

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 لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

ARMENIA

3 November 2003

Appeal No. 01.77/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 908,304 (USD 623,149 or EUR 617,232)

Programme Update No. 2

Period covered: June – September 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: See web link below for live contributions list:

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap017703.pdf

Programme Summary: The Federation, through its country delegation in Yerevan and regional delegation in Ankara, assists the Armenian Red Cross in supporting the country's vulnerable people with the focus on community-based initiatives. Most programmes are implemented with funds carried over from last year. Additional contributions have been received this year from the Finnish and Japanese Red Cross Societies, as well as, the Federation's Capacity Building Fund enabling the national society to pursue health, disaster management and branch development initiatives. Further support has been confirmed from the Norwegian Red Cross to implement health, disaster management, branch development, financial management and youth development projects.

Overall the appeal coverage is good, though donors seem to have preferences for certain projects under the disaster management, health and organisational development. These projects receive continuous support, while others, particularly, community based First Aid, TB and IMCI (integrated management of childhood illnesses) within the health programme, have continuously been under funded. Vocational training of refugees and public awareness campaigns under the disaster management programme could not be conducted either, because of lack of funds. Activities planned to support the Red Cross's financial management restructuring under the organisational development programme was affected too. The humanitarian values, Federation coordination and international representation programmes did not receive any funds either through the Federation channels. Activities planned under these programmes aim to alleviate suffering of vulnerable communities. Poor response from partners has not enabled us to make this possible. Lack of support from partners causes outflow of qualified staff too. The Armenian Red Cross is trying to fill in the gap through bilateral co-operation with other National Societies and organisations. This, however, is not sufficient to cover all needs.

The expenditure in January-September 2003 differs from programme to programme. 60% of the disaster management programme's operational budget has been spent thus far. The remaining amount will be spent on simulation exercises, procurement of equipment, emergency stock and public awareness materials before the end of 2003. The expenditure under the organisational development programme is 47%. The remaining amount will be spent by the end of 2003 to support pilot participatory community development initiatives in 13 communities under the branch development project, procurement of promotional items for youth and financial development. The expenditure under the health and care programme is 83%. The balance will be spent by the end of 2003 on

HIV/AIDS training and social service centres. Through participatory approach, the Red Cross supported by the Federation, developed its plan of action for 2004-2005. It is expected that CHF 401,170, received in response to the appeal 2003, will be carried over to 2004. These are the funds confirmed in the second half of the year to support one year programmes. The funds will be carried over with the donors' approval.

Operational developments

The UN Human Development Report, released in July 2003, included Armenia in a group of countries of medium human development, along with Sri Lanka, Ecuador and Albania.

Armenia development indicators at a glance

(Source: www.undp.org/hdr2003)

Total population 2001	3.1 (millions)
Annual population growth rate (2001-15)	-0.3
Life expectancy at birth (2001)	72.1
Infant mortality rate	31 (per 1,000 live births)
Maternal mortality rate	35 (per 100,000 live births)
Public expenditure on health 2000	3.2 (as % of GDP)
People living with HIV/AIDS 2001	0.15 (% age 15-49)
People living below USD 1 a day (%) 1990-2001	12.8
GDP per capita annual growth rate (%) 1990-2001	-1.3
Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above)	98.5
Human Development Index (HDI) value 2001	0.729

Although Armenia's human development index has been improving since 1995, many problems still remain unresolved: poverty, unemployment, mass deforestation threatening dire environmental consequences, high child and maternal mortality, as well as, the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. The national AIDS centre estimates there are 207 people infected by HIV and another 30 people live with AIDS. Statistically, since the AIDS epidemic began, 27 people died from this disease. Although the number is low, the high growth rate of HIV/AIDS in neighbouring countries combined with the socio-economic crisis, widespread poverty, unemployment and continuous migration can quickly worsen the situation unless more preventive measures are taken.

The government of Armenia signed a two-year agreement of 3.2 million USD with the Global Fund to support a national programme to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The Red Cross is a member of an interagency coordinating group on sexually transmitted illnesses, HIV/AIDS and TB prevention and will seek funds from the Global Fund to support its projects.

