

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

THE GAMBIA

11 November 2003

Appeal no. 01.37/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 259,398 (USD 177,986 or EUR 176,364).

Programme Update No. 02

Period covered: June - September 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: 44.8%; **Click here to go to the attached Contributions List**, or refer to Federation website.

Outstanding needs: CHF 143,176 (USD 107,500 or EUR 92,200); see special note on page 8.

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Refer to Information Bulletins 1/03 and 2/03, Gambia: Squall in Upper River Division, issued 01 September and 12 September 2003, respectively. CHF 30,000 was allocated from DREF for storm relief.

Programme Summary: The **Gambia Red Cross Society** has made major breakthroughs since the last reporting period in addressing its internal crisis: three years of audited financial accounts and a valuable management report to serve as a future road map are now available. A new secretary general is being appointed; almost all staff has been released with some being rehired on a contractual basis as funds permit. A new finance director and finance assistant have been recruited. Concerns raised by the government of Gambia were addressed by the national society. Plans for 2004 have been developed. Minimal but significant activities have continued during the period: the HIV/AIDS programme reaching out to 5,400 youth, and emergency relief was provided to 1,000 victims of a storm which destroyed crops, damaged 1,600 homes, killed three, and injured dozens. Lack of funding prohibited any implementation of the food security programme. The stage is now set for the national society to re-launch itself into a new era, provided partners help the national society to consolidate its gains, and support the Gambia Red Cross Society in a coordinated manner.

Operational developments

It is still too early to tell if this year's rainfall will yield better harvest than last year. Even then, there is a shortage of seeds following last year's crop failure. There are constraints on logistics while buying products from the farmers. Food aid is expected from the US, Taiwan and Algeria. Tourism seems not able to meet its objectives of 100,000 visitors, but with improved economic conditions in Europe, next year should be better. The Gambian currency continues to weaken even against the weak US dollar and inflation is not far from 10% in 2003.

The Gambia Red Cross Society did not manage to launch the planned food security project in the North Bank Division due to lack of funds. It is now scheduled for 2004. The Lower River Division has been added to the programme.

The Gambia Red Cross Society's financial accounts for the last three years (2000-2002) have been audited. The auditors' management report will serve as a very useful tool for the national society. A new secretary general is in the process of being appointed, along with a new finance director who will be able to carry out the objectives of the finance development programme. All staff have been sent on leave as the national society sorts out its finances, while some others were hired on contractual basis to keep nominal activities going. All offices in Red Cross House save one have now been rented out and are bringing in the much needed income. Members of the board are working well together, determined to finish the national society's tough journey by the end of 2003.

It is now important to consolidate the gains made. The Federation Technical Advisor intends to conduct a fourth mission in November.

Health and care

As outlined in the 2003 Annual Appeal for the Gambia, the project intends to intensify the national campaign against HIV/AIDS, in line with the national HIV/AIDS policy. The project is concentrated on two of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence areas in the country - Central River Division (CRD) and Upper River Division (URD). The project targets young people, who represent one of the most vulnerable groups, with varied backgrounds, including: out-of-school youth, and youth in search of jobs leaving them stranded in cities, further exposing them to high risk behavior such as commercial sex.

Due to the limited availability of funds (approx. CHF 34,000 or 22% of the appeal budget), the project plan had to be revised and reduced. To meet the strong commitment of the Gambia Red Cross Society youth towards HIV/AIDS awareness activities, not only in CRD and URD, the revised project has been implemented with the following three main activities:

- A series of training of trainers' workshops for 120 participants.
- A three-month campaign (June to August) with a "filter down" method where trainers link leaders to members of the public. This includes of 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 of CRD and URD) in the month of June was carried out mainly by the trainers. KAP¹ surveys will measure impact and a special activity report has been used to facilitate impact measuring and reporting requirements.

Goal: To complement current efforts made by other key players in the Gambia to reduce new HIV/AIDS and STD² through prevention activities promoting behaviour change.

