

# MRCSS Strategic Plan



## 2021 - 2025





# Acronyms

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>CEA</b>	Community engagement and accountability
<b>EMF</b>	Emergency Management Funds
<b>EWEA</b>	Early Warning and Early Action
<b>FbA</b>	Forecast-based Action
<b>FbF</b>	Forecast-based Financing
<b>HIV</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus
<b>ICABR</b>	Integrated Community Assessment for Building Resilience
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technology
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>MCR 2030</b>	Making Cities Resilient 2030
<b>MRCS</b>	Myanmar Red Cross Society
<b>PGI</b>	Protection, gender and inclusion
<b>PMER</b>	Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting
<b>PSEA</b>	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>RCRC</b>	Red Cross and Red Crescent
<b>RFL</b>	Restoring Family Links
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and gender based violence
<b>SRSP</b>	Shock-responsive social protection

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## FOREWORD

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) stands as the largest humanitarian organisation in Myanmar, having a nationwide network of trained volunteers across in 330 township branches. MRCS plays an auxiliary role to the government in providing humanitarian services with strong legal status.

The MRCS Law was upgraded in 2015, and its Rules were approved in November 2019. In line with the MRCS Law and Rules, MRCS has improved its structure at all levels. With its new governing board which was formed at the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in November 2019, MRCS is gearing up the existing achievements.



MRCS is guided in its humanitarian operations by the Seven Fundamental Principles, its five-year Strategic Plan, and IFRC Strategy. This Strategic Plan (2021-2025) was developed on the basis of the mid-term review of Strategy 2016-2020 and aligned with the IFRC Strategy 2030 and the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan.

Over the forthcoming five years, we will focus on certain areas of humanitarian challenges, such as the climate and environment crises, evolving crises and disasters, health and well-being, migration and displacement, as well as Values, Power and Inclusion. In addition, we are going to promote Red Cross principles and will engage in humanitarian education at all levels.

In addition, we must continue building a stronger MRCS by capacitating our human resources such as volunteers, youth and staff, and by advancing resource mobilisation and information management. To expand our services, we look forward to stronger partnership with the Government, Movement and non-Movement partners, as well as partners of the private sector. To operationalise our Strategy for the next five years, we will do strong networking with our branches and mobilise them to achieve the goals of our Strategy 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' and 'J' shape.

**Dr Maung Maung Myint**  
President  
Myanmar Red Cross Society





# INTRODUCTION

Strategy 2025 sets out the Myanmar Red Cross Society's (MRCS) ambition for the coming five years and outlines how we aim to achieve our vision of being a well-functioning National Society with the capacity to provide humanitarian services to the most vulnerable people in Myanmar and beyond.

Since 1959 the MRCS has been providing humanitarian services to the people of Myanmar. We are an auxiliary to public authorities and are guided in our humanitarian operations by the Seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement. With a nationwide network of over 44,000 trained volunteers organised in 330 township branches, we are widely recognised as the largest humanitarian organisation in Myanmar with the greatest access and reach to communities.

The main focus of our work is oriented to providing services in disaster management and risk reduction, health and care, mental health and psychosocial support, water and sanitation, restoring family links, and first aid and safety services. In providing these humanitarian services, we work alongside various partners within the RCRC Movement, Government of Myanmar, United Nations, international and community based organisations, and the private sector.

Our strategic goals contribute to national goals as outlined in the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, the Myanmar National Framework for Community Disaster Resilience, and the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction; as well as major global humanitarian and development frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Our goals also support Movement commitment to the Global Compact for Migration and Refugees, the Grand Bargain, the International Health Regulations and the Paris Agreement for Climate Change; as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coalition for Resilience that aims to build more resilient communities across ASEAN countries and reach 100 million people by 2025.

## OUR VISION

**To be a well-functioning National Society with the capacity of providing humanitarian services to the most vulnerable people in Myanmar and beyond.**

## OUR MISSION

**To develop safe and resilient communities through integrated community based initiatives, by promoting humanitarian values via our network; and playing an auxiliary role to the State in the humanitarian field through a strong legal base.**

### GOAL 1

Build healthier and safer communities, reduce their vulnerabilities and strengthen their resilience.

