



The SRCS views children as teachers. Through primary schools, the National Society's volunteers and staff explain to children how to inform their families about malaria, health and sanitation practices. Educating children on flood risk reduction will now be considered as a natural extension of the National Society's involvement with schools. Encouraging children's participation addresses both short-term disaster preparedness needs and long-term behavioural changes when these children become adults.

Challenges

The number-one problem faced by programme implementers, volunteers and residents in both states is the absence of material resources. They know that no amount of community-based organization will make a real difference without a modest stock to respond to the actual disaster. Mrs. Omelhassan Soleiman, mother of three children and a Khartoum state branch volunteer since 1988 put it best: "Our biggest problem is that without sandbags, digging tools, jerrycans and water purification tablets, not to mention temporary shelter material like plastic sheeting and tents, the training itself does not reduce risk or realistically prepare us."

The reason why these at-risk communities cannot stockpile their own material is simple: they are too poor. It is unrealistic to assume, for example, that people can use empty sorghum bags as sandbags, because the bag is more expensive than the sorghum inside it. There are tangible limits to what outsiders should expect of communities in terms of coming up with their own stocks when material poverty is so obvious. Communities do have solutions, but they need outsiders to give them the means to implement them.

Aggravated vulnerability

Over 30 years of civil war continue to make the people of Sudan amongst the poorest in the world, with most of the country's resources diverted to fight battles that have generated more dead and displaced than most wars in the Horn of Africa in recent times. And, after the 1991 Gulf war in the Middle East, Sudan's situation worsened when the World Bank withdrew its development support from the country. When the World Bank left Sudan, so did many other donors whose resources could have been a lifeline for civilians and the IDPs in the north.

Eleven years later, warriors from north and south have continued to kill each other and the war machinery has remained well fed. What has happened, to no one's surprise, is the perpetual creation of new generations of people who know only dire poverty or displacement or refugee camps – or all three. Perhaps governments in the West and East alike meant to deter the government of Sudan with their policies of isolation. Whatever the strategy, it has not been a success.

The soldiers march on, children are orphaned, women and elderly displaced. The war, coupled with the destructive force of chronic drought, floods, health epidemics and urbanization, is a recipe for putting millions of people at the grave risk of disaster. The possible return of the World Bank to Sudan is a source for much hope for Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). The agency's deputy commissioner explains that "for the past decade, together with our colleagues in the UN and non-governmental organizations, we have designed a series of initiatives which we are convinced will have positive development implications on fighting poverty and managing our natural risks. There is now a window of opportunity to discuss these with the World Bank

