

# 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

## LESOTHO

12 June, 2003

Appeal No. 01.16/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 506,864 (2003) CHF 535,000 (2004)

Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: January to May, 2003

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### In Brief

Appeal coverage: 0%; please refer to the Contributions List which is available on the Federation's website.

Outstanding needs: CHF 506,864

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Southern Africa: Food Security and Integrated Community Care (Emergency Appeal 12/02)

**Programme Summary:** The Lesotho Red Cross Society is one of the eight National Societies involved in the Federation's Food Security Appeal (12/02). Although the Food Security operation requires many of the Society's resources, the Society is dedicated to the scaling-up of HIV/AIDS activities and efforts to respond to the pandemic, and the Society recently launched its first Home Based Care project.

### Operational developments

During the reporting period, Lesotho experienced severe food shortages and the country is part of the Federation's Food Security Appeal (15/03) covering several countries affected by the drought in the region. During the first part of 2003, the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) has distributed food to the most vulnerable communities mainly in areas targeted for HIV/AIDS projects. The Society also continued its activities within prevention and orphan care. LRCS is dedicated to scaling up its activities concerning HIV/AIDS in accordance with the Ouagadougou Declaration to respond to the country's enormous needs.

In early May, the Society launched its first Home Based Care Project with a large ceremony attended by the King and Queen of Lesotho. The King expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the LRCS with fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic and used the opportunity to pledge his support to the Lesotho Red Cross Society.

The LRCS is in the process of implementing a recovery plan to become a Well-Functioning National Society. With increased capacity, the Society will be able to increase its response efforts to meet the acute humanitarian needs in the country.

### Health and Care

As a result of the on-going food insecurity situation, Lesotho has faced severe food shortages particularly in the mountainous areas. More than one third of the people in the country have depended on food aid. This situation has

had a negative impact on the health of the most vulnerable people especially with regards to malnutrition, morbidity and other common health conditions.

The LRCS has a long history of running health clinics. The Society runs four clinics in the rural and most remote areas of the country: three in the lowlands; and, one in the mountains. The clinics provide basic health care to the most vulnerable in the following areas; ante-natal services, immunisation for children under five years old, family planning, consultation of patients, dispensing of drugs, and follow-up visits to patients in the community.

Despite the enormous needs no funding has been raised yet to support any of the planned activities in Lesotho. This means that none of the expected results set forth in the Appeal were achieved. All LRCS health activities have been postponed and will be implemented if and when funding is received.

**Overall Goal: A sustainable improvement in the general health and reduction in HIV/AIDS transmission of the targeted vulnerable communities through the provision of community-based health and care interventions.**

**Programme Objective: The Federation facilitates the development of the LRCS's capacity in community based health care and HIV/AIDS programming through the provision of community-based health and care interventions.**

### **HIV/AIDS**

Lesotho has been severely affected by HIV/AIDS and has a reported HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 31.5% (UNAIDS 2002). The LRCS has effectively implemented two orphan projects and four prevention projects targeting school children.

The Society is committed to scaling-up HIV/AIDS activities to the extent that LRCS possesses the necessary resources and capacity to fight the pandemic. During the reporting period the emergency Food Security Operation led to an increased workload of the Society's HIV/AIDS Programme as the food is being distributed to the HIV/AIDS Programme's targeted areas. Orphans, with parents who died from AIDS, received support from the National Society in the form of food, inputs and psychological support.

The Society's first Home Based Care (HBC) project was launched in the beginning of May with the participation of the King and Queen of Lesotho. The King expressed how pleased he was with the LRCS initiative to care for and support the most vulnerable and took the opportunity to pledge his support to the Society. Thirty-six enthusiastic HBC facilitators graduated and are ready to apply their skills and care to the people living with HIV/AIDS in their communities.

LRCS has conducted a baseline survey in the Mafeteng District to prepare for the implementation of a Home-Based Care project in the second quarter.