### GOAL 2

Promote understanding and respect for the Red Cross Principles, Humanitarian Values, and International Humanitarian Law as a means to promoting social cohesion and non-violence.

### GOAL 3

Strengthen understanding of the MRCS' auxiliary role among the humanitarian sector by developing a strong, well-functioning and resourceful National Society.





## HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN MYANMAR

Humanitarian needs in Myanmar are driven by multiple factors including vulnerability to natural hazards, armed conflict, and inter-communal violence. The situation is aggravated by chronic poverty, protracted displacement, food insecurity, limited social support networks, and underlying inequalities including statelessness, segregation, discrimination, and gender disparities that exacerbate the needs, vulnerabilities and marginalisation of people in many parts of the country. The poorest and most vulnerable people and those on the margins of society are suffering the greatest consequences.

### Climate and environmental crises

Myanmar is highly vulnerable to climate change and suffers frequent natural disasters. Every year, people across the country, mostly the poor and most vulnerable, suffer from disasters that are triggered by natural hazards such as floods, tropical cyclones, droughts, landslides and earthquakes. With global warming and climate change, extreme weather events are more frequent and we have to increasingly prepare for such occurrences.

Climate change will further increase the disaster risk in Myanmar. The most recent climate change projections confirm trends related to increasing and changing temperature and precipitation, and related events such as heat waves, droughts and floods; more intense tropical cyclones; sea level rise; salinity intrusion; and a further shrinking monsoon season. Millions of people are exposed to severe climatic events, and will be adversely affected by climate change - potentially leading to loss of lives, assets and economic capacities, resulting from both rapid and slow-onset disasters, and the effects of changes on agriculture, water availability, natural resources and land.



## Evolving crises and disasters

Myanmar's economy has grown rapidly in recent years and this has improved living standards and helped to lift seven million people out of poverty in a decade. Yet, inequality has been rising over the same period, along with steady urbanisation. Other inequalities persist, with rural areas, conflict-affected states and ethnic and religious minorities lagging in most dimensions of welfare - from stunting to educational attainment, and access to electricity, basic sanitation and safe drinking water.

Marginalised groups may have limited access to finances, which restricts their ability to invest in resilient assets and be better prepared to recover from disaster-related shocks. Women are less likely to own land, which makes them more dependent on others' land and vulnerable to post-disaster layoffs.

While many disasters in Myanmar are triggered by natural hazards, their devastating effects are largely due to inappropriate development practices, which in turn increases exposure of people's livelihoods and assets to these hazard events as well as existing physical and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Rural farmers engaged in subsistence farming often lack tools and technologies for increased productivity as well as farm skills; urban poor or migrants often settle in underserved communities which are hazard prone due to lack of affordable housing.

The COVID-19 crisis is revealing new and compounding pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities that have to be more effectively addressed by the government, such as those based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, citizenship status, conflict and climatic risk exposure, displacement and migration, and on other personal situations that can complicate access to welfare and generate discrimination in society.

These vulnerabilities often intersect at the individual and community levels. Other areas of concern include: increased delivery challenges in health and education systems; falling levels of trade and tourism rendering thousands of people jobless, especially women, youth and informal workers; volatile financial situations that put the country's macroeconomic stability under stress; and increased insecurity and political tensions as the pandemic creates opportunities for conflict to escalate in certain parts of the country, while its socio-economic impact may exacerbate and create social grievances.







## Our response to disasters and emergencies

The MRCS is uniquely placed to address the consequences of climate and environmental crisis and other disasters as we are present in communities before, during and after emergencies, accustomed to identifying local solutions to local needs, and supporting community mobilisation through our branches and volunteer networks. As auxiliary to the public authorities, we are also uniquely positioned to support our government counterparts in taking necessary action.

In our response to climate and environmental crises, we will continue to be guided by our Resilience Framework 2019-2030, in which we aim to support communities to anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of adversity, without compromising their long-term prospects. In future, our focus will shift from one of mostly service delivery (relief provision or community-based projects) to one in which MRCS branches emerge as facilitators - accompanying, connecting and enabling communities to strengthen their efforts to become more resilient.