Objective: Activities undertaken by the Gambia Red Cross Society to promote HIV/AIDS and STD-related behaviour change and increased access to condoms in Central River and Upper River Divisions are reinforced

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¹ KAP – Knowledge, attitude and practice

² STD – Sexually-transmitted disease(s)

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Training of trainers’ workshops

As noted in the first programme update,³ three training workshops were carried out in May in Pakali Nding (Lower River Division). Participants (120) selected as trainers, mainly from Central River Division and Upper River Division (80) spent three days on lectures on topics 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 on ways and means to engage volunteers and link members in the local community. The training workshops were very well received. Evaluation of the workshop was done daily. Trainers showed great enthusiasm in planning activities for their respective home communities.

The “filter-down” campaign

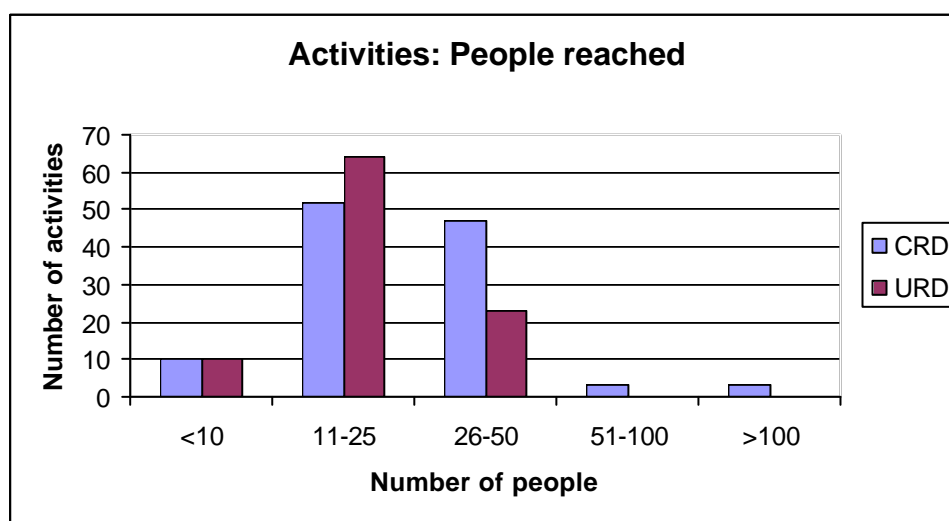
Reports are not yet available.

The CRD/URD campaign

During a field visit to CRD and URD 23 June, the activity report and the KAP survey formats were introduced to the teams of trained educators. The following activities were carried out:

Activity	CRD	URD
Speech/lecture	19	84
Focus group discussion	23	80
Demonstration/march	3	
Drama	1	
House-to-house	65	
Total	111	164

A total of 208 activities were carried out (CRD 111, URD 97) reaching out to a total of 5,391 persons (CRD 3,660, URD 1,731). All activities took place in June. Most of the activities reached between 11 and 25 persons per session.



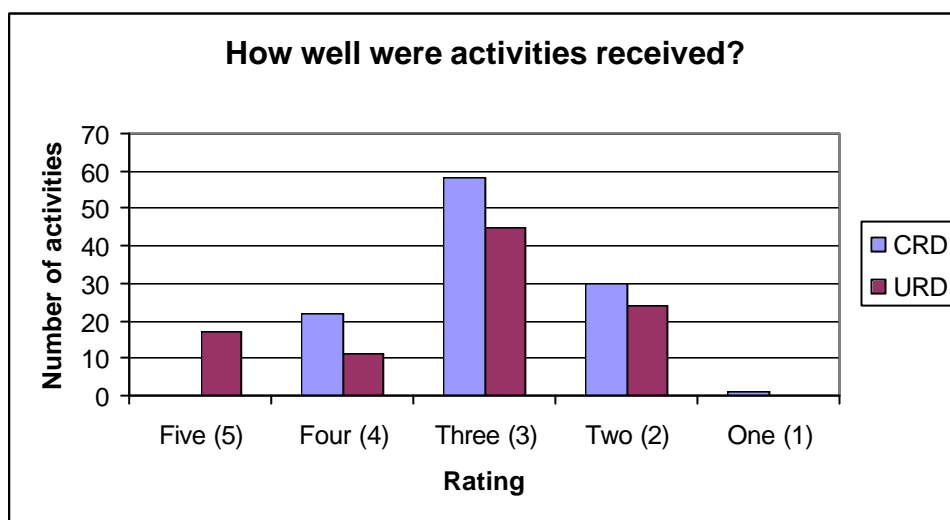
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³ Annual Appeal no. 01.37/2003: The Gambia, Programme Update no. 1 dated 10 June 2003, issued 21 July 2003.

