

EAST AFRICA, THE HORN, GREAT LAKES AND INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

CHF 4,818,000

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Introduction

The Regional Delegation in Nairobi - which includes the Regional Logistics Centre - covers 15 countries in East Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Indian Ocean Islands. Most are among the world's poorest states and together they contain more than 235 million people.

As a result of endemic conflict, poverty and natural disaster, thousands continue to suffer, untold thousands remain vulnerable, while extreme El Niño-induced weather continues to bite. Waterborne disease has accompanied it, and cholera is now a re-emerging threat. Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies have responded to the crises in terms of relief, but emergency action alone will not solve the enduring condition of disaster victims. Ongoing community development and strategic disaster preparedness are necessary.

The tightening grip of poverty, especially among the urban masses, is reflected in the number of street children. From all over East Africa, the Horn and the Great Lakes, there are reports on a rising tide of child homelessness. Red Cross/Red Crescent response is accordingly growing.

Objectives

- To support the institutional/organisational development and volunteer management of National Societies, including facilitating organisational change processes; promoting active role of National Society governance bodies; advising on policy development; upgrading monitoring, logistics and financial systems and procedures; assisting in material, financial and human resource development.
- To provide special support to the Indian Ocean Island National Societies with a view to build up their service and response capacities.
- To support National Societies and/or country delegations in disaster operations, including developing a rapid-response water and sanitation system; assisting National

Societies in improving disaster preparedness plans, such as the repositioning of material, upgrading training, and logistics capacities.

- To assist National Societies in reducing vulnerabilities and mortality through promotion of community-based health care, including reproductive health; provision of technical back-up in water and sanitation; and establishing a rapid-response capacity for disasters requiring water and sanitation interventions.
- To inform on Red Cross and Red Crescent action and advocate on behalf of disaster victims, and to assist National Societies and country delegations to improve their public relations effort.

Programmes

Institutional and Resource Development

Despite the National Societies' long experience with relief operations, their capacity to deal with them in terms of skills, financial and material resources leaves much to be desired. This has an immediate impact on their abilities to implement disaster response operations, programmes and services. Technical assistance mobilised through the Federation is needed to reinforce capacities in managing services and operations. The 1999 institutional and resource development programme seeks to continue promoting and facilitating organisational change, as well as a clearer understanding of National Society governance in theory and practice. Priority countries for the programme are Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Assistance will continue to Eritrea, Tanzania and Uganda. The programme also calls for the development of material, financial, and human resources, including volunteer management.

Plan of Action

- Facilitate workshop on financial and material resource development.
- Research motivation, performance quality management, and training needs of volunteers; make recommendations for improved volunteer management in National Societies.
- Organise training in technical areas of health, relief and management.
- Facilitate mutual aid and exchange of personnel.
- Participate in development of financial and human resource management initiatives; prepare and implement sub-regional financial development training.
- Co-ordinate regional capacity building workshop for francophone societies.

Indian Ocean Islands: Building Service and Response Capacities

The overall objective is to build up capacity within the National Societies of the Indian Ocean islands (in particular in the Comoros and Madagascar) to prepare for and respond to recurring natural disasters, as well as to assist them in developing the systems and related capabilities to implement small-scale community health projects.

The Federation's basic approach to assisting these National Societies is a mix of sub-regional workshops and specific follow-ups at the national level. Specifically, the programme seeks to ensure improved disaster response capacity in the form of defined disaster polices, basic plans, established co-ordination mechanisms with authorities and other actors as well as trained disaster response personnel; to strengthen strategic branches to carry out relevant services with a strong volunteer base; to contribute to basic health care through successful health education campaigns and promotion; to develop improved management and administration systems; and to strengthen voluntary governance bodies and to promote participation.

Plan of Action

- Organise and carry out two sub-regional disaster preparedness and response workshops. The aim is to define National Society disaster policy and related plans and to strengthen local branches through risk mapping.

- Facilitate the preparation and implementation of self-assessment processes within the National Societies.

- Hold a technical meeting to jointly review progress, address technical issues of common concern and to agree on follow-up plans.

- Organise and carry out two training sessions to cover curriculum development for CBFA/CBHC and training of trainers.

- Carry out a response needs assessment in order to identify emergency stock needs and facilitate building up needed stock.

- Actively monitor progress of National Society capacity building processes.

Building Disaster Response Capacities

The overall goal is to support the strengthening of national societies' capacity to be prepared and effectively implement disaster response operations and service programmes. Within this context, the objectives of this programme will be to facilitate a review of disaster policies and assist in identification of priorities; identify criteria for strategic branches; assist in preparing disaster profiles and conducting risk mapping in strategic areas; assist training of Red Cross/Red Crescent action teams at branch level; manage regional knowledge by compiling "lessons learned" during the implementation of recent disaster response operations; and establish a National Society/Regional Delegation rapid-response capability for emergencies requiring water and sanitation interventions.

Plan of Action

- Assist the Sudanese Red Crescent in developing contingency plans and response capacity in six strategic branches in central and western regions of the country.
- Assist the Kenya Red Cross in completing/testing the revised curriculum for the Red Cross Action Team; strengthen strategic branches using risk mapping analysis.

