

# 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 والهلال الأحمر

## SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO/ KOSOVO

10 March 2006

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 180 countries. For more information: <http://www.ifrc.org>

### In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA065; Programme Update no.3; Period covered: July to December, 2005

Appeal target: CHF 3,080,400 (USD 2,534,050 or EUR 1,981,050); Appeal coverage: 92.2% (*Please click here to go directly to the contributions list on the web*)

#### Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:

Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo Annual Appeal 2005. For details, please go to the website at [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA065.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA065.pdf)

Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo Annual Appeal 2005 – Programme Update no.1. For details, please go to the website at [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA06501.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA06501.pdf)

Serbia and Montenegro/Kosovo Annual Appeal 2005 – Programme Update no.2 (Focus on Kosovo). For details, please go to the website at [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA06502.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA06502.pdf)

#### Programme Summary:

The Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society (SMRCS) is in transition, following the transition the state union is going through. Even though it is as yet unclear whether Montenegro and Serbia will part ways in 2006, there is an obvious separation of policies, finances, markets etc. The national society is restructuring: the new statutes of SMRCS have been adopted transferring as many operational responsibilities to the republic organisations as possible while retaining policy issues at headquarters level. Recognition of the changing environment resulted in a new Organisational Development plan for the following three years. This document identifies priority areas and general directions of the work, while the detailed plans of action are still being produced. Remaining activities of the previous Organisational Development programme are being finalised ensuring better communications and financial processing/reporting between the levels of the organisation.

Simultaneously, the ongoing shift in operational priorities means the activities of the Red Cross are increasingly planned for the long term, built around recognised community needs and based on input and contributions from the community. Relief assistance is, sadly still needed with the largest refugee population in Europe (140,000 refugees and 226,000 Internally Displaced People), severe poverty (10% of the population below the poverty line of 4 USD per day) and ubiquitous unemployment (30-35%). The most vulnerable population is assisted through various programmes which are based on volunteer work and have long term

goals. The Home Care Programme, Soup Kitchens Programme, Social Welfare Programme and Vocational Training for Refugees Programme cover some 26,000 beneficiaries assisting them in their daily activities, advocating for their rights, helping them with education or employment and providing food assistance where necessary. All of these activities are well designed to fit Poverty Reduction Strategies now beginning with implementation in both republics, with the Red Cross being part of relevant consultative bodies. Work in Disaster Preparedness has moved beyond equipping and training Red Cross teams to networking with other agencies at local level, helping to improve local disaster response coordination and lobbying for the creation of a national disaster preparedness body.

Legislation-wise, long and exhausting work was invested in both republics into ensuring that draft laws on the Red Cross are prepared. These laws recognise the Red Cross as an auxiliary to the government, define its public powers and ensure some steady government funding in future. The law in Serbia has been adopted in October and the Montenegro one is still pending parliament discussion. However, the future implementation of these laws promises to provide just as much struggle, as evidenced by the slow implementation of the law in Serbia so far. As the organisation struggles to survive in the current environment of retreating donors, this will hopefully introduce some stable foundation on which the national society can build. Red Cross activities are also hampered by the introduction of 18% VAT in January which also applies to humanitarian work and donations. During the year the government has loosened the legislation to a certain extent, allowing for a VAT-free import of humanitarian goods, yet retaining the tax on any transaction made in country.

***For further information please contact:***

- Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross: Phone +381 11 632 564; Fax +381 11 622 965; email [ljubomir@redcross.org.yu](mailto:ljubomir@redcross.org.yu)
- Red Cross of Serbia: Phone +381 11 30 32 125; Fax + 381 11 634 348; email [serbia@redcross.org.yu](mailto:serbia@redcross.org.yu)
- Red Cross of Montenegro: Phone +381 81 241 418, Fax +381 81 241 613; email [ckcg@cg.yu](mailto:ckcg@cg.yu)
- Belgrade Delegation: Knut Felberg (Head of Delegation); Phone + 381 11 32 82 202; Fax + 381 11 32 81 791; email [knut.felberg@ifrc.org](mailto:knut.felberg@ifrc.org)
- Federation Secretariat: Erja Reinikainen (Desk officer); Phone 41 22 730 43 19; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email [erja.reinikainen@ifrc.org](mailto:erja.reinikainen@ifrc.org)

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.

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## **Operational developments**

Over the past three and a half years the Federation has been supporting a shift in national society activities, moving from relief-focused towards community-based service delivery programmes. The presumption was that the changed political environment, the end of conflict and the new economic and social climate would mean improved political and economic stability at the end of the three year programming period, 2001-2004. This also coincided with the end of bulk food distribution, supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), covering 60,000 people in its latest phase at the end of 2003.

