

**MERCY RELIEF: ORGANISATION AND STRATEGY  
IN A SMALL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF CHARITY**

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*Mercy Relief, a small disaster relief and sustainable development organisation, was set up as a charity in 2003. Based in Singapore, it started with small humanitarian projects in the region. This changed when a tsunami swept across the Indian Ocean on Boxing Day 2004, affecting many parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia. Mercy Relief was quickly drawn into a larger ecosystem of disaster relief operations, and took on a pivotal role in Singapore's tsunami relief aid process in Sumatra. Other disaster relief projects followed soon after. It also initiated a number of small developmental projects in crisis-prone areas as a risk reduction strategy for managing possible future crisis events.*

*At the end of 2013, as the charity moved into its second decade of operations, the operating environment for groups involved in international humanitarian disaster relief was becoming more complex. Furthermore, having successfully completed its first decade, Singapore's only independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in humanitarian disaster relief, had to manage the organisational challenges that came with the next stage of its growth and development.*

*How should Mercy Relief address these issues and manage the limited resources it had to enhance the organisation's sustainability and operational effectiveness? What strategies should it adopt to secure the necessary funds, acquire other resources and bolster support from donors to contribute to the costs of operating an ongoing disaster relief organisation?*

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*Associate Professor Wee Beng Geok and Yang Lishan prepared this case. It is based on interviews and public sources. As the case is not intended to illustrate either effective or ineffective practices or policies, the information presented reflects the authors' interpretation of events and serves merely to provide opportunities for classroom discussions.*

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## OVERVIEW

Set up in 2003, Mercy Relief, a small Singapore-based disaster relief and sustainable development organisation, began its humanitarian mission by taking small steps to reach out to those in need in the region and beyond. Its early projects included raising funds for an earthquake in Iran in 2004, sending youth teams to Quezon and Medan on community building projects, and organising the donation of sacrificial meat to villagers affected by the flooding of Bahorok River in Sumatra which had destroyed their livestock.

This approach changed when a tsunami swept across the Indian Ocean on Boxing Day 2004, affecting many parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia. In Sumatra, Mercy Relief became part of a larger Singapore-based relief effort to help those who had lost their towns, villages, homes, livelihoods and loved ones in the disaster. With its local knowledge built through past projects, it took on a much needed liaison role between larger Singapore-based relief organisations and local leaders and officials in tsunami-stricken areas in Sumatra.

Other natural disasters followed soon after. With each new project, Mercy Relief's role in the situation varied, as it adapted to the needs of each crisis as well as to the requirements of partners and stakeholders. Taking a forward-looking perspective, the organisation also initiated small developmental projects in crisis-prone areas such as risk reduction strategies for managing possible crisis events.

As the charity moved into its second decade, the operating environment for groups involved in international disaster relief was becoming more complex and Mercy Relief had to plan for expected and emergent changes in social and economic profiles of communities at risk. Furthermore, having survived its formative first decade, Mercy Relief's leadership had to grapple with the organisational challenges of the next stage in the growth and development of Singapore's only independent

non-governmental humanitarian disaster relief organisation.

## EARLY BEGINNINGS: MERCY RELIEF AS PERDAUS' HUMANITARIAN PROJECT

Mercy Relief had its beginnings as a humanitarian project, set up in 2001 by Perdaus, a Singapore-based religious organisation.<sup>1</sup> Perdaus only had one staff overseeing the volunteer-driven humanitarian project, Muhammad Haniff Hassan. There were several active volunteers including Hassan Ahmad (who subsequently became the first Executive Director and then the Chief Executive of Mercy Relief until October 2013), Mr Sahari Ani (who later became the Director of International Programme) and Mr Jaffar Mydin (who later became the Director of Corporate Outreach and Support). In 2002, they were Mercy Relief volunteers deployed to Afghanistan under the banner of Singapore International Foundation's (SIF) Humanitarian Relief Programme (HRP).

Later that year, Perdaus partnered SIF and a religious organisation – the Singapore Soka Association (SSA), on a developmental project in Cambodia to refurbish an orphanage, conduct early childhood development and educational programmes, and mentor members of the Khmer Youth Association. More than 30 Singapore youths took part in this project.<sup>2</sup>

Two years later in 2003, keen to extend its reach beyond the Muslim community in Singapore, Perdaus' leadership, volunteers and other stakeholders reached a key decision - that Perdaus' humanitarian project should be spun off as an independent secular disaster relief organisation based in Singapore. As explained by then-President of Perdaus, Masagos Zulkifli bin Masagos Mohamad, the vision was for the humanitarian group to be not just community-centric, but to go "beyond Malays, beyond Muslims, beyond Singapore".

1 In 1964, PERDAUS was formally registered under the name 'Pelajar-Pelajar Agama Dewasa Singapura' (Association of Adults Religious Class Students of Singapore). The organisation was founded by students of well-known local Muslim religious scholars at that time. In 1993, PERDAUS embarked on a new phase by garnering the experience of the senior members and the professionalism of the young. Its aim was to ensure that PERDAUS grew into a Muslim organisation that remained progressive and relevant to the development of the society and nation, while remaining true to the tenets of Islam. Today, PERDAUS is a Muslim organisation dedicated to community development through human capital development programmes. PERDAUS' core programmes revolved around equipping the community with critical knowledge and skills that would shape the development of a virtuous and progressive society. Retrieved September 11, 2013, from <http://www.perdaus.org.sg>

2 Mercy Relief. Other Post-Acute Efforts (2003-2004). Retrieved September 11, 2013, from <http://www.mercyrelief.org/web/contents/Contents.aspx?ContId=193>

To realise this, a new non-profit organisation named Mercy Relief was set up as a secular disaster relief charity. Its mission was to render help to those affected by disasters in Southeast Asian region and beyond. Mercy Relief was officially launched in September 2003, in a ceremony officiated by then-Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and three months later in December 2003, the charity was officially conferred Institution of Public Character (IPC) status.<sup>3</sup>

## 2003 Projects

### Bahorok Floods: Establishing Local Networks

Mercy Relief's maiden relief mission as a secular organisation was in response to the Bahorok River flash floods in North Sumatra in November 2003. The flood had caused landslides that resulted in 245 deaths and 6,000 people displaced. Mercy Relief was one of the first overseas relief groups to come to the aid of flood victims. While there, it began reaching out to local community leaders and authorities, as it saw this as essential to facilitate its work. This ability to 'work the ground' and build networks in local communities enabled Mercy Relief to respond swiftly to the call for help when a massive tsunami swept through Indian Ocean coastlines on Boxing Day 2004.<sup>4</sup>

### Bam Earthquake: Working with Diverse Partners

After Bahorok, Mercy Relief followed with a relief mission to Bam, Iran, where an earthquake had struck on 26 December 2003, killing 28,000 and leaving thousands more homeless at the peak of its winter. After an international appeal was made by the Iranian authorities, Mercy Relief partnered a diverse group of religious organisations in Singapore to raise funds for relief aid for the earthquake victims.<sup>5</sup> It also partnered the Singapore Red Cross Society (SRCS) to send an assessment team to Bam to review needs

on the ground. Following the assessment, both organisations jointly facilitated the reconstruction of two orphanages and two relief warehouses in Bam and neighbouring Kerman.

## The 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami

On 26 December 2004, a massive tsunami devastated the coastlines of the Indian Ocean. Indonesia was the hardest hit country, followed by Sri Lanka, India and Thailand (see **Figure 1**). According to the US Geological Survey, a total of 227,898 people perished in this disaster, making it the worst tsunami in history in terms of lives lost. In Aceh, Indonesia, near the quake's epicentre, damage and losses were equivalent to the GDP of the entire province.<sup>6</sup> The Indonesian Minister of Health at that time estimated the death toll, in Indonesia alone, to stand at about 220,000.

