

# Programme Update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Sri Lanka

Appeal No. MAALK002

28 August 2008

This report covers the period  
from 1 January to 30 June 2008



A first aid trainer shows the techniques involved in fastening a sling at a community-based first aid workshop in Ampara (International Federation)

## In brief

**Programme purpose:** An International Federation office is established in the country to primarily support the national society's initiatives through capacity building and technical advice. The programme plan 2008-2009 addresses the initial needs identified at a very early stage of transition from the tsunami operation to core programming. Aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda goals - disaster management, health and care, organizational development and humanitarian values, the activities presented within this plan are complementary to the ongoing tsunami emergency response and recovery, with some projects within the core programme areas crossing over from the tsunami plan of action.

**Programme summary:** Secretariat-supported programmes for Sri Lanka in the four core programme areas, as established in Strategy 2010 and in the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society's five-year Strategic Plan, have been ongoing since before the tsunami operation. When the tsunami struck at the end of 2004, a massive operation was put in place through which programme area components continued to be supported, but at a lower scale because priorities were concentrated on the huge task of bringing the tsunami-affected population back to previous standards of living. Three and a half years after the tsunami, the recovery operation is still ongoing, but views to transition are becoming more vivid and the road to concentrating contributions and efforts to core programme areas is shaping up.

At the end of 2007, with the support of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, in particular the International Federation, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) developed its five-year strategic plan (2008-2012). In order to translate the strategy into concrete plans and budgets for the activities in the four core programme

areas as established in Strategy 2010, the national society has created programme-specific technical committees. These committees have been given the task of putting concrete plans into place that address the main lines of the five-year strategy. Following various discussions with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners in the country, the plans for the core areas have been revised and the national society has highlighted the priorities in order to meet its strategic objective. The following steps in this Movement venture will be to further discuss and determine the support that each partner will provide to the national society as each of the partners moves away from the tsunami operation and further into contributing to the sustainability of the achievements already partially gained in the core programme areas.

**Financial situation:** The total 2008 budget under the appeal 2008-2009 is CHF 3,471,903 (USD 3.16 million or EUR 2.15 million) of which four per cent is covered. Up to 0.2 per cent has been spent. Core programme areas are funded up to 30 per cent under the appeal 2008-2009 with the remaining 70 per cent covered by funds from the tsunami appeal and plan of action. Funds contributed towards the 2008-2009 appeal are mainly for the regional HIV/AIDS project in Sri Lanka, which forms an integral part of the overall health programme that is being implemented under the tsunami appeal, to be continued throughout 2009 – 2010.

[Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

See also tsunami [revised plan and budget 2005-2010](#), [Tsunami Federation-Wide Semi-Annual Report](#), and the forthcoming tsunami operations update.

**No. of people we help:** The programme for 2008 and 2009 was set out to assist approximately 4,614,089 beneficiaries with projects in the core programme areas as well as those integrated with tsunami recovery-oriented projects. This ambitious target has been possible thanks to the strong foundation of the SLRCS' large volunteer base - approximately 217,000 members/volunteers across all the 25 administrative districts of the country.

**Our partners:** As the tsunami operation winds down, the Movement coordination vehicle that was established as a result of the tsunami operation will also change its scope and operating system. This will however take place only once the tsunami operation has reached its completion. Therefore it will remain in place at least until 2010, and because of its utility and efficient functionality, it is foreseen that the most important lessons from having such a structure will be adapted to meet the needs of coordinating partners' future core programme implementation as well as emergency operations. The partnership meetings that have taken place in Sri Lanka, with Secretariat support, are already providing a good base for ensuring coordination in the implementation of the Sri Lanka Red Cross strategic plan and partner contributions to it in the coming years.

## Context

The recurrent conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has a severely negative impact on the country's economy, particularly in the north and east. Before 2006, economic growth rates of these provinces were the highest in Sri Lanka, but it is now believed that they have now fallen to pre-2002 levels. The civilian population bears the brunt of the economic impact of the conflict. Unemployment is high and inflation is gradually rising. The cost of basic commodities such as bread, rice and cooking gas has risen exponentially. Electricity and water rates have also seen dramatic price hikes. Since the resurgence of the conflict, there has been widespread civilian displacement in the north and east of the country.

