

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي جمعيات الصليب الأحمر وال الهلال الأحمر

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

17 September 2003

Appeal No. 01.74/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 1,669,766 (USD 1.145m or EUR 1.34m)

Programme Update No. 2

Period covered: May-August, 2003

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 110.5% as of above date. For a live update of coverage click below

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap017403.pdf

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Central Europe 01.76/ 2003

Programme Summary: Donor response has been strong for the Federation's appeal and work in Macedonia. The Federation, with the Macedonian Red Cross and key partners, such as UNHCR, European Agency for Reconstruction, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish Red Cross, have enabled sustained support of programmes assisting different groups of vulnerable Macedonians. The Federation will end its direct presence in Macedonia at the end of 2003. Strong donor support has enabled the national society to be better placed to continue taking up the challenge of addressing some of the many ongoing needs in Macedonia. In preparation the country delegation is working with the national society's governance and leadership to hand over programmes and ensure that support on key issues continues in 2004 from the regional delegation in Budapest.

The Federation's exit strategy includes support for national society capacity building in the areas of planning and reporting; information management and telecommunications; financial management and accounting; and disaster preparedness. The regional delegation will provide technical support from Budapest. In addition, the Macedonian Red Cross will become more active in securing various partnerships to assist its work with vulnerable people.

The Federation's 10-year direct engagement in Macedonia will be the subject to a more thorough review in the annual report for this appeal (to be issued May 2004). One clear success though has been the ongoing work of an information centre that has counselled and advised people in need. Activities, including consistent advocacy, have focused on assisting women and children.

Operational developments

In the current post-conflict and transitional period for Macedonia, the UN Country team has identified insecurity, restricted access to basic services, as well as poverty and unemployment as the main vulnerability criteria. Internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, ethnic groups who constitute a minority within their communities, and other socially vulnerable populations have been identified for priority focus under UN protection, humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance programmes during 2003.

The Government's commitment to the continuation of the peace process has been of special importance. This commitment is underlined by the agreements reached and ongoing work related to the issue of languages to be used, the issue of equitable representation in public institutions as well as the issue of decentralization in the country. The steps that have been taken against crime and corruption - through increased involvement in bilateral and regional cooperation regarding organized crime and the introduction of control measures vis-à-vis several high ranking people in various public institutions and enterprises - also attest to the Government's commitment to the peace process.

Despite changing priorities, there is recognition that continued humanitarian support is needed while development programmes come on line and macro level reforms take hold. Without short term improvements in daily living conditions, hostilities, which have split communities, will continue to threaten stability. Addressing the root causes of the conflict, in particular long standing ethnic tension, the poor social economic situation and the difficult transition from a central to a market economy, must therefore be incorporated into residual humanitarian programming as well as developmental priorities.

In February 2003, UNHCR started activities to close the Suto Orizari camp and to move the people living there to host families. The people concerned refused this option and in May, almost 700 decided to go to the Macedonian-Greece border at Medzitlija before crossing into Greece. Since Macedonia is considered a safe country, they were not allowed exit. They spent more than two months living in improvised tents. The International Federation and UNHCR provided basic food assistance, water, food, used clothes and high protein (BP5) biscuits. An additional sub-agreement was signed with UNHCR for regular daily provision of water, bread, milk, baby food, cheese and diapers. Primary medical care was provided by the Medical Centre in Bitola.

The displaced people at the border returned on 8 August, in part because of cooperation between members of the Refugee Commission - appointed by the refugees - and representatives from Macedonian Government, UNHCR, the Red Cross and NGOs. Out of 668 displaced persons who returned from Medzitlija, 122 have been accommodated in the Katlanovo collective centre, 254 in private accommodation in Skopje while 292 are in the temporary transit shelter in Kumanovo. After two weeks most went into private accommodation. (Only 39 went to Gazi Baba reception centre.) UNHCR and the Red Cross will continue to work in cooperation with the refugees, authorities, international actors and donors to improve living conditions and help identify multi-family homes for those who wish to live together.

