



OUT REACH

JUL 2023

Celebrating BRCOS 55th Anniversary



BRCOS in the frontline of the national oral polio vaccination campaign

GWETA community farm gives back to the community



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Bagaetsho, Dumelang

It is mid 2023 already, how time flies...

2023 started at a relatively fast pace and brought positive strides for the National Society. The national Society embarked on multiple trainings including communication and project management. The two training courses were to help bring us up to speed with better efficient strategies when implementing, coordinating, and managing our programmes and projects. We believe these training courses will help build and improve our etiquette in running an effective and agile organization. The training was followed by an all-staff meeting where all departments pitched plans and ideas, and finally, the management and staff mapped and signed the way forward for the year. This entire process gave way to the National Society's yearly plan, which aligns with our strategic plans and objectives.

Bagaetsho, the National Society also embarked on a vigorous and engaging National Polio Vaccination Campaign. The dedication, teamwork, volunteerism spirit, hard work and meticulous quality of the NS staff came to the forefront. Thank you, a million times #TeamRed. All your efforts do not go unrecognized. Betsho, the NS has also continued well on the Africa CDC-SLL project; currently, 7 countries out of 10 have been implementing, and we are hopeful that we will soon get the remaining ones on board. This project is very important to the National Society because of its regional context. It has since brought us more prospects and pegged us amongst the best and strongest NS regionally. Furthermore, the National Society continues to implement projects with UNICEF, IFRC, Netherlands Red Cross, Palms for Life, IOM, and South Korean Embassy, amongst other donors. We hope to continue increasing our donor base and partnership as we seek more funding for the National Society to build financial sustainability and trust to become a partner of choice. I therefore take this time to call upon all of us at Botswana Red Cross Society and friends of the National Society to continue helping us re-align our plans, re-innovate our response, and re-affirm our commitment to augmenting the Government of Botswana. To our valued volunteers, we appreciate your efforts in making this journey easy, Botswana Red Cross Society appreciates your efforts and hard work in delivering the humanitarian mandate across Botswana.

This newsletter is dedicated to both living and departed men and women who made Red Cross what it is today as we celebrate 55 years. A few more months to go until 2023 ends, let's go #TeamRed.



BOTSWANA RED CROSS SOCIETY PARTICIPATES IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNICATION FORUM IN AMMAN, JORDAN

The Botswana Red Cross Society Communications Coordinator Ms. Boitumelo Motsenyana attended this year's Red Cross Red Crescent Global Communication Forum 2023 on the 12th – 14th June in Amman, Jordan. The Forum brought together Heads of Communication from IFRC, ICRC and more than 80 Red Cross Red Crescent senior communications practitioners under one roof to foster collaboration, networking, innovation, and learning. The overall Goal of the GCF 2023 was to inspire innovation and transformation in communications that safeguards and strengthens trust in the Red Cross Red Crescent brand.

During the sessions, Communications Coordinators engaged in simulation exercises, presentation of case studies, peer to peer learning and shared best practices from our respective National Societies that aimed at strengthening and encouraging greater investment in communications across the Movement. This enabled us to build a common understanding, to unearth opportunities and see how we can use these learnings to garner positive impact to leverage the Red Cross Red Crescent brand. The three-day event was a fully participa-



tory event composed of a series of panel discussions and presentations. Renowned speakers from around the world managed to impart knowledge on how we need to start thinking creatively in our communications approaches, to engage new supporters and forging partnerships through the utilization of diverse communications platforms.

Ms. Motsenyana collectively with colleagues from the French, Jamaican, Nigerian and Dominica National Societies have volunteered to be champions of the "Driving excellence in communications through stronger capacity" workstream. We believe

our Red Cross Red Crescent brand is built upon the strength of each of the Movement components in a coordinated and collaborative manner, before, during and after emergencies to deliver professional, timely and impactful communications that strengthen the Movement's positioning. In conclusion, the team vouched to improve on ways to cooperate, collaborate and coordinate, through developing greater synergies between our communication, branding, marketing, and resource mobilisation efforts to position the Red Cross Red Crescent as partners of choice with key stakeholders.

THE HUMANITARIAN EMBLEM

The Global Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement utilize the emblems to signify their promise of voluntary, neutral and impartial assistance to all people in need, regardless of race, religion or citizenship status. These life-saving symbols need to be understood and trusted by all, so that they can protect those suffering during armed conflict. It is therefore crucial that the emblems are protected and to limit their use to official Red Cross organizations and programs. The use of the Red Cross Emblem by anyone else who is not authorized to do so by law, is prohibited and unlawful. The Red Cross Society Act CAP. 64:01 (10), criminalizes the use of the Red Cross Emblem without due authorization,



and attracts a monetary fine or imprisonment. Our role as Botswana Red Cross is to promote regulations of use of the Emblem and disseminate information on its proper usage. The Botswana government plays a pivotal role in the regulation of the emblem usage, prevention of its misuse, and to emphasize the essentialness of the protection of the Emblem. The Red Cross Emblem is a symbol of protection that the international law gives to the wounded, sick and those caring for them during armed conflict. The symbol conveys to those fighting that they must not attack anyone or anything that displays these emblems.

