

PACIFIC: REGIONAL PROGRAMMES: CAPACITY BUILDING

*19 December
2000*

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period covered: 1 August - 30 November 2000*

The priorities in the region focus on capacity building, disaster preparedness and response and health care for vulnerable communities. The National Societies in Fiji and the Solomon Islands have continued to play a key role, providing assistance during periods of tension. A regional relief workshop was held in December, the objectives of the DP container programme for 2000 have been met and data from a self-assessment questionnaire sent to each of the National Societies is currently being analysed and a benchmarking tool is being developed in order that National Societies may measure progress in the area of capacity building. The Societies in the region have drawn up programme and project proposals for 2001 which, to date, have successfully attracted donor attention.

The context

There are ten National Societies in the Pacific region: Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Palau, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, and four National Societies in formation – the Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu. With the exception of the National Societies of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and PNG, the other ten National Societies have fewer than five employees.

These Societies cover an exceptionally large geographic region from high snow-covered mountains, jungle and flood plains to coral atolls - an area which is prone to many different types of disasters.

These disasters range from flooding, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and there is also the menace of the greenhouse effect which could impact on the low lying coral atolls. Furthermore, in the last year, the region has experienced droughts of longer duration and in areas which are not usually affected.

The majority of the National Societies run disaster preparedness (DP) and relief services, and blood donor recruitment, youth and first aid activities. Others have started programmes in community health, HIV/AIDS education and work with the disabled. The Hanoi regional meeting and the sub regional Nadi meeting in 1998 established a background against which they have determined their own medium term objectives.

The three priorities set by the National Societies reflect their state of development and the country and regional contexts. Their first priority is to address their internal weaknesses and develop their organisational capacity. This will include the development of improved systems and structures, but also the skills and capacity to tap into new sources of funding.

The second priority is to develop more effective disaster preparedness and response capacity because of the region's vulnerability to natural disasters and the importance of establishing the Red Cross as a key player in this area.

The third priority is for National Societies to provide more effective health services to communities and to vulnerable people. The development of new community-based health programmes with a focus on health education is seen as a way forward to this goal.

The Federation has built its assistance strategy around these three main priority needs. Since all require external funding, the regional delegation, besides providing technical advice and assistance, is concentrating on developing long term partnerships and obtaining funding for the benefit of National Societies in the region through advocacy and networking with other organisations. In the long term, this should lead to a closer regional identity amongst National Societies and create an environment in which Societies are able to cover their core costs from local or regional sources.

Latest events

Ethnic violence, which until recently had occurred in Papua New Guinea only, also broke out in the Solomon Islands in April 1999 and is still on-going inspite of the signing of a Peace Agreement by the two main armed groups and the government. During the reporting period, there have been political changes in a number of countries in the region. The political crisis that has engulfed Fiji since the coup on 19 May which overthrew the democratically elected government, continues with no end in sight. On 2 November 2000, the country witnessed the first military mutiny, with soldiers in the counter revolutionary warfare unit of the military rebelling against the army.

A 36 hour curfew was then put in place by the military in Suva and the overall security situation remains unstable. The political situation has not settled down; the ousted government is calling for the resignation of the unelected interim government and the setting up of a government of national unity.

The economic situation has been seriously affected by the coup. Some 8,000 people have lost their jobs due to loss of tourism and the negative impact of the coup on the garment and sugar industries. The country has also seen a brain drain as professionals flee to Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada.

During this period of instability, the Fiji Red Cross has constantly provided first aid teams which are called upon by the military. The ICRC maintained a presence in the country throughout the crisis and is in the process of establishing a permanent delegation in the country.