The end of large scale relief activities and the related steady funding has posed many challenges for the national society. With Federation support, the National Society (NS) has simultaneously worked on restructuring itself and adapting to the new environment as well as on providing support to the still large vulnerable population of domicile people, refugees and internally displaced people. Current official statistics list 140,000 refugees (the largest refugee population in Europe) and 210,000 IDPs (figures provided by the Commissariat for refugees) with 10% of the population living beneath the poverty line and the unemployment rate oscillating between 30 and 35 %. The national society continues to be forced to find ways to meet the needs of this population while at the same time seeking durable solutions for its own legal position, funding and structure.

Community based health and care programmes such as Home Care, Social Welfare and Participatory Community Development have all relied on local resources (municipal branches and their volunteers) to recognise specific needs of local population and meet them in an optimal way. An average of 9,300 beneficiaries were assisted in their daily activities in Home Care, and an average of 3,000 beneficiaries in Social Welfare programme.

The Disaster Preparedness programme, on the other hand aims to strengthen the communities to be prepared and able to respond to emergencies and disasters, using their own resources. While in the past, the Federation focused on training and equipping Red Cross disaster response teams, the new challenge is integration into existing structures. The focus of the Municipal Disaster Preparedness programme this year is helping to coordinate work of agencies acting in emergencies, with Red Cross being part of a consolidated effort. Tabletop disaster simulations with participants of all relevant actors at municipal level help share information, identify overlaps, gaps and opportunities for improvement of local disaster response systems. Moreover, the national society used the close cooperation between different disaster response agencies during simulations to demonstrate the capacity of the Red Cross to contribute to the future integrated national disaster response system. The appropriate legislation is being prepared and the work on shaping the future disaster response agency in Serbia is done involving the Red Cross representatives.

Advocacy and representation are two areas of action that have increasingly gained importance in the national society's (NS) work, be it through local level activities (advocating on behalf of Roma and disabled through Social Welfare programme) or through inter-agency networking (such as Elderly Advocacy Network 'Humanas', part of the Home Care programme activities).

At the same time, the national society keeps searching for ways to restructure itself internally and reposition itself externally in order to be more efficient and properly recognised as a partner by other actors. Ongoing Organisational Development activities aim to increase the efficiency, reliability and accountability of the NS, positioning it properly in the wider context of the country, region and world. An understanding of the necessity to change the structure to accommodate to the new funding environment is emerging, but very slowly. The most radical turn of the events has been the restructuring of the federal level of the national society, following the adoption of the new statutes. Recognising the practical implications of the direction to which the state union has been heading for the past three years, the national society distributed programme-related activities to republic organisations, retaining the international communication and movement-related activities.

## 1. Health and care

**Goal:** The quality of life of particular vulnerable populations is increased. The general public awareness of at-risk behaviours is raised and as a result, the behaviour is changed.

**Objective:** The national society is recognised as a credible, influential actor within the sphere of health and care, delivering sustainable services for vulnerable people, representing and advocating for them and promoting healthy lifestyles.

### Home Care

**Expected results: Empowered local communities working through Red Cross branches identify and provide services to up to 10,000 vulnerable elderly people, advocating for their rights and providing them with assistance and support to maintain the dignity of their lives in their own homes. The sustainability of the programme is increased; branches have more sustainable resources to deliver the service and there is a national framework for support.**

Running from January 2002, Home care has grown into one of the biggest programmes of the national society. Currently covering 96 municipalities across the country, the programme continually provides much needed assistance in and around the house more than 9,000 beneficiaries. The following table contains some essential data:

Month	Beneficiaries	Professionals	Volunteers	Prof. visits	Volunteer visits
January	9,099	149	1,760	6,880	23,441
February	9,032	161	1,659	7,199	22,851
March	9,156	156	1,723	7,131	23,507
April	9,212	151	1,610	7,194	22,872
May	9,148	158	1,660	7,123	22,979
June	9,016	157	1,588	7,593	22,579

<b>July</b>	9,030	157	1,608	6,586	20,030
<b>August</b>	8,965	161	1,587	6,626	22,312
<b>September</b>	8,940	161	1,592	6,721	23,020
<b>October</b>	8,560	141	1,520	6,380	21,402
<b>November</b>	9,206	149	1,583	7,135	21,797
<b>December</b>	9,079	156	1,581	7,530	21,824

The programme continued its usual activities. Across 96 municipalities approximately 9,000 beneficiaries were routinely visited and assisted by 1,600 volunteers and supported by 160 professional associates. This is now the single largest services-based programme in the national society – covering more than half of the territory of the state union and the highest number of beneficiaries.

