

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والقمر الأحمر

ARMENIA

30 June 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal No. 01.76/2004; Programme Update no. 1

Period covered: 1 January to 31 May, 2004;

Appeal coverage: 130.6% click below for live update of contributions:

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/1-2-3%20-%20ap017604.pdf

Appeal target: CHF 780,182 (USD 594,000 or EUR 503,000).

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Armenian Red Cross Society:** Gurgen Boshian, secretary general, email: redcross@redcross.am phone: +374 1 538367 fax: +374 1 583630.
- **Federation delegation in Yerevan:** Gun Raikkonen, Federation representative, email: ifrcam03@ifrc.org phone: +374 1 341708; +374 1 342740; fax: +374 1 395731.
- **Federation regional delegation in Ankara:** Carl Naucner, head of regional delegation, Turkey and Southern Caucasus, email: ifrcr06@ifrc.org phone: 90 312 441 42 92; fax: 90 312 441 38 66 or Ervin Blau, regional programme coordinator, email: ifrcr36@ifrc.org phone: 90 312 441 42 92; fax: 90 312 441 38 6.
- **Federation Secretariat in Geneva:** Sylvie Chevalley, regional officer, Europe department, email: sylvie.chevalley@ifrc.org phone: 41 22 730 4276; fax: 41 22 733 03 95.

This Programme Update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is based on, longer-term, multi-year planning (refer below to access the detailed logframe documents). All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

Response to the appeal has been good. The appeal coverage is CHF 1,018,682 (130.6 per cent). The main donors are the Norwegian Government, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Federation's Capacity Building Fund.

Most of the projects are fully funded or received more money than originally requested, some, however, did not receive support or are under-funded, including:

- the integrated management of childhood illnesses under the health and care programme;
- first aid and population movement under the disaster management.

These are the projects that continuously have been neglected by our partners. As a result some of the important activities were not implemented. The Armenian Red Cross is trying to fill in the gap through bilateral projects, establishing contacts with Armenia-based international organisations, national agencies and businesses, but the funds raised locally are not enough to cover all the needs.

Some projects received funding later than expected. Thus, the humanitarian values programme and the tuberculosis component of the health promotion and education project received money only in May-June 2004 and consequently, the activities that were planned for the first four-five months of the year were rescheduled for July-December 2004.

The table below shows the appeal coverage as of June 2004 per each project:

Programmes/Projects	Appeal coverage (%)
Health and Care programme	106
Health promotion and education: HIV/AIDS; TB & Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses.	130 ¹
Social services for vulnerable people	119
Disaster Management programme	71
Disaster preparedness and response	124
First Aid	0
Population Movement	10
Humanitarian values programme	224
Organisational development programme	178
Branch development	177
Financial management and development	179
Youth development	180

Most projects are implemented with funds (CHF 571,982) carried over from last year. Additional contributions (CHF 532,452) have been received recently from the Norwegian Red Cross as well as the Federation's Capacity Building Fund for health, disaster management and humanitarian values programmes.

The Red Cross in cooperation with the Federation will review its plan of action and a revised programme will be presented to our partners in September 2004. The plan will reflect the capacities of the national society to implement by the end of the year, the income the programmes received and expenditure to date. An estimated CHF 251,942 is expected to be transferred to support the continuation of activities in 2005.

¹ The amount is distributed between HIV/AIDs and TB components and not integrated management of childhood illnesses.

The expenditure to date mirrors the progress in implementation and varies from programme to programme:

The disaster management programme spent 51.3 per cent of the appeal budget; the remaining amount will be spent on a national and three zonal simulation exercises with the participation of Red Cross response teams. Also posters and more educational materials will be printed.

The organizational development programme spent 52 per cent of its total budget. Expenditure within the programme stands at:

- Financial management and development: 44.9 per cent;
- Branch development: 52 per cent;
- Youth development: 54.2 per cent.

The remaining money will enable the Red Cross to purchase, by the end of the year, more construction materials to complete the community projects under the branch development and install internet connection in four regions under the finance development project. Under the youth projects, volunteers will hold more sessions with schoolchildren and the work with elderly refugees will continue.

Within the health and care programme (overall expenditure 24.1 per cent), expenditure is distributed in the following way:

- HIV/AIDS component of the health promotion and education project (28.2 per cent).
- Social services for vulnerable people (22.8 per cent).

The remaining funds will be used to organize more training sessions on HIV/AIDS, and procure food, drugs and other relief items for lone elderly people targeted by the social support project. Spending under the TB component of the health promotion and education project has not started yet as funds arrived only recently.

The Red Cross estimates, since January 2004, it helped some 53,000 people through its various programmes.

All programmes are directly implemented by the Red Cross through its country-wide network of branches and volunteers. The Federation, through its delegations in Yerevan and Ankara, offers technical support and monitoring of the implementation to ensure the resources are deployed as planned. For example, in April 2004, the Federation facilitated a training workshop on vulnerability and capacity assessment for the headquarters and regional disaster management coordinators to enhance their assessment capacities. It also coordinated procurement of relief supplies and equipment under the disaster preparedness and response project through a locally announced tender.

The Federation also assisted the Armenian Red Cross to establish bilateral partnership links with a number of local and international organisations, such as Jinishian Memorial Foundation, Open Society Institute, Save the Children, Council of Europe and Eurasia Foundation. Supported by the Federation, the national society developed and submitted to these organisations a number of proposals to run bilateral operations. The Soros Foundation has confirmed the funding for a nine-month project on drug abuse harm reduction. The Prime II, an international partnership combining leading global health care organizations, will work with the national society to raise public awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS through a six-month project. Also, the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development has requested the Armenian Red Cross to become their partners in implementing a large-scale project that envisages the establishment of voluntary rescue teams in each region. Discussions are ongoing.

