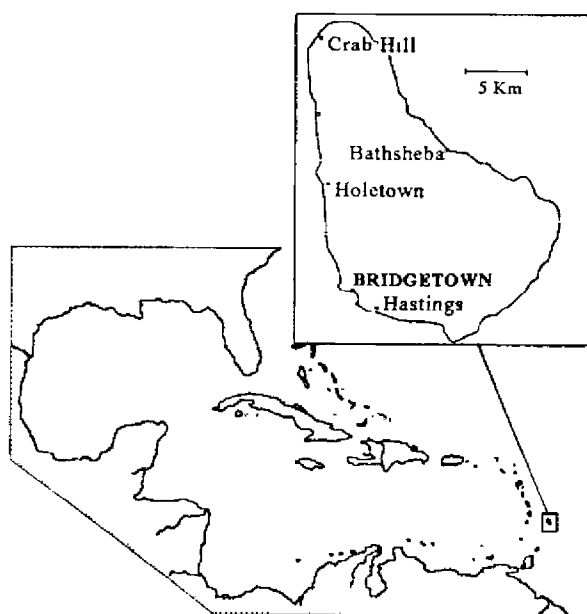


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# BARBADOS



Capital: Bridgetown  
Area: 431 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 257,000 (1990) (a)  
Population density: 597/km<sup>2</sup>  
Urban population: 85%  
Per-capita GDP in USD: 6,350 (b)  
Life expectancy at birth: 75.1 years (c)  
Infant mortality rate: 11‰ live births (1990) (d)  
Illiteracy: 0.7% (e)  
Population under poverty line: 23% (f)  
Human Development Index 1992: 0.927 (20th) (g)<sup>1</sup>

## The challenge of maintaining high levels of human development while confronting the economic crisis and persistent poverty

Barbados lies at the extreme east of the Antilles, in the middle of the "hurricane corridor" between the Atlantic and the central Caribbean. The island, only 431 km<sup>2</sup> in extent, is quite flat, has no significant elevations to protect it from the strong winds of the Atlantic, and is the most densely populated in the region, with almost 600 inhabitants per square kilometer. Most of the population are descendants of the Africans who were carried to the island from the 16th to the 19th centuries as slaves to work on its sugar cane plantations. The descendants of the British, though a small minority in the population, have much political and social influence because racial

differences still coincide with its traditional land distribution. In contrast to other Caribbean countries, there has been little mixing, as a result of which the mulatto population is quite small.

The population of Barbados has the best indicators of life expectancy, per-capita income, and literacy in Latin America and the Caribbean, and on the basis of such indicators is among the world's most advanced countries in terms of "human development" according to the classification proposed by the United Nations. In 1992 it occupied 20th place in that classification and was among the countries with "high human development," behind Israel (18th) and Luxembourg

(19th) and ahead of developed countries such as Italy (21st), Ireland (22nd), or Spain (23rd).<sup>2</sup> Despite this, Barbadian society faces serious problems of income distribution and, above all, unemployment, which during the 1980s affected 17% of the island's active population. It also faces other, no less important social problems such as drug abuse, the situation of the elderly, and a high AIDS incidence—one of the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Poverty is also a major burden. According to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimates, about 23% of the total population had incomes inadequate to satisfy the cost of basic living needs during the 1980s.

Barbados has evolved from an agricultural economy dominated by sugar cane monoculture to a service economy in which tourism occupies the most important place; it also has a significant manufacturing sector. During the 1980s the structure of the economy remained essentially the same except for the sugar sector, whose contribution to the GDP fell by 50%, until it accounted for a marginal 3.1% of the GDP in 1990. The decline in agriculture for internal consumption has been a historical trend, to the point that three-quarters of foodstuffs consumed in the country are imported.<sup>3</sup> Services (particularly trade, tourism, offshore finance, and the public sector) represented more than 60% of the GDP in 1990; tourism, which started to show significant growth in 1986 (the island received 450,000 tourists in 1988), now accounts for 15% of the GDP. Finally, manufacturing represented 10% in 1990.

