

Everywhere
for everyone.



School drill as part of MRCS urban risk resilience program in Hinthada. Photo: MRCS

Climate smart and inclusive urban programs

Myanmar Red Cross Society supporting *Making Cities Resilient by 2030*

Overview

Since 2016, Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) has been addressing the impact of climate change on urban areas in Myanmar through its multi-year urban resilience programs. As of August 2020, MRCS has directly reached over 102,000 urban population in five regions and states which include Ayeyarwady and Yangon regions, Mon and Shan States, and Union Territory of Nay Pyi Taw. The next step for MRCS will be piloting more activities that reach informal urban settlements and schools to introduce climate smart educational activities to children and adolescents. Through these urban disaster risk reduction model and climate-smart methodologies, MRCS is promoting the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's vision and ambition to mitigate the climate change, making cities resilient by 2030.

Urban Risk Resilience (URR) approach has been implemented by MRCS with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), funded by Finnish Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross and American Red Cross. The programs have been guided by the MRCS strategic framework 2016-2020, as well as the MRCS Disaster Management Policy, which were developed based on IFRC's Strategy 2020, IFRC Building urban resilience: A guide for Red Cross and Red Crescent engagement and contribution, IFRC Road to Resilience discussion paper, and in line with the Government of Myanmar's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2030. Through the urban risk resilience programs, MRCS and its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners reached total of 53,146 adults and 48,941 children in urban areas of Myanmar.

MRCS's urban programs focus on preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery aspects in urban context, including school safety in close coordination with school disaster management committees and community disaster management committees. As an auxiliary to the Government of Myanmar by the National Disaster Law (currently under revision between Department of Disaster Management and MRCS), MRCS continues to build on new and existing urban risk resilience programs, together with local authorities, community members and schools, involving students, parents, and teachers.

Our approach

To achieve sustainable program outcomes in urban areas, the collaboration with local authorities is essential. From the planning process of an urban program, MRCS closely works with Department of Disaster Management, Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, local township administration, township education office, as well as local fire brigade, police and ward committee of specific areas, and members of community to build cohesive and collaborative risk resilience programs. Specific community revolving funds and Emergency Management Fund (EMF) at the local level have been also created under the programs to support MRCS branches' collaboration with local authorities in preparing for and responding to disasters.

MRCS's branch development plan includes specific plan of action based on the branch capacity assessment and needs identified through climate smart program, ensuring the sustainability of the program results and continuous collaboration with local authorities and other partners. As the impact of climate change keeps changing over time and depending on places, it is important to work together with local authorities as well as various stakeholders who can bring new technical knowledge and skills to make our approach more resilient against these changes. To strengthen the preparedness and response systems in cities, MRCS also advocates for the change in policies and procedures by influencing the Regional Government Urban Development Plan in specific areas.

From 2020, MRCS's programs integrate more climate smart and inclusive actions and expand its interventions to additional number of informal settlements in urban areas. Through its newly established **Urban Disaster Resilience Model**, MRCS will address the lessons learned from earlier program approaches and roll out best practices identified. It will also expand its program areas to other regions and states not covered, including to Mandalay where MRCS will work together with IFRC to build urban resilience in the city, funded by the Finnish Red Cross. Recommendations from final evaluations of earlier programs include strengthening gender and inclusion aspects to reach more communities and schools, using child-friendly approach in schools and education centres, and providing more livelihoods opportunities to urban population.

Case Study: Strengthening gender and inclusion during urban risk resilience program



MRCS's Urban Risk Resilience program in Hinthada township, Ayeyarwady region, focused on changing attitudes, behaviors, and traditional gender-norms of local authorities to enable inclusive disaster management in communities.

MRCS prioritized gender and inclusion as a core part of selecting target communities. It included children, women, elderly people, youth, casual labourers, and people with disabilities during the program consultation process, as well as during the program implementation period. Child-friendly approach was integrated in MRCS's intervention in schools. In addition, women were put forward as decision makers within the Ward Disaster Management Committee.

The program also trained women as fire-fighters in communities and promoted their inclusion in community-based disaster management. These activities led to transformative changes in perception and attitude changes on women's role in communities and in society in general, as leaders and practitioners in disaster management, while further boosting the confidence of women in their roles in disaster management and in the decision making process of their own communities.

Snapshots: Our intervention

Goal: To build healthier and safer communities, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience through community-led climate smart actions to mitigate the climate change, making cities resilient by 2030.



Forecast-based action Monitoring hazards in collaboration with local authorities and leading early warning and actions



Epidemic prevention Preparing for and responding to COVID-19 & other diseases led by community-based volunteers



Migrants and informal settlements Assisting disaster-affected families, non-registered population & returning migrants



Caring for the environment Supporting communities through fostering sustainable approaches to the environment.

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS)

As the leading and principled humanitarian organization in Myanmar, MRCS is committed to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable people. In line with its auxiliary role to the Government in the humanitarian field through a strong legal base, MRCS continues to provide life-saving support everywhere for everyone, every day.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

As the largest humanitarian network in the world consisting of 192 National Societies worldwide, IFRC is providing vital technical, financial and logistical support to National Societies globally, while strengthening their participation in regional and global cooperation during natural disasters, health emergencies, and population movement among others.

Contact Information

Daw Moe Thida Win

Deputy Director
MRCS Disaster Risk Management Department
Email: moethidawin@redcross.org.mm

Anna Beloff

Disaster Risk Management delegate
IFRC Myanmar Country Office
Email: annamajja.beloff@ifrc.org

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality: It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality: In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence: The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service: It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity: There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.