

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis

Emergency appeal n° MDRMM002
GLIDE n° [TC-2008-000057-MMR](#)
Operations update n° 18
25 July 2008

Period covered by this Operations Update: 8-24 July 2008

Appeal target: CHF 73,987,907 (USD 72.5 million or EUR 45.9 million)

Appeal coverage: 62%;

[<click to go directly to the updated donor response report, or to contact details>](#)



Children in Kappannan village, in the township of Bogale, help out with pond cleaning on 4 July
(Photo: MRCS/Thet Naing) [Full story](#)

Appeal history:

- 8 July 2008: A [revised Emergency Appeal](#) was launched for CHF 73.9 million (USD 72.5 million or EUR 45.9 million) to assist 100,000 households for 36 months.
- 16 May 2008: An Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 52,857,809 (USD 50.8 million or EUR 32.7 million) to assist 100,000 households for 36 months.
- 6 May 2008: A preliminary Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million or EUR 3.86 million) to assist 30,000 households for six months.
- 5 May 2008: CHF 200,000 (USD 190,000 or EUR 123,000) was allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Summary:

Approximately 478,000 beneficiaries (95,600 households) have been reached since the disaster struck, according to data available until 18 July. This beneficiary figure has been adjusted from the previous 600,000 and is believed to be a more realistic figure as it places people at the centre of the calculation rather than the number of commodities delivered. It is only a calculation of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's relief efforts and does not include the thousands of people reached by Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) volunteers assisting other organizations with their relief efforts.

Hub Offices

The first six out of nine planned hub offices were established at the end of June and are staffed by newly recruited MRCS staff. The function of the hub offices is to support the township branches.

Draft Implementation Strategy and Plan

Work is currently being completed on a strategy and plan of action to support the implementation of the appeal as it goes into the recovery phase. This plan takes into account issues such as:

- organization
- ensuring plans of action are further developed and monitored up to the village/beneficiary level
- monitoring of the operation and the impact of various sectors
- investment in the capacity building of the MRCS, including an exit strategy.

The plan includes a workshop on 7 and 8 August to assist with the management issues of the Red Cross at township level, as well as all nine hub offices. This workshop will provide all key stakeholders including the regional disaster response team (RDRT) members based at hubs, with details of the appeal plan, their respective roles in this, the thinking behind the current structure and relationship between hub offices and township branches, the strategy for improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and the implementation plan.

The emergency relief goals are set to be reached by the end of August and the relief sector is developing plans on how to support recovery, livelihoods and shelter.

Travel authorization

Travel authorizations which were previously issued from Yangon are being issued from the new capital, Naypyidaw. As such, applications may take longer to process and affect short missions in particular.

Contributions to the Appeal to date

Partners which have made contributions to the appeal to date include: American Red Cross/American government, Australian Red Cross/Australian government, Austrian Red Cross, Belarusian Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross/Belgian government, British Red Cross/British government, Canadian Red Cross/Canadian government, Red Cross Society of China – Hong Kong branch and Macau branch, Cook Islands Red Cross, Cyprus Red Cross/Cyprus government, Danish Red Cross/Danish government, Finnish Red Cross/Finnish government, French Red Cross, German Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Irish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Republic of Korea Red Cross, Kuwait Red Crescent, Luxembourg Red Cross/Luxembourg government, Malaysian Red Crescent, Monaco Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross/Norwegian government, Portuguese Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent, Singapore Red Cross, Slovak Red Cross/Slovak government, Spanish Red Cross/Spanish government, Sri Lanka Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross/Swedish government, Swiss Red Cross, Taiwan Red Cross Organization, United Arab Emirates Red Crescent and Vietnam Red Cross Society. Contributions have also been received from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Directorate General (ECHO), the Italian, Estonian and Slovenian governments, Total Oil Company, Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Tides Foundation.

The International Federation, on behalf of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, would like to thank all partners for their very quick and generous response to this appeal.

The situation

Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2 and 3 May 2008, devastating the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions. Collective assessment data from the authorities and international communities indicates that 115 townships were significantly affected by the cyclone. The official figures of 2 July state that 84,500 people have been killed and 53,800 are missing. The UN estimates that 2.4 million people are affected.

