

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

GAMBIA

10 June, 2003

Appeal No. 01.37/2003; Appeal Target: CHF 259,398

Programme Update No. 01; Period covered: January-May, 2003

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 26.8 %; See attached Contributions List for details or see the Federation's website at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap013703.pdf

Outstanding needs: CHF 189,842

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Sahel sub-regional programmes (Appeal 01.41/2003)

Programme Summary: The Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) is implementing a food and nutrition project in North Bank Division (NBD), which will run from September 2003- June 2004. The project will involve 9,000 school children in 35 Red Cross School Links in NBD. The GRCS will educate the children about maintaining a well balanced diet, and assist them with activities that promote good nutrition such as the planting of vegetable gardens in schools.

Lack of financial support for the Annual appeal hindered implementation of planned Health, Financial Development and Disaster Management activities.

Operational developments

Gambia is now approaching the rainy season. The Government, however, has already declared a crop failure for the 2002-2003 season. Some food aid will be needed due to a short fall in cereal production. Although food is available, there are areas with high rates of malnutrition. The Gambia Red Cross is responding to the needs of those suffering from malnutrition by launching a Food Security project (see below under Disaster management) that aims at educating school children about the importance of a varied diet.

The country is still wrestling with a troubled economy. Inflation is expected to exceed the forecasted 5.5%. For Gambian families, the depreciated Gambian Dalasis means price increases.

The Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) with the assistance of the Federation, created and adopted a Plan of Action for immediate implementation. The plan includes activities such as conducting an external audit, upgrading the Society's Finance Management System, restructuring and developing GRCS's national headquarters' capacity, supporting branch development, and conducting a membership drive.

Health and care

The HIV/AIDS programme introduced in the 2003-2004 Annual Appeal was revisited and scaled down due to lack of funds and the limited time available for implementation and reporting. The GRCS youth are highly committed to HIV/AIDS awareness activities. Currently the GRCS is running two campaigns to raise public awareness about the disease. The two campaigns are:

- A three months' campaign with a "filter down" method (trainers to link leaders to members to public) that is supposed to include all links in the seven branches. It is time-consuming and the reporting ("filter back") arrangements are complex.
- A controlled campaign in a limited geographical area (one town area in each division) and during a short time period (3-4 weeks), carried out mainly by the trainers. Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys will measure impact and reporting to donors will be given priority. A special activity report has been designed to facilitate measuring the impact of activities on the community, and reporting requirements.

Goal: To complement current efforts made by other key players in the Gambia to reduce HIV/AIDS and STDs through prevention activities promoting behaviour change.

Objective: Activities undertaken by the GRCS to promote HIV/AIDS and STDs-related behaviour change and increased access to condoms in Central River and Upper River Divisions are reinforced.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Knowledge is increased and behaviour improved about preventing HIV/AIDS and STDs among youth, as a result of targeting Popular Opinion Leaders, and involving People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) in the process.

Activities began at the end of May, and continued for 3-4 weeks in two of the targeted communities (Brikama Ba in Central River Division and Basse Santa Su in Upper River Division), and for three months in other targeted communities.

Reinforced capacity of the National Society to undertake HIV/AIDS and STDs prevention activities in the respective Divisions.

Three training workshops were carried out between May 20-28 in Pakali Nding (LRD). One hundred and twenty participants selected as trainers, mainly from CRD and URD (80), spent three days attending lectures about subjects such as HIV/AIDS prevention and control, voluntary testing and counselling, behavioural change and blood donor recruitment. Group work on developing strategies for local activities and discussions took place concerning ways and means to engage volunteers and link members in the local community.

Increased knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS and STDs prevention among the target population.

In May, a baseline KAP survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected persons ages 15-24 in CRD and URD. A second baseline survey, specifically for Brikama Ba and Basse Santa Su, was prepared for early June, targeting 100 persons in each community. Post campaign KAP surveys will be done in early July (Brikama Ba and Basse Santa Su), and the end of August.

