Federation Secretariat
support strategy to Kosovo
2006-2009
I. Introduction

This document sets out how the Federation Secretariat, through its Pristina Office, will work in Kosovo in the next four years (2006 – 2009). It is based on the Strategy 2010 and the Strategy of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The unresolved status of Kosovo and the provisional constitutional framework in place are among the major obstacles for the secretariat’s work with vulnerable people and as a consequence will influence donor support. The Federation will have to re-evaluate its approach once Kosovo’s final status is defined.

The outlined strategic direction and structure of the Federation Office in Kosovo does not apply in case of emergencies because this may require a different temporary set-up to effectively support the Red Cross organisations.

Since the end of the 1999 conflict in Kosovo, there have been two local Red Cross organisations operating within the boundaries of Kosovo. The Red Cross of Kosova (RCK) with 26 branches, works on behalf of 93% of the population, while the Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija (RCKM) works with 6 branches (recognized by the ICRC and Federation Offices in Kosovo) that form part of Serbian RC within the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society structure. A process of dialogue has been started, intended to lead to the establishment of one strong multi-ethnic Red Cross body in Kosovo.

Recent experience of working with both local RC organizations has shown the Federation and ICRC that the ultimate goal of one RC in Kosovo remains somehow distant. In the meantime, confidence building initiatives will be the priority.

II. Humanitarian context

Kosovo has an area of 10,887 km², with approximately 2.0 million inhabitants. The majority, (about 88 per cent) are Albanians. The proportion of the largest minority, the Serbs, is about 7 per cent. The other minorities, Bosniacs, Croats, Goranis, Ashkalis, Romas, Egyptians and Turks, comprise 5 per cent. The population of Kosovo is young; 50 % are less than 20 years of age and up to 60 % are 0-25 years of age.

Kosovo ranks at the bottom of the Balkans and among the least developed societies in Europe.

Population density 175 p/sq.km;  
Life expectancy 69; literacy rate 91.9%;  
GDP 848 €, extreme poverty ratio 13% (0.93 Euro);  
Infant mortality rate 40 per 1,000 live births¹.

Poverty in Kosovo appears to be more complex than initially understood. While a substantial number of Kosovans seems to have climbed out of poverty in the last two years the nature of poverty has changed. Life expectancy and literacy have improved compared to the immediate post-conflict period, while the percentage of people living in extreme poverty has increased.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated 44% of the working age population to be unemployed in 2003. A UNDP Early Warning System survey in April 2004 noted that 81% of those surveyed identified unemployment as the first or second most important problem facing Kosovo. UNDP noted in 2003 that 47.7% of the population lived on less than $2 per day.

¹ Statistical Office of Kosovo “Kosovo in figures 2004"
A high proportion of young people are vulnerable because of a combination of high unemployment (youth unemployment is around 75%), low rates of education, a low level of knowledge on HIV/AIDS and safe sex practices, and pervasive poverty. Kosovar-Albanians attend school, on average, for 9.33 years, with men attending approximately two years longer than women. Only around 9.7% of Kosovar-Albanians attend or have finished high school or university (UNDP, 2004:30). Youth clearly comprise a large vulnerable group. Rural youth are especially at-risk; those in rural areas are four times more likely to be poor or extremely poor and drop out of school earlier than their urban counterparts.

Trafficking of young women and girls is on the rise; domestic violence remains a serious issue; on average, men earn four times the amount of women, who earn, on average, 42 Euros per month. Despite institutional gender-mainstreaming in Kosovo aimed at empowering women, in practice much more needs to be done to reduce inequality.

Drug addiction is becoming an increasing health problem in Kosovo. Especially during the 90s and after the war in Kosovo there was increasing illicit drug trafficking and use among the young population. Unfortunately, Kosovo society is not prepared for this new challenge. Namely, there is no specialized service for chronic users of illicit drugs and there is no institutional support for treatment and rehabilitation of chronic users. In addition there is lack of trained staff to deal with this issue. Therefore, considerable efforts should be invested to address this ever pressing problem.

The registration of HIV/AIDS in Kosovo started in 1986. Since then, 47 HIV/AIDS patients have been registered. The majority of the patients have been males between 30 and 39 years of age. By the end of 2004, twenty-two patients had died from the illness.

In 2000, Ministry of Health established the Kosovo HIV/AIDS Committee and in 2002 the Kosovo AIDS Office. They have produced a strategy for prevention of HIV/AIDS, which will help develop cost-effective programmes including monitoring and evaluation, as well as the mobilization of the needed resources.

According to the UNAIDS classification, Kosovo is a low level epidemic region. However, all the ingredients for an explosive increase of HIV/AIDS are present: stigmatization of AIDS, a large young population; high unemployment; rapid social changes; a growing drug problem, including intravenous use; prostitution; high mobility of Kosovans in and out of Kosovo; and the presence of a large international community.