Noteworthy is the cooperation between the Armenian Red Cross and the Armenian Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth (AASPE). The organisations are currently discussing a

possibility of implementing a joint project addressing seismic risks in the country. The Armenian Red Cross has also been requested to assist in organising the 5th General Assembly of the Asia Seismological Commission, a regional organisation affiliated to International association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior. The assembly will take place in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia in October 2004. It will be attended by delegations from some 24 countries to discuss how to raise public awareness and reduce earthquake risks in the region more effectively. The previous four biannual assemblies were organised in China, India, Iran and Nepal.

Progress has also been made in assisting the Armenian Red Cross in strengthening cooperation with the government. In all marzes (regions) and districts, the Red Cross has signed cooperation agreements with local authorities to strengthen the national society's auxiliary role to the government and improve coordination of services.

Armenia: life today



Poverty is overwhelming, but the Red Cross is there to help

Anahit Gharakeshishyan, 87 years, lives in Stepanavan, north Armenia

'I live alone here. I could see well few years ago, but now I am losing my sight. Getting even older. My knees betray me too. They are not good enough even to go to a shop around the corner to buy a loaf of bread. Good that at least I can buy bread with my pension'- Mrs. Charakeshishyan receives a monthly pension equivalent of 7 US dollars. 'I cannot afford anything else. It is very cold in winter. No heating, no electricity and I have not got enough money to buy firewood. There are many others like me in this town. We survive somehow. Not long to live anyway'.

'The government does not help us. I would feel completely isolated from the society if not for the Red Cross. Thanks to those young ladies from the Red Cross who visit me regularly and help solve some of my problems. I do not need much; just a smile will warm my old heart. The ladies from the Red Cross are very kind. It is nice to know that we are not forgotten'.

Health and care

Goal: Health and social vulnerability of people of Armenia has decreased.

Objective: Target vulnerable communities have improved their health and social conditions through better service delivery from the Red Cross.

Expected result 1: Health promotion and education: Vulnerability of target communities to sexually transmitted infections (STI), HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and childhood illnesses has reduced through improved Red Cross voluntary community services, education, public awareness campaigns and delivery of STI test systems to specialised institutions.

Project context: Health promotion and education are one of the core activities of the Armenian Red Cross because they can reduce risk - protect people from diseases and save lives. The project consists of three components: HIV/AIDS, TB and childhood illnesses, however, only HIV/AIDS received funding. Lack of money did not enable the Red Cross implement the activities planned under the other two components. Funding for TB – CHF 30,080 - arrived only in June 2004 and all activities originally planned for the first five months of the year, have been rescheduled to July-December 2004.

Armenia: Life today

Viktoria Avagyan, 77 years, born in Karabakh. She is one of the many lone elderly people the Red Cross helps within the psycho-social support project for elderly refugees.



Dreaming of a family reunion

‘When I was young, it was my dream to go to Baku and buy shiny shoes from ‘a princess’ there. Now my dreams have changed. I would like to have my relatives again by my side, gathered at a big New Year’s Eve dinner table. But my biggest dream is to find my son’ – Mrs. Avagyan has lost the sight of her son 10 years ago. She believes that he is somewhere in Chechnya.

Red Cross volunteer: ‘is there anything good in your life, Mrs. Avagyan’.
Mrs. Avagyan, replies smiling: ‘you are my good thing, angel’.

HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) are among the biggest public health emergencies in Armenia. It is estimated from 2,500 to 2,600 people are infected with HIV/AIDS. Twenty-seven people have died from the illness. Only in February 2004, 254 new cases were registered including 198 cases among men, 51 cases among women and three among children. 80 percent of HIV carriers are between 20-39 years old and approximately half of them live in Yerevan. The most common ways of HIV transmission are intravenous drug injection and unsafe sex practices. A primary source of the rapid spread of the disease is the lack of information. Individuals and communities do not know how to assess accurately the factors that put them and their families at risk of infection and act to reduce those risks.

As an auxiliary to the local authorities, the Red Cross has a critical role to respond to the growing crises and help empower communities to reduce their vulnerability to the main health problems. It is in a unique position to achieve this. Its comparative advantage lies in its country-wide network of branches and volunteers. It has access to communities living in remote and isolated areas that few other organizations have. It has many years’ experience of working with people. While other organizations have come and gone, the Armenian Red Cross, with the Federation secretariat’s support, has stayed. In 2003, more than 20,000 people, mainly youth, were reached through Red Cross organised HIV/AIDS peer education and public awareness raising campaigns. In 2004, it aims to reach more people.

Progress/Achievements: Since January 2004, the Armenian Red Cross conducted 16 training sessions on HIV/AIDS prevention, the symptoms and cause of the disease, as well as the harm of discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS for 439 youth leaders and

volunteers in 15 districts of Armenia. Various training materials, video-films on HIV/AIDS and drug addiction were used during the training sessions. Participants were provided with printed educational



Red Cross volunteer from a social service centre offers first aid to an elderly man who cannot afford to see a professional doctor.

materials such as leaflets, books, calendars, posters and stickers on HIV/AIDS to distribute among school children and other people in their communities.

The trained youth leaders and volunteers, in their turn, reached over **14,000** people, mainly young students in the target regions .

In addition, three TV films on HIV/AIDS prevention and drug usage have been aired by regional TV channels, and approximately **7,000**

posters, stickers, booklets and leaflets have been distributed to the public at large. The youth leaders have reached another **900** young people in schools alone.

