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# Annual report Armenia

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**MAAAM002**  
**30/04/2012**

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

Disaster risk reduction training  
for volunteers in Shirak region



## In brief

### Programme outcome

The programmes of the Armenian Red Cross Society are aligned with the IFRC Strategy 2020's Strategic Aim One to save lives, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises, Aim Two: enable healthy and safe living, and Aim Three: promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

### Programme summary

In the field of **disaster management** the Armenian Red Cross Society was focusing on strengthening disaster preparedness of the National Society and communities in high risk areas. Therefore partnerships were established with schools in three regions and in Yerevan. Schoolchildren participated on seminars and competitions to raise their skills and knowledge on how to behave in disasters. Information materials were also prepared and distributed in the selected schools of the project. In addition, the National Society involved one new branch to the disaster risk reduction programme and trained volunteers on disaster risk reduction activities and organised training on Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment.

Under the programme **health and care** the Armenian Red Cross Society provided psychosocial support to refugees, including lonely elderly and vulnerable children through educational and integration assistance by conducting weekly visits, distribution of food and hygienic parcels, organising social-cultural events and summer camps. Related to the HIV prevention programme component, the National Society started the implementation of the project in December 2011.

The National Society enhanced the resource mobilisation capacities of four regional branches through trainings and induction meetings organised for the staff, and conducting local needs assessments and organising mini fundraising projects with communities. Also, nine partnerships were established and joint programs/activities have been implemented within the framework of those partnerships. Support has been received in the course of program realization. Fundraising activities were implemented according to the work plan, including shooting a social video, placing charity boxes to public spaces and producing and distributing PR materials.

### Financial situation

The total 2011 budget is CHF 319,355, of which CHF 260,243 (81 per cent) was covered during the reporting period including the opening balance. The overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 194,544 (60 per cent) of the budget.

[Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

### No. of people we have reached

- **34,350** people benefited from the disaster management projects from which over **12,300** were pupils and teachers and **about 22,000** people from targeted communities as well as **60** volunteers.
- 400 older vulnerable people benefited from psycho-social service delivery
- 95 vulnerable children with refugee background and living in the dormitories benefit from the educational and cultural programs organized at two dormitories of Yerevan.
- 40 youth leaders and youth volunteers from regional branches developed their communication and resource mobilization skills.
- 700 young people and 4,000 members of the general population were reached through HIV prevention events.
- 300,000 people were reached through online campaigns for HIV prevention.

### Our partners

During 2011, the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) established and continued cooperation with the following categories.

National institutions and organisations:

Local Authorities, corporate sector and local businesses in obtaining contribution for the local community needs response programs such as:

- Ministries, Regional administrations
- Zvartnots International Airports in realizing fundraising campaigns through charity boxes located at the meeting and waiting halls
- "Ashtarak Kat Diary" Ltd., one of the leading diary production in the country, in implementing activities on healthy lifestyle
- Orange Armenia and VivaCell-MTS mobile companies in implementing SMS HIV helpline project
- Mass media representatives in ensuring regular dissemination of ARCS activities

International organisations:

- Global Fund with "Social support to TB patients for state needs", "Time for choice HIV program" and "HIV prevention among IDUs in Lori marz" programs
- Eli Lilly and Company with "Stop MDR TB in Armenia" program
- MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERS with "Stop MDR TB in Armenia" program
- Mission East "HIV prevention among IDUs in Lori marz" program
- DIPECHO with DRR activities
- US Peace Corps with HIV prevention activities

- JICA
- World Vision in DM
- OXFAM GB
- UNICEF

Within the movement:

- Andorran RC in implementing HIV/AIDS peer education sessions and public events for HIV prevention
- Austrian RC in continuing psycho-social program for refugee lonely elderly people and vulnerable children living in dormitories in suburbs in Yerevan
- DIPECHO- Danish and Icelandic RC co-funded project
- Norwegian RC funding through IFRC support
- DFID funding through IFRC support
- American Red Cross with "HIV prevention in Armenia" program
- German Red Cross targeting psychosocial support and First Aid activities

