

Mid-Year report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belarus

MAABY002

31 August 2010

This report covers the period 1 January 2010
to 30 June 2010.



"A window of hope" – Red Cross food parcels reach a destitute multi-child family in the Chernobyl affected village of Vetka district, Gomel region. Photo: Belarus Red Cross.

In brief

Programme outcome: The Federation supported programmes in Belarus aim to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters; to reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies; to increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability; and to promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme(s) summary: There is a growing understanding at all levels of the Belarus Red Cross that developing volunteering is the main way to making its service delivery in local communities more effective and fulfilling the mission of the organization. Thanks to volunteers the activities in the district branches on social assistance for vulnerable people and promotion of humanitarian values are becoming more regular, planned and focused. Volunteer community-based activities raise the image of the Red Cross as a humanitarian non-governmental organization, attract public attention to the problems of vulnerable groups and serve as an effective tool for local resource mobilization. It is obvious that volunteer development and promotion, which is currently on the rise within the National Society, contributes significantly to organizational development/capacity building and performance.

A revision of the Belarus Red Cross law has been initiated by the by Belarusian lawmakers. However the revisions proposed by the National Society, mainly related to tax benefits and financial support from the government, have not been included in the draft law. The Belarus Red Cross and IFRC will continue lobbying for fiscal concessions from the government. A bronze bust of Henry Dunant was unveiled on the eve of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in Minsk. Top representatives from the European Union, the United Nations, ambassadors, ministries of health and justice, and city authorities attended the opening ceremony. The erection of the bust was made possible with the support of ICRC, IFRC, Japanese Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross, German Red Cross and Belarus Red Cross funds.

Financial situation: The total 2010 budget is CHF 1,674,019 (USD 1,613,390 or EUR 1,275,720) of which CHF 852,504 (51 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). The budget was increased from initially CHF 1,281,297 due to increased funding. Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 531,161. Expenditure against budget was 32 per cent and expenditure against funding was 62 per cent. [Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

See also [Belarus Country Plan 2010-2011](#)

No. of people we help: More than 45,000 people in Belarus benefited directly from the Federation secretariat supported programme interventions. More than 160,000 people were reached indirectly through mass information campaigns.

Our partners: The Belarus Red Cross cooperates with nine partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), NGOs, the national centre for blood donation, national AIDS centre, ministries and governmental organizations, universities and other educational institutions, mass media as well as international and local enterprises. Concept notes and project proposals for EU funding were submitted by the Belarus Red Cross in cooperation with partner National Societies and IFRC.

Context

According to the World Bank Belarus remains one of the least reformed countries in the pre-1990 eastern bloc. Its state-dominated economy has depended heavily on cheap oil and gas from Russia, a benefit that has diminished as relations between the once-close allies have soured. IMF forecasts that the total external debt of Belarus in 2010 will reach the highest level in history to take up some 52 percent of GDP¹ while the state foreign debt would also reach its highest level ever to take up 24 per cent of the total GDP compared to 18 percent in 2009. The annual GDP of 2010 is estimated to grow 2.4 per cent. The government's statist economic model is expected to remain under strain in 2010 and 2011 as external demand remains below the level before the economic crisis and as Russia continues to raise gas prices and wind down concessions on terms of trade in the oil sector, which formerly bolstered government finances.²

The living standard for ordinary people in Belarus has worsened in recent years with poverty and unemployment rates becoming more acute as a result of the global recession. Poverty is widespread among unemployed people, the rural population, pensioners, and children in large families, families with unemployed and single parents. For the first time in several years the Red Cross is receiving a lot of requests for clothes, money and food support.

HIV and AIDS are of great concern in Belarus. Per May 2010 totally 11,044 cases of HIV infection were registered and during the first four months of 2010, totally 354 patients were diagnosed with HIV infection. Most people living with HIV (PLHIV) are aged 15-29³. Almost 52 per cent of people living with HIV today got infected through injecting drug use. However, between 2006 and 2009 the number of people infected through sexual transmission increased with 14 per cent. In recent years sexually transmitted HIV has taken over as the main source of transmission and in the first four months of 2010 as many as 3 out of 4 new HIV cases were transmitted sexually.

¹ Total external debt consist of state foreign debt plus private foreign debt (mainly state enterprises).