The Red Cross Logo can be used for indica-

tive purpose on:
 Red Cross Buildings or Structures,
 Vehicles used by the National Society
 Uniforms, badges, certificates or publications
 For appeal and publicity purposes including advertisement
 BRCS has come across incidences where the Red Cross Emblem is used by various private practices on their premises and equipment such as the first aid box. This contravenes the Red Cross Act regarding emblem protection. We encourage the public to desist from using the Red Cross Logo.
 The extreme sensitive nature and the influence that this humanitarian emblem holds requires that the emblem be used with utmost caution and with the reverence that it deserves; its use is to be authorised by the Red Cross Secretariat.

BOTSWANA RED CROSS IN THE FRONTLINE OF THE NATIONAL ORAL POLIO VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

The Botswana Red Cross Society was amongst stakeholders who supported a nationwide supplementary Polio immunization targeting children aged 7 and below. The objective of the campaign was to make sure all vulnerable children are protected from paralysis and death due to polio.

Polio is caused by a virus and is spread from person to person mainly through fecal-oral transmission, such as ingestion of contaminated food or water. Everyone is at risk of polio though children under the age of 15 are more at risk. The disease can only be prevented through immunization as well as by practicing food, personal hygiene, and proper disposal of faeces and waste.

Following the establishment of the Environmental sample to complement AFP surveillance in Botswana, there were isolates that were positive for circulating vaccine derived polio type 2 triggering a national outbreak response plan featuring vaccination campaign for novel oral polio vaccine 2. The accumulation of unimmunized children over the years through routine immunization, the withdrawal of trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) in 2016 and the additional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on routine immunization in the country, led to accumulation of susceptible individuals' overtime, particularly those



7 years and below. The general objective of the plan was to interrupt circulation of the polio virus by increasing population immunity.

With the largest volunteer base and widest geographical representation, the Botswana Red Cross Society assumed its auxiliary role and deployed 4056 frontliners to augment the government responders in the two phases of the campaign targeting 444360 children to get vaccinated. Amongst others, the Botswana Red Cross Society supported the campaign with vehicles to facilitate mobility of teams in reaching the various terrains in the country ensuring that all eligible children far and wide get vaccinated. Through a set of multiple vaccine deployment strategies such as house to house, school, and stationery site vaccinations, the campaign managed to get 360 370 children vacci-



nated, which is 81% vaccine coverage.

The Botswana Red Cross Society was efficient, ensuring that vaccinations are done within the shortest possible time with the least possible resistance. The National Society once again demonstrated that putting communities central to any kind of emergency response is criti-

cal to ensuring trust and equity. Because the frontliners deployed were community members, they were better suited to deal with challenges such as mistrust and misinformation that came with the response. The community centered approach ensured a relatively good reception of the campaign hence its success.

BRIDGING THE GAP IN COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESSIBILITY FOR MIGRANTS IN BOTSWANA



The Botswana Red Cross Society in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the Ministry of Health conducted a COVID 19 vaccination drive targeting migrants in Botswana. There is a universal access policy guiding the distribution of COVID 19 vaccines in Botswana. However, there are unique challenges faced by migrants, particularly undocumented migrants. These challenges limit migrants' access to this essential service rendering them marginalized in plain sight. Challenges faced by migrants include limited

freedom of movement resulting from their legal status in the country as well as communication barriers.

A deliberate effort was made in the principle of humanity and universality to bridge this gap and facilitate access to COVID 19 vaccines for migrants in Botswana through targeted interventions in the greater Gaborone and greater Francistown areas. The Botswana Red Cross society deployed 90 volunteers: vaccinators, data recorders, and social mobilisers. Migrant volunteers were engaged as part of the team to address the language barrier and build rapport with migrant communities. The team reached and vaccinated 1760 people: 537 migrants and 1223 locals. Mobilization and vaccination were done at strategic areas, at homes, at workplaces and in the streets, reaching people at their convenience. A community centered, one stop shop approach proved to be an efficient service delivery modality, a model that is core to Botswana Red Cross Society.





BOTSWANA RED CROSS SOCIETY HOSTS AFRICA CDC DELEGATES TO DISCUSS INTERGRATION AND ACCELERATION PLANS FOR THE SAVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS PROJECT

The Botswana Red Cross Society, in collaboration with Africa CDC, facilitated by MoHW conducted a monitoring and documentation exercise on rolling out an RCCE and Vaccine Demand Creation project on COVID-19 as well as the integration and acceleration of the Saving Lives and Livelihoods project to the Mahalapye DHMT villages in the Shoshong catchment area, specifically a village called Mosolotshane.