In August, the government approved a national strategy to reduce maternal mortality by 50% and infant mortality by 30% by the end of 2015.

During the first six months of 2003, authorities recorded 721 incidents affecting 615 people - 50 people were killed, 505 injured and another 60 were temporarily evacuated. Statistically, 35.8% of the incidents were caused by natural calamities affecting 70 people. Pouring rains and hails in spring and early summer destroyed wheat, potato and vegetable crops. Spring floods damaged buildings and bridges too. Local authorities estimate, the damage and losses reached USD 667,000. Another 64.2% of the incidents were technological affecting 545 people, of whom 49 died and 496 were injured.

Health and Care

Goal: The complementary role of the Armenian Red Cross Society and its impact on community health and well-being are maximized.

Objective: The Armenian Red Cross Society contributes to improving the health of vulnerable people by advocacy, timely interventions and 'bridging the gap'

Expected result 1: The vulnerability of 20,000 young people to sexually transmitted illnesses (STI), HIV/AIDS is reduced by 2004 through peer education, public awareness campaigns, support to the STI/HIV/AIDS centres and advocacy campaigns for the prevention or discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Armenian Red Cross, with its own resources, conducted five training sessions on HIV/AIDS and TB prevention for 832 people, including senior schoolchildren and draftees, in Vayots Dzor. Youth leaders trained another 1,196 schoolchildren and 304 teachers in 11 villages of Martuni region. In Sevan, additional 34 schoolchildren received training on HIV/AIDS. The explanatory dictionary on sexual health was published and distributed among target groups in June 2003.

In September, additional funds from the Norwegian Red Cross arrived, which will enable the Red Cross to train more people. Red Cross is planning to organise meetings with partner agencies to discuss joint actions to reduce harm of HIV/AIDS in the country.

Impact: Beneficiaries have increased knowledge on safe sex and know how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted illnesses. The vulnerability of youth to HIV/AIDS decreases.

Constraints: Because of lack of funds, Red Cross distributed only limited number of test systems for early detection and treatment of syphilis and HIV/AIDS to appropriate medical facilities. Cultural barriers and taboos affect Red Cross education efforts.

The Federation estimates around CHF 36,000 of the Norwegian funds will be carried over to 2004 to continue some of the planned activities during the next year.

Expected result 2: A total of 12 first aid teams of the Armenian Red Cross are formed in 2003 and provide sustainable community-based first aid (CBFA) services in six border regions of Shirak, Lori, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor, and Syunik in accordance with a new streamlined first aid structure and guidelines and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Progress/Achievement: Lack of funding prevented the implementation of planned activities. Through bilateral programmes, however, with the German and American Red Cross Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Football Federation of Armenia, the Armenian Red Cross has been training teachers and nurses as First Aid trainers to help children change behaviour. With German Red Cross support, the Armenian Red Cross conducted six training sessions for 68 volunteers in Lori, Tavush, Shirak and Vayots Dzor. 56 volunteers received a certificate of a qualified First Aider.

In July, Armenian Red Cross First Aid team participated in a First Aid European competition in Prague and won the sixth place.

Competitions on First Aid were organised in Armenia too. Of 12 teams competing at the regional level, six participated in a seventh national open competition in September. During the preparation period for the national competition, the Armenian Red Cross trained 100 people from Armavir, Ararat, Syunik, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Sevan and Vayots Dzor regions. Of this 100, seven First aid instructors were trained as coaches. Some 200 volunteers took part in the competition.

Red Cross teams offered First Aid at an international rally and 3^d UEFA football matches in Armenia. Through a bilateral programme with UNICEF, the Red Cross has started First Aid training to communities who can pay, including employees of various organisations and agencies.

In September, the German Red Cross held a seminar on professional First Aid for 23 Armenian Red Cross First Aid instructors from Yerevan, Syunik, Shirak, Lori, Aragatsotn, Kotayk and Vayots Dzor regions to improve their skills and knowledge.

Impact: Through First Aid training the Red Cross strengthens capacities of local communities to deal with day-to-day incidents as well as more serious challenges.

