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Annual report Belarus

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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**This report covers the
period 1 January to 31
December 2011**

Red Cross assists in re-establishing family links for ex-offenders by facilitating a meeting of the self-support group in an open type correctional institution in Mogilev region. Photo: Belarus Red Cross



In brief

Programme outcome

IFRC supported programmes in Belarus aim to reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disasters and public health emergencies; to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters; to increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability; and to promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme(s) summary

The overriding purpose of this programme support plan is to strengthen Belarus Red Cross capacities in terms of increasing its role in the civil society to effectively address local vulnerabilities and to meet the humanitarian challenges facing Belarus today. Over the past year, IFRC country representation has been providing essential support and advice to Belarus Red Cross in meeting its strategic priorities, including:

- Scaling up HIV programming to include HIV prevention in the field of labour;
- Introducing gender oriented approaches in HIV prevention and harm reduction programming;
- Increasing capacities of communities to prevent and cope with human influenza pandemic;
- Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable individuals affected by the socio-economic crisis;
- Establishing a psychosocial support service to victims of disasters in accordance with IFRC standards;
- Developing youth volunteer movement and participation;
- Facilitating tailored organizational development support to Belarus Red Cross upon request related to revising statutes, Red Cross law, strengthening governance and management, resource mobilization and finance development, human resource management;
- Supporting prevention and assistance measures related to trafficking in human beings, consisting of, primarily, awareness-raising through peer-to-peer education, rehabilitation and social re-integration of victims;

- Promoting social inclusion and empowerment approaches towards the discriminated and marginalized people.

IFRC representation assistance goes far beyond technical programme support, such as financial and budget management services for ongoing programmes. Partnership development and coordination, support to grant applications and assistance in identifying funding opportunities, humanitarian diplomacy and supplementary services to National Societies operating bilaterally have also been in the centre of attention.

The election of the National Society Presidium, Chairperson and Secretary General, adoption of a new strategy and statutes by the Belarus Red Cross Congress in May created a firm base for further national society development. The Congress emphasized the importance of strengthening that Belarus Red Cross has gone through over the past few years. This strengthening process has resulted in Belarus Red Cross becoming – and increasingly recognized as – a dynamic National Society with quality programmes, growing capacity and a strong focus on the most vulnerable. The increasing perception of Belarus Red Cross as a strong partner increases the organization ability to develop new partnerships and diversifying the funding base.

Financial situation

The total 2011 budget is CHF 2,147,325 of which CHF 1,087,232 (51 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 782,430. Expenditure against budget was 36 per cent and expenditure against funding was 71 per cent.

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

No. of people we have reached

More than 96,000 people in Belarus benefited directly from the Federation Secretariat supported programme interventions. More than 280,000 people were reached indirectly through mass information campaigns.

Programme	People reached
Disaster Management	9,500
Health and Care	16,500
Organizational Development	55,000
Principles and values	15,000

Some 150,000 beneficiaries will be reached by activities planned for 2012.

Our partners

The Belarus Red Cross cooperates with nine partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies, IOM, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, UK's Department for International Development (DfID), Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), NGOs, the national centre for blood donation, national AIDS centre, ministries and governmental organizations, universities and other educational institutions, mass media as well as international and local enterprises. Concept notes and project proposals for EU funding were submitted by the Belarus Red Cross in cooperation with partner National Societies and IFRC.

Context

According to the World Bank, the official devaluation of the Belarusian rouble, held by the National Bank of Belarus on May 24, was the largest in the world for the past 20 years. Over the first five months of 2011, the official rate of Belarusian rouble has fallen by 71.6 per cent against a basket of currencies. After several months of uncertainty with currency restrictions, and with the resulting

black market speculation, a Pandora's box of devaluation and inflation forces had spread throughout the economy. On 20 October 2011 the Belarusian rouble sank 34 percent in a full market free float that set a single exchange rate in line with demands from the IMF. As the rouble has weakened, many Belarusians' livelihoods already hit hard by the crisis have come under extreme pressure.

On 9 December the Belarusian Office for National Statistics reported that between December 2010 and November 2011 inflation in Belarus reached 113.6 percent – and 104 percent if calculated since the beginning of the year. Compared to data from December 2010, food prices increased within that period by 120.9 percent, non-food products went up by 106.7 percent and the price of services rose by 59.9 percent. As a result, four large international audit firms – PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte, Ernst & Young and KPMG – described the Belarusian economy as hyperinflationary. According to the EBRD's latest Regional Economic Prospects report, "inflation more than quadrupled in Belarus since February, following large depreciations and continued lax policies". Moreover, according to EBRD experts¹, the crisis in the euro zone is going to further affect the economies of Central and Eastern Europe, including Belarus, due to trading and financial links with the countries of the euro zone. According to Business Monitor International, the consumer outlook for Belarus will remain extremely challenging, largely on account of massive currency devaluation and skyrocketing inflation levels. Consumer price inflation in the country is expected to remain close to triple-digit rates over the next few months.

The April 11 explosion in the capital's busiest subway station during an evening rush hour killed 13 and wounded more than 200 people – the first deadly bombing in a nation, where such serious security incidents have been rare. Belarus Red Cross staff was on the scene immediately helping move out the injured, put on bandages, and trying to provide psychological assistance.

Trafficking in persons, especially women, remains a major challenge. Belarus is a source, destination, and transit country for women, men, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour. Reports continued of women from poor families forced into prostitution in the capital Minsk. Belarusian men, women, and children are found in forced begging, as well as in forced labour in the construction industry and other sectors in Russia and Belarus. Belarusian single, unemployed females between the ages of 16 and 30 and without higher education are at the greatest risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. Belarusian men seeking work abroad are increasingly subjected to forced labour. Traffickers often use informal social networks to approach potential victims. Some labour trafficking victims returned to Belarus with severe injuries, such as amputated limbs. Child pornography has also become the challenge in the country. During the year 2011 the number of the minor VoTs has grown significantly, from 24 percent in 2009 to 32 percent in 2011.