BRCS as the lead RCCE implementing partner in Southern Africa, coordinating ten Southern Africa countries, was also assessed on the programme operations. The review further explored the capability and operating effectiveness of the internal control system to address the risks associated with implementation, monitoring & evaluation, programme documentation and reporting, fund management and financial reporting of programme activities. The delegation which comprised of Dr John Ojo (Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Officer), Dr Hloniphile Mabuza (Programme Team Lead – Southern RCC), Dr Mary Nyikuri (Senior Behavioral Scientist), Ms. Dorothy Njagi (Senior Communication Officer), Ms. Nelly Odoyo (Senior Risk Officer) and Mr. Brave Hanunka (Programme Officer)



went on a field visit to Mahalapye DHMT.

The Head of Mahalapye DHMT, Mrs Thandie Kgosietsile gave an overview of the Mahalapye DHMT situation in which she showed the level of coverage of the COVID 19 vaccine in the district. Mahalapye DHMT houses 40 Villages and 44 Health Facilities, Mosolotshane being one of them. Mosolotshane village

was selected and visited for observation and interviews as ACHAP was vaccinating at the village primary School. The Health Facility (Mosolotshane) thanked the delegates and partners especially Botswana Red Cross Society mobilisers as they had been assisting them with social mobilization during various projects and activities before the COVID 19 inception era. A courtesy visit to the village Kgosi was also made. The village Kgosi commended the partners in delivering what he termed “great initiative” as their visibility was felt and applauded. He continued to call for the initiative to be continued as coverage had been slow due to vaccine shortage in the village.

BOTSWANA AND MALAWI RED CROSS SOCIETIES HOST THE AFRICA CDC DELEGATES TO DISCUSS INTERGRATION AND ACCELERATION PLANS FOR THE SAVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS PROJECT

Botswana and Malawi Red Cross Societies hosted the Africa CDC delegates from the 16th – 22nd March 2023 to monitor project implementation in both countries as well as integration and acceleration for the Saving Lives and Livelihoods project.

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Brave Hanunka (Programme Officer).

This campaign is brought to you by the Ministry of Health and Botswana Red Cross Society with support from Africa CDC Saving Lives and Livelihoods in partnership with Mastercard Foundation.

#AfricaCDC #savinglives-andlivelihoods #MastercardFoundation



Staff from Africa CDC, AMREF, Botswana and Malawi Red Cross Societies, poses for a group photograph after the meeting at Malawi Red Cross on 21st March 2023, Photo by Jacqueline Nhlema.

BOTSWANA RED CROSS SOCIETY HOLDS BOTSWANA CHAMBER OF MINES FIRST AID INSTRUCTORS FORUM



BRCS, aligning of inter-mine First Aid competition tests to COVID-19 regulations and guidelines to have competitive teams ready and sharp to compete as well as community First Aid Training in Mine operation areas to equip them with techniques in case of emergency strikes so that they can provide the necessary interventions fulfilling the three basic principles of FIRST AID being to; save life, prevent further injury and promote recovery.

During the four day engagement, the organizations successfully came up with strategic mitigations and strengthened partnerships between the Botswana Red Cross Society and Mines in Botswana to create safe working environments.

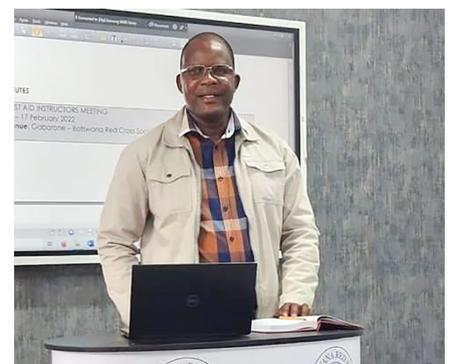
Medical Responsibility:

The organization had the opportunity to provide medical coverage personnel and mobile clinic trucks for delegates and the public during the Forbes 30 Africa Summit and the US Africa Business Summit, along- side the Ministry of Health and Wellness.



The Botswana Red Cross Society recently hosted Jwaneng, Botswana Power Corporation (BPC), Botswana Ash (BOTASH), Morupule Coal Mine, Lucara, Minergy Coal, Orapa, Letlhakane and Damtshaa Mines (OLDM) at the 2023 Botswana Chamber of Mines (BCM) First Aid Instructors forum.

The deliberations at this forum included the review of the Training Manual formulated by BCM in conjunction with



BRCS LIVING

Meet “mabutswapele” a Mokgatlho wa sefapaano se se shibidu.

Since Botswana Red Cross Society's inception in 1968, the National Society has been dedicated to serving people in need. Even while the Botswana Red Cross Society adapts to meet the changing needs of the people we serve, we always stay true to those roots. Today, as throughout our long history, the Botswana Red Cross Society depends

on a vast team of volunteers to support our lifesaving services and programs. We invite you to learn about our 55th anniversary through our long serving members and volunteers and hope you will feel inspired to become more involved with Botswana Red Cross Society.

Botswana Red Cross Society is an organization that relies on the dedication of committed and caring volunteers. In their

20+ years of service, the below have proven to be emblematic of these traits time and time again.

As Botswana Red Cross Society's longest serving members and volunteers, all the below men and women have made an impact in every community they have served. We thank them for their contributions and look back on the ways they have strengthened our teams.



