

Basic Information

Title	Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) Summary of Annual Report 2008–09
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Status of Paper	Final Report
Resolution/s	The Conference receives the Report

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This report summarises the activities and achievements of the Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) in the financial year 2008–09
Main Points	<p>Highlights of the year 2008–09:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 6,193 farmers were provided with training and access to equipment, resulting in improved nutritional intake and increased enrolment of their children in schools. • 3,776 mothers and 3,084 children received health check-ups. • 7,601 community members in Uganda, Malawi and India now have access to safe water, better sanitary provision and a greater awareness of hygienic behaviour. • 1,866 marginalised individuals from groups like the indigenous Maasai communities of Kenya and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nepal gained access to basic literacy programmes. • Income generation projects in 12 countries produced an average of 62% increase in household income for over 7,000 families. • MRDF responded to 11 emergencies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, including helping the survivors of the Pakistan earthquake and assisting refugees in Burundi to return home. • MRDF resourced over 1800 churches and 70 schools to take positive action in response to global poverty. • Thanks to the generosity of supporters, financial sustainability was maintained in the face of an economic downturn.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Not applicable
Impact	None
Risk	None

Highlights of the year 2008–09:

- A total of 6,193 farmers were provided with training and access to equipment, resulting in improved nutritional intake and increased enrolment of their children in schools.
- 3,776 mothers and 3,084 children received health check-ups.
- 7,601 community members in Uganda, Malawi and India now have access to safe water, better sanitary provision and a greater awareness of hygienic behaviour.
- 1,866 marginalised individuals from groups like the indigenous Maasai communities of Kenya and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nepal gained access to basic literacy programmes.
- Income generation projects in 12 countries produced an average of 62% increase in household income for over 7,000 families.
- MRDF responded to 11 emergencies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, including helping the survivors of the Pakistan earthquake and assisting refugees in Burundi to return home.
- MRDF resourced over 1800 churches and 70 schools to take positive action in response to global poverty.
- Thanks to the generosity of supporters, financial sustainability was maintained in the face of an economic downturn.

Purpose and mission

MRDF grew out of the desire to enable Methodist people to respond effectively, in the context of global poverty and injustice, to the commandments of Jesus to love God and love our neighbour. Believing in the dignity of every human being before God, MRDF aims to make small miracles possible for people living in the world's poorest communities.

MRDF's mission is to bring about significant and long-term change in some of the world's most marginalised communities, and to empower people to change structures that are oppressive and unjust.

To fulfil this charge, MRDF has continued throughout this year to focus on four main priorities:

1. Supporting life-changing long-term development initiatives which contribute to the alleviation of poverty

Last year MRDF worked with 20,675 women, 15,099 men and 11,774 children helping them to realise their rights to food, sanitation, education or a sustainable livelihood. In total MRDF worked with 46 projects in 21 of the world's poorest countries. Within these countries, MRDF targeted the most marginalised communities where access to basic services, such as clean water, affordable education and appropriate healthcare is often non-existent and where families are surviving at a subsistence level. Support was prioritised to community members who are doubly disadvantaged due to their location, gender, age, caste or health status. The work of MRDF partners can be broken down into the following broad areas:

i) Sustainable agriculture

A total of 6,193 farmers were supported with training and access to equipment in 11 countries. Projects encouraged participants to set up farmers' cooperatives, enabling groups to access valuable resources including tractors and high-yielding varieties of seed. In addition to reduced workloads, farmers reported an improvement in their nutritional intake and health awareness, increased enrolment of children in schools and reduced incidences of domestic violence.

'Now I don't have to ask my kids to go to sleep hungry and, in fact, can eat with them too!'
Geraldina Semoy, APDCOMA Farmers' Cooperative, Mozambique

ii) Health

MRDF funded nine projects in Nepal, Guatemala, Mali, Togo, Malawi and Zambia which aimed to support and strengthen state capacity to provide basic health services for marginalised communities. Partners report that they have been able to reach out to 3,776 mothers and 3,084 children with reproductive and child health services. In addition, partners have provided 556 people living with HIV/AIDS with counselling, medical care and income generation support. Another 2,763 young people have participated in campaigns to promote safer sex practices. Partners report improved immunisation rates, better pre- and post-natal care, higher nutritional intake, better hygiene practices and greater regularity in medicinal intake within the community as a result of these interventions.