We will work with communities to reduce vulnerability and exposure to the impacts of climate change in both rural and urban settings by scaling up our climate-smart disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities. Specifically, we will support the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR 2030) initiative that aims to accelerate resilience building at the local level and bringing cities on to the resilience pathway towards achieving the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the SDGs by 2030. We will contribute to the MCR 2030 strategic objectives through supporting city plans for risk reduction and resilience, and implementing resilience actions and reducing risks.

Our aim is for communities to be better prepared to manage forecasted weather events and new climate extremes, including being able to access resources ahead of their impact by scaling-up community awareness on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and environmental issues using online activities and social media platforms to enhance understanding of present and future risks. To reduce loss and damage from climate-induced hazards we aim to progressively shift





to using Forecast-based Action (FbA), Forecast-based Financing (FbF), Early Warning and Early Action (EWEA), Emergency Management Funds (EMF), and Shock Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) initiatives. All of this will require learning from partners already engaged in these initiatives and committed investment in developing staff capacity.

Our approach will be to ensure that target communities have the capacity to assess risks and respond to those risks in coordination with other local actors. We will ensure affected communities receive shelter and livelihood support, and that crisis-affected communities have restored family connections and a strengthened socio-economic status following crises.

We will work with communities to strengthen their resilience by helping them adopt climate-smart practices that combine traditional and scientific knowledge and technologies, such as reforestation activities that address climate risks in communities. We will continue to prioritise and invest in addressing the impacts of climate change on women, girls, older people, people with disabilities, and marginalised and vulnerable groups.

To ensure MRCS is well prepared at all levels for effective response, we will build our staff and volunteer capacity in appropriate techniques related to disaster response and recovery, and ensuring community participation in all of these areas. We will continue with our effective Restoring of Family Links (RFL) services and begin establishing safe referral systems where they are needed. We will continue to scale-up our first aid and safety/ambulance services to ensure a rapid response to disasters and other daily emergencies, including the increasing number of road traffic accidents afflicting our country. As with all our emergency preparedness response, relief and recovery efforts, these will be supported by an effective logistics and supply chain capacity.

#### **Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Improved community resilience to the effects of climate change and other disaster related risks.
- ✓ Enhanced MRCS emergency response support to disaster affected communities.



## Health and well-being

The health status of the Myanmar population is poor and does not compare favourably with other countries in the region. Life expectancy at birth is 66.9 years. The maternal mortality ratio is among the highest in ASEAN countries at 250 deaths per 100,000 live births. The infant mortality rate is 38.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. Malnutrition is highly prevalent, with some 29 per cent of children under the age of five stunted.

Both HIV prevalence and tuberculosis incidence are second highest among ASEAN countries. The burden of disease associated with non-communicable diseases is increasing at alarming rates and is estimated to already account for more than 68 per cent of all deaths. Diabetes and hypertension are particularly prevalent and have so far been largely neglected - hidden behind the national averages are wide geographic, ethnic and socio-economic disparities. Effective mental health and psychosocial support services are scarce, especially in rural areas, and are increasingly under pressure as a result of COVID-19.

There are wide discrepancies in health services between rural and urban populations and between central and peripheral states. The country requires massive investment in water, sanitation and hygiene facilities if it is to meet SDG targets. Insufficient sanitation is hampering the country's effort to reduce child and maternal mortality and illnesses such as diarrhoea. Limited knowledge and practice of hygiene behaviour hampers communities' efforts to protect themselves against disease. Although rural areas lag in water and sanitation, urban areas are also struggling to meet need as more people migrate to cities.

Only 23 per cent of nationwide schools meet the national standard of 1 toilet for every 25 students; and more than 50 per cent of health facilities are believed to have severe gaps in water, sanitation and hygiene services, which often means that many women choose to deliver their babies at home for fear of infection. The overall weak capacity of the health system to respond to epidemics and pandemics - as highlighted during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic - means the country is unequipped to face large outbreaks, and the levels of vulnerability to epidemics and pandemics are significant for potentially millions of people.