KEBAITSE GLADYS MOTSWALEDI

JOINED 1994,
BRANCH: SEROWE



PODILE KEREBOLETSWE

JOINED: 1973
BRANCH: PALAPYE



NURSE BAETI

JOINED: 1979
BRANCH: TSAMAYA



MR MFAZO MOLOI

JOINED: 1975
BRANCH: TSAMAYA



MS MALATA SEMADI

JOINED: 1987
BRANCH: KOMANA



MS KENANA OPPERMAN

JOINED: 1989
BRANCH: CHANOGA



MRS AGNES SHAPA

JOINED: 1985
BRANCH: KASANE



MS TSHWANO DIKELEDI

JOINED: 1986
BRANCH: SEHITHWA

IG LEGENDS



GAOTHOBOGWE CHELEKETO
JOINED: 1988
BRANCH: ZOROGA



MRS BATOLI MARIAM MOALOSI
JOINED: EARLY 80S
BRANCH: MARAPONG



MRS ELIZABETH BAKHONI
JOINED: 1994
BRANCH: MARAPONG



MS PELAELO MOIKGOFFE
JOINED: EARLY 70S
BRANCH: TSHANE



MR. GAKEITSE OREBOTSWE
JOINED: 1978
BRANCH: TSAU



MS. DICHABA MACHAI
JOINED: 1996
BRANCH: NXARAGA



TEBOGO VENSON
JOINED: 1980
BRANCH: SELIBE PHIKWE



GAONGALELWE PEGO
JOINED: 1950
BRANCH: KANG



NTHOPHENG ALICE MOSIE
JOINED: 1974
BRANCH: LEHUTUTU



MRS ROSINAH NTEKOLA
JOINED 1979
BRANCH: SELIBE PHIKWE



LADY TAWANA
JOINED: EARLY 1970S
BRANCH: MORWAMOSU



CLEMENT GULUBANE
JOINED: 2009
BRANCH: NATALE

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS: GORATA'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS AS A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR IN MABESEKWA



Gorata is a young woman living in the small village of Mabesekwa in Botswana. She is an active member of the Botswana Red Cross Society. Despite the challenges of growing up in a rural area with limited resources, she has always been determined to make a difference in her community. After completing her secondary education, Gorata trained for a certificate in Fashion Design. She decided to take a different route and venture into agriculture, particularly small stock farming.

Asked why she suddenly changed gears and switched to small stock production from fashion design, she said every businessperson is focused on profit therefore small stock farming has a great long-term return. "Besides that, health wise, small stock doesn't have as many problems as other animals," said Gorata. In 2022, she was selected to participate in an entrepreneurship training program organized by the Botswana Red Cross Society. It was during this training that Gorata learned about the basics of starting and managing a small business, including marketing, financial management, and customer service. Moreover, she received practical training in livestock farming and animal husbandry from the Ministry of Youth and Local Enterprise Authority, which inspired her to start her own small stock

farming business.

"After I heard of a great initiative by the Government to help youth start up their own businesses through the Ministry of Youth, it was then that I decided to try my luck to secure funding for my dream agricultural business in the year 2021," said Gorata. With the help of a government grant for young entrepreneurs, Gorata was able to purchase a small herd of goats, in Mabesekwa. She highlights that she has never looked back since and she has grown to become an established farmer who currently owns over 60 goats from 48 in February 2023. She carefully tends to her animals, ensuring they are well-fed and healthy. She has big dreams to grow her business beyond and diversify into multiple businesses for the benefit of her community.

Gorata has introduced a unique and high-quality breed of goats to position herself as the best in the area. She explained that she keeps her goats for commercial purposes and not for prestige as most are sold to beneficiaries under the LIMID scheme. By June 2023, she did what must have seemed impossible to her just a year ago; became an employer. Not long after, she partnered with the Botswana Red Cross Society and the Ministry of Youth.

Her success has not only transformed her own life but has also inspired many other young people in Mabesekwa to

pursue their dreams of entrepreneurship. "I am inspired by my own transformation. I would like to see the same changes in other young people as well. What I took up as a challenge, I have turned into a business, so I think that should tell you it's been good," says Gorata with a smile. Gorata also had the opportunity to be picked and represent BRCS volunteers at the recently held IFRC Global Innovation Summit for a period of three days in Nairobi. This unforgettable journey helped the young farmer to explore the power of innovation and how it can help her transform her business as well as that of other volunteers. The Summit brought together changemakers, thought leaders, and experts from around the world to share inspiring ideas, experiences, and insights. Participants also enjoyed 97 sessions exploring innovation, leadership, change and the future of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Gorata's story is a powerful example of how education, training, Red Cross membership and government support can empower young entrepreneurs to create positive change in their communities. Her hard work, determination, and commitment to sustainability have made her a role model for many, and her legacy will continue to inspire future generations of entrepreneurs in Botswana and beyond.

