

PACIFIC

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

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Introduction

The Pacific region is an area of great diversity, both in culture and in socio-economic development. Most of the countries in the region have been classified by the World Bank in the lower or lower-middle income grouping. Long term barriers to development, which affect resource development and fund-raising, include: small land masses, growing populations, small domestic markets, geographical isolation from major trading partners, geographical dispersion, ecological fragility, and vulnerability to natural events such as cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and volcanic eruptions. Apart from structural damage, natural disasters can cause immense damage to the socio-economic development of the Pacific Island nations by destroying infrastructure and limiting government spending on other areas of the economy.

The 12 National Red Cross Societies of the Pacific reflect the diversity and differing economic levels in the region. They range from long-established, well-structured organisations to very small bodies, often less than a decade old. In many cases the National Societies are struggling to find the resources to sustain their activities from the small economic pool available to them and, like their governments, they have to rely on diminishing assistance from outside.

With the assistance of the Regional Delegation, National Societies have developed greatly over the last few years and their programmes are now beginning to bear fruit. Limited external funding and the relative isolation of many of these countries have encouraged National Societies to develop a tradition of self reliance and this has influenced their priorities. The challenge for the Delegation is to maintain and increase this momentum towards self reliance in an environment of limited funding opportunities.

Objectives

The objectives for 1999 are to assist National Societies in the region:

- To continue to develop strong organisational structures, adequate capacities and effective policies based on improved methodologies, systems and practices

- To enhance the Red Cross image and profile in the region, with particular emphasis on creating funding opportunities through the improvement of communications between National Societies and with the rest of the world
- To ensure that communities have the awareness and capacity to protect and improve their health and general well-being, and are able to prepare for and minimise the effects of disasters
- To enhance disaster preparedness and response capacity at a regional and national level
- To establish effective structures and resources to enable National Societies to carry out national level health programmes according to their country specific programmes.

At the VIIIth Programme Meeting for Pacific National Societies in Fiji in June 1998, the National Societies identified their priorities for Red Cross programmes in the region as:

- Institutional Development
- Development of a higher profile for the region, promoting its uniqueness
- Retention of the existing programmes, developed as a result of the priority tasks identified in the Beijing Declaration, with a new emphasis on the concept of "Community Based Self Reliance".

The July 1998 report of the Pacific Regional Delegation Review also came up with recommendations, including the following:

- Institutional development and capacity building should be integrated into the work of all delegation programmes
- A concerted profile raising and fundraising strategy for the region needs to be drawn up and implemented
- All avenues of Federation dissemination should be used to raise the profile of the region.

The Regional Delegation Strategic Plan for 1999 and beyond reflects the above priorities. The result is greater emphasis on Institutional Development and Information and Communications. The concept of Community Based Self Reliance as an approach encompassing First Aid, Health Care and Disaster Preparedness has grown stronger and this trend will continue during 1999 and beyond. As the National Societies develop structures to support this concept, their programmes will increasingly focus on community based activities. This is the eventual aim of the Regional Delegation strategy.

Programmes

Institutional Development

- National Society Staff Development

A "staff-on-loan" programme will be initiated between National Societies. Two staff-on-loan will be placed within the region.

Two National Societies' staff members will be provided with advanced technical training in specific fields.

- National Society Institutional Development and Support

During 1999, a Development Delegate will give practical assistance and advice to two selected National Societies. Matters covered will include fund-raising, budgeting, reporting, management and computer skills.

- Formation of New National Societies

The Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, which have been developing their Red Cross structures, will be supported as Societies in formation in 1999, while similar support will be given to Niue, currently in the early stages of developing a National Society.

Information and Communications

- Information and Communications Officers Training Workshop

As part of the Asia and Pacific programme a workshop will be held, attended by 20 participants from Pacific National Societies. It will include fund-raising and image building in addition to information and publicity issues.

- Millennium Campaign

In this one-time millennium year project, "seed funding" and technical advice will assist National Societies to enhance image and capacity building.

- Global Communications Network

National Societies will be linked to each other and to the rest of the world via the Internet, by the provision of suitable hardware, software and training. Connection fees and running costs will be underwritten for the first year of operation. The project will be spread over two years with six National Societies involved during 1999.

Community Based Self Reliance

The Regional Delegation recognised from the start that many of the distinctions between "Disaster Preparedness", "First Aid" and "Health Care" are purely artificial at the community level. The Community Based Self Reliance Programme is therefore designed to incorporate elements of disaster preparedness, first aid and health care into an integrated community based training programme. This involves the development of integrated training materials and guidelines, and facilitation of pilot projects to develop and refine the material and procedures.