In Solomon Islands, the two main warring parties the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF) and Guadalcanal Resistance Army also known as Isitambu Freedom Fighters (IMF), signed a Peace Agreement at a military base in Townsville, Australia on 15 October 2000. They also agreed to have unarmed peace monitors from Australia and New Zealand, who will oversee the handover of all weapons held by both groups. Within days of signing this latest agreement there were violations of the accord and people were killed, but in spite of this, both Australia and New Zealand have deployed peace monitors. The Solomon Islands Red Cross continues to provide assistance to both warring parties. In early October, the ICRC was forced to suspend its activities temporarily after an attack on its head of mission.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Regional Programmes

Disaster Preparedness Programme •

The objectives of this programme are to assist National Societies in their efforts to respond more effectively when emergencies occur, as well as to help them to draw up disaster plans which should form part of their governments' national disaster plans and to train their volunteers.

During the reporting period, there were no serious natural disasters in the region. However, following the coups which occurred in Fiji and the Solomon Islands, the two National Societies continue to provide a prompt and impartial response which has enhanced the image and credibility of the Red Cross.

The disaster preparedness and relief delegate succeeded in assisting the Tonga Red Cross Society to finalise its first national disaster preparedness plan and assisted the Fiji Red Cross Society and the Samoa Red Cross Society to update their disaster preparedness plans. The Delegate also finalised the adaptation and reprint of the Fiji Red Cross "DP Snakes and Ladders" game for the region. The game is related to disaster preparedness awareness which includes topics such as cyclones, floods and earthquakes and is intended for primary and secondary schools throughout the Pacific region.

In December 2000, a regional relief workshop was held. The workshop addressed all areas related to relief operations including the Federation appeal process, relief assessments, the Seville Agreement SPHERE, ERU and FACT teams. Other regional partners such as OCHA and SOPAC gave presentations and the ICRC gave a presentation on conflict preparedness. In addition, the Federation's regional delegate recruitment and training programme was presented..

Disaster Preparedness Container Programme •

The objectives of the DP Container Programme 2000 have been met. The Tonga Red Cross Society received 2 full containers, Micronesia 1 full container, the Solomon Islands and Fiji Red Cross were each provided with relief supplies for one container, whilst Samoa, Micronesia and Kiribati were provided with funds to repair and maintain their containers. In Vanuatu, the costs of repairing and maintaining the container were higher than buying a new container and it was therefore decided to purchase a new container.

The quarterly stock report has been instituted and during the period, all Societies in the Pacific (with the exception of PNG and the Marshall Islands) issued reports.

Health Programme •

The health delegate undertook follow up technical visits to the Micronesia Red Cross for its cholera operations funded by the Federation. Technical advice was provided to the Palau, Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji and Kirabati Red Cross Societies.

In addition, the health delegate drew up criteria and rules for first aid competitions and was one of the judges for the competitions held by the National Societies in Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands. The health delegate has been working on the printing of the Pacific Region First Aid Manual and has finalised the text on first aid in the community for Red Cross volunteer trainees in the Pacific.

In October, the delegate attended the Federation's Regional Workshop on 'Quality in Red Cross/Red Crescent Health Programmes'.

Institutional and Resource Development Programme •

Over the reporting period, the institutional development delegate seconded by the Australian Red Cross has taken on additional responsibility for resource development.

A University graduate was hired for a week to develop a spreadsheet to assist with analysing and presenting data gathered from the self-assessment questionnaire sent to all National Societies. Based on the characteristics of a well-functioning National Society, the assessment was developed to assist National Societies in identifying areas needing improvement and highlighting issues/areas which require input and assistance from the regional delegation. Societies will also be able to see improvements through bench marking.

The institutional and resource development delegate participated in the successful donors' meeting with representatives from the Australian Red Cross, the New Zealand Red Cross, the ICRC, the Federation country delegation in PNG and the regional delegation, Suva. The head of regional delegation approached Embassies, DFID and other potential donors regarding funding for country and regional strategies and programmes.

The institutional development delegate undertook technical missions to Vanuatu Red Cross to attend its AGM and to conduct a governance and management workshop. Technical support was also provided to the National Societies of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Micronesia.

A quarterly performance monitoring system was developed and has been accepted by two of the region's major donors as a preferred means for National Society quarterly reporting.

The institutional development delegate attended the 9th Pacific Regional Disaster Management Meeting held in Niue.