## Context

Unequal economic opportunities, differences in regional development and evidence of the growing severity and depth of poverty suggest that further reductions in poverty rates are a major challenge for Armenia. To date, poverty reduction outside the capital has relied significantly on fiscal transfers and private remittances and this has decreased due to the global economic slowdown. The return of migrants due to the slowdown in the economy of host countries (mainly Russia) also places additional pressures on social service delivery and job creation efforts. Data shows that poverty rates are consistently higher in regions that are at risk of earthquakes or are in regions with unfavourable agricultural conditions and a lack of basic infrastructure, as well as those who live in border regions of the country. Around 36 percent of the population live in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence agriculture and have income levels far below the per capita average for the country. Similarly, people living in small and medium towns, characterized by limited employment opportunities and a failure to attract new investment, have seen only a marginal decline in poverty rates. This suggests that a strong indicator of vulnerability is the region of residence and that there is a need to urgently focus on reducing regional vulnerability. Several vulnerable groups including the poor, disabled and refugees are being hardest hit by the gaps in economic and human development, and may continue to be the hardest hit by the impact of the global economic crisis in Armenia. Despite legal provisions guaranteeing the social protection and additional warranties for people who have disabilities, in practice this does not take place and they constitute one of the most vulnerable group in terms of access to education, health and protection, as well as in difficulties in job placement due to their inability to equal competition in the labour market (92% of unemployment). While numbers have reduced significantly, refugees continue to face problems in terms of access to basic services, poverty and unemployment. Refugees were often settled in circumstances that required skills and knowledge that they did not possess as they came from a completely different background, which considerably hampers their full sustainable integration, as the durable solution for refugees in Armenia. Exclusion, difficulties to access health and education services and sometimes stigma continue to be challenges, and despite government efforts and positive policies, there is still no complete solution to their housing problem and many, including elderly who totally rely on care and assistance, continue to live in dormitories in appalling living conditions.

Even though it has been improving over the last several years, the health system in Armenia still faces many challenges. Armenia belongs to the region with a fast growth of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and according to the WHO/UNAIDS classification, the HIV epidemic is in the second, concentrated state. Analysis of HIV cases according to age groups and gender shows that the majority of HIV-

infected males (84.3%) and females (83.6%) are young people between the ages of 20-44. The main modes of HIV transmission are through heterosexual practices (49%) and injecting drug use (43.2%). Awareness of HIV among young is low and the current educational system does not properly address the actual challenges in HIV/AIDS yet. Stigma and discrimination towards people leaving with HIV/AIDS exists, and this leads to their social exclusion, inhibiting their full integration into society. In Armenia, like in other countries in the world, while the face of the epidemic is usually male, infection rates among women are on the increase and the burden of care for people living with AIDS falls on women. Along with the increasing risk posed by HIV, the incidence of Tuberculosis (TB) has expanded significantly during the recent 15 years. In addition, Multi Drug-Resistant (MDR) TB is becoming a serious problem in Armenia. According to the Drug Resistance Survey 2006-2007, the MDR TB rate in newly detected TB cases is 9.4%, and among previously treated patients is 42.3%.

The country is at high risk of natural disasters (seismic activity, floods, drought, and landslides) and while the government considers disaster risk reduction as one of its priorities, the system still is in the development process for its capacities and resources to prevent, prepare and respond to disasters, and to recover without re-creating risk. In addition, the presence of the Metzamor nuclear plant in an area with a very high risk of seismic activity highlights the additional risk of man-made vulnerabilities. Climate change is likely to result in more extreme climate events in terms of droughts and floods, which may lead to more frequent and intensive natural disasters. Vulnerability to natural disasters is a serious concern for the sustainable development of the country.

Realizing the challenges, threats and changes occurring in the economic, social, health and disaster risk reduction spheres, the Armenian Red Cross, being auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, operates countrywide addressing the challenges brought forward by the spheres mentioned above. The Armenian National Society addresses those challenges in the partnership with the government, local authorities, civil society, corporate sector and international partners. A new strategy for 2011-2020 was developed with the support of Federation and adopted by the Armenian Red Cross at its 22nd General Assembly in 2011. The strategy will serve as a guide in the upcoming nine years in achieving the National Society's mission and addressing the needs existent in the country.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Disaster Management

#### Programme component 1: Disaster management planning

##### Outcome:

- The Armenian Red Cross has effective tools for strengthening disaster preparedness of the National Society and communities in high risk areas.

##### Achievements

In August-December, 2011 the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) implemented the "ARCS capacity building in the regions" project with the financial support of the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK Government through IFRC. The aim of the project was to strengthen one of the ARCS regional branches through involving new volunteers in the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities.

## Programme component 2: Community preparedness

### Outcomes:

- Effective tools for strengthening disaster preparedness of communities in high risk areas are in place through organizing VCAs and disaster risk reduction activities.
- Vulnerability of communities to disasters has been decreased through community capacity building, public awareness and risk reduction activities carried out by the National Society.