With the enforcement of the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection on 4 August, the limited status of temporary humanitarian assisted persons (THAP), which refugees from Kosovo have enjoyed since 1999, was converted to a temporary protection status. An increased number of rights, such as that to work, have been granted to beneficiaries of the temporary protection status compared to those provided under the THAP status.

Health and care

Goal: Reduce the vulnerability of refugees, social cases and internally displaced persons through an effective social welfare programme

Objective: To use the information centre to strengthen the capacity of the National Society to increase the well-being of vulnerable groups and to respond effectively to their basic needs

Expected results

- The information centre will be fully operational in 2003, beneficiary needs will have been registered for follow-up at a later date and, when necessary, referred to relevant aid agencies and institutions

- Access to medical assistance activities by beneficiaries will have been easy and satisfactory, especially for those with no previous access to medical services
- Psycho-social support will have been provided to those in need by trained local staff resulting in decreased stress among beneficiaries. Support will have been provided in collective centres, local Red Cross branches and collective or private accommodation. Activities for re-socialization of the beneficiaries through libraries and social clubs will have been organized
- Counselling of beneficiaries regarding their legal status will have been provided
- Coordination with other aid agencies will have been effective to avoid duplication of activities. Contacts will have been established with relevant ministries to increase cooperation and assist integration of beneficiaries in the local community.
- Full handover of the programme to the Macedonian Red Cross will have been accomplished by the end of 2003

Progress/Achievements

Federation Social Welfare programmes implemented by the Information Centre continued to alleviate the vulnerability of different groups of beneficiaries. This programme also complements UNHCR-funded primary health care sub-project especially in psychosocial activities. The centre assists refugees and vulnerable IDPs, in referrals or with direct assistance. The centre refers such people to appropriate locations for assistance, solves housing problems, medical problems, and deals with educational issues. It also arranges for people to receive such necessities as monthly bus tickets, relief items or medical care.

The following are the numbers of assisted persons May-July and the respective services offered:

	May	June	July
Interviews	462	418	473
Telephone calls	518	511	491
Psycho social support	10	9	6
Medical support	96	116	173
Other	116	171	108
Education	76	78	17

The primary health care programme for refugees, funded by UNHCR, provided basic care and medicine for refugees in collective centres. It also covered private accommodation and transport of patients from collective centres to the public health institutions, when necessary. Three doctors and three nurses are providing primary health care for refugees. Two drivers also transported patients from the collective centres Suto Orizari and Katlanovo to the public health institutions.

The team implementing this project assisted refugees in accessing health institutions and mediated in any problems (ie follow up of the patients in secondary and tertiary health care institutions). Medicine and baby formula were also provided.

Preventive health education included lectures on prevention of disease common in collective accommodation and prevention. The main intention was to ensure that vulnerable refugees and those with special needs have access to specialized assistance.

The Macedonian Red Cross, with support from the Federation regional delegation in Budapest and American Red Cross office in Sofia, started with a voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT) project on HIV/AIDS prevention. The two-month preparation period started in July. Cooperation with the Ministry of Health was also established. UNICEF also supported a seminar for training of Red Cross volunteers in support of the VCCT project. Macedonian Red Cross hired a person to coordinate project activities.

In cooperation with the Skopje and Ohrid Red Cross branches, the Federation conducted a campaign on HIV/AIDS prevention. Special promotional materials were provided and this activity was supported by DUREX, the condom company. Youngsters from Ohrid participated and this campaign was welcomed by all participants. It

was agreed that such efforts should be pursued more often in future and with a broader scope, particularly during summer holidays.

A German Red Cross project continued to provide salary support for two physiotherapists in Demir Kapija Institutions for Handicapped.

Impact

The benefits from this programme can be seen by the great number of consultations, visits, level of epidemiological disease in collective accommodation and absence of complaints concerning primary health care. This programme is connected to relief programmes for refugees and IDPs. The parallel provision of both psychosocial and in-kind support makes it more likely a stronger long-term impact will be achieved.