Following the recommendations of the evaluation of the programme done in the first half of 2005, a plan was devised for the improvement of the programme performance as well as a more equitable approach to branch support. A series of five training sessions (covering all the programme branches) was provided in order to support the branches in performing a new, thorough assessment of needs. Based on the participatory methodology, this assessment, done between November and January was used to reach deeper understanding of the needs in the field, as perceived and expressed by the population the programme was created to assist. Moreover, the emphasis was put on the comprehensive approach as to map not only the local needs but capacities and opportunities as well. Involving the representatives of the communities (social welfare centres, health institutions, local government) in certain cases resulted in joint plans of action. Upon finishing the assessment, the branches were invited to apply for additional donor support with projects resulting from the assessment process. The intention is to support new, innovative projects in well developed branches, which will improve and expand on the existing programme and create sustainable activities that will be adopted by their respective communities. On the other hand, less developed branches are given additional support as means of helping them bridge the gap and catch up with the rest.



**Home care volunteers training**

Kragujevac branch has started with preparations to implement the pilot project of Commercial Home care services provision. Exploring the opportunities for self-sustainable Home care programme, Kragujevac has completed training and equipment provision and is currently engaged in media campaign to sensitise the public to the idea of ‘commercial’ Red Cross activities as well as to advertise its services. The activities and decisions made are to be recorded and later used as blueprint for other branches.

**Impact**

The programme has provided constant care and assistance to more than 9,000 elderly, vulnerable beneficiaries. The pressure on the health and social welfare systems is

enormous due to the situation in the country. Red Cross programmes such as this, based on the work of dedicated, trained volunteers, contribute to improved health, social situation and dignity of life of the most vulnerable individuals.

The activities in the reporting period contribute towards two aims: one is the improved sustainability of the programme and the other is the improved performance through better targeting of the beneficiaries, mobilising the resources and capacities of the beneficiaries and local communities and taking an active stance in relation to advocacy and representation. There is increased emphasis on coordination with other actors as well as beneficiary

participation. The new assessment of local needs and capacities was done utilising participatory approach (following appropriate training for implementing branches) with close participation of target-group representatives and the relevant actors in the local community. The resulting project proposals demonstrate (to a higher or lower degree) closer cooperation with local community in working with elderly vulnerable population.

### **Constraints**

The political and economic situation in the country is still very difficult. Most branches do not have steady sources of income and are only slowly becoming aware of the need to structure themselves differently/rethink their modus operandi. Most of the branches are good at implementation but need to improve their project design/proposal/reporting skills.

Moreover, the federal organisation, as well as the republic ones, has similar problems – staff structure that needs to be improved, constant shortage of funding and a need to update many management skills.

### **Social Welfare**

**Expected results: The needs and rights of the socially marginalised are represented and advocated for through co-ordinated local community efforts focusing through Red Cross branches. The mental health and quality of life of some 3,000 Roma and disabled children and their families is improved and they become closer to being fully integrated into society.**

The Social Welfare programme has entered the second implementation phase with 74 operational local projects in 58 municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro targeting Roma preschool children and children with disabilities. With additional branches joining, now the figures are: 91 local projects in 65 municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro (84 local projects in 59 municipalities of Serbia and 7 local projects in 6 municipalities of Montenegro).

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Roma children project</b>	<b>Support to children with disabilities project</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Children</b>	838	1,111	1,949
<b>Parents and siblings</b>	484	724	1,208
<b>Total</b>	1,322	1,835	3,157

In **Roma** project 38 local projects have been implemented by the Red Cross branches during this reporting period, covering 35 municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro (35 local projects in 33 municipalities of Serbia and 3 local projects in 2 municipalities of Montenegro) encompassing 734 Roma preschool children, 104 Roma pupils (grade 1 to 4) and 484 parents and siblings. The project sought to change the attitude of the Roma towards education, prepare children for school and enable them to use their full potential. Red Cross volunteers and professionals worked with children and helped them in preparing for the mainstream school environment, familiarize with using of school accessories, and develop trust and a wish to enter primary education.

Roma children of age three to seven attended Red Cross kindergartens up to 25 hours per week. Older children and non Roma children were included where appropriate. Teachers, supported by the Red Cross volunteers and staff, have implemented school preparation educational programme based on the official curricula of the Ministry of Education and Sport that was adapted to the learning group characteristics. Learning activities were designed to support the development of majority population language skills, hygiene related habits, social skills, understanding of basic mathematical concepts, grapho-motoric, artistic and physical skills. Where needed, teachers used individualized approach to children.

The parents were motivated to understand the importance and potential benefits of their children getting proper (and legally obligatory) education.

In **Children with disabilities** project 53 local projects have been implemented by the Red Cross branches in 44 municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro in this reporting period (49 local projects in 40 municipalities of Serbia and 4 local projects in 4 municipalities of Montenegro) encompassing 1,111 young people with disabilities and 724 parents and siblings, in total 1,835 direct beneficiaries.