However, despite the insecurity, some owner-driven housing projects in the north and east have continued relatively unaffected by the conflict, including sites located in LTTE-controlled areas. The current assessment allows for long-term programme planning to continue with the understanding that long delays, suspension or abandonment of programmes are to be expected and contingency plans for this possibility need to be incorporated into programme planning. Overall, the annual inflation in Sri Lanka is approximately 17.7 per cent. This has caused delays to several projects as additional funding needed to be sought in many cases, due to budgetary shortfalls because of escalating costs.

## Progress towards outcomes

The Federation office in Sri Lanka, with its 23 delegates and more than 150 local staff, has continued to support the national society in the implementation of its programmes as well as the coordination among all Movement Partners. Since the tsunami operation, the Federation office is both an implementing agency and a donor. Because of the support it has been providing to the national society in the sizeable number of Memoranda of Understanding and other outstanding commitments that will go on until 2010, technical support in core and non-core programme areas will continue until at least such date. As the leading Movement component in relation to programme areas, the Federation office has been providing technical support to both the national society and the partner national societies in the various programmes, from the establishment of strategies and plans, to actual implementation of the programmes.

### Outcomes/Expected results

The SLRCS is in a very significant period of its history. The important amount of humanitarian assistance received as a result of the tsunami operation has allowed this national society to gain exposure and capture a great number of experiences that have contributed to its capacity building. With an acknowledged five-year strategic plan, and a solidly established Movement Coordination Framework, the International Federation office has, and will continue to support this national society's coordination efforts, as well as build the capacity of SLRCS staff through programmes. Two partnership meetings have already taken place this year, and further efforts at creating opportunities for the national society and the Movement partners in the country will take place, leading to an eventual cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) process in the future.

### Achievements

Support from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's health and care initiatives focuses on five main sub-sectors: community-based health, community-based first aid, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, blood donor recruitment, and public health in emergencies training. Building sustainable self-reliance and community action across the country has been ensured throughout by working closely with the water and sanitation sector in the restoration and improvement, as well as promotion of better hygiene practices. The main objectives of these five sectors are according to the 11 strategic directions of SLRCS's strategic plan 2008-2012; therefore, aiming at meeting the strategic goals of this national society, especially by building capacity in projects already existing.

This support translates into establishing and further consolidating work plans within the SLRCS health department in the areas of community-based health/community-based first aid, first aid, HIV/AIDS, blood donor recruitment and public health in emergencies across the country. This includes support to SLRCS's HIV/AIDS prevention programme focusing on HIV prevention in the tea estate sector, and also on reducing stigma across the country. Training in public health in emergencies has been identified as a key activity for the coming period, and SLRCS as well as the International Federation office in Sri Lanka will greatly benefit from such training from the South Asia regional office.

In addition, capacity building efforts have also included a training-of-trainers workshop aiming at strengthening blood donor recruitment efforts both targeting headquarters and branches. The knowledge and skills on all aspects of donor recruitment have therefore been enhanced and work plans for future collaboration been prepared. SLRCS will continue the training, with support from the World Bank, but activities in the future will concentrate on the establishment of lists of regular donors by district. Technical assistance of this kind by the International Federation office in Sri Lanka will also be provided to regional blood banks starting with two districts in the east (Trincomale and Ampara) and following the agreement with the ministry of health.

During 2008, a midterm evaluation of the first aid programme as well as the regional HIV programme was carried out. A collection of the main recommendations have been translated into a comprehensive working agenda for the first aid programme for the period 2008-2009, and recommendations for the HIV programme are currently being incorporated into the revision by objectives as stated in the Alliance document. Further evaluations to identify improvements in quality and impact of health projects such as the community-based health (CBH) and psychosocial support (PSP) projects will take place throughout 2008.

The community-based first aid programme in Sri Lanka has become a vehicle for integration across the programme sectors of disaster management, organizational development, water and sanitation, and livelihoods, and seeks to develop a strategic work plan at branch level that is in line with the newly developed SLRCS strategic direction. Through the health and care technical committee, guidelines in the selection of volunteers as well as mechanisms for working closely with the ministry of health were determined. These integration efforts are seen as timely in view of the phasing out of several supporting partner national societies, and as a



**Two volunteers demonstrate water safety techniques at a training programme in the Gampaha District. (International Federation)**

Federation is currently being carried out in four districts in Sri Lanka. In order to identify vulnerabilities and high-risk communities, hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments (HVCA) have been conducted in over 12 communities in four districts. With the active participation of community volunteers, village disaster management committees were formed in six communities, and volunteer action teams were trained. Participation in regional VCA “Learning by doing” practitioners training workshop has led to the opportunity to apply experiences in community-based disaster management (CBDM) projects, while the global relief training has provided the tools to enhance the design of disaster response interventions. Further improvements in the disaster management sector included the first steps at creating a common framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR) fostered by opportunities such as the regional DRR curriculum development meeting that created a space for discussions and broader understanding.