Coordination and partnerships

International Federation

The director of the International Federation's Coordination and Programmes Division paid a second field visit to Myanmar since the cyclone struck. He met with the Myanmar Red Cross Society's (MRCS) executive committee as well as the minister and deputy minister of social welfare, relief and resettlement, and the deputy minister of foreign affairs. He was accompanied by the head of the International Federation's country office to briefings for various ambassadors and donors on the current response and the revised Appeal.

Meetings with the ASEAN secretariat and the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment for Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction (PONJA) facilitators continue. This coordination has assisted with the development of the MRCS contribution to the national response.

The MRCS and the International Federation jointly hosted a meeting in Kuala Lumpur from 21 to 22 July on the cyclone operations for partner national societies. More information on the outcome of the meeting will be available in the next Operations Update.

Partner National Societies

The MRCS and the International Federation recently received visits from the French Red Cross president and the head of international relations to review French Red Cross activities. An Austrian Red Cross representative provided support to the International Federation in developing the terms of reference for the proposed visit from a group of five partner national societies. This representative will also assist the International Federation's disaster management unit at the Asia Pacific zone office in Kuala Lumpur, to coordinate the visit.

Danish Red Cross

As operations infrastructure continues to be developed steadily, the Danish Red Cross bilateral delegate is now returning to focus support once again on the community-based health programming in the northern part of the country. Since the cyclone ravaged the delta, the Danish Red Cross staff and resources have been generously re-directed through the International Federation response. Reporting and assessments as well as the delivery of relief items, have all been assisted by support from the Danish national society on the ground in Myanmar. All components of the movement have contributed to the MRCS' efforts to reach those most severely affected by the cyclone.

French Red Cross

The French Red Cross intends to continue working in the southern part of Mawlamyinegyun on relief and early recovery activities. They will continue to focus on 6,000 targeted households. These households are in four village tracts (Nut Hmu, Kyat Hylar, Kyun Chaung, and Shauk Chaung), in a remote area which is difficult to access. The support so far, consists of assisting with the distribution of emergency shelter kits, relief kits, water supply kits, hygiene kits and associated health promotion, rain water collection systems, as well as a needs assessment for early recovery activities.

In August, the French Red Cross plans to support the MRCS in developing disaster risk reduction programming initiated in 2007 in the Ayeyarwady division. This will be conducted in close coordination with the International Federation.

During the first few days after the Cyclone Nargis response, the French and Danish national societies worked with the International Federation to support the MRCS headquarters staff and volunteers in setting up the

infrastructure for the emergency response. This included the provision of support for information management and assessment.

The French Red Cross emergency response unit's (ERU) water and sanitation team, along with M40 equipment, arrived in Myanmar soon after the cyclone. In response to the difficulties associated with obtaining permits for expatriates to travel to the delta, the ERU team trained local engineers, technicians and MRCS volunteers on the handling of the water and sanitation equipment, for ten days in Yangon. These trainees were later deployed to the delta.

As a complement to this water treatment activity, the French Red Cross also recruited additional staff and organized water and sanitation training in Yangon for 21 Red Cross volunteers from the Ayeyarwady division. The training focused mainly on emergency needs assessments, community rain water collection systems, hygiene promotion and the distribution process of kits at village levels.

Austrian/German Red Cross

The joint Austrian/German water and sanitation emergency response unit (M20) is still functioning and the new team of ERU-trained staff is arriving to replace the old ones. This new team will train volunteers and local staff to ensure the further functioning of this ERU when the international staff leave.

Other Partner National Societies

- The Australian Red Cross water treatment team is still proceeding with the plan to extend its activities.
- The American Red Cross has agreed to support the operation with a delegate who is due to arrive on 25 July and who will establish a comprehensive monitoring system for the operation as a whole, as well as within individual sectors.
- The Japanese Red Cross recently confirmed their commitment to three years of support for community-based first aid throughout Myanmar. This will be integrated with similar activities outlined in the Emergency Appeal for the delta.
- The MRCS and International Federation are working to ensure that the states and divisions that were not affected by the cyclone will continue to be able to support their plans of action through the annual appeal, as well as through support from other partners such as the Danish, Finnish, Swedish, Australian and Norwegian Red Cross societies and the Taiwan Red Cross organization.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC is providing technical support for the establishment of a Geographical Information System (GIS) for which MRCS staff members have already commenced training. The ICRC's Economic Security (ECOSEC) delegate who arrived this week and will be in-country for four weeks, will work with the International Federation's livelihoods delegate and the MRCS, in developing the livelihoods plan of action in more detail. The livelihoods delegate will arrive in-country at the end of the month.