During the activities, brochures and leaflets were distributed and condoms handed out. Unfortunately, brochures were not available as requested from the National AIDS Secretariat at the time. Project funds did not allow sufficient copies of the Gambia Red Cross Society leaflets: three leaflets were designed, and only 500 copies made, mainly for testing purposes.

Distribution of:	CRD	URD
Brochures, leaflets	344	884
Condoms	14,615	4,930

The teams were asked to estimate how well the activities were received, using a scale from 1 to 5 (1=not very popular; 5=extremely well received).



Impact

A baseline KAP survey for the selected areas in CRD (Brikamaba) and URD (Basse Santa Su) was prepared, targeting 100 randomly selected persons in each community⁴. The pre test took place early June, the post campaign survey in July.

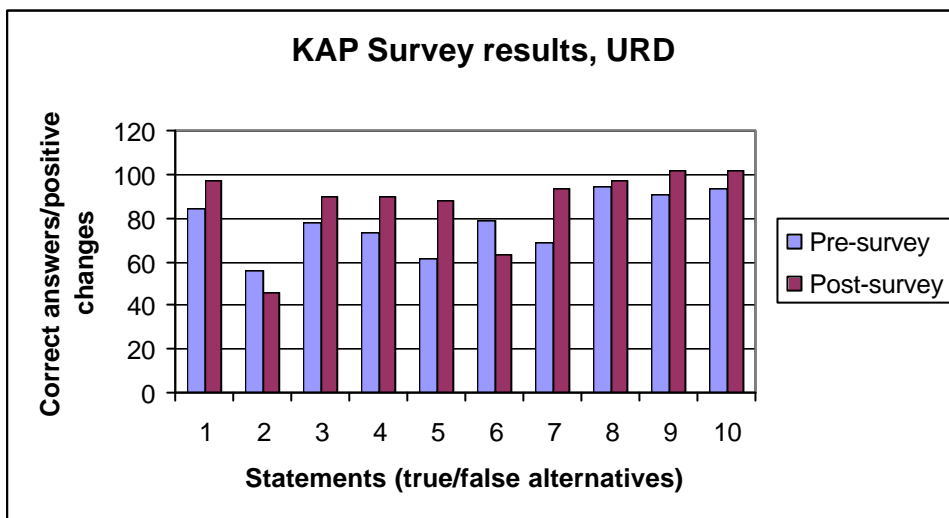
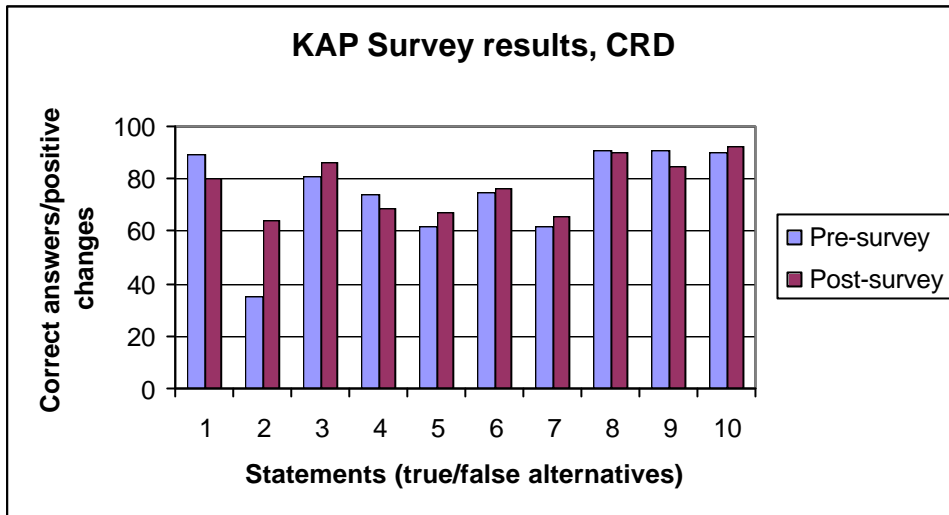
There are considerable levels of knowledge about the questions asked. This may either be an exposure to similar issues in school or other unspecified sources. The situation changes from time to time; a need for intensified IEC⁵ activities on HIV/AIDS prevention and control, as well as related issues, remains important in the service delivery process both at the central and community levels, giving way to greater awareness of the infection on HIV/AIDS.

