

Mid-Year report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Kosovo

Appeal No. MAAKV001

31 August 2010

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



H1N1 awareness raising sessions in schools. Photo: IFRC

In brief

Programme outcome: In line with Strategy 2020 and the priorities of the Red Cross organizations the programme areas supported in Kosovo are disaster management, health and care, organizational development and principle and values. The main emphasis of the Federation's work in Kosovo is on supporting the Red Cross organizations in developing their operational capacities to better respond to the basic needs of the most vulnerable people.

Programme(s) summary: The disaster management programme aims to strengthen the Red Cross organizations' capacity in disaster management. Capacity building was addressed at both headquarters and branch level in order to carry out coordinated disaster response and risk reduction activities. Key achievements during first half of 2010 were training and formation of six branch level disaster response teams, development of branch level risk assessment as well as draft contingency plans in the same six branches.

The Red Cross organizations continued implementing family health education courses. The courses focus on reproductive health, family planning, general family health, good parenting and prevention of diseases in rural and urban areas. In the first six months of 2010 totally 179 courses were conducted with 2,699 participants. In April an agreement was signed with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Kosovo for implementing family health education courses especially targeting Roma communities (RAE) living in Mitrovica.

The Red Cross of Kosova contributed to increasing the awareness about HIV and AIDS and promoting healthy behaviour. Totally 22 Red Cross youth volunteers conducted 24 workshops in schools in 13 branches. Pre and post tests showed a notable increase in the level of knowledge about HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In addition Red Cross volunteers organized 144 peer education sessions in 13 branches for school leavers. Around 800 youth were reached. Red Cross volunteers also organized peer education sessions and other initiatives focused on the risks and effects of drug consumption. These sessions allowed youth to share experiences, ask questions, and express doubts and fears. It is estimated that around 900 youth were reached. Finally a total of 51 volunteers were trained for conducting theatre-based

performances and later conducted theatre-based peer education performances in 10 branches and reached more than 1,100 youth.

The Red Cross of Kosova continued to support returning asylum seekers from Sweden. Totally 30 families were assisted. The returnees received information and guidance about where to get official documents like identity cards; how to register children in schools; and available health and social services. Moral support as well as items such as food and hygiene parcels and kits for kids was provided. Moreover the project tries to link-up returnees with social welfare centers throughout Kosovo. A return guide has been printed which will help returnees to find their way through the present Kosovo society. Good networking and cooperation has been established with local NGO's and institutions. This helped the gathering of information which provides returnees with pre-departure counseling and information about the general situation in Kosovo.

Financial situation: The total 2010 budget is CHF 585,962 (USD 564,739 or EUR 446,546) of which CHF 487,827 (83 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). The budget was reduced from initially CHF 720,677 due to limited funding. Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 276,782. Expenditure against budget was 47 per cent and expenditure against funding was 57 per cent. [Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

See also [Kosovo Support Plan 2010-2011](#)

No. of people we have reached: During the reporting period totally 9,114 people were reached directly counting approximately 45,570 people reached indirectly. The targeted people included community members from different ethnic groups, gender and age, people living in disaster-prone areas; men and women of reproductive age and returnees from Sweden. Moreover Red Cross leadership, staff and volunteers and staff from Kosovo institutions were reached as well.

Our partners: IFRC in Kosovo cooperates and coordinates its activities with a number of different partners within and outside of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Key partners are the Norwegian Red Cross, the British Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross, UNFPA and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies, and local and central authorities.

Context

Kosovo has been under direct United Nations administration since 1999. In February 2008 the Kosovo assembly announced its independence from Serbia. Since then the political, economic and social situation has been dominated by the issue related to its status. This has affected the transformation process that Kosovo is currently undergoing and means that little or no progress has been made on vital internal issues such as health, social welfare, economy and education. Kosovo continues to face a vicious cycle of low growth, significant trade imbalance and fiscal constraints. The World Bank report *Unlocking Growth Potential* from 2010 confirms that the economic development since 2000 has been insufficient to address Kosovo's most pressing challenges.