² Economist Intelligence Unit.

³ The total number of HIV infection cases in the above mentioned age group is 7,279 (the proportion of young people is 66 per cent of all cumulative registered HIV cases)

Over the past few years non-medical use of psychoactive substances has become a pressing issue. Studies of drug abuse point to a fall in the average age of registered drug users and in the age at which drug use begins, an increasing proportion of “hard” drugs, and their growing availability. According to the Ministry of Health the number of drug users registered in dispensaries increased by 31 per cent from 2005 to 2009.⁴ At the end of 2009, a total of 8,058 drug users were registered. However the real number is assumed to be several times higher and in 2008 the estimated number of intravenous drug users was around 76,000 persons.⁵

Trafficking in persons, especially women, has become a major challenge. The government has demonstrated its commitment and made visible efforts to counteract irregular migration, trafficking in human beings and related crime. IOM, however, observes that the country’s capacity to respond to migration challenges is limited and that additional efforts and support is needed. In this context, efforts to cultivate non-tolerance towards exploitation, violence and forced labour play an important role.

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Component 1: HIV and AIDS

Component outcome 1: Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection.

Component outcome 2: Vulnerability of PLHIV decreased through reducing HIV stigma and discrimination.

Component outcome 3: The capacity of the National Society to deliver and sustain scaled-up HIV programmes strengthened.

Achievements: Under the *Youth against HIV* project the Belarus Red Cross involved 24,512 people through 214 HIV peer education and movie sessions, youth actions and seminars. Out of these 2,692 young people, of which slightly more than 57 per cent women received reliable information through peer education sessions. These sessions are an integral component of the standard HIV six-stage model which is successfully continuing in 22 educational institutions in the target regions. The six best HIV prevention voluntary initiatives were selected on a competitive basis for granting. Moreover 28 pairs of volunteer-trainers (ToT) and 132 volunteers from 29 project regions were trained

In order to refresh and upgrade the qualifications of previously trained instructors workshops covering both volunteers without and with work experience in HIV work were held. The workshops thus represented a forum for constructive dialogue between volunteers with mixed work experience, knowledge and attitudes. Furthermore the most experienced volunteers were trained as supervisors, which upgrade their qualifications and serves as an incentive for further involvement. A person representing people living with HIV (PLHIV) acted as a facilitator and expert-supervisor in the workshops. Public events dedicated to the AIDS Memorial Day, St. Valentine’s Day, the World TB Day and the World Day without Tobacco were held throughout the country. The art-exhibition “*A city, where people live*” was held in Zhodino in Minsk oblast (region) to promote respect for civil and human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS, to debunk myths about HIV and AIDS and to promote humane and tolerant attitudes towards PLHIV.

HIV prevention and anti-discrimination activities within the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* continued at the three largest national enterprises including Belarusian Auto Works (BELAZ), Belarus Steel Works and Belarus State Railways. The project will assist companies in

⁴ Aleksandrov A. A., Chief Narcologist of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus. Drug abuse treatment in Belarus / Medical newsletter, March 1, 2010 – <http://www.medvestnik.by/news/content/quick/4678.html>

⁵ Equalling approximately 1.3 per cent of the country’s population between aged between 15 and 54. Belarusian Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addictions.

informing staff and their families about safe sexual behaviour, preventing HIV to affect staff's performance and creating more balanced labour relations.

Since the beginning of December 2009 the project has covered 11,112 people with 25 per cent under the age of 31. Secondary target group coverage is estimated at approximately 19,300 people including family members of staff and more than 22,500 people from local communities. A training of trainers (ToT) was conducted in January for groups established at the enterprises.⁶ The most active training was held at Belarusian Steel Works where, upon the request of the director general the main module "*What should everyone know about HIV?*" was included into the mandatory training programme for the participants of skill improvement.

During the training the participation of a representative from the «Belarusian community of PLHIV» with disclosed HIV positive status strengthened the impact of the events, particularly with regards to reducing stigma and discrimination which was also the purpose of involving the representative. Moreover in the framework of the projects *HIV prevention in the field of labour* and *Youth against HIV* the representative published views on the events on the website of the PLHIV community.⁷ So far in 2010 five articles were published which share the perception of the Red Cross HIV activities from the point of view of the community. In total 46 people including 24 enterprise staff aged below 31 who are also Red Cross volunteers and 22 Belarus Red Cross volunteers were involved in implementing the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour*.