An important Red Cross contribution has also been the provision of testing systems for early detection and treatment of syphilis and HIV/AIDS to health facilities. Since January 2004, the Red Cross distributed 1,996 systems to medical institutions in Yerevan and Goris. Statistics about the application of the tests have not been available when this report was prepared, but will be analysed in the next report.

In light of reduced international support, the Red Cross searches for mechanisms to ensure some sustainability for its projects. To create a solid base for implementation of various preventive health projects at the community level when the external funding ends, the Armenian Red Cross has selected the three most active youth leaders and trained them on how to establish community-based voluntary health service in all 13 regions.

Impact: Over 14,000 young people in Armenia have increased their knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention and healthy sexual behaviour through training sessions and distribution of educational materials. The community voluntary health service, the Red Cross has started to develop, will ensure sustainability of educational health projects after international funding stops. The testing systems will enable 1,996 people to test their blood on sexually transmitted illnesses accelerating early detection of the disease and increasing the chances of treating it.

Constraints: Taboos and cultural barriers, particularly in remote regions, obstruct the work of Red Cross volunteers and peer educators. School directors and senior members of the communities often forbid volunteers to talk about sex.

Due to rapid increase in prices, the Armenian Red Cross purchased only 96 Chlamidiosis tests instead of the planned 500.

Funding for the TB component of the project has arrived with a five-month delay. Therefore, most of the planned activities were not implemented. The Red Cross has rescheduled them and is expecting to achieve the originally set results by the end of the year. Any change to this will be reported in a next programme update.

One of the most important areas of the Armenian Red Cross work is maternal health and raising parents' knowledge on child care and childhood illnesses. Infant and maternal mortality in Armenia remain high compared to other countries in Europe. In 2003, infant mortality was reported at 15.44 deaths per 1,000 live births, mainly caused by respiratory infections and diarrhoea. The maternal mortality was an average of 32.3 per 100,000 live births during the last three years. Lack of necessary medical equipment and pharmaceuticals in health clinics particularly in remote areas as well as poor standards of health services are two reasons of the deteriorated health indicators. Lack of knowledge among the population of basic health prevention is another.

A high percentage of the population does not seek professional medical assistance. According to a nationwide household survey conducted by PADCO, a US based international development consulting firm, a third of the population (34%) who had health problems in 2003 was unable to consult a doctor because of financial constraints (80%), lack of transportation (10%), and distance



Changing attitudes and behaviour takes time: Red Cross volunteers do not give up. They continue spreading the humanitarian values of the Movement calling against discrimination of marginalised groups and violence in the community.

from a medical centre (10%). Travel to remote health facilities was a serious concern for rural households. These people resort to self-diagnosis, which often leads to incorrect treatment and aggravates their condition. The Armenian Red Cross, an auxiliary to the government, believes it has and can play a significant role in improving child and maternal health in the country. The project, however, has not received funding. The Federation is urging its partners to help the Armenian Red Cross address this important problem that affects thousands of people.

Expected result 2: Social services for vulnerable people: 25,000 vulnerable people – single elderly, internally displaced persons, refugees, disabled people, large families and orphans – have improved their health through needs-based socio-medical services including food, medicines, home care, consultations and advocacy, provided by the Red Cross.

Project context: The project supports the work of 23 Red Cross social centres. The centres have some 3,000 registered beneficiaries who regularly come for help to confront their concerns: how to accept and deal with illness, how to adopt a healthier lifestyle, how to better spend free time. Services the Red Cross centres offer include: psycho-social consultations to lone elderly people, refugees and other vulnerable groups; medical check-ups; distribution of basic food; supply of prescription medicine and hygiene supplies; distribution of second hand clothes, home care; and raising awareness on health issues.

Medicines, food and hygiene supplies the centres distribute are procured by the Red Cross branches with the support of local and international donors; a part of this support is channelled through the Federation, but the bulk of it is purchased with the money raised by the Red Cross branches locally. Often the Red Cross receives in-kind donations too to be distributed through the centres to people in need.



Health education can reduce risk: Red Cross volunteers talk to schoolchildren about HIV/AIDS and healthy sexual behaviour. The topics are not covered by the school curriculum nor discussed at home because of taboos.

These centres are located in Red Cross regional and community branch offices. During the last three years, the Red Cross helped over 55,000 people.

Progress/Achievements: The social service centres, with help of 300 volunteers, have provided services to **12,137** vulnerable people during the reported period. Services included: psycho-social consultations, medical check-ups, measuring of blood pressure and glucose, intramuscular injections, home care and minor house repairs. The centres also distributed food, clothes and medicines. Some beneficiaries were helped with money (four to six US dollars).

In Ararat, Armavir, Vayots Dzor, Shirak and Sevan social service centres also have small clubs for lonely elderly. The clubs are in separate rooms with TV and video sets, table games, such as chess, and materials to weave. The lonely elderly visit the clubs regularly, where they are served tea, coffee, sweets and socialize with each other. On special days, such as veterans' day or workers' day volunteers organize concerts and performances in the clubs for lonely elderly people.

Additionally, Red Crescent volunteers conducted a number of sessions to raise people's awareness on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

The table below shows the type of services provided by the centres and the number of people reached since January 2004:

Service provided	People assisted
Food Distribution	674
Clothes Distribution	1,361
Drugs Distribution	454
Financial Support	18
Consultations	2,160
Blood pressure measuring	1129
Measuring sugar level in blood	291
Injections	366
Home visits	221
Health services	36
Small repairs	57
Club visits	170
Seminars on HIV/AIDS, TB and First Aid.	5,200

The social service centres established contacts with local TV channels to tell the public about their work and appeal for the community support to help elderly people. Many responded. Several international, local companies and entrepreneurs donated sweets, fruits, food parcels, drugs and consumables, second-hand clothes and hygiene supplies for distribution. Another international organization donated boxes with toys and stationery to distribute to 50 vulnerable children on 1 June, Children's International Day.