Unplanned opportunities

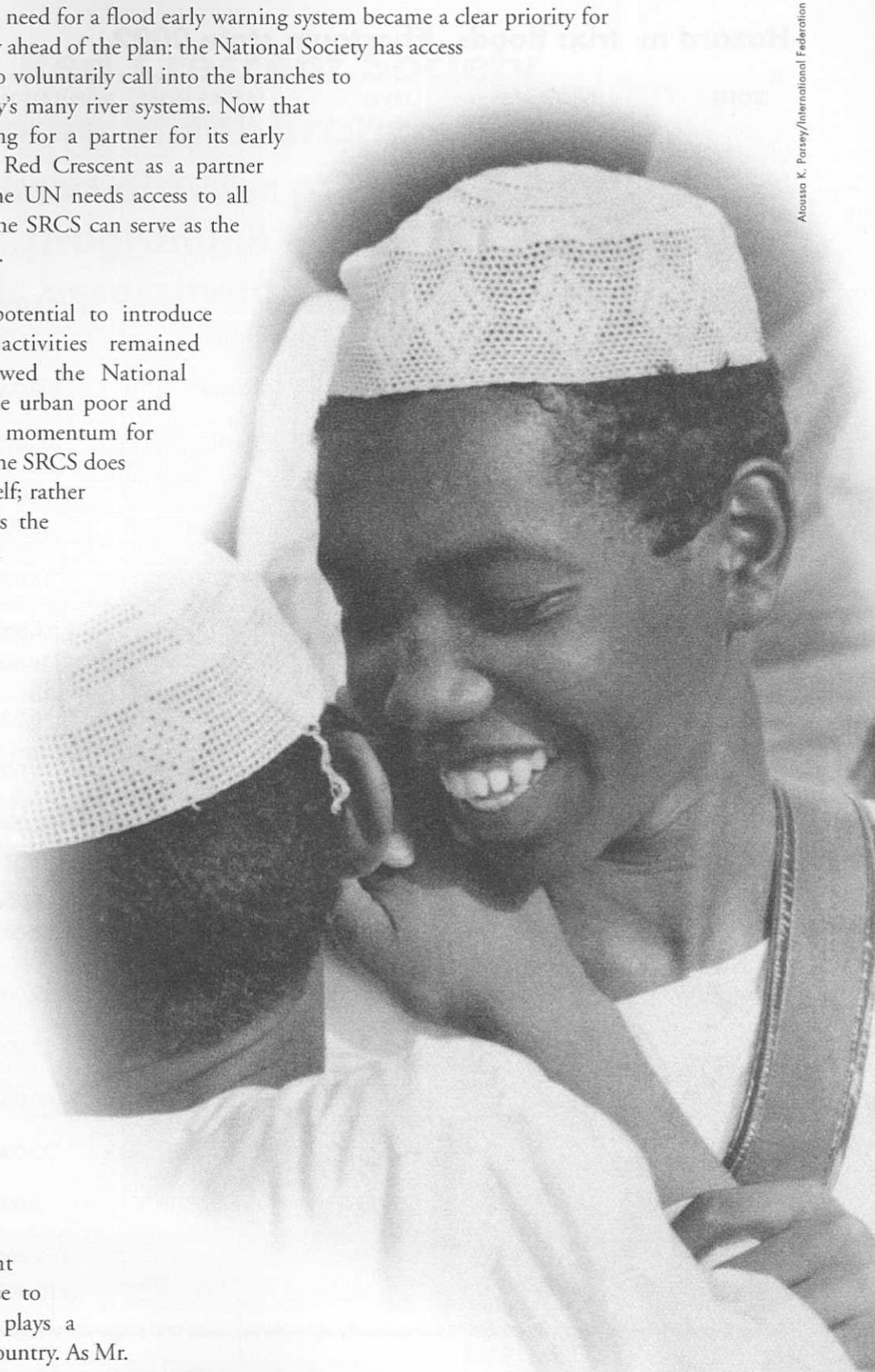
As result of this project, when the need for a flood early warning system became a clear priority for the country, the SRCS was already ahead of the plan: the National Society has access to a network of communities who voluntarily call into the branches to report any changes in the country's many river systems. Now that the UN-OCHA Sudan is looking for a partner for its early warning system, turning to the Red Crescent as a partner would be an effective choice. The UN needs access to all communities in the Sudan and the SRCS can serve as the link through its 20 state branches.

For a long time, the SRCS's potential to introduce organization to community activities remained unnoticed. DFID's funds allowed the National Society's way of working with the urban poor and isolated communities to create a momentum for self-help amongst the residents. The SRCS does not view training as an end in itself; rather it firmly believes that training is the opportunity to create an environment where people, no matter how poor and desolate, can activate their inner sense of motivation to act on their own behalf.

"We are the community" is the firm statement of the SRCS secretary general, Omar Osman; "our staff and our volunteers are deeply rooted and live in the same communities where our clients live. In fact, most of the people involved in this pilot project live in high-risk areas and some were at one point beneficiaries of our relief and social services."

UN agencies and government ministries involved with response to disasters agree that the SRCS plays a crucial humanitarian role in the country. As Mr. Abdowahet Ahmed, HAC's deputy commissioner puts it:

"No matter where you go in Sudan, you will find that the SRCS is present, at the very minimum, through its active corps of volunteers. When we have disasters, we know we can count on the quality of their service."



