

CENTRAL AFRICA

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

CHF 3,080,000

Programme no 01.07/99

Introduction

The Federation's Regional Delegation for Central Africa, established in 1994 to serve National Societies in seven countries with a total population of 30 million, works against a backdrop of increasing poverty, political instability, environmental degradation and deteriorating health conditions in the region.

Droughts, floods, epidemics and armed conflicts are teaming up with what are at best wobbly economies to create increasing vulnerability among large segments of the populace. The tasks, present and future, facing the National Societies in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe are huge. As many of these societies suffer from serious institutional weaknesses, the regional delegation has its work carved out for 1999 and the years beyond: while coping with the region's natural and man-made disasters, its overriding priority must be strengthening the National Societies' capacity.

It should be stressed that National Society leadership in the region recognizes the growing needs of their constituencies and the ensuing necessity of change. Since October 1997, regional senior management has taken up the challenge of modernising their organisations, going through a sometimes painful process of self-assessment, setting priorities and strengthening co-operation between the National Societies in the region. Both the Federation and the ICRC are supporting this process.

Meanwhile, there are real needs to be met. Apart from capacity building, the focus of the delegation's regional programmes will be on health issues - developing National Health Plans in the region, devising educational programmes on prevalent diseases, and setting up disaster preparedness and response plans to counter the ever-recurring cholera and meningitis epidemics.

Objectives

- To strengthen the operational and managerial capacity of the National Societies involved by establishing transparent structures and systems in the field of human resources and fund-raising; by increasing community participation in their programmes; and by improving their visibility among the public-at-large to promote the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, its principles, and its emblem. To promote peace and understanding in the region through the

Culture of Peace programme calling for the dissemination of Red Cross principles and International Humanitarian Law among the region's youth. To improve co-operation between National Societies by sharing best practices and setting up a regional communications network.

- To meet the health needs of the population by developing National Health Plans; by setting up peer-education programmes on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); by developing preventive health strategies against diarrhoea and tuberculosis; by developing and executing preparedness plans to counter cholera and meningitis epidemics; and by putting in place community-based first aid programmes.

Programmes

Capacity Building

The capacity building component of the regional programme is paramount, not only to improve the image of the National Societies in the region, but also to improve their modus operandi. The capacity building programme aims at long-term improvement of management and governance, transparency and accountability, drawing up strategic development plans, and an increase in branch participation level - as well as human and financial resource development to ensure the long-term sustainability of the National Societies. The capacity building programme also calls for the development of a disaster preparedness programme. Additionally, the capacity building programme includes the Culture of Peace initiative aimed at overcoming the prevailing prejudices in the region by educating young people in humanitarian values.

Thus, the capacity building programme seeks to establish effective, efficient, and transparent management at all levels of the National Societies; increased participation of grassroots branches, women and youth in the planning and decision-making process; enhanced fund-raising capacity of National Societies; improved image and visibility of National Societies; improved co-operation and sharing of best practices between National Societies in the region; identification of efficient communications methods; dissemination of Red Cross principles and International Humanitarian Law among the region's youth; and recognition of the Red Cross of Gabon.

Plan of Action

- Implementation of a regional training programme on human resources and participation, targeting Presidents and Secretaries General at the national level. Management training for Presidents, Secretaries General and Treasurers at the provincial and local level. Self-assessment training of National Society management in Chad, Gabon, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe. Development planning training for Chad, Congo, Gabon, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe National Societies. Regional delegation assistance in development plan implementation.
- Organisation of a regional training programme on the promotion of women and youth in National Society planning and decision-making.

- Organisation of a regional training programme on fund-raising.
 - Appointment of a public relations/media contact professional at each National Society.
- Organisation of public awareness campaigns on understanding of and respect for the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, its principles, and its emblem.
- Continue the co-operation process through regular meetings of the regional co-ordinating committee and its two working groups on institutional development and health. Installation of an effective communications network linking National Societies by mid-1999.
 - Establishing youth clubs, Red Cross youth sections in schools, universities and colleges to implement the Culture of Peace programme.
 - Setting up emergency teams and stocks in preparation of disasters and their medical consequences.
 - Assisting the Red Cross of Gabon to fulfill the two outstanding recognition requirements: financial support for acquiring a national headquarters and assistance in programme development.

Health Programme

The seven countries of the Central African region are plagued by inadequate health care structures unable to cope with diseases such as diarrhoea, tuberculosis, cholera, and meningitis. Health prevention is still in its infancy, leading to widespread ignorance on such afflictions as HIV/AIDS and STDs. The Federation's 1999 health programme will seek to redress these potentially lethal problems by working with the National Societies to draw up a Red Cross national health plan; establishing and/or improving peer education programmes on HIV/AIDS, STDs, diarrhoea and tuberculosis, targeting Red Cross Youth; effectively using trainers and trained volunteers in the battle against cholera and meningitis, setting up preparedness plans to counter them; and by establishing community-based first aid programmes.

Plan of Action

- Evaluation by all National Societies of their health activities and, following the setting of priority objectives, development of a National Red Cross Health Plan to be implemented in close co-operation with the respective governments and/or health authorities.
- Organisation by the regional delegation of a workshop on prevention, identification and treatment of diarrhoeal diseases for community-based first aid trainers. Production of material (brochures, leaflets, etc.) to support peer-education programmes on HIV/AIDS, STDs, and tuberculosis.

- Regular branch-level training in Cameroon, Gabon, Chad and Sao Tomé and Principe on prevention and treatment of cholera, meningitis, malaria, Ebola and other diseases, with the regional delegation providing consultancy support and print material. Organisation by the regional delegation of a workshop on preparedness for and management of health-related disasters such as epidemics, followed by the development and execution by National Societies of a prevention/preparedness plan for their respective countries.
- Incorporation of a first aid component in all National Society youth programmes.

The Regional Delegation

The delegation in Yaoundé currently has four delegates, a level to be maintained in 1999.