The economy of Barbados, as in the rest of the region, experienced the effects of the international recession in the early years of the 1980s, above all due to high oil and oil derivative prices. Between 1981 and 1983 there were sharp decreases in the rate of GDP growth (-3.2% in 1981 and -5% in 1982). Some recovery began in 1984, but economic growth during the decade was marginal, with an annual average of 1%.<sup>4</sup> Despite governmental efforts to prevent the decline of sugar, cane growing has undergone a severe contraction and attempts to rationalize the sugar industry have not been successful, as a result of which Barba-

dian sugar is one of the least competitive in the region. The manufacturing sector has also declined, especially since 1987, because of the closing of two of the most important textile and electronics exporting companies. Manufacturing, based on *maquilas* or assembly plants, thus showed itself to be very sensitive to competition from other areas, especially Southeast Asia, and extremely volatile. Another factor was the crisis in the late 1970s of the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM), which Barbados helped found and of which it was an enthusiastic proponent in the 1970s. The crisis in the tourist sector also had an effect: Barbados' proportion of the Caribbean tourist market fell because of exchange fluctuations, and the strengthening of the Barbadian dollar discouraged visits by tourists from the United States and Europe, a situation which only changed in the second half of the decade when the U.S. dollar fell against the pound sterling. In consequence, investment in the tourist sector fell substantially and, as a result and despite the recovery, that sector's international competitiveness decreased in the 1990s.

Finally, the crisis entailed balance-of-payments problems which in turn led to growth of the external debt, which increased from US\$234 million in 1981 to US\$785 million in 1989. One of the most important credits was contracted in yen; since that currency began appreciating, its repayment has become very burdensome. The proportion of exports destined for debt payment, though low in relation to that in other Latin American and Caribbean countries (around 8% since 1987), grew rapidly during the 1980s. Although public administration in Barbados has traditionally been efficient and prudent as far as economic policy is concerned,<sup>5</sup> payments on the external debt have meant an increase in the fiscal deficit which, though small when compared to other countries in the region, has led Barbados to implement various structural stabilization and adjustment measures.

In 1982 the Government negotiated its first standby agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 1989 the rise in debt interest and the fall in sugar prices accelerated deterioration in

the balance of payments, which caused the Government to negotiate a stabilization and adjustment program with the IMF in 1990. The program has required major cuts in public expenditures and, among other things, has meant reducing public employment, freezing wages, cutting the quantity and quality of public services, and reorganizing them so as to guarantee cost recovery in vital institutions.

The Government's decisive willingness to apply such measures caused a political crisis which included strikes, demonstrations, calls for the resignation of the Prime Minister, and a major loss of confidence in the Government; all this showed the fragility of Barbados' economy and the difficulties in applying an adjustment program such as required by international financing agencies. These events are especially significant in a country which until then had been characterized by its political and social stability.

Barbados' economic prospects for the 1990s are uncertain. The formation of major economic areas, particularly the new North American bloc after the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada, Mexico, and the United States and the unification of the European market in January 1993, may have profound though still unpredictable consequences for Barbados since most of the country's sugar and manufactures go to markets in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

### **The employment situation and the labor market**

A characteristic feature of Barbados' economic evolution is that expansion of the service sector, especially tourism, has not been labor-intensive and so has not helped reduce the unemployment rate. Tourism employed 15% of the EAP at the end of the decade. Growth in employment has not kept pace with growth of the work force. Unemployment affected 11% of the economically active population in 1981, 18.7% in 1985, and 22% in 1987. The average during the decade was 17%.<sup>6</sup> Those most severely affected by unem-

ployment have been women and young people, many of whom have completed their secondary education. The high unemployment index found among women is a cause for concern since many of them are entirely responsible for supporting their families. In Barbados, 43.9% of households are headed by women.<sup>7</sup>

Women constitute 52% of the population and 48% of the work force. The greater proportion of women in the population is above all due to the heavy migration to the United States, Canada, and other destinations which occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. The rate of participation of women has been the fastest growing in recent decades. At the end of the 1980s that rate was 69% for the entire population and 61% for women. Since the 1970s, female employment has been proportionally greater in the textile and electronics industries, which were characterized by their unsatisfactory employment conditions and great instability.<sup>8</sup>

In Barbados, as in other Caribbean countries, the jobless and low-income workers subsist through a widespread network of informal activities which to a large extent consist of services and small-scale trade. In addition, Barbados is an important market for the informal network of merchants in the region such as *hucksters* (itinerant vendors) from Dominica and *traffickers* from places as distant as St. Kitts and Nevis. Such merchants and their goods travel in small boats which sail from one island to another and remain at Barbados for several days before returning to their own countries with goods to sell in their own markets.

### **The health situation**

The satisfactory indicators of health and the profile of mortality and morbidity in Barbados match the traits of countries with higher incomes and a high degree of urbanization. Mid-decade data showed that the main causes of death in the population were noncommunicable chronic diseases such as cardiac diseases, malignant tumors, cerebrovascular disorders, and diabetes.<sup>9</sup> It is

thought that hypertension affects 22% of persons older than 18 years, and this is the cause of the high incidence of cardiovascular ailments. It is believed that between 6% and 8% of the population suffers from diabetes. Cervical cancer continues to be the principal malignant disease in women, while prostate cancer is in men. Breast cancer is increasing. Obesity is also a major problem. Studies cited by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) showed that between 1969 and 1981, obesity increased from 32% to 50% among women of middle age, and from 7% to 28% in men.