Constraints

There were no specific constraints concerning this programme. All issues and beneficiaries the centre cannot deal with are referred to relevant institutions and governmental services. In future, the only possible constraints are first, the uncertainty of the project continuing in 2004 and, second, extension of the refugees' temporary humanitarian assisted persons (THAP) status is extended in September 2003.

Disaster Management

Goal: Improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and to reinforce Macedonian Red Cross' effectiveness in responding to any man-made or natural disaster

Objective: To continue supporting the vulnerable groups (refugees, IDPs and social cases) through provision of relief items and to prepare the Macedonian Red Cross to respond in a timely, effective and focused manner to any disaster in the country and in nearby countries

Expected Results:

- The supply and distribution of hygiene and baby parcels to refugees, also IDPs and social cases, as needed, will have been carried out, in coordination with ICRC, Red Cross partners, and other agencies (UNHCR, WFP, InterSOS, ECHO)
- Basic emergency stock will have been established as a back-up for natural or man-made disasters in Macedonia or neighbouring countries, and staff will have been trained accordingly. Training curriculum will have been developed and facilities created to regularly train volunteers throughout the country and mobilise them in time of disasters. In addition there will be increased knowledge and understanding of disaster preparedness by volunteers, and disaster preparedness policies and related public information will have been disseminated
- Macedonian Red Cross staff, both at local and central level, will have been trained; interaction and partnerships with other National Society disaster preparedness (DP) coordinators in the region will have been increased.

Progress/Achievements

Assisting a population of around 2,800 refugees in Macedonia has continued to be the Federation's and UNHCR's aim throughout 2003. The Temporary humanitarian assisted persons (THAP) status of the refugees from Kosovo is extended every six months and the current one expires in September 2003. Finding a compromise solution for these people is more of a political problem. The Red Cross can only advocate to authorities on behalf of the most vulnerable.

In the meantime, humanitarian help is the only source of basic provision for these people. The Red Cross' provides hygiene items to the refugees as part of their humanitarian support.

Finnish Red Cross funding was again used to buy 5,150 hygiene parcels, in August. This will cover the distributions until the end of the year.

Refugees in collective centres

Presently, refugees are collectively accommodated in Katlanovo CC - 470 people - and in Gazi Baba reception centre - 43 people.

Distributions for collective centres:

May	138 hygiene parcels	23 baby parcels
June	138 hygiene parcels	22 baby parcels
July	136 hygiene parcels	22 baby parcels
August	172 hygiene parcels	26 baby parcels

Note: baby parcels are distributed every month to babies up to 18 months of age.

Refugees in host families

The number of refugees in private accommodation is 2,177. Distributions were made regularly. For the returnees from Medzilitja, an additional distribution was organised.

	May-June distribution	July-August distribution
Refugees in host families	1359 parcels	1375 hygiene parcels
Host families*	62 hygiene parcels	66 hygiene parcels
Babies up to 18 months	120 baby parcels	162 baby parcels

* From May-June distribution host families in Skopje received only one hygiene parcel per host family every second month. However, previous distributions continued for host families in smaller branches.

- UNHCR food-items support

Basic food basket for refugees living with host families consists of wheat flour and one box of different commodities i.e.:

Wheat flour, one bag of 9 kg per person, and food parcel containing: 1 kg beans, 1 kg rice, 1 kg sugar, 1 kg pasta, 1 litre oil, 500 gr. salt, 100 gr. yeast and 250 gr. of canned fish. Refugees from Suto Orizari who moved to private accommodation also received this portion of assistance.

Commodity	May/June distribution	July/August distribution
Wheat flour	29,592 kg	37,152 kg
Food parcels	3,263 boxes	4,154 boxes

Refugees in collective centres Katlanovo continued to receive basic and complementary food, procured by IFRC under UNHCR funded project. Basic food was directly distributed to them.