## Our response to health and well-being concerns

As auxiliary to government in public health in emergencies with a presence throughout the country and privileged access to conflict affected areas, the MRCS is well placed to support vulnerable populations to access their healthcare, water and sanitation needs. Over the next five years, our focus will be on making sure that all our target communities have safer and more equitable access to primary and secondary healthcare, and water and sanitation facilities. This will be achieved through a combination of direct service provision and empowering communities to address their own health needs, problems and risks; as well as by supporting the Government's commitment to achieving Universal Health Coverage.

We will support communities to access the local resources available to them, including accessing safe and affordable drinking water and improving their sanitation and hygiene. This will require training staff, volunteers and respective Township Health Departments to impart knowledge and skills to communities in the areas of prevention, promotion and rehabilitation; and to ensure that all our volunteers and staff are trained in first aid and safety services so they can respond to road traffic accidents and other injuries, sudden illness, and provide psychosocial support when it is needed.

We will work with authorities to improve local health security and strengthen local capacity for rapid detection of public health risks, and support epidemic and pandemic preparedness efforts. We will



work in schools and with youth groups on health promotion awareness (focusing on behaviour change with school children), expand first aid training within schools, and revitalise school and youth committees. We will expand our integrated community-based health, care and first aid as well as water, sanitation and hygiene programmes in order to meet the unmet needs of vulnerable or marginalised groups.

We will systematically integrate the health-related consequences of climate change across all our programmes and projects, which will require scaling up our health and hygiene promotion, and community preparedness interventions for climate-related diseases. We aim to reduce the health risks of the community, particularly areas related to communicable and non-communicable disease, mental health and psychosocial well-being, and reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health through a community based approach, and by leveraging social media and other means of information technology to communicate good health practices.

Our staff and volunteers will receive increased psychosocial support training and pandemic preparedness training, which will be supported by the pre-positioning of personal protective equipment. We will contribute to ensuring the country has a safe blood service by supporting staff, volunteers and youth (especially in universities) to provide voluntary non-remunerated blood donations to meet the blood requirements of the country. Our ambulance service will be strengthened to meet increasing demand.

#### **Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Improved health and well-being among target communities.
- ✓ Increased National Society capacity to support communities during public health emergencies.



## Migration and displacement

Migration and displacement are amongst the most important contemporary issues for Myanmar, with the levels of both internal and international migration and displacement expected to increase across all states and regions in the next five years. Migration impacts almost everyone in Myanmar, with up to one in four people migrating somewhere during their lives. Migrants play an important role in contributing to social, economic and cultural life in the countries and communities they go to, as well as supporting their communities back home.

However, vulnerabilities may be created when migration is unplanned, forced, unregulated or does not go to plan. Climate change and slow-onset disasters contribute to reducing rural livelihood opportunities acting as drivers for migration as affected populations search for secure livelihoods. The impact of protracted displacement is compounded by movement restrictions that continue to limit access to livelihoods and essential services such as education and healthcare, deepening vulnerability and dependence on humanitarian aid. High levels of population displacement increase risks of serious protection violations, including conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking in persons.

The humanitarian situation in Rakhine State has deteriorated significantly since 2017, and there are now some 860,000 displaced people living in settlements in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. This is fundamentally a protection – and now a protracted – crisis in which the vulnerabilities of the displaced population are bound up in experiences of violence and insecurity. The intensification of the armed conflict in Rakhine continues to have serious humanitarian consequences for the civilian population and many people continue to require significant humanitarian assistance for basic survival and subsistence; and face ongoing instability, health issues, poverty, and natural and climatic hazards, which demand a prolonged humanitarian response. Travel restrictions continue to have a serious impact on the ability of humanitarian organisations to assess needs, engage with affected people, provide assistance in a timely and efficient manner.

## Our response to migration and displacement

Addressing issues related to migration and displacement is of critical importance to the MRCS and we have been supporting communities affected by migration and displacement for many years. We understand that working with migrants, displaced people and the affected communities is complex and sensitive.

We also appreciate that it reaches to the heart of our mandate to address the humanitarian needs of all vulnerable people irrespective of their legal status. We have taken the important decision to strengthen our capacity to better respond to the humanitarian needs related to migration and displacement as a commitment to being a principled humanitarian actor. This is outlined in a 10-point Action Plan on Migration and Displacement, which signals our commitment to increase attention, and enhance understanding of risks, vulnerabilities and responses to the needs of those affected by migration and displacement by 2021 in alignment with the IFRC Global Strategy on Migration.