Increased access to youth friendly health facilities and counselling services.

No progress as of yet.

Increased access to condoms, facilitating adoption of safer sex practices and behaviour modification in the target areas.

Condoms were provided by the National AIDS Secretariat (NAS), a government institution, and three different leaflets were produced by GRCS, to be available and distributed during the campaign period.

Impact

Due to the delay with starting up of the activities, it is too early to report on the impact of GRCS activities on the beneficiaries. However, the training workshops were very well received, and the trainers have shown great enthusiasm in planning activities in their respective home communities.

Constraints

The late arrival of the cash transfer (end of March), and the considerable strain on the project coordination staff at Headquarters and other key volunteers in some of the branches, supporting the Government in the 2003 general census, delayed project implementation by more than two months.

Disaster Management

Planned program activities were not implemented due to lack of funding. As of the end of May, less than 50% of the planned budget was allocated to the National Society, which forced the GRCS to revisit program objectives and activities.

The revised program plan features a small food and nutrition project in North Bank Division (NBD), that will be implemented during the period of September 2003- June 2004. NBD has a low crop production rate, and was further affected by the crop failure in 2002. The project will involve 9,000 school children in 35 Red Cross School Links in NBD. The GRCS, through the project, will educate school children about proper nutrition, and the importance of a balanced and varied food basket. Over the course of the school year (nine months), the links will have at least ten sessions on nutrition, practice planting nutritional food at home, and measure the impact that consuming nutritious food has on their own health. Five schools will be supported with establishing vegetable gardens for the purpose of demonstration. The project will be coordinated with other food security activities in the region, and in cooperation with the Njawarra Agricultural Training Centre, located in the project area. Continuous monitoring of the project will be the responsibility of the GRCS NBD branch. If successful, the model could be replicated in more school links in the division and to links in other regions.

Goal: Gambian households have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

Objective: 9,000 school children (grades 4-6) understand, practice and benefit from food adequate to meet their dietary needs.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

- Students demonstrate their full understanding of the relationship between nutritious food and personal health.
- 75 % of target group (6,750 students) maintain their own mini-gardens at home.
- Students adding nutritious food to their daily diet gain weight.
- Improved capacity to implement food security projects in the GRCS branch.

Impact

The data is not yet available.

Constraints

Late incoming funds, and the need to coordinate project activities with the target schools have delayed the initiation of project activities until September 2003.

Organisational Development

Goal: The Gambia Red Cross is an increasingly well-functioning national society.

Objective: Financial management and resource development capacities of the Gambia Red Cross are strengthened.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

As mentioned in the Appeal, the Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) is struggling with weak management systems affecting reporting demands and a strong dependence on external funding. In addition, financial constraints, staff vacancies and departures, and the country's troubled economy have contributed to the National Society's difficulties. However, the Society shows its good will with seeking improvement, and bring the GRCS back to and beyond its former capacity.

The Head of the Federation's Dakar Regional Office visited the National Society 4-7 March 2003 and made several proposals for assistance linked to the financial development project: support for a comprehensive management and financial audit covering the past three years, organization of a governance/management workshop, and technical support for development of appropriate financial management systems following recommendations in the above-mentioned audit.

A Technical Advisor was deployed to the GRCS. The first visit took place March 19-April 10 and a second visit took place on May 14-June 16. A Plan of Action for the restructuring of the Society's Headquarters was agreed upon and the external auditors spent six weeks preparing the audit for 2000-2002. Meanwhile, the Finance development project as planned in the appeal is still pending. A visit by the Dakar Regional Office Finance Development Delegate is planned for June 9-13. Her terms of reference include working on a revised *organisational chart* indicating the necessary staffing of the Society's Finance Department to be designed; *Job Descriptions* for each of the posts with required educational background and working experience to handle the planned new system; planning for *Recruitment of staff* and preparing *specifications* for a suitable computer software package covering general ledger, cash management, payroll, budget application and fixed assets (preliminary estimate of modules required).