In the 15- to 25-year age group, the main cause of death was traffic accidents. The number of persons treated in health establishments for drug abuse has been increasing, which is an indicator that consumption of drugs, especially cocaine, is growing.

The population older than 65 years was about 30,000 in 1990, or about 11.5% of the entire population. Arthritis, hypertension, and diabetes are the problems which most frequently affect the elderly. Chronic glaucoma and blindness occur often as a result of diabetes. A geriatric home and six district hospitals provide care to the elderly: PAHO estimates in 1988 held that only 52% of those housed there needed medical care and that the remaining 48% sought treatment at such establishments for socioeconomic reasons. This is a significant indicator of the situation of abandonment and need which many elderly experience in Barbados.

AIDS is one of the major health problems in Barbados. The first case of AIDS was reported in 1984. Since 1989 a major increase has been recorded, and in February 1992 the total number of cases was 280, of which 198 patients had died. Barbados has the second highest incidence of AIDS in Latin America, behind the Bahamas (1.08 cases per thousand inhabitants).<sup>10</sup> Although transmission initially occurred most frequently among homosexual men, the number of heterosexually transmitted cases has increased quite rapidly. Studies of blood donor samples have revealed HIV positive proportions of 0.2%, and in sexually transmitted disease (STD) patients, 4.7%.

The infant mortality rate was 11‰ live births in 1990. Neonatal mortality is a cause for concern as almost all births occur in hospital. The health of nursing infants and children less than five years old has been kept satisfactory through the network of polyclinics which have been offering free maternal and child health services. Prenatal care also has relatively widespread coverage, which explains why the maternal mortality rate is relatively low—3.5 deaths per 10,000 live births.

The Ministry of Health is the principal policy agency in this area. The health system is based on the concept of three care levels, which among other things means that much importance is attached to primary care (PHC). Barbados has also provided hospital health services to patients from other islands in the Eastern Caribbean through Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Bridgetown, the capital. In recent years polyclinics have been built at Maurice Byer, Warrens, Black Rock, Sir Winston Scott Memorial, Edgar Cochrane, Randal Phillips, Six Cross Roads, and Glebe. The polyclinics are the establishments which, together with health centers, provide most consultations. The island's small size and its good road network make access to health services easy for the entire population. In addition, medical care in the public sector continues to be free. The ratio between human resources in health (physicians and nurses) and population is similar to that in Latin America and the Caribbean, and much below that of countries with similar health indicators, which is related to physician emigration abroad.

The Social Security Program's coverage, through the National Insurance System, is among the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean, and covered almost everyone (96.7%) in 1988.<sup>11</sup> The proportion of insured among self-employed workers is much less, however; it is thought to be about 25%.<sup>12</sup> In the mid-1980s the Social Security Program experienced strong financial pressures when unemployment increased and thus expenditures on services. Since 1983, in consequence, the real value of pensions has deteriorated.

During the 1980s the health services, in the framework of general plans, have concentrated on control of communicable diseases and chronic disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancer, community mental health, maternal and child health, family planning, care of the elderly, and health care for the poor. The 1988-1993 health development plan emphasizes improvements in the system's management and administrative capacity.

### Education

Barbados has one of the lowest illiteracy rates in the world (0.7%), which means that almost all the adult population know how to read and write. For comparative purposes, this figure is below the average of that in high-income countries (1%) and much below that in Latin America and the Caribbean (16.1%). Primary school attendance is 110%, ahead of the 102% in high-income countries; in secondary schools it is 93%, which is similar to the rate in those countries. Finally, the higher education rate is 19.4%, which in this instance is below that in high-income countries (39%) but similar to the average for Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>13</sup> These data eloquently illustrate the progress that Barbados has made in improving the educational conditions of its citizens. Except for higher education, Barbados' situation is similar to that in the most advanced countries and far ahead of its neighbors in the Caribbean.

The quality of education, measured on the basis of approved subjects, is very high. Several factors explain this fact. On one hand, student-teacher ratios decrease continually. On the other, public expenditures on education are relatively high—6.9% of the GDP in 1989 compared to the average of 3.5% in countries with "high human development," and are the second category in importance in the state's budget, accounting for 20% of the Government's total expenditures in 1989.<sup>14</sup> Forty-four percent of the education budget goes to primary education, still, it has been noted that the educational system has been placing

greater emphasis on education oriented toward the University than on occupational training, without taking into account the requirements of the labor market.