In Aceh, communication links had been severed by the destruction. The Indonesian government activated the ad hoc National Disaster Management Board (BAKORNAS) on the afternoon of 26 December and the Indonesian Vice-President was sent to Aceh, where all district disaster management secretariats and most other government offices were severely affected. It was only on arrival in Aceh on 27 December that the Vice-President and his advisers fully understood the extent of damage. This led to the request for foreign assistance and the decision to allow international agencies access to Aceh. The Indonesia National Army (TNI) and BRIMOB (paramilitary police), who were present in large numbers due to the implementation of martial law since May 2003, coordinated most of the search and recovery work in Banda Aceh.<sup>7</sup>

The international response to the tsunami disaster was massive, with an unprecedented US\$13 billion raised or pledged by governments, businesses, and the general public; this amounted to over US\$7,000

3 In Singapore, only organisations which had been conferred the IPC status were authorised to issue tax deduction receipts for tax-deductible donations received (i.e. donors were given tax deduction for donations made to these organisations). Retrieved September 11, 2013, from Singapore Government Charity Portal website, <http://www.charities.gov.sg/charity/charity/viewIPCs.do>

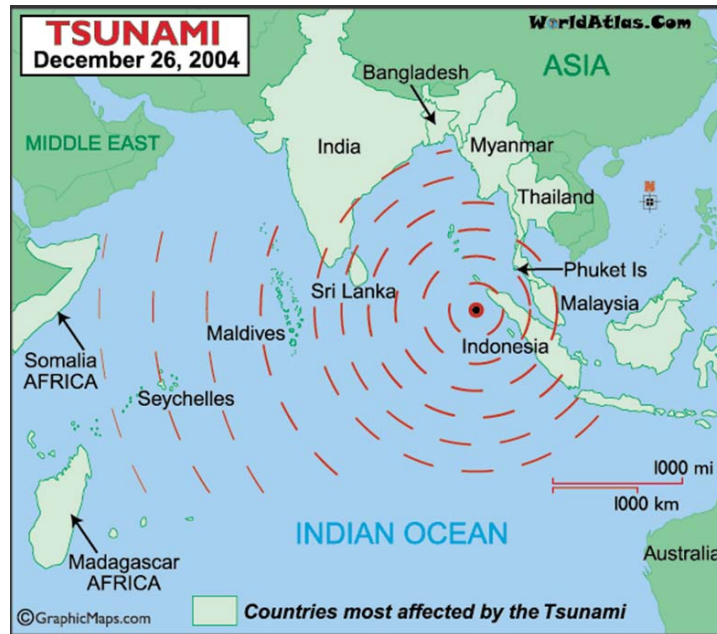
4 News@Mercy. (2003, December 31). Bahorok Floods, 2003, Indonesia. [Press Release].

5 Partnered organisations included Singapore Catholic Archdiocese, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), Singapore Soka Association (SSA), Young Sikh Association (YSAS), and the Iranian community in Singapore. News@Mercy. (2003, December 31). Bam Earthquake 2003 Iran. [Press Release].

6 Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC). (2006, July). Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report.

7 Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC). (2006, July) Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Martial law had been implemented in Aceh from May 2003 due to the separatist war waged by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). See Southeast Asia Press Alliance (2010, May 2) "Some good from the tsunami in Aceh", retrieved from <http://www.seapa.org/?p=3214>

Figure 1  
Countries Most affected by the 2004 Tsunami



Source: Graphic Maps, retrieved from <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/tsunami.gif>

per capita for tsunami victims. In the aftermath of the disaster, relief organisations small and large rushed to the scene. In Aceh alone, it was estimated that almost 400 organisations responded, along with military teams from 17 countries.<sup>8</sup>

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) organised an airlift of 400 tonnes of shelter and other emergency relief supplies for an initial 100,000 people in Aceh. A UN joint logistics centre was set up in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, and an emergency coordinator and fishery expert were sent in.

In Singapore, SRCS collected over S\$80 million in total for the worldwide tsunami effort, contributing over half of that amount to the relief and rebuilding effort in Indonesia. Barely a year old, Mercy Relief joined this massive worldwide disaster relief effort. It organised 17 medical relief missions over a period of four months to Aceh and Nias in Indonesia, and to Sri Lanka, assembling 120 volunteers and dispatching more than 900 tonnes of relief supplies worth more than S\$1 million to several disaster sites. The SRCS

disbursed a total of S\$2,884,807 to Mercy Relief, mainly for the latter's Indonesian tsunami relief efforts (see Table 1).<sup>9</sup>

### Tsunami Relief – Mercy Relief's Role

#### Emergency relief

Due to the tropical climate and high population density in the affected regions, epidemics were a particular concern for non-governmental organisations and government agencies involved in the relief effort. Besides medical aid, the provision of clean water and sanitation to contain the spread of diseases was an immediate and high priority among those involved in the relief effort.

Within days of the tsunami, Mercy Relief sent a preliminary team to Aceh, Indonesia, as well as to affected areas in Sri Lanka. The initial goal was to deliver aid – medical supplies, food and water, and to assess the needs of the communities affected by the tsunami. Having assessed the situation, Mercy Relief dispatched relief goods worth more than S\$530,000,

8 Oxfam. (2009). "In the wake of the tsunami: an evaluation of Oxfam International's response to the 2004 tsunami".

9 Singapore Red Cross Society (2010) List of Tsunami Approved Projects as at May 2010. Retrieved September 11, 2013, from <http://www.redcross.org.sg/articles/tsunami-2004/>

**Table 1 – List of Mercy Relief projects funded by the Singapore Red Cross Society**

Project / Purpose	Area	Amount (SGD)
Fishing Boats for Living: Building 10 modern fishing boats to enhance capability of fishermen to be able to operate for long-haul and reinstate their livelihoods. The funding will be towards 5 boats and the balance will be funded through corporate sector donations.	Indonesia	\$1,325,924
Project Play Pack: Distribution of 20,000 play packs to children in affected areas.	Multiple Countries	\$140,000
Construction of boys' Babussalam orphanage and school.	Meulaboh, Indonesia	\$765,500
Restoration of Muhammadiyah Orphanages to shelter 60-100 children.	Meulaboh, Indonesia	\$318,048
Establish Liaison Offices in Medan and Meulaboh to facilitate the reconstruction efforts of volunteer groups.	Meulaboh and Medan, Indonesia	\$335,335

Source: Singapore Red Cross Society. (2010). *List of Tsunami Approved Projects as at May 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.redcross.org.sg/articles/tsunami-2004/>

comprising water, food, medicines, surgical gloves and masks, blankets and body bags.<sup>10</sup>

Mercy Relief's familiarity on the ground in North Sumatra emerged as result of its work during the 2003 Bahorok Flood initiative. It learnt how to build effective relationships with local leaders and authorities in affected villages and towns; armed with this knowledge, it was able to facilitate access into tsunami-hit areas. Its key personnel also included those conversant in Bahasa Indonesia, the local language. Noting this, Minister for Defence of Singapore, Teo Chee Hean, asked Mercy Relief to take on a coordinator role, liaising with local stakeholders on behalf of the various Singapore organisations participating in the tsunami relief effort in Sumatra. Mercy Relief then opened liaison offices in Medan and Meulaboh to support other Singaporean Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) participating in the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work in Aceh by providing information, projects, logistics, and overall coordination.

Mercy Relief's second mission to Meulaboh, West Aceh, was its first overseas humanitarian aid collaboration with the Singapore Armed Forces and the Singapore Civil Defence Force. In this project, 14 Mercy Relief volunteers were involved in the delivery of 1,600 four-man tents worth S\$80,000. In

Meulaboh, Mercy Relief's volunteer medical team rendered services at the A&E department of the town's General Hospital, previously operated by SAF medics, freeing the latter to offer relief medical help elsewhere. With events unfolding rapidly at the disaster sites, Mercy Relief's staff and volunteers had to adapt quickly to new developments while keeping in mind the need to stay relevant and focused on addressing basic needs.