The volunteer-based educational programme in this project aimed to encourage and facilitate the social integration of disabled children and their life skills development, since in many cases the family keeps disabled children indoors, out of the public eye and thus exclude them from any kind of 'proper' social life.

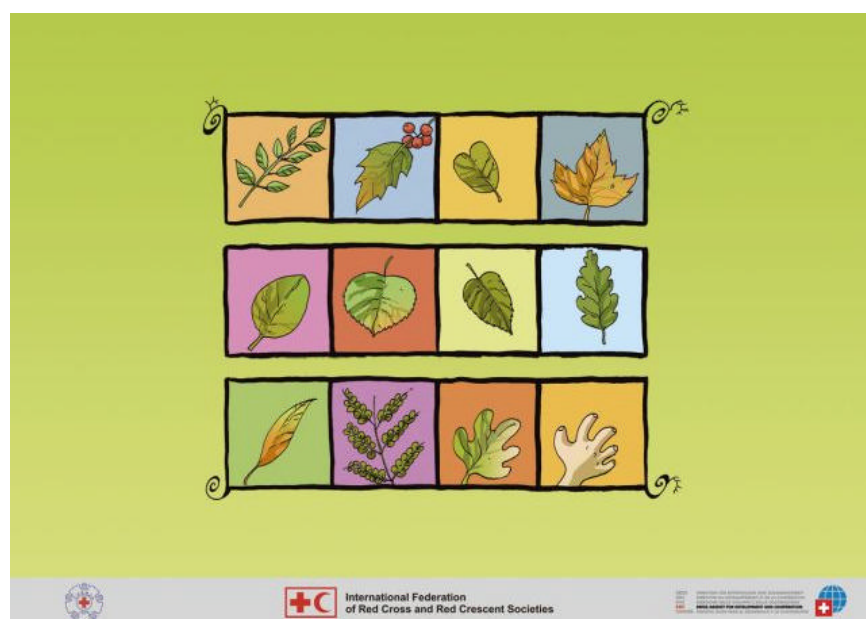
Young people with disabilities attended the Red Cross support programme up to 25 hours per week. Facilitators, supported by the Red Cross volunteers and staff, have implemented various educational and psycho-social support programmes based on the nature of handicap and the group characteristics. Educational programmes were designed to support the development of practical and social skills that led to increased self-confidence. Support programmes have been mainly organized for family members to improve their coping skills and reduce stress. Where needed, facilitators used individualized approach to children.

The parents were supported in care for their children, in engaging in more open communication with those parts of the community that offer support.

The social welfare programme is funded by various donors. It has been noticed that different requirements in sense of financial and narrative reporting and implementation criteria from the donors' side have caused certain inconsistency in the overall social welfare programme of the Red Cross in Serbia and Montenegro. Moreover, the impression is that the ownership of the projects rests with donors rather than with the Red Cross in Serbia and Montenegro. This weakened the power of the Red Cross to advocate for its beneficiaries and to demonstrate the overall impact among key stakeholders in the country.

In order to improve the situation regarding this matter, the Federation delegation organised several meetings with representatives of partners and donors where this issue was addressed and the following steps were identified and afterwards undertaken to overcome the problem:

- Standardisation of narrative reporting;
- Standardisation of financial reporting and reimbursement rules;
- Defining of minimal local projects implementation requirements for Red Cross branches;
- Agreeing the overall project log frames – objectives, expected results and indicators;
- Regular communication between all partners.



In December, the Federation delegation has commissioned the publishing of the 'Zrnice' calendar with the following requirements:

- There should be no year printed on the calendar and it should be designed in a way that allows its usage in leap years;
- The logos of the Red Cross of Serbia and the Red Cross of Montenegro should be on the first page, while logos of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the International Federation should be on the last page;
- Versions in Serbian, ekavian and jekavian dialect, English and Roma language will be obtained;

- An e-copy of the calendar on a CD (high-quality unlocked Adobe portable document file and the press layout of the document) will be obtained as well as the copyright for the International Federation to print copies of this publication later on.

The calendar will be finalised in 2006 and will be available to all Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. The Swiss Agency for Development and cooperation may use it as they see fit.

### **Impact**

Up to 85% of children who attend Roma kindergartens end up enrolling in primary school which is significantly higher than the usual enrolment among Roma (anywhere between 5% and 50% depending on the region), but the true test will be the rate of drop outs over the next years. Social Welfare Roma programme has been extended to providing additional classes to children enrolled to primary school (if necessary). The efforts were made (with the assistance of the Ministry of Education and Sport) to ensure as high a compatibility as possible of the Red Cross kindergarten programme with the official kindergarten curriculum as prescribed by the Ministry.

