

The Indian Red Cross's programmes are grouped into four main core areas: Promoting humanitarian principles and values; Disaster response; Disaster preparedness; and Health and Care in the Community.

Red Cross promotes the **Humanitarian values**, which encourage respect for other human beings and a willingness to work together to find solutions to problems. From the seven fundamental principles, the movement aims to influence the behaviour of all the people.

Disaster response continues to represent the largest portion of IRCS work, with assistance to millions of people annually ranging from refugees to victims of natural disasters.

The sharp increase in the number of natural disasters countrywide in recent years has prompted the Red Cross to devote more attention to **Disaster preparedness** activities. These aim to make Red Cross Societies and communities more aware of the risks they face, how to reduce their vulnerability, and how to cope when disaster strikes.

Too many people die as a result of no access to even the most basic health services and elementary health education. **Health and community care** has become a cornerstone of humanitarian assistance, and accounts for a large part of Red Cross spending. Through these programmes, the Red Cross aims to enable communities to reduce their vulnerability to disease, and prepare for and respond to public health crises.

Guiding and supporting the development of its Societies is one of the Red Cross's fundamental tasks and runs through these four core areas and others. **Capacity building** programmes and activities include : management and volunteer training, improving branch structures, planning, fund-raising and gender equality. creating the opportunity for Red Cross Societies to network .

Other **Major activities** includes : hospital services, blood bank, HIV/AIDS programmes, home for disabled servicemen ,vocational training centers, tracing activities, maternity , child and family welfare, nursing, junior red cross activities, preparedness and prevention of communicable & infectious diseases, relief operations in fire, railway & other accidents and events .

Promoting Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values

The International Committees of the Red Cross and National Societies have a consistent and inspirational approach to promoting humanitarian values and the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

The aim is to influence the behaviour of the people we work with, through a better understanding of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values. The three main target groups are those working within Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, public and private authorities and members of the communities where we work.

The main priorities are:

Developing a better understanding internally

New initiatives are being taken to ensure that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and staff understand and act on the basis of the Fundamental Principles in their work with vulnerable people in times of peace, disaster or armed conflict. Training includes : the legal and ideological basis of the Red Cross Red Crescent, decision-making processes, mandates, as well as communications and relations with others.

Influencing behaviour in the community.

The values that the Movement has formally stated to be of importance for promotion are :

- the protection of life, health and human dignity
- respect for the human being
- non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, disability, class or political

opinions

- mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace among people
- service by volunteers

Disaster Relief

The Indian sub continent is highly prone to droughts, floods and other natural calamities. Among the states as many as 22 states are said to be multi-disaster-prone regions.

Among all the disasters that occur in India , floods are the most devastating. Over 40 million hectare of land has been identified as flood prone. An average of 18.6 million hectare of land is flooded annually. The Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin, which carry 60 % of the nation's total river flow causes floods.

Another killer is the earthquake -the most dangerous and disastrous.About 57% of the total area in India is vulnerable to seismic activity of varying intensities. Generally areas located in the Himalayan and sub Himalayan region and Andaman and Nicobar islands are vulnerable to earthquakes.

Drought is an eternal feature of Indian livelihood. 18% of the country's total area is drought prone. Approximately half of the Indian population is affected by drought annually. 68% of the total cultivated area is estimated to be drought prone.

India has the gift of having long coastline, running to about 8040 km. This is exposed to tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea in the ratio of 4:1. The Indian Ocean is one among the six key cyclone-prone regions of the world. The coromandel coastal line is more prone - about 80% of the total cyclones generated in the region hit here.

Indian Red Cross with the assistance of the Federation and other National Societies reach humanitarian services to the victims of calamities.

Disaster Response

Poverty and war. Flooding and drought. Earthquakes and environmental disasters. Billion people were affected by disasters in the past. The impact is high; leaving people traumatised by the death of family and friends, their lives devastated by the loss of homes, possessions and stocks of food.

Disasters are becoming more complex, with increasingly long-term consequences as they strike countries with economic problems or political instability, and weaken already fragile public services such as health, water and sanitation. Recurrent crises, such as floods year after year, give people and their crops no time to recover.

Disasters disproportionately affect the poor: over 90 per cent of the total of disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries, where the economic losses they cause hit far harder than in industrialised nations and can wipe out years of economic development.

As a result, the impact of disasters has increased dramatically in the last few decades in terms of the number of people affected and the length of time they are affected for. This trend is expected to keep rising in coming years.

Bringing emergency relief to refugees and victims of poverty and disasters has been a key activity of the Red Cross and its member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the last several years.

