

Programme Update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Lebanon

Appeal No. MAALB001

31/08/2008

This report covers the period 01/01/2008 to 30/06/2008.



Blood campaigns were organised by Lebanese Red Cross as part of the World Blood Donation Day, aiming to increase the number of voluntary blood donations.
International Federation

In brief

Programmes purpose: The overall priority of the Lebanese Red Cross (Lebanese RC) is to continue the implementation of institutional changes; strengthen quality performance of first aid and ambulance services; continue assistance through the primary health care (PHC) and social centres, strengthen the volunteer base through the youth as the future capital of the National Society and ensure quality performance of the services performed through the blood banks.

Programmes summary: As predicted, the situation in Lebanon remained extremely tense and volatile during the first six months of 2008. The political impasse which dominated 2007 worsened into 2008, with the failure to elect a president and the increasing stand-off between political factions culminating in violent street clashes in May 2008. The population was brought to the brink of civil war barely avoided by immediate diplomatic intervention by Arab states. While the subsequent agreement between all factions in Doha saw the election of a president and the establishment of a national unity government, the consequences shook the population, brought on a new power base and created possibly a stronger trend towards the armament of militias.

The implementation of the programmes has continued at a pace equivalent to the constraints and challenges faced in the context. The Lebanese RC maintained a high level of emergency preparedness while ensuring the momentum of institutional change. The process to develop a

strategic plan and address the legal base through a statute revision process was ongoing while internal capacity reviews provided assurance of a willingness to address the role and responsibility of the National Society within disaster management and health and care. In addition, the proposed review of the youth volunteers' structure and management was completed and a mapping of activities for the second half of the year initiated. In terms of support to improved structures and systems within the headquarters, progress was made on finance and logistics development. The International Federation additionally provided support to the emergency medical services (EMS) five year strategy, in particular targeting the improved functioning of the fleet base.

The Lebanese RC was on high alert during the street clashes in May 2008. Due to the increased pressure on human and financial resources during the intense fighting, a disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) allocation of CHF 70,000 (USD 66,995 or EUR 42,950) was approved.

Financial situation: The total 2008 budget was revised from CHF 914,963 (USD 871,393 or EUR 559,610) to CHF 818,711 (USD 779,725 or EUR 500,741), of which 84 per cent covered. The target was revised based on implementation rates and donor response to the Appeal. Overall expenditure was CHF 244,647.

[Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

No. of people we help: Through the support to disaster management (EMS) and health and care activities (including the blood bank and medico-social department activities), the National Society covered 117,423 first aid missions, provided 34,060 medical consultations (26,800 female and 7,260 male) and delivered 8,980 blood units. For activities related specifically to HIV/AIDS, including both prevention and stigma and discrimination, the National Society targeted 2,630 youth in a public campaign and through a specific AIDS rally. The prisons programme covered 1,370 beneficiaries through its activities.

In addition, capacity building activities targeted headquarters and branch staff in the logistics, finance, IT, blood bank, medico-social, youth, internal affairs and planning departments.

Our partners: The partners of the Lebanese RC have been relatively stable over the past few months, with the Norwegian government and Red Cross and Canadian Red Cross being the main donors to the International Federation supported programmes. In addition, bilateral support has been forthcoming from the Belgium Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, the American Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Lebanese RC has also been able to attract non-Movement partners for short and long term programmes. These have included the American Taskforce for Lebanon and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), while a close coordination for emergency situations was maintained with the government's emergency response taskforce and other state and non-state actors.

Context

As predicted in the analysis for Lebanon for 2008, the country context remained volatile in the first half of the year with a political stand-off since the end of 2006 ultimately culminating in wide-spread clashes between rival factions in May 2008. The political and eventually military crisis, brought on by the failure to find consensus on the constellation of a new government following the resignation of key opposition members of parliament and the president's position being vacant for six months, left the country on the brink of civil war and was only avoided by diplomatic initiatives aimed at pursuing a continued process of conciliation in Lebanon. While an agreement in Doha brought about the election of a president and the formation of a national unity government in June 2008, sectarian grievances are likely to grow in the longer-term with the clashes setting a dangerous precedent for the use of military force to protect unilateral interests. In the meantime, and following on after the agreement, continuous security incidents were reported linked to ongoing underlying tensions particularly in the north of the country as well as from within the Palestinian camps.