Atoussa K. Parsey/International Federation

Annex 1

Hazard matrix: floods, Khartoum state 2002

ZONE	PROVINCES OF VULNERABILITY	LEVEL LIKELY AFFECTED	AREAS MOST AT RISK	POPULATION	OTHER RESOURCES AT RISK	No. OF VOLUNTEERS
Omdurman	Korary	medium	Elthora 41, 42 and 43	25,000	Schools, roads, public transport	150
		high	Marzoog	40,000	Schools, roads, public transport	55
				65,000		
Ombada		high	Elsalam	275,000	Schools, roads, public transport	50
		high	Elbogaa	300,000	Schools, roads, public transport	75
		high	Elamir	250,000	Schools, roads, public transport	45
				825,000		
Omdurman		very high	Abusaied	12,000	Schools, roads, public transport	25
		medium	El Reef El Ganobi	15,000	Schools, roads, public transport	15
				27,000		
Khartoum North	Sharg Elnil	high	Barona	35,000	Schools, roads, public transport	30
		high	Elhag Yousif	30,000	Schools, roads, public transport	50
		high	Dar Elsalam, new	15,000	Schools, roads, public transport	25
	Baheri			80,000		
		medium	El Droushap	30,000	Schools, roads, public transport	25
				30,000		
Khartoum	Khartoum	high	Toti Irlan	30,000	Schools, roads, public transport	30
Gabel Awlia		high	Elklakat	10,000	Schools, roads, public transport	15
		very high	White Nile (Lamab)	17,000	Schools, roads, public transport	20
		high	Mayo camp	100,000	Schools, roads, public transport	15
		high	Dar Elsalam	20,000	Schools, roads, public transport	15
		very high	Elozozab	6,000	Schools, roads, public transport	25
				183,000		
Total				1,210,000		665

Source: Prepared jointly by Khartoum state branch and community representatives, under DFID programme in August 2001, updated in June 2002

Annex 2

Sudanese Red Crescent Society Khartoum state branch Community-based disaster preparedness programme Needs assessment sheet

1. General

Date of survey: _____
 Province: _____
 Locality: _____
 Area/district: _____
 Population: _____
 No. of population affected: _____
 Main tribes: _____
 Average monthly income: _____
 Type of event (disaster): _____
 Distance from state branch: _____
 Means of communication and transport: _____

Type	Available	Not available	Remarks
Roads			
Radio			
Telephone			
Others			

Comments: _____

2. Health

Health facilities

Type	Number	General condition	Service level	Remarks
Clinics				
Health centres				
Hospital				
Dispensaries				
Others				

Comments: _____

Diseases

Type	Number of cases	Number of deaths	Remarks
Diarrhoea			
Malaria			
Meningitis			
RTI			
Malnutrition			
Measles			
Others			

Comments: _____

Environmental sanitation

Type	Available	Not available	Remarks
Drainage system			
Latrines			
Water pools			
Garbage collection			
Animal death			

Comments: _____

3. Nutritional status

- Number of meals: ☐ < 3 meals ☐ 3 meals
- Food availability: ☐ Dura ☐ Wheat ☐ Others
- Accessibility: ☐ Purchasing ☐ Exchange ☐ Relief
- Food exposure: ☐ Hygienic ☐ Unhygienic

4. Water

Resources: ☐ Net ☐ Boreholes ☐ Others
 Accessibility: ☐ Type ☐ Donkey carriage ☐ Trucking ☐ Others

5. Damage

a) People affected

Type of cases	>5 years	Women	Others
Wounded			
Broken			
Deaths			

Comments: _____

Houses and public utilities

Type	Total damage	Partial damage	Remarks
Health facilities			
Educational facilities			
Water resources			
Houses			
Latrines			

Comments: _____

6. Response

Local community (activities carried out):

Government authorities (level of intervention):

NGOs (type and level of intervention):

7. Assessment team

Name of the team leader: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

8. Management system

At the state level

- Daily meeting during emergency peak.
- Daily report (received by radio from target areas and sent to SRCS headquarters)
- Weekly meeting with volunteer leaders (prepare situation report)
- Regular field visits to the target areas

At local level

- Daily meeting for the team members
- Daily meeting with community leaders
- Daily report the state committee

N.B. The report is shared with the government and NGOs working in related sectors.