Impact: The centres help their beneficiaries solve some of their socio-medical problems and find a role in the community. Many elderly people not only face daily problems but, separated from children and grandchildren, begin to feel useless. The Red Cross centres help them grow in confidence and nothing is more healthy than having purpose in life.

Through local media and advocacy by volunteers, the local communities increase their awareness on the hardships of vulnerable people, including lone elderly and the disabled. The project also helps Red Cross volunteers become compassionate and tolerant through regular contacts with people in need.

Constraints: The main challenge the centres face is scarce financial resources to sustain their work. For years, the Federation and the partner national societies have been supporting them at the same time encouraging the Red Cross regional branches to strengthen links with the local communities, increase community participation in the work of the centres and find local donors. Some branches have done well, others, however, have been less successful. Today, of 23 centres only 13 are fully functioning; others work on an ad hoc basis. They can offer only 10 per cent of the services they were originally set to deliver. The branches raise locally maximum 15 per cent of what is needed. The reasons are complex: the huge economic decline in the early years of transition in this former Soviet republic has not yet been reversed. Recovery is slow and the regions are the most affected. Local businesses are poorly developed. In addition, the national society staff, especially those in the provinces have lost track of modern marketing and fundraising techniques. The organisation's systems, structures and mechanisms to motivate and retain volunteers are not fully developed either.

Lack of funds has resulted in a high turn-over of trained staff and volunteers and consequently the quality of the services has deteriorated. At the same time, the number of vulnerable people continues to rise, while the resources to meet their needs are limited. Many vulnerable people live in remote, isolated communities, and the current budget does not enable to visit them all. The Red Cross needs to step up its advocacy role and improve its marketing capacities to encourage local donors and organizations to contribute to meet the needs of vulnerable people. The Federation will continue working with the national society encouraging it to prioritise these important issues.

Disaster management

Goal: Vulnerability of the population to natural and man-made disasters has decreased.

Objective: The Armenian Red Cross positions itself as a key humanitarian actor in disaster management.

Expected result 1. Disaster preparedness and response: The Armenian Red Cross has strengthened disaster preparedness planning, built effective disaster response mechanisms and enhanced capacities of target communities to reduce the impact and risk of disasters.

Project context: The Armenian Red Cross started building its disaster management capacities in 1998 with the support of the Federation. Presently it has three zonal and 13 regional disaster response centres to coordinate disaster management activities in the central, northern and southern regions.

Each centre has a coordinator and a rapid response team of 12 staff and volunteers trained in disaster management. The Red Cross also has two rescue teams in Lori and Spitak regions that respond to small scale disasters. In 2003, the Red Cross developed a national alarm system that defines roles and responsibilities of each team member during emergencies and will enable them to respond in a more rapid and organised manner.

In parallel to building its disaster management capacity, the Red Cross has concentrated on educating communities so that they understand threats and risks. Their vulnerability to disasters and emergencies, as a result, reduces. Over the years, a number of training sessions were conducted across the country. The focus was on children of 13-15 years. The Red Cross also organizes simulation exercises in schools to help teachers and pupils develop skills to evacuate buildings during emergencies without panic.

The current project assists the Red Cross to continue training of its rescuers, organising simulation exercises and seminars in schools and for the public at large.

Progress/Achievements: To respond effectively to the needs of local communities, Red Cross staff and volunteers need skills to assess community capacities and vulnerability. The Federation has facilitated a three-day training on how to assess disaster risks, identify community resources and plan response strategy for 21 Armenian Red Cross staff members. The training included both the theory and practical exercises.

The Red Cross does not operate in isolation. There are a number of other humanitarian actors in the country who work on disaster management and coordinating work with them is important to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure the resources are deployed where they are most needed. Traditional partners of the Red Cross in Armenia are the Emergency Management Administration (EMA) and Crisis Management Institute. The two are the government bodies that develop government policies and act on behalf of the government to protect the population of Armenia in times of emergency and/or military situations. In cooperation with the EMA, a Red Cross regional rapid response team in Shirak organized a four-day simulation exercise to evacuate people from a ruined building.

The Red Cross also organizes simulation exercises in schools to help teachers and pupils develop skills to evacuate buildings during emergencies in an organised manner. Since January 2004, such exercises were conducted in six schools for 756 teachers and 6,744 schoolchildren based on the 'evacuations from schools' manual, developed by the Red Cross last year.

Another simulation exercise, the Red Cross organised in March 2004 in cooperation with the local authorities, aimed at strengthening Red Cross response teams' capacities to help victims of road accidents. The most recent UN statistics show that over 1.2 million people are killed in road traffic accidents around the world each year. More than 3,000 people are killed every day. World Health Organisation warns the death toll could rise by 60 per cent over the next 16 years. Two-thirds of the people who die are pedestrians. People who will never own a car in their life are at the greatest risk. The first aid group members of Aragatsotn regional rapid response team took part in the exercise.

The Red Cross subscribed for a newspaper *Artakarg Tert*. Every week 15 copies of the newspaper will be delivered to all regional branches and the headquarters of the Red Cross, as well as the Federation delegation in Yerevan. The newspaper publishes articles on emergencies in the country as well as response operations of various organizations. It offers statistics on accidents and disasters in various regions.