The ICRC continues to develop capacity in restoring family links (RFL) through the network of hubs established for the Nargis operation.

Inter-agency cluster

The sectoral cluster meetings in Yangon continue to take place. The MRCS at township level also participates more frequently in similar coordination meetings in the delta.

The International Federation is planning the handover of the coordination of the shelter cluster to UN Habitat. This will take place in August.

Post-Nargis Joint Assessment for Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction (PONJA)

The PONJA report is due to be launched this week. MRCS volunteers have played an active role in the assessments and the International Federation has ensured that the preliminary findings of PONJA were taken into consideration in the revision of the Emergency Appeal.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The operation

Relief

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

To ensure that up to 100,000 cyclone-affected households receive food and non-food items immediately, to help preserve their physical and psychological well-being, human dignity and counter further deterioration of the humanitarian situation, whilst preparing the ground for longer-term recovery activities.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

To ensure badly affected households receive further necessary non-food item assistance, whilst refocusing MRCS programming towards recovery (to include livelihoods and food security), disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities, in order to mitigate the possible effects of future disasters.

Progress

● *Non-food items*

As of 18 July, nearly 478,000 beneficiaries (95,600 households) have been reached. Non-food relief items distributed consist of shelter tool kits, tarpaulins, jerry cans, hygiene kits, mosquito nets, blankets and kitchen sets.

Detailed distribution data is being further refined as information comes from the field through the newly instated relief officers and regional disaster response team (RDRT) support through the hubs.

● *Food items*

About 60 tonnes of rice were distributed by the MRCS during the aftermath of the cyclone, including 7.5 tonnes which were locally procured. Rice from the World Food Programme comprised the bulk of food items distributed.

● Two new regional disaster response team (RDRT) personnel have arrived in order to strengthen two more township offices. Consequently, eight out of the nine hubs will have an RDRT presence.

Challenges

● The constraints faced in organizing travel to the various hubs or township branches in order to monitor the progress of the relief activities remain a challenge.

● The distribution of non-food items in Mawlamyinegyun is behind schedule compared to most of the other targeted townships because of boat transportation difficulties.

● *Unsolicited food items*

There has been a persistent issue with the delivery of unsolicited items, hindering the logistics of the operation. Special efforts have been undertaken to develop plans and provide support for unsolicited donations of food items to be distributed by the MRCS. Many of these items arrive without any warning, affecting transportation and warehouse management. There are efforts being made through the International Federation to educate well-meaning donors on the difficulties these items have created for this particular operation and others before it. Mobilization tables are created to assist donors in their understanding of the most appropriate needs. Through a strong effort of the MRCS, a large portion of these unsolicited goods are now being distributed.

Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelter

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

- Meet the immediate shelter needs of the most vulnerable and cyclone-affected people through the distribution of shelter materials to individual households as well as communities.
- Procure and distribute household tarpaulin kits (comprising two tarpaulins and 30 metres of rope) to individual households and distribute one community shelter tool kit to every five households.
- Target 80,000 households for tarpaulin kits and 275,000 for community tool kits.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

- Procure and supply appropriate shelter materials to support 10,000 cyclone-affected households which have suffered severe damage, and have not achieved a reasonable status of recovery.
 - Ensure better understanding and awareness of appropriate building techniques.
- Integrate with other sectors to support community-based shelter activities such as household water harvesting (a water and sanitation activity supported by the shelter sector) and safe haven establishments.
- All activities are to enhance disaster risk reduction.

Progress

The distribution of shelter kits through the two separate packages of household tarpaulin kits and community tool kits continues.

Distributions as of 21 July are as follow:

- 50,484 household tarpaulin kits (comprising two tarpaulins per kit) have been despatched to township branches where they are being rapidly distributed on a basis of one tarpaulin kit-per-household.
- 24,976 community tool kits (i.e. the tools component of the standard International Federation shelter kit) have also been distributed via the MRCS on a basis of one kit-per-five families.
- To speed up distribution, the International Federation and MRCS work with other humanitarian partners (Save the Children, International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) and CARE) to get the kits out as quickly as possible to families in the Ayeyarwady delta. Some 14,000 kits are being distributed in this way, providing a good example of how organizations in Myanmar are collaborating to ensure an efficient response in difficult conditions.