Constraints: Because of poor response to the appeal, the planned activities could not be implemented.

Expected result 3: A total of 23 social service centres of the Armenian Red Cross provide 50,000 vulnerable people (the single elderly, internally displaced persons, refugees, handicapped, large families of perished soldiers, orphans living in institutions) with socio—medical services of better quality in cooperation with local authorities and non-governmental organizations working in the same field.

Progress/Achievement: Red Cross social service centres continued to provide vital assistance to lone elderly people, refugees, IDPs and other vulnerable groups. The centres offered psycho-social consultations, medical check-ups (blood pressure, blood glucose) and distribution of essential drugs prescribed by polyclinics. In Vayots Dzor, Shirak, Armavir, Sevan, Syunik and Lori regions, 739 lone elderly people enjoyed warm welcome at the Red Cross clubs. They were offered tea, coffee and sweets. In 16 villages of the Gegharkunik region, the Red Cross distributed shirts, donated by the American Red Cross, to 20,000 mothers, women of 15-45 years old and children. Red Cross regional branch in Lori organized computer classes for 17 school children. The Tavush regional branch distributed school supplies to 200 children on Children’s International Day. In June-September 2003, the centres served a total of 12,459 people:

Service provided	People assisted
Food distribution	945
Clothes distribution	2,264
Medicines and medical supplies distribution	1,080
Financial support	6
Consultations	1,307
Blood pressure measuring	3,270
Measuring sugar level in blood	648
Injections	744
Home visits	791
Shopping	197
Health services	94
Minor home repairs	195
Total	12,459

Some 179 Red Cross volunteers were involved in the operation.

The Sevan regional branch repaired its club for elderly people and the Kotayk regional branch repaired the social centre. All regional branches purchased goods and equipment, including vacuum cleaners to clean houses of lone elderly beneficiaries, tools to conduct minor repairs, games to entertain the elderly, axe and saw to cut winter wood, a tape player for the clubs, equipment for hairdresser’s and other items, such as, a heater, a TV set, a video camera, a music centre and a computer.

Head of the Red Cross health and social department visited Abovyan, Sevan, Gegharkunik, Tavush and Masis regional branches to monitor work of the social centres. Consultations were provided to branch chairpersons on financial reporting

During the reported period, the regional branches held a number of trainings, meetings and seminars:

Tavush region:

- A seminar for 20 volunteers on social security, status and state privileges of disabled people.

Lori region:

- A meeting with 16 pupils, teachers and school administration on implementation of the *Collect and Distribute* project. Within the project, schools collect locally second-hand clothes and distribute them to the poor.
- A seminar for 13 children to help them understand through games how important compassion and helping other people is.
- A meeting in Lory between 17 students of computer classes, nine elderly people and representatives of NGOs, schools, mass media and local authorities to bridge the gap between generations through dialogue.

Shirak region:

- Two seminars for volunteers on the topic: *they are looking forward to our help*. The importance of Red Cross social services, as well as, the role of volunteers was once again underscored.
- Another meeting was held with 16 volunteers to discuss the work of the social service centres.

Sevan region:

- A meeting with psychologists from Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). Psychologists discussed with Red Cross volunteers basic psychological aspects of the work with elderly people.



They are not alone: Red Cross social centres provide vital assistance to thousands of elderly people.

Red Cross regional centres have been strengthening cooperation with local partners. A local TV & radio company aired reportage on Red Cross social support services in Lori marz. The Shirak center received drugs and consumables from the regional health department. A businessman donated flour, some pies and fruits to Vayots-Dzor centre. The commodities were distributed to vulnerable people.

Impact: Through social centres, the Red Cross helps its beneficiaries solve some of their socio-medical problems. Communities have increased awareness of the plight of vulnerable people, including elderly people. New equipment will enhance capacities of the centres to provide improved and sustainable services to people in need.

Constraints: In Yerevan and Ararat, Red Cross clubs for elderly people were temporarily closed because of extremely hot weather in the summer. Red Cross staff and volunteers in regions need training to improve their reporting skills.

Expected result 4: Treatment in specialised health institutions of 40 TB patients in nine regions has been provided Chronic malnutrition rates among children in 17 IMCI pilot villages of Geghakunik have reduced 25 per cent by 2004.

