

INTER-AMERICAN SEMINAR ON JUNIOR RED CROSS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

This seminar at Quito from October 27 to November 4 was attended by a large number of participants. The League of Red Cross Societies, which sponsored it, was represented by Secretary-General Henrik Beer, Miss Hentsch, Director of the Nursing Bureau and Mr. J. Gomez Ruiz, Assistant Director of the Junior Red Cross. The ICRC was represented by Mr. P. Jequier, delegate. National Societies from the following countries were represented: Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chili, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, El Salvador, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela. The sessions were also attended by observers from the WHO and from UNESCO.

The Ecuador Red Cross had organized the seminar most competently and its President, Dr. M. A. Iturralde, its Secretary-General, Mr. Merino Grijalva and its Junior Red Cross Director, Dr. Jaime Donoso V., each took a prominent part. The Ecuador Health Department had published a booklet on health and hygiene education in the country's primary schools.

This meeting, which had been prepared well beforehand, was attended by many teachers, health educators and Red Cross juniors from various regions of Ecuador; they participated enthusiastically in the proceedings, of which an idea is given by the agenda, namely:

1. Co-operation with educators for the introduction into schools of courses on the Red Cross and the organization of Junior Red Cross activities in schools.

2. The Junior Red Cross ; its organization and programme planning on a national scale. Leader training and finance.

3. Junior Red Cross and health education ; activities in school and community ; international mutual assistance.

As it was not possible to examine every aspect of the Junior Red Cross programme of action (health protection, life saving, mutual assistance, international friendship and understanding) in a few days, discussions were concentrated on health education, for it is this which enables youths to be of service and put into practice ideas which will be of use not only to themselves but to the community of which they form part.

To convey a picture of the variety of subjects dealt with, we list the titles of some of the papers submitted : appraisal of health education effectiveness—health education in schools—health education courses in teachers' training colleges—health education planning in rural areas.

Also broached was the question of dissemination of knowledge on the Geneva Conventions among youth. Mr. Jequier met with a heartening response when, on behalf of the ICRC, he reminded those present of the necessity of these Conventions. As in the field of health education, the educators gave assurance of their active co-operation as widely as possible in the propagation of the Red Cross principles.

The seminar passed a dozen resolutions which will no doubt influence the work of the Junior Red Cross in America in the next few years. Three of them, numbers 1, 5 and 12, of a general interest, are quoted below ; others dealt with practical matters such as :

- a) Junior Red Cross nation-wide educational programmes, in which parents should participate ;
- b) Necessary extension of health education in schools to the more advanced classes ;
- c) Promotion through education of international friendship, understanding and peace ;
- d) Rush courses for youths wishing to make a career of health protection and social welfare ;

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- e) Setting up of a Latin-American training and co-ordination centre, with responsibility also for circulation of Red Cross information and documents, and for the Junior Red Cross ;
- f) Junior Red Cross action in Latin America and " co-ordination with competent bodies in the drawing up of sex education programmes adapted to various sections of the community and to be approved by the authorities " ;
- g) League assistance to National Societies and Junior sections, by making technical delegates available on request ;
- h) International assistance to sister Societies.

Resolution: 1

The Inter-American Seminar of Red Cross Youth and Health Education, in Session at Quito, Ecuador,

CONSIDERING:

1. *That, as the school system is the fundamental basis of orientation to education, it should be the centre of development of Red Cross Youth Volunteers ;*
2. *That the teacher, correctly educated, is the one who can best promote and counsel the Red Cross Youth Volunteers. This statement does not contradict the volunteer spirit of Red Cross ;*

RECOMMENDS :

1. *That the National Societies, with the help of the League of Red Cross Societies, study instruction plans for teachers so that effective and successful action may develop Red Cross youth volunteers in schools and universities ;*
2. *That the Latin American Governments be asked to give the necessary support and facilities for the implementation of Red Cross Youth programmes ;*
3. *That the Latin American Governments through the Education Ministries provide sufficient incentives for the teachers to devote their leadership qualities to the Red Cross Youth Programme ;*

4. *Further recommends: that a co-ordination commission should be established of representatives of education and of health for the purposes of developing criteria for action and for implantation of the Red Cross in the schools at all levels.*

Recommendation: 5

The Inter-American Seminar of Red Cross Youth and Health Education in Session in Quito, Ecuador,

CONSIDERING :

That, as a complement to the objectives of the Five-Year Plan of Red Cross Youth, it is necessary that each National Society should establish others, which should be in accordance with its particular circumstances,

RECOMMENDS :

1. *That the National Societies, in their programmes of development of Red Cross Youth, should include, among others, the following activities :*
 - a. *Disseminating the Geneva Conventions and the Declaration of Human Rights, taking advantage of documents already prepared in that respect by some National Societies to place the said information at a level of easy reach for every level of Education : Elementary, the High School and University.*
 - b. *Promoting the teaching at Elementary, High School and University levels, using the help of adequate pedagogical materials, of a minimum of basic knowledge about the History and Economic Geography of the countries members of the League, increasing in this way the promotion of international understanding and friendship programmes.*
2. *That the National Societies members of the League should send to the League, once a year and according to the recommendations of the Board of Governors, a report on the progress achieved, or the inconvenience found in the application of this recommendation.*

Resolution: 12

The Inter-American Seminar of Red Cross Youth and Health Education, in Session at Quito, Ecuador,

CONSIDERING :

That human relations are basic to all activities aiming at understanding between peoples,

That youth is the corner-stone of tomorrow's world and that the hope of the world lies in them to achieve universal peace,

RECOMMENDS :

- 1. That National Societies establish close relationship between them, and especially between their Red Cross Youth Sections, with a view to help in the development of service and mutual understanding;*
 - 2. That National Red Cross Societies intensify between them the interchange of young people, and encourage study travels and centres of an international character;*
 - 3. That in any future Seminar of a similar nature as the present one, representatives of Red Cross Youth be included in the participating delegations.*
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