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# Progress Report

## Seed Grants Program for Capacity Building of African National Societies

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**MAA00011**

**01/05/2018**

**Project amount in CHF:**

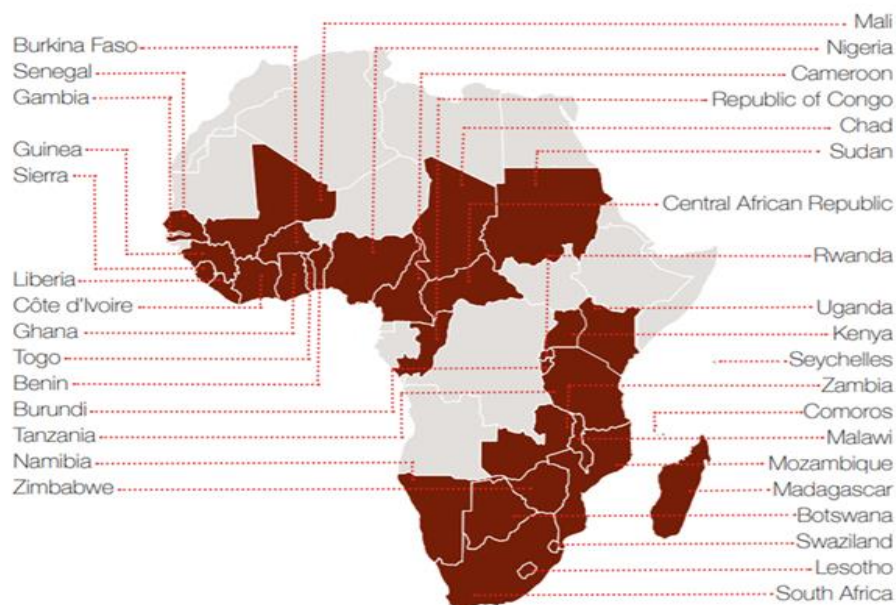
**532,000**

**This report covers the**

**period 01/07/2017 to**

**31/03/2018.**

### Countries that received seed grants



### In brief

#### Programme outcome

The seed grants program was part of an IFRC commitment to enable African National Societies (ANS's) to 'kick start' self-identified initiatives for their own development. This program provided small-scale funding that was used to complete or initiate a key activity essential to building National Society (NS) capacity. National Societies also used these grants as 'innovative funding' to experiment with something new that would contribute to sustainability.

Furthermore, this program has helped to create future champions, allowing ANS's to build up services and capacity they may otherwise have struggled to develop. The support is in-line with the aims of Strategy 2020 and the enabling actions to deliver our strategic aim of building strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Africa. The seed grants program is complementary to the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA), by helping to make ANS stronger candidates for future, large-scale investment.

#### Programme summary

The interventions implemented by ANS under the seed grants program included support to: develop NS's strategic plans, review of NS constitution/statutes, design mechanisms to enhance NS integrity and accountability, provide leadership training for governance and management, create HR and finance systems, conduct consolidated audits (with top up from other sources), initiate 'innovative' projects aimed at 'doing things differently' for NS development, develop youth policies and volunteer programs, launch capacity building for branch development, organize events that boost the image and visibility of NS, and activities aimed at forging new partnerships.

The goal of every Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) NS is to consistently deliver relevant and quality services to vulnerable people through volunteers and staff countrywide. To achieve this goal, the IFRC has continued to support ANS to build and develop their capacities by providing small-scale funding that can be used to complete or initiate a key activity essential to building the NS capacity.

The IFRC Africa regional office considers it our duty to accompany each ANS in the journey to become relevant, efficient and sustainable entities in their domestic contexts. Building strong NS is the foundation of IFRC's strategy 2020 and is one of the key strategies for implementation of the IFRC Africa Road Map 2017-2020.

