FIJI RED CROSS SOCIETY

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
1977 — 1981
FIJI RED CROSS SOCIETY

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— National Headquarters
Fiji Red Cross Society
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National Executive Office Bearers (1981):

Patron — Adi Lady L. Cakobau
President — Sir Charles Stinson
Vice-President — Mr. Roger Probert
Treasurer — Mr. Alan Hannay
Director-General — Mrs. Susan Douglas
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I. HISTORY:

Although an ad hoc nucleus was formed during the First World War (1914-1918), Red Cross activities were not conducted on an organized basis until 1952 when the British Red Cross established an overseas Branch, in the then Crown Colony of Fiji.

Following the granting of Independence to Fiji in 1970, the former Branch sought recognition as a National Society, National recognition was achieved in 1971, however international recognition was not gained until September 20th, 1973, when Fiji became the 118th member of the League of Red Cross Societies.

II. STRUCTURE:

The Fiji Red Cross Society currently comprises of a central organization, consisting of a National Council; a Management Committee known as the National Executive Committee; and a local organization consisting of Branches which ensure the extension of Red Cross activities throughout Fiji.

The National Council is the highest policy-making body within the Society, meeting twice yearly to determine major policy and planning issues. The Council is comprised of the elected representatives of each Branch, an elected Executive, independent nominees and non-voting Government advisers.

The National Executive is responsible for the general administration of the Society.

The Society currently operates seventeen Branches within three geographical divisions.

Membership

Adult membership was estimated at approx. 1000 in 1980, with a Youth membership of approx. 3600. Increasing youth participation is apparent in many isolated areas where no Branches exist at present. Membership is open to all in accordance with Red Cross principles and an annual membership fee of F$1.00 is levied on adult members only.

Relationship with Government & N.G.O’s:

The Society maintains a close liaison with Government through those advisers appointed to the National Council by their relevant Ministries.

The Society has permanent representation on the Prime Minister’s Relief and Rehabilitation Committee and has access to the National Emergency Services Committee (EMSEC).

The Society has representation on the Fiji Council of Social Services and access to bodies such as the Fiji National Youth Council. Participation is governed by the Red Cross principles. In addition the Society participates in ad-hoc National Committees, e.g. the National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons.
A new member is enrolled during National Appeal Week

PHOTO: Fiji Times

III. FINANCE

Annual recurrent expenditure during the past three years showed an average growth rate of 37% per annum. However it must be stressed that this was primarily attributed to a rapid expansion programme.

While recurrent expenditure in 1980 stood at $39,500.00, this was 16% below projected estimates. Current indications are towards stabilisation, with a growth rate more in line with the national inflation rate of 8½%.

1980 audit figures indicate the following major sources of income for recurrent expenditure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions from sister Societies (salaries)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special fundraising events</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of stores &amp; sundry income</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grant (Social Welfare)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and subscriptions</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch contribution / levies</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 Deficit</td>
<td>91%</td>
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NB: These figures relate solely to recurrent expenditure and do not encompass specific programmed activities.

IV. THE FIVE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

While activities began a slow consolidation in 1978, late 1979 saw a major milestone in the development of the National Society with the introduction of a Five Year Development Plan.
Aimed at assisting the Society to become self-reliant and self-sufficient, the Plan specifically seeks to develop the capacity of the Society to:

(a) administer its affairs efficiently and effectively;
(b) plan and implement service programmes that are consistent with the role of Red Cross within the country’s development plan — particularly in the fields of protection, assistance, health and welfare;
(c) generate sufficient revenue for its day-to-day operations;
(d) stir public awareness of, respect for, confidence in, and support of the Red Cross as a humanitarian movement throughout the country.

To achieve these objectives, the following areas required development.

1. STRUCTURE:

To provide for increased activities, changes were required within the Society’s Constitution to provide for a more organized and analytical approach to service policy formulation.

While there was no major change at the highest policy-making level, the National Council, provision was made for increased specialization at the administration level within the National Executive Committee.

Similar provisions were made for increased specialization at the Branch level, according to local needs and resources.

2. ADMINISTRATION:

Under the existing structure (pre-1979) there was little provision for delegation of responsibilities. Staffing consisted of only the Secretary General and a clerical officer.

Provision for expansion in staffing has since led to more efficient administration of the Society’s day-to-day affairs, more active Branches, an increasing membership, an increasing number of trained volunteers and specialist services. These are resulting in a broader population outreach, a strengthening of public support and increased revenue.

The Society currently has six full-time staff members (of whom four are volunteers), and two part-time staff members. Three of these fulltime staff members are permanently based in the field as Divisional Field Officers, while one is permanently engaged in blood donor recruitment activities at the C.W.M. Hospital.