Progress/Achievements: The project did not receive any funds through the Federation appeal. Through bilateral cooperation with the Hellenic Red Cross, however, the Armenian Red Cross supplied 10 regional TB dispensaries with anti-TB drugs to treat 2,100 new patients and published 5,000 booklets on TB for schoolchildren. 31 people, relatives of TB infected patients, received information on TB prevention.

In September, Red Cross health volunteers trained 121 schoolchildren and 600 draftees in Ararat on TB prevention. TB was included in training sessions on HIV/AIDS in 11 communities of Martuni region too.

In addition, the American Red Cross supported the Armenian Red Cross to train 4,032 child carers on integrated management of childhood illnesses. 64 follow-up visits were conducted, during which Red Cross field officers consulted another 879 young mothers.

Impact: Through this project many TB patients received full treatment, which the government is unable to provide. The education campaigns and booklets on TB prevention for children will raise their awareness on how to prevent the disease. Child care takers have increased knowledge of breastfeeding, nutrition, preventive and curative child care, HIV/AIDS, early detection of diseases and immunization. Through education and promotion of preventive measures, the Red Cross aims to reduce infant and maternal morbidity and mortality.

Constraints: More medicines are needed to continue treatment of people ill with TB. Lack of proper food and hard social conditions contribute to increased number of TB patients in the country - 5,450 as of 2003 according to government statistics.

Disaster Management

Goal: The vulnerability of the population to disasters and their impact are reduced.

Objective: The disaster management capacity of the Armenian Red Cross Society is increased to effectively respond to disasters and reduce the impact on vulnerable people in high-risk areas by focused and timely response and public awareness campaigns.

Expected result 1: Preparation of 70,000 people living in high-risk communities for disasters is developed through public awareness, training, simulation exercises and the creation of ten community-based disaster management models by the end of 2004.

Progress/ Achievements: In consultation with the Crisis Management Institute, the Red Cross has decided to develop and publish another educational leaflet on lightning and dangers associated with it to increase public awareness. The leaflet includes rules on how to behave when lightning strikes and what to do if there are casualties. This leaflet is a continuation of the series of leaflets published by the Red Cross on various disasters, such as, hail, flood, earthquake and fire. These materials will be reprinted and distributed to the population according to the vulnerability of each region to disasters.

3,000 copies of the 5th issue of *Aghetik* – an educational booklet for children - were published. *Aghetik* is an invented cartoon character who tells children how to prepare for, what might happen and what to do during various disasters. The latest edition is about floods. A complete collection, which includes five booklets on flood, fire, earthquake, nuclear particles and every-day threats, will be distributed to schools, kindergartens and libraries throughout the country.

Impact: The new educational leaflet will be a good tool to increase public's awareness of the most common disasters in their regions. As a result, people will be better prepared. They will know how to protect themselves from the effects of disasters. The *Aghetik* booklets are increasingly popular with children. The cartoon character helps children understand threats and risks. Their vulnerability to disasters and emergencies reduces.

Constraints: In 2003, the Armenian Red Cross focused its efforts on strengthening its response capacities through retraining of staff and response teams, as well as, conducting simulation exercises. Work on community-based disaster management models, therefore, has not progressed. Discussion has started between the Federation and the national society to shift focus to community based disaster preparedness through the implementation of pilot vulnerability and capacity assessment in 2004.

Expected result 2: The disaster management mechanisms of the Armenian Red Cross are built with skilled staff and volunteers, sufficient material and technical resources. Its disaster management activities are coordinated with relevant governmental agencies and other organisations working in the same field, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Progress/Achievements: The Armenian Red Cross emergency management department held monthly meetings with branch disaster management coordinators to share knowledge and experience in disaster management.

In September, Red Cross distributed to regional branches 300 copies of training guidelines on evacuation from schools. Using these modules, disaster management coordinators have started training of school administration. Trained school staff will then organise similar seminars for students and professors at their schools.