**Goal: A sustainable improvement in general health and reduction in HIV/AIDS transmission of the targeted vulnerable communities through the provision of community based health and care interventions.**

**Project Objective: The Federation facilitates the development of the National Society's capacity in HIV/AIDS programming, including sharing of lessons learnt from other Southern African National Societies.**

### **Achievements against the expected results**

The end of 2004 reduces the prevalence of HIV infection and impact reduced among the target group.

### **500 People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) provided with quality care and support.**

The LRCS conducted a baseline survey in Mafeteng to assess the need for a Home Based Care Project (HBC). The Survey was conducted during the third week of February by a consultant from the Federation together with the Senior Health and HIV/AIDS Coordinator for LRCS. The survey demonstrated an urgent need to establish a HBC project, as there are no other organizations implementing such programmes.

Training of 36 LRCS care facilitators was carried out during the second quarter, and the home-based care project was established and launched on May 10th.

The German Red Cross has demonstrated an interest in establishing two HBC Projects in Berea and Leribe. An assessment was done in order to develop a proposal for funding.

### **80,000 youths reached with safer sex skills.**

Over the reporting period;

- 24 trained peer educators working with 33 primary schools reached 6000 in- and out-of-school youths. Several sensitization sessions were held with community members.
- 41 teachers were trained as coaches in Mafeteng to sensitize learners and communities on HIV/AIDS.
- 21,600 male condoms were distributed. The condoms were sourced from the Ministry of Health.

### **1,000 Orphans supported materially.**

The National Society continued to strengthen the existing orphans' projects in Berea and Leribe. During the first half of 2003, the LRCS supported 200 orphans with school fees, uniforms, and food through the Food Security Operation. Community meetings were also held with leaders in Berea and Leribe to update them on the project activities.

### **The Capacity of the National Society is strengthened.**

LRCS hired a Programme Coordinator to support the Society's HIV/AIDS Coordinator with some of the responsibilities. Officers were also employed at the district level. At the end of February, the LRCS HIV/AIDS Coordinator participated at the Southern Africa Regional AIDS Network Meeting.

Preparations for the LRCS's annual General Meeting were made during the period.

With the launch of the Society's first HBC project in May, the Society will increase its experience and capacity within HIV/AIDS prevention and care, allowing LRCS to reach a greater number of vulnerable people.

### **Impact**

Two hundred orphans received assistance from the LRCS, thereby increasing their well being and reducing their vulnerability. Without the support of the National Society, the children would not be able to go to school and build a future for them.

The LRCS HBC project provides homebound patients with the necessary care and psychological support to improve their health and living conditions.

It is clear from the ongoing baseline surveys that the LRCS is noticeably increasing its visibility in Lesotho through the food security operation, and the HBC project. With the pledged support of the King, the Society is in a strong position to grow. As soon as the Society has developed its organizational capacity, LRCS will be able to respond to many more of the humanitarian needs in the country.

### **Constraints**

High staff turnover is an obstacle to implementing planned activities. As a result the HIV/AIDS coordinator's heavy workload caused some reduction in the planned output.

### **Coordination**

The National Society continued to work closely with Lenaso, UNAIDS, the American Embassy (funded the prevention programme), and other Government departments such as the Ministry of Health (provided condoms).

### **Disaster Management**

Over the last ten years, the LRCS was involved in various disaster interventions and gained valuable disaster management experience and capacity, especially at the branch level. The Society responded to the drought situation in 1994-1995; to the recent blizzards and tornadoes; and, is currently involved in the Food Security operation.

The LRCS, however, is well aware that its capacity in assessment, coordination, distribution, warehousing, reporting and cooperation still needs to be strengthened, and that it needs to focus on the development of a disaster management policy and plan, training of staff and volunteers, and the consolidation and coordination of branch strengths and weaknesses so as to improve the response capacity of the LRCS as a whole.

Three people from LRCS participated in the Regional Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) Training of Trainer's workshop in January 2003. The training offered the Society an opportunity to reflect on whether its programming is taking the vulnerability and capacity of the targeted beneficiaries into consideration to ensure that the impact of a given intervention is appropriate.

