

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

EMERGENCY RELIEF, CAPACITY BUILDING

CHF 3,458,000
170,000 beneficiaries

Programme No. 01.33/98

The election mid-year of a new Papua New Guinea (PNG) government pledged to address the Bougainville crisis by negotiation and not force was followed by a New Zealand government Peace Conference initiative that in October 1997 gave birth to the Burnham Truce, raising hopes that nine years of secessionist conflict between the PNG Government and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and its political wing, the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG), were about to end.

The Operation

By 1997, the extended conflict had deprived the population of Bougainville, in particular those displaced either into government controlled care centres or into the dense and remote forests and jungles that dominate the island, of many basic survival items. While most people were in reasonable health and adequately fed, they urgently needed basic clothing, tools and household items to enable them to return to their home villages when conditions were acceptable.

A decline in military action in late 1996/early 1997 signalled an opportunity to carry out wider relief operations than at any time since 1993 when Federation assistance to the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society (PNGRCS) began. The Federation/PNGRCS extended operation in 1997 set out to supply "Family Packs" as well as basic medical kits and drugs to around 80% of the island's population in villages and care centres in both government and BRA controlled areas in the centre and south of the island. Strict adherence to Red Cross/Red Crescent Principles and intensive communications with forces of both sides, community leaders and councils of chiefs and elders gradually created a climate of trust that opened up hitherto inaccessible areas. As a result the

operation was extended to the whole island and when it ended in November every community had been serviced.

These initiatives were instrumental in cementing better relations on the island and were of help in allowing even greater access and movement for Red Cross operations and the increasing effectiveness and acceptance of its work by all parties.

Objectives in 1998

While there were great hopes in late 1997 that the truce would constitute a real step towards peace, and the rehabilitation of the island, it was far too early to say the emergency was over.

The successes, contacts, trust and co-operation that the 1997 operation built need to be capitalised on. The next phase of operations will be critical if the momentum is not to be lost.

Capacities in the National Society are beginning to be developed and must be further enhanced; the ongoing field training and development of staff will be a crucial part of work. Improved access and security must be maintained by transparency and fairness in ongoing assistance. The drive to encourage and help resettlement projects as well as the rebuilding and retraining of the health and sanitation systems will be a priority for the Red Cross, now able to work freely in areas that may still remain difficult for the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) or other agencies.

The operation in 1998 will have three main objectives:

- | To complete any additional or outstanding activities from the 1997 operation;
- | to move from emergency relief of the most critical nature to rehabilitation/resettlement activities;
- | to address the demands, generated by the success of this operation and the ongoing drought operation, that the PNGRCS responds to needs in other parts of PNG and builds up its DPP and response capacity.

Operations will be carried out in all areas but with emphasis on the established accessibility for the RC into difficult and sensitive areas. Specific initiatives have already been taken to ensure that the Code of Conduct and the Principles and Rules for Disaster Relief are recognised by all parties as essential and critical elements of any Red Cross actions in PNG, and will be increasingly built into 1998 programmes.

Plan of Action

PNG COUNTRY-WIDE

Capacity Building in the PNGRCS

The PNGRCS will be helped to develop and initiate a five year development plan, with emphasis on DPP, Health and Social Welfare. The quality and capacity of NS staff will be enhanced by improved selection and training, including operational participation in Federation/PNGRCS projects. Fund-raising and self sufficiency will be promoted. A maximum time span of two years is envisioned. It is hoped the November 1997 Drought Appeal will act as a precursor to this project and will initiate its first phase. By January 1998, key staffing and training decisions will have been made enabling the tasks to continue throughout the year.

Disaster Response

To develop community-based self-reliance a programme to reinforce the work of the existing Federation CBFA/CBDPP programmes will be introduced, training and strengthening PNGRCS Branches to enhance local capacity and response at district, village, and school level. The re-certification of First Aid Trainers, and trainers of Trainers will be directed at identifying new “clients” such as Police, Hotel and Resort workers, Security Guards and Firemen.

Social Welfare

Social Welfare: “Traumatised and stressed children” Teacher Training support (See Bougainville Section).

BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND

Relief Distributions

Family Packs will be distributed to any additional or left-out population from 1997 (3,000 families). Village “Resettlement Packages” consisting of agricultural tools and seeds, construction basics (nails, hammers, saws etc.) for house construction with local materials, sufficient for up to 170,000 persons, will be distributed.

Health (In consultation and co-ordination with the BTG Health Dept)

A Child Immunisation Follow up campaign, following the 1997 PNG Government Immunisation campaign, will complete immunisation of any missed children due to inaccessibility or other reasons. A core of health workers will be trained to monitor and maintain an ongoing immunisation programme on the island, and an effective cold chain network, to be eventually handed over to the administration, will be established. Expected to reach 20,000 children, it will run one year.

Rehabilitation of the Primary Health Care System. This will reinforce all aspects of PHC in existing Clinics and Aid Posts, with emphasis on areas difficult or inaccessible to the present Health administration. New clinics will be set up in two/three locations in Central and South Bougainville. The target beneficiaries will be 100,000 persons. A one year project, with a second year extension if required.

Water and Sanitation (in consultation with the BTG)

The overall effects of the conflict on water and sanitation systems will be assessed and specific community based projects identified. They will require the procurement and distribution of construction materials and resources, and staff technical training, plus the provision of a technical delegate.

Social Welfare

Workshops, training, teaching, material and logistics support and resources will be provided to help teachers, social workers, and community workers respond to the needs of traumatised children caught up in conflict, civil unrest and urban violence, on a country-wide basis.

Assistance to the PNGRCS

To re-establish a PNGRCS Branch on Bougainville a Branch HQ will be reconstructed and equipped and staff trained. Dissemination workshops (with ICRC participation), emphasising IHL and the role

the RC can play in reconciliation and rehabilitation of parties in a post conflict situation, will prepare the ground for resumed RC branch activities.

Capacity

National Society

The NS is undergoing considerable change and its new leadership is increasingly consulted by government ministries and agencies involved in DPP and crisis management. While this is a positive sign, the Society's capacity, particularly in the areas of staffing and training, needs upgrading. The HQ and some functioning branches need immediate assistance if they are to take full advantage of the heightened awareness of the Red Cross role in PNG. This means additional support in communications and information technology as well as in human resources.

Federation

The Federation Delegation in PNG will be expanded to four delegates to accommodate expanded operations on Bougainville and new activities on the PNG mainland. The ongoing Drought operation will add three short term delegates who will report to the Head of Delegation. The Delegation will remain located in the PNGRCS building but additional workspace, accommodation, transportation and equipment will be needed.

Use will continue to be made of human and technical resources from the Regional Delegation in Sydney/Suva and on occasions Kuala Lumpur, as well as from NSs in the Asia/Pacific region (Staff on loan, short term delegates).

Co-operation

Co-operation between the Federation/PNGRCS/ICRC with regard to Bougainville has been satisfactory; close consultation, planning and joint participation in relevant activities take place.

Relations with the PNG Government, BTG, and BRA/BIG are excellent. The PNGRCS sits on a number of Emergency Response Committees and is acting as a focal point for the NGO response to the drought crisis. These working relations will be useful in 1998, particularly if other agencies are allowed on Bougainville.