The number of persons registered as HIV-positive in Belarus reached 12,846 in December 2011. The most severely affected age group is 15–29 years old (61.8 percent of all HIV-infected persons). Most of the infected population is male (60.9 percent), although the share of cases reported among women (39.1 percent) is rapidly increasing. Sexual way of HIV transmission has been the most common in Belarus for several years. However, injection drug use is still responsible for a large percentage of HIV infections. Drug users are therefore also among the most HIV affected groups in the population of Belarus.

¹ For details please refer to http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/news/REP_October_2011_181011_Final.pdf

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Programme purpose:

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

Component 1: HIV and AIDS

Outcomes:

- Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection.
- Vulnerability of PLHIV decreased through reducing HIV stigma and discrimination.
- The capacity of the National Society to deliver and sustain scaled-up HIV programmes strengthened.

Achievements

Since the beginning of the year Belarus Red Cross has worked to introduce gender oriented approaches in HIV prevention and harm reduction programming, to expand range and quality of services provided to female injecting drug users (IDUs), as well as to strengthen capacity of local organizations providing services to IDUs. This work is supported by IFRC and Italian Red Cross through the project *Enhanced access for female IDUs to HIV prevention and harm reduction services* piloted in Grodno region. The project is implemented in close cooperation with key HIV service organizations in the country. Gender-oriented approaches are being introduced, following the recommendations of a social survey *Evaluation of gender-oriented approaches in harm reduction projects* commissioned by Belarus Red Cross in Grodno with the use of an external consultant. During the reporting period, the project saw the opening of a Day Care Centre for female IDUs and their children, equipped with washing machine, shower, microwave, computer and information materials. Female IDUs (64 persons), children of female IDUs (42 persons), partners of female IDUs (6 persons) receive regular services in the Day Care Center such as counseling by and referral to specialists, health education, computer and hairdressers' courses, work with children of female IDUs, humanitarian assistance (food and hygiene items, condoms and pregnancy tests). As part of this work, the room set up for temporary stay of female IDUs and their children at Grodno city branch of Belarus Red Cross offers a new service "Creative Workshops" (co-funded by the GFATM). Children of female IDUs enjoy participation in the work of creative groups while their mothers receive tailor made services, education and consultations. The total number of services provided to female IDUs in the first year of project implementation was 799.

In October, through the *Eurasian Harm Reduction Network* a study visit was arranged by IFRC for three Belarus Red Cross project staff to the NGO 'Svet nadezhdy' ("Light of Hope") in Ukraine, Poltava, which has well developed gender-based services for female IDUs, including multidisciplinary teams, penitentiary services, harm reduction, rehabilitation and advocacy activities. During the study visit Belarus Red Cross representatives participated in various meetings and also attended a two-day training on introduction of gender-sensitive approaches in programming for IDUs and PLHIV. On 3-4 November Italian Red Cross trainers from Villa Maraini facilitated the workshop in Minsk *Consolidation of efforts for providing comprehensive quality services*. The training was organized and supported jointly by Belarus Red Cross and Positive Movement. On 14-18 November Belarus RC Secretary General and project manager attended a harm reduction course at Villa Maraini. Belarus Red Cross experience in gender-sensitive approaches in harm reduction was also presented to the participants of the course.

The project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* was accomplished in February 2011. The project purpose was to ensure that youth in pilot organizations has access to HIV prevention programmes and benefits from elaborated and improved HIV prevention policies at work places. HIV prevention

and anti-discrimination activities under the project were carried out at the three largest national enterprises including Belarusian Auto Works (BELAZ), Belarus Steel Works and Belarus State Railways. The project assisted companies in informing staff and their families about safe sexual behavior, preventing HIV from affecting staff performance and creating more balanced labour relations. The project reached 26,006 people, 37 percent of them (9,632) are youth, under the age of 31. The coverage of the secondary target group was 28,695 people (family members of the staff) and 36,353 people (in local communities). In total 68 volunteers from the target group (enterprise youth staff aged under 31 years old) and 37 Belarus Red Cross volunteer students were involved in the project implementation. Above all, the three target enterprises adopted HIV prevention policies based on ILO's non-discrimination principles and including HIV prevention trainings for the staff during working hours. In line with their policies and action plans the enterprises continue their work towards reducing stigma and discrimination against PLHIV.

In March 2011 Belarus Red Cross launched the project *Support and capacity strengthening of PLHIV* supported by American Red Cross in Zhlobin, Gomel region. The project team works to improve quality of life of PLHIV by enhancing their access to prevention, treatment and care services. The services include psychological, medical, social and legal counseling, humanitarian assistance, education on how to live with HIV and activities forming an enabling environment in the local community. The project also includes replication of the experiences/approaches gained and tested through IFRC-supported project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* to other enterprises in Zhlobin. In June 2011 representatives of six enterprises interested in introducing and implementing ILO standards on HIV/AIDS in workplace took part in a partnership meeting organized by Belarus Red Cross in Zhlobin, where the main educational module "What should everyone know about HIV/AIDS?" was presented. According to the participants, the session on HIV-related stigma and discrimination was the most effective. The session was facilitated by Anna Nazarova, consultant and representative of the Belarusian community of PLHIV, living with disclosed HIV+ status. Moreover, during the meeting a plan for further action related to implementation of the program "Health @ work" was discussed. The partnership meeting was also attended by representatives of the Danish Red Cross (within the experience exchange visit). They highly estimated the mentioned meeting and highlighted the variety of forms and techniques of work and involvement of a representative of the PLHIV Community. Furthermore, the national society and regional administration agreed on participation of a Red Cross representative in meetings of the Regional Interdepartmental Council on Prevention of HIV and STIs, as well as defined a range of partner organizations to be included in a regional referral system among HIV-oriented organizations (governmental and non-governmental). In November 2011 the project supported the opening of an Information and Counseling Center on HIV/AIDS in the Belarus Red Cross Zhlobin district branch, as well as the establishment a referral system enabling PLHIV to have better access to HIV-related services.