Expected results of the programme include:

Sound financial management systems and procedures are developed and resource development capacities are coordinated and planned.

In the field of accounting and budgeting documentation, GRCS has found that current systems are not adequate, and not meeting international standards. Shortcomings in financial reporting which affects their relations with partners. As a consequence of, among others, finance management issues, the GRCS is facing a serious cash flow situation.

Accounting and budgeting software is installed.

The GRCS could join forces with other National Societies in West Africa in procuring and installing a new finance management system. Therefore, the timing of the procurement process will depend on the preparations taking place in other Societies. A consultant with expertise in the area will be assigned to assist in the procurement.

Budgets are consolidated and chart of accounts revised and completed.

Headquarters' core cost budget for April-December 2003 has been revised and ongoing projects checked to determine whether they are on track and maintaining their activities within the approved budgets.

Finance management staff involved in preparation and budget control, as well as finance reporting.

There is currently no budget control system in place.

Rules and procedures are introduced with finance procedural manual fully respected by national society staff.

In 1999, consultants were engaged by the GRCS to carry out a "Finance Health Check" and to prepare a Finance procedures' manual. The plan was not finalized but this document can be a starting point for the development of the manual in connection with the introduction of a computerized accounting and budgeting package.

Professional skills of finance staff are improved through training.

The inevitable upgrading of the GRCS finance and management system will require the recruiting and training of qualified staff. New posts as Chief Accountant and Cashier shall be introduced. Job descriptions for all positions in the reorganised Finance Department will be developed and the recruiting process will be initiated as soon as adequate funding has been secured. Consequently, a new salary scale prepared by the Society will have to be considered in order to attract qualified staff.

By end 2003 one national resource development committee is organised in the National Society (composition and Terms of Reference approved).

A Resource Development Committee was appointed. A Resource Development Officer supervises small income generating projects. The GRCS Secretary General and the Finance Officer also carry out activities in this field. A redefinition of roles and responsibilities regarding resource development activities and planning is one of the most important challenges of the management reorganisation process.

By end 2003 a resource development plan is developed (operational plan with measurable objectives and defined responsibilities).

There is a high potential for increased domestic income with a variety of sources of income. Today, most of GRCS income derives from rentals of the three story Red Cross House that was constructed with donor support and opened in 1999. A number of new initiatives are being developed. In the revised budget for April-December 2003, income-generating projects (IGPs) account for some 50% of the total income. For year 2004 and onwards, a detailed resource development plan will be drafted.

Impact

The development of a Plan of Action and its early implementation has brought some inspiration to the GRCS, now busy preparing a comprehensive Organisational Development plan for the 2004-2007 Appeal.

Constraints

Limited financial resources is a considerable constraint to the much needed restructuring of the GRCS's Finance Department as well as the Society's Headquarters as a whole.

Coordination

The Federation's Dakar Regional Office and the Technical Advisor have assisted the National Society with coordinating its contacts with partners. The Plan of Action mentioned above for short and medium term initiatives has been shared with the ICRC and concerned sister National Societies.

GRCS is planning to develop a strategic work plan for 2004 and onwards, since the present one is covering 2001-2003. As soon as the plan is adopted, GRCS, with Federation support, will initiate a CAS process and plans to hold a Partnership Meeting during the first half of 2004.

Gambia: Appeal 01.37/2003; Programme Update no. 1

For further information please contact:

- *The Gambia Red Cross Society, Email: redcrossgam@gamtel.gm*
- *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Dakar Regional Office, Head of Office, Email: ifrcsn03@ifrc.org*
- *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Africa Department, Mark Willis, Email: mark.willis@ifrc.org; Tel: +41.22.730-42 60*

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
-------	----------	----------	------	-----------	------	---------

CASH

				TOTAL COVERAGE		
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				259'398		26.8%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				50'000		
IRISH - GOVT				12'000	28.04.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/FINANCE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				62'000	CHF	23.9%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
FRANCE	DELEGATE(S)			7'556		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				7'556	CHF	2.9%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	