As much as 44 per cent of the population is living in poverty and 15 per cent is living in extreme poverty, defined as individuals who have difficulty meeting their basic nutritional needs. In 2009 the labour force unemployment rate was as high as 70 per cent, 27 per cent higher than in 2008.¹ Two third of all jobseekers are unskilled and the majority is aged between 25 and 39.² These poverty and unemployment rates are very high and have unfortunately not changed over time. This situation has had a negative impact on household economies and many bread winners have left Kosovo in search for employment. Merely eight per cent of the population receives minor social assistance benefits mainly due to highly restrictive criteria. The high unemployment rate and a dramatic rise in poverty, a fragile economy combined with gaps in the health sector have resulted in an extremely high degree of structural socio-economic vulnerability for large parts of the Kosovo

¹ Statistical Office of Kosovo: Kosovo in Figures 2009

² Kosovo Poverty Assessment: World Bank and the Statistical Office of Kosovo. October 2007

population. Groups such as elderly people, youth, single-headed female households, and people living in rural and disaster-prone areas are among the most vulnerable.

Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe, with 50 per cent under the age of 25 and 40 per cent under the age of 18. Therefore the challenges related to political, economic and social development are first and foremost the challenges of young people.³ However, the young population remains ill informed about their rights and risks from unprotected sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco and HIV and AIDS. Political and cultural barriers often prevent information and services from reaching young men and women and there is a general reluctance within families, schools and communities to discuss issues related to reproductive health and sexual behaviour.⁴

The limited data available on the health status in Kosovo suggests that it ranks among the lowest in Europe. The health and social welfare system does not cover the basic health and welfare needs of the population so significant gaps in service coverage and information remain. Hence old and new health problems are increasing including tuberculosis (TB), and HIV and AIDS. Official up-to-date information on HIV and AIDS is limited, at best scarce and unreliable. The incidence of HIV and AIDS is therefore thought to be much higher than the 76 cases registered. The issue of sexually transmitted infections (STI) assumes added importance given Kosovo's young population. Moreover, the infant mortality rate⁵, maternal health and the decline in immunization coverage are of particular concern as is lack of knowledge about family and reproductive health.

In recent years an increasing number of people have been returned to Kosovo after being rejected asylum. These people are especially vulnerable due to the overall health and socio-economic situation in Kosovo. A particular challenge is lack of health insurance and social security. Many returnees are staying with relatives which are already living under difficult conditions. Remittances play a vital role for upholding households' standard of living. During the recent economic crisis reduced remittances have had a clear negative impact on many households.

Although not prone to large scale natural disasters, the geological configuration of Kosovo renders it susceptible to earthquakes, landslides and seasonal river floods. Such incidents happen at least once or twice each year. Considering the lack of capacities and coping mechanisms, it is evident that even small-scale disasters may have a strong negative impact on communities.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

The disaster management programme aims to strengthen the capacity of the Red Cross organizations to effectively prepare for and respond to humanitarian needs in disaster situations.

Programme component 1: Disaster management planning

Component outcome 1: Central and branch level disaster contingency and response plan developed and coordinated with the authorities to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities

Achievements: Supported by IFRC the Red Cross organizations continued building their disaster capacity at branch and central level. Disaster risk mapping and response capacity building as well as development of contingency plans in six branches. To this end several meetings were held between trained volunteers and stakeholders including vulnerable community members. The plans will be printed and shared during the second part of the year.

Programme component 2: Organizational preparedness

³ Statistical Office of Kosovo: Kosovo in Figures 2009

⁴ UNICEF 2004.

⁵ The infant mortality remains one of the highest in Europe, rating at 9.7 per 1000 live births. Statistical Office of Kosovo: Kosovo in figures 2009

Component outcome 1: Improved capacity in skilled human resources

Achievements: Human resource capacity building took place in the same six branches as targeted under component one. The number will gradually increase throughout 2011. Volunteers trained in basic disaster management in 2009 were further trained in specialized fields such as shelter and camp management, search and rescue, first aid and risk and needs assessment. The trained volunteers will become part of Red Cross disaster response teams at branch level.⁶ IFRC conducted three trainings for forming six disaster teams. Totally 90 participants attended these trainings. The teams will organize a simulation exercise during the second part of the year. Two regional disaster response team (RDRT) members from the Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija participated in a training for regional disaster response teams in Bosnia and Herzegovina in March.

Programme component 3: Community preparedness

Component outcome 1: Increased awareness of the community on the potential risk from the disasters.

Achievements: Work towards component three is planned to take place during second part of the year as it will continue the work done under component 1. The team members will be further trained in raising the awareness of population on potential risk from disaster and their preparedness.

Programme component 4: Disaster response

Component outcome 1: Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of the affected population.

Achievements: Progress towards improved disaster response did not materialize due to the lack of resources.

Constraints or Challenges (Disaster Management)

During the regional disaster response team training in March in Bosnia and Herzegovina participants from the Red Cross of Kosova were not able to participate due to the visa constraints.