Staff expansion would have been impossible without support from sister Societies through the League’s Development Programme. Current support includes:

(i) Australian Red Cross Society — sponsorship of Blood Programme Co-ordinator
(ii) New Zealand Red Cross Society — sponsorship of Field Officer
(iii) Spanish Red Cross Society — sponsorship of part-time Water Safety Co-ordinator
V. SERVICE PROGRAMMES

(i) Preparedness:

Although the Society had played an active role in disaster relief prior to 1977, specific co-ordination or preparedness was only introduced in 1978, with an initial training course conducted by a volunteer League delegate.

Following this training a National sub-committee was formed later that year. The timeliness of this has since been proved by the active role the Society has subsequently played in four major disasters since 1979.

Preparedness activities now ensure a minimum stock in hand of "emergency family packs" for 200 families (800 people) and clean sorted clothing for approx. 2000 people, in addition to other sundry items.

The Society has also made a major contribution to disaster preparedness education with the production of an earthquake pamphlet/poster and a teacher's unit on Disaster Preparedness lessons for school children. Both publications filled a vital need and have received an enthusiastic reception. Fiji lies in an active fault zone and there has been increased seismic activity since 1979, particularly in the Northern Division.

The Society participated in the South Pacific Regional Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Rehabilitation Meeting in Suva, jointly sponsored by the League and UNDRO in 1979. In 1980, a staff member and a volunteer attended a League Delegate's Training Course in Indonesia.

The Society conducts training courses through it's Branches and also contributed to and participated in three Divisional Training Seminars for senior Government Administrative officers, conducted by EMSEC, (the government's National Emergency Services Committee).

(ii) Relief:

Since 1979 the Society has actively participated in four major relief activities.

In March 1979, Cyclone Meli devastated the Eastern Division of Fiji approx. 1400 families were left homeless and approx. 19,500 people affected. With the support of the League's Disaster Bureau and the invaluable assistance of a League delegate, the Society's newly formed Disaster Committee was able to make a major contribution to relief efforts. Much of this would not have been possible without the generous response of sister Societies to an international appeal. In addition to relief supplies, tents, nutritional drinks, the Society assisted in meeting and registering evacuees and hospital admissions. This was followed up by a six-month support scheme to affected areas. Total expenditure for 1979 was $51,960.00.

The following month further National action was required for localised flooding in the Central Division. Needs were met by the National Society.

In 1980, the National Society faced two major emergencies. In March, Cyclone Tia struck the Northern Division leaving approx. 700 families
homeless and affecting a total of approx. 7,800 people. The National body assisted in liaison and with relief supplies, while the bulk of the ground-work was done by local Branches in conjunction with Government authorities.

Within a fortnight the Central Division was severely affected by widespread flooding and landslides accompanying a tropical depression (originally Tropical Cyclone Wally). 264 families were left homeless and a total population of 11,884 affected. Working in conjunction with the statutory authorities and other voluntary agencies the Society manned evacuation centre, despatched relief supplies, assisted in distribution of Government food supplies, provided shelter, manned an emergency first aid post, helped clean-out the local hospital severely affected by floodwaters and silt, and provided volunteers to assist statutory services. Spontaneous support in financial and material contributions both locally and internationally was both generous and reassuring, confirming increased recognition of the Society's work. In addition to financial support from League trust funds, the Societies of New Zealand, Tonga, and the Tuvalu Committee of the B.R.C.S., support in the form of urgently required medical supplies came from the Japanese and U.S.S.R. Societies.
In January, 1981, Cyclone Arthur hit the Western Division. The Society assisted with the distribution of food (ex. Govt. stock), the provision of clothing and some milk-products. National staff and volunteers were involved in initial co-ordination on site.

In all instances local Branch members have been actively involved at all stages unless severely affected. In addition, individual Branches have dealt with individual disasters during the past four years, including fires, floods and a whirlwind.

The Society maintains active contact with the Government Emergency Services Committee (EMSEC) and has active representation on the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Committee. It also maintains a close working relationship with the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and the Fiji Muslim League, all of whom have made major contributions to relief efforts. (Each of these organizations also has representation on the National Red Cross Disaster Sub-Committee).

Work in this field can be viewed as providing a basic infrastructure for any assistance the Society may be called upon to provide during armed conflict.

2. DISSEMINATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE RED CROSS:

Since 1978 the Society has endeavoured to encourage dissemination of the Conventions and Principles to both the Armed Forces and the general public, through the active distribution of resource material and the use of audio-visual aids. Both fields are covered in introductions to National and Branch training courses.

In 1979 a Red Cross and a Government representative attended a regional Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Seminar in Malaysia.

