

# REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Health,  
Integration of REFUGEES,  
capacitY Building  
and disaster preparedness

CHF 1,516,000  
235,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.08/99

## Introduction

After the 1997 civil war destroyed the Congolese economy and most of the infrastructure in the capital, Brazzaville, most of the 660,000 displaced people have returned to their homes. Water supply and electricity grids have reached pre-war standards, as has the health care sytem in the capital. Economic recovery is painfully slow, however, with the public's purchasing power far below the pre-war standards.

The security situation is still unstable: militias involved in the conflict in 1997 were not disarmed, and the underlying tensions remain. Meanwhile, the situation in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo is threatening stability and peace, creating a constant need for refugee influx preparedness. Meanwhile, Congo still hosts 6,000 refugees in Pointe-Noire from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda.

The National Red Cross Society of Congo (CRCS) suffered considerable losses during the 1997 conflict. With national headquarters destroyed and looted, staff and volunteers were either dispersed or traumatised by the experiences during the conflict. All existing programmes of CRCS in Brazzaville collapsed.

## The Operation

### Health

At the 36 health posts in the capital, 150 volunteers have been trained to conduct a campaign against AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as well as sexual violence against women. The programme ensures increased National Society visibility and sufficient income to maintain the health posts. This programme will continue during 1999 and will be expanded to Pointe-Noire.

In the Northern region of the country, the regional branch will establish a health post in Impfondo, where volunteers will offer First Aid services and basic health care. Beneficiaries will be required to pay a small fee to make the programme self-sustaining.

Apart from the re-established health post in Pointe-Noire, CRCS is planning to open three similar posts in the areas surrounding it, where the indigenous population of about 5,000 has no access to basic health care.

## Relief

With the support of the Federation and UNHCR, CRCS has implemented a relief operation for 6,000 refugees from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda since 1992. In 1998, the Congolese government agreed to the settlement of the refugees in the country, and for 1999 an intergration programme is planned.

## Management Capacity Building/Disaster Preparedness

In the aftermath of the the 1997 conflict, the Federation and the ICRC assisted CRCS with the rehabilitation of its looted buildings and the provision of equipment.

The development of programmes, through which the managerial capacity of CRCS will be strengthened, started in 1998, focusing on health, water and sanitation and refugee relief. All programmes are implemented by qualified CRCS volunteers. Meanwhile, the managerial capacity at headquarters and the regional level suffers from the absence of full-time staff as well as from institutional weaknesses such as the lack of clarity about the complementing roles of governance and management. This issue is being addressed with the help of the Regional Delegation in Yaoundé.

In 1999, the Federation's country delegation will assist the National Society in establishing effective systems to ensure transparency and accountability at headquarters level. CRCS asked for support to complete its development plan with the active participation of their regional branches. The delegation will also provide training in the full programme cycle, from planning to evaluation.

In order to cover core costs of CRCS, different possibilities of income-generating activities will be explored in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Impfondo. To date, all health programmes include fee systems to ensure sustainability.

Additionally, a Disaster Preparedness Plan must be developed in order to be able to respond professionally to internal and external threats. With management capacities increased, CRCS volunteers will be able to handle a potential influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo or Angola with only material support from outside.

## Objectives

- Health

To promote health awareness and education in reproductive health and prevention of AIDS/STDs in all Brazzaville districts and in Pointe-Noire to approximately 150,000 persons.

To provide consultancy services to 15,000 sexually abused women in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire through 36 health posts in Brazzaville and seven in Pointe-Noire.

To improve basic health services in Impfondo, Kakamoeka, Nzassi and Madingo Kayes through four health posts.

To strengthen the CRCS branch in Impfondo through the establishment of a health post and regular monitoring visits by headquarters staff.

To promote awareness and education for environmental hygiene through awareness campaigns and the construction of latrines.

- Relief

To assist 6,000 refugees in Pointe-Noire to achieve self-sufficiency through the provision of tools, seeds, materials for housing rehabilitation, as well as logistical and financial support for income-generating projects.

- Capacity

To enhance the managerial capacities of CRCS, especially on headquarters level through consultancy on governance and management, as well as management training.

To assist CRCS to improve the communication and co-operation between the regional branches and the headquarters through regular supervisory visits of the health programme.

To enhance the preparedness and response capacities of the National Society in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire through the development of a disaster preparedness plan.

#### Plan of Action

- Health

The 36 CRCS health posts in Brazzaville will provide consultancy on the prevention of AIDS/STD and sexual abuse of women. These posts will also serve as focal points for other CRCS-activities such as like first aid, sanitation and intervention in case of cholera. The potential beneficiary population amounts to 800,000 people. The expansion of this programme to Pointe-Noire will provide the same services to the 70,000-strong population in Pointe-Noire.

The establishment of a health post in Impfondo for basic health care and First Aid will offer services for a population of 10,000. Support for material and medicines, as well as supervision will be provided by CRCS headquarters and the delegation Brazzaville.

CRCS volunteers will run the dispensary in Pointe-Noire, but they will need training and supervision in management issues, to be provided by CRCS headquarters staff with assistance

from the delegation. For the establishment of the three health posts around Pointe-Noire materials and medicines will be required as well as training in management and supervision.

From all 36 health posts, CRCS volunteers will launch sanitation and epidemics awareness campaigns in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Kakamoeka, Nzassi, Madingo Kayes and Impfondo.

- Relief Services to Refugees in Pointe-Noire

Distribution to refugees of tools, seeds, and housing rehabilitation material.

Provision of a truck to assure refugee access to the markets.

Continued support for medical treatment for one more year.

Provision of medicines to the three on-site dispensaries to be sold at competitive prices.

Dispensary management training of the CRCS regional committee by the Pointe-Noire sub-delegation.

- Management Capacity Building/Disaster Preparedness

Assistance to CRCS in establishing systems at headquarters for planning, reporting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, as well as in drawing up a disaster preparedness plan.

### Resource Planning

The 1999 programmes of CRCS in health, capacity building, preparedness and relief will be implemented by the National Society's volunteers. Day-to-day technical management and monitoring requires five key positions at headquarters level. In 1999, continued external support through the Federation's country and regional delegations will be instrumental to implementation of the programme.

#### Capacity

- The Operating National Society

CRCS is present in Brazzaville with 220 volunteers and in Pointe-Noire with 120, most of whom are trained in relief and first aid. In Brazzaville, 150 volunteers are involved in the programme against AIDS/STD, while 50 volunteers in Pointe-Noire are implementing the relief programme in Pointe-Noire.

- The Federation

The Federation provides support in the areas of training, planning, and management to CRCS with a

three-strong delegation in Brazzaville and a relief co-ordinator in Pointe-Noire. A development delegate will be essential for the success of the 1999 appeal.

The Regional Delegation in Yaoundé provides delegate support where needed. It also mobilises regional human resources. Specifically, the Regional Delegation supports CRCS in the fields of governance and management, community health and first aid.

- Other Red Cross/Red Crescent Resources

Participating National Societies provide material support and delegates on an ad hoc basis. During the civil war, the ICRC, in its lead agency role, provided assistance in relief, rehabilitation of CRCS buildings and governmental services (health and water supply). The ICRC/CRCS sanitation programme will be handed over to the Federation towards the end of 1998.

#### Co-operation

Full co-operation is in place with UN bodies such as UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and UNFPA. CRCS serves as the main implementing agency for the refugee programme in Pointe-Noire, based on the UNHCR support channelled through the Federation's delegation. During the rehabilitation phase after the conflict, CRCS and the Federation worked in close co-operation with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF). The delegations of the Federation and the ICRC in Brazzaville have established close working relationships.