Health and Care

In order to address the health needs in Kosovo the Red Cross organizations worked to strengthen its capacity in health and care and offered services in reproductive health, better child care and child development, HIV and AIDS and drugs and healthy behaviour.

Programme component 1: Community-based health including maternal and child health

Component outcome 1: Increased knowledge and access to appropriate information about reproductive health, better child care and development and other family health issues.

Achievements: The Red Cross organizations in Kosovo supported by IFRC and in cooperation the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and UNFPA worked to improve healthcare knowledge and raise health awareness through family health education courses. The courses focused on reproductive health, family planning, general family health issues, good parenting and prevention of diseases in rural and urban areas. The course was held by certified public health trainers and was open to both females and males with a special emphasis on mothers and young people. In the first six months of 2010 totally 179 courses were conducted with 2,699 participants.

A health survey was conducted in four municipalities in 2009 and finalized in the first half of 2010 with the support from British Red Cross. The survey will assist the Red Cross organizations in developing the health education courses in future.

Owing to the health risks caused by H1N1 the Red Cross included awareness raising and organizational preparedness on H1N1 in the family health courses. In addition to this 26 youth

⁶ Each team will consists one branch secretary and volunteers with skills in search and rescue, first aid, shelter and camp management, risk assessment and psychosocial support.

volunteers were trained who implemented youth awareness raising and prevention activities among their peers. A total of 156 activities reaching around 2,500 pupils were conducted. The H1N1 activities were supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

The Red Cross of Kosova organized training in monitoring and evaluation for ten family health education supervisors in June. The aim of the training was to improve supervisors' knowledge and skills to conduct systematic monitoring of the courses as well as to provide support to the family health education trainers in-field. Beside this the Red Cross of Kosova organized a meeting with branch secretaries, supervisors as well as the health coordinator from the headquarters in which the implementation of the courses, including monitoring and reporting were discussed.

In April an agreement was signed with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Kosovo for implementing family health education courses especially targeting Roma communities (RAE) living in Mitrovica particularly focusing on mother and child health. The Red Cross is but one of few humanitarian organizations able to reach people from all communities in this area. Until June 9 courses were conducted with the participation of 118 participants. Although the courses were open for both females and males, all participants were women. In addition the Red Cross procured 140 hygiene parcels of which 72 were distributed to families participating in the courses. Principles and values is integrated in all the activities of the Red Cross in Kosovo and received special emphasis during the courses targeting RAE families in order to influence the behaviour of people from different ethnic communities though promoting respect for diversity and reducing discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Programme component 2: Increase awareness about the risk of HIV and AIDS

Component outcome 1: Reduced vulnerability to HIV and its impact through increasing awareness and reduce stigma and discrimination among youth.

Achievements: Both Red Cross organizations in Kosovo contributed to increasing the awareness about HIV and AIDS and promoting healthy behaviour. The activities targeted youth from all communities in Kosovo including minorities and drug users. The project started its implementation from July 2009 and was completed in June 2010.

In 2010 totally 22 Red Cross youth volunteers, who were trained in 2009 continued implementing HIV and AIDS activities. In addition to the 248 peer education workshops conducted in 2009, youth volunteers conducted 24 workshops in schools in 13 branches to increase the awareness about HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and reduce stigma among the youth. Pre and post tests showed a notable increase in the level of knowledge. Teachers were also invited in order to increase their knowledge and skills. This will help teachers to advise school children about HIV and AIDS. In addition Red Cross volunteers organized 144 peer education sessions in 13 branches for school leavers. Around 800 youth were reached through the above activities.

Red Cross volunteers also organized peer education sessions and other initiatives focused on the risks and effects of drug consumption. These sessions allowed youth to share experiences, ask questions, and express doubts and fears. The events were organized in places frequented by young drug users as well as other youth. It is estimated that around 900 youth were reached.

A total of 51 volunteers were trained for conducting theatre-based performances. Supported by trained peer volunteers, the volunteers conducted theatre-based peer education performances in 10 branches and reached more than 1,100 youth.

Programme component 3: Voluntary non-remunerated blood donation

Component outcome 1: Increased awareness of the population for voluntary non-remunerated blood donation.

Owing to insufficient resources awareness activities towards voluntary non-remunerated blood donation did not take place.

Constraints or Challenges (Health and Care)

Apart from insufficient resources to address voluntary non-remunerated blood donation, no major constraints or challenges occurred in the first six months of 2010.

Organisational Development/Capacity Building

In order to improve its performance for better service delivery the two Red Cross organizations continued strengthening its capacities through trainings and improvement of skills, and development of strategy, policy and guidelines documents.