The IFRC Africa Regional Office offered seed grants for capacity building to all 49 RCRC NS in the Africa region. This seed grants program is an extension of the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) administered by the IFRC Secretariat which comprehensively supports NS to be sustainable and able to fully carry out their mandate to serve vulnerable people. However, the CBF is limited to a specific number of NS given the nature/size of the grants. As such, the seed grants program provided each ANS with funding up to CHF 10,000, to be used for eligible capacity building initiatives, provided the proposal met the criteria as explained in the guidelines when the requests for proposals (RFP) was first made. This seed money could be topped up by other grants or donations to achieve greater impact.

**Figure 1.1: Summary of interventions supported through the seed grant program**

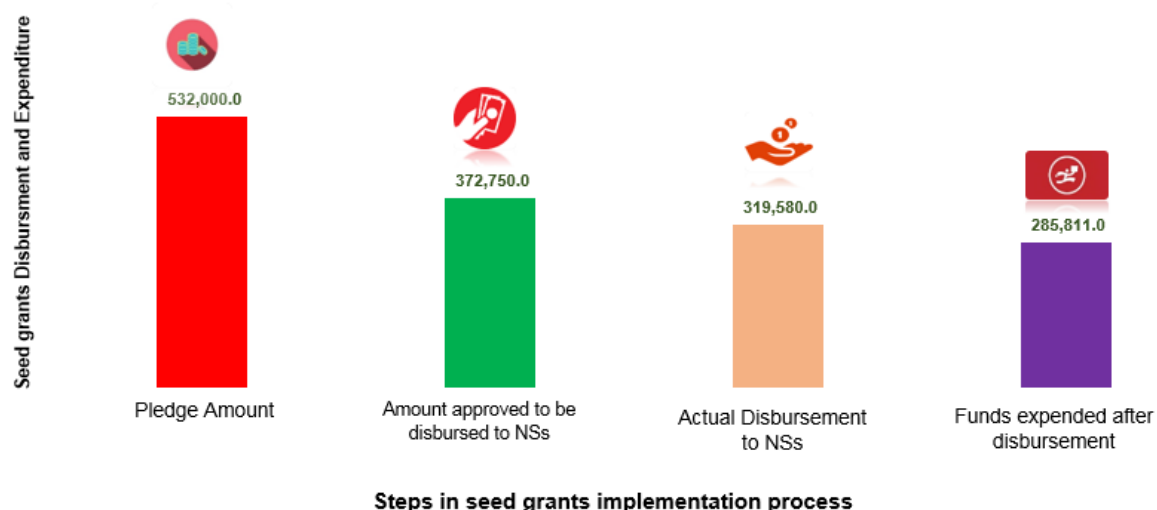


## Financial situation

Figure 1.2: Financial situation under the seed grant.

**35** National Societies Proposals were approved  
**10,000 CHF** Disbursed Per National Society

**30** National Societies Received Cash Disbursement  
**89.4%** Implimentation Rate at National Societies



## Context

The IFRC Africa Road Map recognizes the vital aspect of organizational development and capacity building. “The IFRC in Africa will provide programmatic support to all National Societies and broker knowledge and innovation. It will prioritize the development of tools and guidance to enhance use of data, build and manage reputation risks, and support leadership and management development”.

In line with the commitment of the IFRC in Africa to accompany ANS in their journey toward becoming well-functioning NS, the Africa region, led by the PSK team, administered the seed grants program in coordination with all country and cluster offices. However, it is important to note that individual projects supported through the Seed Grants Program were identified, designed and implemented by ANS, based on self-identified needs and priorities for capacity building drawn from their strategic plans.

## Progress towards outcomes

**Outcome: Developing NS’s strategic plans**

**Achievements:**

Through the seed grants program support, the **Mauritius RC** conducted its strategic plan review and developed a multi-year operational plan. The support also ensured the alignment of programme focus

related to the strategic plan. The operationalisation of the document will be done within this year. The seed grants program also helped the **Mali RC** revisit its 2015-2019 strategic plan, in view of changing needs and learning from OCAC. The **Benin RC** used the seed grants program support to develop its strategic plan 2017- 2021. In Togo, the **Togolese RC** made use of the seed grant support to review the Strategic plan 2012- 2016 and develop a new Strategic Plan for 2018-2022. **Comoros RC** was able to develop a strategic plan 2017- 2021 using the seed grants. The NS also carried out an OCAC evaluation and developed their 2017-2021 strategic plan with an annual operational plan.

