

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

Laos

The Japanese Red Cross medical team at Pak Lay will be replaced in December by another Japanese team which will also serve for six months in this remote area of Laos where elephants are the standard means of transport for heavy supplies. Teams from the Belgian and British National Societies continue their medical work at Paksane. The northern part of the country is covered by the Swiss team based in Luang Prabang.

Pathet Lao

Mobile X-ray equipment, medicaments, medical and surgical kits in considerable quantities have now been and are being delivered to the Pathet Lao for aid to the population in the areas they control.

Khmer Republic

In October, the Swedish Red Cross team started its work in Kompong Cham Hospital. A joint medical team from the National Societies of Denmark and Norway is at work in Kompong Thom.

PROMOTION OF THE RED CROSS IMAGE

This was the theme of the third meeting of the Heads of National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies Information and Public Relations Services which was held at Varna in June 1973, and about which International Review published an article in its August issue.

We revert to that meeting here in order to give readers some excerpts, covering four agenda items, from a recent summary record.

I. Develop the Red Cross Information and Public Relations Structure

It was proposed that the first responsibility of Information and Public Relations Services of the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies is that of supporting fully the policy and programmes of these Societies, while promoting simultaneously the image of Red Cross throughout the world. Each National Society would be primarily concerned with creating a favourable "climate" of Public Relations within its own country, while the I.C.R.C. and the League are responsible for advising and assisting the National Societies, as requested, and co-ordinating international publicity actions which build up and maintain a positive public image of the Red Cross movement worldwide...

... Certain wishes were expressed which will depend on both the National Societies and the international institutions.

1. Developing the co-production of Red Cross films, with emphasis on those which would make a real impact on the general public.

2. Increasing study visits, for personnel of National Societies, with the international institutions; and advisory-work missions of I.C.R.C. and League Information and Public Relations officers invited by the National Societies.

3. Continuing and increasing the exchange of practical information between National Societies and the League, concerning subjects such as the promotion of the free gift of blood, fund raising, membership recruitment, etc.

4. Organizing regional meetings, particularly on technical subjects, upon the initiative of National Societies of a given region, or of the League. The results of such regional meeting could then be advantageously transmitted to representatives of all National Societies, and could be reviewed at subsequent General Meetings convened by the I.C.R.C. and the League, on the average of once every three years.

II. Propagation of Red Cross Principles and of Humanitarian Law, particularly the Geneva Conventions

National Societies should develop and plan for a long time ahead their efforts, in harmony with their Governments, to disseminate Red Cross Principles and humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions. In that respect, they should be guided by the plan of action proposed by the I.C.R.C., which is ready to assist in every way, at all times.

III. Make the Red Cross Better Known

During the discussion, participants underlined again the importance for National Societies to take advantage of the mass media and other means at their disposal to present a positive public image of themselves in general and, in particular, to support fund raising and membership recruitment.

Emphasis was put upon the role of the I.C.R.C. and the League, to assist the National Societies, especially in co-ordinating the release of Red Cross news from Geneva when it is likely to have repercussions within the National Societies, as for example during an international crisis or a large-scale natural disaster.

IV. Obtain Increased Means of Action for the Red Cross

Fund raising and membership recruitment should not be viewed as isolated activities, but rather as the logical outgrowth of a permanent programme of Information and Public Relations. Although obtaining increased means of action for the Red Cross takes many different forms, and some National Societies do no fund raising, there does seem to be a universal need for recruiting and training volunteers...