Programme component 1: Support RC organization OD process
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Component outcome 1: Ensure better functioning RC organizations with improved systems and procedures, and staff with improved managerial and technical competencies.

Component outcome 2: Improved RC organizations leadership and management capacities to ensure good performance and accountability
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Achievements: Laws on the Red Cross of Kosova and the emblem of the Red Cross were approved by the Kosovo assembly in June. These laws are considered as key steps in developing the Red Cross further. Moreover, in the beginning of 2010 the Red Cross of Kosova, supported by IFRC finalized its annual plan of action for 2010. Moreover the process for developing relevant policies and procedures started.

With the aim of developing the first complete strategy of the Red Cross of Kosova in April and May two workshops on strategic planning took place with the participation of 85 people. Presidency members, volunteers, headquarters and branch staff took part. Following the workshops a working group was formed to ensure progress towards the finalization of the strategic plan.

Building upon its ongoing work within strategic planning the Red Cross of Kosova started preparing for a workshop on operational planning. The workshop will contribute to translating the strategic priorities into operational and programmatic measures in a consistent way, thus increasing the likelihood for realizing its strategic priorities. The workshop will be supported by IFRC and is planned to take place in the end of July. These processes, including the finalization of the strategy and operational plans are expected to be finalized within 2010.

In order to improve its performance and accountability the Red Cross of Kosova initiated a human resources development process. Job descriptions and classifications, an appraisal system and an organogram were developed. Following the expected approval of the presidency these modifications will take effect from 2011. Monthly coordination meetings between the Red Cross of Kosova and the Red Cross of Metohija and Kosovo were conducted in order to review progress and implementation of activities.

Programme component 2: Volunteering and Youth development
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Component outcome 1: Promote and support development of volunteers and youth and their involvement in programme and services

Achievements: Both Red Cross organizations celebrated World Red Cross Day on 8 May. Activities included first-aid exercises by youth volunteers, theatre-based performances, group dance and a drawing competition, and voluntary blood donation. Some 600 volunteers participated. Activities such as improving the volunteer management structure, training of youth leaders, and implementing community-based activities were not implemented due to limited resources.

Constraints or Challenges (Organizational Development/Capacity Building)

No major constraints or challenges occurred in the first six months of 2010.

Principles and Values

The programme will focus on improving understanding of principles and values in local communities and within the Red Cross organizations. Emphasis is on ensuring that capacity building initiatives and trainings will contain a principles and values component in order to influence

the behaviour of staff, volunteers and people from different ethnic communities through promoting respect for diversity and reducing discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Programme component 1: Promotion of Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values

Component outcome 1: Increase knowledge and understanding of Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values
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Component outcome 2: Basic support to prospective returnees from Sweden
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Achievements: The focus on principles and values in the context of Kosovo is especially important due to its recent history and still remaining tensions. Hence the activities of the Red Cross in Kosovo includes a fundamental principles and humanitarian values component in order to influence the behavior of people from different ethnic communities, promoting respect for diversity and reducing discrimination, intolerance and violence. Activities where principles and values are disseminated include peer to peer activities; HIV and AIDS activities; family health education courses; and during the annual Red Cross Red Crescent day. Owing to resources and a lack of priority from donors, the ability of the Red Cross organizations to promote and follow-up on its work on principles and values have been limited. This has also meant that no specific programming could have taken place. Rather, as outlined above principles and values has played a role as a component in other activities, but not as a key activity in itself.

Still, the returnee project supported by the Swedish Red Cross has ensured that principles and values at least to some extent have gained particular attention. The overall objective of the project which started as a pilot project in 2008 is to contribute to return in safety and dignity. More specifically its aims to develop an effective system of information gathering, counselling and support before, during and after return.

Totally 30 families were assisted in the first six months of 2010. The returnees received information and guidance about where to get official documents like identity cards; how to register children in schools; and available health and social services. Moral support as well as items such as food and hygiene parcels and kits for kids was provided. More than 25 monitoring visits were done with 22 parcels distributed to a limited number of returnees.

Re-integration is difficult but this project tries to link-up returnees with social welfare centers throughout Kosovo which offer vocational training, language courses as well as psychosocial counseling. Moreover a return guide has been printed in Albanian, Serbian and English with information about the Municipal Centre for Civil Registration (MCCR), the Regional Employment Centre, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Centre for Education. Red Cross contact details and information about health costs are included as well. The return guide will help returnees to find their way through the present Kosovo society. Additional activities contributing to a sustainable and dignified return and re-integration included:

- assessment of conditions in communities before the arrival of returnees mainly targeting minorities as they might not be accepted in some communities;
- assistance in dealing with local bureaucracies and registration with various authorities to receive identification card, documents for attending public schools and receive health services;
- distribution of food and non-food items a limited period of time;
- rehabilitation targeting people suffering from trauma that upon return might worsen their mental health situation;
- provision of psychosocial and health care support;
- evaluation of returnees' skills and offers for training for a sustainable economic reintegration.

