



ICRC delegate Robert Keusen and a team of laboratory technicians

ICRC hands over health care program to Ministry of Health

Between 2005 and 2008, the ICRC renovated 14 health clinics which were handed over to Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare by end of June 2009.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has the mandate to protect and provide assistance to all victims of armed conflicts and other situations of armed violence.

International humanitarian law provides that persons, who are not or no longer directly participating in hostilities, whether wounded, sick or detained, must be humanely treated and must receive the necessary medical care without distinction.

The aim of the ICRC health programs is to ensure that the victims of conflicts have access

to essential preventive and curative health care of a universally accepted standard.

In Liberia, the ICRC was one of the few humanitarian organizations that remained in the country when the armed hostilities intensified in 2003.

Between 2003 and 2004, the ICRC provided emergency medical services at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Monrovia (JFK), Stephen A. Tolbert Memorial Hospital in Buchanan and a clinic at the Tubmanburg Hospital.

Medical services offered at the time included surgeries, medical supplies, equipment and payment of incentives for health personnel thus providing much needed aid to the wounded. The ICRC surgical team at the JFK Hospital treated over 2'500 war-wounded patients.

At the Stephen Tolbert Hospital, the 30-bed surgical facility handled trauma cases and obstetric emergencies that could not be referred to the JFK Hospital.

The hospital also provided comprehensive primary and secondary health care services for the resident and displaced populations in Grand Bassa and patients from the south-eastern part of Liberia.

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ICRC hands over health care program to Ministry of Health (Continued from page 1)

In Tubmanburg, the ICRC provided basic medical supplies, which enabled the clinic to provide first and curative care services.

The ICRC also transferred patients from Tubmanburg to the JFK Hospital to ensure they receive adequate medical care.

Additionally, the ICRC evacuated patients from various parts of the country to hospitals in Monrovia. 11'800 outpatients treated including 889 war-wounded; 3'986 inpatients treated including 1'914 war-wounded; 3'068 surgical interventions performed including 305 on war-wounded.

Between 2005 and 2008, the ICRC renovated/constructed and fully supported the smooth operation of 14 health clinics located in Grand Kru and Lofa counties. These facilities served the basic health care needs of over 107,000 people.

The health facilities were damaged during the 14 years of armed conflict. In addition to rebuilding these facilities, the ICRC also donated medical equipment. Among them, pharmaceuticals, laboratory and other medical supplies. It also provided training in immunization, malaria case control, and laboratory techniques, etc.

Over 280 traditional midwives in Grand Kru and Lofa were also trained and received delivery kits. Other training beneficiaries included 15 laboratory technicians and assistants assigned in the 14 ICRC supported clinics. These technicians and assistants were provided with microscopes, mentored through regular workshops, and on-the-job.

Now that Liberia is on its way to recovery and development, the ICRC in June 2009 finally handed over all its community-based health care programs to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW).

The hand over was done in two phases to ensure the sustainability of the health services. The first phase transferred some responsibilities including management, supervision, monitoring, data collection and maintenance while the second phase targeted all financial supports (drug supplies, operating costs, payment of salary incentives).

Among the health facilities supported and supervised by the ICRC, eight are located in Lofa - Voinjama and Lukasu health centers, Bondi, Dugomai, Vezela, Kpotomai, Popalahun, and Kamatahun clinics. The remaining six are in Grand Kru - Barclayville and Grand Cess health centers, Gblebo, Garraway, Behwan, and Sass town clinics.

"The health clinics have successfully gone through the transition period from reconstruction to re-establishment of a basic package of health services," said Sara Beneit Gomez, former ICRC Health Coordinator in Liberia. "It now depends on the communities, the county health teams of Lofa and Grand Kru and the MOHSW to ensure the sustainability

of these health facilities and the continued promotion of primary health care."

Said Dr. Gomez at the handing over ceremony in Lofa, June 2009, "These are your health clinics. The ICRC worked alongside the MOHSW and the community to re-establish the health clinics and now they have been returned to you. The health clinics can continue to be centers for improving the primary health in the community, but this is up to you and depends on you. Your continuous support and use of the community based programs that have been re-established do not depend on outside humanitarian actors."