After doing a small validation exercise in the areas covered, the KAP results indicated that the trained volunteers had been successful in sensitizing people in their respective areas. However, the level of the target group’s understanding should not create complacency, as it may not bring about change of attitude. Situations also change and the community should be abreast with the prevailing circumstances.

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⁴ The KAP survey format (available on request) contains 11 true-false statements covering knowledge, attitudes and performance.

⁵ IEC – Information, Education, Communication



Constraints

Late cash transfer considerably strained project coordinating staff at headquarters and other key volunteers in some of the branches which were supporting the government in the 2003 general census. This led to delays in the implementation by more than two months.

Although well received and with considerable impact, the intensive campaign weeks in CRD and URD could have achieved more. In a follow-up meeting with all participating staff and volunteers, the following comments and recommendations were made:

- TV/video equipment would make the activities more attractive and effective.
- Means of transportation are needed to facilitate the movement of the teams.
- More volunteers need to be trained which would make the work faster; this approach is being used in the “filter-down” campaign.
- Funds should be available to provide refreshments (*Ataya* - green tea) to the youth participating in the activities.
- Refresher trainings should be periodically organized.
- The ‘training of trainers’ workshops should include training on counselling and guidance.
- HIV/AIDS information corners should be established in each branch office.

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Coordination

There is a continuous contact between the Gambia Red Cross Society and the National AIDS Secretariat, which can provide IEC material, expertise and general support. Coordination with other humanitarian organisations is above all taking place within TANGO⁶ and the Stepping Stones Program.⁷

Disaster Management

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

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

This programme has not been implemented due to lack of funds.

Organizational Development

Goal: The Gambia Red Cross Society 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 first programme update, the Gambia Red Cross Society has been traversing a difficult phase due to weak management systems affecting reporting demands and strong dependence on external funding. In addition, other elements have contributed to the current critical situation within the national society: deteriorating relations between governance and management, financial constraints, alleged mismanagement of funds, and staff vacancies and departures. In March, a technical advisor was recruited to assist the Gambia Red Cross Society to reorient itself. Three short missions took place between March and October. The achievements listed below incorporate the financial management objectives listed in the 2003 Gambia appeal (01.37/2003), as well as those for the missions of the technical advisor.

External finance and management audit

The audit report covering 2000, 2001 and 2002 has now been signed and copies have been submitted to the Federation and ICRC; copies will also be mailed to key partners. The auditors' management report will serve as a very useful tool for the national society.

Finance Management System

A senior accountant has been recruited to head the finance department, and is expected to start working at the end of October. The employment of a senior accountant has also been initiated. The headquarters budget for the remaining four months of the year has been revised.

Reinstate the Gambia Red Cross Society Senior Management

The central committee appointed a new secretary general in its meeting of 20 September 2003. A governance-management workshop is being planned for December 2003 (or early 2004); invitees include branch chairpersons, branch officers, the executive committee and headquarters' senior staff.