A significant aspect is that the educational achievements of women are high; and as a result they often occupy high positions such as managers or professionals in both the public and private sectors.

### The environment and vulnerability to disasters

In the 16th century a chronicler described Barbados as an island "completely covered by trees." A century and a half later, the productive specialization imposed by the colonial order had profoundly changed the countryside and the land's ecosystems. At the end of the 17th century the island was an immense sugar mill, with more than 700 plantations and around 80,000 African slaves. The original forests had almost disappeared and the ecological balance was irreversibly altered, to the point that at the start of the 19th century droughts and desertification occurred.

High population density and the impact of tourism have helped cause new environmental problems. One of the most important is contamination of the underground aquifers on which the country depends for its potable water supply (the island does not have rivers). In Bridgetown and along the southern and western coasts numerous buildings use septic pits and absorption wells to dispose of wastes, which pollute subsurface waters. Wastewaters from buildings near the sea continue to contaminate coastal waters. The Government has confronted such problems by allocating its own funds and Inter-American Development (IDB) monies to constructing and/or improving the sewerage network in coastal areas. To deal with the problem of solid wastes, environmental protection measures have been promulgated such as the mandatory return of plastic containers or glass bottles for beverages (of which Barbadians and visitors consume between 12 and

15 million yearly) to bottling companies since the island does not have a recycling plant.

Barbados lies directly along the path of hurricanes which, from June to November each year, traverse the Caribbean. The worst in terms of destruction and damage was Janet in 1955. Barbados developed emergency policies and plans of reasonable scope during the 1980s<sup>15</sup> to deal with its great vulnerability, which is rooted in (a) its small size, which means that when a hurricane occurs the entire country is affected; (b) its completely flat topography, which offers no protection against hurricane winds or cyclonic waves, and (c)

its great dependence on a sector very sensitive to such disasters—tourism—since much of the infrastructure is built along the seashore. Although hurricanes have not affected the island in recent years, they continue to be the chief threat among natural disasters. In contrast to other islands in the Caribbean, Barbados is not of volcanic origin and therefore is not directly threatened by eruptions. Nevertheless, torrential rains have at times caused floods, as in 1970 and 1984. On both those occasions damage occurred throughout the island.

## **BARBADOS RED CROSS SOCIETY**

### **Facing an uncertain development**

Barbados has one of the highest standards of living in the region and the highest human development indicator in Latin America and the Caribbean. These positive economic indicators nevertheless conceal problems and conditions of deprivation in an otherwise democratic and politically stable country. Income distribution remains uneven, unemployment continues to hit the least advantaged, especially women heads of household, inflation mounts, and the environment has been severely damaged.

The National Red Cross Society, through its social welfare activities and especially its Meals on Wheels program, tries to satisfy the needs of people who do not have adequate living standards. Although this and other welfare efforts benefit the needy and elderly, their coverage when compared with their efforts and costs is extremely limited. Some traditional activities still have a certain impact but, as members of the National Society recognize, do not contribute effectively to solving welfare problems or dealing with new challenges such as widespread drug addiction or AIDS.

Training in first-aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and home nursing are some of the ongoing activities undertaken by volunteers. The National Society is also a member of the Central Emergency Relief Organization (CERO), in which it has been assigned responsibility for providing relief supplies and first aid in disasters or emergencies, especially after the hurricanes that periodically assault the Caribbean.

The National Society has recognized the need to strengthen its overall capacity. It has recently undergone certain administrative and organizational changes to introduce new methods enabling better control of finances and programming, areas the new leaders consider weak. This process is still in its initial stage, and will eventually address the following issues. medium- and long-term planning, expansion of programs to increase

national coverage, improvement of internal communications, recruitment of more volunteers, especially young people, and headquarters staffing.

So far, a number of issues have emerged that the National Society must address. Because of financial and organizational difficulties, little progress has been achieved in improving overall performance and in producing the main services, but there is much hope. This clear awareness, combined with an increased level of attention given to the Federation's strategies for the present decade, are positive signs of a transition to a new stage of development.

### **Organization of the National Society**

The Barbados Red Cross was founded in February 1960 as a branch of the British Red Cross and became an independent National Society in July 1969. It was recognized by the ICRC and the Federation in 1984.