### **Outcome: Review of NS constitution/statutes**

#### **Achievements:**

The seed grants program supported interventions that spearheaded review of NS constitutions and statutes. The seed grants supported **Tanzania RC** to review its constitution and develop a Youth Policy ensuring youth representation in the NS governance structures. The seed grant support contributed to the **Ghana RC** reviewing its statutes, improving of leadership structures, enhancing integrity framework and developing a business model for sustainability. The seed grant to **Sierra Leone RC** contributed to start the process to review and adopt a new constitution with clear separation of powers, and to disseminate the results among members. However, the recent Ebola-related reputational crisis that rocked the SLRCS has considerably slowed the planned constitutional review process.

### **Outcome: Develop and implement mechanisms to enhance NS integrity and accountability and develop Finance and HR systems**

#### **Achievements:**

The IFRC continued to support the design and implementation of mechanisms to enhance NS integrity and accountability. The seed grants supported several ANS to enhance integrity, transparency and accountability in varied ways. In **Uganda**, the **RC**, the seed grant support contributed towards conducting a consolidated audit. While in **Swaziland RC**, the support contributed to developing a fraud policy and sensitization of governance and management through leadership training and, in-part, contributed to the consolidated audit. The NS has gone through a remarkable transformation in the last two years. The NS was able to pay off all its debt and now even receives government support, making it one of the two NS in the region that have more than 50% of the income raised domestically.

Through seed grant support, the **Namibia RC** strengthened financial accountability by completing past audits. Specifically, NS used the seed grant to complete the 2014 audit. The contribution was significant because the NS was behind on its financial audits, which made it impossible for the NS to enjoy credit facilities from banks. The NS is on a rebranding mission and these audits were part of the process. The completion of the audits makes the NS a more favourable partner to the Government and external partners.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the seed grant support was used to introduce a new filing and archiving system which will enhance accountability systems of the NS. This was a dire organizational development need that was deferred for years because of a lack in small-scale, flexible funding.

### **Outcome: Leadership trainings for Governance and Management**

#### **Achievements:**

Seed grants supported interventions geared towards leadership training for governance and management. Through the seed grant support, **Sudan RC** reviewed legal structures and addressed

challenges with governance and with management viz a viz roles and responsibilities. Together, management and government camp up with a vision and plan of action for SRCS to suit the changing times.

In **Burundi RC**, the support continued to strengthen governance capacity at the branch level in four regions, namely north, south, central and western regions covering 18 branches. The aim of this initiative was to provide training for governance at branch level on resource mobilization, through specialized Governance Commissions in four relevant themes: Financial Management and Resource Mobilization, Humanitarian Diplomacy, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting as well as Community Development. Strengthening branch capacity for governance is an important aspect under the strategic plan of the BRCS.

Through the seed grants, the **Mozambique Red Cross** hosted the General Assembly and Elections on 6th and 7th October 2017. The NS had been struggling for a long time and had not conducted a General Assembly for seven years. Further governance training was held for the newly elected members. With a strengthened legal base and a 'new look' governance, backed by strong management, the NS is now on a path to recovery and consolidation.

The **South Africa RC** was able to review the legal base including governance and management structures. Further, through the seed grants program support, board induction and review of branch functioning was initiated. The grant has also supported the development of youth initiatives and structures to increase youth engagement in the board and in branches. In **Liberia RC** the seed grant support went to leadership training for governance and management. This was a critical aspect of the turn-around strategy of the NS, which is still recovering after the Ebola crisis.