The above activities prompted the companies to adopt policies on HIV prevention and prohibiting discrimination towards people living with HIV. For the first time in Belarus enterprise managers approved regulations based on ILO's basic principles aiming to prevent discrimination on the basis of health status and included HIV prevention trainings for the staff during working hours. In line with their policies and action plans the enterprises will continue their work towards reducing stigma and discrimination against PLHIV.

In March the Belarus Red Cross presidium approved its own policy on HIV prevention and prohibition of discrimination towards people living with HIV. The policy is aligned with the Federation policy on HIV and AIDS and will be shared with Belarus Red Cross staff members and volunteers as well as the public. In order to introduce the policy and consolidate its efforts on HIV prevention and reduction of stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV it will also be shared with partners of the National Society.

Supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) the National Society runs harm reduction and HIV and AIDS palliative care activities.

Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers also took part in several trainings:

- Supported by IFRC Red Cross staff took part in TB advocacy training of trainers for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries held by Advocacy Partnership (UK) and IFRC in June;
- Supported by IFRC two representatives from Belarus Red Cross regional harm reduction centers participated in trainings organized by the Italian Red Cross at Villa Maraini;
- One youth volunteer attended HIV prevention training for trainers organised by the Bulgarian Red Cross.

In March the society organized World TB Day activities in 35 cities. More than 1,000 volunteers disseminated 150,000 copies of information materials. Movies were shown in 11 movie theatres throughout the country free of charge.

⁶ The training was organized in cooperation with the Institute of Professional Skills Improvement for managers and specialists. The training was provided by highly professional staff of the Russian representative office of the Global Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), who has experience in implementing the awareness programme "Health @t work" at Russian and Ukrainian companies. In Belarus "Health @t work", upon request of the Belarus Red Cross is targeting companies, enterprises and organizations.

⁷ www.hiv.by

Component 2: Community-based first aid

Component outcome 1: Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) have increased.

The first-aid component was not supported through IFRC. However, with bilateral support from the French Red Cross, Estonian Red Cross and the European Reference Centre for First Aid Education a sustainable first-aid training system is being developed through courses and training and development of a first-aid manual.

Component 3: Human pandemic influenza

Component outcome 1: Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with avian and human influenza pandemic have increased.

In order to face up to the challenge posed by H2P, 45 trainers and 540 volunteers were trained in 56 districts of Belarus. These volunteers conducted 2,100 information sessions and disseminated information materials to 120,000 members of local communities. In March IFRC supported the making of a film on H2P project activities.⁸

Constraints or Challenges: Integrating the cycle of the six-stage HIV peer education model into the education for pupils in schools remains a challenge. Recommendations were developed on how to organize meetings with school administrations to support regional coordinators and peer educators so that agreements can be reached on hosting the full cycle.

Volunteers in several regions in Belarus are interested in organizing HIV prevention events and adopting new working methods. The volunteers are particularly interested in the international movement *Dance4life*. Owing to limited resources for coordinated implementation, volunteers adopt *Dance4life* activities based on information received from peers and the Internet. This contradicts the general concept and principles of the *Dance4life* movement and can impede project implementation should it be officially extended to Belarus in the future. The Red Cross requested the Moscow-based *Dance4life* coordinator to consider including Belarus into the list of participants and provide training for Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers. Regrettably, since Belarus is not included in the areas of project expansion National Society staff and volunteers cannot be covered by the above mentioned trainings.

Disaster Management

Programme component 1: Disaster management planning

Component outcome 1: Improved ability to predict and plan for disasters to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities, and respond to and effectively cope with their consequences.

Programme component 2: Organisational preparedness

Component outcome 1: Improved capacity of the Belarus Red Cross in skilled human resources, and financial and material capacity for effective disaster management.

Achievements: No funds were received for disaster management planning and organizational preparedness. However the National Society maintained its domestic disaster relief fund and regional emergency stocks, and ensured that a sufficient number of staff and volunteers are on stand-by in case of disaster. Two per cent of the Red Cross's income from membership fees and local non-earmarked donations is allocated to the relief fund which enabled the Belarus Red Cross to procure relief items for domestic spring floods. Through support from IFRC and ICRC and local fund-raising almost CHF 18,000 was contributed from the Belarus Red Cross to the Federation Haiti operation.