As part of this process, the number of activities under the Disaster Preparedness and Health Programmes has decreased, while the number under the CBSR programme has increased proportionately.

This programme is the cornerstone of the Regional Delegation's and Pacific National Societies' approach to community based training.

- Review and reprint the Community Based Self Reliance Manual, the CBSR Disaster Preparedness Training Manual for Instructors, and the CBSR Train the Trainer Manual. A limited number of copies of these Manuals were printed in 1998. They have been developed by the Regional Delegation in co-operation with National Societies, and comprise the basic training and resource materials for the CBSR training programme. In 1999 they will be further field tested, adapted where necessary and reprinted.
- Community Based Self Reliance pilot project workshops. Building on the lessons learned from the first of these workshops, held in the Solomon Islands in 1998, a second workshop will be held.

Support will be given to the Solomon Islands Red Cross, and one other National Society to follow-up on and expand their CBSR training programmes.

- Pacific Regional CBSR Meeting. Late in 1999, a meeting of Pacific National Societies representatives will be held to further promote the concept of CBSR and to discuss various technical issues.
- Community Based Health Care Instructor Recruitment. Suitably qualified instructors for the Community Based Health Care component of the CBSR programme will be identified and recruited in those vulnerable areas where CBSR training will take place.

Disaster Preparedness

- Review of National Societies' Disaster Preparedness Plans. During 1997 - 1998 comprehensive guidelines on preparation of Red Cross DP plans were compiled and distributed to National Societies. This will now be followed up by the Regional DP Delegate, who will assist and advise National Societies in preparation or optimisation of their DP Plans. This will be done in two countries in 1999.
- Regional DP Plan and Information Base. The Delegation's Cyclone Response Plan will be further developed and expanded to include regional Red Cross resources and activities; they will be incorporated into a Regional Plan to optimise the use of these resources in times of emergency.
- Basic Disaster Management Training. A prerequisite of the CBSR training programme is that National Societies have sufficient personnel with knowledge of the basic principles of disaster management to enable them to train community members. As part of an ongoing programme, one country workshop in Basic Disaster Management will be facilitated by the Regional Delegation in 1999.
- Disaster Relief Containers. The Regional Delegation will continue to co-ordinate, monitor and report on the programme to supply National Societies with modified shipping containers for the storage of disaster relief supplies, and the replenishment of supplies utilised in disaster response operations. In 1999, this will also involve direct procurement of supplies.

Health

- Development and Training of Community Based First Aid Instructors

It is vital to ensure that certification requirements are maintained, and it is also a prerequisite for the CBSR programme that National Societies have available sufficient qualified instructors. Certification will be facilitated by training workshops conducted either by the Regional Health Delegate or by qualified staff-on-loan. In 1999 the Regional Delegation will assist two National Societies in this way.

- Regional First Aid/Community Health Plan

National Societies will be assisted with developing strategic plans for First Aid, CBSR and First Aid in the Workplace.

- Health Surveillance, Education Aids and Materials

A structure will be established in each National Society to facilitate the compilation of information on First Aid and Primary Health Care issues and sharing this with the Regional Delegation. A pool of culturally acceptable first aid, health care and educational aids and materials will be established.

- HIV/AIDS Awareness, Prevention and Control

The focus in 1999 will be to further the dissemination of culturally acceptable information and knowledge which will assist National Societies in their campaign to fight discrimination against HIV infected people and to promote awareness of how to prevent AIDS.

- Blood Services

National Societies will be assisted with the development of policy to facilitate and promote voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation.

National Societies will be provided with up to date information on blood related issues.

Advanced training will be provided for one National Society staff member in the region.
Solomon Islands

During the nine years' fighting on Bougainville, some islands inhabitants sought safety and medical care in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC) has been looking after the basic welfare needs of this group since 1991, ensuring food, shelter, clothing, transport, utensils and some gardening tools. Since the cease-fire, 139 Bougainvilleans returned home, but 49 others came for medical care (provided free by the SI government), leaving 203 islanders still in the care of the SIRC. Many of the Bougainvilleans are deferring their return until the political situation is clearer. It is anticipated that they will continue to stay in the Solomon Islands until at least to after the election in June 1999.

Objectives

- To maintain activities at four Care Centres in three provinces - Choiseul (Taro Island), Gizo and Guadalcanal - until repatriation takes place.
- To distribute food and other household necessities.

- To conduct an evaluation of the programme.