Raising public awareness on the most common disasters to reduce their vulnerability is another priority area for the Red Cross. The main target groups are children. Over the last few years more than 500,000 copies of educational materials were printed on earthquake, floods, fire and landslide. This year, the Red Cross has developed and printed 3,000 copies of a leaflet on lightning. Leaflets were distributed through Red Cross regional branches in the five regions that are most prone to this natural

phenomenon. The leaflet contains information on how to avoid lightning strikes and how to help victims.

One of the most successful educational materials the Red Cross has developed for children is an educational booklet *Aghetic*. *Aghetik* is a cartoon character, which in Armenian language means 'disaster'. It teaches children through poems how to prepare for, what can happen and what to do during disasters. Over the last few years, the Red Cross has developed five series of the booklet on fire, earthquake, dangerous particles, domestic dangers and floods. Based on these series, the Armenian Red Cross produced two cartoons *Aghetik and the Earthquake* and *Aghetik in daily life* which were aired on national television.

The *Aghetik* booklet was used to organise one-week training sessions on basic disaster preparedness in nine schools for 235 pupils. In three schools, schoolchildren also put on performances based on the poems.

Red Cross volunteers additionally conducted ten-day training sessions on *how to cope with different disasters* in six schools for 150 schoolchildren. After the sessions children formed six groups of seven members and organised a quiz on what they had learnt during the training.

The Ararat regional branch trained another 52 schoolchildren in two schools on the risks and threats of floods and how to mitigate the damage caused by the disaster. Heavy rains and storms are frequent phenomena in Armenia. In spring this year, they have caused damage of millions of dollars in nine regions of the country. The worst affected was the region of Ararat.

Impact: The training sessions and simulation exercises help both the Red Cross staff and volunteers and the targeted groups. Rescue team members refresh their knowledge and improve skills whereas schoolchildren and teachers learn how to prepare for and mitigate the affects of disasters. This year, around 7,129 schoolchildren and 756 teachers were reached. The booklets and cartoons will help children understand the threats and risks associated with emergencies.

Constraints: The project has progressed as planned. Most of the work, however, is yet to be done. The three zonal and one national simulation exercises will be organized by the end of the year. New public educational materials will also be developed and printed, and rescue equipment will be procured for the Red Cross response teams.

Expected result 2. First Aid: The Armenian Red Cross has increased the quality and availability of first aid services through developing better training materials, organising effective trainings and raising public awareness.

Project context: The Armenian Red Cross is a leading provider and trainer in first aid. First aid training and services are used as entry points for disaster preparedness. First aid is a proven cost-effective, safe and simple way to save lives in an emergency. It provides that initial rapid response to protect people and minimize the impact of a health emergency.

The Armenian Red Cross has a network of volunteers who train others. It prepares training manuals for instructors and the general public. Each year the Red Cross also organizes competitions among its first aiders to help them improve their skills.

Progress/Achievements: Lack of funding prevented the implementation of planned activities under this expected result. With their limited resources, however, Red Cross first aid instructors conducted a number of training courses on basic first aid for volunteers and members of the Armenian Red Cross.

The Red Cross also offers its first aid services to individuals and various organisations that can pay. The income generated helps the national society sustain some of its activities. Since January 2004,

three paid courses were provided to 13 members of the *Peace Corps* and for employees of the *Global Source net* organization. All participants were qualified as first aiders.

The Red Cross has also developed two micro projects that aim at teaching children safe behaviour through educational games and posters. These projects will be submitted for funding to the Jinishyan Memorial Foundation.

Impact: Through training offered by the Red Cross, people learn how to survive and save lives in various hazardous situations, such as traffic accidents. Their capacities to deal with day-to-day incidents as well as more serious challenges strengthen. The service is particularly significant for people living in remote, isolated areas, where they often do not have access to basic health care services and rely on their knowledge and skills to help others and themselves.

Constraints: The project has not received support through the Federation Appeal for the sixth consecutive year. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the national society to secure bilateral funding from partners. This causes outflow of skilled staff who leave the organisation due to low incentives.

Expected result 3. Population movement: The Armenian Red Cross helps displaced people to integrate and naturalise through legal consultations, vocational training, and provision of basic daily necessities, public awareness and advocacy.

Project context: The Armenian Red Cross Society is one of the few organizations in the country assisting migrants. For years, it has been helping internally displaced people and refugees in cooperation with the Federation, partner national societies and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It has provided these people with financial assistance, food and clothes, as well as legal consultations.

Taking into consideration the growing number of asylum seekers, illegal migrants and victims of human-trafficking, the Armenian Red Cross has shifted its focus to help these groups too.

Through years, the Red Cross, supported by the Federation, has built a capacity to respond to their needs. There are areas, however, it has to improve, particularly in the regional branches to meet rising needs of asylum seekers, refugees and victims of human trafficking through better services.

Progress/Achievements: The project has received only 10 per cent of what was budgeted. However, the Armenian Red Cross has been filling the gap through bilateral work with the UNHCR to develop an asylum system in the country.

The Armenian Red Cross conducted individual needs assessments and, based on the results, provided 15 asylum seekers, persons with temporary asylum status and individually recognized refugees with legal and social, financial and material assistance. It conducted for them Armenian language and vocational training sessions. Additionally, 120 refugees from Azerbaijan living in Syunik region are attending the Armenian language course organised by the Red Cross. With the knowledge of the language the refugees will have better chances to find work.

The Red Cross played an important role in the development of a national action plan and concept paper on anti-trafficking, which was adopted by the Government in early 2004. It participated in the development of films on human trafficking and organised a number of round-table discussions with students.