The emergency phase of a relief operation aims to provide life-saving assistance; shelter, water, food and basic health care are the immediate needs; along with a sense of humanity and a sign that someone cares. Subsequent needs include reconstruction and rehabilitation. These needs can continue for several years, particularly in the case of refugees and victims of socio-economic collapse. IRCS approaches to disaster response on these lines and works to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance provided to beneficiaries. The Indian Red Cross Society has been equipping itself with its manpower and physical

infrastructures for a nation-wide Disaster Preparedness/Disaster Response (DP/DR) programme. The urgent and serious need for substantial disaster preparedness measures in India had been recommended by a number of agencies (including DFID and the UK Disasters Emergency Committee) after major disaster response operations for the 1998 Super Cyclone in Orissa, the 2000 floods in Assam and the massive earthquake in Gujarat in 2001, Tsunami in 2004, Floods and earthquake in 2005. It is proved that the amount spent in prevention pays richly and saves a lot in relief.

Disaster Preparedness

The Indian Red Cross Society (with Federation support) initiated a nation-wide Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) training programme in 1999 after a series of awareness raising workshops between 1996 and 1998. In 2000, the National Society convened a national strategic planning workshop attended by 19 State Branches from which a strategic plan for DP/DR (2004-2007) was formulated and its activities are still continuing.

The vision of the programme is institutional strengthening, training and knowledge sharing through the establishment of a Disaster Management structure, programmes for strengthening and expanding community based disaster preparedness (CBDP) in disaster affected areas.

Other activities:

BLOOD BANK: The Indian Red Cross is a pioneer in the field of blood services and one of the largest voluntary blood banks in India since 1962. IRCS regularly conducts motivational campaigns to organize Voluntary Blood Donation Camps. It has more than 100 blood banks all over the country under different states and district branches.

HIV / AIDS: The IRCS is very active in the prevention Of HIV / AIDS. It trains youth to disseminate information about the prevention of HIV / AIDS through Youth Peer Education Programme. It also has programmes and projects for children of HIV positive mothers, to provided comprehensive care.

Hospital Services: IRCS provides service for sick and wounded men of the defence forces. Trained IRCS Lady Welfare Officers run welfare services for these people in military Hospitals. The officers run and maintain amenity stores and libraries as well as diversionary therapy programmes such as teaching handicrafts to convalescing patients encouraging ailing soldiers to participate in recreational activities and to give Psychological support for their disability and sickness.

Home for Disabled Servicemen: IRCS runs home in Bangalore for servicemen since 1946. The centre is provided with an operation theatre, Physiotherapy Department, recreation room, Library and diversionary therapy all free of cost.

Vocational Training Centre (V.T.C.): The IRCS provides opportunities to increase vocational skills and the earning opportunities of low-income groups and to raise the status of women socially and economically by making them available opportunities for learning and leadership. The VTCs were started in areas which are dominated by backward classes and tribal population. IRCS in respect for gender equality and to augment the participation of women in economic development process started 2 vocational Training Centres, one each at Salt Lake , Calcutta (West Bengal) and at Arakkonam (Tamil Nadu) in the years 1989 and 1993. These centres besides providing training to the needy women also have developed as nucleus points for promoting Women/ child development activities. These centres also serve as garment production centres for use by the society in its relief operations it helps in supplementing family income, enabling mothers to spend more liberally on the welfare and upbringing of their children, give economic independence and improve the status of women in the community, enhance their decision-making role and Improve the quality of life for the family and the communities in which they live.

Tracing Activities: IRCS helps people trace or send message to missing loved who have been separated ones through forced, unseen and inevitable circumstances when all other means of locating them have not yielded results. It also reunites families who have been separated under similar circumstances.

Maternity and Child Welfare: Maternity and Child Welfare schemes of National Headquarters were started in 1954 to extend Maternal and Child Development activities for the Weaker Section of the

Community. The welfare activities are being continued through various Hospitals, Sub Centres and Bal Vikas Kendras.

Family Welfare: These are run by different states and district branches. All Red Cross MCW hospitals and centers, as well as family welfare clinics, carry out family welfare work. They motivate eligible couples to adopt small family norms and provide them with contraceptives and other family planning devices. Many of these centers are equipped to meet motivational and clinical arrangements

Nursing: The Red Cross MCW units teach home nursing skills to auxiliary nurses, midwives and housewives.

INDIAN RED CROSS PROJECTS: IRCS has lots of projects to its credit regarding Disaster preparedness, Disaster Management, HIV/AIDS, Tracing Activities and Maternity & Child Welfare etc.

