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Annual report: Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme Belarus, Ukraine, Russia

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MAA67002
30/APR/2012

**This report covers the
period 01/01/2011 to
31/12/2011.**

*Ukraine: Doctor of Zhitomir
RC mobile diagnostics
laboratory is screening
thyroid gland in a
woman living in
Chernobyl affected area
May 2011/IFRC*



In brief

Programme outcome

Effective medical, social and psychological assistance is provided to targeted individuals in the regions affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Programme(s) summary

In the reporting period, CHARP provided general medical, social and psychological assistance in the seven regions of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia affected by the Chernobyl disaster. The main focus was on thyroid cancer screening in the priority group of people who were aged between 0 and 40 at the time of the Chernobyl accident and live in radiation contaminated areas. Besides the specialists of mobile diagnostics laboratories (MDL) provided breast screening, blood testing for diabetes and general check-ups. The programme distributed multivitamins to children living in radiation contaminated areas.

During 2011, the Red Cross mobile diagnostics teams screened 115,072 patients out of which 38 per cent were screened for the first time. Totally 55,134 cases of thyroid pathologies, 50 per cent of all screened, were detected. Some 18,290 patients suspected of having different types of thyroid gland cancer were referred to specialised medical institutions. Suspected thyroid cancer cases were confirmed in 186 patients.

Financial situation

The total 2011 budget is CHF 512,163 of which CHF 519,425 (101 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). However it should be taken into consideration that part of DFID contribution in amount of CHF 55,560 was meant for 2012. Therefore actual coverage in 2011 was CHF 481,878 (94%). Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 431,959 (84% per cent) of the budget.

Click here to go directly to the financial report.

See also: CHARP Revised Country Plan <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual11/MAA6700211p.pdf>

No. of people we have reached

According to reports from the Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in 2011 about 183,900 people have benefited directly from CHARP interventions as follows:

- Thyroid gland and breast screening: 115,072
- Psychosocial support: 48,200 people
- Distribution of multivitamins to children: 20,700

It is planned that in the following year the total number of people who benefit from programme implementation will be 190,000 recipients.

Our partners

CHARP is a cross-country project being implemented by IFRC together with the Red Cross National Societies of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in close cooperation with the ministries of health of the three countries. At present the local input constitutes about one third of the overall budget and the rest is provided via international support. In the reporting period the donors of CHARP were Irish government, Japanese Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross. Besides, the newly created laboratory in Volyn Region in the first half of 2011 was supported by German Red Cross.

The International Federation is an active member and participant of the UN Inter-Agency Task-Force on Chernobyl-related activities. CHARP also has maintained cooperation with several international agencies, including WHO, UNICEF, USAID.

Context

In the reporting period, IFRC together with the national Red Cross societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia continued implementing the long-term Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme (CHARP). In 2011, the programme was enriched with inclusion of one more mobile diagnostics laboratory (MDL). This MDL had been established by Ukraine Red Cross with assistance of German Red Cross in Volyn Region (Ukraine) also affected by Chernobyl disaster. Thus, the updated CHARP consists of seven MDLs: 3 labs operate in Belarus, 3 – in Ukraine and 1 – in Bryansk region of the Russian Federation.

During the reporting period, IFRC continued its work as a member of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. An international meeting of UN IATF was organized via videoconference, which connected 11 different locations (NY, London, Vienna, Kiev, Minsk, Moscow and others) involving over 60 participants on 26 January 2011. The members of the IATF discussed the progress of implementing the UN Action Plan on Chernobyl for the third decade after the disaster i.e. until 2016. Representatives of IFRC, who participated in this event at Kiev UNDP Office, reported/presented the current CHARP activities and showed to the international community that the Red Cross fulfils appropriately its commitments in terms of assisting people affected by Chernobyl disaster. On the other side the results of CHARP implementation in 2010 show that the health consequences of Chernobyl disaster are still serious and that this important work should be continued.

In 2011, the international community commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. Furthermore, the international conference "Twenty-Five Years after Chernobyl Accident. Safety for the Future" was initiated by the President of Ukraine and was held in Kiev on 20-22 April 2011. Prominent leaders of the international community were participating in this event, like the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, leaders of IAEA, WHO, World Bank and other international agencies. After the invitation of the Ukrainian government Red Cross delegation (10 people)

consisting of representatives of Japanese Red Cross, representatives of IFRC, leadership of Ukraine Red Cross Society were present. The Red Cross delegation was headed by IFRC Under-SG Mathias Schmale who delivered a statement on behalf of IFRC President Tadateru Konoe, highlighting Chernobyl-related activities of Red Cross.