In November a pilot project aiming at HIV prevention at work places started in Rechitsa, Gomel region. The project is piloting a social order mechanism and has been selected for support on a competitive basis. The funding is provided from the budgets of local authorities and GFATM grant.

With Danish Red Cross bilateral support Belarus Red Cross continues its countrywide HIV prevention efforts through peer education and anti-discrimination activities in 30 educational institutions of the country. In 2011 a total of 44,353 young people (17 percent more comparing to the year 2010) were reached through peer education sessions, youth actions, film group sessions, seminars and lectures under the project *Youth against HIV* as a result of 442 educational campaigns and actions.

Belarus Red Cross proposal aiming to reduce stigma and discrimination of PLHIV was selected for support (USD 23,800) by the US Embassy Small Grant Program. The project started in September with the aim to contribute to forming tolerant attitudes in local communities and an enabling environment for PLHIV and their families; building community capacities for effective reduction of stigma; and improvement of interaction and partnership between civil society and authorities to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS.

A number of activities were organised by youth volunteers of the National Society in 16 cities of Belarus, in the framework of the Belarus Red Cross HIV programme, with the overall goal of giving young people an opportunity to be role models and living examples of responsible behaviour. Another event dedicated to 1 December was the official opening of the exhibition 'A city where people live' in the town of Lida, Grodno region, organised in cooperation with the *Belarusian Community of People Living with HIV*.

Component 2: Community-based first aid

Outcome:

- Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) have increased.

Achievements

After a terrorist attack at Oktyabrskaya metro station near Belarus Red Cross headquarters in Minsk it was decided to organize first aid trainings for all staff of Belarus Red Cross headquarters. As a result, 130 staff at Belarus Red Cross headquarters and regional branches were trained in first aid. In 2012 Belarus Red Cross will purchase 200 basic FA kits to equip its staff and volunteers.

Even though the *pandemic preparedness* component is not included in Country Plan 2011, Belarus Red Cross has maintained its commitment to further increase capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with human influenza pandemic. In the reporting period, Belarus Red Cross successfully accomplished a three-month pilot project *Sustaining pandemic preparedness in orphanages* aimed at awareness-raising of the target group on pandemic influenza aspects, ways of self protection and promotion of healthy lifestyle. With the IFRC support, a peer education model was adapted to pandemic settings and introduced into the work of pilot orphanages in Minsk City and Minsk Region; eight volunteer-instructors were trained at ToT (two volunteer-instructors per orphanage); four supervisors were trained to guide and supervise volunteer-instructors (one supervisor per orphanage); 56 representatives of target audience received knowledge on pandemic influenza, its symptoms, ways of transmission and personal protection through information sessions; about 150 people were reached with prevention messages during Red Cross public actions. The project was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, local administration and mass media.

Constraints or Challenges

Lack of donor interest is one of the stumbling blocks to further scaling up of HIV programming. Even though the achievements at the three pilot enterprises remain sustainable, the successful innovative HIV workplace programme is discontinued and the Belarus Red Cross is losing its important HIV prevention role in the field of labour. Thanks to the American Red Cross support the positive workplace experiences are being replicated to other enterprises in Zhlobin.

Disaster Management

Programme purpose: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters

Programme component 1: Disaster response

Outcome:

- Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of those people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition.

Achievements

IFRC and the Swiss Red Cross supported the Belarus Red Cross in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable individuals affected by the socio-economic crisis. A total of 8,294 food parcels were

procured and delivered to Belarus Red Cross regional branches to support elderly people living alone and people with disabilities, homeless people, people with low incomes, people released from prisons and multi-child families. Distributions to final beneficiaries were completed in June.

Through this six-month operation a total of 4,141 vulnerable people benefited from 8,294 food parcels. Taking into consideration the fact that each large family supported by the project consists of three or more kids, the number of beneficiaries reached over 8,932 people. Such support in supplementary nutrition is deeply appreciated by project beneficiaries. These 8,932 project beneficiaries not only improved their nutritional status, but also their health and psychosocial status through assisting them in breaking social isolation and raising awareness of the local community.

In 2011 within the *Twice Christmas* operation the Swiss Red Cross bilaterally donated food, hygiene items, toys, second-hand clothes and shoes in Minsk city and the regions of Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel and Minsk. Additionally, Euro 18,000 were provided for supply of 1,087 additional food parcels.

Furthermore, the Swiss Red Cross commissioned an important evaluation to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of humanitarian aid projects in Belarus and Moldova. The results and lessons drawn from this evaluation advised on the opportunities for future humanitarian aid projects in Eastern Europe countries.

In February, a representative of the Icelandic Red Cross visited Belarus to monitor distribution of in-kind assistance supplied to Belarus Red Cross Grodno regional branch. The assistance contained clothes, footwear and other items for children. Future cooperation was also discussed during this monitoring visit. In November, Grodno regional branch received the second shipment with humanitarian aid from the Icelandic Red Cross. Furthermore, an agreement was reached to provide the same kind of assistance to Brest region in 2012.

The National Society also maintained its own disaster relief fund and regional emergency stocks, and ensured that a sufficient number of staff and volunteers are on stand-by in case of disaster. Two per cent of the Red Cross's income from membership fees and local non-earmarked donations is allocated to the relief fund which enabled the Belarus Red Cross to procure relief items for domestic spring floods.

After a massive earthquake and tsunami in Japan, Belarus Red Cross launched a national fund-raising campaign in support of the affected population. As a result of a 2.5 month campaign Belarus Red Cross collected and transferred to Japanese Red Cross CHF 36,000 donated by private entrepreneurs, legal entities and individuals.