In the capital, Banda Aceh, as the scale of the disaster became apparent, Mercy Relief took over from the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) the supervision of a camp housing 3,500 internally displaced people (IDPs), setting up a medical team and treating 150 patients daily.

These experiences marked the beginning of Mercy Relief's collaborative efforts with several Singapore-based uniformed organisations in rendering humanitarian aid overseas. As a small group, it could leverage on the advantage of scale and resources of the larger organisations while it added value in terms of building relationships and networks with local communities and officials in affected towns and villages.

Mercy Relief's approach also supported the Tsunami Evaluations Coalition (TEC)'s recommendation that "all actors should strive to increase their disaster

10 News@Mercy. (2009). Indian Ocean Tsunami 5 years On – An Observation of Remembrance. [Press Release].

response capacities and to improve the linkages and coherence between themselves and other actors in the international disaster response system, including those from the affected countries themselves."<sup>11</sup>

## MOBILISATION OF VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS

While working close to the ground on the disaster sites, Mercy Relief discovered villages that had been cut off from aid supplies. Realising this, the charity started a project canvassing Singapore-based corporations for sponsorship of logistics support as well as donations of food supplies which it then distributed to people in tsunami-hit villages and towns.

The Charity mobilised 1,200 volunteers in a Singapore-wide street collection to raise funds for subsequent relief missions and rehabilitation projects in Sumatra. As many Singapore residents donated clothing, blankets and food items, it secured two empty school buildings to use as collection centres for goods collected. At the height of the tsunami response, the two collection centres became second homes to thousands of volunteers gathered there to sort and pack donated items into boxes bound for distribution to those in the affected regions.

The collection centres processed more than 1,500 tonnes of relief supplies worth around S\$4 million. Due to cultural sensitivities, a level of care was needed in sorting the items and many man-hours were spent in this activity.

From this experience, the Charity realised that a more viable alternative would be to procure relief items from the affected region where possible. Besides reducing labour required for sorting, as well as creating savings in transportation and other logistic costs, this approach contributed much needed income to regions where the economy had been hard hit by the disaster.

Mercy Relief also decided to convert some of the donated goods to cash. Of the 700 tonnes of bottled drinking water received at the collection centres, about half were distributed to the affected areas. The remainder was liquidated, and the proceeds were

used to purchase 10 units of water filter systems which could produce 100,000 litres of clean water each day. The water filter systems not only fulfilled the original intention of the donors, i.e. to provide safe drinking water to the victims, but ensured a more sustainable source of clean and safe water for the beneficiaries as they rebuilt their lives.

## Post-Disaster Development Projects

The scale of the destruction caused by the tsunami had a severe impact on the communities' infrastructure, as more than 250 coastal communities in Aceh were completely destroyed, with entire neighbourhoods and fishing villages swept out to sea. Reviewing the situation, Mercy Relief decided to go beyond disaster relief, and launched a series of post-disaster development projects. These included:

Project Playpack: This project was targeted at children in disaster-affected areas to help restore normalcy to their lives. 10,000 'Play Packs', each comprising a reusable backpack containing school essentials such as stationery and art materials, as well as toys and games, were sent to children in tsunami-affected areas in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Re-building schools: With funds from Singapore-based organisations such as the Lien Foundation and the Singapore Red Cross Tsunami Relief Fund Committee, as well as commercial organisations such as Commerzbank AG, Mercy Relief embarked on a project to rebuild schools and an orphanage. In March 2005, when another tsunami hit the coast of North Sumatra (affecting Nias and Simelue Islands), with the experience gained from this school-rebuilding project, Mercy Relief was able to quickly put up 50 semi-permanent school buildings for 6,000 affected students to resume classes.

Socio-economic projects: To support the local community's larger socio-economic needs, Mercy Relief initiated a project to construct 10 semi-modern fishing vessels for Aceh fishermen who had lost their boats during the tsunami. For this project, Mercy Relief worked with PT Pal Indonesia, an Indonesian shipbuilder, as well as several shipping firms in Singapore who helped with funding of the project. PT Pal also ran boat-building courses for Aceh's fishing community.

<sup>11</sup> Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC). (2006). Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami. The TEC was a unique learning and accountability initiative in the relief and development sector. It was established in February 2005 to carry out joint evaluations of the response to the tsunami, and was comprised of over 50 member agencies from the United Nations, donors, NGOs and the Red Cross.

School bursaries: With funding from the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura or MUIS), Mercy Relief provided bursaries to 100 Acehnese university students whose studies had been halted by the disaster. The organisation worked with the University of North Sumatera, which allowed the students to resume their studies there.

Grave preservation: Mercy Relief also supported the preservation and upgrading of the mass grave at Aceh's Ground Zero, using funds from the Indonesian Embassy to erect a brick wall structure around the cemetery.

Reflecting on the group's learning experience in this disaster relief effort, Mercy Relief's leadership articulated as follows:

*The experience gained by Mercy Relief for responding to the tsunami relief efforts proved to be an unmistakable lesson for the organisation. From a young humanitarian NGO, Mercy Relief was propelled to act in a capacity liable for bigger and more established aid agencies. Many friendships were forged between our funders, volunteers and partners, whose unyielding support has become the backbone to ensure the continued growth of the organisation. From this disaster on, Mercy Relief could no longer look back and will continue to fulfil the humanitarian need further.<sup>12</sup>*

### **Mercy Relief's Disaster Relief Operations Pathway**

Mercy Relief monitored worldwide humanitarian crises (caused by natural disasters or armed conflict) through UN OCHA's (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) ReliefWeb.<sup>13</sup> Apart from OCHA, other sources of disasters monitoring news include: US Geological Survey (USGS), Tropical Storm Risk (TSR), Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC), Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), individual Asian countries' meteorological agencies. It would only consider taking action if there was an appeal for

humanitarian aid from either local, provincial or national authorities, or an appeal from the UN on behalf of the affected state.

The management team would then decide on whether to respond to the appeal, or to standby and continue to monitor the situation. A decision to respond would depend on whether it already had or would have the opportunity to establish ground contact, so that it could enter the crisis zone without "ending up being a burden instead".<sup>14</sup> In order to have access to the disaster areas, Mercy Relief relied on partners in the field, such as other NGOs or local grassroots organisations, as most of the time, the local government would itself be crippled.<sup>15</sup> The decision to respond would also depend on the availability of resources that could be deployed – both on Mercy Relief's part, as well as its existing resources on the ground where the disaster event had happened.

The Charity believed that it was critical to be on the ground to understand the relief system and actual operations, otherwise there could be wastage of resources, including time and manpower. To facilitate the decision making process and operations, it would work with other NGOs and with local authorities, as well as the local business community, to understand ground conditions.<sup>16</sup>

Mercy Relief's Executive Committee would then be briefed and a final decision made. A preliminary project team would then be sent to assess the area, to determine needs and resource requirements.

Meanwhile, at the Singapore headquarters, assessments of resource ability and requirements would be undertaken and plans activated to acquire the necessary resources including forging collaborations with other parties for the relief operations. At the same time, volunteers would have to be organised and donation drives initiated.

On site, Mercy Relief's personnel would work with local partners or other NGOs to facilitate the flow of relief services including the distribution of relief items, aid in rescue missions and the dispatch of medical missions.

<sup>12</sup> News@Mercy. (2009). Indian Ocean Tsunami 5 years On – An Observation of Remembrance. [Press Release].

<sup>13</sup> Reliable disaster and crisis updates and analyses for humanitarians so they can make informed decisions and plan effective assistance. Retrieved September 11, 2013 from <http://reliefweb.int/about>

<sup>14</sup> Hassan Ahmad to Authors, 25 September, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> News@Mercy. (2008). Cyclone Nargis, 2008, Myanmar. [Press Release].

