

NIGERIA

HEALTH, CAPACITY BUILDING, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE, RELIEF

CHF 1,446,000
185,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.06/99

The Context

Nigeria is still under military rule, but recent events indicate that a handover of power to a civilian government may occur in the near future. The new head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, has promised general elections in the first quarter of 1999.

While the economy is still in a fragile state, with low growth and investment levels, recent indicators suggest an upturn in 1999. However, a majority of Nigerians have seen a deterioration of their social and health conditions over the last decade. Less than half the population in rural areas now have access to health services and safe water. Annual per capita income has plummeted to USD 240.

As a result, people are particularly susceptible to outbreaks of infectious diseases such as yellow fever, meningitis and cholera, and to natural disasters such as floods and landslides. Competition for scarce resources has also led to a steady increase in the number of communal conflicts which have led to loss of life and destruction of property in different parts of Nigeria.

The Operation

The Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) works in three programme areas: Community-Based Health, Capacity Building, and Disaster Preparedness/Relief.

The health programme concentrates on preventive health: 150 volunteers and officers have been trained and are now working within their communities. In 1999, the network of community volunteers will be extended, while Mother's Clubs are to be established to improve mother and child health care. NRCS youth groups will start peer education to encourage safe sex and reduce the level of sexually transmitted diseases.

NRCS capacity building is being funded by the Tripartite Programme, which started in 1998 with the support of the governments and National Societies of Sweden, Britain and Canada. Headquarters were strengthened by new management systems and structures, the

implementation of a new reporting system, and additional staff. The branches received support through training of Branch Training Officers in disaster management. The programme will continue in 1999.

During 1998, NRCS has been responsible for providing assistance to over 5,000 Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees residing in western Nigeria. The programme was implemented in co-operation with UNHCR, who will pull out in 1999. While the majority of Liberian refugees are self-sufficient, the most vulnerable groups among them (600 persons) still need food assistance, as do 1,350 Sierra Leonean refugees.

NRCS aims at continuing its role as the most effective in-country organisation to respond to natural and man-made disasters. Nigeria is included in the regional health-related disaster preparedness and prevention plan. The objectives and activities of the regional plan are included in the Community - Based Health Programme.

Objectives

- Health

Ensure strengthened management and monitoring capacities of health staff at all levels of NRCS.

Establish strengthened capacity among the most vulnerable through First Aid, immunisation, health education and community health measures against the most common epidemics and water-borne diseases.

- Capacity Building

Develop efficient headquarters to provide adequate guidance and support to branches.

Establish functional offices with a full-time Branch Secretary in each of the 37 branches.

Set up an adequate communications system throughout the country, with strategically placed relief stocks in Lagos and Kano.

- DPP/Relief

Pre-stock non-food relief items in the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters.

Provide food to 600 Liberian and 1,350 Sierra Leonean refugees.

Train volunteer Disaster Preparedness and Response Management teams in each branch to respond in a planned, timely and appropriate manner in the event of disaster.

Plan of Action

- Health

Hold Training of Trainers Workshop, two workshops on the programme for Health Advisers, and six zonal technical committee meetings with a training component.

Establish three service units: emergency squads, mothers' clubs and youth peer groups in one community in each branch; training of 20 volunteers within each service unit. The emergency squads will be trained in accident and disaster response, as well as disaster preparedness; the mothers' clubs will provide education in mother and child care and household hygiene; the youth peer groups will focus on environmental sanitation, adolescent health, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Carry out routine immunisation campaigns in 12 Local Government Areas benefiting a total of 48,000 children and women of child-bearing age.

- Capacity Building

Expand headquarters office space.

Hold training workshops in governance and management, reporting, and management skills, as well as resource development.

Implement the results of these workshops at branch level through the appointment of Branch Secretaries and through the establishment of reporting systems in all branches.

Installation of four HF radios and two pactors in selected branches.

- DPP/Relief

Purchase relief items for pre-stocking in Lagos and Kano warehouses.

Establish disaster management, needs assessment and relief distribution training in all branches.

Distribute monthly supplementary food supplies to 1,350 Sierra Leonean refugees: 3 kg of rice and 1.5 kg of beans per person per month.

Distribute monthly supplementary food supplies to 600 Liberian refugees: 6 kg of rice and 1.5 kg of beans per person per month.

Resource Planning

The NRCS programmes in Community-Based Health, Capacity Building and DPP/Relief will be carried out by the staff of NRCS headquarters and its 37 branches. While the National Society will develop a fund-raising plan aimed at tapping local sources of funding, continued financial support through the Federation Delegation will be instrumental to the implementation of the programmes.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

The National Society has a Red Cross Branch in each of Nigeria's 37 States with a total membership of 262,700 volunteers. National headquarters is staffed with nine senior officers. The gradual appointment of full-time Branch Secretaries will start by the end of 1998 as part of the Capacity Building Programme. Fifteen branches have HF radios and 22 branches have transport. The headquarters has five vehicles.

- The Federation

A three-person delegation (Head of Delegation, Health Delegate and Finance/ID Delegate) will be maintained to assist the National Society in implementing the development plan. The Regional Delegation in Abidjan provides additional assistance in the prevention and preparedness for health-related disasters.

- Other Red Cross/Red Crescent Resources

The ICRC has a delegation in Lagos. It has provided support in the areas of dissemination, extending the radio network, emergency relief and institutional development over the last decade. This support will continue in 1999.

Co-operation

There is close co-operation with UN agencies, UNHCR and UNICEF in particular. In the Health and Relief programmes, NRCS co-operates closely with the government. The Health Programme is carried out with the full support of the Federal Ministry of Health with technical input from MSF. Embassies generally provide support in disaster situations.