A TRIBUTE TO MRS PRECIOUS MASEGO MASISI- 1928 TO 2023

One of the benefits of being a Red Cross volunteer or staff member is having the opportunity to work side-by-side with exceptional, dedicated and determined volunteers. Mma Tshelang, as popularly known, who recently passed on at age 95, was one of those volunteers. Luckily for the Botswana Red Cross Society, Mma Tshelang decided to volunteer in Moshupa, where she was pivotal in starting the Moshupa Red Cross branch. Mma Tshelang was well known in the Red Cross as one of the members with a heart of Gold. She periodically sacrificed her resources to the Red Cross with the intention of uplifting the lives of the most vulnerable people in her community. Mma Tshelang's Red

Cross journey was also felt as she became the first Motswana National Treasurer, a position that was based in Gaborone. As a National Treasurer, she was pivotal in shaping the resource mobilization and sustainability strategies of the Botswana Red Cross Society. This departed heroine served with distinction and in the true spirit of the Red Cross founder, Mr. Hendry Dunart. The Botswana Red Cross Society recognizes and appreciates her efforts, which assisted the National Society in becoming what it is today. As we always say, 'Humanitarians are united by a shared mission to save and protect lives, and they do so without compromising humanitarian principles. Mma Tshelang is a true testa-



ment to that; she volunteered tirelessly to serve her community without any expectation of a reward. The National Society greatly appreciates Mma Tshelang for imparting her skills during her tenure, her sense of humour, intelligence, quick wit, kindness, and perspective on what is essential in life. Botswana Red Cross Society is forever grateful for her commitment and dedication. Her teachings and contributions will forever live on and be remembered across our Red Cross movement. Thank you once again, Mma Tshelang, and Rest in Peace, Mmaarona

RECOGNISING BRCS FORMER EMPLOYEES



Mma Motlhabane

Having joined the Botswana Red Cross Society a while ago, in 1979 and 1988, respectively, Mma Evans and Mma Motlhabane remain the walking dictionaries for the Botswana Red Cross Society. Those who experienced service from both heroines will attest that Mma Evans and Mma Motlhabane were exceptional at what they did, serving the National Society. Mrs Jane Evans joined the Red Movement straight from Secretarial School as a secretary through a volunteer recruiter, with BRCS having only "seven (7) employees,"



Mma Evans

in her own words. Narrating her story, Mma Evans, as popularly known, cites that at the time of joining BRCS, the Society did not have any government financial support but subversion primarily for disaster and blood donation initiatives. She continues to highlight that Tlamelong and Tshimologo Rehabilitation Center were launched mainly for home-based care. Mma Evans notes that she took old age retirement in 2007 after successfully serving the Society. As for Mrs Letang Norah Motlhabane, her

service to the National Society started in 1988 as a healthcare worker coordinating HIV/AIDS counselling, blood donation collection, and education. Mma Motlhabane coordinated the Health Care department for three years and was later promoted to the position of Secretary General. The former secretary General notes that during her tenure, they worked tirelessly to augment the Government's efforts in responding to HIV/AIDS and in mobilisation and blood collection, which was critical for various medical procedures. Mma Motlhabane highlights that to serve in the Red Cross, one must be resilient, have a humanitarian heart, and be passionate about assisting the most vulnerable communities. As the Society celebrates 55 years of existence, we take cognisance of Mma Evans and Mma Motlhabane's humanitarian service. They are genuinely inspiring and hardworking individuals who have dedicated their lives to serving the humanitarian sphere from the heart. We thank them for their service. Like Martin Luther King said, "everybody can be great because anybody can serve. And to serve, You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love".

A CALL FOR STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

BENAH SEKGABO

Botswana Red Cross Society in partnership with the Netherlands Red Cross Society recently held a two-day seminar themed “Putting Communities at the centre of Disaster Risk Management - Community Disaster Management in Botswana,” in Francistown, Tati River Lodge.

This seminar came as another opportunity for the sector to regroup and discuss strategies and plans on how best to prepare, get ready and respond to threats faced by this country.

“Through its various programmes and interventions, the Botswana Red Cross Society has continued its auxiliary role over the years by developing community-based strategies tailor-made to our local context and offering humanitarian services to the most vulnerable people in different communities. Therefore, we are excited that today we will discuss, brainstorm and plan on the various solutions and interventions best fitted to solve disaster management challenges in our communities”, said the Botswana Red Cross Society Secretary General, Mr Kutlwano Mukokomani.

According to Mr. Mukokomani, the humanitarian needs continue to grow as the frequency of disasters also grows. He noted that there has been an exponential increase in natural and man-made disasters, with statistics estimating that over 2 billion people worldwide get affected by disasters every year in one way or another.

“Botswana, as a country, has not been spared from the ever-growing disasters. Yearly the country experiences recurring droughts that continue to propel food insecurity. In addition, road accidents continue to claim lives, as evidenced by the horrific accident that occurred along the A3 road. We continue to experience outbreaks of floods, stormy rains, veld fires, animal diseases and pest outbreaks. Pandemics such as COVID-19 have also strained ecosystems globally, increasing the risks



of disasters,” said Mukokomani. Further, Mukokomani highlighted that these multiple challenges directly impact households, communities, and businesses and burden Botswana’s economy. He therefore called for a united and collaborative effort towards ensuring proper disaster management between the disaster management sector, the humanitarian sector, businesses, community leaders and all of those invited to the seminar.