### ***Organizational and geographic structure***

The National Society has two formal levels: a) a central organization consisting of a General Assembly which in principle meets every year, a Council which meets every two months, and an Executive Committee; and b) a local organization consisting of detachments or groups of volunteers who are responsible for ensuring Red Cross coverage throughout the country

The General Assembly represents the Society as a whole. It is composed of the members of the Council, the chairpersons of six existing detachments, the leaders of established units, and

elected representatives of the divisions. The number of representatives elected is proportionate to the number of active members in each detachment.

Among the functions of the General Assembly are election of the Council, approval of the annual report, voting on the budget submitted by the Council, approval of accounts, and the election of the 12 members of the Executive Committee.

The Council administers and controls the Society. It has 12 members elected by the General Assembly, three appointed by Government departments that work closely with the Red Cross, and three outstanding citizens chosen by the Council. It elects the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Executive Committee, and Finance Committee. It also appoints the Director General and the paid staff.

The Executive Committee derives its powers from the Council and consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Director General, and Chairman of the Fund-Raising Committee, plus four members elected by the Council.

The existing network of detachments has a limited role in program implementation. The National Society's expected expansion has not taken place for want of operational resources and also because decision making, management, and participation have been centralized in the headquarters and in a few programs. There is only one regional branch as communication by road is very easy on the flat island of Barbados. Efforts are being made to organize an additional branch in the north, where floods often occur.

At the local level there are six detachments composed of uniformed volunteers which are established by the Council and have specific geographic responsibilities. These detachments lack transportation and suitable meeting facilities, however. Some members feel that communication between groups and the Council is inadequate, that cross-communication is limited, and in general that the objectives and goals of the National Society are not well known. Local members are active in first-aid training and provide coverage at sporting and mass events despite limited resources.

### *Administration and planning*

Since elections in March 1991 of new executive officers, including the President, the National Society has been undergoing internal changes, the most important being the establishment of a new financial and accounting system which should allow for updated financial reports for the monthly Executive Committee meetings.

Among the matters that worry the National Society's leadership and members is the lack of a clear and stable organizational structure and a long-term development plan. Only short-term planning now exists, despite the fact that members are quite enthusiastic about planning as a way to achieve development and take advantage of the Red Cross's comparative advantages over other nonprofit organizations on the islands. It is feared that the organization will tend to disappear gradually if long-term planning is not adopted, management skills are not developed, and training for volunteers and paid staff is not enhanced.

There is a lack of understanding and suitable methodology for determining the magnitude of poverty and social problems in the entire country. This impedes planning, redefinition of target sectors, and identification of the right types of service. Redefinition of the National Society's identity, mission, and image should also be promoted during the institutional readjustment now under way.

The post of Director General has been vacant for a considerable time. In July 1992, however, the Society appointed an Executive Secretary with responsibility for general administration of the National Society. That person was later promoted to Director General.

At the time the Study was conducted, a lack of administrative organization could be observed in the National Society's headquarters. There were no exact figures, data, or documents about Red Cross activities. Except for a new fax machine there was no modern office equipment which would allow adequate controls and records to be kept. These are logistical shortcomings which limited structural and operational changes



in other areas and created a kind of "vicious circle" of poor performance. services or projects lack administrative and logistical support and so do not function well. This situation in turn created frustration and apathy which impeded changing the organization's structures and culture. By early 1993 the National Society had acquired computers, typewriters, and a photocopying machine.

In the absence of a Director General, the President of the National Society has had to take on some executive duties in what free time he has after his own work and other responsibilities.

The National Society occupies an old wooden building belonging to the Government in the Ministry of Health's compound. It has no facilities for ordinary or large meetings or workshops, or for conducting daily Red Cross activities efficiently. This situation affects the day-to-day operations of the National Society.

The leadership of the National Society is aware of these unsatisfactory conditions, and in the long run would like to develop administrative efficiency, improve internal and external communication (including integration with or help from ham operators), and obtain adequate equipment such as photocopiers and computers.

The leadership considers a suitable building a priority. This would also permit a regular income from rental facilities, space for holding conferences and seminars, and more storage room. Any gathering of more than 20 persons now requires renting other facilities.

### ***Human resources***

The Barbados Red Cross has some 300 active members and a Junior Links Program at schools. About 90% of volunteers are women, a fact that makes it difficult to recruit male volunteers for the voluntary aid detachments which carry out Red Cross services for the community.

There is a recognized need to cultivate and monitor the Junior Links carefully in order to assure members' continuity in the Society as they leave school. Since there is a lack of fulltime

volunteers in the schools, some loss of continuity in training and recruitment patterns tends to occur. Many teachers show a lack of interest in training and, more generally, in the Red Cross.