Programme component 3: Disaster response

Component outcome 1: Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition.

⁸ A short movie was uploaded on the YouTube website http://www.youtube.com/user/ifrc#p/u/6/5L5S6Y_IU0c

With financial support from the Swiss Red Cross, 9,710 food parcels were distributed to elderly people living alone, people with disabilities, homeless people, people with low incomes, people released from prisons and multi-child families with low incomes. In addition, the Belarus Red Cross procured 1,970 food parcels locally with funds from the Swiss Red Cross as part of the project *Humanitarian Assistance to the Vulnerable*. These food parcels will be distributed in 22 districts of Minsk oblast reaching an additional 1,000 people. Finally, within the *Twice Christmas* operation the Swiss Red Cross bilaterally donated food, hygiene items, toys, second-hand clothes and shoes in Minsk city and the regions of Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno and Gomel. Some 38,000 people were reached. Through bilateral support from the Icelandic Red Cross 2,000 baby parcels, 600 blankets and 95 pairs of shoes were distributed during the winter to multi-child and single-parent families in remote villages in Minsk oblast. Some 2,000 families benefited from the action. Moreover a documentary film about the situation of the needy people in Belarus and the distribution of baby parcels was produced.⁹

Constraints or Challenges: Because of limited resources for implementing programme components one and two joint efforts were made by GTZ, IFRC and the Austrian Red Cross for obtaining a tender for the EU project for strengthening the Prevention, Preparedness and Relief capacity for man-made Disasters (PPRD) in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Caucasus.

Organisational Development

Programme component 1: Improving the Belarus Red Cross's leadership capacities to develop and implement strategies, to ensure good performance and accountability

Component outcome 1: Implementation of the revised statutes.

Component outcome 2: Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels.

Limited resources meant that no activities were implemented for improving leadership capacities.

Programme component 2: Ensuring a well-functioning organization with sustainable systems, procedures and staff with desired level of managerial and technical competencies.

Component outcome 1: Effective and transparent human resource management.

Component outcome 2: Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines.

Component outcome 3: Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems.

Component outcome 4: Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication.

In 2009 the Belarus Red Cross established a working group to develop a human resource policy, salary regulations and a system of evaluation and motivation for staff and volunteers. As a result, in 2010 the position of human resources manager was introduced at headquarters level and a manager was recruited. Moreover bonus regulations and staff incentives were adopted. IFRC continues to provide support in developing a fair salary system.

Programme component 3: Developing a nation-wide coverage of grass-roots units and services

Component outcome 1: Develop a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/ units at grass-roots level.

Component outcome 2: Support branches/units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.

Achievements: Although the third year allocation from the Federation Capacity Building Fund supporting the *Volunteer promotion and development* project was confirmed only in April, the project team was active since the beginning of 2010. The Vitebsk city volunteer council developed an annual work plan and examined new community-based micro-projects. A number of actions and fund-raising activities were organized with support of other projects such as *Youth*

⁹ For the movie please see <http://vimeo.com/12017289>

Against HIV, I can stop TB and Your best defence is you. Red Cross staff and volunteers in Vitebsk region now have a shared understanding of how to ensure the sustainability of the volunteer project. As a result, nine youth actions including promotion of blood donation and the annual marathon for disabled people were implemented reaching more than 3,830 people.

In April a small-grant competition was launched as part of the project. During the first phase youth volunteer groups developed concepts of community-based initiatives. Representatives for the 16 best concepts were invited for training on leadership and project writing after which they will further elaborate their ideas to prepare full applications for the second phase of the competition in August 2010. Implementation of the initiatives will start in September.

The city volunteer council in Vitebsk held 14 meetings and enjoyed extensive cooperation with several partners¹⁰ which contributes to implementation of the volunteer project. Partners include Vitebsk city and oblast executive committees, education and youth affairs departments, the city cinema hall and the zoo, orphanages and hospitals.

Training on leadership, communication, team-building and project planning as well as promotion of tolerance towards refugees through the *Youth on the run* project jointly with UNHCR were held in Vitebsk region for 55 Red Cross staff and volunteers in May.