Local fund-raising campaign in support of blast victims in Minsk subway has yielded some USD 60,000 which is being used for their rehabilitation. Estonian Red Cross contributed Euro 1,000. With the support of Austrian Red Cross and IFRC, Belarus Red Cross has progressed quite well in developing its psychosocial support capacities. A dedicated team of trained staff and volunteers in Minsk city work every day to ensure that the most vulnerable blast victims and their families have access to the full range of psychosocial and other vital services. The Red Cross assistance is not limited to psychological aid but also includes providing information, representing victims' interests in state social protection centres, supplying the necessary medication and rehabilitation items, organizing treatment in Belarusian recuperation centres and abroad to a total of 69 persons. Overall, in the reporting period Red Cross volunteers supported 200 people affected by the explosion and more than 300 people from their community. In addition, about 10 victims express their willingness to join a self-help group supported by Belarus Red Cross and three victims have already become Red Cross volunteers. The need for continuation of the above activities and longer term support to victims remain highly relevant. Following Belarus Red Cross participation in the annual ENPS forum (supported by Austrian Red Cross), it was decided to work for integration of psychosocial activities in other projects. Within GFATM grant, Belarus Red Cross now offers psychosocial support to TB patients who are undergoing a long-term treatment course. This will help achieving sustainability of

the project outcomes and of the recently established RC psychosocial support service. Possibilities are also being explored to replicate the positive experiences gained through the project *Psychosocial support in crisis* to other regions of Belarus, as well as to add to the target group disaster victims and families affected by alcoholism and/or drug addiction.

In May the month of Belarus Red Cross under the slogan *Mercy without borders* became a part of the global campaign *Find the Volunteer Inside You*. Charity events and volunteer activities to support the most vulnerable, especially single pensioners and disabled people, the elderly living in nursing homes and nursing hospitals, were held by the Belarus Red Cross during this month in all regions of the country. Among the most notable public events were concerts, motor rally, actions in maternity homes, and a steamboat excursion for the disabled on wheelchairs with a press-conference and a visit to the church on the way. A fest was organized on 21 May 2011 in Central Gorky park as a final event of the campaign. Over the month, 21,502 people received Red Cross assistance for the value of 770,636,552 Belarusian roubles (CHF 153,000). A total of 48,163 people were involved in the activities including 9,751 volunteers and 154 new Red Cross primary organizations were set up.

In October-November Belarus Red Cross held an annual campaign *Care* aiming to assist single, elderly people living alone and disabled persons. The main activities within the campaign included collection of warm clothes and shoes, fundraising actions in public places, charity concerts and other activities. A total of 4,076 services were provided, including home visits to elderly people, delivery of humanitarian aid, providing clothes and shoes collected during actions, providing of hygiene items purchased with sponsors' support, winterization of housing utilities etc. The total value of in-kind and cash assistance collected during the campaign is over 166,521,350 Belarusian roubles (CHF 17 860), including 27,381,540 Belarusian roubles (CHF 2,940) raised in cash.

A campaign *Christmas tree of wishes* was held in December. The campaign was supported by 154 volunteers in 11 localities. Donations were collected for disabled and orphan children, as well as for children in crisis situations. Photos of children holding letters with their wishes were put on Christmas trees set up in shopping malls in Grodno region. Passers-by who became interested in the campaign and read the information bought presents that were afterwards brought to the children. The total value of in-kind (toys, stationery and clothes) and cash assistance collected is 19,044,110 Belarusian roubles (CHF 2,150), including 7,218,000 Belarusian roubles (CHF 815) raised in cash.

Constraints or Challenges

Due to lack of funding, Belarus Red Cross emergency responders do not receive sufficient training and practice in disaster preparedness and response.

Organisational Development

Programme purpose: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability

Programme component 1: Improving the Belarus Red Cross's leadership capacities to develop and implement strategies, to ensure good performance and accountability

Outcomes:

- Implementation of the revised statutes.
- Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels.

Achievements

The revised statutes were adopted by the Belarus Red Cross Congress in May 2011. Limited resources meant that no activities were implemented for improving leadership capacities.

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

Outcomes:

- Effective and transparent human resource management.
- Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines.
- Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems.
- Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication.

Achievements

Belarus Red Cross Congress was held on 20 May. The Congress elected new Governance (Belarus RC presidium, chairman and secretary general), adopted Belarus Red Cross strategy for 2012-2015 and endorsed revisions and amendments to the National Society statutes. The Congress also highlighted the national society achievements over the past five years: 11.7 percent of the Belarusian population are members of the Belarus Red Cross; during five years over 250,000 vulnerable people (orphans, elderly living alone, people with physical and mental disabilities, children with cancer, at-risk teenagers, large families, underprivileged children, etc.) benefited from Belarus Red Cross activities. Also at the Congress, the Florence Nightingale Medal was awarded to Ludmila Lelikova, visiting nurse of the Belarus Red Cross Mogilev city branch. It is the second time over the recent years when Belarus Red Cross visiting nurses are internationally recognized.

New Belarus Red Cross strategy was aligned with IFRC Strategy 2020. It was developed with active involvement of all regional branches and in consultation with relevant national and international partners. Four strategic directions are included: health and care, promotion of the Movement's fundamental principles, disaster preparedness and response, organizational development. The strategy sets out priorities for implementation of Belarus Red Cross statutory activities for the next four years in the context of the current situation in the Belarus. The National Society auxiliary role is reflected in addressing pressing social issues by increasing access of vulnerable groups to health and social services, implementing activities to prevent negative social phenomena that result in people's vulnerability, and attracting financial, material and human resources to Belarus Red Cross.