Challenges

Difficulty of access, especially given the remote and scattered nature of villages, continues to make detailed assessments and subsequent planning complicated. In addition, although many households have obtained emergency shelter or are in self-recovery, the condition of the buildings being used across the entire delta is hard to gauge. Plans for the above-mentioned assessments should meet this challenge but will take a considerable amount of time to be implemented.

Health and Care

Community-based Health and First Aid

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disease and public health emergencies, by providing immediate basic health care, first aid and psychosocial support, health and hygiene promotion, to the cyclone-affected populations through the MRCS volunteers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

- Ensure access to basic health care, first aid and psychosocial support by training community-based first aid volunteers and putting a referral system in place, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, and involving the community in health, hygiene promotion (in support of the hygiene promotion activities carried out by water and sanitation sector) and sanitation activities.
- Strengthen the capacity of the MRCS to manage an integrated community-based health and first aid programme which includes water and sanitation, and psychosocial support activities, conducted in emergencies and normal situations, in coordination with the Ministry of Health.

Progress

- Thirty hub health officers have been recruited - 20 of them took up their new posts in their respective townships on 12 July. These officers attended a pre-deployment briefing provided by the MRCS health department and an induction organized by the MRCS together with the International Federation. In two locations, health officers have begun their activities (five in Bogale and three in Mawlamyinegyun) by meeting with local hub representatives, local authorities, township medical officers, and local and international non-governmental organizations.

- In Bogale, a health team comprising two doctors, two nurses and five MRCS volunteers distributed hygiene kits to five villages with the assistance of local MRCS staff and volunteers. The team provided health services to 77 patients (for acute respiratory infection (ARI), diarrhoea, back pain, common cold /fever, depression, sleeping problems, and skin infections) and health education for 300 persons (including the importance of safe drinking water, prevention of malaria/dengue, and personal hygiene).

- One-day feedback training workshops were conducted for volunteers – three workshops were held in Yangon (88 participants) and one in Patheingyi (32 participants). The feedback covered pre-cyclone and post-cyclone activities to measure activities, impact, challenges and community involvement.

Challenges

- There are still places being reached for the first time - this is true not only in places like the Mawlamyinegyun township where there are relatively few non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on health initiatives, but also in other areas as well.

- One big challenge to prepare for is the integration of hub staff with MRCS township branches. This will be done by providing volunteers with training and involving hub staff in these sessions, to enable them to interact with volunteers and therefore, build strong ties.

Other matters

- An MRCS/International Federation team (comprising the head of the MRCS training department in Yangon, and the International Federation's psychosocial support programme (PSP) delegate and health delegate) visited Pyawon, Bogale and Mawlamyinegyun from 2 to 8 July. The purpose of the trip was to support newly recruited hub health officers who have just begun their work, and to help them build good relationships with local authorities, local MRCS township branches, township medical officers and the different clusters at township level.

- The MRCS/International Federation health team continues to participate in individual health, psychosocial support programme and nutrition cluster meetings, held every week.



A health team member attends to a woman in Asi Gyi village in Bogale township during a relief distribution operation. (Photo: International Federation/Evelyn Paasa-Lacsina)

Psychosocial Support

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

Address the immediate psychosocial needs of the population affected by Cyclone Nargis, by providing psychosocial-related relief and by conducting psychosocial support programme training for MRCS volunteers and local key workers in psychosocial support, in collaboration with the ministry of health, local non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and international non-governmental organizations.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

Address the psychosocial recovery needs of the population by ensuring cultural and spiritual support, and initiating drama and creative activities for children in schools, monasteries and the community at large. This will involve working in an integrated way with other sectors to include psychosocial support in MRCS training, and support access to vulnerable people for livelihoods and other community-based programming.

Progress

- 25 MRCS volunteers previously trained in psychosocial support (PSP), attended a three-day PSP booster training session from 9-11 July in Yangon. These volunteers who are from different states and divisions, have been deployed to the nine most affected townships in the delta areas for two weeks, from 14 to 27 July. The townships are Labutta, Bogale, Pyapon, Dedaye, Ngapudaw, Mawlamyinegyun, Kyaiklat, and Myaungmya in the Ayeyarwady division; and Kungyangon in the Yangon division.

The PSP volunteers will coordinate with the MRCS township branch and support local volunteers in initiating psychosocial support activities.