Construction work is ongoing on a regional warehouse for stockpiling goods for emergency response initiatives in Anuradhapura – a town in close proximity to the ongoing conflict in the north.

Having undergone a comprehensive and consultative strategic planning process, the International Federation has supported SLRCS in the production of a new five-year strategic plan 2008-2012. The International Federation’s organizational development programme strives to ensure that SLRCS has the organizational structures, policies and procedures, capacities, skills, resources and shared values to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in Sri Lanka with the goal of becoming the leading self-reliant humanitarian service provider with a high quality and accountable service delivery mechanism, and with a very good public image.

To achieve this objective, branch construction has been one of the key elements in improving the capacity of branches. Land has been secured for ten branches out of which, construction is underway in two districts, namely Gampaha and Galle. Training in project planning process, income generation development and restructuring, finance reporting procedures, and monitoring and evaluation have also taken place. A mapping report as well as a fixed asset verification report was also completed. In addition, the branches recently undertook an annual community assessment exercise, which provided positive beneficiary feedback on enhanced quality of service as a result of training provided.

Support provided through the International Federation’s communications programme is largely focused on developing and maintaining high quality internal and external information-sharing with various stakeholders including Movement partners, beneficiaries, donors and the government. The joint communications strategy developed between the International Federation, the SLRCS and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) remains relevant and ensures a coherent and common approach to communications within the Movement. The strategy enables all Movement actors to balance their need for visibility and advocacy while continuing to maintain sound working relations with relevant authorities, ensuring unimpeded access to beneficiaries across the country. Although international media interest in the tsunami has diminished, it is vital that relations with the local media are well managed in order to safeguard the role and reputation of the International Federation and Movement partners.

mechanism to ensure sustainability and optimal use of resources. In addition, participation in global health care programmes has positioned SLRCS as a model for community-based first aid’s pilot “CBFA in action” approach. Regional support in the form of a master facilitators’ workshop will take place in Colombo to increase the number of facilitators to four trainers which then can be extended to branches.

Capacity building at all levels has been a major Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement disaster management activity. Community-based disaster management and high vulnerability capacity assessment processes have taken place with support from the Movement in 120 disaster-prone communities which are now developing their own risk reduction plans.

A community-based disaster management programme supported by the International

As a cross-cutting programme, the promotion of humanitarian values is integrated across SLRCS's core programming and the International Federation is providing technical input and guidance to this process through participation in a virtual policy committee. This committee was created by SLRCS to meet its strategic plan objectives and is strongly supported by the International Federation office in Colombo. In addition to enhancing integration of humanitarian values across programmes, this committee aims at providing the national society with tools and mechanisms for defining policies as well as in setting strategic direction to guide this integration. Currently, the committee meets once a year.



**Community members in Ampara listen to information on Red Cross Red Crescent Principles and Values. The promotion of humanitarian values is integrated across the SLRCS's core programmes. (International Federation)**

### **Constraints or Challenges**

The ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka presents both risks and opportunities regarding the implementation of programmes and projects. The SLRCS is well placed at the community level to strengthen the ability of vulnerable groups but in an increasingly polarized environment where international and national NGOs are not perceived favourably, these efforts could be misconstrued by the political establishment as being contrary to the Principles of the Red Cross.

## **Working in partnership**

The tsunami recovery operation is implemented under a Movement Coordination Framework. The framework is comprised of the International Federation, SLRCS, ICRC and 17 partner national societies (PNS) with an operational presence in the country. Red Cross Red Crescent partners continue to collaborate on technical, operational and strategy levels.

As more and more of the tsunami response and recovery projects near completion, PNS are also looking into their exit from the tsunami operation. In recent months, Movement partners' progress in exit planning has ensured all administrative matters are efficiently managed. The Movement is now looking more closely at additional critical aspects of exiting from programmes, to ensure sustainability measures are enhanced. Exit planning tools and guidelines are being developed into documents to be circulated among partners

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society hosted a partnership meeting in January, inviting the Movement partners to look into long-term cooperation and capacity building for the national society and its core programmes beyond the tsunami operation. Partners have continued to express interest in this process, for which the groundwork continues in a collaborative manner. Follow-up of such meetings is programmed throughout the year in order to continue with the dialogue and analysis of partner contribution to SLRCS strategies and plans.