Kosovo’s main environmental problems predate the conflict and continue to be present. Most mining and industrial development took place without installation of adequate environmental protection equipment and without proper sitting of the industrial plants. This has resulted in serious environmental degradation and impacts on the health of the local population. Environmental hot spots in Kosovo are Mitrovica (lead and zinc mines), Obiliq (lignite mines), Glogovc (ferro-nickel mines and metallurgical industry) and Han i Elezit (limestone quarries and cement factory).

Kosovo is one of the most densely populated areas in the mountainous region of the Balkans. The ravages of conflict, destruction of homes and agricultural infrastructure - together with economic deprivation and environmental degradation - have resulted in extensive population displacement and its concentration in increasingly congested urban settlements along valley floors and on the narrow plains that extend to the lower reaches of foothills. Lack of effective planning and control has fostered the building of poorly constructed houses on ground of marginal safety, in a landscape of limited and largely unprotected water sources. For most people, access to electric power is, at best, intermittent. Although not prone to frequent natural disaster, the geological configuration of Kosovo (its location within a region characterised by seismic volatility) renders it susceptible to earthquake, the most recent of which occurred in April 2002. Seasonal river floods, avalanches and landslides are also relatively common events.
In a global context, however, Kosovo would not rate highly in any index ranking territories according to the incidence of natural disasters. Yet when disaster (whether natural, technological or derived from conflict) does occur, its impact is often widespread and devastating. For the majority of Kosovo’s people, living with the distressing consequences of such events has been an intrinsic component of their experience for generations. A decade of constitutional crisis and ethnically divisive civil discontent culminated in armed conflict in 1998/99, a circumstance that precipitated many deaths and injuries, extensive damage to property, large-scale population displacement, thousands of missing persons and a refugee crisis.

II. Red Cross organisations in Kosovo profile and priorities

2.1. Red Cross of Kosova profile: at a glance

Founded: 1945
Volunteers: 4000 (2004)
Staff: 19 in HQ and 54 in branches (2005)
Structure: 26 branch offices + HQ in capital

The Red Cross of Kosova (RCK) has 26 local branches across the territory and is coordinated by the HQ. Some branches are active in health and social services, while most of the others need further development. The RCK works on behalf of 93% of the population (88% Albanian and 5% other ethnic groups: Roma, Turkish and Ashkali) and is registered as a humanitarian organization with UNMIK.

Strengths:
- Volunteer mobilization and effective response
- Participation of youth in Governance
- Cooperation between HQ and branches
- Experienced staff and volunteers

Challenges:
- Un-resolved Kosovo status
- Local funding opportunities
- High number of beneficiaries
- Lack of owned premises

The Red Cross of Kosova and Metohija (RCKM) seeks to serve the remaining 7% (Serbian and Roma) of the population. There are six branches recognized by the ICRC and Federation Office in Kosovo. The work in branches and enclaves is coordinated by the HQ.

2.2. Priorities of Red Cross organisations in Kosovo

The Red Cross of Kosova vision is to improve social and health condition of population, minimising disaster consequences and risky behaviours in society, by mobilizing the power of humanity.

Its mission is to alleviate human sufferings through focused, prioritized and sustainable programmes as auxiliary to the local and central Government in conformity with the Fundamental Principles.

2 The RCKM branches form part of the Red Cross of Serbia (RCS), a republican member of the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society and, for this reason; the RCKM has not registered itself with UNMIK.
In 2005, the Red Cross of Kosova established 5 strategic objectives:

1. To advance the position of Red Cross of Kosova in local plans and regional networks for Kosovo
2. To increase the capacities of Red Cross of Kosova for governance and management
3. To increase the capacities of Red Cross of Kosova to offer needed support and services
4. To offer support and services for target groups through the following Red Cross volunteer-based programmes: Health; Social Welfare; Disaster Preparedness/Disaster Response; Youth; and Communication.
5. To promote the Movement’s Fundamental Principles, Humanitarian Values and Red Cross of Kosova history.

Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija works based on the priorities set in the strategy of Red Cross of Serbia. Priorities are mainly focused on relief activities including some social activities for elderly and youth.

III. Partnerships

3.1. Non-Movement partners

The provisional Institutions of self government were established in 2001 based on the Kosovo Constitutional framework. They are functioning with limited responsibilities as set in Security Council Resolution 1244. Since the establishment of the Institutions, Red Cross of Kosova has made significant efforts to create working relations and partnership in order to assist the most vulnerable as an auxiliary to the Government.

