

# Mid-Year report



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Serbia

Appeal No. MAARS001

31 August 2010

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



Affected people on flooded property in the southwest of Serbia. Photo: Red Cross of Serbia

## In brief

**Programme purpose:** All programmes and activities of the Red Cross of Serbia are aligned and contribute to the Global Agenda goals and Strategy 2020 aiming to improve the lives and to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable people through disaster management, health and care, organizational development, and focus on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values.

**Programme summary:** The International Federation continues to support the Red Cross of Serbia its efforts to provide efficient and quality services to the most vulnerable groups within following programmes:

- **Disaster management** (In addition to the ongoing preparedness activities, dealing with coordination among stakeholders at local level, the Federation provided support for activities aimed at people affected by severe floods.)
- **Health and care** (The focus is on HIV and AIDS as well as Voluntary Blood Donation activities.)
- **Organizational development** (The focus is on developing sustainable systems, procedures and increasing the staff's capacities.)
- **Principles and values** (Work with vulnerable populations on their strengthening and

integration, as well as advocacy: vulnerable Roma children, young people living with disabilities, older vulnerable people.)

Limited funding dictates that some of the activities have to be postponed until there are means to implement them. The International Federation continues to support the National Society in looking for new sources of funding to invest into priority areas and achieve planned results.

**Financial situation:** The budget for 2010 is CHF 752,805 of which 167% was covered, due to the transfer from the Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination which covers the programme budget both years 2010 and 2011. The expenditure of 43% in comparison with the budget should be therefore viewed in the light of this fact. [Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

See also [Serbia country plan for 2010-2011](#)

**No. of people we help:** During the first half of 2010 a total of 2,720 people benefited directly from Federation supported programmes. Another 3000 have been assisted through emergency Response activities funded through the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

January – June 2010 - Serbia		
Programme	Target groups	People reached
Disaster Management	First responders, school students	285
Health and Care	N/A	0
Organizational Development	N/A	0
Humanitarian Values	Vulnerable people, RC staff and volunteers, youth	2435
<b>Total number of people reached</b>		<b>2720</b>

**Our partners:** Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development contributed as a multilateral donor. Danish and Spanish Red Cross societies have contributed as bilateral donors on programmes coordinated by the Federation. Two ministries were programme partners and some 30 local governments and services were active as partners.

## Context

The economy in Serbia has experienced modest growth in the first six months of 2010 with Gross Domestic Product increasing by 0.6%. This is by far the slowest growth since 2000 and the reflection of the effect that global economic crisis is having on the country. Accompanied with rising unemployment which increased to 19.2 percent since last year's 18.8 and the steady inflation of approximately six percent in the first half of the year, the standard of living in Serbia has been stagnating. The number of people living below the poverty line has actually increased for the first time since 2000 and is now eight percent.

The stagnating economy has been kept afloat through credit arrangements with the International Monetary Fund; however this arrangement also includes an agreement to reduce public spending which will be acquired through downsizing the public sector. The exact number of people who will be out of work in the next six to eighteen months is still unknown, but if the estimates of needs (reducing public sector by 20%) are to be believed, tens of thousands will be let go.

On the political front, the tense situation related to Kosovo has been maintained with some instances of violence in the northern part in early summer. The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on

Kosovo's declaration of independence – that the International law was not broken – is likely to shift the political balance in the region with Serbia announcing further diplomatic efforts to claim the territory.

Serbia is still host to the largest body of displaced people in Europe with approximately 86,000 refugees (three quarters of them from Croatia and another quarter from Bosnia and Herzegovina) and another 206,000 internally displaced people from Kosovo still looking for long term solutions. While with Bosnia and Herzegovina most of the property issues have been solved, the same is not true for Croatia and Kosovo and housing is still a serious issue for many in this population. Approximately 5,000 displaced still live in collective centres and approximately 40% of people living under the poverty line are refugees or internally displaced people.

Roma people – particularly children – and older people living alone or in couples are still among the most vulnerable groups in the country, the second group especially affected by the arrangement with IMF as the planned increase of pensions for this year seems to be off the cards.

Heavy floods at the beginning of the year prompted a Red Cross intervention. The response was funded through the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund and CHF 51,027 were allocated to provide approximately 3,200 people with basic food and non-food items. Detailed report:

<http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/09/MDRRS002dfr.pdf>

## Progress towards outcomes

### Disaster management

#### **Programme purpose**

Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

This programme focuses on strengthening local and national disaster response mechanisms, contingency planning, risk reduction and community-based disaster preparedness and prevention.

#### **Programme component 1: Disaster preparedness/ Municipal disaster preparedness**

**Component outcome 1:** The capacity to be prepared for and respond to emergency situations at national and local level is increased, through better coordination of the work of all the stakeholders, leading to a reduced number of deaths, injuries and property damage.