Seven simulation evacuations were held in seven schools in six regions with 4,038 people, including 548 teachers and 3,490 pupils. 420 copies of the training module on evacuation from schools and 140 copies of a manual on earthquake preparedness & response were distributed to participants.

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The Red Cross Lore rescue team conducted six-day training for regional rapid response teams from Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Yerevan, Syunik and Aragatsotn.

The Lore rescue team also trained 24 logisticians of the Red Cross rapid response teams on needs assessment, situation analysis and follow-up measures in emergency situations.

Rapid response team volunteers in Kotayk region organised a walking-tour to a sanctuary in Khosrov. Volunteers passed through mountains testing their surviving and life saving skills. They cleaned historical places.

In July, the Red Cross rapid response team in Gyumri, Shirak Region, helped people trapped in rubbles of an old building that had collapsed. There were no casualties.



A reliable partner: Red Cross rapid response team helps people trapped in a building that collapsed in Gyumri.

In July, Armenian Red Cross disaster management coordinators and chairmen of regional branches participated in a six-day disaster management workshop organized by the Iranian Red Crescent Society. Participants of the workshop discussed various aspects of disaster management, including psycho-social support to disaster victims, as well as, search and rescue.

The Red Cross developed a disaster alarm system. Roles and responsibilities of regional branch chairpersons, staff and volunteers during disasters were defined. In September, a regional simulation exercise on the alarm system was conducted in Stepanavan with participation of Lori and Stepanavan regional rapid response teams. The

similar exercise was conducted at the zonal level. Regional rapid response teams from Lori, Shirak and Tavush took part.

Impact: Through training, simulations exercises, meetings and discussions, disaster management capacity of the Armenian Red Cross is improving. Disaster alarm system will enable the Red Cross to respond rapidly and effectively to future disasters or emergencies.

Constraints: The planned procurement of rescue equipment and emergency stocks was delayed because of the survey of the inventory at the central and regional warehouses has not been completed yet.

Expected result 3. The integration and naturalization of 5,000 refugees through vocational training of socio-medical assistance and public awareness and via cooperation with the Government's department for migration and refugees and the UNHCR.

Progress/ Achievements: No funding has been secured for this expected result through the Federation Appeal. The Armenian Red Cross through bilateral cooperation with the UNHCR, however, provided financial assistance, food and clothes to asylum seekers and newly recognized refugees. In addition, Armenian language and computer courses were organized for six newly recognized refugees. Another 60 refugees living in Syunik region received training on Armenian language. The Red Cross also provided legal and social consultations to refugees.

The Armenian Red Cross is a member of the UN working group on counter trafficking. It is also an observer at the state inter-agency commission on trafficking. Head of the population movement department regularly participates in meetings organized by the working group and the committee to coordinate efforts of various humanitarian actors.

Impact: Mechanisms to provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and newly recognized refugees has been developed and are well-functioning. Red Cross population movement coordinator established strong links with relevant government authorities, as well as, local and international organizations to provide assistance in a more focused and participatory manner.

Constraints: Because of lack of funds, Red Cross could not carry out all planned activities. The Red Cross continues to seek support from partners to help refugees.

Organizational Development

Goal: The capacity of the Armenian Red Cross is increased at all levels to fulfil its mandate to alleviate suffering of vulnerable people.

Objective: The capacity of the national society is increased to take over all operational and financial responsibilities for the implementation of the programmes by the end of 2004.

Expected result 1: The Armenian Red Cross improves its legal base, capacity and performance in accordance with the plan of action for the implementation of the Strategy 2010. It coordinates capacity building through programmes to achieve overall organisational development of the national society.

Progress/Achievements: In June 2003, the Armenian Red Cross convened an extraordinary general assembly to review the organisation's work in 2002 and approve its plan of action for 2003.

The Red Cross established a new regional branch in Sevan, which brings the total number of Red Cross regional branches in Armenia to 13.



Constant self-improvement: Red Cross staff learns how to plan responsive programmes for vulnerable people at the Project Planning Process workshop organised by the Federation.

The Red Cross amended its statutes in compliance with the recently revised national legislation on non-governmental organisations. The general assembly approved draft statutory changes and submitted them to a joint Federation and ICRC commission in Geneva. The commission's recommendations will be incorporated into the statutes.