One of the beneficiaries of the clinics is Boakai Talawally, town chief of Lukasu. At the closing ceremony, he said, "I am very happy to see the ICRC handing over the clinic of Lukasu, which was damaged during the war. Our people and the ICRC staff have been sharing responsibilities for patients and drug management. I express our appreciation for all the supports given by the ICRC."



Traditional medwives in Grand Kru trained by the ICRC

FOCUS ON HIV/AIDS

by Rebecca J. Moore

HIV/AIDS has become a tragedy for human experience and crisis that affect humankind irrespective of ethnicity, colour, creed, academic acumen, wealth etc. A horrific crisis is damaging the lives of individuals, families, and communities. This is producing plateau of orphans, widows, widowers, decline in school enrollment, socio-economic setbacks, etc. Candidly, HIV/AIDS is everyone's business.

HIV/AIDS epidemic is of serious concern in the world today. Knowing no boundary, the virus has affected all sectors of the society including employers and employees at work places.

Liberia, as part of the Sub Sahara region is even in more danger due to the civil crisis, which has affected every fabric of the country, i.e., socio-economic status, mental, and physical health of the people. This 14 years of conflict has damaged family values, moral ethics and subsequently, a disregard for socio norms thus leading to an increase in sexual promiscuity, which gave rise to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

In respond to the pandemic, the International Committee of the Red Cross in Liberia introduced an HIV/AIDS workplace program as the institution's commitment to addressing the health needs of its employees and their families who may be affected or are affected with the virus.

The program started in 2006 following the employment of a country manager and subsequent training of 22 peer educators by a Kenyan-based organization, NOPE. Since then, peer educators have continued to educate staff members, relatives and friends about the danger of the virus and safety measures required. The ICRC is among few organizations



Delegation staff during HIV/AIDS 'Family Day' program at ICRC delegation

in Liberia that have established HIV/AIDS work place program.

"As peer educators, we are frequently disseminating messages to our colleagues about behaviour change. Where HIV/AIDS cannot easily be talked about, we break those barriers as peer educators and communicate freely with our peers about the virus. In this manner, they get to know about behaviour change in a positive way," says Wilfred Lawson, former peer educator.

To create awareness about the prevention of HIV/AIDS and the importance of Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing (VCCT), every year the delegation organizes 'Family Day' events in Monrovia and in the field. The occasion brings employees and their families under one umbrella where they discuss about HIV/AIDS issues including behaviour change.

Films, Power Point presentations, demonstration and quizzes are tools used to re-enforce messages of living 'positive' and avoid discrimination and stigmatization.

The first HIV/AIDS 'Family Day' program was organized in Monrovia in June 2007 with the launching of a peer educators' club – DEHU and a comic booklet, Kumba HIV/AIDS story. DEHU in the Gbandi Language means "Sweet Life." Despite being HIV positive, life is still sweet.

Statistics:

According to National Aids Control Program's (NACP) annual assessment on the overview of HIV/AIDS in Liberia, there are 29 Voluntary Confidential Counselling Testing (VCCT) centers, 15 Antenatal clinics (ANC) and 21 health centers have Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT) services.

Promoting International Humanitarian Law to Armed Forces

Five days workshop on IHL/HR rules on the use of force in situations of violence with AFL, LNP and Ministry of Defense staff.



Armed Forces of Liberia and Liberia National Police participants during the IHL/HR training at the Edward Binyah Keselly Military Barracks. March 2009

Ministry of Defense in March 2009 benefited from a weeklong training on IHL rules on the use of force in situations of violence and Human Rights at the Edward Binyah Kesselly Military Barracks.

The training was organized by the ICRC and facilitated by its Armed Forces Security (FAS) expert, Retired (Col.) Serge Bourgeois. "This is the second time the ICRC has organized such training on international humanitarian law to officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia," said Ishfaq Khan, ICRC Deputy Head of Delegation. "The aim is to place the teaching of IHL on a firm footing so that the AFL personnel will later be able to run such training on their own."

The training covered topics such as various types of armed conflicts, the status of combatants and prisoners of war, means and methods of war, protection of civilians, situation of violence and the use of force, IHL instruments - principles and concrete rules. Other topics centered on cluster munitions, working of the International Criminal Court, use of force in situations short of armed conflict, maintenance of order, arrest, search, questioning and detention.