Annex3

Sudanese Red Crescent Society/DFID disaster preparedness programme

Contingency plan for seasonal floods Khartoum state branch

Background

Rainfall and flash floods have become a seasonal phenomenon in the Khartoum state since 1988. Since then, about six seasonal floods occurred almost every year (in 1988, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999). Increasingly the floods/rainfall are causing more damage than in the past, due to the increase in the vulnerability levels (housing in high-risk areas, poverty, lack of planning, poor infrastructure, urbanization, etc.). For example, the 1988 floods caused ten times more damage than one in 1946, which was the worst during the last century. During most of the floods disasters since 1988, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), with International Federation support, engaged in relief operations averaging 1.5 million Swiss francs. However, and in all of the cases mentioned above, the SRCS/International Federation were caught off-guard and as such the response was late, inadequate and ad hoc, leading to unnecessary suffering for the affected people.

So the idea behind this plan is proactive preparation based on previous operations. As of 2001, the contingency planning process will start as early as March and will be expanded to include other high-risk states vulnerable to floods. Putting this contingency plan into operation took account of the participatory and decentralized nature of its preparation, from localities to provinces to state, with the involvement of community leaders and local authorities.

Purpose

The purpose of this contingency plan is to mitigate the possible flood damage and human suffering through advance preparedness measures, based on previous experience and the existing SRCS's state branch capacities (volunteers, knowledge, experience, infrastructure, skills, etc.)

Objectives

The main focus of the contingency plan in the period before the start of the rains is to:

- identify populations and areas at risk in each province;
- identify safe places for accommodation and evacuation routes to them;
- make an inventory of existing resources and their location;
- pre-position a minimum of resources for evacuation and relief in places at risk;
- prepare mechanisms to advise and warn the population of the possible occurrence of a disaster;
- determine what additional resources are needed for response;
- mobilize and post volunteer emergency response teams at selected strategic locations in the state, during the peak flood period;

- engage into public awareness and educational campaigns, spreading well-selected, simple, mitigation messages to enable the public to take action in order to reduce the overall flood risks (e.g., opening the drainage system, checking the roof, plastering mud houses, first-aid messages, mobilization of local grass-roots organizations, etc.);
- improve the response through pre-positioning of non-food stocks at the state level (e.g., plastic sheets, water jerrycans, first-aid kits, blankets, essential medicines, water pumps, etc.); and
- improve coordination and communication with the other key players (governmental authorities, other NGOs, local committees, etc.), especially during flood operations.

Duration, coverage and planning figure

- This contingency plan will be put into effect during the 2001 peak flood period (the peak flood period is from July to October every year). It will then be reviewed and the results will be fed into 2002 plan.
- According to the administrative structure, there are seven provinces in the state. This plan will only focus on six areas in the four provinces most at risk. The selection was based on a risk map drawn by the state branch in the light of previous disasters.
- Planning figure: this contingency plan will address the needs of about 10,000 families or XXX per cent of the total population in the at-risk provinces for the first four weeks, until an appeal is mounted.

Lessons learnt from previous flood operations

1. Strengths of the state branches

- Limited early preparedness (establishment of emergency committee, training of volunteers, posting of community-based first-aid (CBFA) teams in high-risk areas, etc.).
- The SRCS is always the first, and in most cases the only organization, present on the spot immediately after flood disasters (rescue, evacuation, guarding people's belonging, first-aid services, etc.).
- Early collection of information at local level. For 2001, local community leaders were trained in disaster preparedness, and survey and report formats are already designed and introduced (to collect data on demographic, health, environmental, latrines, disaster history, etc.). In addition, plans are under way to train local communities on damage and needs assessment.
- Over the last few years, the SRCS has managed to train a good number of local community members and grassroots organizations on needs assessment, disaster management, etc. They have also managed to promote and institutionalize the traditional self-help system, especially during the first few days of a disaster (until external assistance arrives).
- The state branches have managed to establish good cooperation with all key players. For example, the state information authorities provide good media coverage for SRCS intervention. CARE cooperated with the state branch in opening a drainage system using food-for-work. Médecins sans Frontières cooperated with them on preventive health.
- Some local units in the state have already started a number of preparedness measures (information gathering, opening of the drainage system, etc.).
- Generally speaking, the state branch has a high profile, good recognition and respect from all key players, especially at community level.