Progress towards outcomes

Outcome:

- Six mobile diagnostic laboratories have screened 90,000 people for thyroid gland pathologies in the target group of individuals who were 40 years old or younger at the time of the accident and living in contaminated

Achievements

In 2011, CHARP was enriched with one more mobile diagnostics laboratory created in Volyn Region (Ukraine). Therefore, the number of people screened within the programme increased. In particular in 2011, the specialists of seven mobile diagnostics laboratories working within CHARP examined 115,072 people. The target group were persons aged 0 to 40 at the time of the accident and living in remote contaminated areas. The priority was given to areas, which have not been screened recently or were not screened at all in the past were prioritized. About 38 per cent of examined people were screened for the first time since the disaster.

Among the examined people, MDL specialists detected 55,134 cases of abnormal scans, i.e. pathologies. This means that about 50 per cent of all screened people have pathologies of the thyroid gland in various stages of development. Among these abnormal scans the three primary thyroid pathologies detected by the medical teams were nodular pathology (about 40 per cent of all cases), diffuse goitre (36 per cent of all cases) and thyroiditis (16 per cent of all cases). The patients diagnosed with these pathologies are under constant monitoring by Red Cross mobile teams because if left undiagnosed or untreated, there is a risk that these conditions may develop into thyroid cancer.

Totally 18,290 patients suspected of having different types of thyroid gland cancer were referred to specialised medical institutions for in-depth examination and surgery if needed. Suspected thyroid cancer cases were confirmed in 186 patients by cytological examinations; information on these cases was provided by clinics to the Red Cross. The patients with confirmed cancer have received necessary treatment and are also being monitored by the mobile teams and health care institutions. Along with thyroid examinations the medical team doctors conducted breast screening. In particular those women who had been diagnosed with thyroid nodular pathologies also passed through thyroid screening. In total 19,985 women passed this type of examinations. While conducting breast screening, in addition to examining patients women were also taught how to do self-examinations. Moreover the teams provided HIV counselling to the target group and helped the National Societies to organize HIV activities such as peer education and information dissemination.

Outcome:

- Stress and anxiety linked to radiation is reduced for 30,000 people through psychosocial support.

Achievements

In the reporting period CHARP continued rendering psychosocial support focused on diminishing stress and anxiety, reducing risks of radiation exposure in the population. These efforts were also contributing to providing healthier lifestyles, combating alcohol and drug abuse as well as risky sexual behaviour.

In December 2011, the three National Societies conducted refreshing psychosocial workshops in Mogilev (Belarus), Rovno (Ukraine) and Bryansk (Russian Federation). At these workshops the mobile medical teams and Red Cross staff and volunteers were trained on methods and tools for providing psychosocial assistance. The knowledge obtained at the workshops help the trainees to

better inform the population of the consequences of Chernobyl accident and how to deal with these problems and cope with crisis situations.

In addition, especially on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Chernobyl disaster, the medical team doctors and Red Cross staff published articles in newspapers, gave interviews on local radio highlighting the consequences of the accident, explaining preventive measures against stress, related diseases and social problems.

Outcome:

- Immunity is improved for 30,000 children living in highly contaminated areas through winter supplies of multivitamins containing the C, D and B groups with iron, folic acid and stable iodine.

Achievements

The National Societies distributed 607,500 tabs multivitamins that were supplied by Federation's logistics service in Geneva Belarus and Ukraine Red Cross (Bryansk RC branch purchased the vitamins locally) for contribution of Japanese Red Cross. The multivitamins were distributed to children in February-April by regional/district RC organisations, RC MDLs, volunteers in children institutions: schools, kindergartens, children hospitals etc.

In particular, in Belarus, the distribution of multivitamins was organised in Brest Region (Luninets district), in Gomel Region (Bragin and Gomel districts), Mogilev Region (Bykhov, Slavgorod, Cherkov, Krichev, Klimovichi, Chausy district and in Dribin town). In total 1,750 children received multivitamins.

In Bryansk Region (Russian Federation) the multivitamins were distributed in Novozybkov district highly affected by the Chernobyl disaster (contaminated by caesium 137 with density 15 Ci/km²). With assistance of Red Cross activists the vitamins were handed to 6,100 children and adolescents in kindergartens and schools in the course of prophylactic medical examinations provided annually by local health authorities.

In Ukraine the distribution of multivitamins was conducted mainly in April 2011. Some 12,850 children were provided with multivitamins in Volyn Region (Kamin-Kashirskiy, Lyubeshivskiy and Manevitskiy districts), in Zhitomir Region (Luginy, Korosten and Narodichi districts) and in Rovno Region (Dubrovitsa and Zarichne districts).

Regional Red Cross Committees received reports from schools, kindergartens, and children's hospitals located in radiation-contaminated areas that after taking multivitamins the children complain less of fatigue and headaches, and they are more rarely subject to acute respiratory diseases.

Other supplies. On agreement with Japanese Red Cross, the money from the pledge of JRCS was used for purchasing a vehicle (minibus Citroen 71C) for Brest mobile diagnostics laboratory.