A significant development and achievement over the semester has been the marketing of National Societies' country programmes, together with the regional programmes. National Societies now see the benefit of developing plans using the logical framework, in order to improve programme and project outcomes.

National Society Activities •

Cook Islands •

The Cook Islands Red Cross continued to run first aid training activities for the general public and schools throughout the period under review. The Society's field officer who is responsible for youth activities in the Society attended the youth workshop in Singapore and is now developing a youth policy. The issue of recognition of the National Society by the ICRC and membership of the Federation remains pending as the Cook Islands' government has not yet enacted legislation recognising the Society. It is expected that this will be finalised in early 2001.

The National Society programmes for 2001 were drawn up and, to date, two of the three proposals presented by the Society have been fully funded by the New Zealand Red Cross and the third covering the construction of new headquarters has received approximately one quarter of funding required from the Japanese Red Cross. The Secretary General represented the Pacific region at the global first aid working group meeting held at the Secretariat, thanks funding from the Australian Red Cross.

The Society organised a first aid competition which was preceded by a 2 day communications and counselling skills workshop for staff and volunteers; both events were funded by the regional delegation.

Fiji •

The Fiji Red Cross continues to reinforce its profile given the key role it played during the hostage crisis earlier in the year and the humanitarian support it has provided to displaced civilian population as direct result of the coup. On 2 November, at the height of the mutiny within the armed forces, the Fiji Red Cross was called upon to evacuate wounded soldiers and during a further week, the Fiji Red Cross had a team of staff on 24 hours' standby.

The political crises in Fiji saw a number of houses in the rural areas being set on fire. As a result, hundreds of Indo-Fijian people were forced out of their homes and became displaced, with some 300 individuals camped in Lautoka, whilst others stayed with friends and relatives in and around Suva. The Fiji Red Cross assisted the displaced in Lautoka with weekly supplies of vegetables, whilst those in Suva and the surrounding area received family packs. The New Zealand government funded building materials for displaced families wishing to go back to their homes. The interim Fijian government is allocating F\$ 5,000 for each displaced family towards the costs of rebuilding their houses.

An ongoing role for the Society during the political crisis was blood donor recruitment as stocks of blood are used increasingly rapidly. The Fiji Red Cross has worked hard to implement its programmes; furthermore, an innovative membership drive was launched countrywide, not only to raise funds but also to recruit more members.

For the first time, the Fiji Red Cross Society held a first aid competition in the Pacific. Competing teams were drawn from branches and the competition was funded by the regional delegation, Suva. The regional health delegate and New Zealand Red Cross's operations manager for the Pacific were the judges. The Society extended its water safety programme to Lautoka in the west, where Court Fiji Ltd has donated a swimming pool to the National Society. In addition, the Society organized its annual fashion show awards in Suva in December.

The large majority of programmes and projects for 2001 were funded through the Australian and New Zealand Red Cross and the British Embassy. The Society was also active in gaining corporate sponsorship for two of its programmes.

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) •

The Society continued its cholera operations over the period. It also carried out the distribution of jerrycans for water and educational materials such as posters and pamphlets. Through its immediate response to the cholera outbreak, the Micronesia Red Cross has gained respect from residents of Pohnpei, State and Federal governments.

The National Society continues to progress with chapter development: Kosrae, Yap and Pohnpei chapters are functioning, The Society developed its plans and budgets for 2001 and 3 programmes have been proposed: disaster preparedness and response, institutional development and first aid. Pledges have been received from Kanagawa Chapter of the Japanese Red Cross and the British High Commission under its small grants scheme. A new first aid instructors' training course has been planned for early January and an institutional development workshop, for staff and volunteers from all chapters will include youth and first aid activities.

The Society continues to produce its magazine (the Redline), the only printed magazine in Pohnpei State and with many companies and individuals paying for advertising space, the Society is able to recoup some of the costs associated with its production.

Future plans are for the Society to apply for recognition by the ICRC and membership of the Federation, it is hoped that this will take place prior to the next General Assembly of the Federation. The Society is in the process of seeking a grant from its government for its core-costs in 2001.