Important to us will be increasing awareness and capacity within the National Society on migration issues and extending our approach of 'do no harm'. We will provide opportunities for safe referrals and develop specialised programmes for responding to migrant and displacement issues within our

MRCS mandate. We will continue to raise awareness and respond to human trafficking, and provide target displaced communities with the livelihood, water and sanitation, and disaster risk reduction support that they need.

**Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Increased MRCS capacity to support migration and displacement issues.
- ✓ Continued humanitarian support to target migratory and displaced affected communities.
- ✓ Clear strategy, policy and guidelines that outline our support for migratory and displaced affected communities in accordance with the MRCS mandate.

**Values, power and inclusion**

We cannot remain true to our Red Cross principles unless we are able to reach all vulnerable people effectively and in a non-discriminatory and equitable manner. To ensure that all of our work and actions promote gender equality and respect for diversity - and are undertaken in a non-discriminatory way towards people of all ages and backgrounds - protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) will be incorporated as a cross cutting aspect throughout all our work.

In support of this aim, we will ensure that all MRCS staff and volunteers receive relevant training in order to mainstream PGI throughout the National Society. This includes providing training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Safe Guarding, our Code of Conduct, and anti-





harassment guidelines. We will also ensure that safe reporting mechanisms are established and put in place, so staff, volunteers and community members can alert us to PGI issues that demand our attention.

A key area of focus in creating safe and resilient communities, requires integrating PGI in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. We will work together with relevant partners at the regional, national (State and Township) and community levels to mitigate the risk and respond to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) and trafficking, afford social protection to affected men and women, and to address the needs of persons with disabilities and persons on the move.

We will ensure that violence prevention, PGI and a culture of non-violence are promoted in all our community based programmes, and strengthen the community engagement and accountability capacity of staff and volunteers to maximise the impact of programmes and operations in both normal times and during emergencies. We will participate in relevant working groups and cluster meetings for violence prevention, and ensure information is shared with target communities on referral support and awareness raising processes. We will participate in local SGBV networks and establish 'Mothers' Clubs' so women have an opportunity to actively participate in forums orientated to ensuring their empowerment.

We will work towards ensuring that disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals are better represented at all levels of our National Society, and are meaningfully able to participate in the work we do. We will communicate our Red Cross Values to government authorities and aim for a formal coordination arrangement with the Ministry of Education to establish Red Cross clubs in all schools throughout Myanmar as a means of promoting the Fundamental Principles, Red Cross Values, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and child protection laws.

Through the use of technology as well as through our Red Cross youth and volunteer networks, we aim to communicate better with disadvantaged and marginalised groups, for example, by providing key documentation that is accessible in different ethnic languages as well as in different forms, such as sign language for the hard-of-hearing. We will continue to support people to access our Hpa-An Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre (jointly run with the International Committee of the Red Cross) that has been providing orthopaedic appliances to people with disabilities since 2003.

We aim to expand our volunteer and membership bases, so that more diverse groups can be involved in our work, thus enabling them to better serve the communities that they represent. This will involve helping communities and volunteers to better understand our auxiliary role to government and how our MRCS 2015 Law distinguishes us from other humanitarian organisations working in Myanmar. Within the National Society, our aim is to aim for increased diversity of staff and volunteers across the country (more women and youth), as well as an increased number of women in National Society decision-making roles and in our Member Committees.

#### **Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Increased application of values, power and inclusion approaches at community level.
- ✓ Increased representation and participation of women and youth at all levels of the National Society, including increased number of women in decision-making roles.
- ✓ Increased representation and participation of diverse groups within the National Society, particularly among the volunteer network.

## Dissemination of Red Cross principles, Humanitarian Values and our auxiliary status

Following our MRCS Law 2015 and MRCS Rules 2019, we need to disseminate our status, mandate and work more clearly to our stakeholders, so they have a clearer understanding of our role as auxiliary to government along with the support services that we provide to vulnerable communities and the people of Myanmar. Our messaging will be guided by the seven Fundamental Principles, with MRCS volunteers being strong advocates of the Red Cross in their respective areas.