Constraints or Challenges

In the reporting period the main constraint for programme implementation was the lack of funding in the first six months of 2011, due to the delay with transfer of contribution from Irish government. Because of this delay there were arrears in paying salaries to the staff working in the programme.

Working in partnership

In connection with commemorating the 25th anniversary of Chernobyl disaster, Kiev IFRC Office organised together with Ukraine Red Cross a CHARP regional round-table meeting held on 14 April 2011. Representatives of local authorities, embassies, international NGOs and mass media participated on the meeting. Speeches were delivered by the Secretary General of Belarus Red Cross, President of Ukrainian Red Cross Society, Head of international department of Russian Red

Cross, IFRC Representative for Belarus and Ukraine and two leading Ukrainian scientists. CHARP coordinator made a presentation on the programme. They answered numerous questions and mass media took their interviews.

On 19 April 2011, a delegation of Japanese Red Cross, after the international conference "Twenty-Five Years after Chernobyl Accident. Safety for the Future", visited Zhitomir Region. They got acquainted with CHARP activities, in particular with work of Red Cross mobile laboratory, distribution of multivitamins supplied with support of Japanese Red Cross to children living in radiation affected areas. The delegation also visited abandoned areas affected by Chernobyl disaster.

Regular meeting of International Chernobyl Coordination Committee (ICCC) was held on 6th September 2011, in Lutsk, Ukraine. The ICCC is the main coordinative body of CHARP). Taking part in this event were President of Ukraine Red Cross, Secretary General of Belarus Red Cross, Head of Emergency Department of Russian Red Cross, IFRC Country Representative for Belarus and Ukraine, high level representatives of local administration and health authorities. At the meeting issues of programme funding, sustainability, ways of further development of activities were discussed. The ICCC has concluded that CHARP remains important, it should be continued in the coming years, and efforts should be made for raising funds internationally and locally. The representatives of local administration highly appreciated the Red Cross Chernobyl-related activities.

Contributing to longer-term impact

During the reporting period senior staff from the three operating National Societies organised regular visits to the field for monitoring and ensuring share of experience and communication between the branches.

In the connection with 25th anniversary of Chernobyl disaster several international mass media agencies arrived to highlight CHARP. In particular in March-April correspondents of French newspaper "Liberation", journalists from Great Britain, Switzerland, Ireland, Russia, Belgium leaded by EZO communications manager visited Chernobyl nuclear power plant and CHARP mobile diagnostics laboratory in Zhitomir Region. The materials about CHARP activities were published in numerous international mass media. Besides Kiev IFRC office developed and printed a leaflet devoted to the above mentioned anniversary and twenty years jubilee of CHARP activities. The leaflet was distributed to mass media, embassies, NGOs etc.

Norwegian Red Cross and Japanese Red Cross allocated funds (CHF 5,375 and CHF 5,000 accordingly) for producing a film about CHARP activities. For this a professional film-maker from London, UK, was employed. He visited Chernobyl nuclear power plant and Ukraine and collected appropriate materials. The produced film profiles the health consequences of Chernobyl disaster and highlights work of Red Cross mobile laboratory team doctors. The film was demonstrated at National Society Consultation Forum on nuclear weapons arranged by Japanese Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross held on 12-14 May in Oslo, Norway.

The film is placed on the website <http://dustandscratchesfilms.com/chernobyl>

As mentioned above IFRC is a member of the UN interagency task force for Chernobyl. Since its launch CHARP has maintained cooperation with several international agencies, including WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and several NGOs. At present IFRC together with these agencies are implementing the UN Action Plan on Chernobyl for the third decade after the disaster i.e. until 2016.

Looking ahead

The results of CHARP work in the reporting period show that in spite of twenty five years that have passed after Chernobyl accident the health consequences of this disaster remain serious. The RC MDLs detected essential amount of thyroid pathologies and cancer. Therefore in 2012, CHARP is going to operate on same conceptual basis. The core activities will be thyroid screening in remote

areas of those aged 0 to 40 at the time of the disaster and providing psychosocial support for the affected population. Along with this MDL teams will conduct breast screening and general checks when necessary. In particular lab specialists will carry out blood testing for detecting sugar diabetes. Those patients who were diagnosed with thyroid and other pathologies will be benefitting from constant medical monitoring of RC MDL specialists. In spring time the programme will distribute multivitamins to children living in contaminated areas to boost the immunity of kids.

It is planned to hold in 2012 the next regular ICCM meeting in order to discuss issues of programme sustainability. In accordance with the above mentioned UN Action Plan on Chernobyl for the third decade after the disaster, CHARP should be continued at least until 2016. However it might happen so that it will be more and more difficult to raise international support for the programme. Therefore the IFRC together with the three operating National Societies will have to consider at this meeting how to further increase local input and in conformity with the CHARP strategy, and how to gradually hand over in future the programme to the governmental health care system.

How we work

All IFRC 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 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.

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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 nonviolence and peace.

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