Some Red Cross members believe there is a lack of projects, activities, and training to hold the interest of volunteers and that an awards and recognition system is needed in addition to recognition of outstanding volunteers during Red Cross Week. The leadership identifies its difficulties in volunteer recruitment as follows: a) lack of training programs and loss of trained instructors to other organizations which can afford to pay for their services; b) reluctance of volunteers to provide services in remote areas; c) need for young instructors able to provide services during regular office hours. There is underutilization of trained personnel. Participation is hindered by other social attractions such as concerts, video rentals, etc.

The Albany chapter of the American Red Cross has assisted with the training of first-aid instructors. The National Society now has 19 trained instructors.

During 1989-1991 the Director General's salary was covered by the Spanish Red Cross, but the post has been vacant since July 1991.

### ***Finance and budget***

Total income in 1990 amounted to USD 65,346. Fund raising, donations, and subscriptions accounted for 26%, international cooperation for payment of salaries, 24%; an additional 17% in Government grants (USD 6,000 for the office assistant's salary and an annual USD 5,000 subsidy); registration fees for training courses, 10.7%; and the sale of manuals and cookbooks, 7%.

Expenditures in the same year were USD 72,074. The largest category was salaries (USD 23,301, or 32.3% of total expenditures). The Meals on Wheels program had a total cost of USD 24,189 (33.6% of the total), and the amortization of a donated vehicle amounted to 10.74%.

It is important to note that from 1987 to 1990 the cost of the Meals on Wheels program rose from USD 15,657 to USD 24,189 per year. This figure does not take into account donations in kind by stores and restaurants.

For the first time in the past five years, the 1990 financial period closed with a deficit of USD 6,728, which was covered by special fund-raising efforts.

Since the new treasurer took office, new financial controls have been implemented. Not all members of the National Society are happy with these controls, but they are considered necessary and appropriate.

While the National Society's leadership sees the lack of financial resources as an obstacle to the implementation of new projects and activities, the level of fund-raising is low in relation to the potential. The rapid development of the tourist industry would suggest the existence of income-generating opportunities that the National Society could exploit more aggressively.

### **Role and activities of the Barbados Red Cross in the context of the country**

Some members of the National Society have expressed concern over the lack of branches and the need to increase the coverage of Red Cross services throughout the island, especially in rural areas. Some proposals have been made to decentralize welfare services, undertake new and broader community activities, improve internal communications, and appoint a coordinating officer.

The following is the general situation of existing services.

#### *Social welfare*

The most important activity of the National Society is the Meals on Wheels program. This service is provided to about 40 persons five days a week by the headquarters and to about 20

persons twice a week by the St. George Parish detachment. At headquarters the food is prepared by paid staff and delivered by volunteers in the Red Cross vehicle, to elderly, indigent people previously screened and approved by the Director of Social Services. In St. George Parish all of the service is done by volunteers. The program receives in-kind donations from restaurants and supermarkets.

The main problem, apart from the negative cost/benefit balance of this program, is the lack of committed volunteers. The Lions Club has provided a grant of USD 2,000 to increase the program's coverage, but the Red Cross lacks drivers and volunteers to handle the increased workload.

#### *Relief and emergency services*

Training courses in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and home nursing are given to volunteers, community groups, and employees of private firms. The National Society charges a small registration fee, which does not cover the total cost of the courses. In 1991, a total of 300 persons were trained in first aid, 20 in CPR, and 120 in home nursing. Yet given the demand for this kind of service, more specialized, skillful, and stable trainers are required. Rewards and motivation are low, and there is no structured induction course for volunteers.

A water safety program is being prepared for implementation in the near future with the cooperation of the Albany Chapter of the American Red Cross (the paired partner). In 1991 the Albany Chapter sponsored a first-aid instructors' training course.

First-aid services are also provided at sporting and mass events through voluntary aid detachments.

The National Society is a member of the Central Emergency Relief Organization (CERO) and in it is responsible for relief supplies and first aid in case of natural disasters or emergencies. Nevertheless, the National Society has neither the funds nor technical and material resources to deal with this responsibility. Vol-

unteers are not trained or equipped to act in such cases, and the inclusion of men in the National Society might be necessary for some tasks. A workshop sponsored by the International Federation to review the Barbados Red Cross Disaster Plan was held in 1990. No significant actions have been taken to implement a program in this field, however.

### *Health services*

There is a medical equipment loan program which provides wheelchairs, crutches, and other equipment to needy members of the community. Present stock is not adequate to meet all needs, however.

As a result of its participation in a workshop organized by the Federation and World Scout Movement in Jamaica, the National Society is studying the feasibility of implementing an "Action for Youth" AIDS prevention project, or of coordinating activities with other organizations in the struggle against the spread of this disease in the country.