Our aim is to generate a stronger image of the Red Cross in general, and communicate more effectively what makes MRCS unique in Myanmar when undertaking humanitarian work. This will involve increasing the number of public awareness sessions about the National Society, including on our law, rules, policies and strategies.

We increasingly recognise that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is crucial to providing high quality and efficient humanitarian services and enabling well-informed decisions to be made (based on accurate and timely information) at both headquarters and branches. Using ICT, we aim to reach affected communities with well targeted humanitarian information in a timely way. This will require building our capacity in ICT at all levels of the National Society, and using communication campaigns to mobilise public and government support and resources for humanitarian operations and programmes, as well as to facilitate effective partnerships for responding to the needs of vulnerable communities.

### Our signs of success:

- ✓ Improved and increased MRCS humanitarian access.
- ✓ Increased awareness of MRCS's work among stakeholders accompanied by an increased understanding and acceptance of our Red Cross values and auxiliary status.
- ✓ Increased application of Red Cross principles, humanitarian values and IHL by volunteers and staff leading to communities being better informed on relevant humanitarian issues.





## MAINSTREAMING THEMES

### Community engagement and accountability

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) is an approach to Red Cross programming and operations that we increasingly use in our work - it puts communities at the centre of what we do by integrating communication and participation. CEA is concerned with providing timely, relevant and actionable life-saving and life-enhancing information to communities; and about using the most appropriate communication approaches to listen to communities' needs, feedback and complaints, ensuring they can actively participate and guide our actions. We will ensure that all our staff and volunteers receiving appropriate CEA training and development, and that Red Cross volunteers and youth are actively involved in the decision making and implementation of community-based activities. In working towards effective CEA, we will ensure that a community engagement component is included in all our programmes, and that communities are involved at all stages of the programme cycle so that services and programmes are adapted based on feedback. This will require strengthening the community engagement capacity of our staff and volunteers in order to maximise the impact of programmes and operations.

#### Our signs of success:

- ✓ Communities better informed with life-saving and life-enhancing information.
- ✓ Integrated Community Assessment for Building Resilience (ICABR) approach used in all community based programmes, and CEA minimum standards and guidelines actively practiced in all programmes and operations.





### Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Having an effective planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (PMER) system is essential to help identify trends, strengths and areas for improvement in our work at national, region, state and township levels. While solid efforts have been made in recent years to improve our PMER, there is still work to do, especially at branch level. Our aim in the coming years will be to strengthen all aspects of PMER work and CEA to increase accountability, including further development of systems and structures so overall MRCS capacity is strengthened. This will require investing in staff and volunteer training and development, and establishing an independent PMER department that has responsibility for this function.

#### Our signs of success:

- ✓ A more efficient and effective MRCS through strengthened PMER capacity at all levels.
- ✓ Improved information sharing across the National Society and with partners; and increased use of information management and availability of disaggregated data across programmes and operations.



# A STRONGER NATIONAL SOCIETY

## Branch development and decentralisation

Both branch development and decentralisation are priorities for the MRCS. Branch development is the work needed to achieve and maintain MRCS branches that consistently deliver, through volunteers and staff, relevant countrywide services to vulnerable people sustained for as long as needed – as well as contributing to the strength of the National Society and the RCRC Movement as a whole. It is therefore, the work done to increase one or more of the relevance, quality, reach and sustainability of our services, and we see this as a means of ensuring greater localisation and being more accountable to our communities and stakeholders.

Decentralisation is primarily concerned with shifting planning and decision making responsibility and authority from our national headquarters to our branches. Here, we will work on creating a clear branch development strategy that considers how decentralisation can be best secured. In the initial two years of the strategic plan, we will define our ambitions and develop approaches and targets for our decentralisation aims. During this period, we will continue to actively engage in branch development work, and through this develop a better understanding of what decentralisation means for MRCS and how it can be enabled given the challenges faced, and the need to account for differing branch capacities and contexts.