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

### An Example of the Relief Flow Process: Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar, 2008<sup>17</sup>

On 2 May 2008, Cyclone Nargis made landfall near the mouth of the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar, leaving 138,000 dead or missing, and affected more than 2.4 million people. Mercy Relief had been monitoring the cyclone situation on OCHA and within the first week, Mercy Relief sent five tonnes of relief supplies through UNICEF and Myanmar's Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. These supplies were air-flown with the support of its corporate partner, Silk Air, an airline company.

By the fifth day of the disaster, an eight-man medical team had assembled and was ready for deployment, but local authorities imposed regulatory restrictions that hindered the possibility of early intervention. Once these regulations were relaxed, Mercy Relief collaborated with Singapore's Ministry of Health and the Singapore Red Cross Society to send a 23-man medical contingent under the banner of Team Singapore. This team operated out of a 50-bed hospital in Twante Township and ran mobile clinics, treating on average 500 patients a day over two weeks.

Mercy Relief identified and proceeded to work with an USA-based NGO with a longtime presence in the country, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)<sup>18</sup>, which had an established network into the far-reaching delta areas of the country. ADRA, had operated in Myanmar for 16 years, and could gain access to areas that were located beyond multiple security checkpoints.<sup>19</sup> With ADRA's assistance, Mercy Relief sent out three ultra-filtration water treatment units to some of the far-flung regions in dire need of drinking water. The project implementation also included the deployment of technicians to install the systems and train the locals on their use and maintenance.

In the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, Mercy Relief installed eight Rapid Deploy System Shelters provided by corporate sponsor Accel International Co Ltd, that were used as temporary classrooms for six schools in the delta region. Classroom furniture worth S\$27,000 were supplied to these schools through Myanmar's Basic Education Department. Mercy Relief also contributed S\$103,400 to the reconstruction of a primary school in the area.

The group's work did not end after the immediate relief effort, as each mission would include a rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. Depending on the communities' needs, this could include rebuilding schools as well as disaster risk mitigation programmes to prepare for future disasters.

#### Post-Aceh Disaster Relief Initiatives

The Aceh disaster relief experience, though a steep learning curve for Mercy Relief, laid the groundwork for the group's subsequent efforts in the years that followed. (See **Table 2**)

##### 2005 Nias Earthquake, Indonesia

In March 2005, as the island of North Sumatra was still reeling from the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, it

was hit by another earthquake, this time at Nias. The quake measuring 8.7 on the Richter scale resulted in 850 fatalities and the destruction of 13,000 homes.

Still working on recovery operations in Aceh, Mercy Relief redirected volunteers and resources there to Nias. Within two days of the earthquake, Mercy Relief's first team, including four medical volunteers, arrived on site to provide food, water, and medical supplies. With the main hospital in Nias destroyed by the quake, a Basic Healthcare Unit (BHU) was set up, and the medical team was able to attend to 100 patients each day. A second medical team was sent five days later to relieve the first team. With two more doctors and three more nurses, the medical team could double the number of patients to 200 per day. Mercy Relief also worked with the SRCS to send in more relief supplies.

<sup>17</sup> Mercy Relief. (2008). Cyclone Nargis 2008. Extending hands, connecting hearts: Consolidated report 2003-2008.

<sup>18</sup> The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was established in November 1956 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide humanitarian relief and welfare. Retrieved September 11, 2013, from [http://www.adra.org/site/PageNavigator/about\\_us/history.html](http://www.adra.org/site/PageNavigator/about_us/history.html)

<sup>19</sup> Hassan Ahmad to Authors, 25 September, 2012.



**Table 2**  
**Summary of Disaster Relief Initiatives undertaken by Mercy Relief**

Disasters	Southeast Asia	East Asia	South Asia	Middle East
<b>Earthquakes</b>	2005: Nias (Sumatra)	2008: Wenchuan (China)	2005: Pakistan,	2004: Bam (Iran)
	2006: Bantul, Pangadaran, Bengkulu (Java)	2010: Qinghai (China)	India	
	2009: West Java	2013: Lushan (China)		
	2009: Padang (West Sumatra)	2013: Gansu (China)		
	2013: Bohol (Philippines)			
<b>Volcanic eruptions</b>	2006 & 2010: Mt. Merapi (Java)		2005: Pakistan	
<b>Tsunami</b>	2004: Aceh, Meulaboh, Nias (Sumatra)	2011: Japan	2004: Sri Lanka	
	2010: Mentawai (Sumatra)			
<b>Typhoons/ Floods</b>	2005: Bahorok (Sumatra)	2009: Taiwan	2005: India,	2008: Yemen
	2006: Legaspi (Philippines)		Bangladesh,	
	2007: Johor (Malaysia)		Nepal	
	2007: Aceh (Sumatra)		2010: Pakistan	
	2008: Myanmar		2011: Sri Lanka	
	2009: Philippines			
	2009: Vietnam			
	2010: Philippines			
	2011: Philippines			
	2011: Cambodia			
	2012: Philippines			
2012: DPR Korea				
2012: Myanmar				
2013: Philippines				
<b>Armed Conflict</b>	2012: Myanmar		2008: Sri Lanka	2009: Gaza Strip
			2008: Pakistan	2012: Gaza Conflict

Source: Compiled by authors from Mercy Relief's website, 2013.

2005 Muzaffarabad Earthquake, Pakistan

In October 2005, an earthquake of magnitude 7.6 devastated Pakistan-administered Kashmir, killing 18,000 and injuring 41,000. In response, Mercy Relief quickly made contact with the Pakistan

Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) to gather ground information. Mercy Relief had worked with PIMA, Pakistan's largest medical NGO in 2003, when PIMA hosted a Singaporean humanitarian medical mission to Afghanistan.

Having discovered that the Muzaffarabad region was the hardest hit, Mercy Relief worked with the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) on a joint rescue effort, and also with the Singapore General Hospital, organising the dispatch of a six-man preliminary medical team to the city to help in provision of medical services at the quake-affected site. Operating out of PIMA's field hospital, which eventually became the main referral hospital for the World Health Organisation's (WHO) efforts in the areas, the team attended to about 450 patients each day. The Pakistani Armed Forces also brought in evacuees needing medical aid from the surrounding mountains to this field hospital.<sup>20</sup>

Under the banner of 'Team Singapore', Mercy Relief together with several other Singapore-based organisations namely, SIF, Parkway Medical Group, the Singapore Red Cross Society (SRCS), and the National Healthcare Group, mounted a series of missions to provide aid to the affected region. These missions were funded by the SRCS and supported by the Singapore Pakistani Association (SPA) and Ba'alwie Mosque. Team Singapore also worked with international aid agency UNICEF to implement a vaccination programme at the PIMA field hospital.

A total of five relief missions were carried out, involving 48 volunteers from Mercy Relief. Most of the relief effort was on providing medical aid to meet urgent medical needs spanning gynaecology and obstetrics, paediatrics, and primary healthcare services.

After Mercy Relief's logistics team conducted a needs assessment in remote villages closest to the quake centre, the charity sent 200 tents to house an additional 1,000 people, with funding provided by the SRCS. In the rehabilitation phase, Mercy Relief turned its focus on providing psychological comfort to children. About 10,000 play packs were distributed to six schools around Kashmir, identified by The Citizen's Foundation (TCF). Mercy Relief also locally procured and distributed relief supplies such as blankets, medicines and household items to IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) in camps run by the Pakistani Armed Forces, as well those operated by TCF.<sup>21</sup>

## 2006-2011 – Relief Missions in the Region and Beyond

These were busy years with extensive humanitarian efforts for Mercy Relief. In 2006, it was involved in seven missions. In Indonesia, it mounted the relief efforts for the Bantul Earthquake in Central Java, Mount Merapi's eruption near Jogjakarta, Java, an earthquake and tsunami in West Java, and floods in Aceh, Sumatra. Mercy Relief also sent relief teams to the Philippines following the impact of typhoons Durian and Utor, and also supported relief action in response to floods in Muar, Malaysia. In addition, a two-man reconnaissance team was sent to perform needs assessment in Lebanon, in support of civilians harmed by the armed conflict that had broken out with Israel.