Following the visit of an ICRC delegate this year dissemination efforts are being increased particularly in regard to the Armed Forces in view of their continued participation in UNIFIL, Lebanon, and their proposed participation in Sinai.
3. BLOOD PROGRAMME:

The foundation work for this activity commenced in 1976, when an initial 4-year joint proposal was drawn up outlining Government and Red Cross roles and responsibilities.

The initial objectives were to strengthen and develop Blood Transfusion Services in Fiji through the upgrading of existing services, the introduction of simple blood component therapy, increased public awareness and active donor recruitment.

Considerable technical support and expertise was contributed through the auspices of the New Zealand Red Cross Society, while the purchase of major essential items were partially met through the League Development Programme.

Australian Red Cross Society support in 1979 enabled us to employ a full-time Co-ordinator at the Central Blood Bank to oversee recruitment of donors and collections.

In 1979, a generous grant from the Empress Shoken Fund, enabled us to convert collection methods to the disposable pack system, including double packs for simple blood component therapy.

Early in 1980, an advisor of the Blood Transfusion Unit, League, visited and met with government representatives. As a result of this visit a proposal for a Memorandum of Agreement was submitted to the Ministry of Health delineating objectives and responsibilities for a national programme. Despite follow-up and adaption, the Ministry of Health still has this proposal under review.

The Fiji Red Cross has however continued to meet its commitments in donor recruitment, motivation, maintenance of records at the Central Blood Bank and the provision of a vehicle for mobile collections. Mobile collections during 1980 accounted for 93% of all donations.

The Society was represented by the Programme Co-ordinator at the Vth Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on Red Cross Blood Programmes in Indonesia, 1980.
4. HEALTH EDUCATION AND FIRST AID:

The appointment of a (volunteer) Health Educator to National Headquarters in 1979, allowed the Society to begin a complete revision of all health and first aid educational material and training.

As a result of this ongoing work, six new graded courses have been introduced in both Health Education and First Aid. This work has been boosted by the sponsorship of printing junior and intermediate booklets in both areas by the Australian Red Cross Youth this year. Adult first aid courses are based on the League Guidelines (1979).

There is an increasing demand for these courses at all levels, particularly with the introduction of more relevant local material and an informal approach at the junior and intermediate levels. A children’s safety competition printed in a local paper in conjunction with the 1981 Red Cross Week received an overwhelming response.

A proposal for a Primary Health Programme outlined in the Five Year Development Plan has had to be shelved as it was viewed as premature and unacceptable to the Ministry of Health.

5. WATER SAFETY SERVICES:

1978 saw the introduction of this new and vital programme. Instigated by a volunteer, the programme is adapted from those provided by the American and Canadian Red Cross Societies. One of the first local instructor’s to qualify later participated in an Aquatic School conducted by the American Red Cross. Despite the fact that Fiji people have ready access to open water (the sea, rivers), the drowning rate remains at approx. 3.5 per 100,000. Minimal instruction was available in Water Safety and Swimming Skills prior to the introduction of this programme.
The aim of this Programme is to (a) provide trained instruction to the public at minimal cost throughout Fiji, (b) increase public awareness of the need for water safety, and (c) encourage the introduction and development of appropriate water safety regulations by the appropriate public authorities.

Emphasis is placed on training Instructors and Swimmer's Aides by National staff and water safety sub-committee members at the Divisional level. Participants in these courses are then encouraged to conduct training at the district level. From an initial core of 21 trained instructors in 1978, the programme now has 56, with an additional 28 Swimmer's Aides.

Whereas only 59 participants gained swimming award cards in 1978, 1980 figures indicate approx. 1000 participants, demonstrating an increasing public awareness of the need for increased water safety knowledge and skills.

The adoption of this project by the Spanish Red Cross in 1981 has given the project additional impetus and will allow for increased development previously curtailed by lack of finance. This sponsorship was made possible through the League’s Development Programme.

6. WELFARE AND COMMUNITY WORK:

Traditional services of the Fiji Red Cross Society, this work was conducted by all Branches in the past four years. Activities incorporate temporary support for destitute elderly or chronically sick, auxiliary hospital services, entertainment and provision of “comforts” for hospital patients and residents of institutions.

The Society also maintains a Medical Benefits Fund to provide assistance for medical cases requiring emergency treatment overseas, wheelchairs, artificial limbs and aids. This work is being boosted in 1981 with a project aimed at producing aids for disabled people locally (refer youth section).

The Society maintains a close relationship with the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Fiji Council of Social Services and doctors in the private sector.

During 1981 the Society has had active representation on the National Co-ordinating Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons. It is anticipated that this Committee will continue as a National Co-ordinating body.

Out of School youth handover first order of crutches made under an international Youth trade-training project. PHOTO: Fiji Times
In August 1981, a disabled representative attended a Conference on “Disabled Persons and Volunteers” in Melbourne. Costs were jointly met by the Australian Red Cross and the Fiji Societies.