On 6 October Belarus Red Cross marked its 90th anniversary with an event, which included presentation of Belarus Red Cross history and current work, concert, awarding RC veterans, staff, volunteers and donors. Government representatives, RC partners and diplomatic missions attended the event. A number of awards from ministries and partners were presented to the national society, including a personal letter of acknowledgement of the work of Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers from the President of the country

On 15-16 October a workshop on fundraising was organized for 22 staff and volunteers of Red Cross Grodno branch. The workshop was facilitated by director of *dance4life* project from Russia, Moscow. The topics included resource mobilization for NGOs, including positioning of organization, using social networks, working with celebrities, attracting private donations, etc. This activity was supported by the project *Enhanced access for female IDUs to HIV prevention and harm reduction services*.

On 13-16 December IFRC Europe Zone office facilitated a three-day workshop for Belarus Red Cross staff on project planning, monitoring and evaluation according to the standard IFRC/ICRC methodology.

Programme component 3: Developing a nation-wide coverage of grass-roots units and services

Outcomes:

- Develop a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/ units at grass-roots level.
- Support branches/units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.

Achievements

In February Belarus Red Cross accomplished the three-year project *Development of youth volunteer movement and participation* supported by the IFRC Capacity Building Fund in Vitebsk region. In the end of the project period a quality self-assessment was carried out with active participation of volunteer leaders, members of volunteer councils, branch staff and partners. The whole exercise was an honest reflection over the past three years highlighting key results and providing guidance for potential future youth projects in the region (the report is available with the Zone office and IFRC representation in Belarus).

Over three years, 29 youth volunteer initiatives were supported and implemented. Adding to this, seven initiatives were supported with own funds of Belarus Red Cross Vitebsk regional branch. At total of 8,326 vulnerable people benefited from the implementation of these community-based initiatives. Besides, 4,932 people benefited from youth actions and at least 39,545 people became the secondary target group reached with information about Belarus Red Cross activities. 234 youth leaders, volunteers and staff were trained in leadership, volunteer management, planning of community-based initiatives during the project period. They transmitted their knowledge and skills to more than 450 volunteers. By April 2011 four Volunteer Councils (VC) were established and continue to execute their functions: Vitebsk City VC, Vitebsk region VC and two district VC. Electronic volunteer database was developed and introduced in 2009 and is updated regularly. To date, the data base contains data about 1,145 volunteers from 18 districts of Vitebsk region. All these volunteer-led initiatives enjoy support from the local authorities and other stakeholders (e.g. letters of support to the volunteer initiatives, permissions to use local administration's bank accounts for cash transfers to volunteer groups and to provide free-of-charge support by administration's finance officers to process accounting documentation). Local authorities also supported the establishment of a Steering Committee on volunteering issues initiated by Vitebsk Red Cross branch. The Steering Committee will support and promote further development of volunteer movement in Vitebsk region, especially in remote areas.

Partnership with the Danish Red Cross in volunteer development continues. The exchange with the Danish Red Cross Youth volunteers was organized in May-June and in September-November 2011. The objective of the Danish and Belarusian intercultural exchange project was to give youth in Belarus and Denmark increased awareness of alternative ways to conduct Red Cross projects.

A five-day Red Cross Youth Leader School was held nearby Minsk in July. A total of 44 young people including two Danish Red Cross volunteers developed their leadership and volunteer management skills, and attended master classes on humanitarian values and IHL, disaster management and response to pandemics, first aid, HIV prevention, social work with disabled children, anti-trafficking, and fund-raising.

By the end of the year Belarus Red Cross volunteer data-base has registered a total of 21,295 volunteers, including 17,971 youth volunteers. These Red Cross volunteers are supported in development of their own ideas and implement volunteer initiatives in their communities. Over 2,893 volunteer activities were carried out, including 13 youth initiatives supported with the National Society own funds. A total of 226,053 vulnerable people benefited from the implementation of these community-based initiatives. Youth leaders, volunteers and staff were trained in leadership, volunteer management, planning of community-based initiatives during the year. All these volunteer-

led initiatives enjoy support from local authorities and other stakeholders (e.g. letters of support to the volunteer initiatives, permissions to use local administration's bank accounts for cash transfers to volunteer groups and to provide free-of-charge support by administration's finance officers to process accounting documentation).

Constraints or Challenges:

Limited resources were a major constraint leading to scaling down of successful activities which are focusing on involving citizens in voluntary service delivery. There is a need in elaboration of common approaches in collecting and sharing data (statistics, performance indicators) in all regional Belarus Red Cross branches and headquarters.

IFRC country office team continued to provide regular support and guidance to Belarus Red Cross on IFRC procedures and key finance management functions. Tangible improvements in financial management in the National Society are however facing the challenge of continuity in staff, with two finance managers leaving Belarus Red Cross in the reporting period due to low salary. To resolve this challenge Belarus country representation continues to promote the introduction by Belarus Red Cross of a fair salary scale with grades and levels, including motivation of staff.

Principles and Values

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

Programme component 1: Promotion of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values

Outcomes:

- Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general.
- The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and changing behaviour

Achievements

The promotion of humanitarian values is an integral part of key National Society programmes. In addition, dissemination of humanitarian values and reduction of stigma and discrimination are incorporated into other programme activities such as youth volunteer actions and community-based initiatives. The activities in promotion of humanitarian principles and values are supported by ICRC.

Programme component 2: Anti-discrimination and violence prevention/reduction programmes

Outcomes:

- Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence.
- Improved access to psychosocial support, healthcare and legal counselling services for migrants and victims of trafficking.

Achievements

The National Society currently runs five regional consultation centres called *Hands of Help* and two district centres² offering support to victims of trafficking. By mobilizing its own resources and building new partnerships, the Belarus Red Cross strives to sustain the work of the centres.

² In Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel and Mogilev, and Novopolotsk and Mozyr respectively.

Joint IFRC/IOM project *Strengthening national mechanisms for the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking* (supported by EU) is progressing in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. In Belarus the project is implemented in Brest, Gomel, Grodno, Vitebsk and Mogilev regions on the basis of consultation centres *Hands of Help*.