### Our signs of success:

- ✓ Stronger MRCS branches enabled through the development of a Branch Development strategy and model underpinned by a 'minimum package' implemented at all levels.
- ✓ Decentralisation strategy terms of reference and plan of action developed and implemented.

## Volunteer and youth management and capacity building

Our Red Cross volunteers are the backbone of the National Society and are at the heart of our effective humanitarian assistance for vulnerable people. Volunteers are our strength. They are what defines us and what makes us a unique humanitarian force in both Myanmar and the world beyond. One of our future focuses will be to better support our volunteers by giving them the tools and resources they need to meet the high demands and expectations we place on them, and this requires putting in place clear structures to manage volunteers according to our volunteering policy and laws of the country.

With the changing context globally and locally, we acknowledge the changing patterns of volunteering and will work towards reviewing our volunteering system in order to have a systematic and realistic volunteering development programme in place, coupled with a continuous capacity building approach aimed at building a strong volunteer base and ensuring that more youth are brought into our RCRC network.

We will leverage social media to increase volunteer and youth numbers as well as volunteer/youth diversity, allowing for distinctions between brigade volunteers and community volunteers. This will require us to update our volunteer management guideline and establish ways to mobilise more youth in urban settings. We will also need to focus on effective volunteer recruitment and retention, and provide them with both recognition and other incentives (for example personal insurance) to ensure they remain with the National Society.



We will continue building our online/remote capacity to attract and engage volunteers and youth, and to develop their capacity in key areas such as first aid and disaster management. Volunteers are also central to our Branch Development and decentralisation plans, and it is important that we develop clear strategies that ensure they are involved in branch level resource mobilisation and decision making processes if branches are to be sustainable.

#### **Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Vulnerable communities better supported through increased diversity of volunteers and youth nationally who are connected and engaged in MRCS activities.
- ✓ Communities better supported through improved MRCS volunteer and youth management system and increased numbers of volunteers and youth adept in social media and technology use.

### **Resource mobilisation and human resource management**

Effective resource mobilisation is a critical concern for MRCS in the years ahead. While we are delivering relevant services to the most vulnerable, there is a continuing concern for the National Society's sustainability, both in financial and human resource terms - at all levels. To manage this challenge, our aim must be to diversify and expand our income streams.

Building on the resource mobilisation work that has been ongoing since August 2019, including the development of the Resource Mobilisation Policy, we will actively develop strategies and plans of action that explore and utilise MRCS's existing capacities such as commercial first aid activities, private sector engagement and opportunities for leveraging our expertise in disaster risk reduction and health as means for increasing resource mobilisation. Over the next five years we will leverage the support of our partners to focus on resource mobilisation, and move toward a model of proactive resource mobilisation that focuses on organisational sustainability and flexibility.



In doing so, we will continue developing strategies for working with partners (commercial, private and non-profit) and provide clear support and defined roles and responsibilities to branches so they can increase their own resource mobilisation capacities and opportunities. We will also collaborate with the communications team to implement a communications strategy that promotes the vital importance of the MRCS mission throughout the country. We will capitalise on the willingness of people to donate, help and volunteer in order to sustain quality programming and operations, and to develop reliable control mechanisms and robust financial management approaches.

In a competitive employment environment, where MRCS has experienced fast turn-over of trained staff, we must work towards developing a human resource management system that aims to retain a highly qualified core structure and manages human resources according to established standards and policies. We will prioritise staff well-being, safety and security at all levels of the National Society, and ensure everyone has job satisfaction, the opportunity to acquire the professional skills needed to do their work, and a safe working environment. Staff development and regular remuneration reviews will be part of the human resource management system.

#### **Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Increased and sustainable MRCS funding and an increased number of non-Movement partners enabled by a resource mobilisation plan that outlines a clear understanding of resource mobilisation roles and responsibilities between headquarters and branches.
- ✓ A more sustainable National Society human resource base enabled by improved staff and volunteer satisfaction and well-being, supported by appropriate human resource policies and guidelines.

