

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

CENTRAL AFRICA SUB-REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

6 June 2004

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 181 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal No. 01.48/2004; Programme Update no. 1, Period covered: January to March 2004;
Appeal coverage: 179.7%; Outstanding needs: None.

(Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List (also available on the website).

Appeal target: CHF 519,982 or (USD 390,523 or EUR 334,716)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: N/A

Programme summary: The appeal had significant coverage, but activities were delayed due to late budget approval. However, within the framework of the HIV/AIDS project with sex workers, capacities of ERDAC¹ members were strengthened, the General Assemblies of the Cameroon Red Cross and the Red Cross of Chad were held, and the training of the leaders in good governance were covered in the first semester.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *In Cameroon: Roger Bracke, Head of Federation Central Africa Sub-regional Office, Yaoundé; Email ifrcm06@ifrc.org; Phone 237.221.74.37; Fax 237.221.74.39*
- *In Geneva: Mark Willis, Federation Regional Officer for West and Central Africa, Africa Dept.; Email mark.willis@ifrc.org; Phone 41.22.730.42.60; Fax 41.22.733.03.95*

This Programme Update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is based on, longer-term, multi-year planning (refer below to access the detailed logframe documents).

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](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Central Africa sub-region encompasses eight countries. The sub-regional office works with the National Red Cross Societies in each of those countries. (Click the name below to access the specific Federation web page). [Cameroon Red Cross Society](#), [Central African Red Cross Society](#), [Red Cross of Chad](#), [Congolese Red Cross](#), [Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Red Cross of Equatorial Guinea](#), [Gabonese Red Cross Society](#), and [São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross](#).

¹ ERDAC - Equipe de Réponse aux Désastres en Afrique Centrale

Operational developments

Once again, epidemics hit some parts of the sub-region during the past three months. Although cholera reappeared in DRC and Cameroon, the most serious threat to the socio-economic and political stability of the region, is the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is predominant among the working age people, between 15 and 49 years. Practically, all the eight governments' efforts to achieve sustainable development through the educational training of their populations have failed. Over 50 per cent of people hospitalized are HIV/AIDS patients, and the situation has reached a level where a good number of them are left to their respective families who do not know what to do in order to appease their suffering.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is low in countries with islands like Equatorial Guinea (0.5%) and São Tomé and Príncipe (0.05%). Greater efforts are needed to stop any increase to these figures, if not to decrease them.

Given the fact that the oil market of Equatorial Guinea is enjoying an unprecedented boom, there are fears that this may influence a negative change in the population's sexual behaviours, thereby facilitating the progression of HIV/AIDS.

The construction work of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline was launched in 2001. As a result, a good number of girls and women from the region came to the site (along the alignment of the pipeline) and developed a seemingly prosperous prostitution business to meet their daily demands.

The Central African countries have suffered poverty and economic crisis for a decade now, and this has pushed prostitutes to accept unprotected sex, thus aggravating the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

For these reasons, the Federation's Central Africa sub-regional office acknowledged the relevance of the programme on "Filles libres" (commercial sex workers), and vowed to ensure that the programme is effectively executed.

During this reporting period, the Central Africa sub-regional office received limited support from donors. In fact, only two relevant contributions were received, both from DFID² (see attached Contributions List): CHF 55,000 in support of humanitarian values' promotion and CHF 64,000 in support of the regional disaster response team (ERDAC). This latter amount was channelled via the Federation's Disaster Management and Coordination Division (DMC) in Geneva.

Health and care

In order to maximize the impact of their activities on community-based health, the national societies need to establish mechanisms aimed at spreading the best practices accrued from previous experiences in order to bring sustainable improvement in the living standards of the most vulnerable.

Goal: Reduce the vulnerability of populations in Central Africa to diseases through community-based activities carried out by volunteers in all eight national societies.

Objective: Put in place a mechanism to facilitate the improvement of community-based health in order to develop the national societies' volunteer networks in its fight against diseases endemic in the sub region.