While the agreement in Doha created the foundation for more positive investments in the country - in particular linked to tourism, increased construction, trade and finance - the situation could be short-lived with the second half of the year affected by the run-up to parliamentary elections in 2009. As elsewhere around the region, the Lebanese economy faced rising fuel and general consumer prices, which - with little increase in basic salaries – have affected middle to lower income families. While the country was not as severely affected as some of its regional neighbours, there were increasing concerns for the most vulnerable in the suburbs of large towns and in rural and remote areas.

In the meantime, for the first time in 50 years, the country witnessed a series of earthquakes in the south of the country which brought increased attention to this growing vulnerability. A deterioration in the situation in the country resulted in the Lebanese RC having to consolidate the need to maintain a high level of emergency preparedness while ensuring the momentum of institutional change, as well as addressing new vulnerabilities.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Disaster Preparedness Institutional Level

Outcomes/Expected results

- The capacity of the Lebanese RC to respond to disasters is increased through the creation of coordination mechanisms at a regional and local level.
- Delivery of emergency response is enhanced through the implementation of the recommendation of a local level capacity assessment.
- Disaster management plan of action is adapted according to the national situation analysis.
- Development and standardisation of logistics procedures at a national level are consolidated and transferred to the regional and local level for warehousing, procurement and fleet management.

Achievements

As part of the process to have a more integrated approach within the National Society towards disaster management, the disaster management committee reviewed its capacities and entered into discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the departments at the headquarters as well as at the local branch (committee) level. The committee identified three specific objectives in terms of building the capacity and assuring the national role of the Lebanese RC in man-made as well as natural disasters:

- Necessary tools are identified to enhance the response during disasters to prevent and alleviate the suffering of affected communities.
- A response plan is developed engaging the following operational departments through the setting of a disaster management committee: EMS, medico-social, youth, blood bank and logistics.
- The Lebanese RC mandate is updated and approved by the government to play an appropriate role in emergencies.

Based on the above, an emergency plan has been developed; disaster management coordinators have been selected to coordinate between the headquarters and the local committees; and improved technical skills are being provided to the medico-social teams to ensure greater response capacity to disasters through the dispensary network and the mobile clinics. Within this field, support has also been forthcoming from the ICRC with specialised relief training for youth volunteers. Discussions on developing a contingency plan are in the process of being held.

For logistics in particular, a tripartite agreement between the Lebanese RC, the International Federation and the ICRC was renewed for capacity development, consisting of continued financial and technical support to the logistics department core areas of warehousing, procurement and fleet management. Financial support was provided to maintain the current warehouse until a permanent solution can be found, while technical support was provided in assuring the continuation of the procurement and fleet management systems. In the first six months of 2008, a plan of action was developed for all sectors, a fleet committee was established and continuous coaching on procurement and warehousing systems was maintained.

Constraints or Challenges

With a highly fractional structure to the National Society, as well as very autonomous local committees, the main challenge for the disaster management committee is to centralise the disaster preparedness and response functions and ensure that all are represented with their respective roles and responsibilities within any response plan. Furthermore, the technical skills vary significantly between the departments. This is being addressed through capacity building activities. The plan to undertake a local level capacity assessment linked to the health component as well as the youth volunteers' structure was initiated; however, the national situation analysis activity has not yet started. For logistics in particular, the fact that the current staff is contractual poses a longer-term sustainability issue. Already at the beginning of the year, two members of the staff left due to lack of job security. They were rapidly replaced and new staff was provided with technical guidance.

Emergency response

Outcome/Expected result

- Support to EMS five year strategy is consolidated to improve emergency service delivery.

Achievements

Through a contribution by the Canadian RC, the activity to provide four new ambulances to the EMS over two years was adapted instead to cover the cost of reconverting 10 new but non-standard ambulances received from various donors to the standards set in the five year strategy. This included the provision of all standard equipment for the 10 ambulances. The tender process was completed for both components of the activity and the conversion started. In addition, an initial dialogue was held to assist EMS in addressing the human resource component of the five year strategy focusing mainly on volunteer recruitment and retention. A proposed project is awaited from the Lebanese RC following technical input on a possible framework.

Constraints or Challenges

Due to the fact that the process of tendering is completed by a purchasing committee consisting of the Lebanese RC, the International Federation and the ICRC, certain procedures are lengthy. At times, there also seems to be a lack of understanding of the need to ensure all procurement standards are followed for all participating partners.