In addition, the training offered opportunities for open discussion among the participants especially on the roles and limitations of the army and police in situations of violence.

The ICRC has been engaged in spreading knowledge of IHL and humanitarian principles since it opened the Delegation in Monrovia in 1990.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) seeks to minimise suffering during armed conflicts by restricting the methods and means of warfare employed in order to protect people, military and civilian, who are no longer taking part in hostilities.

Many state actors and non-state actors who carry arms have a responsibility to take steps to ensure compliance with the applicable law during hostilities. While some positive results have been recorded, there are still violations. Some of these violations are not necessarily intentional; rather, they are because of improper understanding of the law. This reason compels the ICRC, as mandated by the Geneva Conventions (GCs) and their Additional Protocols (APs), to share experiences and best practices in this field to enhance compliance.

States that are signatories to the GCs and their APs are obliged to inform their armed forces of their provisions, apart from the added responsibility of punishing breaches.

The ICRC works closely with armed forces, police, other weapon bearers, decision-makers and opinion-leaders at the local and international level to promote the incorporation of IHL into military training and operational procedure. This initiative is in fulfilment of one of ICRC's primary responsibilities to spread knowledge of IHL, which aims to limit the suffering of victims of armed conflicts by protecting those not, or no longer taking part in hostilities and by restricting methods and means of warfare.

Twenty participants from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Liberia National Police and the

Communicating IHL to newly arrived UN Military Observers and Staff Officers

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) – also known as the Law of War – sets out detailed rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflicts and other situations of violence. In particular, it protects those who are not or no longer taking part in fighting, and sets limits on the means and methods of warfare.

It is very important to spread knowledge of humanitarian principles and the law of war during peace time and during conflict situations. Since the end of hostilities in Liberia, the ICRC has continued to provide information on IHL targeting those people and groups who could determine the fate of victims or facilitate/hinder humanitarian actions.

These groups include the armed forces, police and other weapon bearers, decision-makers and opinion-leaders at the local and international level and, with an eye to the future, youth, students and their teachers.

As part of this effort, the ICRC Monrovia Delegation conducts dissemination sessions on IHL and humanitarian principles to all newly arrived UN Military Observers and Staff Officers of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), in Monrovia, as well as upcountry in Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Nimba and Maryland counties. These dissemination sessions also highlight ICRC's operations in Liberia and IHL applicable to United Nations peacekeeping operations. These sessions are held twice a month in Monrovia.

The objective is to sensitize the UNMIL commanders in order to improve the protection of civilians and detainees in times of armed conflicts and internal disturbances

and to improve the security of humanitarian action.

In an interview with Sgt. Ijeoma Arunsi of the Nigerian contingent (NIBATT 18) at the Mission G7 Training Cell in Monrovia said, "I enjoyed the lecture very much, because I happened to be one of the members of the Red Cross back home in Nigeria."

"The Geneva Conventions have outlined rules of the law of war, is something that we as soldiers ought to know and abide by in all armed conflicts. I served in two missions, Sierra Leone first and Liberia second. I am serving in the Star Base as assigned officer". She continued, "In showing respect for the

law of war, one needs to be a disciplined soldier. My colleagues in the Nigerian army are very much disciplined and have no need to disobey the law we are taught to obey. We respect the law in all peacekeeping missions". She added with a proud tone, "Liberians are my brothers and sisters. I need to come to their aid at any time they need me. I am so happy to be their sister too." Sgt. Arunsi then admonished her colleagues in armed forces to always abide by the law, be neutral, and do their work in any situation of warfare.

Since 2003, more than 4,500 Military Observers and Staff Officers have received briefings on ICRC and International Humanitarian Law in Monrovia and rural Liberia.



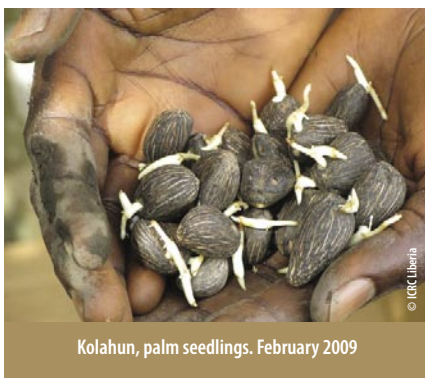
Newly arrived UN Military Observers and Staff Officers at the Mission Training Cell

Coffee and Cocoa farms rehabilitation

Coffee and Cocoa farms were a major source of income for rural communities in Liberia. However, due to the conflict, these cash crop plantations were abandoned and taken over by wild and thick vegetation.