On his part, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Developments, Mr. Mpho Morapedi, noted that communities are the primary stakeholders in Disaster Management. He pointed out that they are the ones with both historical and contemporary knowledge of hazards prevalent in their areas. “They are aware of vulnerabilities and capabilities of their people. Therefore, community-based disaster risk management becomes a very critical component of disaster management,” highlighted Morapedi.

Community Based Disaster Risk Management is a disaster management approach that puts community engagement and participation at the centre. It emphasizes

the need to strengthen community capacity to assess community vulnerabilities, develop strategies and resources necessary to prevent and mitigate the impact of identified threats.

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) which was represented by Mr. Maeletso Pego, also explained the importance of the role played by communities in disaster preparedness and response. Mr. Pego highlighted that existing laws and policies in disaster management espouse community engagement and participation. As he concluded, Mr. Pego noted that the National Policy on Disaster Management of 1996 and the National Disaster Management Plan 2009 have both also clearly defined the role of community members, leadership, and volunteers. He observed, “It could not be more appropriate that the Botswana Red Cross Society be the one calling on stakeholders to reflect on their contributions towards community engagement and participation during disaster management.”

The National Disaster Risk Management Plan has given the Botswana Red Cross Society the responsibility to mobilize and capacitate community members to volunteer to support authorities and or to be at the fore front providing relief services during disaster response. The Botswana Red Cross Society is the only statutory humanitarian aid organization in Botswana, having been established by an act of parliament in 1968. The Society continues to be an important stakeholder in community mobilization to combat disaster, health challenges, and provide social services.

The seminar called on all stakeholders in Disaster Risk Management to share their contribution towards building community resilience, sharing programmes or interventions that each ministry, department or entity is undertaking to engage communities and promote their participation or role in planning and responding to hazards in their local areas.



Emergency Team Leader Training -Uganda Kampala.

Botswana was among the National Societies to take part in the first Africa Emergency Team Leader Training held in Uganda Kampala on 8th -14th May 2023. The National Society was represented by the Disaster Management Coordinator Mr Onkemetse Joseph as one of the Regional Rapid Response Team members. Following a rigorous application and selection process, Mr Joseph has finally undertaken the training and brought to the National Society yet another advantage in participating in rapid response to large scale and complex international and regional disaster situations.

Research has shown that one of the most crucial elements of an effective emergency response is exceptional leadership. The humanitarian community and the RCRC recognize the importance, as well as the challenges in identifying, cultivating, and supporting these leaders for the complex environment in which they work. The Federation's Disaster and Crisis Prevention, Response and Recovery (DCPRR) Department has developed the Emergency Team Leader training course to focus on a range of competencies required by emergency team leaders. Among these is leadership during emergency deployments; understanding leadership space; composing and developing a team; negotiation skills and tools; communication skills and tools; decision making in complex situations;

and appreciation and managing diversities (culture, gender, traditions) in the work environment.

Candidates for this training are carefully chosen from among members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and within staff and volunteers that have shown progressive growth on knowledge and experience within their field in humanitarian work. The training has always been held at least biannually and is implemented by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and funding partners. Unfortunately, over the years, there hasn't been any such training held in the African region, except the 2023 one.

As a first of its kind in the African continent, the 2023 Emergency Team Leader Training in Kampala, Uganda did not disappoint. The training had chosen participants across the whole world, with some participants from the Americas, Asia, Europe, middle east, and a good representation from the African continent. There were twenty-five participants and 12 facilitators. Among the facilitators were 5 learning focal persons meant to give close support and guide to participants; 4 main resource persons; and 3 persons who constituted the back-office team. The training took place from 8th – 14th May 2023, in partnership with IFRC, Uganda Red Cross Society and the German Red Cross Society.

GWETA COMMUNITY FARM GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

The Botswana Red Cross Society Community farm located at Gweta village hosted standard 6 and 7 pupils from Gasebalwe Primary School to teach them about pest and disease control management in a horticulture project. The activity is in line with the National Society's motto of giving back to the community of Gweta.

With the guidance of the Food Security Officer (FSO), Mr. Mpho Kenao, students had the opportunity to scout the field to identify pests such as birds, locusts, aphids, grasshoppers, and fungal disease that affect the production of vegetables. These pests greatly affect the expected yields and thus play a detrimental role in the country's food security which the Gweta Farm aims to address. The pupils were also taught about control measures that one can adopt to curb further damage caused by these pests. During the visit, the FSO had the opportunity to enlighten the group on the importance of following horticulture as a career. He emphasized that horticulture helps to build the pupils' self-esteem and resilience as the learners believe that they are playing a role in improving food production in their community.