Through bilateral cooperation with the Danish Red Cross activities aiming at promoting youth volunteering continued in Grodno, Brest, Mogilev and Gomel regions. A model for mobilizing volunteers in rural areas and small towns and initiating cooperation with local authorities in strategic planning, needs assessment and project management was developed. However, time is required for institutionalizing achieved results and to allow the model to gain wider geographical coverage.

The Belarus Red Cross presidium adopted regulations on volunteer councils in March. Red Cross volunteer and youth policies were shared with the Federation regional representation in Moscow to support the Russian Red Cross in developing a strategy on volunteering.

The Belarus Red Cross held several national press conferences and participated in numerous exhibitions attracting attention to Red Cross activities and volunteer development. For the first time a charity concert was organized by the National Society in May in Molodechno town in Minsk oblast to attract local donations and contribute to a positive image of the Red Cross. The concert yielded some CHF 4,400 in cash and kind.

Constraints or Challenges: Limited resources was a major constraint leading to scaling down of successful activities which are focusing on involving citizens in voluntary service delivery and activities aimed at social inclusion and empowerment of older people.

The Belarus Red Cross financial manager recently left the post. The National Society is now seeking a replacement. Meanwhile a number of processes in building financial management capacities have slowed down. In order to fully computerise financial systems and develop internal procedures, time and additional resources are required.

Principles and Values

Programme purpose:
Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme component 1: Promotion of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values
Component outcome 1: Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental

¹⁰ Totally 23 partners are involved.

Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general.

Component outcome 2: The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and changing behaviour.

Achievements: The promotion of humanitarian values is an integral part of key National Society programmes. In addition dissemination of humanitarian values and reduction of stigma and discrimination are incorporated into other programme activities such as youth volunteer actions and community-based initiatives.

In 2010 the Japanese Red Cross supported the installation and opening of a bust of Henry Dunant in Minsk.¹¹ Moreover it supported the creation of a newly designed Belarus Red Cross website which is expected to be introduced in August. The website will facilitate learning about the Red Cross, International Humanitarian Law and online resource mobilization

In May the Belarus National Library held the book exhibition “The grandeur of humanity, charity and voluntarism” dedicated to the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. More than 60 books, brochures, periodicals and booklets in Russian and English were presented.

Programme component 2: Anti-discrimination and violence prevention/reduction programmes

Component outcome 1: Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Component outcome 2: Improved access to psychosocial support, healthcare and legal counselling services for migrants and victims of trafficking.

Reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking was provided and an anti-trafficking network with other National Societies was established supported by IOM and the Danish Red Cross. Because of funding constraints the activities were scaled down compared with previous years. The National Society currently runs five regional consultation centres called “Hands of Help” and two district centres¹² offering support to victims of trafficking. By mobilizing its own resources and building new partnerships, the Red Cross strives to sustain the work of the centres.

In June the Belarus Red Cross hosted the international workshop “Networking against Trafficking in Human Beings” with financial and technical support of the Danish Red Cross and IFRC.¹³ The participants shared best practices and developed profiles of risk groups, brainstormed ways to change the behaviour of risk groups and how to evaluate the effectiveness of Red Cross interventions.

In the second half of 2010 Gomel region will join the knowledge and capacity building project *Youth volunteering to prevent trafficking in human beings*. The project aims at strengthening and expanding assistance to victims of trafficking and promoting prevention activities among youth through joint efforts between Belarus Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross and IFRC.

Constraints or Challenges: Limited resources are the main constraint for the Principles and Values programme, in particular for the components targeting migrants and victims of trafficking. IFRC and the National Society continue to explore new funding opportunities, including participation in EU thematic calls. A joint application of IFRC and the Icelandic Red Cross to the Icelandic Foreign Ministry resulted in a three-year funding for the Belarus Red Cross anti-trafficking activities in Gomel region. The Belarus Red Cross has also become part of a joint grant application prepared by IFRC and IOM under the EU thematic programme of cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum. A successful application will help

¹¹ For the news story about opening of the bust of Henry Dunant please see <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/10/10050702/>.

¹² In Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel and Mogilev, and Novopolotsk and Mozyr respectively.