The Red Cross conducted the first meeting of regional branch chairpersons and the leadership of the organisation to improve internal cooperation and effectiveness of services. In July, the Federation trained Red Cross staff at the headquarters on project planning process (PPP), the Federation's main planning tool.

Within the community development model project, supported by the Federation's Capacity Building Fund and a special fund for organisational development provided through the Federation Secretariat's organisational development department, training on participatory community development (PCD) was held for regional branch chairpersons including management of the national society. The training was facilitated by a coordinator from the Federation regional delegation in Budapest and was conducted in an interactive manner.

A PCD manual and toolkit were translated into Armenian and distributed to Red Cross regional branches involved in the pilot project. Thanks to funds from the Norwegian Red Cross, the number of target communities for pilot PCD projects has increased from originally planned seven to 13. The Red Cross formed a structure to coordinate

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all organizational development projects in the target communities and strengthen their efficiency and effectiveness. After the PCD workshop, the Red Cross staff and other stakeholders in 13 communities were trained on how to conduct participatory rapid appraisal (PRA). By the end of September, needs assessment has been conducted in five communities using the PRA methodology. Assessment results are being analysed and working groups will then develop projects tailored to target communities. The working groups include representatives from the Red Cross, target communities, local authorities, NGOs, mass media and other actors.

Impact: Changes to the Statutes aim to improve effectiveness of Red Cross services in compliance with the national legislation. Through its new branch, the Red Cross will be able to reach larger communities saving and improving their lives. Participatory community development approach will enable the Red Cross to be more responsive to local community needs. It is a tool to identify the most acute problems communities are facing and find solutions to them in a participatory manner. The ultimate goal is to strengthen self-sustainability of target communities, as well as Red Cross regional branches.

Constraints: The PCD pilot project is in its early phase. Although leadership of regional branches is committed to the project and showed a genuine interest in, as well as, understanding of the new approach, the Red Cross has to improve some areas to ensure successful implementation of planned activities: training materials needs to be finalised; financial management system and mechanisms internally – between the headquarters and regional branches, as well as externally with the Federation needs to be improved too considering an increased workload of regional branches over the coming few months.

Funds for the PCD project arrived only in September 2003. The Red Cross cannot absorb the amount, which is to cover a one year project, in three months until the end of 2003. Therefore, certain amount will be carried over to 2004 to ensure project objectives are met effectively.

Expected Result 2: The Armenian Red Cross takes over all operational and financial responsibilities for the implementation of the programmes by the end of 2004 by improving its structure at headquarters and the branches, reporting system, programme management and financial and accounting system.

Progress/Achievements: With the Federation's support, a local audit company studied the Red Cross financial management. The company identified risk factors and developed recommendations to help the Red Cross improve.

The Armenian Red Cross Society has installed new software to improve its accounting system to international standards. The finance department is exploring now technical and financial possibilities to establish internet connection with regional branches.

Impact: Based on recommendations of the audit company, the Red Cross, in consultation with the Federation, established issues it has to work on to improve its financial management. The new software enables to prepare timely and accurate reports.

Constraints: The financial restructuring is now well underway with the renewed commitment of the Armenian Red Cross to improve its systems. However, further work is needed to secure a systematic, sustainable, and transparent financial management. Frequently changing and porous legislation on taxation and accounting causes confusion and affects the Red Cross work.

Additional funds from the Norwegian Red Cross arrived in September 2003. However, the Red Cross will not be able to implement all planned by the end of 2003. The Federation estimates around CHF 24,872 will be carried over to continue the project in 2004.

Expected Result 3: An active participation of 2,000 Red Cross youth volunteers in various activities and the provision of services that reinforce commitment to and knowledge of the Movement's Fundamental Principles.

Progress/ Achievements: On 1 June, Children's International Day, 15 youth volunteers visited 165 children at a boarding school and an orphanage in Yerevan. Volunteers played with children and gave them presents – toys, clothes and small hand-made boxes – '*Friendship boxes*'. The boxes have a name and address of the volunteer who made them so that correspondence and friendship can be exchanged.