Project management/planning meeting held by Belarus Red Cross in Minsk on 12 October was attended by all stakeholders, including EU, IOM, Ministry of Interior, and IFRC. The meeting was hosted for free by the International Training Centre on Migration and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Interior. An agreement has been reached with the Ministry of Interior for joint development of a training module for Red Cross nurses with providing a state certificate upon completion of the course.

In the period of October-December six National Referral System (NRS) workshops were conducted in every oblast of Belarus with direct involvement of IOM and Red Cross staff in each responsible region, aiming at building the national capacity and strengthening regional coordination within the referral system for more effective reintegration and rehabilitation of VoTs. The outcome of the workshops was the establishment of multidisciplinary groups (MDGs) that will be responsible for coordination of counter trafficking activities in the region, and for referral and reintegration of VoT. MDGs serve as an instrument to involve the state agencies into active decision-making process relating to counter-trafficking, and also to the protection and reintegration of VoTs, prevention activities and further development of the NRS. An important outcome of the workshops is the formalization of responsibilities and liability of every agency and preparation of the Memorandum of Cooperation, later signed by all agencies involved in NRS at the regional level, with the exception of Minsk city.

The regional workshops were also followed by sensitization sessions, working and coordination meetings for Red Cross district chairpersons, other RC health professionals, local authorities law enforcement bodies, border guards, educational institutions, and other agencies – aiming at informing all concerned about the establishment of MDGs, clarifying the roles of each group member, fine-tuning referral models at regional level, planning further cooperation and interaction between state and non-state actors.

Access to medical and psychological assistance to VoTs is provided through IOM Rehabilitation Centre. During the reporting period, 19 VoTs were hosted in IOM Rehabilitation Centre and obtained rehabilitation support. Furthermore, provision of comprehensive and individual reintegration assistance to VoTs is ensured through seven Red Cross Helping Hands centres. Red Cross nurses visit VoTs at home addressing their specific health needs and providing social support. The support services to at least 47 VoTs included psychological assistance, humanitarian aid, legal advice, professional education and help in finding employment, and other services in accordance with the IOM recommended standard re-integration assistance package.

Red Cross visiting nurses ensure social and medical follow-up of VoTs, and at least 47 victims were supported psychologically and socially in five regions of Belarus over the reporting period. 18 Red Cross staff were trained as instructors on identification and referral of VoTs. Among the services rendered to VoTs are: medical, social and psychological support, humanitarian aid distribution, referral to other agencies, assistance in finding a job.

The project *Youth volunteering to prevent trafficking in human beings* (supported by IFRC, Icelandic Red Cross and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland) continued throughout 2011 and in June entered the second year of the three-year implementation cycle. During the past year youth volunteer groups in Gomel region developed and implemented their own volunteer initiatives targeting those at risk of being trafficked or abused. The initiatives included awareness raising, peer education, movie group discussions, essay/drawing competitions, quizzes, role plays, and forum theatre; psychological assistance; safe internet use; and activities aiming at development of self-esteem and professional education. These community-based initiatives were implemented by 241 volunteers (including 99 newly attracted) and reached 1,465 people in ten locations raising their

awareness of human trafficking and helping adopt safe behavior models. 99 representatives of the target group also became Red Cross volunteers. Over 10,000 representatives of local communities (parents, townspeople, teachers, friends of volunteers and target group representatives) were reached by the project through active Red Cross volunteers and staff. Campaigns and volunteer-led initiatives help to reach a much wider audience and promote increased awareness of risks in the society, but also assist both potential and actual VoT.

A total of 14 volunteer initiatives were submitted for the new round of the small grant competition under the project *Youth volunteering to prevent trafficking in human beings*. 13 initiatives were accepted for funding in the total amount of CHF 4,050 and are being implemented in 10 locations by 196 volunteers targeting 2,899 beneficiaries. 24 youth leaders received the training in leadership, teamwork, planning of volunteer initiatives and human trafficking issues.

A new system of support of victims of trafficking and violence is being established in Belarus Red Cross in 2011. The *mentoring system* will give the possibility to a victim to be integrated into normal life with the help of a Red Cross volunteer. Trained mentors will be rendering day-to-day support. The workshop on mentoring was organized with the *Networking against trafficking in human beings* project support in March 2011. However, it was discussed that it can be difficult for the volunteers to work with VoT, so the system will be first piloted in Grodno region and will target victims of violence.

A training on effective job search was organized in April 2011 in Gomel for 17 people from the group at most risk of trafficking. The training covered the following topics: motivation to find a job, how to set targets and objectives, how to analyze your own resources, how to behave during the interview, how not to get into situation of trafficking, etc. Five VoTs have found a job as a direct outcome of this training.

Two Belarus Red Cross volunteers were invited to participate in the anti-trafficking summer camp in Serbia in July. During one week the volunteers learned new skills and anti-trafficking interactive games, which were later applied in the Red Cross work in Belarus.

On 31 August – 2 September Belarus Red Cross attended the annual *European Red Cross Anti-Trafficking Network* meeting in Croatia which enabled the National Society project coordinator to learn from experiences of Red Cross and civil society organizations in Europe. The meeting assigned Belarus Red Cross as member of the Network steering committee.

On 18 October (EU anti-trafficking day) the team in Gomel organized a public action to raise awareness of young people about trafficking in human beings and safe behaviour in this regard.

On 22-27 November Belarus Red Cross hosted a visit by Serbian Red Cross volunteers to exchange experiences in combating human trafficking. The exchange programme included meetings with IFRC, IOM, Serbian Embassy, field visit and co-facilitation of the joint peer education workshop in Gomel (supported by IFRC and Icelandic Red Cross). Relationship with the Serbian Red Cross is further developed, with an agreement for cooperation on anti-trafficking being prepared for signing in 2012.

