

IRG Project Profiles



HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STUDY OF THE SOUTHERN NATIONS, NATIONALITIES, AND PEOPLES' REGION OF ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is facing three interconnected public health crises—malnutrition, malaria, and measles. Widespread malnutrition is the result of crop production failures, inconsistent distribution of food rations, single-commodity cereal rations, high rates of diarrheal and infectious diseases, and lack of dietary diversity. National nutrition surveys, conducted by the Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University and funded by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), estimate that 11.1 percent of the rural population suffers from severe malnutrition, increasing the vulnerability to diseases. Under normal circumstances, 75 percent of Ethiopians are at risk for malaria, but the malaria threat increased in 2003 because of the large numbers of severely malnourished children and adults. Similarly, despite an accelerated vaccination campaign, a measles outbreak in 2003 remains a serious health

risk for unvaccinated Ethiopian children under the age of five. In light of the serious nature of the situation—food insecurity, malnutrition, and disease in Ethiopia's Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)—immediate action is needed.

Activities

In September 2003, USAID asked IRG to assess the extent and nature of the humanitarian crisis in the SNNPR, identify areas in which the humanitarian situation had reached critical levels, and recommend appropriate interventions to allay the crisis. The project also included a socioeconomic study of the SNNPR and strategy for the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

Within 72 hours of the contract award, IRG mobilized concurrently operating field teams to

Region: Africa
Country: Ethiopia
Sector: Relief & Reconstruction
Duration: September 2003–December 2003
Client: USAID
Partners: International Medical Corps
Johns Hopkins University Center for International Emergency, Disaster, and Refugees Studies
Catholic Relief Services
Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University

Key Accomplishments

- ◆ Accelerated vaccination campaign
- ◆ National nutrition surveys
- ◆ Timely and accurate assessment of the humanitarian crisis in the SNNPR
- ◆ Concurrent in-depth socioeconomic study to assess long-term needs
- ◆ Ability to identify and procure additional expertise as required

conduct the humanitarian assistance assessment (Team I) and the socioeconomic study (Team II). At present, Team I is working with the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to perform a timely and accurate assessment of the humanitarian crisis in the SNNPR, and provide recommendations on areas that need a more focused response. Team II is working on a more in-depth socioeconomic study, based on the work of the DART, Team I, government, and other institutional sources. The goal of this study is to clarify the overall needs of the population and provide possible strategies to address these issues. IRG expertise is being utilized across all sectors, including humanitarian assistance, food aid, water

and sanitation, livelihoods, health, nutrition, agronomy, and epidemiology. This “big-picture” approach aims to provide USAID with recommendations that can help break the cyclical pattern of loss of livelihood, food shortages, adverse health implications, and increased mortality. Key to the project’s success has been IRG’s ability to identify and procure additional expertise as required. IRG also provides overall administrative, budgetary, and logistical support to the field teams and USAID, including weekly reporting and regular briefings for the DART team members and local and Washington-based USAID personnel.

October 2003

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