

PRCS Strategy 2005-2010

Mandate

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) was mandated in 1969 is to provide humanitarian, health, cultural and social services when and where needed to Palestinian people both in Palestine and Diaspora. In 1996, and 1999, PRCS was mandated by the Palestinian Authority to provide National Ambulance and Blood Transfusion and Pre-hospital Emergency Services in Palestine.

Legal base

PRCS legal base has stemmed from its mandate both by the Palestinian National Council (PNC) of 1969 and the Decree by the chairman of PLO, its observer status at the International Federation's General Assembly, and its statutes.

Constituency

The society is now well established with its headquarters and 30 branches, in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. In addition, there are four branches in the Diaspora: Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The PRCS has approximately 20,000 members.

Leadership

The governing structure of PRCS consists of the general assembly, the administrative council, and the executive committee.

The General Assembly is responsible for approving PRCS policy, and elects the Administrative Council and the Executive committee.

The Administrative Council is responsible for following up the implementation of the approved policy, and can play the role of the assembly in case when is not capable of convening meetings.

The Executive committee is responsible for implementation of PRCS policy that is executed by the Society branches and HQ departments.

Material and Human Resources

The trend now is that PRCS gradually moving from rented property towards property ownership. The society owns and operates a number of community centers, hospitals, branches and a fleet of ambulances as well as a number of vehicles which are used for the blood bank, primary health-care, rehabilitation and social welfare programs. Besides PRCS is constructing its new headquarters that includes offices, Deaf Total Communications Center, Warehouse, National Blood Transfusion Center and the Emergency Education Center. In addition to several construction plans and projects for establishing Community Centers within PRCS branch facilities that will include Primary Health Care, EMS, nurseries, and rehabilitation centers, work space for the youth and volunteers and multi-purpose halls.

The number of PRCS employees in headquarters and the 34 branches is 4138, in addition to 5,820 registered youths and 20,000 members makes PRCS presently one of the largest institutions in the occupied Palestine with good gender balance among the staff. This huge asset of human and material resources indicates that PRCS will have good self sustainability to pursue its mission.

Partnerships

Since its establishment, PRCS has managed to build stronger relationships and partnership, within Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, with national societies, international formal and non-governmental voluntary organizations and local Palestinian community. These relationships and partnerships have provided PRCS good financial, logistical, technical, and legal support. This support gives PRCS strength in both conflict and peace times and high capability to provide its humanitarian, health and social services as well as a good preparedness to disasters.

Strategic Issues

PRCS cannot formulate its strategy without considering both national and global trends as a challenging external environment.

There is global fragility and vulnerability to natural and technological disasters, as well as the many on-going armed conflicts. The acquisition of nuclear weapons and global warming is affecting the entire globe. New types of armed conflicts motivated by social, economic, ethnic and political concerns will affect many countries and regions. More conflicts will be fought over dwindling natural resources such as water. The number of internally displaced people and refugees will continue to grow as a result of conflicts, natural and environmental disasters.

The uncertainty and doubt and the debate whether the economic globalization is the solution to a better world or is just another burden to the poor, since millions of people remain untouched by its benefits. Poverty will continue to be a major challenge, and many lives will be lost due to re-emerging epidemics such as tuberculosis and infectious diseases including diarrhea, acute respiratory infections and measles. The HIV/AIDS pandemic represents an unprecedented humanitarian and development disaster.

Mega-cities' and other urban centers will continue to grow, straining or even crippling their infrastructures and generating new catastrophes centered around food, water and energy shortages, diseases triggered by unsanitary conditions in overcrowded slums and growing numbers of street children and orphans.

Nationally, the Palestinian suffers the consequences of forced immigration from their homeland since 57 years to Diaspora and the remaining part of Palestine leaving most of them living in refugee camps. The continuous occupation to the West Bank , Gaza and East Jerusalem as well as the political tensions between Israel and some Arabic countries, the two gulf wars and invasion to Lebanon has put Palestinians in difficult situation affected negatively their life in all aspects of economic, social, humanitarian, health and social development.

Currently, here is an internal migration of more that 70,000 people in addition to demolitions of houses in Rafah that are further creating forced displacements to

30,000 people. The continuation with the construction of the Apartheid Wall by Israel is creating a third wave of refugees in their own land. The displacement will result in brain drain, the movement of the young and able people with negative economic and social consequences on households and the national economy.