In November, with IFRC and Norwegian Red Cross support, a new component was added to the programme *Community care for children with disabilities*. This Red Cross programme has been running in Grodno region since 2009, empowering children with disabilities and their family members and strengthening parental self-help initiatives. Long-term technical and financial support is being provided by the Austrian Red Cross and the programme activities are planned to be further developed with IFRC support. With new partners' support Belarus Red Cross expands the ongoing programme to reach those families who have newborns with disabilities in order to address specific family needs and help parents and siblings integrate a handicapped or sick newborn into the family. The programme promotes family-focused approach in assisting children with disabilities and includes development of parental self-help initiatives, involvement of volunteers and empowerment of beneficiaries. A small-grant competition was announced during the project start-up meeting on 13

December. The competition will support six micro-projects (CHF 3,180) aiming at inclusion of children with disabilities and reduction of stigma and discrimination. A vehicle for the mobile toy library was procured and experience of other agencies studied in organizing toy libraries for disabled children. As a result, preliminary list of the toys and rehabilitation items for the library was developed. On 28 December a meeting of self-help group with participation of 20 family members was conducted. The motto of the meeting was *Christmas miracle*. During the meeting the parents discussed the results of their action devoted to fundraising for purchase of New Year gifts for the children with disabilities. Private organizations participated in the action and provided fruit, pampers, clothes and toys for the children. During the event the parents handed the presents with congratulations and warm wishes. Also during the meeting of self-help group parents shared their challenges and discussed ways to address them.

Phase 1 of the project *Empowering community through participatory approaches* (supported by IFRC and DFID) has been completed. The project addresses vulnerability of socially excluded groups in Mogilev region through a combination of advocacy, service delivery and awareness raising activities, with active participation and leadership from the target groups themselves. The main focus is on lonely elderly but also other groups such as ex-prisoners undertaking to return safely to the community and to reintegrate as law-abiding citizens.

Over the reporting period, 200 active volunteers, community leaders and vulnerable people were mobilised and supported by Belarus Red Cross in development of 24 community-based initiatives (micro-projects). 15 best initiatives were selected for small grant support and implemented. Out of these, 11 micro-projects aimed at social support and inclusion of elderly people, three micro-projects aimed at resocialization and reintegration of offenders and ex-prisoners, one micro-project aimed at social support and integration of disabled blind people. In addition, 291 members of elderly self-support groups attended 12 trainings covering practical topics such as self-help, first aid, effective communication, legal issues, etc. A total of 1,106 vulnerable people benefited from micro-projects and self-support groups activities. The work of self-support groups also promoted active aging principles. Approximately USD 7,900 has been raised locally in support of 15 volunteer initiatives while the number of effective partnerships with state and non-state actors has increased from 73 to 97. A workplan for Phase 2 has been developed and the activities will be continued in 2012.

On 6-8 June within the project *Strengthening Visiting Nurses Service* Belarus Red Cross conducted a workshop on advocacy for vulnerable people in local communities. Among the participants were representatives of advocacy groups of vulnerable people in local communities and staff of the Belarus Red Cross from Vitebsk and Grodno regions as well as representatives of the Bulgarian and the Swiss Red Cross societies. The aim of the workshop was to teach vulnerable people (elderly, disabled living alone, disabled children and their families, orphans) the advocacy elements such as how to find information, communicate with local authorities and the media, not just demanding but together finding ways of solving problems in order to improve their standard of living.

Constraints or Challenges:

Limited resources are the main constraint for the Principles and Values programme, in particular for the components targeting migrants.

Limited resources were a major constraint leading to scaling down of successful activities aimed at social inclusion and empowerment of older people. IFRC efforts to mobilize resources for this area from DFID succeeded in the second quarter of 2011 and Belarus Red Cross has since revitalized its work aimed at community development through participatory approaches.

Working in partnership

The main international bilateral and multilateral partners within the Movement are the ICRC delegation in Moscow, the Danish, Swiss, Austrian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, American and Norwegian Red Cross Societies. In the national arena traditional partners are the ministries of health, social welfare, emergency, justice, internal affairs and education.

In discharging its mission in Belarus, IFRC country representation has worked on heightening Red Cross Red Crescent influence and support to Belarus Red Cross for carrying out its humanitarian mandate. The National Society auxiliary role has been promoted through supporting revision of the RC law and initiating adoption of a law on volunteering. To this end, IFRC Zone representative visited Belarus to share law-making experiences of a number of European countries with members of parliament responsible for international affairs and RC Law.

Furthermore, the National Society humanitarian diplomacy efforts have been supported through facilitation of a diplomatic reception hosted by Belarus Red Cross as well as by linking to new partners such as USAID, UNICEF, International Women's Club, etc.

The tradition of togetherness has been further deepened through the IFRC coordination platform offered to all partners involved. Communication and information exchange have been promoted through regular meetings, skype conferences, operational updates and project mapping, thus contributing to common understanding and alignment of working modalities in Belarus. The role of IFRC was also to encourage cross-border cooperation and create opportunities for dialogue and joint learning. To this end, IFRC facilitated and led the process of a cross-border application for the national societies of Belarus, Poland and Ukraine.

In 2011 Belarus Red Cross started to function as the Secretariat of ERNA. In this capacity Belarus Red Cross works to strengthen and promote the exchange of experiences, information and best practices among member National Societies and with others, facilitating collaborative actions in the prevention of HIV, AIDS, TB and other communicable diseases with UN agencies, EU, nongovernmental organizations, Global Fund and other organizations. ERNA Secretariat took an active part in organization and holding of four ERNA Board meetings (Italy, Belarus, Slovenia and Hungary) and the 15th ERNA General Meeting in Slovenia, entitled *Humanitarian diplomacy, HIV and TB*. ERNA Secretariat also participated in World TB Day activities, initiated by the IFRC Secretariat in Geneva.