The continuation of the conflict in the recent months has witnessed PNS working closely with the ICRC and SLRCS on conflict relief. Tsunami programmes in the north continue to be affected by the conflict, and the Movement is once again looking into the status of the tsunami recovery fund to support recovery operations in the affected areas when it is possible to do so.

The Red Cross Red Crescent continues to collaborate with other partners in the country including United Nations agencies, the Sri Lankan government and other NGOs. Key working partners in the government include the reconstruction and development agency under the ministry of finance and planning, ministry of health, the national disaster management centre and the national water supply and drainage board. Among several NGOs in-country, SLRCS works closely with Lanka PLUS, a People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) organization. This collaboration seeks mainly to initiate small livelihoods programmes such as farming, pottery and home gardening so that beneficiaries are able to improve their source of income.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's five-year strategic plan has quality and accountability at the forefront of most of the strategic issues that will be tackled throughout this period. The need for better quality programmes and delivery of such, in a more transparent and efficient way, has been identified as one of the priorities for all sectors in the following years.

The Secretariat, through its Federation Office in the country, will support this national society initiative through the promotion of more collaborative and integrated approaches that contribute to greater accountability to stakeholders, donors and beneficiaries alike. This will also contribute to the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the periodic review of the efficiency and quality of programmes. As a result of the increased project portfolio due to the massive tsunami operation, the national society is facing an important period in its history with the opportunity of collecting important lessons from all Movement partners working in this operation.

The International Federation office in the country has organized training in the project planning process (PPP), to the national society at various levels, and provided technical advice as requested. Efforts in the past that concentrated on training of the project planning process and methodologies for carrying out assessments, monitoring systems and evaluation served as a good base for the national society. A quality and accountability working group was established with the objective of providing support for the improvement in programme processes. However, with the departure of the quality and accountability (Q&A) delegate, follow-up of this initiative has been taken up by the organizational development (OD) and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) programmes.

Programme management is currently not systematically informed by standardized monitoring mechanisms to collect and distill important lessons from the tsunami operation. To this effect, the OD programme along with other core programme areas and support from PMER will work together throughout 2009 and 2010 to continue the capacity building of the national society so that it can meet the demands for better programming.

Institutionalizing better practices in project planning and implementation processes will be a key element to which the International Federation office will contribute. Adequate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of all programmes still need to be put in place for the benefit of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society. However, one of the most important contributions to this national society already in 2008 will be the establishment of an efficient and coherent mechanism for collecting lessons learned to feed back into current and future programme planning.

## Looking ahead

The second half of 2008 is still covered by the tsunami plan of action; thus, core programme area activity will only be increased gradually during this period. Despite many core area programmes being supported under the tsunami plan of action that stretches until 2010, the elaboration of this plan has revealed programme areas that will need further support once the Movement partners start phasing out their programmes.

A great deal of support has been provided to the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society during the years since the tsunami, but a sudden exit by an important number of Movement partners in a two-year period may seriously hurt the progress made. Therefore, although Secretariat planning for long-term support for the national society, when another recovery plan is still in place may seem too early, this is a propitious moment to start reflecting on possible gaps left by the scaling down of such an important operation as was the tsunami response and recovery, may be covered.

Taking the planning one step further to analyze where contributions are needed in the next two years so that gaps already start being filled, has been the main objective of the planning process that was undertaken in Sri Lanka.

The national society is currently continuing to prioritize plans, and the secretariat is providing support and guidance as well as reinforcing relationships among partners in the country. In this important phase of transition, support from the South Asia regional office will be increasingly required. By guiding all Movement partners towards a coherent collaboration for the long-term plans of the national society through the partnership meetings that are held periodically, a greater need to place more emphasis on some of the vulnerabilities identified during disasters and to build the resilience and preparedness of communities in facing other man-made and natural disasters will be met.

The improvement of the capacity of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society through support of its strategic plan will lead the way towards meeting the Global Agenda goals that seek to reduce the number of deaths, injuries, illnesses and impact from disasters and health emergencies as well as promote the respect of human dignity at all levels.

<b>How we work</b>	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p><b>Global Agenda Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.</li><li>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.</li><li>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.</li><li>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.</li></ul>
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