"Since 2006, the ICRC has contributed to the rehabilitation of cash crops that are the economic backbone of rural populations in Lofa and Grand Kru counties," said Jean-Pierre Soumah, ICRC Economic Security Coordinator. "The conflict in Liberia completely destroyed the agricultural sector in many parts of the country. The needs of the local population were not limited to crop rehabilitation, but included re-establishing markets and improving agricultural techniques.

To improve production, the ICRC brought 10,000 seedlings of new coffee tree clones and 17,000 palm seedlings from Seredou Agronomic Research Centre in Guinea and Lamé Institute in Ivory Coast respectively and distributed them to cooperatives and



Kolahun, palm seedlings. February 2009

agricultural groups in Lofa. Additionally, one metric ton of Nerica rice seeds was also distributed to 20 communities in Voinjama and Kolahun districts for seeds multiplication purpose.

Mahawa Kamara, aged 48, and a mother of nine children is a beneficiary of the ICRC Economic Security program. "My husband was a victim of the war in Kolahun and after he died we fled to Guinea," Mahawa said. Before the war, she was engaged in growing vegetables (peanuts, beans) and harvesting wild palm for oil production. Mahawa continued, "The new palm seedlings from the ICRC, which we call 'makindo,' can produce more than the traditional palm and is easy to harvest. This is a great help to us."

Windo Mandojay, a widow from Yandohum raising six children is also another beneficiary of the ICRC. "This makindo palm is the best type anyone can have. We will work hard so that they do not spoil in our hand," she said. Windo is one of 500 single women head of family selected by the community to receive 17 palm seedlings each.

The ICRC also supports more efficient food processing techniques with agricultural/marketing micro-economic initiatives. These include the distribution of rice and coffee mills to empower farmers as they focus on the rehabilitation and production of their cash crops and other agricultural products.



Kolahun, Mahawa Kamara learns how to put palm seedlings on nursery. February 2009

The 27 machines, among them, 21 rice and 6 coffee mills, were given to 25 village communities in Voinjama and Kolahun districts, as well as two other villages in Grand Kru - Jlatwen and Filorken.

Meanwhile, 4,497 farmers have benefited from a training program related to cash crop rehabilitation, post harvest technique, marketing and swamp development.

To improve quality products and to ensure proper storage of produce (rice and cash crops) and address seasonal food crisis or specific food insecurity factors, the ICRC built 53 grain banks and 171 sun-drying platforms in 44 villages of Voinjama and Kolahun in 2008.

The ICRC started coffee and cocoa plantations rehabilitation through the clearing of 6,000 hectares in 2006 and 7,000 hectare in 2007.

Occasion marking Red Cross/Red Crescent Day and launching of “Our World. Your Move” campaign

Excerpt of speech delivered by Riccardo Conti, former Head of Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Liberia on occasion marking Red Cross/Red Crescent Day and the launch of “Our World. Your Move” campaign on May 8, 2009.

“The Red Cross celebrates May 8 each year because it is the birthday of the founder of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, Henry Dunant. But, this year is exceptional for the Movement and for Liberia.

2009 marks the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Solferino, the battle that inspired Henry Dunant to create the Red Cross; the 90th Anniversary of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the 60th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

To celebrate these anniversaries around the world, the ICRC and the International Federation, made of National Societies like the Liberian Red Cross, which is also celebrating its 90th Anniversary this year, created a campaign called “Our World. Your Move.”

The objective of the “Our World. Your Move” campaign is to put a spotlight on the value of humanity and to raise the awareness of needs, vulnerabilities and expectations of those affected by conflict.

2009 is also a pivotal year for the ICRC Delegation in Liberia. For the past eighteen years, the ICRC has helped conflict victims in Liberia by providing massive assistance during the war and building capacity after the guns went silent. The Liberia delegation of the ICRC is in the process of handing over its assistance programs such as Health, Water and Habitat and Economic Security to ministries of Government and communities.