- MRCS volunteers in the townships involved in the relief distributions, continue to provide psychosocial support to affected families. Additionally, in villages in Bogale, where hub health officers are present at the health posts set up in the temporary relief distribution centres, psychological first aid (supportive communication) is also being provided to cyclone victims.

- The MRCS/International Federation are participating in the regular mental health and psychosocial support technical working group meetings with international and local non-governmental organizations, and UN agencies. Cooperation has also been established with the ministry of health, department of health, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the University of Yangon's department of psychology, with an understanding that representatives from these organizations can serve as facilitators during the booster PSP training sessions. During the training sessions from 9 to 11 July, the ICRC gave an overview on the restoring family links programme which it helped the MRCS to establish in affected townships in the delta.

- Printing of additional information materials for communities and workers on how to cope with stress, is now underway. The volunteers who are in the field at present, have been provided with existing posters and brochures on how to cope with stress, as well as copies of the community-based psychosocial support manual written in the local language and developed by the MRCS.

- Psychosocial support for the MRCS staff and volunteers is in place with the provision of supportive items, briefing/debriefing sessions and recognition ceremonies for volunteers involved in the operation. The briefing sessions for volunteers, staff and regional disaster response teams include components on coping with stress and the concept of psychosocial support.

Challenges

- The need for psychosocial support in the affected areas continues to be a major concern. Accordingly, PSP field activities will be strengthened through regular supervision by the hub health teams and trained volunteers.

- There is also a need to conduct a more detailed psychosocial support assessment in the targeted township areas, in order to identify people in specific areas/village tracts who are in need. This assessment report will serve as a good base for the implementation of the PSP plan of action; in this regard, the MRCS along with the International Federation will coordinate with the ministry of health, *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), the World Health Organization and the University of Yangon to integrate assessments with ongoing studies in the field conducted by the different parties.

- Debriefing for MRCS staff and volunteers is an area to be strengthened. While the local volunteers have developed some of their own ways of coping with stress, the introduction of a debriefing scheme will give added value to the MRCS as a regular activity and make progress in meeting the responsibility of the Movement in the Red Cross 'duty of care' towards the volunteers.

Other matters

- The operational definitions of the terms related to psychosocial support for the Myanmar context were discussed and accepted at the fifth PSP working group meeting held last week.
- The ministry of health's mental health care plan in the cyclone-affected areas was presented by the head of the department of mental health. The plan provides for six teams working in six affected townships simultaneously, one psychiatrist on board the floating hospital in the delta, and one psychiatrist in each medical team deployed to the areas.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

Objective 1

To ensure that the *immediate* risks of waterborne and water-related diseases have been reduced through the *most essential* provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene promotion and education to 100,000 households.

Objective 2

To ensure that the *long-term* risk of waterborne and water-related diseases has been reduced through *sustainable* access to safe water and adequate sanitation, as well as the provision of hygiene education to 75,000 households.¹

Progress

Pond cleaning activities have begun in two townships, namely Bogale and Labutta, with the support of MRCS volunteers. In Labutta, assessments have been completed in eight villages. The International Federation has also received a list of 400 affected ponds in Bogale, from the MRCS township branch. The water and sanitation team will start assessments simultaneously with ongoing pond cleaning activities.

Challenges

It has been a challenge for the team to organize the required supplies for the field, such as fuel and boats for transportation, as the financial procedure for the field hub offices is being finalized by the MRCS. The deployment of finance officers to these offices has begun.

Other matters

French Red Cross ERU

The purification unit installed in Labutta has not been running on full capacity. The main constraint is that villages are remote and the only means of transportation is by boat, making it logistically difficult to transport water to these villages. The Singapore Red Cross has provided support (through the mobilization table) for the procurement of a fleet of boats to assist with this issue.

A plan has been developed to install smaller capacity purification units near village tracts to provide communities with safe drinking water. While these purification units are operating, pond cleaning activities will be carried on in the same village tracts. These rainwater harvesting ponds are the main drinking water sources for the communities in the region. The pond cleaning activities will enable the communities' drinking water needs to be met in the long run and will also provide an exit strategy when the use of these water purification units comes to an end.

Following the plan, a purification unit was installed in the Bi Tut village tract on 12 July, and is up and running. Simultaneously, assessments for pond cleaning were carried out in eight villages in the Bi Tut tract.