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⁶ Coordinating office for NGOs in the Gambia

⁷ A World Bank financed HIV/AIDS programme involving several organisations, with the Gambia Red Cross Society responsible for activities in certain districts in Western Division

Enhance programme planning and initiate the CAS process

The process leading to the next generation of strategic work plans for the Gambia Red Cross Society is pending the arrival of the new secretary general. The planning process for 2004 has been carried out. Three workshops to elaborate plans were held in the areas of Health/HIVAIDS, Organizational Development and Disaster Management/Food Security.

Regarding on-going bilateral projects, the diarrhoea project is back on track, and the Federation HIV/AIDS project is reported on above. The Spanish HIV/AIDS project will be discussed in connection with a visit by a Spanish delegate early October. Under the Empress Shôken project, a basic training course for ERT⁸ members is being planned for mid-November.

Promote a nationwide membership campaign

Membership cards have been printed and the campaign is ongoing. A report is expected by the end of 2003.

Intensify finance resource development

Red Cross House has one vacant office at the moment. Water supply is now available on the first and second floors. A container-load of used clothing has arrived from the Icelandic Red Cross. It is expected that at least part of the consignment can be sold in order to support the national society's core costs.

Restructure headquarters' organization and improve its capacity

The acute financial situation has forced the Gambia Red Cross Society to take action earlier than planned. The central committee, although concerned about the risk for legal consequences leading to excessive costs in the end, has approved a proposal to release almost all staff, re-hiring only project staff with secured funding. It is anticipated that with all staff on time-bound contracts and no further employment without funding being secured in advance, the new secretary general stands a better chance in restructuring the headquarters and build its capacity.

Prepare for amending the statutes

Due to a re-prioritization of actions, no activities have been implemented yet. This can be linked to the December governance workshop (see above).

Support branch development

Initiatives are on hold, pending the arrival of the new secretary general. On-going project continue: diarrhoea disease intervention, HIV/AIDS and squall emergency are all linked to branches.

Improve relations with the Government

There is an opportunity to introduce the new secretary general to the patron who is the country's Vice President, with the participation of the ICRC and the Federation. This should be a suitable occasion to discuss areas of mutual interest.

Impact

The determination of the executive committee and the full support of the central committee have resulted in important decisions being taken during the reporting period. Although the national society still has a long way to go, next year should bring about a positive change, with new projects for implementation and attention given to organisational development plans. It is now crucial that the arrival of the new secretary general is supported by all partners to bring about the much needed restructuring of the national society's national headquarters.

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⁸ ERT – Emergency Response Teams

Constraints

The financial crisis is obstructing the ambitious plans which have been laid out. With a worn-out vehicle fleet, limited access to electricity and lack of office equipment and supplies, the work of the staff is hampered.

Coordination

The Federation Sahel Sub-Regional Office and the technical advisor have assisted the national society in coordinating its contacts with partners. Mission reports have been shared with the ICRC and traditional partner national societies, and an active dialogue has been maintained. The Sahel Regional Working Group has been made aware of the plight of its sister national society and has offered assistance, both technical and political, to help the Gambia Red Society manage its relationship with the government. The formula of using a part time technical advisor with regular links to the regional office has proven to be cost-effective and successful ways of helping the national society get back on its feet. The sub-regional office is assisting the Gambia Red Cross Society to ensure its involvement in the upcoming national measles vaccination campaign in October and November 2003 through technical support and guidance.

Special note: The Food Security project under Disaster Management was not implemented; the appeal budget was not revised. The Technical Advisor project was initiated in early 2003, and a budget developed; however, this budget (CHF 61,123) was not integrated within the appeal budget. The net effect results in only a nominal change to the total appeal budget; therefore, at this late stage, there will be no official revision to the appeal budget. Appeal coverage and outstanding needs indicated on page one above are materially correct.

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DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

				TOTAL COVERAGE		
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				259,398		44.8%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				50,000		
BRITISH - RC				23,333	26.09.03	FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE
ICELANDIC - RC				23,333	12.05.03	TECHNICAL ADVISOR
IRISH - GOVT				12,000	28.04.03	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/FINANCE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				108,666	CHF	41.9%

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	