### Achievements

Training on Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) and DRR issues was organized for 20 new volunteers in order to integrate them into ARCS and DRR activities. Plan of action for the first three months was developed at the end of training. The volunteers started their activities according to the plan in the selected target Vardarat community of Shirak region. The volunteers implemented VCA in order to explore the threatening risks and scale of the vulnerability forwards those risks and summarizing assessment results, developed VCA report with a map of community risk zones. Awareness raising training sessions on Disasters were also organized in the school of the community, proceeded with an evacuation and children quiz. Moreover, the awareness level of the community population was raised through meetings, distribution and placement of DRR materials in public places.

2,000 schoolchildren and 400 teachers from six schools of Vayots Dzor and Armavir regions and nine schools of Yerevan raised their knowledge and skills on how to behave in disasters through educational activities/seminars, children quiz and competitions. About 40 volunteers, mostly new ones, raised their preparedness to disasters through the training.

Evacuation drills were also organized in all the selected schools with involvement of 7,700 pupils and teachers. Educational posters and booklets were printed and distributed to the targeted 15 schools. All above mentioned events were carried out by instructors, selected from the organized “Disaster Risk Management” workshop’s participants, on the daily basis.

The component outcome was also possible to be reached through the “Disaster Preparedness in Schools” project with financial support of World Vision Armenia. During the implementation of the project, the ARCS cooperated with the educational department of Gegharkunik region and the administration of ten community schools.

Other achievements in the particular field reached through partnerships are described in the section of Working in Partnership.

## Health and Care

### Programme component 1: Social Welfare

#### Outcome:

- Capacities of Red Cross staff and volunteers to provide focused and responsive social support to local communities are strengthened.
- 400 lonely elderly refugees have improved their social conditions and received psychological support.
- Totally 125 children living in dormitories have received educational session from the volunteers and participated in cultural events and their integration process into the society has been supported.
- Armenian Red Cross branches have mobilized local resources to sustain social services for vulnerable communities

## Achievements

Two regional branches volunteers and staff raised their capacities to identify, assess and provide relevant and appropriate services and support to the most vulnerable older people in two regions of Armenia.

The social and living conditions of the 60 lonely elderly in Aragatsotn and Gegharquniq regions have been improved through the psychosocial services provided for them by the Red Cross nurses and volunteers. The beneficiaries' social burden has been decreased through monthly provision of food parcels and second hand clothes as well as through provision of services such as household chores, shopping, small in-house repairs, etc. The social inclusion has been reached through regular visits of nurses and volunteers, communication with the elderly and consultations.

Certain achievements are also registered through cooperation with the local authorities and organisations acting in the particular field. As a result, the beneficiaries have been provided with basic goods and second hand clothes donated by the latter.

A number of psychosocial support activities took place. The living conditions of 400 older refugee people have been improved through distribution of food and hygiene parcels four times in a year. The integration of the 400 older and 95 (due to the shortage of funding number of 95 has been covered instead of planned 125) children refugees has been ensured through weekly visits made by the volunteers, 14 social-cultural events and sight-seeing, educational daily sessions and a summer camp organised for 95 children.

The project was actively disseminated during the reporting period. As a result of successful cooperation with the media a number of articles were printed in five national newspapers and national TV channels covered the activities repeatedly.

The Armenian Red Cross ensures the involvement of communities and local authorities in addressing the existing needs in the community. In regard to the social support, local authorities and private sector has been encouraged to get involved and support the vulnerable. Thus, Hall of Armavir region, Dino Gold mining company acting in Syuniq region supported the branches to provide social service to the beneficiaries with socially poor conditions. Volunteers are actively involved in raising funds from business sectors and communities to ensure some basic social service delivery of the targeted beneficiaries, their integration into the society and isolation reduction through periodical cultural events and visits.

## Programme component 2: HIV/AIDS

### Outcomes:

- Further HIV infections have been prevented through peer education and community mobilization.
- HIV care, treatment, and support are expanded. – no funding
- HIV stigma and discrimination has been reduced among general population.
- Armenian Red Cross Society capacities to deliver and sustain scaled-up HIV programme are strengthened.

## Achievements

Due to the fact that the program funded by Andorran RC through IFRC started in December 2011, during one month period only preparatory activities were completed, such as:

**Recruitment of volunteers:** the national society recruited 15 volunteers from Yerevan and the 3 implementing regional branches (Tavush, Armavir, Vayots Dzor). The volunteer selection process took into account the previous experience of volunteers in this field. Some new volunteers were also involved in the program and participated in the training.