The **Nigerian RC's** seed grants proposal was to strengthen NRCS HR capacity and systems development. The NS had a change in leadership and has outstanding working advances that exceeded the agreed level of working advance. Hence, the funds have not been transferred to implement the planned intervention.

**Outcome: Initiate 'innovative' projects aimed at 'doing things differently' on NSD**

#### **Achievements:**

The Seed Grants Program promoted innovative projects aimed at 'doing things differently' for NS development. Through program support, the **Zimbabwe RC** was able to expand science laboratory facilities at the Red Cross High School to improve education opportunities for disadvantaged youth and to make the school more competitive generally. The NS successfully converted one of the rooms at the Red Cross High School into a science laboratory. The seed grant was used to refurbish the room and pay the necessary licenses for the science lab to be approved by the Ministry of Education. The NS now seeks additional support to further equip the science lab.

With seed grant support, the **Seychelles RC** will implement interventions geared towards strengthening volunteer management systems after policies were updated and strategy/tools were developed. Since the funds were disbursed late, there is delay in the implementation of the initial part of the project.

**Outcome: Developing Youth Policies and Volunteer Development**

#### **Achievements:**

With a vibrant youth population in Africa, developing youth policies and rolling out Youth Engagement Strategies (YES) is imperative to develop effective and meaningful youth participation in RCRC activities. In **Botswana RC**, seed grant support went to strengthening youth structures in branches,

leadership training, the establishment of RCRC school clubs, organizing youth assemblies and promoting youth representation at branch and national levels. However, a change in leadership and outstanding working advances, resulted in a delay of funds transfer. Nevertheless, the project was completed as activities were fast tracked.

The **Cameroon RC** proposal was to strengthen youth structures and to promote a culture of peace and change of mind set. However, with the recent changes in governance and management at the NS, the new team needed time to get acquainted with the approved project requested an extension of the timeframe for activities. As a result, the funds have not yet been transferred. In **Congo RC** the seed grant support was for the development of youth structures and another on climate change. The MoU for the grant was signed by the NS in October 2017. The funds were transferred but the process witnessed a delay due to some administrative difficulties with the NS bank account. However, the NS finally had access to the funding in March 2018. The revised budget and plan of action are being finalised to reflect the current humanitarian context in the country and priority needs.

The support to **Senegal RC** was for implementation of a project that aims to contribute towards strengthening the operational capacity of the NS. Activities included support for management and retention of volunteers, implementation of a youth and volunteer policy and improving the internal and external communication of the NS, all identified as critical priorities during the last OCAC exercise.

**Outcome: Branch development activities, including conducting BOCA**

#### **Achievements:**

The IFRC is committed to branch development in Africa and aims to build branches as centres of resilience throughout the region. The **Zambia RC** has identified a need to enhance accountability in branches. The NS is has developed a new strategy for the next three years. Branches are at the centre of the strategy and therefore it is necessary to ensure they are functioning well both in operations and governance. The NS is therefore using the funds to sensitize all board members in the branches to ensure the branches are functional and can contribute to the NS strategy.

The **Madagascar RC** conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) on BOCA (Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment) that will create a trained national level pool of trainers/facilitators who will in turn roll out branch level BOCA assessments and develop branch development plans.

The **Central African Republic (CAR) RC** saw the restructuring of branches as part of an essential decentralization plan, necessitated by the sensitive political environment and volatile security in the country. The seed grant support helped the NS to hold branch elections and conduct inductions and leadership training for branches.

Through seed grant support to **Chad RC**, a framework was designed aimed at strengthening regional committees. In addition, a training session on good governance as well as on the importance of good internal organization systems was conducted. Further, the NS was able to strengthen the committees structure by conducting an administrative follow-up and developed communications tools.

The **Gambia RC** used the seed grant to complete the construction of a key branch building and provide equipment to the branch office. Although the construction work of the office building as well as the perimeter fencing of the office compound was completed, the branch staff are still not able to use the office space, since the office building is still without electricity and sanitary ware.