Health and Care

Psychosocial Support Programme

Outcomes/Expected results

- Access to civilians in need of psychosocial support programme (PSP) during crises is improved.
- The PSP team capacity of Lebanese RC is strengthened and ability for rapid interventions improved.
- Capacity of volunteers to cope with stress is improved.

Achievements

Following the training of trainers (ToT) activity which took place at the end of 2007, a core PSP team was established to assist in developing a stronger network of the PSP volunteers, assure the development of a strategy, and improve planning and implementation of activities. The team was meeting regularly although for the first six months activities were limited to two debriefing sessions for 32 Red Cross volunteers and one group communication session for 18 volunteers. The slower implementation rate is linked to a similar issue as with the community based first aid (CBFA). Originally PSP was placed within the teaching department as the understanding on how to apply PSP activities as well as integrate PSP in all programme areas was unclear. In the meantime, the medico-social department was also implementing PSP activities through the social assistant network.

Constraints or Challenges

The main challenge has been to identify a location within the National Society structure for the PSP team. It was decided to open discussions with the medico-social department to integrate the team which would allow for a more coordinated approach towards activities and assist in drafting one PSP strategy and subsequent plans for the National Society.

Community Based First Aid

Outcomes/Expected results

- Capacity of Lebanese RC CBFA team is improved to implement activities in communities in the north, south and east of the country.
- Health education is provided to vulnerable communities in Lebanon with specific focus on issues covering hygiene, vaccination and HIV/AIDS.

Achievements

The main focus with regards to CBFA has been on the management of the programme and to identify within which department and through which structure (i.e. volunteer base) the programme should be implemented. Lengthy discussions were held on this issue also linked to the National Society process of identifying its future role and responsibilities within the communities. It was agreed that CBFA should be focused on community based health awareness, in order not to conflict with the first aid service provided by the EMS (ambulance) and the teaching department. In order to address this structural issue, it has been agreed with the Lebanese RC to move the programme component into the medico-social department and re-activate the activities through their social assistant network in the second half of the year.

Constraints or Challenges

The CBFA programme component was put on hold pending a decision within the National Society on the integration of CBFA within the health and care programmes. Until 2007, the CBFA was placed within the teaching department; however, the latter's primary roles as support function - running the nursing schools of the Lebanese RC and providing first aid training to the public - provided them limited capacity to work within the communities.

Health and Care in Emergencies

Outcomes/Expected results

- Reproductive health and mother and child care in emergencies is integrated into the Lebanese RC health centre services.
- Awareness on avian influenza within local communities is improved.
- Capacity of Lebanese RC to respond to public health in emergencies is improved.

Achievements

Interlinked with the developments under the disaster preparedness at an institutional level, the medico-social department in particular engaged in addressing the need for increased capacity within public health care in emergencies through its dispensary networks. The function of the individuals trained last year is now highlighted in the emergency response plan with the focus on a complimentary service to the EMS. The following functions have been identified:

- Full coordination with the emergency and rescue teams with a medical doctor in the ambulance when needed.
- Coordination with the youth department all over the country and in affected areas.
- Provision of care to lightly injured people to facilitate to ease the tasks of EMS.
- Mobilisation of the mobile clinics in operations when needed.

Further elaboration of public health in emergencies within the Lebanese RC will be addressed in the future. In terms of avian influenza, the National Society has decided at this stage to no longer engage in this activity.

Based on collaboration between the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the medico-social department, the Lebanese RC assisted in the national measles campaign with its main function to provide vaccines in schools and through RC dispensaries in April and May 2008. Some 50 doctors and nurses from 22 dispensaries vaccinated 19,851 children (9 months to 15 years of age) of which 11,344 were female and 8,507 male.

In the meantime, the medico-social department, with the assistance of technical support from the Norwegian RC health advisor, has embarked on an elaboration of a capacity assessment undertaken in 2004. The assessment is due to be presented as a report in the second half of the year in order to assist in further developing a health and care strategy.

The objective to increase the number of voluntary blood donations was achieved through nine blood campaigns held in May and June as part of the World Blood Donation Day. In addition, with the financial support of the International Federation, a public awareness campaign was launched through the placement of eight large billboards on the main highways between Beirut and the north, south and Bekaa valley.

Constraints or Challenges

The medico-social department is challenged through the lack of qualified human resources and an unstable volunteer base to undertake activities. As such, many activities are run on an ad hoc basis and are not unified within a strategy based on globally identified needs. Furthermore, the department identified weak centres as one of its main constraints in implementation which it hopes to address through the capacity assessment and the subsequent recommendations later in 2008.