The Red Cross is the only non-governmental organization, which is a full member of the inter-governmental commission on counter trafficking. The national society is also a member of the UN theme group on anti-trafficking and works in partnership with a number of international organizations, such as UNDP, IOM, OSCE, ABA/CEELI, several embassies and a few local non-

governmental organisations. Besides, the Armenian Red Cross is actively involved in the development of the European National Societies Network on Anti-Trafficking, initiated by the Danish Red Cross.

Impact: More than fifteen asylum seekers, persons with temporary asylum status and individually recognized refugees received assistance they needed.

Constraints: Limited funding enabled the Red Cross to help only fifteen people. However, there are over 220 migrants who need assistance. The Red Cross helps those people with consultations and puts them in touch with relevant government bodies. It is unable though to provide any relief support, such as hygiene supplies and food which are essential for their existence.

With more support the Red Cross can do more to prevent human trafficking, which is becoming a serious issue. Although there are no official statistics, it is estimated that several thousand individuals were trafficked between 2000 and 2004. Most of the victims are women and children, who are offered work abroad but in reality, find themselves in brothels subject to exploitation and deprived of basic necessities.

In November 2001, the Government established a State Inter Governmental Commission on Counter Trafficking to prevent human trafficking, especially children, and help the trafficked people return home. The commission has had successes, however, more work remains to be done to raise the awareness of potential victims. Needs overwhelm the capacity of the Government. It is lacking resources – human, financial and technical. It is searching for an experienced and reliable local partner. The Red Cross, as an auxiliary to the local authorities, has an obligation to end this and advocate for the respect of the rights to which those people are entitled. The national society is the only indigenous, volunteers, community based and nationwide humanitarian organisation working with the people of Armenia. It can stand with these people and help them build the foundation for the new life for which they migrated. Partners are urged to help the Armenian Red Cross achieve this.

Humanitarian values

Goal: People in Armenia are less vulnerable to discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Objective: The Armenian Red Cross has increased capacity to advocate and act for tolerance and coexistence.

Programme context: Promotion of humanitarian values is an integral part of all Red Cross programmes. By working with the most vulnerable people, including isolated groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS, sex workers and lone elderly people, the national society sets an example of compassion and humanity, it advocates for tolerance and coexistence, mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace.

The current programme aims to assist the national society strengthen its information capacity to profile better the Red Cross work and reach more people with the message of humanity by telling them the story of how the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement was created and what fundamental principles guide its work.

The programme, however, received funding only in June 2004 and only some of the planned activities were implemented with limited resources of the Armenian Red Cross and the ICRC's help. Other planned activities have been rescheduled for July-December 2004. Any change to this will be reported through the next programme update due in September 2004.

Expected result 1: The information network of the Armenian Red Cross has strengthened.

Progress/Achievements: In April, a seminar was held with the financial support of the ICRC for 13 information officers from 13 regions to inform them about the current activities of the Armenian Red Cross and help initiate monthly newsletters in the regions for general public about the national society operations. Following the training, 80 newspapers in Armenian and 10 in English were published and distributed to people. The production of the newsletters is supported by the ICRC.

Impact: Regional information officers have improved their communication skills.

Constraints: The major constraint is a lack of funds, which does not enable the organisation to pay salaries to its staff and initiate new activities. People lose motivation and leave for a better paid and more challenging work. Since January 2004, the information department of the Armenian Red Cross has lost four information officers, who resigned because of low incentives.

Expected result 2 The public has increased understanding of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values through education campaigns.

Progress/Achievements: The Armenian Red Cross, with financial support of the ICRC, held a seminar on International Humanitarian Law and the role of the Movement components in military situations for 70 corporals of the Public Order Security Regiment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Yerevan. A similar seminar was held for 50 municipality staff of Avan-Nor Nork community in Yerevan.

Additionally, a seminar for 25 Armenian Red Cross newly recruited staff and volunteers was held at the Red Cross training centre. Agenda of the seminar included presentations on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, including its components, use and misuse of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Emblems, the Fundamental Principles², basic information on International Humanitarian Law, the Armenian Red Cross mission, structure and current activities. Video films produced by the Armenian Red Cross on the activities of the national society were shown.

A similar seminar was conducted for 100 staff members of the Red Cross International Post-Trauma Rehabilitation Centre built with the support of the Federation in 1992 to treat people with spinal injuries. The majority of the staff members have been recently recruited and knew little about the organisation they work with.

Video films about the Red Cross history, the Movement and the Fundamental Principles, as well as the mission and activities of the Armenian Red Cross were distributed to all regions. These films will be shown in schools, municipalities and other public places to promote who the Red Cross is and what it does.

Additionally, the Red Cross distributed 1,705 printed materials – leaflets and brochures, about the Movement and the Fundamental Principles.

Impact: More people know about the Red Cross, its work, values and principles. By learning and sharing our principles, the Red Cross believes, people will change their behaviour. The level of violence and aggression in the communities will reduce.

Constraints: As with the other two expected results of this programme, the major constraint is a lack of funds. Due to low incentives, three trained and skilful instructors have left the Red Cross during the

² Proclaimed in Vienna in 1965, the seven Fundamental Principles bond together the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

last few months. Their departure means that the organisation has to recruit and train new people. There is a high probability, however, that new people will eventually leave too after they have gained experience and expertise.

The issue is a real challenge for the national society and calls for a serious reflection. The Armenian Red Cross continues to largely depend on the funds the Federation brings in through annual international appeals. With the reduced international support, however, the Federation will not be able to support the national society on the level it has been. The plan is to phase out the Federation's presence in the country by 2006. At the same time, the national society is voicing their concern that it is difficult to find alternative funding sources locally. The economic situation in the country shows little improvement. Local businesses are not well-developed. The Government cannot meet many of the basic needs of its people.