2. Weaknesses

- Too great a demand and too much public pressure.
- Weak coordination among NGOs operating in the state. For example, during last year's floods

there were more than nine different coordination forums. The state branch is planning to take the lead on this front to minimize duplication of efforts and resources.

- Poor communication system, especially during disasters. In most cases, local areas are cut off and the only way for the state headquarters/emergency committee to get information is by sending a car to the area. This is frustrating and uses up precious time and resources. As a consequence, a basic VHF communication system, with handsets, is urgently needed.
- The response from the SRCS national headquarters/International Federation is normally very slow.
- There are no warehouse facilities or emergency stocks at the state level.
- The volunteer support system is weak, especially when volunteers themselves are affected by the floods (as was the case in 1999 for example).
- External response is not based on the state branch's priorities.
- Lack of a viable disaster plan.
- The state branches often try to obtain too much information, but do not establish control of the information flow.

Components (by functional activities)

1. Public awareness/educational campaign

- The campaign will be directed towards the public in order to take preventive and mitigation actions.
- Messages will be communicated through leaflets, posters, seminars, state broadcasting, word of mouth; and training sessions.
- Messages will include issues such as the opening drainage systems, checking of roofs, plastering mud houses; control of vectors (flies and mosquitoes), rainfall and river level forecast information, etc.
- The campaign will be conducted in very close cooperation with the state broadcasting and information services.

2. Preventive and environmental health

- The focus will be on preventive, environmental health and first-aid services.
- The major activities will include posting of CBFA teams at strategic locations; training of local committees on first aid and primary health care; home visits; health education sessions directed mainly towards mothers; vector control; provision of first-aid services (e.g., wounds); vaccination, etc
- Actions will be conducted in close cooperation with the local health authorities, other NGOs and UNICEF

3. Emergency stocks

- Non-food stocks (blankets, plastic sheeting, kitchen kits, essential medicines, first-aid kits, water pumps, water jerrycans, etc.) will be stored and managed at the state level.
- If a disaster does not occur in 2001, the stocks will be carried over to 2002.

4. Communication system

- To reduce costs and time, a simple communications system of a VHF base station and handsets will be established to link up the CBFA/response teams with the state headquarters/emergency committee.

Plan of action, implementation mechanism

1. Emergency committee, at state level:

The committee will be chaired by the SRCS state director and include members from the youth, health and relief departments. National headquarters and the Sudan delegation will be represented. During the peak flood period, and before disaster occurs, the committee will meet twice a month; and twice a week during disasters. The mandate is to give overall guidance, direction, planning, management and resource allocation. Detailed terms of reference will be developed by the state branch.

2. CBFA/response teams

During the peak flood period (normally July and August), teams will be posted in six areas in the four high-risk provinces of the state.

Each team includes a team leader and ten members, with multidisciplinary skills (first aid, needs assessment, disaster management, primary health care, etc.). The teams are the major connection between the state headquarters and local communities. Before disaster occurs, their major role will be on the public awareness and educational front (e.g., to gather and disseminate information in both directions, from the state to local level and vice versa; seminars; training, etc. When disaster occurs, they become the first line of response, starting with rescue, evacuation, damage and needs assessment, provision of first-aid services, etc. If a disaster does not occur, the teams will carry on with their public awareness and educational activities in preparation for the next season.

The teams will be posted in their designated locations during all of the peak period (July to October).

The SRCS state branch will develop detailed terms of reference for the CBFA/response teams.

Coordination

This is one of the serious problems faced by the state branch, especially during operations. As part of this contingency plan, the SRCS will regularly lead a coordination forum prior to the disaster. The forum will include the governmental authorities, other NGOs and local committees. The forum will convene once a month, with the SRCS explaining their plans, progress, obstacles, etc.; the forum will be held more frequently once disaster occurs. Close cooperation will be maintained with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the government's Humanitarian Assistance Commission (HAC).

Budget

The requirements for intervention were aimed at ensuring actions towards preparation, readiness and response, should the moderate scenario of contingency plan happen.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.