Kiribati •

The Society's main activities are the Handicap School and first aid and these activities are ongoing. During the planning process for 2001, the Society drew up a project proposal on community based self reliance and was not able to achieve more as a result of a lack of skilled staff.

The Kiribati Red Cross has much potential for first aid training as an income generating activity, in particular targeting the sailors who work on German and Japanese ships which the most significant source of employment. During the second quarter of 2000, the regional delegation assisted the Society with a trainer, to train more first aid instructors. As a follow up, and on request from the National Society, the regional delegation is discussing provision of a staff on loan (first aid trainer) for 3 months with the Australian Red Cross.

The main task of the staff on loan will be to reorganise the first aid programme of the Society, train more trainers and to develop a first aid business plan for the Kiribati Red Cross. The Australian Red Cross (ARC) has agreed to the proposal and is in the process of recruitment. The ARC has also pledged funding for the community based self reliance project in 2001.

Palau •

During this period, little has been reported by the Society, the ongoing activity being first aid training for the public which is funded by the Hiroshima Chapter of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Papua New Guinea •

Papua New Guinea benefits from a country Delegation and has a separate appeal. However, as part of the regional programmes, the National Society and country delegation take part in meetings and training sessions organised in the region.

Solomon Islands •

The political crisis and armed conflict that has faced the country since early 1999 and the coup in June have compounded the already volatile situation. On 15 October 2000, the "Townsville Peace Agreement" was signed by the main warring parties. Both the Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC) and the ICRC continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the displaced population on Guadalcanal Island, mainly through distribution of food and provision of health care. In early October 2000, the ICRC suspended its activities temporarily after its head of delegation was attacked by armed men at one of its food distributions. An official apology in the form of shell coin was presented to the ICRC in Honiara by local leaders from the area where the head of the ICRC delegation was attacked. The ARC development delegate is now in place and liaises with the regional ID/RD delegate on development issues. The Australian Red Cross is also funding institutional development activities and one programme area. The Delegation has been working closely with the ICRC, the Australian and Solomon Islands Red Cross Societies on a Memorandum of Understanding for support to SIRC.

Samoa •

First Aid continues to be the major activity of the National Society, with regular courses being organised for the general public, schools and businesses. The Society has organised a first aid competition for the first time on 22 November 2000. Prior to the competition, a two day workshop on communications and

counselling skills was organised by the Society for its staff and volunteers, conducted by a consultant identified by the regional delegation. Both the first aid competition and the psychological support workshop were funded by the regional delegation. The Regional Health Delegate and Fiji Red Cross, Safety Manager were among the judges for the competition.

Disaster preparedness and response is another major activity of the National Society which updated its national disaster plan in October. The New Zealand Red Cross is funding the Society's first aid training in 2001 and Australian Red Cross is funding the field officer's salary.

Tonga •

The Tonga Red Cross Society (TRCS) continues to make steady progress and developed, finalised and approved its first national disaster plan. It also received two fully loaded DP containers with relief supplies from the regional delegation.

The new Secretary General made a one week familiarisation trip to the regional delegation and the Fiji Red Cross, where he was briefed on the activities of the Fiji Red Cross, the regional delegation and the Federation. The visit to Fiji Red Cross included meetings with the Director General and various department heads.

The Tonga Red Cross Society has been planning its annual Red Cross Ball which was held on 24 November. The Society is now selling first aid kits from the New Zealand Red Cross as a fundraising activity. The Society has had successful discussions with the Tonga government and AusAid in Tonga who have agreed to fund TRCS's industrial first aid programme for 2001.

Tuvalu •

Little has been achieved by Tuvalu Red Cross during the period under review, largely as a result of internal staffing problems; the regional delegation is liaising with the National Society to review appropriate support.

A number of both internal and external donors have shown interest in funding the 3 programme proposals put forward by the Society for 2001. However, this will be on the understanding that the Federation will assist the Society to address its current difficulties. The delegation is currently holding discussions with the Tuvalu government with a view to resolving these issues.