The Federation's Disaster Management (DM) department held a very successful Disaster Management planning meeting which LRCS participated in from 18-20 February 2003. The workshop was held to: consolidate the participants' 2003 DM plans in line with the National Societies' priorities, capacities and appeal; finalize and agree on the regional disaster response plan; agree on minimum standards of a well prepared National Society; and, come up with a development contract "MoC." The MoC is intended to establish operational parameters with the National Societies for the 2003 - 2004 period.

**Overall Goal: Vulnerability of communities in disaster prone areas is reduced and their ability to cope with effects of disasters is improved.**

**Programme Objective: The capacity of the LRCS to provide appropriate and timely support to the communities affected by disasters is increased.**

#### **Achievements against the expected result**

The capacity of LRCS to provide appropriate and timely support to the people threatened or affected by disasters was increased.

**The LRCS has a consolidated and updated database for human and technical disaster management resources that are accessible when needed; target for 11 emergency first aiders and 5 RDRT members by 2004.**

The LRCS now has six Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT) composed of trained staff and volunteers who can respond to any disaster and produce credible disaster assessment reports. The Society has updated its human resources database, and has 600 active volunteers who can be mobilized at short notice to respond to major disasters. A number of LRCS volunteers are already assisting with the current food security operation in Lesotho. The experience is improving the capacity of LRCS volunteers and staff to manage large-scale relief operations. LRCS plans to recruit a Disaster Management coordinator who will facilitate the smooth implementation of DM activities.

**Disaster management policy and plan in place and disseminated to all stakeholders by end of 2003.**

In an attempt to establish an operational framework, the LRCS has committed itself to the development of a disaster management policy and plan in 2003. The Federation's Regional Delegation is offering technical support towards the development of these important documents. Other policies and plans from other National Societies in the region were shared with LRCS so that it has a base to start from. It is expected that the development of a LRCS DM policy and plan will be done by July. Although efforts are being made to raise funds for the LRCS appeal on DM activities, funding is still insufficient to permit all of the planned DM activities to be implemented according to schedule.

**200 staff and volunteers countrywide trained in disaster management by end of 2003.**

In order to carry out a rapid disaster response which adheres to the Code of Conduct, in line with the Humanitarian Charter and SPHERE minimum standards, the LRCS needs to have well-trained staff and volunteers in basic disaster management. During February's regional disaster management planning meeting, LRCS maintained its plans for training staff and volunteers in disaster management, a move that will lead to the creation of a strong disaster response capacity. Financial constraints however have hindered the smooth implementation of all planned DM activities.

**Integrate long-term food security interventions in national society priority programmes.**

The on-going food security operation has given the LRCS the opportunity to learn how to integrate long-term food security interventions into National Society programming. This is going to improve chronic food insecurity in the country. LRCS is currently distributing food and supporting vulnerable people with agricultural inputs in four districts, namely, Mokhotlong with 26,171 beneficiaries, Leribe with 20627 beneficiaries, Berea with 19,519 beneficiaries and Botha-Bothe with 16,242 beneficiaries. The German Red Cross Society has supported the LRCS with the implementation of this project.

### **Countrywide Early Warning System (EWS) network based upon DMIS and situation monitoring by RDRT members established.**

The National Society has six RDRT trained staff and volunteers. However, these members have not been fully used in providing situation reports to the Federation's Regional Delegation and this needs to be addressed. The recruitment of a LRCS disaster management coordinator might improve the coordination of an Early Warning System by RDRT members.

### **Impact**

The agricultural inputs have helped increase crop production as well as improve the lives of the vulnerable communities of Mokhotlong, Leribe, Berea and Botha-Bothe. The on-going food security programme has helped beneficiaries to have access to food and improved nutritional status. Food and nutrition are especially critical for the survival of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The regional disaster response trained staff members of the LRCS contribute to the increased disaster response capacity of the Society.