'There aren't any organisations that bother to come to our village – our village doesn't have roads and you have to walk long hours before you can reach here from the nearest bus stand. ISS helped me get operated on for (uterine) prolapse and I have got another chance at life after this operation.'

Sushila Kshetri, recipient of uterine prolapse surgical treatment, Surkhet, Nepal

iii) Water and sanitation

MRDF's partners have been able to reach out to 7,601 community members in Uganda, Malawi and India to ensure they have access to sufficient quantities of safe water, better sanitary provision, and greater awareness of good hygiene practices. Partners in these regions have been able to set up a total of 469 water supply systems, 518 toilets and 17 rainwater harvesting structures.

'I first heard about VAD through the leaders in my community. I received some training on water, hygiene and sanitation and because I am a widow caring for five grandchildren I was given a new latrine. My old one was very dangerous, especially for the children. The new one is made from cement and is safe and easy to clean.'

Teresa Namatovu, who is working with MRDF's partner in Uganda, VAD

iv) Education

MRDF supported basic literacy programmes for a total of 1,866 marginalised individuals from groups like the indigenous Maasai communities in Kenya and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nepal. As a result of these programmes members report becoming more confident in travelling by themselves, negotiating fair prices for their produce, maintaining their family budgets, and negotiating group and family situations.

'Learning to read and write and count will allow me to be protected from those in business who want to take advantage of me.'

Fante Kante, AMAPEF, Mali

v) Income generation

MRDF supported a total of 14 income generation projects in 12 of the poorest countries in Africa and South Asia, generating an average 62% increase in household income for over 7000 families. Partners have used a range of strategies to create sustainable income including micro-credit support, vocational training, marketing support, livestock loan schemes and Self Help Groups. Most of these income generation initiatives have focused on women, since it is widely recognised that women face the greatest difficulty in accessing dignified sources of income.

'I bought chickens with the loan I received and now I sell the eggs. With the money I made from selling eggs I have been able to buy clothes and school books. This has really helped my family as without this I would have been forced to pay back more than I had borrowed from a traditional moneylender.'

Mamitu Gabissa, Self Help Group Member, Ethiopia

2. Increasing the effectiveness of local partners

Building the capacity of local partners is the principal priority for all MRDF partnerships. MRDF has focused support in several areas, including Governance, Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Human Resources Management, Office Administration and Fundraising. The specific ways in which MRDF directed capacity-building support to partners during the reporting period include the following:

- Devising guidelines for effective organisational governance, financial management and donor reporting.
- SAFAPO, a new partner in Malawi, visited long-term partner COPRED to learn from their systems.
- Audit exercises were commissioned for four partners with the purpose of strengthening their financial probity.
- MRDF's Programme Officers offered training to over 19 different partners in areas such as Project Cycle Management, Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, Rights Based Approach, Advocacy and organisational development areas such as Fundraising, Human Resource Management and Financial Management.
- In order to strengthen and upscale existing partnerships, MRDF worked with 14 of our partners to submit 18 joint funding bids to external donors – out of these, eight were successful and five are still pending.
- We produced a regular newsletter for partners, entitled *Strength to Strength*, which features case studies for promoting south-to-south learning.

3. Providing rapid disaster relief

MRDF responds to emergency situations that have been caused by natural disasters, conflict, or political instability all over the world. It recognises the importance of responding to forgotten emergencies – crises that have not been highlighted by the media. This year we have continued to provide funds to SUNARMA, an MRDF partner based in Ethiopia, to give emergency seed supplies to farmers in order to combat the large-scale malnutrition and hunger caused by heavy rainfall in the north of the country during early 2008. Our partnership with the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka this year has focused on supporting displaced populations from the tsunami of 2004 in rebuilding their lives through job training, building homes, and income generation activities.

MRDF primarily responds to emergency situations through its local partners, Methodist Churches and Action by Churches Together (ACT) International. This year we have worked through ACT in 11 different countries, funding well-known measures such as relief for the displaced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as less-publicised efforts such as assisting returnees in Burundi. We have been encouraged by the response to our special appeals for emergencies in Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan.