A solution remains to be found but it may well be in prioritising work according to the pressing needs and the capacity of the national society, strengthening links with the communities, better planning and better marketing. These issues emerged during the recently conducted self-assessment workshop with the participation of regional branches (see organisational development programme below for more information on the workshop findings)

Discussions with the Armenian Red Cross will continue to ensure the Federation support over the coming two years is well focused to help the organisation strengthen the sustainability of its vital services.

Expected result 3: Through increased visibility, the Armenian Red Cross attracts more volunteers and members.

Progress/Achievements: With its own limited resources, Red Cross volunteers conducted various public educational campaigns on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement history and the Fundamental Principles for 2,573 people in 36 educational and nine non-educational institutions.

Some 862 booklets on the Movement history, its components and activities were distributed to general public through regional branches.

Impact: Since January 2004, the Red Cross has recruited 50 new volunteers.

Constraints: The Red Cross has yet to develop an effective volunteer management system to recruit more volunteers and retain them.

Organisational Development

Goal: The Armenian Red Cross becomes a well-functioning national society providing sustainable, focused and responsive assistance to vulnerable communities.

Objective: The Armenian Red Cross continues organisational changes to improve its services to vulnerable people.

Expected result 1: Branch development: The Armenian Red Cross regional branches have increased capacity to implement programmes based on vulnerability of local communities and strategic directions of the national society.

Project context: The Red Cross has 13 regional and 52 community branches. Since 1997, the Federation has been assisting the Red Cross in strengthening its branch network. The branches have come a long way in building their capacities. They have trained staff and volunteers, as well as, basic

infrastructure. The major weaknesses, however, remain their dependency on external support to sustain the core services, as well as the lack of community-based activities. There is a need to bring the Red Cross closer to local communities and ensure its programmes are responsive to local needs and focused on the areas where the organisation can have the greatest impact.

To achieve this, in 2003 the Red Cross launched a pilot initiative, which would encourage its branches to work in a participatory community development (PCD) approach. PCD is supporting people to reduce the causes of their own predicaments, mobilising community action. The grassroots networks of Red Cross national societies are bringing vulnerable groups together with local government, non-governmental organisations and other relevant parties, asking them to assess priority problems, design projects to address them, and make the most of local resources.

By involving beneficiaries in decisions directly affecting their lives, the Red Cross believes beneficiaries will not be just passive recipients of aid but active partners of the national society. Increased participation of communities in designing and implementation of projects, will, at the same time contribute to strengthening the sustainability of Red Cross operations and reduce the organisation's dependency on international funding by mobilising locally available resources.

To help the Armenian Red Cross branches pilot the new approach, their staff and volunteers were trained on participatory community development, as well as, participatory rapid appraisal methodologies. Both approaches aim to increase community involvement in Red Cross work.

The current project supports the national society to continue the work it has started in 2003.

Progress/Achievements: Training of Red Cross staff and volunteers, selection of target communities, identification of needs and designing of community projects based on the assessment findings have been accomplished in 2003. This year, the efforts concentrated on their realisation.

The project is piloted in 13 communities. People in these communities chose to springboard training centres for youth, football pitches, a gym for the disabled people, repair of an irrigation system, renovation of kindergartens, installation of a heating system in a local school, planting of trees in a local park and furnishing of an art centre.

Works are ongoing and planned to be completed in August 2004.

The project funds are mainly spent on purchasing necessary materials, while the communities contribute with labour. The Red Cross has also been encouraging other stakeholders – local authorities, non-governmental organisations and local businesses – to support. Some responded with cash, others with construction materials, human resources or expertise.

Impact: It is early to measure impact, as the community projects are still progressing. The Red Cross is planning to conduct an evaluation of the work, interview beneficiaries and other partners, and based on the analysis, develop future plans.

The initial assessments show positive results. The start has been promising. Communities show interest in the new approach introduced by the Red Cross. They are keen to be a part of a decision-making process. Cooperation with the local authorities and other local organisations/agencies, has improved too.

Constraints: Although the start has been encouraging, the Red Cross has failed to mobilize the maximum of human and material resources available in the communities. Reasons are complex: for years people have been passive recipients of humanitarian aid and it is difficult now to change their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. They show reluctance to contribute. At the same time, Red Cross staff and volunteers need better preparation too. They have to improve management, monitoring and evaluation skills as well as fund-raising capacities.

Lack of marketing techniques has been identified as a major weakness by the Red Cross branches at the self-assessment workshop organised in February 2004. Another area the national society believes it has to improve in is planning.

To make their work with the communities more coherent and consistent and ensure a systematic development of their own capacities, the Red Cross branches are planning to develop regional strategic plans, which will feed into the national plan of the national society and will also incorporate real local needs of the communities they work with. This will be a priority in 2005.

Expected result 2: Financial management development: The Armenian Red Cross and its affiliated organisations have improved their financial management system to provide transparent accounting and better donor reporting.

Project context: Transparency and accountability are key to maintain the reputation of a credible organisation. Since 1997-1998, the Red Cross has been making attempts to improve its financial management systems, structures and mechanisms to make them transparent, but also to ensure funds are channelled through its systems more efficiently to avoid delays in the delivery of services to vulnerable people.

The efforts have led to a marked improvement. Accounts are better and better internal control is in place. The computerised accounting package enables the Red Cross to minimise possible errors or misuse of funds. However, there are still difficulties in obtaining timely and necessary information and documentation from branches, as well as Red Cross affiliated organizations leading to inaccurate and delayed reports to local tax authorities and donor organizations. Additionally, frequent changes in national legislation require regular training of Red Cross staff to upgrade their knowledge. These are the issues the current project aims to address.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Cross has opened a bank account for each regional branch to transfer funds, including salaries for regional branch staff and programme money, from the headquarters to the regions. Previously, money was hand-carried by staff from the regions. This was cost-ineffective and insecure too.