² DFID - Department for International Development (U.K. Government)

Central Africa sub-regional programmes; Appeal no. 01.48/2004; Programme Update no. 1

HIV/AIDS Control: The “Filles libres” programme

Cameroon

The Cameroon Red Cross HIV/AIDS Control Officer, the Central Africa Regional Officer, the Health Officer and the Coordinator of the sex workers programme went on a three-day mission to Douala to meet GICAM authorities from 12 to 15 March 2004. The mission aimed to develop the partnership between GICAM, the Cameroon Red Cross and the Association of Cameroonian Employers; the partnership is intended to enable the Cameroon Red Cross to get involved in the fight against AIDS in working places.

A meeting was held at the Central Africa sub-regional office with a team from the Ambulatory Hygiene Department (Hygiène Mobile) to launch the partnership aimed at studying microbicides³ as proposed by Imperial College, a partner which is highly interested in the programme on sex workers.

The sub-regional office retrained peer educators (sex workers and young first-aid workers of the Cameroon Red Cross) in communication to enhance a behavioural change. The institution used this programme to review the content of educational talks and elaborate a manual on this activity.

A new theatre group known as “Les Combattants de l’Humanitaire” (Humanitarian Warriors) was set up in January 2004 in Douala. This young group consisting of 15 volunteers has been performing in schools and enterprises since its creation. In fact, the Humanitarian Warriors have already performed about 10 plays on the theme “Youths, for a better Future”. They also performed plays in private companies like AES-SONEL and Guinness Cameroon (.It should be noted that these two companies employ thousands of staff; this implies that, through these performances, the Red Cross not only sensitizes and entertains people but also strengthens its public image as an organization.

Sensitizing through educative talks

During the month of March 2004, the Cameroon Red Cross volunteers, in collaboration with members of the Club des Amis de la Prudence (CLAP), carried out awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS through a series of 13 educative talks in all sectors of prostitution in Cameroon. Awareness was raised among 450 sex workers during this term. The next-term campaigns, to be carried out in the next reporting period, are targeting an additional 1,000 more sex workers.

This activity which was carried out with the support of the sub-regional office (logistics) falls in line with the execution of the programme on sex workers. Prior to the replication of that project in other towns of Cameroon, contacts were made in order to establish a network of sex workers peer educators in Douala. To this effect, two training sessions were organized at the national society headquarters in Yaoundé, in favor of about 50 volunteer first-aid workers. The training session was held for the first group 26-27 March 2004; the session for the second group was held 1-2 April 2004.

Sensitizing people to HIV/AIDS in hair-dressing saloons and barber shops

Cameroon Red Cross activities were scheduled in three phases, as follows:

- The first phase consisted in training 12 volunteer first-aid workers in STI/HIV/AIDS peer education; it was carried out from 13 to 16 January 2004.
- The second phase was dedicated to volunteer peer educators’ field work. This phase lasted two months (February to March) and was aimed at sensitizing people in 24 hair-dressing saloons and barber shops in some popular quarters in Yaoundé like Nsam, Olezoa and Efoulan among others.
- The third phase, scheduled for the month of April, involved the distribution of hair-dressing and barbing tools’ sterilization products.

The national society intends to reach as many people as possible, working in a good number of sectors where HIV/AIDS is likely to spread rapidly.

³ The study of microbicides refers to the evaluation of impact of cream, gel and capsules susceptible to block sexually-transmitted infections (STI) including HIV. It is used as supplementary protection in case condoms break during sexual relations.

Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)

In Congo

In its capacity as an auxiliary body to the government, the Congolese Red Cross took part in the preparatory meeting of the Ministry of Health and Population's on the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) held on 22 March within the framework of the fight against measles. The national society is determined to move a step further from their previous activities to ensure success during the national and local immunization days. To this effect, they intend to reach the targeted populations that live in enclosed areas so as to improve on the epidemiological surveillance.

The Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever

A joint mission team of the Congolese Red Cross and the sub-regional office went to the "Cuvette-Ouest" division to mobilize and sensitize people about the Ebola epidemic. About 25 coaches have been trained in the management of Ebola. The national society volunteers have intensified its fight against this epidemic.

Impact

The Cameroon Red Cross has distinguished itself in the fight of HIV/AIDS by way of widespread advertisement and campaigns. In fact, an increasing number of national society volunteers are involved in activities aimed at eradicating the pandemic in Cameroon. The sex workers programme has enhanced the Red Cross public image and strengthens its trustworthiness before diplomats and other donors.