Capacity Development

Capacity Development at an Institutional Level

Outcomes/Expected results

- The legal and volunteers base of Lebanese RC is strengthened.

Achievements

At the beginning of the year, a statutes drafting commission was established by the National Society to present a revised version of the statutes in the second half of the year. The commission was launched during a workshop to explain the guidelines at the end of 2007 and met on a weekly basis for the first six months of the year. The commission represented both local and headquarters level senior volunteers and staff. In addition, the internal affairs department started to prepare for a new round of governance and management trainings which will target in particular the subject of the legal base as well as the election process to be held in 2009.

The development of a volunteer and membership database is slowly coming on line with all the necessary data collected by the internal affairs department. The implementation of the database will take place in the second half of the year.

Constraints or Challenges

The drafting commission faced internal and external challenges to its work, with the situation in the country making it difficult at times for members to travel for the meetings while a resistance to change within the organisation affected the motivation level. However, through a high level of engagement, the group managed to finalise their proposal.

Capacity Development at an Operational Level

Outcomes/Expected results

- Capacity of the Lebanese RC to respond to vulnerability is improved through programmes, projects, human resources and financial management.

Achievements

The strategic planning process of the National Society took on a new momentum in the second quarter of 2008, with a concerted effort by the management committee to define a process to address capacities; the added value of the National Society; roles and responsibilities in emergency and community development; identification of vulnerabilities and needs; the complimentary role with other actors and authorities; and the clarification of the auxiliary role to the government. Two strategic

workshops were held with the management team in order to assist in the momentum. In addition, the capacity assessment of the youth, medico-social and a strength and weakness mapping of all departments assisted in defining the strategy process due to be finalised for the next General Assembly at the end of the year.

In the meantime, the departments of the Lebanese RC are systematically applying the planning tools provided last year although more efforts will be made to provide standardised reporting and monitoring tools.

The proposed review of the youth structure and programmes was completed with the assistance of an external consultant by the end of the first half of the year. The recommendations were presented to the National Society and accepted and followed by a workshop with youth volunteer leaders to identify an activity plan to implement the recommendations.

With the assistance of an external consultant, the finance department of the Lebanese RC completed an assessment of finance structures and software requirements. Based on the final recommendations, new finance policies and procedures were developed and the finance department structure was reorganised. The final stage is the implementation of the required financial software which will take place in the second half of the year.

Constraints or Challenges

The capacity of the departments to manage not only the implementation of their ongoing activities but also the work towards the strategy development is draining already minimal resources. The organisation identified the following as its main constraints: insufficient technically qualified staff, high turnover rate of volunteers, poor management of volunteers, lack of financial vision for sustainability, insufficient accountability, bureaucratic procedures, lack of clear separation between governance and management, poor cooperation between local committees and central administration and out of date equipment and technical resources, all of which are being addressed through the current programme components although financial constraints at times limit the extent of implementation.

Humanitarian Values

Anti-discrimination, Marginalisation and Stigmatisation

Outcomes/Expected results

- Stigma and discrimination related to HIV is reduced among the youth.
- Marginalized prisoners in prisons and reformatory schools demonstrate improved coping mechanisms.
- Criminal activities of youth are reduced as a result of targeted awareness and prevention activities in vulnerable communities.

Achievements

The youth volunteers have been actively engaged in activities to reduce stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS. A rally was held for 70 youth to reduce misconception and increase awareness on HIV/AIDS related topics. In addition, linked more to prevention, the youth volunteers initiated an awareness campaign on the topic of sexually transmitted diseases which entailed the distribution of condoms together with an information kit at key nightlife areas during the valentine's celebration. Internally, the Lebanese RC programme coordinator initiated a better dialogue with local centres to improve consultation at a local level for global campaigns, ultimately with the aim of increasing participation and improving the outreach of the programmes.

Under the expected result to improve coping mechanisms of prisoners, the Lebanese RC youth volunteers conducted awareness sessions on the prevention of respiratory diseases assisted by the distribution of hygiene kits. A total of 715 male and 19 female prisoners were targeted by 33 volunteers.

Expected result number three was put on hold pending the outcome of the youth department review.

Constraints or Challenges

The length of time taken to develop the activity plans considerably influences implementation rates. More efforts will be placed to finalise activity plans before the start of the new year. The security situation in the first six months additionally made it difficult to implement large-scale awareness campaigns.