	Normative per person	May	June	July	August
Wheat flour	12 kg	228	252	405	396
Oil	1 lit	285	220	400	450
Beans	1 kg	150	250	400	400
Sugar	1 kg	350	250	400	400
Salt	0.2 kg	30	8.4	100	80

During reported period (May-August 2003) Federation distributed several other items as ad-hoc distribution to the refugees:

- Part of Finnish Red Cross donation of summer used clothes (127 bales) were distributed in Katlanovo CC
- Children and elderly people received diapers on a monthly basis (90 diapers for baby and 150 for elderly people monthly)

- Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

The number of IDPs in Macedonia, according to latest statistics, reduced and the latest figure is 3,154. 1,089 are in collective accommodation and 2,065 with host families. They are mainly hosted in families near their places of origin: Skopje, Kumanovo and Tetovo.

The European Agency for Reconstruction-funded project for deregistration of the IDPs finished in August, but the database will be updated before the end of this year. The Federation will continue with food support for this category. The May-June distribution was finished with ECHO support. July and August was to be covered with ICRC food parcels. An extension of this project is still pending and the Federation is seeking a possible donor.

The Disaster preparedness (DP) department of the Macedonian Red Cross continued regular activities. A Swedish Red Cross donation covered salaries, transportation and communication costs of the disaster preparedness team. The Swedish Red Cross desk officer for central and eastern Europe visited the team. A CD database of disaster prone areas in Macedonia as well as disaster response capacities was presented to the desk officer. The DP programme for 2004 was discussed. The desk officer visited Veles Red Cross branch and "Ramina", where landslides have happened.

In line with improving regional cooperation, contacts with Croatian Red Cross and Bosnia & Herzegovina Red Cross were established. Croatian Red Cross were interested in water purification training.

Team members participated in the work of the commission for disaster and response as well as at meetings with the Red Cross branch emergency rescue unit. Good cooperation between the centre for disaster preparedness and response and Red Cross branch disaster preparedness units is a necessity. Several contacts were made to improve information flow and the organisation of prompt and efficient response in emergency situations. A project proposal for education of the teams for assessment and logistics in local Red Cross branches was made and presented to branches. The DP team was also active in the field in assistance to the people affected by minor disasters: floods in Vinica area and a landslide in Veles.

Impact

The Federation continued to support the Macedonian Red Cross in its relief programmes to assist refugees by providing hygiene items to complement the food support provided by UNHCR. Organisational changes in the disaster preparedness department of the Macedonian Red Cross will help improve the promptness of any emergency response.

Constraints

The main constraint in disaster response for the reporting period was the lack of funds for food support of IDPs. The Federation Office in Skopje has been active, together with the ICRC delegation, in searching for funds locally for an extra three months of distributions.

In terms of disaster preparedness the main constraints are the fragile DP structure of the national society's headquarters and branch level. It remains to be seen whether the transfer of basic preparedness and response management knowledge to the grassroots level in branches and local communities will be enough to help mitigate the effects of any manmade or natural disaster.

Organisational Development

Goal: Improve the overall capacity of the Macedonian Red Cross to develop and deliver responsive and sustainable programmes to meet the needs of the vulnerable groups in FYROM

Objective: To increase the ability of the Macedonian Red Cross to manage programmes and obtain funding both for headquarters and branches

Expected results:

- Reporting, management and coordination skills of the Macedonian Red Cross staff will have been improved, including financial management, with provision of financial software and training, that will contribute to better project management and increased funding
- The role of the National Society within civil society will have been better defined and the image of the national society raised.

Progress/Achievements

Organisational development of the national society as one of the main priorities for this year, continued in this reporting period. The Federation's main role was to facilitate the development process of the national society by building its capacities and providing technical support in programme areas. During this year this process was mainly funded from the Capacity Building Fund.

Handover of programmes to the national society has been on-going. During May meetings, discussion concentrated on the transition process and future of programmes. Practical next steps were identified.