Initially, the Ministry of Public Health authorities were sceptical of the relevance of the sex workers' programme. However, they now appreciate it and are encouraging the Red Cross to expand it to other towns in the country where HIV/AIDS and prostitution are rampant.

Constraints

The construction work of the Health Centre which is a key element in the sex workers programme is facing cumbersome administrative procedures. The site has been closed for some time following a dispute between the sub-regional office and the contractor.

Disaster Management

The current Federation policy for change aims at giving more responsibility to regions and facilitating collaboration between local, regional, and international structures of the Federation. In order to consolidate this policy in the domain of disaster management, continuous training sessions and exercises need to be organized. This will contribute to improve on the sub-region's level of preparedness and the ability to regularly assess our structures, mechanisms, and procedures for the deployment of efficient teams that can bring pertinent, calculated and timely responses to disasters.

Goal: Reduce the vulnerability of populations in Central Africa to disasters.

Objective: Reinforce the technical know-how of the Regional Disaster Response Team (ERDAC) in the domains of water and sanitation (Watsan), epidemic management, and food security (FS). Concrete measures will be taken to facilitate the deployment of ERDAC teams, should a disaster occur.

Achievements

Following the repatriation of Cameroonians from Equatorial Guinea, a joint mission to Limbe – where returnees disembarked – was carried out by officials of the Cameroon Red Cross, the sub-regional office and the department of civil protection (DPC) from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD). Acting as the main partners of DPC in disaster management, the Cameroon Red Cross and the sub-regional office consolidated their position in the field of humanitarian action. They assessed the situation and developed a strategy to enable returnees to go back to their respective localities of origin. As a means of reinforcing the bedding

Central Africa sub-regional programmes; Appeal no. 01.48/2004; Programme Update no. 1

capacities of the government Transit Centre, the sub-regional office offered 50 blankets to the Limbe Local Committee of the Cameroon Red Cross.

The sub-regional office has been actively fulfilling its role as the coach of national societies in the sub-region by carrying out simple, impact-bound actions.

The sub-regional office has been very active and is currently multiplying contacts in to get more partners to finance their programmes at local level. Contacts have been established between the sub-regional office and the Japanese Embassy to study the possibility of securing support in areas such as disaster management (ERDAC) and the sex workers programme.

Following the outbreak of cholera, in Douala, Cameroon early this year, which claimed 20 lives, the Cameroon Red Cross carried out information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns on this disease and on the need to obey hygiene rules. Sixty (60) Red Cross volunteers chemically treated these wells and other water sources in the affected areas.

The sub-regional office supported the Cameroon Red Cross in this operation by providing materials (1,000 brochures and 500 posters on the theme "How to avoid Cholera"). This equipment enabled the Cameroon Red Cross sensitize over one million people in Douala, thereby enhancing the Red Cross image.

In reaction to the resurgence of cholera that killed seven people and left 158 others infected in Mbuji-Mayi (Kassai Oriental Province), over 150 volunteers of the Congolese Red Cross took action in order to control the disease. They intensified home-based health awareness with UNICEF support. They also treated drinking water, and insisted on the necessity for the populations to construct latrines and observe preventive measures. This activity was funded by the Federation.

Impact

- The Red Cross positions itself as a key partner to the government and the image of the Congolese Red Cross is strengthened.
- Other humanitarian agencies within the framework of their own operations solicit the support of the Mbuji-Mayi local committee.
- The Red Cross action facilitated the management of Cameroonian returnees from Equatorial Guinea.

Humanitarian Values

The programme on humanitarian values is relevant, given the regional context characterized by exclusion, marginalization, discrimination and violence.

Goal: Eradicate all acts of discrimination against marginalized individuals or groups of people.

Objective: Enable groups of marginalized people to communicate and express themselves through the media, personalities of international renown, or through any other form of expression (painting, plastic art, traditional dance etc.). Advertise the Federation's position on discrimination with special emphasis on stigma against HIV positive people.

