

ST KITTS & NEVIS RED CROSS SOCIETY



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St. Kitts & Nevis Red Cross Society President's Report for July 2017 – Oct 2019

The SKNRCS elected a new executive to guide the NS on July 2nd, 2017. Several new officers were elected during that General Assembly including myself as President and a new Treasurer, Ms. Sanginee Rattan. Most of the members previously held positions on the Governing Board and were re-elected to their positions.

Major Hurricanes Irma and Maria were the first major tests for the new Governing Board to see how well we can manage the affairs of the National Society. Both hurricanes only skirt the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis causing widespread impact to homes and infrastructure across the north and south of St. Kitts and in pockets of areas on Nevis. The Hurricanes enabled us as a National Society to identify our strengths such as a core volunteer base that is always ready to respond in times of need; but they also point out our deficiencies such as lack of property insurance for the buildings and lack of stand-by power supply to enable the post impact operations efficiently.

As the scope of the impact from the hurricanes was staggering across several Caribbean islands, the timely and helpful intervention and support from the Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members enabled us here in St. Kitts and Nevis to meet the challenges posed by the disaster while ensuring that our direct beneficiaries were served during their times of need. Through the hurricane appeal that was launched to assist us amongst other Caribbean nations, we were able to begin to ensure that the operations of the National Society can be as resilient as possible and thus enabling we to meet our mandate of humanitarian response while maintaining the highest standards set forth by IFRC. For all the technical and logistical support; and capacity building that were garnered through the kind and generous financial support of the many donors to the appeal, I would like to express my profound gratitude on behalf of the Governing Board of the SKNRCS and its entire volunteer base as well as on behalf of the Government and people of the St. Kitts and Nevis.

Some of the capacity building trainings and workshops that our National Society benefited from as a direct result of the appeal includes but not limited to the following: ODK Mega V training (2017); planned workshops and sessions for 2018 included OCAC training workshop (Phase 1); Community Health Awareness Campaign; and Livelihoods Course.

The St. Kitts & Nevis Red Cross Society continued to benefit from the Hurricane Irma/Maria Appeal during the year 2018. The benefits were designed to improve the resiliency of the Nation Society in disaster mitigation and response. Several volunteers benefited from capacity development opportunities funded through this appeal in critical areas such Mobile Data Collection training. Recognizing that collection of data post impact can be sometimes challenging due to gender issues, the National Society endeavored to have as close as possible gender equity during the training. This involved fifteen (15) males and seventeen (17) females and this was a combination of our volunteers as well as those from the National Disaster volunteer corp. The National Society also benefited tremendously from the Appeal through the acquisition of two (2) new vehicles (pickup trucks); a standby generator and NFIs. Due to these acquisitions our ability to respond to disasters has improved immensely. All those individuals, companies and countries who contributed to this Hurricane Appeal, we the volunteers of the St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society would forever be in your debt.

Additional training of our volunteers was completed through IFRC and close collaboration with some of our key stakeholders such as OFDA USAID and Nevis Disaster Management Department (NDMD), we were able to build on the competencies of our volunteers. Some of the training completed by our volunteers includes but not limited to the following: ECBHFA ToT; Response & Contingency Planning; Cutting & Installation of plastic sheeting; Vector control; Mass casualty management; Emergency operations Center; Psycho-social support; and Emergency medical Responder training. To this end, it is important to use any and every opportunity to thank our invaluable and close partners who continue over the years to collaborate with us in an effort to build the capacity of our volunteers so that we can be better positioned to serve our communities even better.

The Nevis Branch of the National Society continued building on its strong and timely interventions by the successful execution of their marquee programs. Some of these programs included Disaster Risk Reduction awareness and education campaign in collaboration with the NDMD. This program targeted all Primary schools on the island of Nevis as it was felt that to effect changes in attitudes towards disaster risk reduction, that the children would be an ideal conduit to their families and to the communities by extension. This program was hailed as a major success not only by the NDMD but also the Nevis Island Administration.

Another timely program was the annual water safety and swimming program undertaken by the Nevis Branch. This initiative exposed children about safety around water and at the same time taught them how to swim not only in a pool but also open waters. A similar initiative was conducted by the St. Kitts Branch and this targeted the children in one of the main fishing communities on the island. Commendations were expressed by the community members as well as the sponsors as they recognized that the skills learnt during these programs can lessen the chances of drowning deaths in children within St. Kitts & Nevis.

Both branches continued with their school safety programs where they provided technical support to the schools' administrations in identifying the various hazards and vulnerabilities that can impact their schools. Teachers were then advised how they can minimize potential impacts from these known hazards while capitalizing on the various strengths within their schools. This disaster resilience initiative continues to make the

education sector aware of the threats posed to their sector and how they can minimize potential impacts through proper planning and regular practice drills.

The National Society through both of its Branches continued to provide first aid services to various sporting and cultural events. These events were professionally completed but it is becoming more important that the volunteers be certified and be provided with the requisite certification in the likelihood that there is a challenge to their certification. Additionally, the volunteers participated in various local capacity development opportunities as well as regional trainings and meetings. These opportunities have now empowered our volunteers to provide invaluable support and aid to the most vulnerable citizens in our community.

Fundraising and membership concerns and recommendations

The sustainability of the National Society continues to be a concern. Presently, we are not receiving directing financial assistance or support from Government although we continue to play our auxiliary role to the Disaster agencies/ departments in disaster response and mitigation. Nonetheless, funds were generated through training and provision of first aid services and this enabled us to meet our current daily operations. Rental of conference space as well as office space continued to augment the financial resources collected by the Nevis branch as well as the NS Headquarters. Selling of donated clothing in the thrift shop operated by the Nevis Branch also help to supplement the revenue collected to ensure they can meet their regular operations. The number of active volunteers declined for both the St. Kitts and the Nevis Branches. This decline was due to various reasons one of which was some of the volunteers migrated for studies or in a few cases for permanent residency overseas. Nonetheless, the remaining volunteers stepped up and were able to meet the rigorous demands of the various services that we proudly and professionally provide to our communities. The volunteers must be commended for their continued dedication to humanity and assisting the less fortunate members of our communities as well as the vulnerable members in the communities.

Other recommendations

It is important that as a National Society, serious considerations be given to reform some existing practices within the Society. Some of these relates to financial practices and as such it is highly recommended that a financial policy be developed as a matter of urgency to ensure that proper financial records and practices are adhered to. This can only improve the level of transparency and accountability within the National Society. Also, it is important that an updated strategic plan be developed to ascertain the current position of the National Society and help chart what is needed to take the National Society through the next five (5) or so years. This strategy should be aligned with the national challenges as well as any regional or international strategies. This will position the Society to meet the evolving challenges and remain relevant beyond first aid provision and disaster response.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who supported us (the Governing Board) over the past 2 plus years and worked along with the executive of the National Society in a constructive way to advance our initiatives while adhering to the Fundamental Principles. To the incoming executive, I wish you all the best and hope that you be bold and prepared to take the necessary steps to continue to build this National Society despite the many challenges that can arise in the future.

Thank you,



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Elmo Burke,MSc.
President (2017-2019)
SKNRCS