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During the reported period, 119 volunteers were recruited throughout the country. The Red Cross has 2,500 volunteers today. Many actively participate in the Red Cross work.

In June-September 2003, 210 youth volunteers were involved in Red Cross activities, including organization of minor yard camps and chalk drawing contests, visits to orphanages and second-hand clothes distribution. Youth volunteers regularly met at the Red Cross Sunday Club to discuss health related issues, such as, dangers of alcohol and smoking, as well as, HIV/AIDS.

In July, 28 young volunteers from 13 regions received three-day training on youth activities in the framework of international voluntary movement. During the training, volunteers discussed their current work too. They exchanged experience and knowledge. Through brainstorming, volunteers listed their constraints and then attempted to find solutions to them.

To ensure sustainability of youth work, the Red Cross is running income generation projects, such as printing and selling of T-shirts, caps, pens and calendars with Red Cross emblems. In June-September, the Red Cross sold 83 T-shirts, 25 blouses, 34 caps and 63 pens for USD 500.

The Red Cross youth club generates additional income for the national society through internet café, photocopying, translation and typing services, as well as computer training. Photocopying and internet services have the biggest demand among visitors, mainly staff of a neighbouring hospital and inhabitants of surrounding buildings. The club also serves as a gathering place for young people.

With financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Red Cross volunteers launched a campaign '*clean Sevan*' to raise public's awareness on ecological problems of lake Sevan. An international youth camp was organised in August 2003. Volunteers had an opportunity to interact, share experience and knowledge, and discuss problems of Armenian youth. Volunteers cleaned about 60 kilometres of the lake Sevan shores. The Red Cross also held information session on ecological issues for 4,000 schoolchildren. Five TV spots have been broadcast to alert the general public about the situation of the lake.

In June 2003, head of the youth department and a youth coordinator attended a European cooperation meeting in Jesolo, Italy, organized by the European coordinating committee to simulate exchange of experience and the increased involvement of youth in Red Cross work. The meeting also strengthened links between the youth of European countries.

Impact: The Red Cross makes continuous efforts to strengthen its volunteer management systems and mechanisms encouraging more active participation of youth in reducing vulnerability in the country, particularly of lone elderly refugees and children. The Armenian Red Cross has 2,500 volunteers across the country. A big majority of them are young, enthusiastic and committed people who want to make the world a better place to live in. Volunteers assist the national society to expand its presence much wider in the community. Red Cross activities provide them with opportunities to contribute to the society they live in, broaden their horizon, meet their peers and gain professional, as well as interpersonal skills. Through regular contact with the vulnerable, young people become compassionate and tolerant.

At the meeting in Italy, the Red Cross exchanged experience and learned from practice of other National Societies to improve their work with young people.

Constraints: Number of people visiting the Red Cross youth club is not high as it was expected, largely due to its location. The Red Cross disseminates information about the club through leaflets and advertisement in newspapers.

With the assistance of partner national societies, the Armenian Red Cross has organised a number of youth activities to recruit and train more young volunteers. However, in a country with a widespread poverty, collapsed economy, poor social and health care, and thousands of people on the edge of survival, it is a challenging task to motivate and retain them.

Humanitarian Values

Goal: A positive change is made in the behaviour of national society's staff and volunteers, authorities and communities.

Objective: The information and dissemination capacity of the Armenian Red Cross is increased to promote the Movements' fundamental principles and humanitarian values.

Expected result 1. A total of 1,000 staff and volunteers of the Armenian Red Cross have a better understanding of the Movement's Fundamental Principles and apply them in their work with vulnerable people.

Progress/Achievements: The appeal did not receive funds to conduct planned activities under this expected result.

With financial support of the ICRC, the Red Cross held seminars on the history of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its components, the emblem, the Fundamental Principles and the International Humanitarian Law for 11 regional dissemination officers and regional, as well as, community branch chairpersons.

The similar training was conducted for Red Cross First Aid regional team members. 40 volunteers from Armenia, Germany and Nagorno-Karabakh participated in a competition on the Red Cross knowledge in September 2003.