The implementation of local projects has ensured the access of children with disabilities to community services in 44 municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro. In total, 1,111 children with disabilities have been supported to develop/improve everyday skills resulting in improved self-confidence and reduced impairment. Family members, mainly parents, have acquired knowledge and skills needed to support the family member living with disabilities through participation in psychosocial support workshops.

### **Constraints**

Efforts are continually being made to ensure standardisation of the activities across all implementing branches as well as compliance with the official pre-school education curriculum as provided by the government. The Red Cross as well as the beneficiary groups covered by these activities have to work harder to achieve higher level of discipline in order to reap positive results of these activities (government funding, expanded activities etc.)

## **Health promotion**

**Expected results: Public awareness of the benefits of healthy lifestyles is raised through health promotion activities which encourage a more strategic approach and position the national society as an auxiliary to government.**

In 2004, a Branch capacity building fund was set up to support branches to implement projects on HIV/AIDS prevention. All branches of the NS were invited to an open competition jointly organized by the NS and Federation delegation. Strict procedures and a transparent selection process, including sharing guidelines and forms with interested branches, gave a total of eight projects to be supported.

The results of this open competition enable the national society to demonstrate the interest of the Red Cross in HIV/AIDS prevention to key stakeholders in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as to define the scope of activities branch volunteers are interested in regarding this issue. This will lead to the development of the NS strategy on HIV/AIDS, based on best practices. Moreover, the experiences gathered through this process (designed to be as transparent as possible), especially at branch level will serve as a basis for the improvement of the project design cycle in future.

In the first half of the year, the implementing branches went through detailed planning and budgeting of their projects and the actual implementation is ongoing. At the same time, their work is continually evaluated and analysed with a double aim: to create guidelines about project design/management/reporting for other branches, as well as to produce a concept paper on the national society's HIV/ AIDS strategy. The branch projects have been finished in October and the evaluation of the work, followed by the creation of more strategic documents is in preparation. Another cycle of projects, based on the evaluation of the current round is planned for 2006.

There discussions with the Youth of JAZAS (leading Serbian NGO in the area of youth peer education on HIV/AIDS) about possible partnership with the Red Cross of Serbia and future work in this field resulted in a joint campaign marking the International HIV/AIDS day. December the 1<sup>st</sup> was marked with the promotion of a video

clip produced jointly by JAZAS and the Red Cross of Serbia. Following the promotional activities that lasted throughout the month, the video was distributed in DVD format to all interested partner organisations, television stations and other media. Additionally, condom pendants with Red Cross logo were produced and distributed to general public (youth mostly), accompanied with condoms and balloons in actions throughout the country.

### **Impact**

The projects in branches have not yet been evaluated so their individual impact has yet to be measured. However, the effects the project had on standardisation of project proposals, management, reporting and other procedures is visible in other programmes and activities and the fact that the practices and procedures tested in this project are becoming official parts of the work for the national society (at least when dealing with donors). Refining these procedures through this project and then replicating them at all levels of the national society is an important activity in its own right.

### **Constraints**

The uncertainty of future funding is a constraint. The programme needs more time for the best ideas to crystallise and then be replicated/expanded into a national society strategy.

## **2. Disaster Management**

**Goal:** The country's most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and socially vulnerable people maintain their dignity, their minimum living standards and are well nourished. The effects of local and national disasters are mitigated by a rapid, well-resourced and coordinated response mechanism.

**Objective:** The national society continues to provide cost effective relief assistance (food and non-food) to beneficiaries in need, while strengthening its capacity to be prepared for, and respond to emergency situations.

### **Disaster preparedness**

**Expected Results: A well-integrated disaster management system is further developed with a network of disaster response teams who receive higher training, are equipped and able to provide rapid assistance and host international relief teams and emergency response units. The role of the national society within a national and regional disaster management plan is clearly defined. A legal framework for disaster response is continually addressed and reshaped to bring further clarity to roles, commitments and duties within the national disaster preparedness system. 36 municipalities particularly vulnerable to disaster will undergo Municipal Emergency Management Improvement (MEMI) Methodology exercises in order to strengthen co-ordination of preparedness, mitigation and response between agencies at local level.**

The Disaster Preparedness programme has been discussed at length in the national society, in an effort to improve the setup and performance, especially with the possibility of a split between republics in the state union in near future. The workshops planned for 2006 will help analyse this issue as well as address the outstanding training and retraining needs.

