

ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY IN THE AUTONOMOUS/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

CHF 2,773,000

Programme no 01.49/99

The Context

The Wye Plantation agreement in October 1998 and the creation of Palestinian autonomous and semi-autonomous areas revived fading hopes for peace among Palestinians, but this alone is not enough to boost the economy and improve living conditions. Although investments in the public and private sectors have to some degree helped to improve the situation of many Palestinians, benefits are still fragmentary and unevenly distributed. Individual incomes in general have not improved. In a total work-force of some 1,300,000 only 400,000 are fully employed and an average salary covers only half of a family's basic needs, leaving a major part of the population facing considerable social and economic hardship.

The Operation

Co-operation between the Federation and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for the development of the Society began in 1993. The PRCS Headquarters, established in Jericho in September 1994, was moved in 1996 to Al-Bireh, near Ramallah.

PRCS is currently developing core programme areas such as Primary Health Care and Rehabilitation and at the same time is working on taking over the Blood Transfusion Services in the West Bank and Gaza, recently assigned to it by the Palestinian National Authority. Emergency Medical Services (EMS), also mandated to PRCS, are continuing to expand, with emphasis presently on the Gaza strip. They and other programmes will be included in a projected Disaster Preparedness Programme.

The Society's ability to sustain and consolidate this wide range of essential services is the key issue for PRCS/Federation co-operation priorities. The agreed principle is increased integration within every field of service, and between the services and institutional development. While services are directed at involving the most vulnerable through community-based methodology - especially with the Primary Health Care and Rehabilitation programmes - they are also designed to strengthen the structure and capacity of the Society itself. Resources are therefore sought equally for both service areas and institutional development.

Objectives of the Operation

The overall objective is to assist the PRCS in its development as a well-functioning Society, providing services to the most vulnerable people in the Palestine AT/OT. This implies support for key service programmes and for consolidation of the PRCS headquarters' structure.

The objectives for 1999 are:

- Institutional Development

Strengthen the capability to plan, implement and report on programmes;
 Develop fund-raising skills and human resources;
 Promote public awareness of PRCS and its activities through increased communications capacity;
 Set up and launch a long-term branch development programme;
 Develop the Youth and Volunteers programme.

- Primary Health Care

Improve professional standards and beneficiary involvement in the development of PHC centres;

Improve the quality and co-ordination of both curative and preventive services of the PHC network.

- Rehabilitation

Provide rehabilitation for disabled children and their integration into society through community based special education;

Develop a programme of speech therapy units for disabled people in order to support their integration into the community;

Develop and produce a Palestinian Sign Language Dictionary, to improve the ability of the deaf to communicate.

- Disaster Preparedness

Strengthen PRCS capacity to respond to major emergencies and disasters through the development of a Disaster Preparedness Programme.

- Social programmes

Extend and improve kindergarten/nursery services for disadvantaged families.

- Blood Services

Ensure a secure and efficient blood supply for the population of the West Bank and Gaza by developing a blood transfusion service.

Plan of Action

- Institutional Development

The strengthening of the PRCS Headquarters will focus in 1999 on planning, communications/information and resource development.

A long-term plan for Branch development in the West Bank and Gaza covering all aspects from Governance to Programme Development and Community Participation, will start in mid-1999. A systematic approach to linking Youth and Volunteer activities to the general development of PRCS will also be introduced.

- Primary Health Care

PRCS currently provides Primary Health Care services in over 30 locations in the West Bank and Gaza.

A Community Outreach Programme has been developed in order to strengthen the communities' involvement in determining the priorities for each catchment area. The programme, which has a three-year time-scale, will commence in early 1999.

A second programme will continue the upgrading of staff, equipment and physical structures in the PHC network.

- Rehabilitation

The PRCS Rehabilitation programme comprises eight centres in the West Bank and one in Khan Younis, Gaza. It helps children with disabilities and students with hearing loss. In 1999 the Society will launch two new programmes:

– Community Based Special Education, aimed at integrating disabled children into the community, will commence in six areas: Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jericho, Hebron and Gaza strip. It has a two-year timetable of training (rehabilitation workers, families) and evaluation.

– Speech Therapy Units will be set up in four areas: Nablus, Jericho, Hebron and Gaza. This programme will be developed in co-operation with a Jordanian university and has a three-year plan, aiming at complete sustainability in the last year. In addition, PRCS plans to produce a Palestinian Sign Language Dictionary.

- Disaster Preparedness

The PRCS has begun a project to determine its role in Disaster Preparedness through a SWOT analysis.

- Social programmes

PRCS Social Welfare Programmes provide a wide range of auxiliary services for the most vulnerable in Palestine AT/OT: they include home care and centres for the elderly, vocational training for women, and kindergartens/nurseries. A project to enhance services in the 19

kindergartens has begun. PRCS will establish a curriculum, produce teaching manuals, organise staff training and provide support materials.

- Blood Services

At present blood for the West Bank and Gaza is collected and tested in many hospitals, both big and small. The Palestinian National Authority has mandated PRCS to organise a cost efficient system which will ensure an adequate supply of safe blood and blood products. PRCS will set up a Central Blood Service while keeping four major hospitals as regional centres. Voluntary repeat donors and mobile collection will be essential to the success of the programme. In 1999, PRCS will start a donor recruitment survey/programme, and set up a central facility with five staff and a blood collection vehicle with two staff.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

The Society comprises 19 branches in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza and a further three in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, working within a unified structure adopted in 1996.

- The Federation

Through its Representative and Health Delegate the Federation is providing technical support for ongoing projects as well as for programme development and work on strengthening the capacity of the Society's base and structure.

- Other Red Cross/Red Crescent Resources

PNSs are providing technical assistance, working through the Federation and/or ICRC. All efforts to continue support for the PRCS are to be co-ordinated by the Federation.

Co-operation

The components of the Movement are working side by side in the AT/OT where information sharing mechanisms link the ICRC, the PRCS and the Federation, and PNSs operating bilaterally in the area. Regular consultations are held to ensure co-operation and co-ordination.