

RWANDA

REHABILITATION, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

CHF 4,289,000
80,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.11/99

The Context

Rwanda continues to suffer from the consequences of the April 1994 genocide, in which up to 800,000 people died. Mass population movements to and from the country put constant pressure on attempts to normalise the situation. Since 1994, an estimated 3.1 million people have returned to the country from exile, representing close to half of the current population. Meanwhile, Rwandan prisons are holding 130,000 people in connection with the genocide, removing a large number of adult males from economic activity.

In this context, the Rwandan Red Cross (RRC) has been working to re-establish itself as a viable organisation serving the many needs of the population. Currently, there are 70 communal committees and 85 youth sections throughout the country's 12 prefectures. In September 1997, a General Assembly was held. It adopted new statutes and elected a new Central Committee and president.

The Operation

The programmes of RRC and the Federation focus on alleviating the housing shortage in the country, reconstitution of the health system, disaster prevention and preparedness, and community development. Turning away from the crisis management that has characterised RRC activities for the past five years, the National Society will in 1999 begin to make meaningful contributions to finding durable solutions to the nation's complex problems.

Objectives

The overall goal of RRC is to increase its capacity to respond to the needs of the vulnerable population, especially women and children, and to contribute to the resolution of conflicts in a volatile society. The following specific objectives contribute to this goal:

- To address the country's housing shortage, as well as the deterioration of community infrastructure such as schools, health centres, water sources.
- To complete the process of training 360 community volunteers in the country-wide network of Community-Based First Aid Programme. Health and sanitation activities at the community level will continue to focus on latrine construction, health education, and referrals to local health centres.
- To complete a disaster preparedness and response plan in co-operation with the government and humanitarian organisations. To establish a series of well-functioning, strategically-located branches throughout the country, prepared to respond to emergencies with trained, well-equipped volunteers.
- To assist in sustainable community development working with vulnerable groups such as widows, orphans and handicapped people through income-generating projects in agriculture.

Plan of Action

- Rehabilitation Programme

The 1999 construction programme envisions the construction of 150 houses for widows and child-headed households, as well as the renovation of another 150 houses damaged by war or storms. The programme also seeks to contribute to the revitalisation of life in the villages by repairing local schools, hospitals and water sources. Project delegation support is being sought to fund specific sites of 50 to 100 houses.

- Community-Based First Aid Programme (CBFA)

A key Red Cross programme in 1999, the CBFA project will involve the deployment of 360 trained volunteers working in communities throughout the country. Their priorities will be health and sanitation (latrines and waste management), health education (malaria prevention and personal hygiene), as well as small agricultural income-generation schemes. The CBFA programme will be linked to the DPP programme, with the volunteers providing disaster preparedness training at the community level. When the programme is fully operational, it is expected to have a direct impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands people.

- Disaster Preparedness, Response and Prevention (DPP)

Given the volatile situation in the country and the region, a successful DPP programme is of paramount importance to both RRC and the Federation. Currently, a DPP delegate and his counterpart are involved in the development of a national disaster preparedness plan, addressing both natural and man-made disasters. Training of volunteers began late in 1997 and will continue throughout 1999. The construction of branch offices in each of the 12 prefectures is part of this programme. These offices will serve as focal points for branch projects, warehouses for quick response relief supplies, training centres for both the DPP and Community-Based First Aid programmes, and outreach centres to respond to needs of the

community's population. In 1999, four offices will be established in the most strategic prefectures.

- Community Development

In a bid to address the root causes of vulnerability in the country, RRC has identified women and orphans as the people most in need of assistance. Many families have lost one or two breadwinners through war, imprisonment or natural causes, making them extremely vulnerable to the hardships in Rwanda. Through various agricultural and income-generation projects, RRC will seek to counter the problems these families face in supporting themselves. Aiming at independence from non-sustainable food aid, RRC and the Federation are planning to launch projects in animal husbandry and other agricultural areas to promote the self-reliance of targeted beneficiaries.

Resource Planning

External financial resources have become more difficult to secure in 1998. Apart from the traditional donors who have supported Red Cross efforts in the past, RRC and the Federation will continue to approach funding sources within the country, such as embassies, the UN and other humanitarian agencies active in Rwanda.

For projects such as construction, support to women and orphans and DPP, donors are invited to support a specific project (or part of it) in its entirety.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

The National Society has been rebuilding its capacity gradually over the last few years. It is now present in all of the country's 12 prefectures and is actively participating in relief projects, in co-operation with humanitarian organisations such as WFP and UNHCR. The CBFA, DPP and youth programmes continue to serve as building platforms for a trained volunteer base.

- The Federation

The Federation Delegation in Kigali currently consists of Head of Delegation and seven delegates, a number to be reduced to five in the course of 1999. Support in the fields of disaster preparedness, institutional development, information and logistics is provided by the Regional Delegation in Nairobi.

Co-operation

RRC and the Federation are co-operating with the ICRC on security issues. Co-operation is expected to widen to other fields in 1999. Co-operation with WFP (food security) and UNHCR (contingency planning, refugee and IDP support) will be expanded.