Indian Red Cross Society Strategic Development Plan (2004-2007)

Whether people live in huge cities or isolated villages, whatever language they speak, they all want to have the best for their children and families and to live in peace and harmony, with economic and physical security, personal dignity and in a supportive community. But too many people are at risk from situations that threaten their capacity to live with a minimum of socio-economic security and human dignity – they are vulnerable. Indian Red Cross works together with other National Societies all over the world “to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.” The first part of this mission statement, “to improve the lives of vulnerable people”, captures these objectives while adding a dimension of capacity building, sustainability and dignity. Indian Red Cross works through “mobilizing the power of humanity” to provide support and solidarity. Indian Red Cross is open to all individuals, who can find in the Red Cross “space” in which to come together to exercise their responsibility to assist others and find solutions to community problems. The mobilization of beneficiaries, volunteers and donors is the manifestation of that responsibility. By working in this way – “mobilizing the power of humanity” – the Indian Red Cross empowers people, promotes cooperation and lasting peace. The vision of Indian Red Cross is to become “a leading humanitarian organization serving vulnerable people by the end of 2007” To fulfil this vision requires several development activities. Many of them have been identified during the process of developing this National Development Plan. Three strategic directions, four objectives and seventeen actions have been defined.

Three cross cutting strategic directions have been considered when developing this National Development Plan.

- Focus on disaster prone states
- Focusing on core programs
- Focus on branch development

Strategic objectives

Objective 1: Enhance the capacity of Indian Red Cross to deliver its humanitarian message both within and outside the society, and to advocate tolerance and coexistence in the communities.

Action 1:1 Systematically organize, train and share knowledge among Red Cross members, volunteers, governance and management about Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement history and structure, Fundamental Principles and International Humanitarian Law.

Action 1:2 Raise the awareness and strengthen the knowledge, understanding and respect of the public authorities and others to the Fundamental Principles, the Emblem and International Humanitarian Law.

Objective 2: Increase the capacity in disaster preparedness and disaster response in disaster prone branches and National Headquarters and reduce the vulnerability of communities in key disaster prone areas

Action 2:1 Develop Disaster Management policy, strategy, plans and protocols.

Action 2:2 Develop effective and sustainable disaster management mechanisms guided by sphere

standards.

- Action 2:3** Enhancing community capacities and creating awareness
- Action 2:4** Improved advocacy, coordination, collaboration and integration
- Objective 3:** Increase the capacity in health and care in branches and National Headquarters and improve the health of vulnerable people and communities
- Action 3:1** Develop health policy, strategy, plans and protocols and design and develop health and care programs
- Action 3:2** Strengthen preventionfocused volunteer based community health care
- Action 3:3** Enhance the Indian Red Cross emergency health capacity
- Action 3:4** Help and support the vulnerable to handle HIV/AIDS epidemic and respond to public health crisis with particular focus on HIV Aids
- Objective 4:** Raise the capacity of the branches and that of National Headquarters in mobilizing, organizing and managing local resources in order to improve the situation of the vulnerable Under each strategic objective, one or several actions, which need to be taken to achieve it, are identified and explained. This is followed by a listing of expected results and of concrete implementation measures.
- Action 4:1** Develop a national branch development policy and strategy and increase the capacity of the national headquarters and state branches to provide development support to the branches
- Action 4:2** Promote the integrity of the Indian Red Cross ensuring respect and compliance with the Fundamental Principles by reviewing, amending and establishing the constitution organizational structure, rules, policies and procedure in according with the need of the organization and in coherence with the policies of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement.
- Action 4:3** Develop and establish a national resource development strategy and policy integrating financial, material as well as member and volunteer development, mobilization and maintenance components
- Action 4:4** Improve and upgrade the capacity for information and communication at the district level and at national headquarters
- Action 4:5** Improve and upgrade the capacity for financial planning, management and reporting at the national headquarters and design and establish a finance development project for the branches
- Action 4:6** Develop and establish a community based volunteer management system including a relief and emergency volunteers.
- Action 4:7** A human resource development system and phased training programme for governance, volunteersand staff developed and established,

Present Thrust Area : To Assist the National Preparedness and Response Plan to

- Disaster Management Programme
- HIV/AIDS Programme
- Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

Education and Training Programmes :

INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY organises training, workshops and short courses for volunteers and trainers on Disaster Management, First AID.

Tracing Activities :

Have you Lost contact with your family member ? Family News Services



Economic hardship, social problems, conflicts and natural disasters separates millions of families. The affected persons experience the terrible anguish of being separated from their loved ones, of not knowing where they are or what has happened to them and where to turn to find a missing relative or how to get a message to them.

The Red Cross Tracing Service operates around the world, to re-establish contacts between separated family members and re-uniting them whenever possible.

The Indian Red Cross Societies Family News Service can help you with :

- Delivering a family message when the regular means of communication (such as telephone, poster service, internet, etc) are interrupted by using a Red Cross Message.(click to see the form).
- Tracing a family member who is separated or lost contact due to conflict, disaster or other situations of humanitarian need. (click here to see the form)

These services are offered to :

Family members separated due to conflicts, disaster or any other situation of humanitarian need.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Migrants

Separated children

Families of the above mentioned categories.