## **Partnership frameworks**

We recognise that in order to achieve our goals and be effective in our work we need to continue developing partnerships with the Movement (both bilaterally and multilaterally) as well as with external partners to respond to humanitarian needs, especially at times when surge is not possible. Our intention through our partnership frameworks is to facilitate a more coordinated implementation of supported activities within the National Society according to MRCS strategy. We will do this through regular bi-annual Movement partner meetings, as well as regular partnership review talks that aim to better structure and coordinate Red Cross humanitarian services in accordance with agreed partnership frameworks, that also include other international humanitarian organisations, and where relevant, government and private sector partners.

#### **Our signs of success:**

- ✓ Stronger and more effective partnerships based on clearer partnership agreements that are supported by an appropriate MRCS partnership framework that involves regular Movement coordination meetings, partnership meetings, and partnership review talks conducted every two years.
- ✓ More diverse MRCS partnerships enabled by expanding the partnership framework to non-Movement partners.

# OUR GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1

**Build healthier and safer communities, reduce their vulnerabilities, and strengthen their resilience.**

**Strategic objective 1.1** To enhance support for affected communities as a means of helping mitigate the impacts of climate change, health emergencies, disasters, conflicts, and situations of violence.

**Strategic objective 1.2** To strengthen the resilience of communities and fulfil their needs related to health, first aid, water, sanitation and hygiene, psychosocial support, disaster risk reduction, climate change, shelter, and livelihoods.

**Strategic objective 1.3** To ensure MRCS has well-preparedness capacity at all levels for effective response.

## GOAL 2

**Promote understanding and respect for the Red Cross Principles, Humanitarian Values, and International Humanitarian Law as a means to promoting social cohesion and non-violence.**

**Strategic objective 2.1** To promote understanding and respect for the Red Cross Fundamental Principles, Humanitarian Values, humanitarian diplomacy and IHL at all levels.

**Strategic objective 2.2** To strengthen National Society information technology and information management capacity **at all levels** to ensure effective communication of information and reporting in normal times and during emergencies.

**Strategic objective 2.3** To mainstream gender and diversity, violence prevention, psychosocial support, social inclusion, and community engagement and accountability as cross cutting issues into all humanitarian activities.

## GOAL 3

**Strengthen understanding of the MRCS' auxiliary role among the humanitarian sector by developing a strong, well-functioning and resourceful National Society.**

**Strategic objective 3.1** To continue developing and strengthening the National Society and its auxiliary status at all levels according to the MRCS existing Law.

**Strategic objective 3.2** To improve the capacity and systems at state, region, Nay Pyi Taw, council, districts, branches and sub-branch levels to better respond to humanitarian needs and more effectively deliver MRCS core services.

**Strategic objective 3.3** To empower and mobilise Red Cross youth to take a lead and active role in the promotion of humanitarian activities.

**Strategic objective 3.4** To scale-up resource mobilisation capacity at all levels as a means of becoming an independent, self-sufficient and financially sustainable National Society.

**Strategic objective 3.5** To support **MRCS capacity in organizational management at all levels** to ensure improved transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of services.

**Strategic objective 3.6** To expand national and international cooperation, coordination and partnership mechanisms through the existing partnership framework.



# MRCS STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 - 2025:

## DEVELOPMENT STEPS AND PROCESS

### PHASE I

#### Review of MRCS Strategic Plan 2016-2020

- Needs Analysis
- Stakeholders Assessment (Key Informants Interviews – MRCS HQ, S/R/Tsp., ICRC, IFRC, PNSs, UN Agencies, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Social Welfare and Resettlement, Community-based Organisations)

### PHASE II

#### Strategic planning workshops

- Two workshops for 17 states/ regions on August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Virtual National Strategic Planning Workshop (on September 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020) with MRCS HQ., ICRC, IFRC, PNSs, UN Agencies, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Social Welfare and Resettlement, Community based Organisations

### PHASE III

#### Consultation and approval process

- Initial draft presented to leadership, IFRC, ICRC, PNSs
- Present the draft MRCS Strategic Plan (2021-2025) for adoption at 83<sup>rd</sup> MRCS Central Council Meeting.
- Launching MRCS Strategic Plan (2021-2025)

### PLANNING DURING A PANDEMIC

Impressions from the National Strategic Plan Workshop with mixed physical and virtual attendance.