Promotion of Fundamental Principles

Outcome/Expected result

- The population is more aware of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) principles and activities of the Lebanese RC.

Achievements

The Lebanese RC was not yet able to focus on developing a new marketing tool, due to the limited capacity of the public relations (PR)/communications department in terms of human and financial resources. The web site which was funded and developed under the Middle East Humanitarian Crisis Appeal came online during the first quarter of the year and was used to promote the activities of the Lebanese RC during the clashes in May. For this, funding was provided for an additional staff member. The 8th of May campaign was also cancelled due to the contextual situation. In the meantime, the PR/communications department maintains a good reputation within the public and the media network and is able to implement activities on behalf of other departments as well as attract good coverage of media events.

Constraints or Challenges

The identified challenges include the lack of technical know-how within the human resource base, limited finances and an unclear mandate for the PR/communications department.

Working in partnership

The strength of the Lebanese RC is to permeate all levels of the Lebanese society. Its leadership has actively sought to engage with other actors although at all times maintaining a principled distance. The National Society is now represented in a newly established emergency response taskforce developed by the authorities in which the roles and responsibilities of state and non-state actors have been identified.

Within the Movement, close coordination has been maintained between the Lebanese RC, the ICRC and the International Federation through joint meetings and open information exchange. Monthly Movement coordination meetings were held with partner National Societies (PNSs) engaged in the short or longer term either directly through the Lebanese RC or through the International Federation and ICRC. This includes representation from the five permanent PNSs - the Belgium RC, the Iranian Red Crescent, the Palestine Red Crescent Society/Lebanon Branch, the Netherlands RC and the French RC. Close partnership will continue to be maintained with the longer-term partners such as the Norwegian RC as well regional cooperation between the Lebanese RC with the Qatar Red Crescent and Kuwait Red Crescent.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The ongoing commitment of the National Society to concentrate on its systems, structures and strategic direction at a national and local level aims to ensure a longer term vision and approach to address the changing needs and vulnerabilities within the context. This can be seen through its initiative to create a development plan and drawing on resources from the International Federation and others, ultimately aiming for improved longer-term performance and accountability. A strategic process addressing its mandate, role, vulnerabilities and needs takes into account the fact that the National Society is the only organisation in the midst of a plethora of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which can claim in Lebanon to transcend all political and confessional boundaries. The gender and religious and general diversity within its network of 4,000 volunteers promotes respect and tolerance within a highly politicised society. This is either achieved through its EMS teams or through the network of youth centres and medical dispensaries.

Looking ahead

The International Federation supported programmes will continue to maintain an approach linked primarily to facilitate the ongoing strategic process of the National Society in terms of defining its role and responsibility as a key civil society organisation as well as maintaining and increasing the diversity of its current disaster management and health and care portfolios. The process of the youth review and the medico-social capacity analysis will continue as a key component to improving the added value of the Lebanese RC in vulnerable communities. Defining the necessary tools and training to support the strategic process will be a priority in the second quarter of 2008. Attention will be placed on the continued application of new or amended internal systems and improved skills base at a local level.

At all times, security remains a risk factor not only in the implementation of longer-term programmes but also for the volunteers in the field. The ongoing clashes in the north of the country highlight a continued fragile foundation for the immediate future.

How we work	
The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".	Global Agenda Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Lebanon: Mr. Sheikh Sami Al DahDah, President, Lebanese Red Cross, Beirut; email: president@redcross.org.lb; phone: +961 1 37 28 04/05; and fax: +961 1 37 82 07.• In Lebanon: Ms. Anne-Katherine Moore Karlsen; Country Representative, Lebanon Representation, Beirut; e-mail: ak.moorekarlsen@ifrc.org; phone: +961 1 34 99 44; and fax: +961 1 34 99 33.• In MENA Zone: Mr. Marwan Jilani, Head of Zone Office (temporary in Amman); email: marwan.jilani@ifrc.org; phone: +962 6 562 79 34; and fax: +962 6 569 45 56 or Mr. Eduard Tschan, Deputy Head of Zone Office; email: eduard.tschan@ifrc.org; phone: +962 79 504 29 22; and fax: +962 6 569 45 56.• In Geneva: Jaeryul Kim, Officer, Management Support Unit; email: jr.kim@ifrc.org; phone: +41 22 730 4260; and fax: +4122 730 0395.	