The Federation and Macedonian Red Cross undertook several activities during this period:

- End of May, Macedonian Red Cross held second "planning and reporting" workshops. Participants were secretaries of the local Red Cross branches and facilitators were Macedonian Red Cross headquarters' coordinators, who participated in the first workshop held by the Budapest delegation. The workshop covered four main areas: introduction of the appeal process; response mechanisms, monitoring in disasters and reporting process.
- The "Project Planning Process" (PPP) handbook has been translated and published in Macedonian. The Albanian Red Cross donated PPP handbooks with Albanian translation. In late June, a PPP workshop was held for Macedonian Red Cross headquarters and branch staff, to improve planning and reporting skills of leadership personnel, according to internationally accepted standards of the Federation. The finance development manager from the Federation Delegation in Serbia and Montenegro facilitated this training.
- To develop a better financial and accounting system, compatible with international donor requirements, the Macedonian Red Cross and the Federation agreed to start a finance development project in Macedonia. The finance development manager from the Federation delegation in Serbia and Montenegro was consulted to identify the needs and steps to be taken. A new finance assistant for Macedonian Red Cross has been hired. At the same time, specific finance software, compatible with International accounting standards, has been prepared. Three months' data has been entered and analysed with the new software and the financial results match with the previous manual bookkeeping.
- To raise the image of national society, following modern trends of advertising, a web-site for the Macedonian Red Cross has been funded. In addition, new computer equipment and installation of a network for internet access at headquarters has occurred. An information technology officer of the Macedonian Red Cross finished web-design training and prepared a draft for the web-site.

The head of fundraising and marketing of the Bulgarian Red Cross made a return visit to Macedonian Red Cross head of fundraising. The main purpose was to clarify preparations for a fundraising workshop for Macedonian Red Cross branch staff responsible for fundraising. The workshop will be facilitated by the Bulgarian head of fundraising.

In 2003 a second round of participatory community development (PCD) will be implemented in Macedonia, but this time by the Macedonian Red Cross. To clarify PCD implementation in 2003-2004, the PCD regional coordinator visited Macedonia in July. The present social welfare coordinator will be the new PCD coordinator. The regional PCD coordinator made a presentation with the former PCD coordinator to introduce achievements of the PCD in 2002 and how capacity in the Macedonian Red Cross will be developed. Six branches will have the opportunity to apply for PCD seed budget to carry out micro projects.

Impact

Progress in organizational development in 2003 is in line with the Federation's exit strategy. Main capacity building areas covered strategic planning skill and leadership development, financial resource development and

information and communication development. Progress has been achieved with full cooperation, commitment and involvement of national society staff.

Constraints

The remainder of the capacity building fund allocation has to be allocated to the Macedonian Red Cross in line with the plan. The last part of the project will be leadership training and consulting, which will take place during the last reporting period. The Federation has to continue to support the Macedonian Red Cross via knowledge sharing as it moves towards ending its direct presence in the country at the end of 2003. Support will be maintained from the Federation's regional delegation in Budapest. The cooperation with the ICRC Delegation in Skopje will help this transition.

Coordination

During the reporting period, the Federation representative regularly attended inter-agency meeting chaired by UNDP as well as the weekly OSCE information meeting. Regular meetings continued with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement representatives, including Macedonian Red Cross, ICRC and the Federation. After American Red Cross closed its country delegation in Macedonia, there are no partner national societies (PNS) present in the country. The Federation representative participated at the one-week organisational development workshop in Alicante, Spain, in June facilitated by Spanish Red Cross and the Federation Secretariat.

At the beginning of August, the head of the Federation's regional finance unit in Ankara and a finance unit analyst visited the Macedonia Delegation to provide financial software (CODA) training for the finance officer and to put the new software into use.

The annual Central Europe Partnership Meeting was held in June in Bratislava, jointly hosted by the Federation and Slovak Red Cross. The Federation representative, senior programme coordinator and the president and secretary general of the Macedonian Red Cross participated.

As planned, the Federation's country office in Macedonia will close at the end of December. In 2004, an international annual appeal for Macedonia will not be prepared. However, Macedonia will receive technical support in core programme areas through a regional appeal for central Europe. Partner national societies are requested to contribute directly to the Macedonian Red Cross in support of programmes.

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