Staff members have also been trained in VCA tools in order to identify the needs of the most vulnerable and their capacities, and to design programmes that address prioritized needs, which also result in quality service delivery.

Overall, the LRCS is making good progress and continues to increase its disaster response capacity.

### **Constraints**

The will to implement is high, but funding is still a problem, which hampers the smooth implementation of DM activities in LRCS. Given sufficient funding, the LRCS will be in a position to streamline its DM activities and become a Well Prepared National Society that can respond to any disaster in a timely manner and offer assistance adhering to the Code of Conduct, Humanitarian Charter and SPHERE minimum standards in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable people.

### **Coordination**

The Federation's Regional Delegation has offered technical support to the LRCS and shared information and reports with the LRCS. There is good coordination with the Federation's Food Security country office in Lesotho and all correspondences going to the LRCS are copied to them. This allows the LRCS to be in the picture and have full knowledge of the support being given, and for them to offer on-the-spot assistance to the LRCS. The agricultural inputs were supported by the German Red Cross Society, who are working with the LRCS through a Federation coordinated bilateral partnership. However, there are gaps in the funding with other DM areas that need to be addressed so that an appropriate disaster management infrastructure is put in place.

## **Organisational Development**

The regional Organisational Development (OD) Programme currently focuses on supporting the LRCS with institutional capacity building and the establishment of branches, volunteer management systems and effective financial management systems to ensure that the LRCS can respond to the humanitarian needs in the country. However, during the reporting period, the LRCS has been busy with the food security operation and had to hold off on many of the activities.

Federation OD support given so far to the LRCS has mostly been technical advice. The main area being the raising of funds for the LRCS's OD appeal, which so far has not received any contributions. The co-operation and coordination between the HIV/AIDS programme and food security operation have helped the Society to implement its rescue and recovery plan, as some activities were linked to the OD objectives.

The National Society is a member of the Regional Capacity Building Team (RCBT) that has recently been established as a regional forum for National Societies to share experiences and to assist each other in their capacity building process through peer support and the sharing of best practices.

The Society also participated in the resource development workshop that took place in Johannesburg, where all the National Societies in the region pledged to make regional fundraising a main priority to increase the Society's funding base.

**Overall Goal: Implementation of characteristics of a Well-Functioning National Society has improved the LRCS in the three key areas: foundation, capacity and performance.**

**Programme Objective: The National Society's institutional capacity and its progress towards operating as a well-functioning NS is enhanced through Secretariat support.**

#### **Achievements against the expected results:**

The capacity of LRCS to design and implement their strategic directions is improved.

- LRCS has a legal foundation that supports the effective implementation of programmes.
- LRCS has an effective volunteer management system in place.
- LRCS has increased its financial resource base both in value and diversity.
- LRCS has functional branches in place that are actively participating in project implementation.
- LRCS has in place effective financial management systems.

Discussions are going on between the Federation's Regional OD department and the LRCS to find support for the planned activities. PNS have been approached to look for funds to support the LRCS with its capacity building process.

The LRCS is currently finalising the volunteer policy, which will ensure an effective volunteer support system.

The food security project, which is currently being implemented by the LRCS, also increases the Society's capacity in financial management.

The Society participated in the regional resource mobilisation and has pledged to give priority to local fundraising initiatives, as the Society is still struggling to find donor societies within the Movement.

#### **Impact**

The LRCS is dedicated to implementing its recovery plan to become a Well-Functioning National Society. The process has been slow to take off, but improvement is gradually being felt and the Society is now part of the Regional Capacity Building Team where the participants share information and best practices with other National Societies in the region.

#### **Constraints**

Staff-turnover in the LRCS has been high consequently limiting the output of the planned activities and changes. The lack of donor support for the Federation's Lesotho Country Appeal also seriously affects the implementation of the planned OD activities. However, it is essential that the Regional OD programme continues to support the LRCS to become a well-functioning national society to increase its response capacity to respond to the acute humanitarian needs in the country.

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