Additionally, the project has supported the procurement of fax modems and other necessary hardware for four regional branches in remote areas to enable the installation of the internet. The installation will be completed in July 2004.

To stay updated on frequently changing local legislation on taxation and accounting, Armenian Red Cross chief accountant participated in a three day seminar on tax related issues organised by the Ministry of Finance and Economy.

Impact: Working through a bank will enable the Red Cross to transfer funds to the regions without a delay. The internet connection, once installed, will expedite receipt of reports from the regions.

Constraints: Frequent changes to the national legislation on taxation and accounting affects the work of the Red Cross demanding constant re-training of staff.

The prices for intercity communication increased in January 2004 and hampered installation of internet communication in the targeted branches. This also caused a delay in starting a distance-learning course on financial management for staff in the branches planned for the beginning of this year. In July, the prices are expected to decrease and the internet connection will be installed.

Expected result 3: Youth development: The Armenian Red Cross has strengthened its volunteer management systems and mechanisms encouraging more active participation of youth in reducing vulnerability in the country, particularly of lone elderly refugees and children.

Project context: Volunteers play an important role in strengthening the organisational capacity of the national society. They help the Red Cross in its work with the vulnerable people and also contribute to strengthening sustainability of the programmes. Presently the Armenian Red Cross has 2,200 volunteers who are engaged in its various activities such as HI/AIDS prevention campaigns, dissemination of the Movement's Fundamental Principles, food and clothing distribution to the social centres' beneficiaries. A majority are young, enthusiastic and committed people who want to make the world a better place to live in.

The current project supports the Armenian Red Cross to develop an effective volunteer management system that would enable the organisation to recruit more volunteers, better manage and retain them. The focus is on reorganising the youth structure of the national society. The project will also facilitate motivating volunteers to be more actively involved in the work with vulnerable people.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Cross has established a working group of five volunteers to analyse the strengths and weakness of the current youth structure and develop recommendations on how to improve it. The group conducted a two-day meeting with 13 youth leaders from 13 regional branches to collect ideas. Among the weaknesses, youth volunteers named were poor selection process of youth leaders, absence of clear mechanisms for volunteer registration, and limited participation of volunteers in decision making processes within the national society. Following the discussion, the working group has developed recommendations along these issues. The recommendations were submitted to the management of the Red Cross for further discussion and approval. If approved, the Red Cross will need to review its statutes too to reflect the changes to the structure. The new structure will also need to be brought in line with the national legislation on non-governmental organisations.

Volunteers need a forum to discuss their problems and share ideas. Having this in mind, the Red Cross has initiated monthly meetings of thirteen regional branch youth leaders. During these meetings, youth leaders discussed various issues, such as how to reach school children in remote villages given the limited budget for transportation and how to include refugees who live in the dormitories where the volunteers work.

To strengthen volunteers' skills and knowledge, the Red Cross also supports them through various training sessions. This year, the Red Cross organised three training sessions for 52 volunteers on how to promote interactive participation during school classes, help children cope with challenging situations, such as disputes with their friends or parents, how to conduct sessions on various health care issues, ecological problems and preservation of Lake Sevan.

Following the training, volunteers conducted monthly discussions with over 5,100 students of 12 to 14 years in 76 schools on harms of dangerous habits such as smoking and drug addiction, benefits of a healthy lifestyle, how to prevent infectious diseases, the importance of safe behaviour, how to cope with stress, be more active during school classes and keep the environment clean.

Another vulnerable group Red Cross volunteers work with are elderly people. The Red Cross encourages young people to spend more time with elderly people to bridge the gap between the two generations. The project supports Red Cross young volunteers' work with 450 elderly refugees. Fifty-four volunteers from six regional and community branches visit elderly people twice a week to talk to them, help them clean houses, carry out minor repair works and do shopping for them – buy hygiene items, medicine, clothes and food including oil, sweets, sugar, rice, tea, canned milk and meat. Volunteers also organized concerts for the elderly and visits to historical sites of Armenia, such as Echmiatsin, St. Grigor Lousavorich cathedral in Yerevan. 98 elderly people were also provided with small birthday gifts procured within the project.

Impact: The skills and professionalism of many Red Cross volunteers have strengthened, which means the quality of their work with people in need has improved too. The impact of volunteers' work

with their peers is significant. Through a number of training sessions they organised in schools, some 5,100 children learned about the danger of smoking, drug addiction, benefits of a healthy lifestyle and safe sex. These are the issues that are normally not covered by the school curriculum, nor are they discussed in families because of cultural barriers and taboos.

Through regular contact with the vulnerable, young people become compassionate and tolerant. With the help of Red Cross volunteers, elderly refugees solve some of their problems. These are people who have lost their families, friends and personal belongings and feel isolated from the rest of the society. They are in need of attention and care. By doing things together, visiting historical places, organising concerts and other social events, volunteers with their energy and enthusiasm bring joy and light to these abandoned people.

Since January 2004, another 164 young people joined the Red Cross as volunteers.

Constraints: The project is half way through. There are many challenges the organisation has to yet address. The more acute one is how to retain volunteers and encourage new people to join. The renewed youth structure, it is hoped, will enable the Red Cross to manage its volunteers better and increase volunteers' participation in decision making processes affecting their work.

More training sessions will be conducted for volunteers this year. Sessions in schools for children on various issues that youth prioritise, as well as work with elderly refugees will continue too.

[*Click here to return to the title page and contact info*](#)