The number of psychologically, physically and mentally disabled persons is noticeably becoming higher. A number of psychological disorders were noticed among children, youth, women and free old prisoners. Children below the age of 12 are suffering anxiety disorders and hard traumatic experiences. Youth are feeling hopeless and depressed. The freed prisoners showed symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder and marriage problems. While, many children were killed and injured were less than 18 years.

The deterioration of the economic conditions with soaring poverty and unemployment levels and, most importantly, the exacerbation of an already disastrous situation by the construction of the Apartheid Wall will have an enormous impact on the Palestinian population and any development initiatives. There is a decrease in Gross Domestic Product, GDP per capita and dramatically increasing poverty rate to 47% coupled with increasing unemployment rates to 26%. People at poverty line constitute two third of the population and suffer more from acute and chronic diseases while pay from their pockets more than 40% of their income.

In Diaspora, the adverse socio-economic factors, coupled with a shortage of services, the crowded living conditions, deficient sewage and waste disposable mechanisms, and the widespread of non-communicable diseases related to income, life style and diet have created inevitable long term impacts on standards of diet, immunity and general health. These conditions coupled with high un-affordable cost of private health care in both relative and absolute terms to Palestinians living refugee camps in Diaspora, the majority of Palestinian refugees look to the PRCS and UNRWA as the principal providers of health care.

There is a high national population growth coupled with high density in Gaza (40% of population live on 6% of the land). The majority of the population is less than 15 years of age leading to highly dependent population with implication on public services and poverty and strain on already weary population and resources if and when refugees return.

The fertility is still higher when compared with Arab Countries. High fertility coupled with high population density and over crowdedness especially in the Gaza and the camps as well as poor infrastructure impact health especially of children and mothers. Both antenatal and post natal care decreased due to difficulty experienced by families accessing a health care setting. Infant mortality rate is still higher than neighboring countries.

Stunting, wasting and underweight are on the rise in children under five years of age due to accumulated effects of rising food insecurity manifested by gradual loss of fertile land and weak affordability and inaccessibility to food and micronutrients.

Based on the latest earthquake in Turkey, local and regional studies expected that Palestine, Israel and Jordan will be affected by strong earthquake in the coming few

years affecting mainly the northern part of West Bank especially the city of Nablus. About one million of Palestinian population is expected to be affected with thousands of casualties. In addition to infrastructure destruction, economic recession is expected to continue for 5-10 years.

PRCS within National and Diaspora Context

The national mid term development plan (MTDP) for 2005-2007 stresses the interconnectedness between emergency and development with necessity to tackle emergency needs within the overall development context. It emphasized the need for the provision of humanitarian assistance as a result of increased needs of the Palestinian population especially those marginalized and the poor. The priorities will be given to promoting health care, poverty alleviation, social welfare and institutions capacity building. This evidenced that, PRCS, although its role has been seen as a humanitarian organization, yet it played and will continue to play as a major organization in national development process and commitment to Diaspora through:

- Becoming an efficient, self-sustainable, and independent humanitarian organization committed to provide immediate relief to human suffering and reduce vulnerability, under the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescents movement, through its partnership with national societies, IFRC, ICRC and working closely with national communities and international non-governmental organizations in a democratic, transparent and participatory way.
- Enhancing a comprehensive social and cultural development programs that are open to other cultures helping the Palestinian society capable of acquiring the elements of creative self development and relieving the social structure of the obstacles of its development.
- Bringing about social progress within the cultural values of the Palestinian community through developing programs that promote the mutual respect for different cultural opinions, facilitate cultural co-operation with other nations and strengthen educational and scientific research publication.
- Participating in poverty eradication process through programs played a role in human resource development and creating job opportunities targeting certain vulnerable population groups such as women, children, youth and low-income families. In addition to special programs targeting disabled persons and orphans enabling them entering the labor market.
- Enhancing Social solidarity and integration through developing programs that assist in provision of material and moral assistance to the families of martyrs, prisoners, injured persons and families facing disastrous crisis. Commitment to international declarations on human rights shall also be emphasized by PRCS with special attention to guarantee the rights of women to equitable, health, education and their participation in political decisions, curbing all types of discrimination against them and emphasizing the principle of equality between men and women.