During the reporting period one MDP simulation took place in the municipality of Smederevo and beyond the tabletop exercise, it included a field exercise, involving Fire brigade, police department of Smederevo, Emergency medical service and the local Red Cross branch. The table top exercise lasted for two days and involved 35 first responders. The subsequent field exercise was used to test the procedures and coordination in practice, using a simulation of fire in one elementary school in village close to Smederevo city. The simulated evacuation of 250 students went well and was covered by the local media. All local services taking part in the table top simulation were active in this field exercise as well.

The provincial Red Cross of the Vojvodina province has partnered with the Vojvodina Province authorities on a Disaster Preparedness project that will be supported with IPA funds. The Federation provided some support in drafting the project and the implementation (that will last 16 months) is scheduled to start in the third quarter. The total value of the project is approximately 300,000 € and it focuses on flood rescue and the formation of a protection mechanism for the civilian population and resources. The activities will include acquisition of equipment, training of responders and development of cooperation between different services as well as educative and training activities for teachers, students and young people. The Federation will be involved with the training activities for the selected municipalities. The national society will be managing (and storing) the disaster response equipment bought through the project, delivering

training in coordination and cooperation in disasters to the selected municipalities and delivering training in schools.

**Component outcome 2:** National disaster management bodies are formed with the role of the Red Cross at national and local levels recognized and officially defined.

Although the new law regulating Disaster Management in Serbia was adopted at the end of the last year, national disaster management bodies have not been formed yet. Bylaws planned to be adopted in the six-month transitional phase between adoption of the law in the Parliament and its full functionality are still either discussed or in preparation and therefore the whole process is slightly delayed. However the National Training Centre for Disaster Management has been formed in January and is at the time situated in the premises of the Red Cross of Serbia which facilitates day to day contact and future joint planning of different activities in Disaster Management training.

### **Programme component 2: Risk reduction**

**Component outcome 1:** Risk-prone areas within five highly disaster-prone municipalities are mapped, identifying risks and capacities. The data collected is further presented in the form of GIS, an additional tool for disaster management at municipal level.

**Component outcome 2:** The safety of schoolchildren in ten municipalities is increased through education on hazards and the promotion of safety procedures in emergency situations.

No funding available for these activities.

### **Emergency Activities**

After heavy snowfalls in the second week of February 2010, the temperature in Serbia quickly rose, reaching 15 degrees in less than a week and causing rapid snow melting in mountainous areas. This contributed to a rapid rise in the water levels of many rivers, particularly in central and eastern parts of the country and in the river systems of Sava and Morava. Floods, flash floods and landslides followed, threatening the livelihood of hundreds of families in several municipalities across the eastern part of Serbia. In the municipality of Zaječar only, which is the most affected municipality, 650 houses have been flooded since 20 February leaving more than 1,000 people in urgent need for assistance. Although the level of water in the Beli Timok River which flooded Zaječar settlements started to ebb on 23 February, heavy rainfall on 24 and 25 February reversed this course of development and caused further flooding. On 27 February a third flood wave hit the affected areas, preventing the population moving back into their houses. The Red Cross of Serbia has until 2 March been responding to the floods using its own resources. The National Society has distributed food and non-food items, equipment for house cleaning as well as other items to assist the affected people in coping with the effects of the floods. A request for assistance was then placed with the Federation. In response, CHF 286,219 (USD 267,260 or EUR 195,609) has been allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 3,150 beneficiaries and to replenish emergency stocks. This operation is expected to be implemented over six months, and will therefore be completed by the end of August, 2010.

More details: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/10/MDRRS003do.pdf>

### **Constraints or challenges**

Due to absence of funds the Federation was forced to severely reduce planned activities and postpone other activities indefinitely. The national society has, with Federation's assistance developed relationships with governmental actors (Provincial Authorities in Vojvodina Province, National Training Centre for Disaster Management) and is currently working in close coordination with them, adapting its practices to the situation but maintaining its priorities.

## Health and care

### **Programme purpose**

Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

The National Society through advocacy and promotional activities addresses the general public in relation to HIV and other public health threats.

### **Programme component 1: Health promotion with focus on HIV**

**Component outcome 1:** The national HIV and AIDS database (CRIS system) is updated and maintained through the collection of data on activities at local level, using the resources of the Red Cross of Serbia and serving as a basis for coordination of HIV activities nationwide.

**Component outcome 2:** HIV awareness is increased among high school students.

### **Programme component 2: Voluntary blood donation: Youth club 25**

**Component outcome 1:** The number of young people who have donated blood 20 to 25 times by the age of 25 is increased raising the percentage of blood donors among the general population to reach the target of 4 per cent.

These activities are planned for the second half of the year.