### • Mount Merapi Eruptions, 2006 and 2010

Two weeks before authorities declared red alert for the 2006 eruption, Mercy Relief had sent a two-person team to Jogjakarta, Indonesia, to assess the conditions of communities that could be affected by the impending volcanic eruption.<sup>22</sup> When the event occurred, Mercy Relief was ready with two medical teams dispatched to assist in the evacuation and to provide medical aid to villagers in the Dukun sub-district in Megalang.

As the only foreign NGO in Dukun in the aftermath of the eruption, Mercy Relief staff and volunteers worked closely with the local authorities to evacuate displaced villagers to the evacuation camps, and undertook projects to improve hygiene, sanitation, and water purification at the camps.

As Mount Merapi followed a pattern of volcanic eruption about once every four or five years, Mercy Relief was back in the area in October 2010 to provide emergency relief when the volcano erupted again after receiving separate requests for assistance from two areas that were affected by the eruption.<sup>23</sup>

20 Ahmad, H. and Sayadi, S. (2009). *Thwarting the secondary enemy*. Mercy Relief.

21 A professionally-managed, non-profit organisation set up in 1995 by a group of citizens concerned with the dismal state of education in Pakistan. By 2013, it had emerged as one of Pakistan's leading organisations in the field of formal education.

22 News@Mercy. (2006). Mount Merapi Eruption. [Press Release].

23 One was from the local government in Megalang, Jogjakarta, who requested Mercy Relief to aid the internally displaced persons [IDP] in the vicinity of the eruption. The other request was from a local non-government organisation, IBU Foundation, requesting the group to provide relief for Mentawai, where a tsunami originating from the eruption had struck. The IBU Foundation had previously worked with Mercy Relief on relief efforts for the 2004 Aceh tsunami, and earthquakes in 2009 in Java and Padang.

Mercy Relief's relief efforts in the Merapi eruptions led to insights about the community's relationship with the volcano and a deeper understanding of the area's culture, motivating its leadership to develop disaster risk mitigation (DRM) programme to better prepare the community for future eruptions.<sup>24</sup> In this way, Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) initiatives were embraced by the people "as they could still hold on to, to some extent, their cultural beliefs."<sup>25</sup>

Besides a reconstruction project for new water distribution systems to replace those damaged by the eruptions, Mercy Relief implemented a comprehensive DRM programme for the communities. They included the supply of respiratory care equipment for three health clinics with training for medical support personnel in first response and respiratory care management. Two schools were fitted with multi-purpose halls and improved sanitation facilities, so that they could be converted readily into relief evacuation centres. An early-warning system was set up, accompanied with educational workshops to prepare the villagers for future eruptions. Mercy Relief's objective was for the DRM programme to take into account "longer-term development goals and the strengthening of core public institutions during peace time", such as "cultivating community resilience."<sup>26</sup>

- Wenchuan Quake, China

In May 2008, Mercy Relief's response team arrived on the scene on the fourth day after the quake occurrence. The team worked with the local Disaster Management Centres, the Sichuan Foundation for Poverty Alleviation and the Poverty Alleviation Bureaus of Chengdu and Ziyang. Team members travelled across four prefectures (Aba, Mianyang, Deyang and Chengdu) to personally distribute to affected villages, relief supplies of tents, food and medicine worth S\$450,000.<sup>27</sup> Through these initiatives, Mercy relief set up networks for focus on sustainable development (namely in this case, poverty alleviation), leading

up eventually to the set up of its regional office in Shaanxi.

- Japan's 9.0 magnitude Earthquake & Tsunami

The 2011 quake and resulting tsunami wrought massive destruction along Japan's eastern coastline. Within 24 hours of an appeal from the Japanese authorities for international assistance, Mercy Relief deployed a preliminary two-man team to assess the logistic supply situation to affected areas around Iwate prefecture.<sup>28</sup> A decision was made to procure supplies from within Japan, to avoid issues "such as tailbacks at ports of entry".<sup>29</sup> One item that Mercy Relief did send from Singapore was its Mercy Ready Meals (See **Exhibit 4** – Mercy Relief Innovations – Products and Equipment for Humanitarian Aid).

In total, Mercy Relief sent seven relief teams to the region over a four-month period. The organisation followed up with a delivery of heavy-duty winter blankets for survivors to help them cope with the bitter northern winter.<sup>30</sup>

To support Tohoku's rebuilding, Mercy Relief later collaborated with a local volunteer's network, Fumbaro, to implement a Livelihood and Recovery programme for survivors such as farmers and fishermen who had lost their means of livelihood due to the disaster, to equip them with relevant and useful skills post-disaster. The programme successfully trained and licensed over 830 participants to operate heavy machinery such as bulldozers and excavators, so they could be employed for the authorities' clearing and reconstruction efforts.<sup>31</sup>

### Disaster Risk Mitigation (DRM)

As a small and young non-government aid organisation with limited resources, Mercy Relief's strategy for success in its relief initiatives was to cooperate and align with like-minded organisations that shared similar goals and vision. This included Singapore-based and international organisations as well as NGOs based in disaster areas. Hassan

24 Ahmad, H. and Sayadi, S. (2011). *Risk reduction and adaptation: good concepts with great challenges*. Mercy Relief.

25 *ibid.*

26 Ahmad H., Soe, K.S., Othman, N. (2012). *Mitigating vulnerability for sustainable development*. Mercy Relief.

27 Mercy Relief. Mercy Relief Consolidated Report 2003-2008.

28 News@Mercy. (2011). Ops Japan earthquake & tsunami (JET) relief update #1: Mercy Relief established logistics network, second relief team deployed. [Press Release].

29 News@Mercy. (2011). Ops JET relief update #3: Mercy Relief meets tsunami survivors. [Press Release].

30 *ibid.*

31 *ibid.*

Ahmad, Mercy Relief's first Chief Executive, sought for ways to continuously engage with a host of potential stakeholders during peacetime, in order to build goodwill, understanding and cooperation. This would lead to easier access and greater efficiency when it comes to risk reduction before and after disaster strikes.<sup>32</sup>

The Charity's risk mitigation strategy was the outcome and this focused on "longer-term development and risk reduction goals in its relief and reconstruction programmes", to help local communities prepare for the impact and effects of natural disasters.<sup>33</sup> The strategy was aimed at peacetime community capacity building in at-risk communities before disasters hit, with the goal of "enabling people to help themselves build their own risk reduction methods."<sup>34</sup>

The approach began with the systematic analysis of causal factors of each disaster, and was aimed at lessening the vulnerability of people and property when exposed to hazards accompanying such events.<sup>35</sup> Measures initiated included the appropriate management of land and environment, as well as improving the community's preparedness for such adverse events. A critical supply chain management system for acute disaster relief items, including optimised stockpiling of survival essentials was also set up. The system enhanced the speed and efficacy at which relief aid could be provided once needed.

Mercy Relief's overall DRM goal was to "create an enabling environment for improved early warning, information management and community-based disaster preparedness. Ultimately, responding to disaster should be seen as a development action, with the advocacy potential from the disaster's profile itself offering opportunities to build longer-term agendas."<sup>36</sup>

## DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS

The Charity's disaster risk mitigation strategy invariably gave rise to developmental projects to support at-risk communities. These projects were

selected based on two criteria: firstly, to target places and communities that were disaster-prone, and secondly, regions that were poverty-stricken. When the group set up field offices in disaster-prone regions such as Shaanxi, China or in Sumatra, Indonesia, these offices enabled the organisation to have more effective engagement with local communities and from there, to learn more of their contexts and their needs.<sup>37</sup> In fact, many of its relief missions incorporated developmental elements.