Vanuatu •

The Society held its AGM in December and elected a new, more broadly representative Board. Following the AGM, the institutional and resource development delegate conducted a governance and management workshop familiarising new members with the roles and activities of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and outlining their responsibilities as board members.

The Society holds regular board meetings and continues to carry out in-country fund-raising. Several new members have been recruited and Santo Branch is expanding its activities.

The Society has completed the construction of disaster stores, thanks to funding from the Japanese Red Cross disaster preparedness container programme, and has also renovated its headquarters through its own funds. A new disaster preparedness container has been procured for the Society's Santo Branch by the regional delegation.

Three of the Society's programmes have received funding for 2001: disaster preparedness and response (Australian Red Cross), first aid training (New Zealand Red Cross) and institutional development.

Outstanding needs

The appeal for the regional programmes in the Pacific for 2000 has received 124.2 per cent funding coverage.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Relations with the Australian, New Zealand and Japanese Embassies, as well as with the UN and other aid agencies, DFID and the EU, have been maintained through visits and posting of the RC/RC Magazine and the AP Focus to profile the work of the National Societies and the regional delegation. Technical contacts are regularly maintained with UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and regional organisations such as the South Pacific Forum and SOPAC.

The Delegation has continuously worked with the National Societies to highlight their activities through media coverage, and whilst some Societies have a good level of expertise, others need further support.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The National Societies in the Pacific developed 2001 programme proposals for submission to donors for the first time, thanks to training and support on logical framework techniques from the regional delegation. This represents significant progress for the National Societies in the region.

The results of the above work has now started to bear fruits, since firm funding pledges for 65% of programme costs have been committed for 2001. Furthermore, the regional programmes have already received pledges which cover more than 90 per cent of programme costs.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Head
Asia and Pacific Department

This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

Pacific						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.60/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				12/20/00
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,408,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 124.2%
Balance carried forward from 1999				155,537		
Relocation of income				40,000		
DANISH - GOVT/RC		300,000	DKK	62,580	14.06.00	30% OF DKK 1'000'000
FINNISH - RC		33,637	EUR	52,346	12.06.00	REGIONAL HEALTH
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		25,228	EUT	39,288	07.09.00	HEALTH/PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT
JAPAN - RC				148,000	11.01.00	
JAPAN - RC		154,500	USD	254,538	28.04.00	REG. DEL SUVA
JAPAN - RC		20,000,000	JPY	311,440	28.04.00	REG. DEL SUVA
JAPAN - RC		3,500,000	JPY	54,814	19.09.00	FS MICRONESIA
NEW ZEALAND - RC		51,735	NZD	42,397	03/02/00	CBSR WORKSHOPS IN FIJI AND VANUATU
UNAIDS		2,000	USD	3,148	03/03/00	SUVA, FOR PRINTING OF BLOOD POSTERS
AMERICAN - RC		221,911	USD	365,598	26.05.00	IDRDP
WHO		1,680	USD	2,768	04/07/00	WHDAY CELEBRATION IN FIJI
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,532,454	CHF	108.8%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIAN - RC		9,525	AUD	9,321	12.06.00	COSTS F.A. INSTRUCTOR /TONGA
AUSTRALIAN - RC		28,037	AUD	27,437	12.06.00	COSTS DEVELOPMENT DEL. TONGA
AUSTRALIAN - RC		19,802	AUD	19,378	12.06.00	COSTS LOGISTICS DELEGATE
AUSTRALIAN - RC		12,435	AUD	12,169	12.06.00	EXPENSES DEL. DEVELOPMENT
AUSTRALIAN - RC		3,683	AUD	3,604	14.07.00	EXTENSION MISSION OF LOG.DEL
Australia	Delegate(s)			46,488		
Finland	Delegate(s)			60,123		
Japan	Delegate(s)			29,897		
USA	Delegate(s)			7,500		Adjustment 19/12/2000 LV
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				215,917	CHF	15.3%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
P55160, P55900, P55901, P55902, P55905, P55907,P55908						