## Organizational development

### **Programme purpose**

Increase the Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

### **Programme component 1: Improvement of public image and public relations**

**Component outcome 1:** The National Society has developed a systematic promotion procedure relying on ongoing activities and contacts with the media

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

**Component outcome 1:** The National Society has undertaken a capacity/ needs survey and has based its strategic planning on the results.

The funding for this section is extremely limited and it is planned for the activities (focusing on strengthening the capacity of the governing structure) to be implemented in the second half of the year.

## Humanitarian values

### **Programme purpose**

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

### **Programme component 1: Home care programme**

**Component outcome 1:** Empowered local communities working through the Red Cross branches identify and provide services to vulnerable older people, advocating for their rights and providing them with assistance and support to maintain the dignity of their lives in their own homes.

**Component outcome 2:** The coordination between stakeholders is improved and the use of capacities and resources becomes more efficient.

**Component outcome 3:** The Red Cross is leading the advocacy efforts in the area of health and social protection of older people, contributing to their social security, reducing discrimination, neglect and abuse. The older people themselves are actively participating in planning and implementing the activities.

Funding for these activities is very limited and is planned to support the activities in the second part of the year (related to training for Red Cross of Serbia branches to apply for municipal governments' funding in the area of social welfare services).

**Programme component 2: Support to Education of Marginalized children-Roma and children/young people with disabilities**

**Component outcome 1:** Education and social participation of Roma children and children/young people with disabilities has been improved through continuing work with 2,700 Roma and disabled children as well as their families.

**Component outcome 2:** By the end of 2011 the level of enrolment, retention and inclusion of vulnerable Roma children and YPWD in the official education system is higher, in order for them to receive education in accordance with their needs and rights achieved, with the support of the Red Cross.

**Component outcome 3:** By the end of 2011 parents, family, community, social system and the Red Cross provide better support for personal psycho-social development for vulnerable Roma and YPWD involved in the programme.

**Component outcome 4:** By the end of 2011 there is an evident increase of confidence in the health care system and use of its services and raised awareness of the vulnerable groups of healthier life styles.

**Component outcome 5:** By the end of 2011 both vulnerable Roma and YPWD involved in the programme have better access to social services to meet their needs and rights, with the support of the Red Cross.

**Component outcome 6:** By the end of 2011 communities in which the programme is implemented and both vulnerable groups have developed a higher degree of mutual understanding/acceptance.

**Component outcome 7:** By the end of 2011 the YPWD involved in the programme have developed appropriate skills with support of Red Cross, that empower them to be recognised as active job seekers by the labour market.

The programme was designed using the right based approach and it consists of four distinct components: service delivery; advocacy; capacity building; and cooperation.

The activities implemented in the reporting period:

- Mentor classes: support to preschool children (age 3-6) to enrol into the formal preschool preparatory programme was implemented by 27 RC branches encompassing 397 vulnerable Roma children;
- Preschool preparatory programme: in communities where the capacities of formal preschool institutions or accessibility for vulnerable Roma children are limited, the Red Cross branches provided replacement programmes. This was done by 8 RC branches encompassing 138 vulnerable Roma children;
- Homework support classes: support to vulnerable Roma pupils in elementary school was provided by 26 RC branches encompassing 535 pupils.
- Programme for parents: currently organised in the form of parents meetings and thematic workshops based on the local needs, this programme was implemented by 19 RC branches encompassing 391 parents.

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
Mentor classes	<b>397</b>
Preschool preparatory programme	<b>138</b>
Homework support classes	<b>535</b>
<b>Total number of children</b>	<b>1,070</b>

<b>Programme for parents</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>Total number of beneficiaries</b>	<b>1,461</b>

There were 717 children and young people with disabilities and 257 parents and siblings included in the programme in Serbia:

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
Children and young people with disabilities	<b>717</b>
Parents of children and young people with disabilities	<b>257</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>974</b>

Key segments of service delivery for the vulnerable children and young people with disabilities included various activities in the form of interactive workshops aiming to:

- Stimulate social development and inclusion;
- Help beneficiaries acquire practical life skills;
- Stimulate intellectual development;
- Stimulate perception and fine motorics;
- Improve skills that are relevant for active job seeking;
- Support the parents.

**Monitoring tools and reporting templates** for the implementing Red Cross branches have been revised and consolidated. Six one-day workshops have been organised to introduce the tools to the field staff. It is expected that the new tools will significantly increase the efficiency of data gathering from the field and its analysis at the HQ.

**Media conference** on the Joint programme took place on 10 May in Belgrade Media Centre. Further information is available at: <http://www.mc.rs/code/navigate.asp?id=4&eventId=7467>.