**Outcome: Activities aimed at forging new partnerships, advocacy and improving visibility on NSs**

## Achievements:

Seed grants were used by some NS's to strengthen activities aimed at forging new partnerships/collaborations. Through the IFRC seed grant, Lesotho Red Cross hosted a fundraising event that successfully brought on board several local businesses and government agencies as donors and partners. The IFRC seed grant helped the **Lesotho Red Cross** to build long-term partnerships with government and members of the private sector through partnership events and forums. This has increased funding from local donors and contributed to the sustainability and visibility of the Lesotho Red Cross.

In Malawi, the seed grant is being used by the NS to upscale an innovative programme called the Volunteer Savings Scheme, which was initiated in a few **Malawi RC** branches. The project supports the volunteers to organise themselves into groups and create a savings culture. With the savings, income is generated through lending funds to members in the group, who pay a small interest fee. At the end of the period, the group may choose to reinvest the money or share out the dividends. The NS expects to build capacity in all the 33 branches in the NS, and manuals were developed.

The **Burkina Faso RC**, project consisted of advocacy actions for parliamentarians and elected local government officials aimed at reinforcing the national society's role as an auxiliary to the public authorities. The NS organized a workshop for different stakeholders paving the way for future collaborations and partnerships.

Through the IFRC support under the seed grant, **Rwanda RC** enhanced its in-house communications capacities that will boost NS's image and visibility. The **Rwanda RC** was able to establish an audio-visual unit and a library that will cater to the communications need of the NS aimed at gaining more visibility to the NS.

## Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Thirty-five ANS responded to the initial request for proposals, and several more applied late, out of the cycle. This suggests that there is both need and demand for small grants.
- Grants were used for a wide-range of self-identified capacity building needs, demonstrating that there are significant gaps in support for NS development that otherwise go unmet.
- Small grants can be an effective way to seed growth and future champions. Today, the Sudanese RC is a leader in migration, recently receiving recognition from its government and support from both partner NS and DFID for large-scale programs. The interest and capacity of the NS to work in migration was initiated through a small seed grant. More recently, support for education and domestic fundraising through seed grants to the Zimbabwe and Lesotho RC, respectively, may yet show these NS to be regional leaders in their respective areas of interest.
- The process of awarding seed grants was done in a competitive manner. Proposals that did not meet the criteria were rejected whilst some proposals had to be sent back to ANS for revision/modification as they did not fully align to the criteria laid out in the guidelines. ANS were supported and revised their proposals accordingly.
- Delay in disbursement funds- This is mainly due to some ANS having dormant, 'unreported working advances'. The region is working to resolve these issues, but regrettably there are still some ANS that have not yet received the funds due to the outstanding 'WA' issues.

- ANS not following correct financial procedures- For example some ANS do not raise a 'cash request' for the funds to be sent by the cluster. The region is working with cluster and country offices to ensure timely and compliant practice with financial procedures.
- The above factors resulted in funds being disbursed as late as October 2017 in some cases, resulting in implementation delays. The region is working with NS to ensure timely and complete narrative/financial reports.
- As originally intended, seed grants helped to 'kick start' many initiatives, but it was not enough in some cases to realise the planned objectives fully. Several NS have requested additional funding to achieve the ultimate results envisaged through the project.

For example, in the case of Zimbabwe RC the seed grants were used to renovate the science laboratory, but the NS is still short of equipping the lab with the furniture and other material needed for a science lab. In the Gambia, the NS used the funds to complete a key branch building that would eventually be able to deliver quality humanitarian services to the community. However, the funds were not enough to see the full completion of the project and the branch is yet to move in to the renovated building.