- Participate with the Tanzanian Red Cross in the development of disaster policies in the western corridor; document practical links between the National Society and in-country early warning systems; evaluate the recent handover of refugee camp operations.
- Assist the Ugandan Red Cross to implement the 1997 Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment report and facilitate the development of a national disaster policy.
- Assist National Societies of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia to organise consultative and advisory meetings aimed at developing/consolidating practical preparedness and response programmes.
- Remain on standby to provide logistics support to National Society emergency relief operations through the Regional Logistics Centre.

Integrated Health

The overall goal of the Integrated Health programme is to assist National Societies in reducing vulnerability and mortality through community-based health care programmes and relief health measures. The programme targets disaster victims, refugees, and local populations in need of Red Cross/Red Crescent assistance. It also ensures preparedness for health-related response to relief operations. Additionally, the programme addresses reproductive health and water and sanitation issues.

As to the former, the programme seeks to strengthen reproductive health advocacy, education, counselling to refugees and displaced persons, as well as to enhance services geared towards reduction of infant and maternal morbidity and mortality, especially from child birth, sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases and unsafe abortions.

On water and sanitation, the overall goal is to provide technical support to National Societies to help vulnerable people achieve sustainable improvements in their quality of life by improved domestic water supply, sanitation and associated hygiene practices through education and associated technical training for National Society staff. Technical services are also to be provided to the substantial water and sanitation projects of the National Societies in refugee and displaced persons camps. In addition, regional and country-based rapid emergency response units (ERU) will be developed.

The programme is well integrated into the Federation's capacity building efforts, with human resource development in health services remaining an important element.

Plan of Action

- Actively monitor trends in epidemics/diseases, initiate/engage assessments and be prepared to assist in responding to health-related emergencies.
- Provide on-site technical support to refugee operations in the region.
- Conduct monitoring missions to cholera operations.

- Develop with francophone countries Community-Based First Aid (CBFA) curricula; conduct training of CBFA trainers for francophone countries. Finalise CBFA curricula for Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia and Sudan. Adapt CBFA material to the regional context and facilitate translation into Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Somali languages.
- Assist National Societies in a critical review of the coherence and relevance of their health policies and programmes.
- Actively participate in the establishment of youth centres in refugee camps in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda as a part of an advocacy campaign on reproductive health and sexual violence. Provide reproductive health kits to Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan, Rwanda and Somalia and conduct training on reproductive health services. Expand community-based reproductive health services in rural Somalia.
- Support an increasing role of women in health services to minimise violence and decrease vulnerabilities of women.
- Develop a regional water and sanitation strategy together with the National Societies.
- Ensure a fully operational ERU capability region-wide. Create a database of National Society water and sanitation ERU professionals.
- Facilitate design of eight new water and sanitation projects.

Public Information and Advocacy

A clear public perception of what the Red Cross and Red Crescent is, what it stands for and what it does in this region is of paramount importance. Providing media and public with a strong profile of National Societies, the Federation and their donors in an environment of conflict, population movements, natural disasters and disease is the overriding goal of public information and advocacy. Just as importantly, all activities and initiatives will include the strengthening of information capabilities of National Societies. The objectives of the 1999 information programme are therefore to assist National Societies and field delegations in acquiring maximum media and public attention to Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian actions; to promote and advocate on behalf of victims of disasters through effective use of mass media; to highlight global participation of donors in supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian interventions; and to ensure that the information capabilities of National Societies are strengthened through selection and training of local journalists.

Plan of Action

- Produce four issues of Focus, the regional newsletter.
- Produce a regional edition of the Weekly News for donors and the media.
- Produce video products on work, interventions and concerns for television syndication.
- Actively assist National Societies in gathering and production of information.
- Develop the region's Internet web site.

- Develop and manage the regional information network based on selection and training of local journalists in all 15 countries.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In August 1998, fighting broke out again in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). For a brief period, the Federation had to withdraw all its staff from the country. A month later, the fighting was mainly limited to the Eastern part of the country, and by late September, the Federation re-established a presence in Kinshasa. All DRC Red Cross programmes supported by the Federation are currently under revision. With several provinces inaccessible due to the fighting, part of the institutional and branch development will have to be put on standby.

The National Society has been involved in the collecting of wounded and dead during the fighting and was also chosen by WFP as a partner in the distribution of food in Kinshasa. It is expected that in the near future, the Federation's support to the DRC Red Cross will be in the field of small-scale relief operations for vulnerable people in the areas surrounding Kinshasa and outlying areas. A separate appeal might be launched next year.

Eritrea

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea (RCSE) is still awaiting formal recognition by the government. Despite the absence of a legal status and a governance body, the National Society continues its programmes which include ambulance services, water trucking, community-based primary health and disaster preparedness. Since the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea in May 1998, the National Society has also been involved in addressing the plight of displaced populations.

The Federation's support through its representative in Asmara is mainly focused on strengthening operational and management capacity. The Federation is also making an effort to act as the co-ordinator of the partnerships between the RCSE and several Participating National Societies.

The Regional Delegation

It is planned that in 1999, the Nairobi delegation will consist of 17 delegates.