

RedR - Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief

Established in London in 1979, RedR is now an international organization working to save lives and reduce suffering around the world from offices in the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India. Members provide engineering expertise and technical, logistical and management support to front-line humanitarian relief agencies like the Red Cross, CARE, Oxfam and Save the Children.

Every year, millions of people at home and around the world suffer the devastating impact of natural and man-made disasters. Humanitarian agencies and governments respond with financial aid, and shipments of food, clothing and medical supplies.

At RedR, members complement the front-line relief groups by providing technical assistance vital to restoring the everyday lives of the affected communities by:

- Rebuilding roads and bridges,
- Re-establishing fresh water supplies,
- Managing waste,
- Restoring communications,
- Protecting the environment, and
- Managing financial, material and human resources



1.0 RedR Canada

In January 2001, the Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada (ACEC) signed a memorandum of understanding with RedR International, paving the way to the establishment of a RedR office in Canada. RedR Canada was incorporated as a federal charitable society in August 2001 when three other leading engineering organizations joined the ACEC as Founding Partners:

1. The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE), representing the 160,000 professional engineers licensed to practice engineering in Canada;
2. The Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC), representing the engineering technical societies;
3. The Canadian Academy of Engineering (CAE), which honours individuals who have had eminent careers in engineering.

2.0 Update on Activities

RedR Canada has completed its first year of operations with very encouraging results. The Board of Directors finalised and adopted a governance model along professional lines, a start-up strategy was elaborated, membership recruiting and accreditation processes were set-up, 36 members were successfully registered, a member training plan was developed and initiated, and field placements were orchestrated.

On September 1, 2003, a grand ceremony was organised in Ottawa in honour of the humanitarian work performed by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal (Princess Anne). Firstly, Princess Anne addressed the second annual general meeting of RedR Canada held at the Fairmont Château Laurier hotel noting that she agreed to come to the RedR annual meeting because she believes the organization has an enormous potential to make a difference. And she urged different aid delivery groups to work together to find ways of delivering assistance efficiently. Having money is not enough, she said; there must be co-ordination, understanding and efficient use of the expertise available. The party then travelled to Rideau Falls Park, where HRH laid a wreath of flowers on the monument to honour Canadian humanitarian aid workers following prayers led by representatives from seven of Ottawa's religious faiths. A group of about 150 was in attendance, including families of aid workers who lost their lives in the performance of their duties.

Later that night, at the Chateau Laurier, Princess Anne received the first RedR Canada Award for Meritorious Service in Humanitarian Aid, which was presented by the then Minister for International Cooperation, the Honourable Susan Whelan.

by *Kirk Thompson*

Executive Director of RedR Canada, Ottawa, ON

3.0 Membership

RedR Canada now has 36 members on the 2000 strong global Register and has created a new class of membership, reflecting the requirements of many of its clients: the Member-in-Training. Like the successful Engineer-in-Training program of the provincial engineering governing bodies, RedR's MIT program brings in younger and less experienced engineers to acquire experience, whereby they can become full members. With regards to membership, the goal is to recruit at least 14 more members by the end of the year.

4.0 Placements

Of the Canadian membership, four of them are presently on assignment overseas as a result of their own efforts. RedR Canada was instrumental in placing a New Zealand engineer with an American non-government organization (NGO) operating in Iraq. All Canadian members are well-qualified and the aim is to place as many of them as possible with RedR clients - the NGOs who operate on the front lines of disaster relief. But the office lacks the resources at present to do this in any meaningful way and we therefore hope to engage the efforts of volunteers to seek out placement opportunities.

5.0 Training

RedR's Canadian Training Program was initiated with a 2-week training program in Kingston that certified 8 Canadians as RedR Trainers and 21 Canadian participants which took an Essentials of Humanitarian Practice course. The idea of this first training period was to develop a pool of Canadian trainers able to present training packages in Canada and the rest of N. America as demands require, and to present the first RedR Canada training course. The course was led by a UK training team and produced a very successful event. All participants expressed that the course had been very good and all had fully participated.

In the near future, RedR Canada plans to establish and improve the training skills and confidence of the new trainers with several 2-day "So You Want To Be an Aid Worker" courses in the Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto and London (Canada) areas. Efforts are also under way for 3 day Conflict Resolution and Media relations skills course.

6.0 The Future

At its most recent general assembly in Auckland, NZ, RedR International decided to start addressing needs in disaster preparedness, in addition to its traditional markets in disaster relief, and to pursue partnerships in the commercial sector. This new development was supported by the Canada office and should be of considerable interest to engineering consulting firms with staff working on overseas development projects. RedR Canada will take a proactive position with regard to assisting disaster preparedness and is prepared to promote engineering services in this regard.

But to achieve this new objective, RedR Canada must first focus on two key goals - firstly, to spread awareness about RedR Canada, particularly within Canada's engineering community, and secondly, to create a stable financial basis from which to operate. RedR Canada is the only Canadian charitable organization that focuses on providing engineering expertise to disaster relief and preparedness operations, and every Canadian engineer should rightly be proud of the role that this organization is playing to help alleviate worldwide suffering. It is hoped that RedR Canada will become one of the charities of choice for the engineering community and that all engineers will consider making a modest contribution to support its activities.

To find out more about Red, visit our web sites: www.redr.ca and www.redr.org