4. Advocacy and education – seeking to influence decision-makers by challenging injustice at a structural level in our target countries and in the UK

During this year, MRDF has strengthened its partners' capacity to bring about change through advocacy at local, regional and national levels. Specific training and funding has been provided in this area. Key activities and achievements include:

- Permaculture Institute of El Salvador (IPES) mobilised a community-led advocacy campaign to seek state commitment for discouraging the use of chemical fertilisers and promote organic farming.
- ADAC in Mali worked through Village Development Committees in an attempt to influence them to earmark a minimum of 7% tax revenue for setting up and strengthening health services.
- READ (India) sought state commitment for a lift irrigation project for Dalits in the region. This region has had no state-sponsored development schemes so far.
- RAIDS (India) organised a public hearing session where local and state-level officials had to respond to public queries regarding inadequacies and corruption in the public distribution

system.

- The September 2008 issue of *Strength to Strength*, our capacity-building newsletter, focused on advocacy.

Focusing on the key challenges facing our partners overseas, MRDF also undertook advocacy and education in the UK, seeking to help supporters and churches to develop a critical understanding of the causes of poverty and take positive action in the pursuit of justice. In 2008/09 we achieved this in two principal ways:

i) Resourcing church groups and individuals

4,500 copies of MRDF's six-week group study guide, *What does the Bible say about changing the world?* were distributed free-of-charge to groups and churches. A resource pack for churches, *Enriching Harvest*, highlighted the work being carried out by MRDF's partner in India to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable farming communities.

Five 'Make your Mark' day conferences were held around the UK which aimed to equip supporters to take positive action for change.

World AIMS, MRDF's joint initiative with Methodist Colleges and Schools, continued to act as a catalyst for developing the idea of global citizenship in the 70+ Methodist Foundation Schools in England and Wales across the state and independent sectors.

ii) Grants to development education and campaigning organisations

As a small charity, MRDF realises that its impact will be increased by working in partnership with others. In 2008/09 we issued grants totalling £46,000 to support development education and campaigning work carried out by expert partners in the UK including Jubilee Debt Campaign, The World Development Movement and Labour Behind the Label.

Financial position

A major challenge for MRDF during this period was sustainability in the face of the economic downturn. The devaluation of the pound against many currencies meant resources were stretched more tightly than ever, and it was feared that the recession would also adversely affect income. However, our supporters and institutional funders continued to support us generously and total income for the financial year increased by 3.2% to £2,034,000.

MRDF's consolidated statement of its financial activities to 31 August 2009 is set out on the next page. Copies of its full accounts, including the notes referred to in this statement, can be downloaded from www.mrdf.org.uk or obtained by writing to MRDF, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR.

***** RESOLUTION**

7/1. The Conference received the Report.

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 August 2009

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2009 £	Total 2008 restated £
Incoming resources from generated funds					
<i>Voluntary Income:</i>					
Donations & grants	1,027,763	629,691	-	1,657,454	1,599,530
Legacies	273,797	-	-	273,797	241,655
Investment income & interest	91,537	10,535	-	102,072	128,592
<i>Activities for generating funds:</i>					
Sales & other income	411	-	-	411	302
Total incoming resources	1,393,508	640,226	-	2,033,734	1,970,079
Resources expended					
<i>Cost of generating funds:</i>					
Fundraising & publicity	107,094	-	-	107,094	105,332
Cost of Sales & Investment Mgt	10,333	-	-	10,333	10,824
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Development	616,780	582,839	-	1,199,619	851,652
Humanitarian	38,325	298,026	-	336,351	330,245
UK Grants	12,201	-	-	12,201	115,912
Advocacy & Education	192,967	-	-	192,967	175,720
Governance costs	68,237	-	-	68,237	67,037
Total resources expended	1,045,937	880,865	-	1,926,802	1,656,722
Net incoming/(outgoing)resources	347,571	(240,639)	-	106,932	313,357
Other recognised gains/(losses)	(113,403)	-	-	(113,403)	(107,086)
Net movement in funds	234,168	(240,639)	-	(6,471)	206,271
Total funds brought forward at 1 September 2008	305,231	258,779	5,000	569,010	781,780
Prior Year adjustment	419,041	-	-	419,041	-
Total funds brought forward at 1 September 2008 (restated)	724,272	258,779	5,000	988,051	781,780
Total funds at 31 August 2009 as originally stated	958,440	18,140	5,000	981,580	569,010
Prior Year adjustment	-	-	-	-	419,041
Total funds at 31 August 2009 as restated	958,440	18,140	5,000	981,580	988,051

There are no recognised gains and losses other than those dealt with above. All operations are continuing during the year.