¹³ The workshop was attended by representatives of the Belarusian, British, Croatian, Danish, Polish and Serbian Red Cross societies.

strengthening national mechanisms for reintegrating and rehabilitating of victims of human trafficking in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

Working in partnership

To achieve better results and generate high quality programmes, the Belarus Red Cross is cooperating with the key stakeholders in disaster management, health and care, organizational development and humanitarian values. Traditional partners are the ministries of health, social welfare, emergency, justice, internal affairs and education. The main international bilateral and multilateral partners within the Movement are the ICRC delegation in Moscow, the Danish, Swiss, Austrian, German, Icelandic, French, Italian and Swedish Red Cross Societies as well as the consortium of German and Swiss Red Cross Societies.

Belarus Red Cross Vitebsk regional branch continues its active cooperation with the Lithuanian Visaginas Red Cross branch in disaster response training and youth development. Regular meetings and trainings in Lithuania and Belarus are conducted.

Supported by the Austrian Red Cross, community care support was continuously provided to families with children with disabilities in Grodno region through mobile Red Cross team services. More than 60 families were covered. Moreover the families attended the Red Cross Day Centre.

The National Society is member of the “Anti-AIDS” and “Y-peer” youth organizations. A standardized concept of peer-to-peer training for educational institutions in Belarus is being developed jointly with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. The qualifications of the Red Cross in peer-to-peer education have been acknowledged and recommendations, experience, best practices and techniques within *Youth against HIV* are taken into consideration.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All projects implemented by the Belarus Red Cross are aligned with IFRC’s Strategy 2020. The National Society works to ensure gender equity and ensures equal participation and access of women and men through appropriate information materials and in the design of project activities. Gender balance is sought in project management structures.

Competence-building is a key element in all project activities carried out by the Belarus Red Cross as it encourages knowledge, skills and experience development. The activities have built competencies and capacities both at the national and local level, enabling the society to provide young and older people with opportunities to carry out social initiatives and advocating for their rights and needs in the local communities.

Local authorities played an essential role in the development of volunteer service delivery through providing administrative support, expertise and resources, and in establishing new mechanisms for interaction between local authorities and civil society organizations. At lower administrative levels Belarus Red Cross local branches worked closely with local administrations and educational and social welfare authorities to ensure access to the target groups, as well as to increase the sustainability of the community-based initiatives and to ensure exchange of information about best practices. The Red Cross continues to focus on developing its local network of branch units and improving its access to vulnerable people with sustainable and high quality services. To this end supported by the IFRC secretariat and other National Societies the Belarus Red Cross actively strives to attract EU funding.

Looking ahead

In September 2010 the Belarus Red Cross will host the XIV annual meeting of the European Regional Network of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on HIV and tuberculosis (ERNA).

ERNA is one of the largest regional networks of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies combining more than 40 European and Asian countries. ERNA aims to facilitate change of experiences and develop opportunities for National Societies and their partners at national, regional and international level in HIV and tuberculosis prevention, harm reduction, nursing and social care, treatment, stigma and discrimination in the field of HIV and social integration of PLHIV into the society. More than 70 representatives and 35 National Societies will take part.

The American Red Cross and the Italian Red Cross expressed their interest to support Belarus Red Cross HIV projects in Gomel and Grodno regions. Project proposals are currently being developed by Belarus Red Cross with the support of the IFRC.

The Icelandic Red Cross will support anti-trafficking activities in Gomel region over three years, as well as continue to supply humanitarian aid to vulnerable population groups.

The National Society has approached the Polish Red Cross and the Ukrainian Red Cross for a joint EU application for cross-border cooperation. The first working meeting was held in Lviv with the support of the Austrian Red Cross. A concept note was discussed and agreed upon. The second meeting will be held as soon as the call for proposals will be announced.

In the framework of the EU call “Non-State Actors and Local Authorities” the Danish, Austrian and German Red Cross societies in partnership with Belarus Red Cross submitted concept note for volunteer service development. The Dutch-based non-profit organization Stichting Yanos Public Health in partnership with Belarus and Lithuania Red Cross societies submitted a concept note for enhancing the quality of life of elderly people. ICRC in Moscow has offered support if the National Society goes ahead hosting a leadership training course for Russian speaking National Societies in Minsk in October.

How we work	
<p>All Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.</p>	
<p>The IFRC's vision is to: Inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.</p>	<p>The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises. 2. Enable healthy and safe living. 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
Contact information	
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