In the meantime, the activities in the Municipal Disaster Preparedness programme went as planned. Five simulations in new municipalities were organised, as well as follow-up meetings in six municipalities where the simulations took place earlier. As the follow-up meetings serve to assess the effects and impact of the simulation in the particular community, a questionnaire was prepared to do the more in-depth analysis and collect comparable data from all the municipalities where the simulations were done. The collected data so far demonstrated improvements in municipal-level coordination between agencies, as stated by their heads, in about half the communities analysed.

As usual, the simulations were among other things, an opportunity to present the capacities of the Red Cross (local and national) in terms of disaster preparedness/response. Presence of representatives of appropriate government bodies (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior) served to strengthen the positions of the Red Cross in the future disaster preparedness setup in both republics.



**Municipal DP simulation in Podgorica**

### **Impact**

Red Cross is no longer an isolated disaster preparedness actor. In municipalities where the simulations were completed there is a far deeper understanding of roles and responsibilities of each interested party with a place for and expectation from the Red Cross to make its contribution. Moreover, the republic authorities take an active role in this project, participating in local meetings and simulations. This ensures a good position for the Red Cross in the future republic disaster preparedness bodies and legislation. It is hoped that this pilot project will ultimately serve as blueprint for structuring a government endorsed programme for the improvement of disaster management coordination.

Inter-agency cooperation is the essence of the Municipal Disaster Preparedness project as its objectives are to improve coordination between different actors. At municipal level, representatives of emergency health service, police, fire department and local government all take part in the simulation, while the representatives of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior also join as observers. At the moment, in Serbia, preparations for the government-lead disaster preparedness/response agency are in the works and Red Cross is considered to be one of the key members. This is confirmed by having the national society participate in the work of the working group drafting the new law on disaster preparedness in Serbia.

### **Constraints**

Besides uncertain future funding, political instability is another potentially dangerous factor. Change of administration often leads to change of many of the key staff in the services relevant for this programme, as well as policies and procedures.

## **Vocational Training for Refugees**

**Expected results: The Federation assists the national society to provide 150 beneficiaries - unemployed refugees and social cases - with vocational training, as a result increasing their chances of permanent employment. Networking with local partners (Red Cross branches, National Employment Agency, Adult Education College) will ensure the appropriate direction of the training, the proper follow up as well as the proper level of advocacy.**

To enable refugees who have opted for local integration to compete on the labour market (increasing their self-sufficiency), the Federation supports the National Society in implementing a programme of vocational training to refugees. The choice of actual skills is made in co-operation with National Employment Agency branches, based on their statistics of skills currently sought. The Red Cross is co-ordinating the training, the selection of beneficiaries and, most important of all, the follow-up. Project agreement has been signed and the training courses started in January 2005. The first round was finished in April and the second one in October. So far, the programme has been run in five municipalities and the results have been good with more than 50% of the beneficiaries managing to get employment within three months after finishing the course. Since October, the project has been expanded to three more municipalities and the current cycle of training is coming to an end at the time of writing this report. At the moment, with eight municipalities running the programme, there are around 120 beneficiaries involved per training cycle, in all parts of the country.

### **Impact**

So far the success has been encouraging, taking into account the general level of unemployment in the country. Over 50% of all the trained beneficiaries have been able to find employment within ninety days of completing training.

### **Constraints**

The situation with employment in general is not improving, which naturally means difficulties for the beneficiaries of this project as well.

## **Asylum seekers**

**Expected results: The Federation assists the national society in providing assistance to and advocating for asylum seekers in the country, integrating with European initiatives and co-operating closely with the authorities on a legal framework.**

The national society has conducted regular visits to the 'Shelter for Aliens', namely, the Centre for irregular foreign migrants in Padinska Skela, near Belgrade, once a month since March 2004 when the Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Serbian Ministry of Interior. During these visits, representatives of the national society have been able to speak with the occupants of the shelter in privacy in order to find out their needs and review their treatment by detention authorities. In terms of direct assistance the national society provided hygiene packages (toothpaste, tooth brushes and shampoos) for approximately 50 detainees in the detention centre for asylum seekers near Belgrade, through visits each month.

The national society continued being an active member of the working group producing a law on asylum in Serbia. At the same time, the NS has been active internationally (participation at the ECRE meeting in London) and nationally with media activities related to the up and coming law on asylum seekers.

### **Impact**

The difficult period of detention for asylum seekers has been somewhat alleviated. The Red Cross helped decrease psychological tension through reestablishment of family links. Additionally there was successful prevention of diseases spreading among the detainees through provision of hygienic products and clothes.