Achievements

Within the last three months, the sub-regional office has been able to publish its monthly news bulletin (*Central Africa in Brief*), and its quarterly Newspaper (BRAC-Info). Through these press documents, readers are exposed to the sub-regional office projects and the national societies' activities carried out in their respective countries. Activities to eliminate stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are well covered in these documents.

The head of the sub-regional office granted a press interview in which the programme on sex workers was fully explained, thereby providing more publicity for the programme.

Central Africa sub-regional programmes; Appeal no. 01.48/2004; Programme Update no. 1

The sub-regional office information/reporting officer initiated contacts with Yaoundé-based newspaper editors and chief editors and encouraged them to publish humanitarian articles. This activity will be pursued in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital and host to most of the newspapers published in Cameroon.

Newspaper authorities in Yaoundé and the representative of the sub-regional office reached an agreement that all important dates of the Red Cross (e.g. 8 May) will serve as opportunities to give media coverage to humanitarian issues in general and about the Federation's position in particular.

Impact

The media now shows more interest in Red Cross activities while the sub-regional office strengthens its relationship with the media through cooperation strategies that are likely to benefit both parties.

Constraints

In spite of the training received at the end of the year 2003, some reporting officers failed to forward their reports early enough to the sub-regional office to meet the official deadline for publication.

Organizational Development

The Central Africa national societies need to expand the sustainable programs in order to maximize the impact on the most vulnerable. More human, financial, and material resources could be mobilized through the recruitment of trained volunteers, establishing partnerships with available local experts in government-owned institutions and in private organizations and companies. They could also organize fund raisers in their own communities to perpetuate Red Cross action while remaining independent in the face of limited external funding.

Goal: Build the capacities of Cameroon Red Cross, Red Cross of Chad and Gabonese Red Cross.

Objective: Build the national societies' financial capacities to enable them cover their respective basic needs and execute programmes.

Achievements

Cameroon Red Cross

Members of the Managing Central Committee were elected during an Extraordinary General Assembly that was organized with the technical support of the Federation. Later, they were trained in good governance.

A National Programme Coordinator was recruited and engaged with the technical support of the sub-regional office.

Gabonese Red Cross

The national society engaged a Secretary General, departmental heads and a programme coordinator, with the support of the Federation's representative in Gabon.

The Chairman and the Secretary General of the Gabonese Red Cross were trained in information management (data collection, analysis, diffusion and storage) to enhance their managerial skills.

Red Cross of Chad

A new Managing Committee was elected during the 7th Ordinary General Assembly which took place in N'djamena 25-27 March, with the technical support of the Federation.

The same General Assembly adopted the statutes of the national societies which had been revised in accordance with the Federation's guidelines.

Members of the Managing Committee were trained in good governance.

The national society's capacity building process has been scheduled for the period March to December 2004.

Central Africa sub-regional programmes; Appeal no. 01.48/2004; Programme Update no. 1

Impact

After the training in good governance, members of the Managing Central Committees of the Cameroon Red Cross and Red Cross of Chad understood what was expected from them during their official tenure. They also promised to implement the principles of good governance in their daily work. The Cameroon Red Cross is more suited to develop quality programmes and projects and follow them up so as to achieve pertinent results.

The head of the organizational development of the Red Cross of Chad now has the skills required for operational planning.

Authorities of the Gabonese Red Cross local committees better appreciate the importance of capacity building and the need to establish closer collaboration with administrative and community authorities in their respective localities.

Members of the Gabonese Red Cross are progressively realizing how relevant the presence of representatives of partner Ministries in their Board of Directors is. On their part, these representatives have started playing their role as facilitators for the smooth functioning of the national society.

Constraints

Shortage of money to pay the salaries of the personnel of Cameroon Red Cross and permanent executives of the Red Cross of Chad hindered the execution of programmes as planned in the 2004 Appeal.

The delay in the disbursement of subsidies for the year 2004 turned out to be a major handicap to the smooth functioning of the Gabonese Red Cross.

The long delay observed in processing the assignment files of civil servants (heads of departments) seriously prevented the Gabonese Red Cross from meeting the deadlines for the execution of their programmes.

The Central African Red Cross lacks skilled executives for their respective headquarters as well as coaches for their local committees to be able to run all the programmes effectively.