"Gardening gives children a sense of responsibility, and fosters positive behavior, particularly for those with behavioral and learning difficulties," observed Mr. Kenao. The exercise indeed will help to engage the students actively in their learning, to support healthy living and the sustainable development of the agriculture industry in our country. Mr. Kenao congratulated Gasebalwe Primary School management and teachers on providing support and encouragement to pupils to ensure that gardening continues to contribute to their learning, health, and overall well-being. When concluding his field class, Mr. Kenao thanked the teachers for seeing it fit to bring the pupils to Gweta Community Farm as this will encourage them to take greater control of their own learning and become more active in seeking knowledge and solving problems. He further said horticulture knowledge could enhance children's skills in core subjects including literacy and numeracy.

The Botswana Red Cross applauds Gasebalwe Primary School for seeing the potential of gardens as a natural and sustainable resource, offering huge benefits to their pupils across all areas of the curriculum. The Gasebalwe Primary School pupils were encouraged to implement the horticulture knowledge in their Agriculture studies and backyard gardening projects.

BOTSWANA RED CROSS SOCIETY RECEIVES EQUIPMENT DONATIONS FROM SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY



The South Korean Embassy donated Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment through the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) to Tlamelong Rehabilitation Centre which includes an industrial photo copier / printer, embroidery machine and smart / interactive board with the aim of upskilling the students at Tlamelong to expand their capabilities.

The Tlamelong Rehabilitation Centre as the name conveys, is a learning institution that offers a learning platform for less privileged persons living with disability in Botswana. The centre also offers physiotherapy and rehabilitation services for young people living with disabilities aged 18-35 from across the country over a period of two (2) years per cohort (a cohort has a maximum intake capacity of 35). Upon exit, the trainees are examined and certified (Trade C Practical Certificate) by Madirelo Testing and Training Centre

and issued with a start-up package to facilitate translation of the vocational skills onto active income generation activities.

Through the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), BRCS has managed to create great working synergy with the South Korean Embassy in Pretoria (based in South Africa) to support the National Society's Rehabilitation Centre's learning challenges. Students are exposed to better technologies which ultimately improve the quality of materials they produce. Learners have a diverse range of knowledge about different embroidery machines. Through this embroidery machine, students are exposed to better technologies which ultimately improve the quality of materials they produce. Students are also accorded an opportunity to learn business skills and run profitable ventures. The Smart board gadgets provide the students with an elevated learning process fostered by

e-learning. The gadgets provide a more visual element to the learning process, which in turn improves learners' mental retention.

During the handing over ceremony, the Ambassador of South Korea in South Africa, His Excellency MR. Chull-Joo Park, said they saw a great need to give out e-learning equipment to better the training skills of students living with disabilities at the Rehabilitation Centre. "With the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment and job training skills, we will be able to help the students living with disabilities to do e-learning and to better their education and job training," said His Excellency Chull-Joo Park.

When receiving the donation on behalf of the Botswana Red Cross Society, the Secretary General, Mr Kutlwano Mukokomani expressed appreciation to the South Korean Embassy for the donation of the equipment. The Secretary General said they are delighted to convey their gratitude as BRCS to the South Korean Embassy for the donation and they look forward to a continued partnership in such worthy causes. "The South Korean Embassy's great gesture will enable trainees to thrive, fulfil their dreams and to make them a reality as this equipment will go a long way in creating great impact in the lives of trainees and their families. We wish to convey our sincere gratitude to the South Korean Embassy for their noble gesture of donating the E-learning equipment."

BRCS offers rehabilitation services spread across three (3) areas in Botswana namely: Sefhare Stimulation Center in Sefhare, Tshimologo Stimulation Center in Francistown and Tlamelong Rehabilitation Center in Tlokweng.

SEFHARE STIMULATION CENTRE EMBARKS ON STUDENT EXCURSION

Sefhare Stimulation Center recently embarked on a student excursion to J.Q Farm. The Centre decided to take students to this place away from their usual routine environment with the main aim of imparting knowledge through hands-on experience, which is one of the ways of making learning more interesting.

J.Q Farm, situated in Sefhare, houses small stock (sheep & goats), fruit trees and vegetables. Although agriculture is not one of the subjects offered at the center, it has always been important that students are taught about the environment and life skills which include farming. This is done mainly to help students develop different skills through observation and learning differently through the different excursions. It is good to expose people with disabilities to different environments so that they also learn and get involved in different activities in the community as they grow. The center notes that excursions seem to be one of the effective



academic concepts and it makes studying fascinating and engrossing. Educational trips organized by the center serve as a miracle stress buster. Seeing, touching, and live experience of an academic concept enhances memory power. One of the main benefits of school excursions for students living with disabilities is the interactive

sessions during these trips. Such field trips allow students to freely interact with friends, teachers, and others, helping them fit well in society.

This practical exposure encourages students to perform better. It provides an all-round development of students, which is the main aim of today's education.

TSHIMOLOGO STIMULATION CENTER ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITY



Tshimologo Stimulation Centre organized a road safety exercise for its students in order to instill the importance of vigilance when students cross the road. The objective of engaging children in a road safety enactment is to offer them practical experience in road safety. This exercise is carried out monthly so that students can successfully comprehend the concepts. Students learn a skill that will help in combatting risks associated with improper usage of roads by pedes-

trians which might lead to serious injuries experienced by road users. The exercise will enable the students to develop skills and knowledge on how to conduct themselves when they walk along roads. The Centre found it imperative to impart these skills to students as they are the most vulnerable in our society. The excursion helps to instill confidence in our students as they experience valuable road safety techniques through real live scenarios.