Mass media have been regularly briefed about the abovementioned activities. The general public, aware of the long-lasting Red Cross activities with refugees from the sub-region (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia), has been gradually introduced to other categories of migrants

### **Constraints**

All of the enlisted activities have been conducted from the federal level of the national society. Precisely, it has been done from the International Department by one employee, assisted by another employee from the Red Cross of Serbia and volunteers from the SMRCS Working Group on Migrations. A new Statutes of SMRCS, adopted in June, puts future engagement on migrations issues at the Headquarters level, too. However, a slight increase of capacities might come as a result of the new intentions to respond to the needs of returnees (readmission procedure) and victims in human trafficking. In general, there have been increasing efforts of the authorities to accelerate the process of harmonization of national legal instruments with the European Union (EU) legislations, which will affect further Red Cross activities with foreign migrants positively. The possible split of the state union in 2006 will most definitely affect this area of work too.

## **3. Humanitarian values**

The International Decade of Roma Inclusion (a regional initiative) was officially launched in Belgrade, in April. With a focus on education, corresponding well with the Roma Open Kindergarten programme, the Red Cross is well placed to be a key player in this important initiative. It fits well with the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Roma Strategy and could be a significant opportunity for the whole region. Looking into the opportunities to expand the activities in this field, the Federation delegation has added another delegate to the staff. Ms. Mia Hellesthøj's interest is in looking into opportunities to develop programmes and activities dealing with Roma

population and possibly other minorities. So far, her work has been linked to the coordination of activities with Roma IDPs in Montenegro as well as to the assistance with preparing project proposals to new donors (like Roma Education Fund). The new project proposals use the past and current Red Cross activities with Roma population as the basis to build on.

The Federation participated in two international conferences on combating trafficking in human beings, one in Cavtat, Croatia and other in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro. Both have involved numerous participants from national societies (within and outside the region), NGOs and government representatives and both have produced a host of recommendations to be implemented between stakeholders. Specifically, the national societies in the region are encouraged to develop more dynamic bilateral relationships in this area of work, in addition to the existing centrally coordinated activities.

#### **4. Organisational Development**

The three-year work in the Organisational development programme of the national society in Serbia and Montenegro was evaluated in mid-2004. The results of the evaluation, presented through a series of recommendations for the development of the national society have served as a basis for planning the new cycle of the Organisational Development programme. During autumn 2004 Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society has, with support of the delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, organised a series of workshops devoted to the planning process. Representatives from all levels of the national society participating in these workshops have through methodical work analysed the current position of the organisation, looked over the results of activities so far and identified the priority areas of organisational development in the next three years period.

The five identified priority areas over the next three years are based in these recommendations but they also reflect the ideas of the members of the national society about the continuing development of the organisation. The five identified priority areas of development are: human resources, legal base, financing, programme focus and public relations. Coordinated work in these five areas should at the end of the three year period bring forth significant, important changes for the national society. Concentrated efforts of Red Cross people from all levels will bring forth the following results:

- Modern new structure of the organisation
- Staff being more skilled and more motivated
- Well defined role in the society and flawless public image
- Stable financial basis
- Efficiently managed programmes targeting the most vulnerable population with optimal resource utilisation and maximum impact

After identifying five priority areas and setting general goals for each of them the workshop participants have been hard at work finding out ways to achieve these goals. The final product of the last workshop was the draft plans of action for each of the priority areas. These drafts were afterwards systematised and formatted and as such presented to the Federal Board of Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society. At the moment the planning process is still underway. The uncertainty of the future shape of the national society (pending the possible dissolution of the state union) is however slowing everything down.

Meanwhile, the remaining activities from the previous programme cycle have been finalised.

Finance development and IT & Communication projects have been implemented in parallel in the Red Cross of Montenegro since January 2005. The lessons learned from the implementation of both projects in the Red Cross of Serbia in the past three years helped make the work in Montenegro smoother and quicker.

In order to improve the financial management, accountability and transparency in the Red Cross of Montenegro, and through this the overall performance as well as financial situation, it was necessary to first provide a technological basis and then follow it up with specific tools and training. In practise this meant providing all branches with access to the Internet and providing RCM headquarters as well as accounting centres with

equipment sufficient to assure handling of appropriate data as well as the necessary level of security. An assessment of the existing system was made and the structure of the future IT/accounting network adopted. The equipment was procured and distributed.

In the reporting period, a set of standard accounting procedures was produced (adapted from the previously produced set for the Red Cross of Serbia) and adopted by the MRC board, in order to bring the organisation to a more modern, more efficient level, compatible with the new legislation and the EU standards. Related training for the appropriate staff in branches, headquarters and accounting centres was also provided.

At the same time, the work on producing a modular software package for financial and business management (HUBIE-erp) went on. The version done for the Red Cross of Serbia was heavily modified to take into the account the specific needs of MRC as well as differences in legislation/monetary policies between the two republics. By the end of February 2006, all of the modules were repeatedly tested in RCM headquarters and accounting centres and the software is now officially accepted in its final version. The training of staff for use of this package started in October with the representatives of the developing company delivering initial training and continued until today through internal RCM training.

