

# PERU

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### CHF 708,000

Programme No. 01.21/98

---

Despite Peru's economic growth, poverty and violence remain the lot of the vast majority of its citizens, 60% of whom live in poverty and more than a fifth in extreme poverty.

Privatisation has had a positive effect on the public debt, but has put many services out of reach of the poor. Economic reforms have attracted international investment in urban areas, sharply reducing support to agriculture and investment in the rural sector, and increasing migration to the urban areas, where 72% of the population now live. Deterioration of the rural environment, due to uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, and urban over-population create serious health hazards for the poorest members of society, adding to the scenario of misery.

Forty-eight per cent of all Peruvians are under 20 years of age — and it is the young who are particularly affected by unemployment, violence and the lack of opportunities. Close to 70% of the poor have either not attended school or only finished primary level, while 28% of children under five are undernourished. The government recently launched a four year programme to fight poverty, but it is too early to see results.

The impact of “El Niño” on normal weather patterns was felt already in 1997 when heavy rain provoked floods and landslides, requiring an international Red Cross operation. The forecasts for 1998 are worse, with rain predicted in the North and extreme drought in the South. This will have a direct impact on the poor, who live in the most disaster prone areas, and indirectly on the country's economy, if the pattern of the last “El Niño” is repeated.

### *Objectives in 1998*

After a successful restructuring, the Peruvian Red Cross (PRCS) now has now up-dated statutes and a National Development Plan guiding its activities and fostering programmes focusing on improving the situation of the most vulnerable.

The PRCS has identified initiatives in Disaster Preparedness, Health Promotion and Youth as its priorities for 1998. All projects presented have a developmental aspect, with a scope of two to four years. Much of the work will be carried out by the branches, thereby favouring co-ordination and promoting unity of action of the National Society (NS).

The objectives are:

- | To strengthen the disaster preparedness and response capacity of the NS and further increase the scope of its Community Based DPP programme;
- | to improve the quality of life of vulnerable communities by training volunteers to promote and support community development, with an emphasis on health promotion;
- | to improve the health of marginal communities by promoting their active participation in preventive health campaigns, especially against cholera, TB and Chigas disease;
- | to encourage school children and young people to participate in Red Cross development activities;
- | to strengthen the NS's capacity building by increasing the branches' participation in planning and management.

## *Plan of Action*

### **Disaster Preparedness**

Drawing on lessons learnt in two large relief operations in 1996 and 1997, the NS has produced a plan to improve its Disaster Preparedness capacity and to strengthen the infrastructure needed for efficient disaster management. It is continuing to implement the Latin American Regional Programmes for Community Based Disaster Preparedness in which it has participated since 1996.

The Plan foresees the creation of an operational centre at the NS Headquarters to oversee the national level administration of disaster relief and response. The first steps will be to draw up a national disaster response plan; establish a team to carry out training and co-ordination with the branches; and define administrative procedures and manuals. Adequate equipment for the centre, the branches and the volunteers will be a key factor. The improvement of the operational capacity of the NS is closely linked to community disaster preparedness.

### **Health Promotion**

Because most of the population live in conditions favouring the spread of contagious diseases, the Peruvian Red Cross is increasing its preventive health efforts. Branches working in health met in late 1997 to establish priorities and start specific campaigns. Health promoters will be trained in five districts. Their tasks will be to create a network of well trained volunteers at branch and community level, and to help communities find long term solutions to their social and health problems. The project should attract new volunteers, especially from communities in depressed areas.

(The branches of Piura, Tumbes and Lima have prepared a cholera prevention project, in anticipation of the forecasted el Niño floods. The Arequipa, Moquegua and Tacna branches in the South are planning to work on the prevention of Chagas' disease. The projects include the production of materials for use at community level, training and basic equipment. Eastern branches have prepared a malaria and dengue fever prevention project and the area of Lima and Arequipa is working in tuberculosis prevention. These projects have been presented separately to donors.)

### **Youth**

The majority of Peruvian Red Cross volunteers are under 18, reflecting the demographic make up of the country. The development of their capacities is therefore a main concern of the NS.

In a workshop in June 1997 in which the majority of the branches participated, the Red Cross Youth determined its future priorities. One of them is to initiate a Red Cross School Programme, aiming at including children and young people in all Red Cross developmental activities. Red Cross Youth (RCY) will work to prevent social exclusion and school drop-outs, to increase solidarity and to take RCY work into vulnerable communities. In late 1997 the Peruvian Red Cross was preparing to sign an agreement with the Ministry of Education under which the ministry would facilitate infrastructural and teaching staff support.

### **Capacity Building**

To further strengthen the institutional development process of the NS and the role of the branches in putting the National Development Plan into action, the Peruvian Red Cross has chosen four focal points, Arequipa, Iquitos, Lima and Piura, where it will support the development of branches. (The Lima branch is operationally separate from the national headquarters). Priorities will be: improving financial management and administration, supporting human and financial resource development, strengthening the public image and reinforcing communications between the branches. Basic communication and administration infrastructure will be provided. Training will be given in Red Cross principles, strategic planning, administration, project management and leadership.

The elaboration of national level regulations will stress the participation of the branches.

## *Capacity*

### **National Society**

The National Society launched its National Development Plan in 1996. It has 45 branches, and employs 20 staff at its headquarters. Volunteers are divided into four groups: Youth, Community Health, Relief and First Aiders.

### **Federation**

The Federation has supported the restructuring of the NS through its Regional Delegation. A Development Delegate has been present since 1996. Technical assistance in DPP and Community DPP is provided by the Regional Delegation, and by a Youth Consultant and a Resource Development Consultant.

## *Co-operation*

Good working relations were developed between the NS, the ICRC and the Federation during the NS restructuring period and this co-ordination has been especially important in the revisions of Statutes and in the elaboration of the National Development Plan. The NS has close contacts with the Ministries of Health and Education and the Civil Defence, and is increasing its collaboration with NGOs.