7. YOUTH:

Fiji Red Cross Youth activities during the past four years have seen major changes, in particular, the awareness that they are an integral part of the Society and should not be isolated. The recent developments in new programmes have provided for increased and active participation in all the Society’s activities. As Youth represents approx. 75% of the Society’s membership, this integration is vital.

The Youth Programme offers a wide range of activities and training programmes outside the school curriculum to develop and stimulate personal and community development. In addition it offers relevant resource material to schools, particularly in the rural areas, which have limited access to community service programmes. These activities are further enriched by participation in the International Friendship Programme.

In 1978 a National Youth Leadership Training Course was sponsored and conducted by the New Zealand Red Cross. Branches have since been encouraged to conduct their own training courses with support from Headquarters. During 1980 a staff member and a volunteer Youth Leader attended the Red Cross Asian and Pacific Youth Leaders Seminar in Australia through the assistance of the League’s Development Bureau who provided 50% of the funding.

Later that year, a Lautoka Youth Member represented Fiji at the Australian Red Cross Society’s biennial Festival, “Gumbooya”. Sponsorship was undertaken by the Tasmanian Youth Division of the past Society.

In 1981 three Youth members attended the International Red Cross Youth Meeting hosted by the New Zealand Red Cross Society. The members’ travel expenses were met by their respective Branches of Lautoka, Navua and Suva, while conference costs were met by the host Society.

The benefit of broadening the scope of youth activities through the introduction of new programmes and international participation can be illustrated by an increase in Youth groups from approx. 57 in 1978 to 142 in 1981.

While approx. 90% of Youth activities are conducted in conjunction within the school system, the introduction of a new and valuable project in 1981 aims at both reaching out-of-school youth and providing practical training in basic trade skills. Funded by the Australian Red Cross Youth for the next four years, the cooperative youth training project will provide a source of low-cost aids for disabled people. Involving both a voluntary and a statutory Boys Centre, the project is aimed at becoming self-sufficient by 1984. The aids will be marketed through the Society to meet public demands. The project has the support of the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health and has received wide exposure through the media.
8. INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS:

The Society maintains ongoing activities in this field. Maximum use is made of the local media through press releases. In addition, one newspaper generously provides a regular service advertising mobile blood collections, while Radio Fiji regularly broadcasts notices or messages free of charge.

Concerted efforts are made each year in conjunction with Red Cross Week for maximum exposure, through both National and local Branch efforts. The Society has produced a poster and recruitment pamphlet in 1980 for public distribution. This has been supplemented by specific information material from the Society's various programmes, i.e. disaster preparedness, water safety, medical benefits, health and first aid.

Films have proved an excellent medium for increasing public awareness and the commercial circuits are utilised at no cost for maximum exposure.

The Society has established good working relationships with all relevant Government Ministries. Support from the general public is steadily strengthening and expanding, re-inforced by the work of the Society during disaster relief in the past three years. A revision and expansion of services and activity approaches have also contributed towards increased public support.

The participation of a delegate at the Public Information and Fundraising Seminar in the Philippines in 1980, under the League's Development Programme has resulted in increased efforts in this field supported by the exchange of material relevant to the region.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

In the past four years the Society has played an increasing active role in regional and international meetings. In addition to representation at those meetings specified in the preceding service programmes the Society has benefitted from participation at 3rd Annual Introduction to the International activities of the Red Cross conducted by the Institute Henry-Dunant, the council of Delegates and General Assembly in 1979, and the 2nd Asia/Pacific Regional Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference in Indonesia, 1981.

This exposure to international exchange of information has undoubtedly contributed enormously to an expanding view of the scope and potential for Red Cross development within Fiji and has provided stimulation, comparison and self-examination.

It should be stressed that participation in international affairs would not be possible without sponsorship through the League's Development service and sister Societies for which we are profoundly grateful.

Of more vital importance is the contributions made to the Fiji Red Cross Society by sister Societies without which our development during the past four years would not have been possible.
CONCLUSION

In concluding this Report emphasis must be placed on the rapid development of the Society in the past four years. While we are not yet self-sufficient financially, it must be noted that the expansion and growth of development programmes in the period 1981—1984 is aimed at achieving this goal. Only if we strengthen and broaden our services to meet community needs, thus increasing our public credibility, can we expect the recognition and necessary local support the National Society needs.

Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Ohtaka and Fiji Red Cross Director General, Mrs. Susan Douglas, handover a gift of tetanus vaccine and syringes from the Japanese Red Cross to the Minister of Health, Mr. E. Beddoes, to assist in a massive immunization Cyclone Wally victims.

PHOTO: Fiji Times.