### *Relations with the Government*

The Government of Barbados recently signed the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions. It gives an annual subsidy of USD 5,000 to the National Society. In 1991 it gave a special contribution of USD 6,000 to pay the salaries of National Society staff. Negotiations are presently under way for the Red Cross to assume responsibility for shelter management as part of the central emergency organization (CERO). In addition, the National Society is exempt from paying duties on imported goods, and the Government occasionally offers it free photocopying services.

In general, relations are fluid and cordial, especially with the Ministry of Health, which houses the headquarters of the National Society in a building next to its main offices. Yet many members feel that the annual subsidy may be withdrawn or cut in the future, that more in-

volvement in Government and defense forces programs and activities (such as mass, islandwide casualty simulations) is possible, and that coordination could and should be improved. There are also concerns and a sense of relative deprivation or frustration because, despite first-aid training for governmental and private organizations, the Government continues using other agencies for many services instead of the Red Cross, thus ignoring the need to strengthen the National Society.

### *Relations with other organizations and agencies*

The Lions and Rotary Clubs are cooperating with the National Society in conducting the Meals on Wheels program. There are approximately 120 NGOs in Barbados. Some Red Cross members believe that, despite competition with them, particularly in fund raising and hiring trained instructors, close collaboration with those organizations having similar or complementary goals and interests is not only necessary but should also be encouraged through agreements. Some members also feel that other NGOs are far more aggressive than the Red Cross in their fund raising and public relations. Still, the demands for help and services which the public and the poor make on the Red Cross are more numerous.

A widespread perception is held that the prevailing institutional image and program of the Red Cross are inadequate to compete for funds and exploit opportunities used by other humanitarian and social institutions such as the Scouts, sports medicine, St. John Ambulance Brigade, or even the defense forces, although the Red Cross continues to be regarded as a respectable institution.

### *Role of external cooperation*

External cooperation has played a fairly important role in implementing the National Society's programs. The Spanish Red Cross

financed the salary of a fulltime Director General, and the Empress Shoken Fund donated a new vehicle. The Barbados Red Cross also participates in a pairing program with the Albany chapter of the American Red Cross. This development is quite recent and is in its initial phase. The National Society has benefited from the exchange by receiving some training equipment such as manikins and audiovisual materials.

The leadership of the National Society considers the integration and improvement of relations with the other Caribbean Societies important, particularly in the following fields: skill development, organizational guidelines, strategies and programming; training opportunities for staff and volunteers, intensified and diversified attendance at international conferences and seminars; setting up disaster preparedness and relief operations, and detachment exchanges to share information about organizational strategies and successful fund-raising drives and programs.

Many leaders and members feel that they are living in an increasingly competitive world. Different National Societies are fighting for the same funds to broaden their programming. It is felt, however, that such competition should be seen not as a threat but as a stimulus for growth.

### **The National Society's perception of its public image**

The general feeling among members of the Red Cross in Barbados is that it suffers from a

case of "mistaken identity" and has a very low profile at present. The services rendered by the Red Cross tend to be identified by the general public as belonging to other well-known private organizations, the reasons being that other NGOs implement activities that duplicate or overlap Red Cross services and that the Red Cross symbol is illegally used by many of those organizations. Discussions regarding this situation are presently under way with the relevant Government Ministry.

Another element contributing to this situation is that the national headquarters, being in a Government complex and in a deteriorated condition, does not project an image of power and independence.

Members believe that it is necessary and urgent to implement a more dynamic public relations program, with the following characteristics: first-aid demonstrations for the public; publication of a regular newsletter; an increase in the flow of information between Friends of the Red Cross whose services can be utilized; and improvement of the National Society's profile by ending the detachment from communications media and not relying solely on press releases. Such a program would also benefit fund-raising efforts and would be a new way of using the services of the Friends of the Red Cross Society.

The problem of a poor public image is also linked to a lack of volunteers and a scarcity of activities that would create and maintain the public's and members' interest.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

Social welfare activities are seen as the Barbados Red Cross's principal field of action, and specifically the "Meals on Wheels" program. This program has limited coverage, consumes about half of the National Society's resources, and focuses only on the distribution of food, but its scope and significance could be widened by including greater socioaffective support for the elderly through community promotion activities which could serve as a basis for primary health care activities. Something similar occurs with the continuous training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and home nursing whose strengthening and extension are recognized as necessary by members of the institution

The Red Cross of Barbados is responsible nationally for managing shelters and temporary housing in disaster situations in the framework of the Central Emergency Relief Organization (CERO). Its operational capacity in this sphere is nevertheless limited.