Already during the pilot phase good networking and cooperation were established with different local NGO's and institutions such as Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, Project 03 and Central University Clinical Centre. Increased networking and cooperation helped the gathering of information which provides returnees with pre-departure counseling as well information about the general situation in Kosovo.

Although NGOs express motivation and readiness to cooperate with the Red Cross in the area for return these do not necessarily have the capacity and expertise to provide services. Still,

cooperation with others has yielded some results. Through cooperation and joint advocacy with local NGO's, returnee families that had no where to go were offered accommodation and transportation for up to one week in a motel. Moreover psychosocial counseling is offered and through advocacy transportation free of charge was provided for a young woman three times a week from to hospital in order to take haemodialysis. Moreover, supported by Red Cross staff and volunteers a returnee was qualified to receive social assistance which is very difficult due to highly restrictive criteria.

Constraints or Challenges (Principles and Values)

No major constraints or challenges occurred in the first six months of 2010.

Working in partnership

The local Red Cross organizations and the Federation office built on the increased level of partnerships which were developed over the last two years. These partnerships, which have an emphasis on local and non-Red Cross partners, contribute to: a) ensuring a constant exchange of information and analysis which complements the view and expertise of the Red Cross in assessing the needs and implementing programmes for the most vulnerable; b) providing funding and capacity-building support to the local Red Cross organizations and thus enhancing their programme implementation ability and quality; and c) allowing for better focused planning and activity implementation through an increased level of cooperation and coordination with other actors. The partnerships have enabled the organizations to increase their service delivery to vulnerable communities and to build the capacity of staff and volunteers.

Both organizations work closely with the IFRC. In its support to the organizations IFRC continued focusing on locating new partnerships and sources of funding. Actors such as the United Nations, the European Commission, central and local authorities and Movement partners were and will be approached for possible joint assistance in the time to come. In 2010 IFRC succeeded in securing much needed support to reach extremely vulnerable Roma communities in Mitrovica through a new partnership with UNFPA in Kosovo. ICRC provides capacity-building support in dissemination and tracing including restoring family links activities. Increased participation in coordination and planning meetings with existing and new partners and stakeholders will be a future priority.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The IFRC supported programmes in Kosovo are aligned with and contribute to the strategic aims in Strategy 2020. The Red Cross organizations play an important role in strengthening local communities and developing civil society. The programmes' strong focus on gender issues, including the family health education project and the social welfare programme contributes to this end. Through awareness-raising people are better able to prevent and cope with difficult situations. The integration of the fundamental principles and humanitarian values in all programme activities influences people's behaviour by promoting respect for diversity, reducing discrimination, intolerance and violence. The emphasis of the Red Cross continues to be on providing direct services with a lasting impact. In doing so capacity-building is pursued in parallel. Still, the Red Cross organizations cannot yet address such evident vulnerabilities without external support. In order to ensure the sustainability of its programmes, and subsequently to contribute to longer-term impact, the Red Cross in Kosovo needs to develop a stable financial resource base.

Looking ahead

The Red Cross organizations in Kosovo, supported by IFRC will continue to assess the situation of the most vulnerable people living in Kosovo. In the coming period the IFRC will be particularly focusing on two core areas. First it aims to assist the Red Cross organizations in improving their level and quality of services to the vulnerable population. This will be achieved through family health education with a special emphasis on women; awareness-raising activities on HIV with a special emphasis on youth; increased response and support to people affected by natural disasters through better trained and equipped disaster response teams; and decreased vulnerability and

impact of disasters through risk reduction activities. Second the Red Cross organizations will strengthen their operational capacities. This will result in a more effective use of financial and human resources for the greater benefit of vulnerable people. This will be achieved through enhanced capacity and skills of management and governance structures; increased number of trained volunteers through improved volunteer training and management; increased number of partnerships through enhanced transparency; and an improved public image and better capacity to forge and manage partnerships (see *Working in Partnership*).

How we work	
<p>All Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the <u>Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief</u> and is committed to the <u>Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere)</u> in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.</p>	
<p>The IFRC's vision is to:</p> <p>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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