

LEBANON

HEALTH, CAPACITY BUILDING

CHF 848,000
500,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.50/99

The Context

After 17 years of civil war, most of Lebanon is now in the midst of a process of reconstruction and rehabilitation and rapid growth, despite the fighting that continues in the south of the country. The economic situation is difficult everywhere but is especially acute in the south.

The Operation

The Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), with financial support from the Federation, is playing an important role in the post-war period by supplying basic health services normally provided by the government. It now covers the entire country with 50 fixed and mobile Primary Health Care (PHC) Centres. Its First Aid Department runs Lebanon's only ambulance service, thanks to the commitment of 1,500 volunteers. Red Cross vehicles are the only ones allowed to operate in the south. The two services are only partially financed by the government.

The drying up of external assistance has brought the issue of the Society's financial self-sustainability into sharp focus. At present, the Society only covers about 10% of its budget itself. The remaining funds come from government allocations and outside sources. Financial self-sufficiency has been identified as one of the biggest challenges for the Society.

Objectives of the Operation

- Maintain basic medical assistance to the most vulnerable through LRC health centres
- Maintain the countrywide coverage of the ambulance service, in particular in remote areas
- Develop and introduce an appropriate fund-raising strategy.

Plan of Action

- Primary Health Care

Health centres operating in confrontation areas and remote rural areas will be provided with essential medicines to ensure that the population in these areas, who are unable to pay for their medication, will continue to receive the necessary health care. These medicines represent 20% of the total drugs consumption of the health centre network.

- Rehabilitation of Ambulance Service

Ideally, 20 ambulances should be renewed each year in order to maintain the service at optimum capacity. Since this is financially unattainable, five ambulances will be purchased and assigned for service in remote areas, where wear and tear on vehicles is particularly heavy.

- Resource Development

After its enforced dependence on external assistance during the 17 year civil conflict, LRC is now facing funding difficulties as the end of the conflict brings a consequent reduction in aid. Many essential services such as blood transfusion, first aid, and ambulance transportation, are provided to the population at nominal prices which bear little relation to capital investment and running costs.

An external consultancy will assist the LRC in profiling its activities amongst the population, improving its image, and developing fund-raising strategies that will enable it to become more financially self-sufficient.

- Delegation

The delegation in Lebanon in 1999 will be much smaller than in previous years. It will comprise a Head of Delegation, a Project Co-ordinator and one local staff. The delegation will support the LRC as well as the Palestine Red Crescent Society Chapter in Lebanon.

PRCS Lebanon medical services

For a number of years the Federation has worked with the Palestine Red Crescent health services in Lebanon which offer medical care to 343,000 registered refugees and 25,000 non registered refugees in Lebanon. For the fourth year running, ECHO (through the Netherlands RC) has financed this programme, providing ECU 400,000 for the purchase of drugs and consumables. This project is supported by a project coordinator (see under "Delegation").

Resource Planning

To reorient its services towards post-war requirements, the Society established a long-term development plan in 1994 extending to the year 2000. The plan is divided into programmes, one of which is the upgrading of primary health care services.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

The Lebanese Red Cross has six district branches and 24 regional branches which cover the entire country. The Society's services rely on thousands of men and women serving as volunteers.

- The Federation

See "Delegation" above.