The developmental programme covered five main areas – water and sanitation, shelter, livelihood, healthcare and education.

*A development project, which provides immediate and sustainable sources of food and income – for example, potable water and water for farming – is virtually certain of winning over the wills and minds of the targeted communities.<sup>38</sup>*

Sustainable development projects in the Philippines and Vietnam were implemented in 2009, with the goal of "uplifting the lives of impoverished and disadvantaged communities", focusing on healthcare, water and sanitation, education, shelter and sustainable livelihoods.<sup>39</sup> (See **Exhibit 3** – Developmental Projects.)

Mercy Relief set up two field offices – one in Medan, Indonesia and the other in Shaanxi, China, to kickstart and to manage the new sustainable development projects over the two locations. For example, from 2008 to 2010, Mercy Relief was engaged in seven developmental projects in China, covering areas in Hebei, Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces.<sup>40</sup> They included a joint development effort with the Shaanxi Poverty Alleviation Bureau (SPAB) and the Changzhi Township government to transform a poverty-stricken cluster of cave-home dwellings into a self-sustaining eco-village.

Shanghwa, in Yuanqu County, was the most impoverished village in the county, with an annual average per capita income of 800 yuan. Recognising

32 Ahmad, H., Wong, A., Shiever, S.R. (2008). *Peacetime strategies for disaster risk mitigation*. Mercy Relief.

33 Ahmad H., Soe, K.S. and Othman, N. (2012). *Mitigating vulnerability for sustainable development*. Mercy Relief.

34 *ibid.*

35 Ahmad, H. and Sayadi, S. (2011). *Risk reduction and adaptation: good concepts with great challenges*. Mercy Relief.

36 *ibid.*

37 Mercy Relief. Udairam, T.K. Chairman's Message. Mercy Relief Consolidated Report 2003 - 2008.

38 Ahmad, H. and Sayadi, S. (2009). *Thwarting the secondary enemy*. Mercy Relief.

39 Mercy Relief. (2010). *The 7th Year Pitch: Stakeholders' Consolidated Report 2003 - 2010*.

40 Mercy Relief. Udairam, T.K. Chairman's Message. Mercy Relief Consolidated Report 2003 - 2008.

the need for self-sustenance among villagers, Mercy Relief proposed the installation of a biogas digester system in 2008, along with 352 piglets for 88 households for pig-rearing. The biogas digester system would facilitate the harvesting of renewable energy through the fermentation of human and animal waste, which would then be used to power biogas cookers and lamps, ensuring savings on energy expenditure, while the pig-rearing provided the villagers with a means of income.

The Changzhi Township government then made a decision to relocate the village altogether, so that it could be closer to markets, healthcare and education facilities, and also more farmland. Mercy Relief paved 5.2 square kilometres of roads within the new village, and also built 2 kilometres of perimeter wall.

### Developing Goods and Equipment for Disaster Relief Situations

Mercy Relief also embarked on a strategic initiative to develop and produce goods and equipment for its humanitarian aid programmes (See **Exhibit 4** – Mercy Relief Innovations – Products and Equipment for Humanitarian Aid). These included Mercy Ready Meals (MRMs), ready-made, cooked meals in 250g packages that were portable and nourishing, such as rice porridge with sweet potatoes. Other MRMs containing high proteins and fibre such as red and green bean soups were later rolled out.

Many of these innovations were the outcome of collaborations between Singapore Polytechnic (SP) and Mercy Relief. Former Singapore Polytechnic Principal Tan Hang Cheong was a staunch supporter of Mercy Relief, facilitating and participating in many

of the product and equipment collaborations as well as promoting the Charity's outreach to students in tertiary education institutions in Singapore.

### Building Organisational Capability

From its early beginnings, Mercy Relief's many projects and reach were driven by the passion and commitment of its people. This "Tribe", as Mercy Relief members regarded themselves, comprised both volunteers and staff members. It was a fluid group, changing as projects progressed through the stages or when new ones were launched. Over the past decade, the Tribe had grown from 5 staff and 200 volunteers in 2004 to 17 staff and 3,000 volunteers in mid-2013.

Members of the Mercy Relief Tribe came from all walks of life and possessed a wide range of competencies necessary to carry out disaster relief work. They included members of the medical teams organised by the Charity to provide medical assistance in various disaster projects, and corporate managers who helped the Charity reach out to more corporate sponsors and bolstered fundraising efforts.

As a start-up, the Charity started from zero base with regard to the organisation's capability to deal with disaster relief and development work. Training of staff and volunteers was critical in order to enhance the major competencies required for its projects. Over the years, Mercy Relief collaborated with educational and training institutions in Singapore on such training and the outcome during this first decade was the launch of two programmes aimed at developing and training current and future individuals involved in humanitarian work.

#### Examples of Products/Equipment

- As the availability of clean water was one of the top issues in the aftermath of any disaster – earthquake, tsunami or flood – Mercy Relief decided to find a means of delivering clean water to affected communities. Collaborating with the Singapore Polytechnic, it developed a portable water filtration system named PedalPure for this purpose. While PedalPure served entire communities, Mercy Relief developed PurHeart Bottle and PurHeart Straw for use by individuals and households affected by disasters or poverty.
- The Household Rain Harvester (HRH) was a joint design between Mercy Relief, Singapore Polytechnic and AGplus. The simple household system comprised of a collapsible collector (inverted umbrella) with an attached ceramic filter. Its overall simplicity, transportability and affordability made the HRH suitable for emergency response and rural application.
- The Rapid Deployment Shelter (RDS) could be assembled in less than two hours by three men, and could function as a medical clinic, storage facility, administrative area or living accommodation.

To train volunteers, the MOVE (Mercy Overseas Volunteer Expedition) Programme was established in partnership with the National Youth Council (NYC) in January 2010. The action learning programme was targeted at two groups of volunteers: Mercy Expeditions in which adult individuals or corporate groups participated in volunteer expeditions and Mercy Youth, in which young students participated in humanitarian projects.<sup>41</sup>

Also launched in 2010 was a Diploma-Plus Certificate Programme in Humanitarian Affairs offered at the Singapore Polytechnic. The course was “developed by Mercy Relief and Singapore Polytechnic to provide an Asian-centred perspective on the scope and mechanics of humanitarian work.”<sup>42</sup> The former also regarded this programme as means to address Singapore’s humanitarian sector’s longer-term human resource requirements.

*Given the escalating occurrences of natural disasters in the region, it is imperative that we produce aid workers that are adoptable and adaptable to varying ground situations in different country settings. Being Asians ourselves, having the cultural appreciation and familiarity with other affiliated sensitivities give us the advantage to relate better to host partners and beneficiaries. Therefore, operating with an Asian-centred philosophy, inculcated through this course, would make these future Asian aid workers more readily acceptable, relevant and valuable in the field.*<sup>43</sup>

*Hassan Ahmad*  
*Former Chief Executive, Mercy Relief*

To generate greater community support for its work and mission, Mercy Relief also conducted corporate events to encourage companies to collaborate or support relief and development work.

## Donations

In Singapore, the award of the IPC status meant that the charity was authorised to receive tax-deductible donations and donors making qualifying donations to an IPC would be given tax deduction against their income.<sup>44</sup> However, for this tax benefit to apply, the donation “must be for activities beneficial to Singapore as a whole and not confined to sectional interests or any particular group of persons based on race, creed, belief or religion, unless otherwise approved by the Commissioner of Charities”.<sup>45</sup>

For Mercy Relief, although the Charity had been awarded IPC status, funds received and earmarked by the donors for specific overseas disaster relief projects did not qualify as tax-deductible donations. Only general donations for the Charity’s Singapore operations would qualify.

