

ETHIOPIA

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

CHF 807,000
25,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.17/99

The Context

Ethiopia is one of the most disaster-prone countries in Africa. Over the last two decades, there have been numerous large and small-scale disasters, both natural and man-made. The most common natural phenomena include drought, famine, floods, hail storms, plant pests and insects. Earthquakes are less frequent but lurk as potentially devastating disasters.

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), with strong support from the Federation, has been continuously engaged in disaster response programmes over the past 20 years. As a result, the National Society has developed its infrastructure and facilities nation-wide in an effort to respond in time to the needs of the most vulnerable.

Although the National Society has developed the skills for disaster response programmes, the disaster preparedness (DP), prevention and mitigation programme activities of the Society have not been equally developed or well-integrated to generate the desired benefits. In addition, the Society has experienced problems retaining skilled staff - a problem which is currently being addressed through the Institutional Development programme. The Society is seeking to build its preparedness and response capacities through a strategy of decentralisation in an attempt to retain qualified staff closest to disaster intervention points. The Society's renewed emphasis on prevention and preparedness is in line with the country's Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission (DPPC) strategy of promoting integrated disaster management activities to respond effectively to the drought and famine-related disasters that frequently hit the country.

The Operation

The overall objective of this one-year programme is to boost disaster preparedness capacities of the ERCS through technical relief support from the Federation in order to set up standardised needs assessments and early warning information gathering systems, communications, emergency materials, and the pre-positioning of relief items for immediate response to 25,000 disaster victims.

The programme aims at maximising use of existing capacity and expertise in disaster relief to contribute to the establishment of integrated national disaster preparedness and response

programmes in conformity with DPCC national policy guidelines and the mission statement of the ERCS.

Objectives

- To provide on-the-job training and orientation for ERCS staff in management of disasters before, during, and after the event.
- To pre-position a minimum contingency stock to respond to small-scale interventions.
- To install Federation-standard radio/communications systems in strategic locations/branches and to conduct training on standard operating procedures for telecommunications and logistics for branch and relevant headquarters staff.
- To develop the capacity to gather and disseminate relevant, timely, and accurate information which will enable ERCS to respond rapidly and effectively to emergencies.
- To revitalise youth and volunteer involvement in disaster response interventions.

Plan of Action

- Provide training in basic logistics functions and standard operating procedures of the Federation.
- Restock the emergency response stocks of ERCS for addressing the emergency needs of 25,000 disaster victims. These stocks were depleted in 1998 due to numerous responses to small-scale disasters.
- Install and train local users on HF radio equipment to ensure and maintain reliable contact with four disaster prone regions/branches.
- Train trainers and conduct workshops for provincial branches in early warning information gathering and needs assessment methodologies.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy for the ERCS, especially on gathering, use, and timely dissemination of information within and outside Ethiopia in order to activate intervention mechanisms.
- Revitalise, through promotions and training opportunities, community-based participation of youth volunteers as an integrated part of ERCS relief services (registration of beneficiaries, shelter construction, information dissemination, etc.).

Resource Planning

The National Society has invested three years in a review and redirection of its vision, direction, and services. It now requires donor support to implement the above plan of action. Where possible, the ERCS will solicit material support through partnerships with DPPC, WFP, and UNHCR. However, most of the initial resources will require international sponsorship.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

There are 31 branches and 33 sub-branches in Ethiopia with close to 70,000 volunteers. In line with the ERCS's strategy most systems and activities are decentralised. The branch relief co-ordinators in targeted locations will be the lead implementors of the objectives of this programme with technical support from the Federation. Current communications capabilities of the National Society are insufficient as detailed above and logistics capacity needs to be seriously strengthened.

- The Federation

The Federation will provide technical support to the National Society through its Head of Delegation, finance/administration delegate and two development delegates. Specialised technical support in logistics, relief, information and telecommunications will be provided by the Regional Delegation in Nairobi.

- Other Red Cross/Red Crescent Resources

The ICRC is providing support to victims of the Ethiopia and Eritrea conflict.

Co-operation

It is planned that in-country co-ordination and co-operation with DPPC, UN agencies, other NGOs and the OAU will be notably strengthened in 1999. At the regional level, similar co-ordination will be undertaken by the Federation's Regional Delegation in Nairobi.