Coordination

Since its installation in Yaoundé (Cameroon), the sub-regional office has been promoting a sense of collaboration and mutual assistance among the eight national societies of Central Africa, the intention being to work together as a Federation so as to meet the needs of the most vulnerable more efficiently.

Goal: Improve on the image of the Central African national societies.

Objective: Build the capacities of the Central African national societies in good governance and encourage them to establish new partnerships among themselves and with other members of the Red Cross Movement.

Achievements

The head of the sub-regional office regularly briefed the Chairperson of the Coordination Committee on the problems confronting the national societies in Central Africa.

The sub-regional office's news bulletin, '*Central Africa in Brief*', was published in collaboration with the information/reporting officers, and distributed to all eight national societies within the sub-region. This was an ideal means of information sharing among the national societies.

The head of the sub-regional office participated in the Federation All-Africa team meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa (22-29 January).

A meeting to assess the activities of the sub-regional office and the Cameroon Red Cross was held in February 2004. That meeting enhanced relations and strengthened their project execution capacities.

Central Africa sub-regional programmes; Appeal no. 01.48/2004; Programme Update no. 1

The Central Africa national societies and the sub-regional office took part in the partnership meeting which brought together both West and Central Africa national societies in Accra (Ghana) from 1 to 3 March. Participants at that meeting acknowledged the relevance of both the programme on sex workers and the ERDAC.

The head of the sub-regional office travelled to Chad, where he visited the Sudanese refugees' camp in Abéché. He also had a working session with the Red Cross Red Crescent team on the field.

Impact

The Coordination Committee of the Central African Red Cross is now aware of the sub-region's priorities, thanks to the collaboration with the head of the sub-regional office.

International Representation

In its position as the leading humanitarian organization in the world, the Red Cross has a specific responsibility to defend the rights and interests of millions of vulnerable people. Given the fact that this organization is trusted by the public and governments, it holds a favored position to advocate on behalf of the vulnerable individuals and groups of people who, at times, are forgotten by the media, and even by their own political authorities.

Goal: Convince the public, the diplomatic corps and other donors to increase their support to the activities of the Federation and the Central Africa's national societies.

Objective: Establish a broad-based awareness campaign on the Federation and the Central Africa national societies' position on humanitarian issues, in order to attract donor support.

Achievements

The head of the sub-regional office was invited to take part in the General Assembly of the Diplomatic Circle which was held in the premises of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He used this as an avenue to create new contacts and consolidate old ones with the participants. This was a unique chance given the Red Cross to integrate the highly restricted diplomatic milieu, thus strengthening its image and encouraging support. Several embassies accredited in Yaoundé (USA, British High Commission, etc.) invited the head of the sub-regional office to their National Day celebrations and other activities. This reflects the efforts of the sub-regional office to attain its objective of making the Red Cross a public-recognized institution. The Belgian Ambassador to Cameroon paid a courtesy visit to the head of sub-regional office on 4 February.

Impact

The International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement is known by a wide range of people, and the regional office has been fully integrated in diplomatic and other international decision making instances.

Constraints

The scheduled meeting between the Cameroon Minister of Communication and the head of sub-regional office did not occur due to changes in their respective agendas. That encounter was expected to be a unique chance where the regional office could plead with the Minister for an easier access of the Red Cross to government-owned media.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page and contact information.](#)

Central Africa Sub-Regional programmes

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 01.48/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

02/07/2004

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

CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				519,982	TOTAL COVERAGE 179.7%	
BRITISH - GOVT/DIFD GRANT 2004				64,000	29.01.04	DISASTER MANAGEMENT
BRITISH - GOVT/DIFD GRANT 2005				55,000	29.01.04	CAMEROON HUMANITARIAN VALUES
SWEDISH - RC		1,325,000	SEK	223,925	06.04.04	HIV/AIDS YOUTH PROGRAMEM & FILLES LIBRES PROJECT
SWEDISH - GOVT		3,500,000	SEK	591,500	03.05.04	DISASTER MANAGEMENT, HEALTH, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION & COORDINATION
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				934,425	CHF	179.7%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Note: due to systems upgrades in process, contributions in kind and services may be incomplete.						
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

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