

AFRICAN RED CROSS/RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES HEALTH INITIATIVE

(ARCHI 2010)

CHF 652,000

Programme no 01.03/99

The Context

In Africa today, there is a growing gap between rich and poor in their access to basic health care. Although nearly all African countries have improved their level of technical knowledge and medical service, the impact on the actual health of the most vulnerable remains marginal. In many cases, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies must assist governments in providing the very minimal standards of health care in vulnerable communities.

The time, energy and money invested in basic health care activities by Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies throughout Africa is considerable. In 1995 and again in 1996, African National Societies received more than CHF 35 million annually in development funding - much of it dedicated to health problems. In both years, Africa represented 40% of the Federation's total global development funding budget. Undoubtedly, this trend will continue for some time to come. This situation, combined with the widely diverging performances of National Societies across the continent, has motivated the Federation Secretariat to suggest a review of the priorities, strategy, and approach to Red Cross/Red Crescent health service efforts. The result of such an analysis may be an affirmation of current Red Cross/Red Crescent programmes - or a call for fundamental change.

The Programme

The goal of ARCHI 2010 is to improve the health situation of Africa's vulnerable individuals and other groups served by the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies on the continent. As a recognised auxiliary to their respective Health Ministries, National Societies are strategically positioned to contribute to government efforts to improve the quality and impact of basic health services. This initiative aims at supporting and strengthening African National Societies' capacities to respond more effectively to tomorrow's basic health needs. ARCHI 2010 will review the current health activities of the 53 National Societies in Africa; examine the substantial Red Cross/Red Crescent health investments in the past; and begin a process to review the current national health priorities needed to develop a flexible framework of health intervention options based on the Federation's "core" health recommendations. Using this framework, National Societies will be able to begin formulating in 2000 their long-term national health strategies through the year 2010.

Objectives

- Identification of national health priorities.
- Review of priorities and drawing up recommendations.
- Consultation with African National Societies and Participating National Societies.
- Formulation of a continental health strategy for the African National Societies to contribute to the improvement of health.

Plan of Action for 1999

- Collect, analyse, and organise findings of field visit reports; add information to ARCHI 2010 information database.
- Begin building the "flexible framework" of health priorities and options for Red Cross/Red Crescent engagement
- Convene ARCHI 2010 expert committee to review and advise on findings, options, and proposed African health strategy framework.
- Conduct five sub-regional health strategy meetings with National Societies, Health Ministries, and other partners; present summary conclusions identifying Red Cross/Red Crescent "niche" in health in Africa to technical experts from various Health Ministries.
- Develop paper on strategic partnerships between National Societies and their Health Ministries.
- Conduct one-day "African Health Strategy Pre-Conference" in October 1999.
- Support dissemination of African Health Strategy (ARCHI 2010).
- Develop Red Cross/Red Crescent capacity building framework and plans for individual upgrades at National Society level (training, communications, computers, etc.).