In Serbia, most of the work was related to support of the RCS in making use of its newly acquired hardware and software, training the staff and outlining procedures and practices. A staff member in RCS was designated to be responsible for the complete overhaul of the organisation's web presentation so training and coaching for this person was provided.

The work on the modular training system for volunteers has continued through workshops with branches responsible for individual modules and the consolidated pilot modules are expected to be finished in the first half of 2006.

The Commercial First Aid pilot project has been postponed to 2006, with likely bilateral funding by Belgian Red Cross.

## **5. Coordination, Cooperation, and Strategic Partnerships. Effective Representation and Advocacy**

**Goal:** In partnership with civil society and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the national society is able to deliver appropriate, needs-led, volunteer delivered assistance to persons in need, in a cost-effective and transparent manner.

**Objective:** To develop a set of clearly defined national society operational priorities that accurately reflect national society capacity and added value and that are understood, respected and supported by a diverse range of partner organisations.

**Expected Result: Restated national society priorities serve as the platform for improving cooperation within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with government and with other partners .**

The presence of different national societies in the country has diminished over the years after the end of conflicts in the region. However, several long-time partners have remained present and active, namely Spanish Red Cross, working closely with the Federation on the Home care programme. The Luxembourg Red Cross has renewed its service agreement with the Federation and continued its micro-credits programme for failed asylum seekers returnees to Serbia and Montenegro. Norwegian Red Cross is still awaiting the confirmation that the government of Serbia will support the IT & communications infrastructure, to continue its First Aid project. Danish Red Cross is a partner with the Red Cross of Montenegro in a project supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction, targeting Roma IDP population in Konik camp. The Federation delegate Mia Hellesthøj is helping coordinate this activity and ensure its compatibility with other Red Cross activities with Roma population. Spanish Red Cross has officially ended its bilateral support to both Home Care and Social Welfare programmes and currently has no activities in Serbia and Montenegro. The branches supported by Spanish Red Cross have been handed over to the

Federation – all of them in case of Home Care and six out of 24 in case of the Social Welfare with other branches having a chance to compete for support again in 2006.

The partnership between the national society, Federation and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the Roma Kindergarten project has continued in 2005. The contract for a two and a half years programme with SDC's support has been signed in summer and the programme has been expanding since (please refer to the Social Welfare section of this document for more details).

A Baseline study for the Roma kindergarten project was carried out by the International Federation Reference Centre for Psychological Support in Copenhagen in close collaboration with the Federation delegation, the Danish Red Cross, the Red Cross of Serbia and the Red Cross of Montenegro in the last quarter of 2005. The objective was to develop monitoring and evaluation guidelines and revise the existing logical framework matrix of the project according to the findings. Training for the implementing branches will be organised in the first quarter of 2006 to introduce monitoring and evaluation process and record keeping at the branch level. It is expected that, together with new reporting and record keeping system, this will contribute to reliability of the project data. No significant changes of the logframe were suggested.

The process of producing the guidelines on the Red Cross work with Roma in Europe was initiated during a networking meeting held in Belgrade in April 2005. Representatives of the International Federation, European National Societies, non-governmental organisations and institutions working with Roma attended the meeting. The purpose of such guidelines is to assist the National Societies in approaching the Roma issue and in developing initiatives targeting marginalized groups, taken into consideration the Red Cross role and capacities, best practises and experiences as well as linking the work with the strategies of the Red Cross movement. More specifically the guidelines should include mapping of the existing activities and capacities as well as the inclusion of the Roma minority in the Red Cross, assessment of the positioning of the Red Cross in relation to the Roma issues both regarding national and international Roma strategies and initiatives as well as the strategies of the Red Cross movement itself. Furthermore it should give recommendations on how to coordinate and cooperate in the field of Roma in the Red Cross movement.

An international consultant was hired to carry out the work needed. The draft report is being commented at the moment of writing this report. The work on the guidelines will be followed up by a second networking meeting that will take place when a draft version of the guidelines is produced, enabling the involved partners to give comments before a final version is developed.

Significant work was invested by the Federation in both republics on advocating for the laws on Red Cross. In Montenegro, the Federation Head of Delegation was part of the working group producing the draft law documents and in Serbia several meetings with the officials responsible for this document were held. Finally, the law has been adopted and passed in Serbia in October with the Montenegro law still waiting for the parliamentary debate and expected to be adopted in April 2006. Both laws acknowledge Red Cross as the auxiliary organisation to the government, list its public powers (as obligatory activities that are also granted certain level of funding from the government) and, on paper, improve its funding situation. The implementation of the laws, however, is something to be worked on in 2006.

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