Belarus Red Cross chairmanship of ERNA was marked by the organization and holding of the first ever ERNA evaluation over 2007-2010 and the training "*Consolidation of efforts to provide comprehensive quality services for injecting drug users*" held jointly with Italian RC/Villa Maraini Foundation, Belarus Red Cross and UNAIDS Country Office in Belarus. Furthermore, a new interactive English/Russian ERNA web-site (www.erna.by) was designed. Its creation was made possible with financial assistance rendered by ERNA-member National Societies and the American Red Cross Society.

In September a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between Belarus Red Cross and Polish Red Cross was signed. It reflects general principles of cooperation, main areas and forms of cooperation and financial aspects of cooperation.

In November at the International Conference in Geneva Belarus Red Cross Chairman presented the National Society experience during the discussion by the thematic commission concerning *Furthering the auxiliary role: Partnership for stronger National Societies and volunteering development*. The presentation illustrated how Red Cross volunteer initiatives benefit from partnership with local authorities and their in-kind support, which can be just as effective and is likely to be more readily given to.

With IFRC support, Belarus Red Cross has established a contact the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network seeking to learn from best practices in developing services for female drug users. Belarus Red Cross also develops cooperation with the International Alliance on HIV/AIDS in Ukraine. A preliminary agreement on further joint efforts was reached in the area of staff training, internships, work of experts.

With financial support of the Austrian Red Cross community care for children with disabilities in Grodno region is provided. 54 families with children with disabilities are supervised through home

visits of the Red Cross multifunctional team. Twice a week 12–14 children attend Grodno Red Cross Day Centre. In addition, family members are involved in Parents' Club and self-help group meetings. Engagement of volunteers and the awareness building activities enhance the social integration of children with disabilities.

Belarus Red Cross representative as a member of Belarus delegation took part in European Conference *HIV in European Region - Unity and Diversity* held on 25-27 May in Tallinn. During the conference Belarus Red Cross and Belarusian Community of PLHIV presented their best practices and experiences of cooperation aiming at reduction of stigma and discrimination. The joint initiatives of Belarus Red Cross and Belarusian Community of PLHIV were rated by the participants as effective and successful example of such partnership. These innovative approaches in HIV prevention are also shared through ERNA which Secretariat is currently hosted by Belarus Red Cross.

In October Belarus Red Cross Secretary General visited the Icelandic Red Cross to study the experience of the Icelandic Red Cross in working with mentally disabled people and to discuss cooperation possibilities between the two National Societies. During the visit a meeting was held to discuss issues related to the implementation of the project *Youth volunteering to prevent trafficking in human beings* supported by Icelandic Red Cross in Gomel region. Other sites visited included Icelandic Red Cross centre for mentally disabled people, Reykjavik centre for unemployed, shelter for homeless women, mobile syringe exchange point for IDU, Red Cross logistics centre for sorting and storing humanitarian aid to be further transported and distributed to the vulnerable in other countries.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All projects implemented by the Belarus Red Cross are aligned with IFRC's Strategy 2020. The National Society works to ensure gender equity and ensures equal participation and access of women and men through appropriate information materials and in the design of project activities. Gender balance is sought in project management structures.

Competence-building is a key element in all project activities carried out by the Belarus Red Cross as it encourages knowledge, skills and experience development. The activities have built competencies and capacities both at the national and local level, enabling the society to provide young and older people with opportunities to carry out social initiatives and advocating for their rights and needs in the local communities.

Local authorities played an essential role in the development of volunteer service delivery through providing administrative support, expertise and resources, and in establishing new mechanisms for interaction between local authorities and civil society organizations. At lower administrative levels Belarus Red Cross local branches worked closely with local administrations and educational and social welfare authorities to ensure access to the target groups, as well as to increase the sustainability of the community-based initiatives and to ensure exchange of information about best practices. The Red Cross continues to focus on developing its local network of branch units and improving its access to vulnerable people with sustainable and high quality services. To this end supported by the IFRC secretariat and other National Societies the Belarus Red Cross actively strives to attract EU funding.

Looking ahead

IFRC submitted an application to the EU call for proposals under Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine. The project title is *Red Cross Cross-Border Cooperation for building resilient communities*. Belarus, Polish and Ukrainian Red Cross societies are Partners in the application, and Austrian Red Cross provided technical expertise and co-funding. Lessons learned from the planning process have been analyzed and shared with all partners to help in future planning.

Belarus was included as a focal country for Europe Zone in the EU Thematic Application for IFRC Global Campaign to fight Human Trafficking.

An application was also submitted to the EU call under Cross-border Cooperation Programme Belarus-Lithuania-Latvia. The proposal for *providing health care, education, home care and social support to the vulnerable, the elderly, and people with disabilities through volunteer networking* was developed in cooperation with IFRC and with support of the Swiss Red Cross.

Belarus Red Cross was also a partner in the application to EuropeAid for *Regional capacity building programme for improved access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care* currently being developed with the support of the Danish Red Cross.

In the framework of the EU call *Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development* the Danish and German Red Cross societies in partnership with Belarus Red Cross submitted concept notes aiming at supporting *Community-based volunteer initiatives for civic groups in small towns and remote areas in Belarus* and *Strengthening participation and dialogue between communities and local authorities on social issues*.

Swiss Red Cross intends to continue supporting the Belarus Red Cross Visiting Nurses Service (VNS) for another three years. Given the strong basis already built in terms VNS professionalism, education and recognition, this will be the period of consolidation and phasing out. Swiss Red Cross is also prepared to consider other priority areas for support in Belarus (e.g. health promotion, education, anti-alcohol and anti-tobacco campaigns, communicable and non-communicable diseases, domestic violence). Positive experiences exist in Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova, so future projects can benefit from cross-country fertilization and exchange.

In March 2012 Belarus Red Cross is planning to host a partner coordination meeting with the purpose to strengthen cooperation effectiveness between partners, develop agreed approaches to response to the humanitarian needs of the vulnerable in Belarus, and build capacities of the Belarus Red Cross with emphasis on issues related to human resource development.

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.

www.ifrc.org
Saving lives, changing minds.



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

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