

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Emergency relief, rehabilitation, disaster preparedness and response, and capacity building

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period covered: 1 September - 31 December 1999

Post disaster programmes initiated after the Aitape tidal wave in 1998, including a water and sanitation project, a community health project, a nutrition assessment and the reinforcement of disaster response capacity, were completed in late 1999. A community based self reliance training project has been postponed to February, as has part of the disaster preparedness project: they form part of assistance under Appeal 2000 - 2001.

The context

The tsunami which struck the area around the Sissano Lagoon near Aitape, Sandaun Province, on 17 July 1998 left 2,182 dead and 9,199 people homeless.

The response from the community, the rest of the country and the world at large, was rapid and overwhelming. The Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society (PNGRCS), supported by the International Federation, provided immediate assistance, before moving on to the rehabilitation phase of the operation, incorporating- medium to long term assistance, to optimise the use of the substantial funds available through the Federation Appeal and the PNGRCS.

As from February 2000 the programme will focus on the third phase: delivering trainings/workshops in Community Based Self Reliance (CBSR) (comprising Community Based Health Care, Community Based First Aid and Community Based Disaster Preparedness) to affected communities in and around Aitape and beyond. (For further details, see Appeal 2000 - 2001).

Generally, there has been a scaling down of relief/rehabilitation activities in Aitape by all agencies and NGOs.

Latest events

The Water and Sanitation project of the Aitape Tsunami Post-Disaster Programme which began in November 1998 was brought to a close in October 1999 with all basic objectives achieved.

The revision and planning for the third phase of the programme, CBSR training for the PNGRCS and affected communities in the Aitape area and beyond is in its final stage. It is scheduled to begin in February 2000.

The Institutional Development (ID) project is progressing well. After the ID workshop held in August, the drawing up of a detailed 1 - 5 year Plan of Action for the PNGRCS has started. A two day Governance training was held for PNGRCS Council members and Executive Committee in late November.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Water & Sanitation

The purpose of this project was to provide safe and adequate water supplies and sanitation facilities to affected communities (1,000 families) in resettlement areas and host communities, plus the training of community water and sanitation volunteers.

The Federation provided a Water and Sanitation Delegate. From November 1998 to October 1999; 501 pit latrines were installed in 2 villages, Barupu and Arop I.

Twelve 9,000 litre Polymer water tanks with a roof collection system were installed in four villages, Barupu, Arop I, Ramu and Pou.

Five 9,000 litre ferro-cement water tanks were installed in two villages, Ramu and Pou.

Twelve water wells with hand pumps were installed in four villages, Barupu, Arop I, Wauroin and Pou.

Five water technicians and over one hundred water and sanitation volunteers, drawn from villagers in the affected communities, were trained in construction, maintenance and sanitation dissemination.

Community Health Promotion and Awareness

The purpose of this project was to improve community health in resettlement areas, including an assessment of psycho-social needs, to assist amputees and the seriously injured in returning to normal village life, and to promote and disseminate disaster awareness information.

From August 1998 to July 1999, the PNGRCS health team concentrated their efforts on community rehabilitation programmes rather than direct individual assistance to injured persons, since this was adequately covered by other organisations.

The assessment of community needs in rehabilitation resulted in distribution of over 2,000 preventive health brochures to schools, women's groups, aid posts, health centres and community leaders.

A distribution of 4,000 mosquito nets was done in five villages.

Community Based Health training (basic) was given to 39 women from six affected villages.

Nutrition Assessment

The purpose of this project was to determine the past, present and possible future nutritional levels of the affected population, and to produce recommendations on future nutritional strategies for Red Cross, government and other agencies. The training of women's groups in appropriate nutritional strategies was one option.

The PNGRCS health team conducted two nutritional surveys in the Aitape area. They proposed the distribution of basic items to the affected population to re-establish their self-support capacity in terms of livelihood and income.