### **Some quotes from African National Society leaders on the Seed Grants**

*"The Liberian National Red Cross Society used the Seed grants to facilitate trainings for members of the new Board and management teams in specific skills, with the objectives of ensuring compliance to policies, procedures and processes, as well as strengthening the Board's resources mobilization capacities and management confidence with partners. The trainings provided to various board members and key staff members was aimed at strengthening their networking and lobbying capabilities, forging new partnerships for resources mobilization at the local/chapter and national levels. The decision to train them in areas linked to their work and specific skills have been viewed positively because it motivates staff and helps as an incentive to retain staff. It has also been viewed as part of staff development which is very important at this critical stage of the NS. In some cases, the training has enabled the reassignment of new responsibilities and additional duties." (Ms. Sayba Yawai Tamba MPH, Secretary General, Liberia Red Cross)*

*"The Seed grant came as a great blessing as we wanted to upgrade a community-based infrastructural initiative to a functional Branch Office, namely the Lower River RC Branch to support community resilience and to be able to respond effectively to emergencies. Although the funds allocated were not enough to complete the project with additional funding the ultimate outcomes will be realized. Once we get the branch up and running the Branch will be able to mobilize financial and human resources, inter alia, to sustain itself and its main activities." (Dr. Mohammadou Kabir Cham., President, Gambian Red Cross Society)*

*"The SRCS used the seed grants to conduct a governance training for branch governance from all the branches which was followed by another workshop attended by governance, senior management, volunteers and staff of SRCS to develop our NSD plan for 2018-2020. The branch governance found it very important to them and expressed the need to replicate this training at branch level, which we hope to do in the coming months" (Mr. Osman Gaffer, Secretary General, Sudanese Red Crescent Society)*



*“Our National Society has been running the Red Cross high school for some time. However, we didn’t have a proper science laboratory in the school. Our goal is to empower Zimbabwe’s next generation of leaders through quality science education whilst generating income to the National Society. Through the seed grant we were able to equip the science lab that will attract more students to the school” (Mr. Maxwell Phiri, Secretary General, Zimbabwe Red Cross)*

## Looking ahead

Through the seed grant program, the IFRC supported ANS's to have clear strategic direction, develop integrity and enhance NS accountability. The program helped ANS to strengthen communication and enhance visibility among peers, partners, governments and other stakeholders. The IFRC intends to continue to support ANS to become sustainable, strong NS accountable for results and resources, and working to build resilient communities.

The IFRC intends that "VISA" (Visibility, Integrity, Sustainability and Accountability) will characterize all 49 NS in Africa, increasing the impact, efficiency and scale of services delivered throughout the continent. Capacity building of NS is a gradual process which takes time. Results will not be evident overnight. Investments will bear fruit in the long term, though there will undoubtedly be some ‘quick wins’ on the way. These quick wins help to inspire further action among ANS and engender confidence among their stakeholders. The Seed Grants Program is an essential part of this process.

In 2018, the regional office will focus on promoting shared leadership in ANS, particularly around sustainability, domestic resource mobilization, leadership development, leveraging the auxiliary role and enhancing integrity and risk management frameworks. Other areas that the regional office will support through seed grants includes revamping youth and volunteer networks, promoting the application of YES, finance development including enterprise risk management, information management and education. The regional office will work closely with the Pan African Coordination Team to ensure monitoring of the Pan African Conference commitment and indicators. The Regional office will also work closely with the African Governance Group to re-activate the sub-regional networks that will provide leadership support to Governance structures.

Africa Regional Office is in the process of capturing ‘lessons learnt’ and compiling ‘case studies’ from the seed grants program. Interesting stories from Zimbabwe RC and Lesotho RC can be found on the following [link](#). While some ANS capacity building initiatives supported through the seed grants program have resulted in strengthened capacities of National Societies, a number of NS are eager to build on the successes of the initial intervention with follow up support. Many NS have expressed their gratitude for the timely support provided to them, allowing opportunities for capacity building work that were unmet for years. Inspired and encouraged by the successes in the 2017 seed grants program, the regional office looks forward to implement a follow-on seed grants program in 2018.

It is important that by the end of 2020, the IFRC can demonstrate that it has a closer, more connected relationship with each NS in Africa, and that 80% of ANS have improved compared to the current baseline. Seed grants program for capacity building is one positive step in that direction.

## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Find out more on [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

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