The ICRC Delegation will stay in Liberia, but its emphasis will be on the dissemination of international humanitarian law to the

Liberian Police, the Armed Forces of Liberia and universities; monitoring the country's continued development, as well as continuing to support the Liberian Red Cross' activities.

We all know that ‘one hand cannot tie a bundle.’ And, this is why the ICRC and the Liberian Red Cross have worked in partnership since 1997 to provide much needed assistance and support to the Liberian population throughout the years of conflict. Although the work of the ICRC in Liberia is changing and the delegation is downsizing, the ICRC remains committed to building the capacity of the Liberian Red Cross in its humanitarian endeavours and to working in cooperation with other Movement partners.

In 2009, ICRC's support to various Liberian

Red Cross programs such as food security, water and sanitation, restoring family links, communication and commercial first aid increased by 20% from the year before. We have already begun to link ICRC technical expertise with those of the Liberian Red Cross – to encourage the development of capacities through coaching and mentoring in the implementation of various programs.

As the Liberian Red Cross celebrates its 90th Anniversary and we all celebrate Henry Dunant's birthday and the 150th Anniversary of the battle that inspired Dunant's humanitarian vision, I am proud to be with you celebrating the strength of the humanitarian gesture and launching the international campaign, ‘Our World. Your Move.’



Red Crossers marched through the principle streets of Monrovia in celebration of RC/RC Day. May 2009

ICRC supporting communication training of Liberian Red Cross

As part of the capacity building of the Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS), the ICRC participates in communication training workshops to help improve and expand the promotion of humanitarian values and knowledge about the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

Participants to the training courses are those involved in the promotion of humanitarian values. These "humanitarian officers" are assigned to various chapters (offices) of the LNRCS throughout the country to help reunite families due to conflict or disaster and to promote youth and communication programs.

"ICRC's capacity building with the Liberian Red Cross is to ensure a concerted, rational and rapid humanitarian response to the needs of the victims of armed conflicts, and other situations of violence," said Riccardo Conti, former Head of Delegation. "This is why the ICRC is working with the LNRCS to enable its personnel become more effective, efficient and productive in their daily work."

ICRC's support helps the Liberian Red Cross to improve its communication activities by ensuring the dissemination of accurate information about the Red Cross and promoting Red Cross Fundamental Principles. The training of the participants was aimed at upgrading the knowledge, communication skills and strengthening the capacity of the humanitarian values officers.



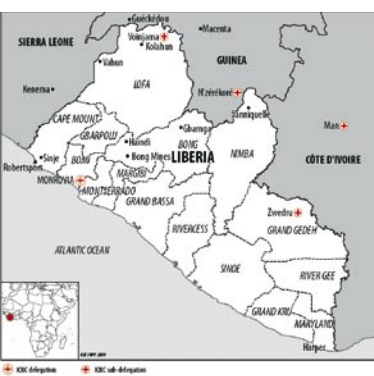
Kakata, Liberian Red Cross Humanitarian Values officers in a Communication workshop. August 2008

"The training has enabled me to blend theory and practice -- giving me a good balance in passing out accurate messages about the Red Cross," said Emmanuel Dolo, Humanitarian Values Officer, Montserrado County Chapter. "We have just learned the strategy and techniques involved in reaching our target audiences. This will surely improve and enhance our work."

At these trainings, participants received basic skills in presentation techniques, writing press releases, stakeholders mapping, the importance of the Red Cross emblem, organizing press conferences, information gathering and report writing. They also gained knowledge in International Humanitarian Law.

"This area of cooperation is extremely important because it takes a basic understanding of the Red Cross Fundamental Principles in order to apply them in every day decisions and actions, contributing toward the integrity of the institution and the Movement as a whole," says Lincoln Reeves, LNRCS Communication Director.

Said Maxwell George, LNRCS Communication and Resource Development Director, "I urge you to take advantage of the training and put into practice what you have learned. The Liberian Red Cross depends on you in the field for the implementation of its programs and networking."



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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization with an exclusively humanitarian mission to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. The founding of the ICRC in 1863 led to the evolution of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

For further information, visit our website at www.icrc.org



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