Distributions

The following items were distributed among the affected communities:

Axes	319 pcs	for canoe making
Adzes	492 pcs	for canoe making
Canoe scrapers	155 pcs	for canoe making
Bottom fishing kits	501 units	
River fishing kits	500 units	
Trolling fishing kits	250 units	
Fish nylon twine	1,332 Kgs	for fishing net making
Tarpaulins	12 units	for initial water collection
Files (metal)	75 pcs	for maintenance of tools
Files (stone)	55 pcs	for maintenance of tools
Sago beaters	2,285 pcs	for Sago harvesting.

Community Based Self Reliance (CBSR) Training

The aim of this project is to provide Community Based training in disaster preparedness, first aid and health care, in vulnerable communities in the Sandaun province, adjacent coastal areas and other disaster prone areas throughout the country.

This project has been delayed due to slight changes in implementation strategy. It is now planned that the project will begin in mid February 2000 and will run for two years. This project will be the foundation for further development of the PNGRCS capacity building as well as the main service-providing project of the PNGRCS in the years to come.

Disaster Response & Relief Centre, Lae

This project enhances the disaster management capacity of the PNGRCS, to enable rapid relief response to disasters throughout the country.

The PNGRCS procured a renovated 850m² warehouse on a prime property in Lae. The Federation Logistics delegate was given the responsibility of staffing and equipping the warehouse according to needs and to consolidate all Federation/PNGRCS disaster preparedness stocks scattered in various warehouses, containers and suppliers' stores.

The delegate trained four staff members in basic logistical tasks. Some more practical "on the job" training and experience will be needed. In the future, with an assigned PNGRCS Project officer, this logistics base will be able to support disaster interventions and generate income through provision of storage and shipment services to other agencies and NGOs. Meanwhile, the Lae Logistics Base continues to support the Bougainville operation as well as other logistical needs of the National Society and the delegation.

Storage Facility/Training Room/Federation Office Space at PNGRCS National Headquarters

The purpose of this project was to enhance the disaster response capacity of the PNGRCS and the Federation through the establishment of additional storage space for relief goods, a Red Cross Training Centre, and additional Federation office space at the PNGRCS National Headquarters building in Port Moresby.

This project was completed in October and the rehabilitated and improved facilities now accommodate the PNGRCS and the Federation delegation in modern offices. A two-level warehouse was added. The new training /operations room is well equipped and used on a regular basis for meetings, training and workshops for both the PNGRCS/Federation as well as for income generation through renting the facility to other humanitarian organisations.

Strengthening PNGRCS Disaster Preparedness Capacity

PNGRCS disaster preparedness capacity was strengthened through the training of Red Cross personnel, the production of an operational disaster preparedness plan and the provision of branch offices and community training facilities in Sandaun province.

There have been some changes to this programme and it will now run in tandem with the CBSR project that is to start in early 2000.

Institutional Development (ID)

The purpose of this project is to reinforce the PNGRCS's human resource capacity, programme planning / monitoring / implementation / management capacity and the overall management of the National Society.

This project has been the most successful of all the programmes supported by the Federation. A five-day institutional development workshop was held in mid August and focused on a SWOT analysis of the PNGRCS. The outcome of the workshop provided the National Society with a solid foundation for future programme planning and the 1 - 5 year plan of action now being prepared by the PNGRCS.

The need for governance/staff training was highlighted during the ID workshop. The first governance training was held in late November. A request was made to run such training on an annual basis.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Throughout the programme, the PNGRCS and the Federation Delegation have maintained close collaboration with relevant government departments, international agencies, NGOs and donors, with the aim of maximising efforts to re-establish normal life in the communities affected by the Aitape Tsunami and to lay a solid foundation for future co-operation in disaster mitigation, disaster intervention and capacity building activities at all levels of the PNGRCS.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

This programme has in a relatively short period of time gone through three phases of disaster management: the relief phase with assessments and direct relief to affected communities; the second phase of rehabilitation and reconstruction of drinking water sources and sanitation facilities and distributions of items for re-establishing income generation and cropping various food sources. Now, a third phase of training activities to enhance the PNGRCS disaster preparedness and disaster management capacity and to mitigate the vulnerability of the population most at risk is about to begin.

The PNGRCS is fully committed to this programme and has put in place capacity building elements such as additional senior programme officers, and advanced governance and staff training seminars and workshops, and is in the process of finalising a comprehensive 1 -5 year plan of action.

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