**Peer Education Manuals:** the national society reviewed and improved the educational manuals that had been previously developed by the Youth Department and used for earlier peer educational sessions. The manuals were updated with HIV and AIDS information and printed to be distributed to the peer educators and provided to the teachers and administration of schools.

Other achievements in the particular field reached through partners' funds and bilateral program implementation

These outcomes have been possible to achieve through partners funding, particularly through bilateral program implemented with American Red Cross and the programs funded by Global Fund and US Peace Corps in cooperation with Orange Armenia and VivaCell-MTS mobile operators.

Armenian Red Cross also strengthened its capacities through participation in various Federation meetings and workshops in the field of health and HIV/TB/Harm Reduction, sharing experiences with sister National Societies.

### Programme component: Resource Mobilization

#### Outcomes:

- Armenian Red Cross Society has developed resource mobilization mechanism and tools to ensure continuous activity within the National Society.
- Armenian Red Cross Society has developed a mechanism and tools for the promotion of membership and recruitment, appraisal and reward of volunteers to assist programs relying on volunteers, as well as on financial inputs.
- Armenian Red Cross Society has sustainable and transparent financial management system

#### Achievements

A significant achievement was the strengthening of regional branches of the National Society. The provided five training sessions on communication, fundraising and project proposal writing, conducted by the specialists, contributed to the improvement of resource mobilization skills of about 90 staff members and volunteers from four regional branches and Headquarters. The project activities also systematized the resource mobilization procedures in regional branches, including needs assessment and designing and implementing projects and activities for addressing the most vulnerable groups in the respective regions. The list of possible regional donors was also shortlisted and meetings with them were organized to seek for the abovementioned projects. Local fundraising activities were also organized, such as placing about six charity boxes in the local shops in four regions. However due to the poor social conditions in the regions, it was not possible to reach tangible results with the charity boxes. PR materials such as 1,000 copies of informational booklets, 80 stickers for cars with RC logo, 20 budes and four table flags were also provided to the four Regional Branches which were used during their events and meetings with possible partners.

ARCS gained and shared experiences of using various fundraising and resource mobilization tools with other national societies during the Fundraising Skillshare organized by the British Red Cross together with Federation.

The cooperation with Mass Media was raised to a higher level, obtaining contact persons in certain print, online and TV media. Innovative methods were used to approach and establish long-term communication with the media, such as business breakfast with journalists or an out-going training. The week following the training, a TV program was prepared and broadcast on ArmNews TV channel about Psycho-social program beneficiaries and an article was publicized in Panarmenian.net in three languages. About 100 copies of newspapers of various releases were provided by the "Hayatsk" Daily newspaper for Psycho-social program and an agreement was made

with journalists to make a series of social releases about ARCS's activities.

A number of donors were also approached through non-standard methods; a business lunch was planned to be organized for the representatives of national and international companies, phone conversations and eye-to-eye meetings were organized with the ARCS management and the local authorities for implementing joint projects. These approaches are an initial step towards drawing potential donors attention on ARCS and establishing contacts for further cooperation.

Through the continued fundraising activities ARCS raised about 2600 USD through the charity boxes placed in the Airports, 350 USD through the charity boxes placed at the shops, and 200 USD through donations and street collections. About 1600 USD was raised through Bulk SMS and 150 USD through the street collection by the youth volunteers for supporting Japan after the earthquake. About 3000 USD was donated by the Syunik Regional Administration and in kind contribution of 6000 USD was made by the World Vision Armenia as a contribution to the project targeting local needs in Syunik Region and about 1000 USD was donated by the Armavir Regional Administration for the local project.

Friendly relations are also in place with the "Zvartnots" International Airports for already couple of years resulting in continuous fundraising possibilities for ARCS. So far about 4600 USD has been raised through donation boxes placed at the airport.

### Constraints or Challenges

Natural and man-made disasters can divert the attention from regular activities to disaster response. As a result of limited funding few activities were implemented for improving ARCS Disaster Preparedness and Response Structure and strengthening skills and knowledge of rapid response teams' volunteer-members. This results into inactiveness and low commitment from the volunteers. Also, there is a need to revise and practice Contingency Plan of the NS, as it sets up certain definition of roles and responsibilities, reaction mechanisms, plan of action, etc and needs to be operational. To overcome the situation several volunteer-instructors from Yerevan, Vayots Dzor, Armavir and Shirak regional branches were involved in the activities (mostly school preparedness and community based DRR) implemented within the projects.