When members of the public (individuals or corporate) made donations to Mercy Relief, they were given the option to donate either to relief efforts (money for specific overseas relief projects) or to the general fund (money needed to fund Mercy Relief’s Singapore operations). Donors tended to fund relief efforts over the general fund. This was because most were moved by specific disaster events and chose to donate to these funds which were channelled into specific overseas projects (See **Exhibits 2A, 2B and 3**).

While it was natural that many wanted their donations to directly benefit victims caught in disaster events, as a non-government organisation, it required funds to support its day-to-day operations and to maintain and build on the organisation’s disaster-ready capabilities. These ranged from overhead expenses such as rentals and staff salaries to training and development of staff and volunteers. Compared to the emotional appeal in supporting a disaster relief event, it was an uphill challenge for the Charity to persuade donors to support the development and sustenance of Mercy Relief’s

41 News@Mercy. (2010). Mercy Relief unveils its new overseas volunteer expedition programme – MOVE! [Press Release].

42 News@Mercy. (2010). New diploma plus in humanitarian affairs takes off. [Press Release].

43 *ibid.*

44 In Singapore, only organisations which had been conferred the IPC status were authorised to issue tax deduction receipts for tax-deductible donations received (i.e. donors were given tax deduction for donations made to these organisations). Retrieved September 11, 2013, from Singapore Government Charity Portal website, <http://www.charities.gov.sg/charity/charity/viewIPCs.do>

45 Singapore Government Charity Portal website. Retrieved September 11, 2013, from <https://www.charities.gov.sg/FAQs/Pages/Institution-of-a-Public-Character-IPC.aspx>

organisational capabilities in Singapore. Even though the organisation had fewer than fifteen full time staff members, operating expenses and overheads had steadily increased over the last 10 years as Mercy Relief expanded its projects.

Mercy Relief needed to position itself to funders and demonstrate to them that by donating to its general fund, they would be funding their capabilities to handle future disaster events.

## POSITIONING FOR FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

At Mercy Relief's event marking the Second World Humanitarian Day on 19 August 2010, the Guest-of-Honour, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, Teo Chee Hian, noted:

*For an organisation that has increased its outreach over the years, Mercy Relief is modestly housed at a HDB (Housing Development Board) void deck. It is such modesty, frugality and pragmatism that have allowed you to win many supporters and friends over the years.<sup>46</sup>*

In its first decade as a Singapore-based disaster relief NGO, Mercy Relief grew rapidly despite a lack of resources. Its leadership was quick to respond to needs of its overseas beneficiaries working with bigger organisations in bringing relief to affected groups of people caught in regional disaster events.

In October 2013, as Mercy Relief entered its second decade, Goh Chin Siang took over from Hassan

Ahmad as Chief Executive of Mercy Relief. Goh was intent on continuing the Charity's focus on sustainable development. However, he knew that moving ahead, Mercy Relief needed to engage with more partners and sponsors to continue its work overseas, as well as to fund its planning and capability building operations in Singapore.

*We are hoping corporates will come forward for our core funding, whereas in the past they have come in for relief funding. We want to have more of a presence locally, with the Singapore public.<sup>47</sup>*

*Goh Chin Siang  
Chief Executive, Mercy Relief*

Moving into its second decade, Mercy Relief's leadership had to address several challenges. Firstly, it had to acquire the resources to enhance and build on existing organisational capabilities and competencies needed to sustain its future operations and projects.

Furthermore, it needed to articulate a strategy that would continue to add value to major stakeholders while managing the resource demands of disaster relief operations and that of developmental work aimed at reducing the impact of future disasters on those affected.

How should Mercy Relief position and organise itself to meet these challenges, and to achieve the mission and vision that the leadership had set for the organisation for the next 10 years?

<sup>46</sup> Mercy Relief (2010). DPM Teo Chee Hian at the Second World Humanitarian Day 2010. The 7th Year Pitch: Stakeholders' Consolidated Report 2003 - 2010. Mercy Relief.

<sup>47</sup> Jaffar Mydin to authors, 7 April, 2014.

## EXHIBIT 1

## MERCY RELIEF – CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2003-2012

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>										
<b>ASSETS (\$\$' 000)</b>										
Inventories				109	171	162	264	500	249	
Accounts & Receivables	9	35	12	9	6	975	1,371	2,147	1,257	1,493
Cash & Deposits	496	554	1,899	1,941	1,701	551	1,065	1,035	1,577	818
Other Tangible Assets	18	46	88	53	20	121	89	73	46	21
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>1,999</b>	<b>2,003</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>2,687</b>	<b>3,519</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>2,581</b>
<b>FUNDS (\$\$' 000)</b>										
Unrestricted General Fund	51	266	468	180	195	836	1,131	861	1,273	1,004
Restricted Fund	463	346	1,496	1,730	1,580	675	1,389	2,495	1,796	1,346
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>1,964</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>3,356</b>	<b>3,069</b>	<b>2,350</b>
<b>LIABILITIES (\$\$' 000)</b>										
Current Liabilities	9	23	35	93	61	307	167	163	311	231
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>1,999</b>	<b>2,003</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>2,687</b>	<b>3,519</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>2,581</b>
<b>INCOME STATEMENT</b>										
<b>INCOME (\$\$' 000)</b>										
Donations in Cash: Tax-Deductible	-	-	-	-	-	233	196	604	836	531
Donations in Cash: Non-Tax-Deductible	-	-	-	-	-	3,953	3,571	3,270	4,060	1,592
Donations in Kind: Non Tax-Deductible	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	431
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	714	1,130	951	881	789
Merchandise sale & Facilitation Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	36	32	39
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>8,274</b>	<b>3,367</b>	<b>2,364</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,942</b>	<b>4,861</b>	<b>5,809</b>	<b>3,383</b>
<b>EXPENSES (\$\$' 000)</b>										
Direct Fundraising Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	45	38	61	7	50
Direct Charitable Expenses - Local	-	-	-	-	-	275	95	38	115	140
Direct Charitable Expenses - Overseas	-	-	-	-	-	3,918	2,600	2,741	4,705	2,468
Staff Salaries and Allowances	-	-	-	-	-	769	904	923	1,031	1,198
Other Operating Administration Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	158	296	261	238	246
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>6,922</b>	<b>3,421</b>	<b>2,499</b>	<b>5,165</b>	<b>3,933</b>	<b>4,024</b>	<b>6,096</b>	<b>4,102</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1,352</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>(135)</b>	<b>(265)</b>	<b>1009</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>(287)</b>	<b>(719)</b>

Source: Compiled from Mercy Relief Annual Reports 2003-2012



**EXHIBIT 2A**

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF MAJOR RELIEF PROJECTS (AS OF 31 DEC 2008)**

<b>Amounts in S\$'000</b>	<b>Indian Ocean Tsunami</b>	<b>South Asian Earthquake</b>
Donations Received	9,202	485
Relief Missions & Supplies Expenses	2,650	228
Reconstruction Expenses	6,318	–
Project Playpack	196	204
Amount Disbursable	38	53

**Detailed Accounts – Indian Ocean Tsunami**

**Donations Received**

Corporate Donations	7,358
TeleMercy Collection	735
Public Donations	1,109
<b>Total Donations Received</b>	<b>9,202</b>

**Relief Missions & Supplies Expenses**

Relief Missions & Supplies	650
Operations Command Centres: Posko Temasek (Medan & Meulaboh)	530
Bursaries for Acehnese students in University Sumatera Utara	49
Operations Support Costs	1,421
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2,650</b>

**Project Playpack**

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>196</b>
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**Reconstruction Expenses**