At the same day the national television channel RTS 2 started broadcasting a series of short films about the activities in the programme. The aim is to introduce the general public to the programme and raise awareness on the matters that vulnerable Roma people and people with disabilities are faced with. The series lasted until mid June. In addition, DVDs with the series will be available to all the Red Cross branches involved in the programme implementation and local TV stations by the end of the year. Further information:

<http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/Dru%C5%A1tvo/686151/Obrazovanje+za+sve+.html>

### **Programme component 3: Promotion of humanitarian values**

**Component outcome 1:** The social inclusion of elementary school students belonging to minority groups is facilitated/ strengthened.

**Component outcome 2:** The ability of elementary school students to stand up to discrimination, intolerance and violence is enhanced, as well as their capacity for non-violent conflict resolution.

**Component outcome 3:** The awareness of elementary school students related to tolerance, personal and cultural identity, discrimination and stigmatisation, as well as gender equity is raised.

The activities in this section are planned for the second half of the year.

#### **Programme component 4: Skills training for refugees**

**Component outcome 1:** The quality of life of 300 refugees and their families who have opted for local integration is improved and their capacity to sustain themselves through work is increased.

#### **Programme component 5: Assistance to migrants**

**Component outcome 1:** Asylum seekers are protected by appropriate legal framework; their accommodation conditions and treatment are improved.

**Component outcome 2:** Returning rejected asylum seekers are assisted in reintegration.

**Component outcome 3:** Awareness of trafficking in human beings is raised among the general population, the members of services dealing with trafficking victims are appropriately trained and sensitised for their tasks, and returning rejected asylum seekers are protected from trafficking.

There was no funding for these activities.

#### **Constraints or challenges**

While the activities related to vulnerable Roma children and young people living with disabilities are progressing according to plan, the limited availability or the total lack of funding for the rest of the activities means that they are taken over by the national society who implements them using its own resources in a scaled down form.

## Working in partnership

The Red Cross of Serbia worked in partnership with the International Federation and received funds from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through the Federation secretariat plan. The National Society was supported bilaterally by the Danish Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. The health and care programme is implemented through several partnerships at local level including local authorities, centres for social welfare, schools, Roma NGOs and pensioners' associations. At the national level HumanaS, the Pomoć deci NGO and UNICEF are partners contributing to the programme.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

The work with vulnerable populations in Serbia through addressing health practices, access to health and social support institutions and education, and ensuring a community-wide response to needs, is in line with the International Federation's Global Agenda and its emphasis on preventing and reducing deaths, injuries and illnesses as well as the building of communities' capacities to combat their own vulnerability.

Programme components are compatible with local and regional initiatives such as The Decade of Roma Inclusion and the Poverty Reduction Strategies. Work towards disaster preparedness pursues the Global Agenda goal of reducing the number of deaths and injuries and impact from disasters, a much needed endeavour in both countries as disasters seem to become more frequent.

All programmes have gender as an integrated and important component. Within disaster preparedness the psychosocial component puts special emphasis on gender to ensure that the needs of each family member are adequately assessed and met. In vocational training for refugees, professional training is provided to meet the needs of both genders. In health promotion gender balance is presented as one of the priorities resulting in projects addressing reproductive health as well as sexual hygiene and specific activities for target groups of both genders. In volunteering and youth activities the organizational development programme promotes humanitarian values through a young volunteer project with a clear gender focus.

## Looking ahead

The Federation secretariat and the National Society work closely together on planning and implementing activities based on the strategic priorities of the National Society as well as the funding realities. As more of the programmes are taken over by the National Society such as home care, the International Federation focuses its capacities on those areas needing more development. A one-year contract was signed last year with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for a new implementation phase of the social welfare programme focusing on Roma children and children living with disabilities and will be renewed in autumn pending audit. Several other partners participated, including the Spanish Red Cross and the Danish Red Cross, and there is a possibility for extension to three or more years. Other programme activities depend on funding available such as USAID support to disaster management and the National Society priorities.

The National Society will continue to gradually expand its activities from exclusively being a provider of assistance to also being an advocate for the vulnerable, through its role as a partner and driving force behind processes of civil society building at both national and local levels.

### How we work

**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.**

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.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

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

**For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:**

- **In the Red Cross of Serbia:** Vesna Milenović, Secretary General; email: [secretary@redcross.org.rs](mailto:secretary@redcross.org.rs); phone: +381 11 30 32 117; fax: +381 11 634 348
- **In the Country Representation for Serbia:** Nenad Andrić, Head of Office; email: [nenad.andric@ifrc.org](mailto:nenad.andric@ifrc.org); phone: +381 113282202; fax: +381 113281791
- **In the Europe Zone Office:** Elias Ghanem, Head of Support Services, Budapest; email: [elias.ghanem@ifrc.org](mailto:elias.ghanem@ifrc.org); phone: +361 888 4518, fax: +361 336 1516
- **In the Europe Zone Office:** Leon Prop, Head of Operations, Budapest, email: [leon.prop@ifrc.org](mailto:leon.prop@ifrc.org); phone: +36 1 8884 502; fax: +361 336 1516