Additional funds are needed in order to implement more activities in more communities and in order to have high results and outcomes from the programs it is important to implement more long-term programs.

## Working in partnership

Partner	Sphere	Short Description
European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), Danish and Icelandic Red Cross in a consortium with IFRC	Disaster Management	ARCS implemented “Building Safer Local Communities in South Caucasus” project. The project was co-funded by European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), Danish and Icelandic Red Cross in a consortium with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The project was implemented in close cooperation with Ministry of Emergency Situation, Ministry of Education and Science, Crisis Management State Academy, National Survey for Seismic Protection, Armenian Rescue Service, as well as ,Shirak regional and local authorities.
<b>Elly Lily &amp; Co Technical support was received from IFRC as well</b>	<b>Health: TB</b>	The “Stop MDR TB in Armenia” project is aimed at providing care, psychosocial support and direct observation for most vulnerable people affected with MDR TB in Yerevan city, thus promoting their treatment and minimizing the consequences of MDR TB and raising community awareness on TB, MDR TB and TB/HIV. The project gives the opportunity to support the implementation of MDR TB control in Yerevan involving MDR TB patients in Avan, Nor Nork and N19 policlinics. The ARCS community nurses and the psychologist have received appropriate training to work with the patients, to support MDR TB control, provide psychosocial assistance, consultancy, explanatory and disseminating information on MDR TB.

The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) is member of the Advisory Board of the National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction as well as several thematic groups; UN Disaster Management Team Working Group, CCM, PERCO, ENDOV, Global Alliance on HIV, ERNA, ECC, ECM.

Cooperation continues with number of Ministries and the new Memorandum of Understanding will be signed in the near future with the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

The National Society’s financial resources are limited and the activities are being implemented within the certain funding of projects and grants. However, the development of new contacts and partnerships with the local businesses, corporate sector and local authorities who are encouraged to bring their input into their community improvement, also promote the sustainability of certain activities and service delivery. On the other hand, the trained volunteers and strengthened capacities within the National Society also contribute to the sustainability of the service delivery. For instance the skills and experience of the trained staff and volunteers are used for implementation of public awareness activities and educational events, as to the service delivery, the volunteers are engaged in resource mobilization process, the outcome of which is used for covering to some limited extent certain service delivery activities.

The disaster risk reduction is indicated within the Government proposed “Sustainable Development Program 2008 - 2012” as priority. The aim of this program is to decrease the poverty level particularly in rural regions which have underdeveloped communication and road system, irrigating and health system, etc. For this, the activities carried out by the NS like implemented VCAs,

Disaster Risk Management workshops and “Building Safer Local Communities in South Caucasus” project would highly contribute to the development of the regions thus making a supplementary effect to the government proposed program.

The year was successful in school preparedness direction, where a number of educational campaigns were implemented with involvement of huge amount of beneficiaries. The experience and knowledge gained during this period is important and crucial for further planning and concentrating on school preparedness activities. The volunteers, community members, pupils, teachers and other stakeholders are equipped with skills and knowledge on how to behave in case of an emergency; moreover, they will be able to make right decisions in emergency situations for protecting themselves and could also save lives of close located and affected people with their suggestions or instructions.

ARCS representatives participated at several international trainings, workshops and working group meetings where they presented and shared experiences and lessons learned.

## Looking ahead

Certain elements ensuring the future sustainability in the implementation of the activities are the existing human resources and expertise. The skilful and devoted volunteers are encouraged to be engaged in the support activities. The newly established contacts and ongoing cooperation with the local authorities and other organisations acting in the particular field will promote further coordinated service delivery.

Based on reviewing the project in terms of evaluating the work carried out, summing up the achieved results, understanding the challenges and deciding the most effective ways of reaching future objectives, the National Society will modify its activities accordingly and aim to:

- Promote the involvement of regional branches and key staff at the headquarters through various dissemination activities organized by project staff and volunteers.
- Direct all the National Society's communication and resource mobilization efforts in current projects to reach a larger scale of target populations and achieve a higher level of awareness of the society's activities, as well as considering specific approaches to different target groups.
- Continue to strengthen our human resource mobilisation through organising sustainable skills development courses for staff and volunteers.
- Develop further partnerships with the private sector.

## 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.



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.

Find out more on [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

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