- Leveraging inaccessibility and enjoyment to inequitable community-oriented comprehensive health care social services to all members of the Palestinian community specially underserved and marginalized groups.
- Contributing to life saving and mitigating drastic loss at the times of disaster and its aftermath by implementing field hospital and pre-hospital care, blood transfusion services and a Disaster preparedness and emergency response program.

The PRCS Mission

To pursue with its mandate in providing humanitarian, health and social services to the Palestinian people when and where needed. That is to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, to protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being, in times of peace and armed conflict and other emergencies, to work for the prevention of disease and for the promotion of health and social welfare, and to encourage voluntary service.

The PRCS Vision:

PRCS will be the leading humanitarian organization in Palestine delivering excellent quality humanitarian services and disseminating the movement principles and International Humanitarian Law, with continued commitment to responding to Diaspora population needs. As well PRCS will be one of national institutions and platforms leveraging inaccessibility and inequality to health, and social welfare services, and supporting disadvantaged group rights.

PRCS Strategy Priority areas

Based on its mission and vision, and its national role in development and Diaspora, PRCS defines five strategy priority areas:

- 1) **Humanitarian values:** That encompasses the Dissemination of PRCS and movement principles and International Humanitarian Law.
- 2) **Health:** That encompasses services of Primary Health Care, Pre-hospital care and disaster preparedness, National Blood Transfusion, and Secondary Care.
- 3) **Social Development:** That encompasses services of Rehabilitation, Psycho-social, Youth and Volunteers and Social Welfare.
- 4) **Organizational Development:** That encompasses the Development of Financial and Administrative systems, Branches integration, Human Resources and Physical Resources development.
- 5) **Partnership:** That encompasses processes of promoting partnership at Community level, within the movement of RCRC and other international partners.

Strategy Goals:

Goal 1: Humanitarian values have been promoted.

Goal 2: Contribution to good health and long life for Palestinians has been made through PRCS health services.

Goal 3: Contribution to a better quality social life for Palestinians has been made through PRCS social services.

Goal 4: Various governance and operational systems required for a well functioning PRCS responding to vulnerable Palestinian population needs in Palestine and Diaspora have been developed.

Goal 5: PRCS role in Palestinian human development has been sustained through building a wide network of solid, long-term relationships and partnerships based on mutual dialogue, communication exchanges, trust, openness, recognition of and respect for differences in values, resources and interest.

Goal 1 Expected Results

1.1. PRCS mission, RCRC movement principles and the international humanitarian law have been disseminated at all levels.

1.2. Regional and international awareness on Palestinian humanitarian, health and social issues has been raised.

Goal 2 Expected Results

2.1. Palestinian community has been well prepared for any emergency situation and its emergency needs has been met through raising its awareness and provision of high quality emergency and disaster preparedness and response services to large majority of Palestinian population.

2.2. The needy Palestinian people have enjoyed good accessibility to safe blood from safe voluntary blood donors.

2.3. Vulnerable and underserved Palestinian population groups in Palestine and Diaspora have enjoyed good accessibility to primary community-based clinical, diagnostic and preventive services.

2.4. Vulnerable and underserved Palestinian population groups in Palestine and Diaspora have enjoyed good accessibility to quality hospital care services.

Goal 3 Expected Results

3.1. Disabled people life has been improved through developing their abilities and enabling their families and integrating them within their communities to the possible extend.

3.2. Palestinians in Palestine and Diaspora has enjoyed a better psycho-social well being through better access and acquired high coping skills with negative psycho-social consequences.

3.3. Vulnerable and disadvantaged Palestinian population has been socially supported especially preschool children, geriatrics, poor families, orphans, detainees, and marginalized women.

3.4. Voluntarism in Palestine and Diaspora has been improved and better invested in social development, dissemination of movement principles and supporting PRCS on achieving its mission.

Goal 4 Expected Results

4.1. PRCS dependency on external funding has been reduced and cost containment has been improved.

4.2. Various models and mechanisms for effective governance and branch development have been developed.

4.3. PRCS programs efficiency and impact on target groups has been improved.

Goal 5 Expected Results

5.1. PRCS ability and opportunities to create sustainable development processes that will benefit the vulnerable Palestinian groups has been strengthened.

5.2. Assistance has been channeled through the international organizations by well established alliances between PRCS and other countries programs and relevant co-operation partners.

5.3. PRCS programs ownership as a mean to moving away from a project focus to a partner focus and from discrete, piecemeal interventions towards strategic, result-oriented ways of working has been improved.