Muhammadiyah Boys Orphanage	381
Muhammadiyah Girls Orphanage	237
Muhammadiyah School	520
Babussalam Boys Orphanage	1,053
Babussalam Girls Orphanage	489
Samatiga Orphanage Complex	508
Meulaboh Mass Cemetery	80
Semi-modern Fishing Vessels	2,541
Semi-permanent Nias Schools	320
Sanitation for Orphanages and Schools	189
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>6,318</b>
<b>Total Relief Expenses</b>	<b>9,164</b>
<b>Amount Disbursable</b>	<b>38</b>

**EXHIBIT 2B**

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF MAJOR RELIEF PROJECTS (AS OF 31 DEC 2009)**

<b>Amounts in S\$'000</b>	<b>Donations Received</b>	<b>Relief Missions &amp; Supplies Expenses</b>	<b>Reconstruction Expenses</b>	<b>Amount Disbursable</b>
Myanmar				
– Cyclone Nargis	768	613	141	14
China				
– Wenchuan Earthquake	1,856	617	1,212	27
Gaza				
– Conflict Relief	466	433	–	33
Sri Lanka				
– Humanitarian Relief	99	87	–	12
Pakistan				
– Humanitarian Relief	185	89	89	7
Philippines				
– Typhoon Morakot	184	146	–	38
Java				
– Quake Relief	98	97	–	1
South Pacific				
– Tropical Storm	488	342	–	146
Sumatra				
– Quake Relief	969	256	–	713

Source: Mercy Relief. (2010). *The 7th Year Pitch: Stakeholders' Consolidated Report 2003-2010*, p.56. Retrieved September 11, 2013, from <http://www.mercyrelief.org/web/imgcont/93/MERCY%20RELIEF%207TH%20YEAR%20PITCH.pdf>

**EXHIBIT 3**  
**DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS**

Country	Province/ Region	Project	Commencement	Completion	No. of Beneficiaries	Project Value SGD
China	Hebei	Sustainable Livelihood & Disaster Risk Mitigation	Sep 08	Jun 09	537 pax of 136 households	130,540
	Shaanxi	Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Livelihood	Sep 08	Jun 09	2,024 pax of 558 households	360,108
		Eco-sanitation & Sustainable Livelihood	Sep 08	Jun 09	430 pax of 88 households	322,690
		Reconstruction of Songyan Home for the Elderly	Jun 09	Jun 10	60 destitute elderly	357,178
		Provision of Safe Drinking Water & Livelihood Enhancement	May 09	Oct 09	927 pax of 330 households	228,469
	Sichuan	Eco-sanitation (Biogas) & Environment Enhancement	Jun 09	May 10	1,025 pax of 224 households	282,950
	Sichuan	Provision of Safe Drinking Water & Livelihood Enhancement	Jun 09	May 10	2,301 pax of 574 households	289,171
Indonesia	North Sumatra	Provision of Clean Drinking Water Development Project	Sep 08	Dec 08	7,830 pax of 2,466 households	88,543
		Safe Drinking Water & Livelihood Enhancement	Dec 09	Jun 10	4,675 pax of 925 households	201,600
		Sanitation Project & Livelihood Enhancement	Dec 09	Jun 10	900 pax of 190 households	112,764
	West Sumatra	Provision of Clean Water and Poverty Alleviation	Aug 09	May 10	3,062 pax of 652 households	180,000
	South Sumatra	Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP) / Principal & Teacher Improvement Programme	Jan 09	Dec 10	30 principals, 60 teachers	246,212
	Riau Islands	Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP)	Aug 08	Jun 09	40 principals, 3 superintendents, 80 teachers, 7,162 students	177,092
		Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP) / Principal & Teacher Improvement Programme	Nov 09	Oct 10	40 principals, 80 teachers	233,407
Philippines	Zambales	Health & Water Management and Livelihood Support	Nov 09	Sep 10	3,262 pax	101,702
		Empowering Communities through Community-based Ecotourism	Mar 10	Mar 11	1,192 pax of 298 households	136,536
Vietnam	Danang	English for Everyone (EFE)	Nov 10	May 11	5 trainers, 75 teachers, 4,000 students	80,000
	Ho Chi Minh City	Special Needs Training Programme	Dec 09	Dec 10	40 teachers, 1,000 special children	90,113
		English for Everyone (EFE)	Jul 09	Jun 10	5 trainers, 4 BED, 53 teachers, 4,000 students	79,194
	Quang Nam	Treatment of Contaminated Water for Village Consumption	Jul 10	Apr 11	600 pax of 140 households	95,175
	<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>3,793,444</b>

Source: Mercy Relief. (2010). *The 7th Year Pitch: Stakeholders' Consolidated Report 2003-2010*, p.35. Retrieved September 11, 2013, from <http://www.mercyrelief.org/web/imgcont/93/MERCY%20RELIEF%207TH%20YEAR%20PITCH.pdf>

## EXHIBIT 4

### MERCY RELIEF INNOVATIONS – PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

#### Household Rain Harvester (HRH)



- The HRH is a joint innovation of Mercy Relief, Singapore Polytechnic and AGplus
- Comprises a collapsible collector (inverted umbrella) with an attached Purheart ceramic filter to collect rainwater
- The filter (US Patent App: 13/487,852) is coated with nanosilver material and designed to effectively kill and inhibit microbial activity
- Filtration fineness: 0.2 microns
- Flow rate: 6 litres per hour (4 x 1.5 litre bottles)
- Suitable for emergency relief and rural application

#### PurHeart Relief Series

##### PurHeart Bottle



- A joint innovation of Mercy Relief, Singapore Polytechnic and AGplus
- Point-of-use (POU) water treatment for converting source water (from pond, ground, river, rain, tap, etc) into safe, drinkable water for immediate use
- Portable, light-weight
- Comprises a cartridge of ceramic membrane (US Patent App: 13/487,852), coated with nanosilver material, to filter undissolved solids and simultaneously remove microbial pathogens
- Holding capacity: 550ml
- Flow rate: 15 litres of water per hour
- Filtration fineness: 0.2 microns
- Suitable for disaster-stricken areas, travellers and military

##### PurHeart Family Filter



- A joint collaboration by Mercy Relief, Singapore Polytechnic and AGplus
- Two-part design:
  - Upper chamber (Holding capacity: 4 litres)
  - Lower chamber (Holding capacity: 10 litres)
- Gravity-driven
- Filter is made of ceramic membrane (US Patent App: 13/487,852), coated with nanosilver material, to filter undissolved solids and simultaneously remove microbial pathogens
- Filter capacity: 6,000 litres
- Filtration fineness: 0.2 microns
- Produces 2 litres of safe drinking water hourly
- Suitable for use in rural developing areas

## EXHIBIT 4 (CONTINUED)

### MERCY RELIEF INNOVATIONS – PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

PedalPure



- Designed by Mercy Relief, in partnership with Singapore Polytechnic and Golden Season
- Ultra-filtration water treatment system
- Powered by pedalling
- Equipped with wheels, brakes and adjustable seat
- Dimensions meet airfreight requirements
- High flow rate: 700 litres per hour
- Filtration fineness: 0.01 microns
- Membrane quality certified by independent laboratory
- Easy to operate and maintain (recommended to daily flush out clogged pores of the membrane fibres to extend product life and ensure the quality of the water)
- Wheels do not require inflation and are puncture-proof; system can be easily washed without any refitting of pipes

Mercy Ready Meals (MRMs)



- A joint collaboration by Mercy Relief and Golden Season
- MRMs include rice porridge, sweet potatoes, red and green beans soup
- Weight: 250 gms
- Easily consumed and digestible, suitable for infants, the elderly and injured
- No reheating required
- Shelf life of 3 years
- High fluid content of the porridge serves to rehydrate the victims
- Starch fills hunger and provides energy
- Sweet potato included for its high nutritional value - its the number one nutrition of all vegetables with rich content of dietary fibre and naturally occurring sugar, complex carbohydrates and protein

Source: Mercy Relief. (2013).