UNICEF is also working in the tract and has completed six pond cleaning activities in the villages. To avoid an overlap, discussions were held with UNICEF and it was agreed that the International Federation/ERU will

¹ The initial phase of relief focused on reaching 100,000 beneficiaries, irrespective of their level of 'affectedness'. The second phase of relief will focus on the most vulnerable portion of this group of people, and this amounts to 75,000 beneficiaries.

continue with the pond cleaning operation in the remaining villages in the Bi Tut tract. UNICEF and UNDP have also offered additional pumps to be used by the International Federation/ERU for the pond cleaning activities.

Water treatment unit in the Labutta township

According to the scaling down plan for purification/treatment units, two water filters (sand and active carbon) have been dismantled and re-packed.

Australian Red Cross water treatment unit in Mawlamyinegyun

The team in Mawlamyinegyun is now working on extending the water treatment and supply network to other villages by installing additional sedimentation tanks. At the moment, they supply water to 15 villages weekly.

Human resources

Candidates are currently being sought for the second water and sanitation delegate position.

MRCS team

Recruitment for the remaining water and sanitation engineering positions in the hub offices is underway.

Logistics

The international pipeline continues to work smoothly, with the remaining shipments of relief items coming now exclusively by sea freight to the Port of Yangon in both 20' and 40' containers.

Local procurements of five 24-foot fibre-glass boats, as well as 30 boats financed by the Singapore Red Cross are being completed. The MRCS has sought expert advice from the delta to ensure that the boats are to the specifications required for the context.

Logistics officers who will be working in four logistics hubs have been identified by the MRCS, in close cooperation with the International Federation. They have been briefed on International Federation logistics procedures and completed practical exercises on warehouse documentation. An MRCS logistics officer has been trained in the International Federation's standard warehouse management system software and will update the database with goods movement information from the field. New bilingual logistics forms as well as generators have been sent to hub office warehouses.

Finance

The Foreign Exchange Currency is experiencing a substantial devaluation which began in early July. The impact of this of course extends to International Federation funds.

Capacity of the MRCS

Up to 67 new MRCS recruits have been deployed to the nine hub offices over the past three weeks. The recruits comprise hub managers, administration/finance officers, logistics officers, assessments/relief officers, reporting officers, water and sanitation engineers, a water technician, and health officers.

Capacity of the International Federation

The Yangon office is currently staffed by 14 local technical staff and approximately 24 international delegates, eight of whom are RDRT personnel currently deployed to the delta.

Communications

Members of the communications and advocacy team in both Geneva and Kuala Lumpur continue to field and manage a significant volume of media inquiries. Staff support for ongoing communications activity is being increased to plan for ongoing opportunities to highlight key aspects of the operation.

Additional tools to support communications can be found at www.ifrc.org or www.flickr.com/ifrc.

News from the field



All in a day's work... Villagers in Kappannan, in Bogale township, come out in full force to help the MRCS/International Federation water and sanitation team, to clean the village pond – the community's main drinking water source contaminated by sea water as a result of Cyclone Nargis.

The team arrived in Kappannan on 4 July through the dedication and tenacity of the leader of Bogale township's Red Cross volunteer movement, Thet Naing (*picture above*).

According to International Federation water and sanitation delegate Vinay Sadavarte who met with Thet Naing, the Red Cross leader was extremely enthusiastic when he heard about the pond-cleaning activities. Thet Naing immediately took action in assisting Kappannan villagers as he had recently received word of their plight. The Red Cross leader mobilized 10 volunteers, a boat and fuel in just one hour. Accompanied by the MRCS engineer from Bogale and equipped with three cleaning pumps, the team reached Kappannan in 90 minutes.

"Things started moving so quickly!" says an astounded Sadavarte who was in Bogale to assist the MRCS in conducting other assessments. Working together, the villagers and the Red Cross team cleared debris before and after the pond was drained. They took just one day to clean and rehabilitate the pond.

While pond cleaning was going on in Kappannan, Thet Naing headed to two nearby villages with five of the volunteers to conduct similar assessments and initiate pond cleaning. Ponds in these villages were cleaned in the following days, using the pumps brought to Kappannan.

Contaminated ponds and other rainwater collection sources need to be cleaned by the end of August, to enable villagers to collect rainwater in the month of September, the remaining month in the rainy season. Ponds serve as essential drinking water sources for communities during the drier months of November to May. (*Photos:MRCS/Thet Naing*).



How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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