The National Society is confronting a number of internal problems that are impeding develop-

ment: management shortcomings; lack of training for the volunteers and paid personnel, lack of financial planning, and above all, a limited understanding of the problems of vulnerability and poverty that exist in Barbadian society. The Red Cross of Barbados must thus make decisions and take steps to develop its operational capacity, extend its national coverage, and increase and diversify the areas it works in. But the most important issue, as viewed by people who work in the Red Cross, is to redefine its strategies and development objectives. This planning should be based on accumulated experience, should take into account the national reality, and should advance gradually so as not to compromise gains already made.

This also presupposes a general change in the Red Cross's organizational structure and administrative style, in addition to extending and improving its equipment and infrastructure, particularly with respect to transportation and the headquarters. This will only be possible if serious efforts are made to increase the institution's funds and improve its public image.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Redefine the National Society's objectives, priorities, and structure by preparing a development plan, with emphasis on social welfare and disaster preparedness**
2. **Rationalize administration and internal communication**
3. **Implement a human resources development program**
4. **Design and apply measures to achieve financial self-sufficiency**
5. **Improve and develop the National Society's image**

1. **Redefine the National Society's objectives, priorities, and structure by preparing a development plan, with emphasis on social welfare and disaster preparedness**
  - 1.1 Assess the institution's situation, with special emphasis on: a) the extent of poverty, marginalization, and vulnerability in Barbados; b) the desired and possible role of the Barbados Red Cross in the country's social development; c) the consistency between this role and the institution's present activities; d) the existing geographic system and its effectiveness in terms of decentralization and coverage of services, and e) the quantity and quality of available human, technical, and financial resources.
  - 1.2 Based on this assessment, redefine the Meals on Wheels program to increase its coverage and thus efficiency. Make the program comprehensive by including in it the health and social support components implicit in it.
  - 1.3 Develop the National Society's operational capacity in disaster preparedness and prevention.
  - 1.4 On the basis of the evaluation noted above, formulate a medium- to long-term development plan which establishes clear priorities for National Society programs and activities as well as the measures necessary to carry them out in the spheres of organization, administration, finance, and human resources.
  - 1.5 Adopt measures which guarantee broad participation of the membership in formulating the development plan.
  - 1.6 Formulate annual plans of action containing precise goals and objectives to implement and be able to evaluate and adjust annually the scope, methods, and results of the development plan.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

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### **2. Rationalize administration and internal communication**

- 2.1 Design a new administrative system consistent with decentralization that integrates recent accounting and financial advances.
- 2.2 Establish an information system and register covering the activities carried out, the assignment of human resources, changes in them, and other variables of institutional interest.
- 2.3 Appoint a Director General who is responsible for implementing and coordinating the administrative system.
- 2.4 Adopt measures to decentralize decision making in favor of local committees

### **3. Implement a human resources development program**

- 3.1 Promote the integration and activities of the Junior Links through an assessment of teachers' opinions, ideas, and interests in relation to the Barbados Red Cross. With this information, design a program to strengthen the recruitment and training of Red Cross youth.
- 3.2 Create a continuing education program in the development plan's priority fields, particularly in management and training, using a participatory methodology.
- 3.3 Improve the working conditions of both volunteers and paid staff, with emphasis on job security and incentives.

### **4. Design and apply measures to achieve financial self-sufficiency**

- 4.1 Draw up a plan to raise funds by identifying new sources of financing.
- 4.2 Study and define financing alternatives based on the National Society's participation in sectoral or national development projects and/or based on recovering costs of services provided to governmental, private, or international agencies operating in the country.
- 4.3 Strengthen the financial self-sufficiency of programs and services through operating revenues in those programs where such revenue is possible.
- 4.4 To strengthen the National Society's financial base, implement income-producing or profit-making projects which are in keeping with the institution's principles, focusing especially on the country's tourist sector.
- 4.5 Establish the mechanisms necessary to guarantee the sustainability of both present and future projects which rely on external cooperation resources.

### **5. Improve and develop the National Society's image**

- 5.1 Design and put into practice a program of external communication and public relations, with a person in charge.
- 5.2 Improve and overhaul the infrastructure and equipment, which is an external reflection of the National Society (headquarters building, offices, etc.).
- 5.3 Reinforce the National Society's image of autonomy with respect to public authorities.
- 5.4 Initiate measures, in relation to the public authorities, which guarantee appropriate use of the Red Cross emblem.
- 5.5 Increase publicity of the National Society's activities through the public media.

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