PHYSIOTHERAPY

CORNER

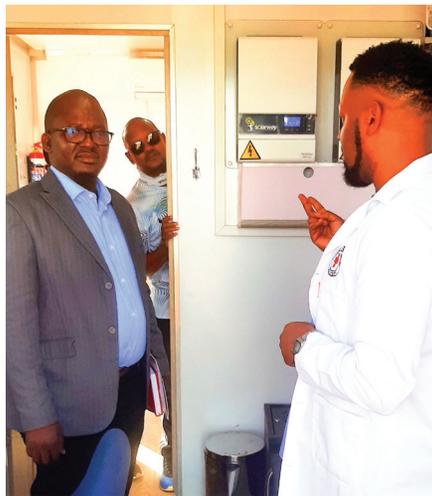
BOTETI WELLNESS WEEK

BY MWIIMBI MUUNYU

A “Wellness” and “Health Week” is a crucial and engaging event aimed at encouraging individuals to prioritize their physical and mental well-being. Amidst the fast-paced modern lifestyle, focusing on self-care has become more vital than ever before. Additionally, a wellness week provides education, resources, and activities that inspire a healthier and more balanced life.

In its on-going support capacity for public authorities, the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS), through its physiotherapy and First Aid divisions, took part in a wellness week organized by the Boteti District Health Team (DHMT) from April 22 to 28, 2023 in Boteti East. This event, graced by the Assistant Minister of Health, who is also the area MP, Hon. Sethomo Lelatisitswe, focused on raising awareness about Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in ten communities across seven villages (Letlhakane, Mmatshumo, Mosu, Mmea, Mokubilo & Khwee) within the district. Through collective efforts, we can overcome non-communicable diseases for a more vibrant and healthy life.

During the weeklong event, an array of activities were conducted which focused on promoting sustainable development goals. These included fitness walks, aerobics, measuring BMI, screening for hypertension, diabetes, cancer, TB, and HIV, eye testing, dental services, and First Aid awareness. Additionally,



rehabilitation services were provided for persons with disabilities (PWDs) by our physiotherapists who conducted assessments for special aids and devices, as well as supplying wheelchairs, walking frames, and crutches to those with disabilities. All these activities were



geared towards ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being of people of all ages, as per SDG 3; and towards strengthening the means of implementation and revitalization of global partnership for sustainable development, in line with SDG 17.



KURUSA GASETSHEKO

A SELFLESS YOUNG VOLUNTEER

My name is Kurusa Gasetshoko and this is my story as a volunteer and how this has impacted my life.

When I started volunteering with Botswana Red Cross Society in Maun Sub-branch, I was a little nervous as I was not quite sure what to expect. I have been interested in humanitarian work and giving back to the community, but the thought of working with people in crisis was a bit intimidating. However, after some months my pursuit took over as I met other volunteers and learned more about the humanitarian work they do as Botswana Red Cross Society. It was so inspiring to see people who were so passionate about their work and how much they cared about making a difference in people's lives. I knew then that volunteering here in Maun Sub-branch was going to be a life changing experience.

One of my first activities was paying a visit to two (2) vulnerable people at Sedie ward in Maun, whom we spent the day with. It was hard to see those people in such dire circumstances, but it was also a privilege to be able to provide help like cleaning the yard, washing their clothes, and sharing meals with them. The appreciation on their faces sets my heart on fire. From this experience I learned about the importance of em-

pathy, compassion, and power of human connection.

Also learned that kindness goes a long way and we all have the power to make a difference in someone's lives.

One of my highlight experiences was the litter picking activity held at Matlapana ward in Maun, where we were invited by various organizations to take part in. Litter picking improves the cleanliness of our community and beautifies the area. Every piece of trash we picked was taken

away to be recycled and re-used. From these projects I built close relationships and made better connections. The skills I learned from this project include respect for nature, conversation, recycling, communication, and teamwork.

The most significant impact volunteerism has on me was a newfound sense of gratitude for my own life. Being exposed to people facing unimaginable hardships makes me appreciate the little things in my life that I might have taken for granted.

Volunteering at Botswana Red Cross Society in Maun Branch is an incredible rewarding experience. It continues to teach me the importance of community, selflessness, hard work, and resilience in the face of adversity. I will always cherish the memories and lessons learned from my time there.

Volunteering can be a rewarding experience that can make people feel good about themselves and their contribution to the Society. Volunteering makes one have a better understanding of life, to look at things from a different angle. Volunteering is a two-way street it benefits you as much as it can benefit someone or the organization. Whatever your age or life situation, volunteering can help take your mind off your own worries and add more zest to your life therefore I encourage everyone to volunteer and help others. You will never regret volunteering, plain and simple.





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