In 2002 after months of planning and negotiation, Red Cross of Kosova signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication regarding First Aid for new drivers. Together with American RC and Saudi Red Crescent, the Federation developed a first aid project proposal, and had a key role in advocating the project to the Ministry. This partnership with the Ministry enabled the Red Cross of Kosova to generate income for the organisation and to assist the most vulnerable by using a considerable percentage of this income for different activities. This also contributed in raising the image of organisation among the population.

Another agreement, for two years, was signed between the Red Cross of Kosova and the Ministry of Health in July 2005, related to family health education. The Ministry will provide limited financial support to the RCK in providing health education courses in community by trained instructors.

The Red Cross of Kosova cooperates also with different institutions, particularly with the Institute for Public Health, Kosovo AIDS Committee, Blood Transfusion Centre, Ministry of Youth, and Department for Emergencies and with local authorities. It also cooperates with UNDP and Kosovo Protection Corps in the field of emergency and disasters.

The Federation assisted Red Cross of Kosova to establish partnerships with different institutions and agencies through building capacities of staff and volunteers to better implement activities.

3.2. Movement partners

Several partner national societies support the needs of the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo through the Federation’s annual appeals: the British Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.

Spanish Red Cross, Saudi Red Crescent and Swiss Red Cross are working bilaterally with Red Cross of Kosova supporting different projects and activities.
The ICRC has a mission in Kosovo with the main office in Prishtina and 6 antennae offices throughout Kosovo. The mission includes 6 expatriate and 50 local staff. It is supporting the Red Cross organizations in dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law and the Movement’s Fundamental Principles, mine awareness programme, safe access and strengthening the tracing service.

IV. Federation Secretariat – Kosovo partnership

Since the re-establishment of a sub-delegation in 1999, the Federation has provided support to each of the two Red Cross organisations in Kosovo. Delivered in proportion to their respective size, that support has focused on the building up of physical infrastructure by providing salary stipends, equipment and the strengthening of operational capacities through training and activities in planning, administration, programme development and reporting.

The ethnic violence in Kosovo on 17 and 18 March 2004 highlighted the fact that the idea of One Red Cross in Kosovo can be achieved only when the final status of Kosovo is determined. The Federation and ICRC jointly confirm that the goal remains, but not any more as the priority on a week to week working level. The RCK and RCKM have different priorities and capacities; therefore intended common programmes are still not implemented. Also the work of the Joint Working Group (a forum where the two Red Cross organizations meet) needs to be reviewed with the aim to give to the members’ new responsibilities in practical issues and a more advisory role in cooperation between the two Red Cross organisations.

In 2005, capacity building remained a key area for the Federation’s support to the local RC organizations in Kosovo. Two significant issues that the local RCs continue to face are the development of sustainable sources of funding and further development of staff, volunteers and governance.

Federation priorities and support 2006-2009

The Federation will continue to advocate for the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo and maintain the lead role in capacity building.

Organisational development

Goal: Better functioning Red Cross organisations with increased capacity to offer support to the vulnerable groups including minorities

Objective: RC organisations in Kosovo have improved image among the public and stakeholders including beneficiaries, local authorities, media and Movement members as a result of better programmes.

Youth Development

Goal: Better functioning RC organisations with increased youth capacity to offer support to the vulnerable groups

Objective: RC organisations recruit and train youth to develop and implement long term projects and activities that emphasise basic needs of vulnerable people and youth themselves

Humanitarian Values

Goal: More tolerance and respect for humanitarian values in civil society

Objective: RC promotes Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values within RC and among population

Health and care

Goal: The health of the vulnerable people has improved.
**Objective**: Red Cross health programmes in Kosovo have contributed to improved general health of the population.

**Social Welfare**

**Goal**: The beneficiaries’ ability to effectively meet their own social basic need is improved

**Objective**: The well-being of target groups is improved through social welfare and home care based programmes.

**Disaster Management**

**Goal**: Vulnerability to the impact of disasters is reduced in Kosovo

**Objective**: The capacity of Red Cross of Kosova to plan and manage effective disaster preparedness and response initiatives based on national plan is increased.

**V. Federation Secretariat structure**

The secretariat office in Prishtina is currently staffed at one head of office (international) plus five staff (local recruits). In terms of the political (ie Kosovo being an international protectorate and its final status being unresolved), socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Kosovo as well as the (related) issue of the status of the RC organization (ie possible recognition by the Movement), there is need to remain at the current level. It is possible an increase in staff may in future be required. It is foreseen that the Federation still needs to maintain its presence in Kosovo for some years to come.

Financial support will be also needed for some time. Support from the Secretariat and the Regional Delegation in Budapest is essential for further development of RC organizations in Kosovo.

**VI. Assumptions**

- Political stability is maintained in Kosovo & region.
- Large-scale emergency does not divert focus.
- Funding is available for the Secretariat’s work.