Expected result 2. The Armenian Red Cross has more effective communication with public authorities and the community, ensuring an understanding the role of the Armenian Red Cross and the Movement and reinforcing its independence and the role of its emblem.

Progress/Achievements: The Armenian Red Cross, with its own resources and through bilateral partnerships, has disseminated information on the Movement, its history and work to 3,375 persons. 390 leaflets, brochures and booklets on the Red Cross and its work were distributed to the public at large.

The Red Cross conducted a survey among 2,694 schoolchildren and 905 adults to determine their knowledge of the Red Cross and its work. More than 50% of respondents gave correct answers on the history, the Emblem, the Principles and activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. 51% of respondents showed interest in the activities of the Red Cross.

The dissemination department of the Red Cross also conducted a session on the history of the Movement, its components, the Fundamental Principles, its mandate, structure and work of the Armenian Red Cross for 75 teachers of law at public schools. In September, a similar session was held for 25 high ranking officers of the military forces of Armenia.

Expected result 3: An advocacy component is included in all programmes of the Armenian Red Cross. Staff and volunteers are involved in the efforts to reduce discrimination and promote a culture of non-violence.

Progress/Achievements: Advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS is one of the main tasks of the Armenian Red Cross. Together with other humanitarian actors, it strives to reduce the spread of this disease, as well as, discrimination of people living with it. Advocacy on disaster preparedness and promotion of humanitarian values is carried out through projects.

Impact: The Armenian Red Cross advocates more vociferously on behalf of the vulnerable, strengthening its position as an effective partner of people in need. By speaking on behalf of vulnerable people, the Armenian Red Cross raises the public's awareness of their needs and seeks assistance for them.

Constraints: The Red Cross has to develop better mechanisms to advocate to respective authorities on needs of vulnerable communities.

Federation Coordination

Goal: Effective and efficient assistance is provided to the Armenian Red Cross in developing itself into a well-functioning national society.

Objective: Resources of partner national societies and other organisations are best used in supporting Armenian Red Cross programmes.

Progress/Achievements: The Federation, through its country delegation in Yerevan and a regional delegation in Ankara, continues to assist the Armenian Red Cross in strengthening capacities to deliver high quality services to people in need. The Federation team has expertise in variety of fields, including planning, reporting, organisational development, disaster preparedness and response. A number of workshops and training sessions, such as training on project planning process and participatory community development, were organised by the Federation. The Red Cross developed its plan of action for 2004-2005 with technical support of the Federation.

The Federation also provides the Red Cross with information on major donors and available funding in the country, initiatives undertaken by other NGOs and the UN agencies, as well, as government policies on health and disaster management.

The Federation met with partner organisations to avoid duplication and ensure effective response to needs. In cooperation with the ICRC, the Federation has been supporting the Red Cross on governance related issues.

A dialogue with the Armenian Government continues to clarify the role of the Armenian Red Cross and explore the support the government is prepared to provide to enable the national society to play this role.

The Federation is in the process of developing a four year plan of action in consultation with all stakeholders. The plan will outline the Federation Secretariat's support strategy in Armenia.

Impact: Regular trainings improve capacities of the Red Cross to deliver efficient and effective services to vulnerable people. Coordination with partner organisations ensures maximum impact of humanitarian efforts. Stronger partnerships with Government authorities and non-governmental organisations and agencies strengthen sustainability of Red Cross operations.

Constraints: The Red Cross has to strengthen its planning capacities to develop focused and realistic projects to help the most vulnerable people in accordance with its mandate and the Fundamental Principles. More work is needed to enhance partnership with the government and various humanitarian actors in the country to maximise their efforts and resources in support of the most vulnerable.

International Representation

Goal: The credibility of the Armenian Red Cross and the Federation's international persona are enhanced.

Objective: The Federation's policies and the national society's agendas are promoted to create an environment favourable to Red Cross activities in Armenia.

Progress/Achievement: The Federation distributed the first Programme Update and the World Disasters Report 2003 to over 25 international agencies working in Armenia, as well as, some government agencies to raise their awareness of the Red Cross work.

Federation representatives attended various meetings and events organized by the government and international humanitarian agencies to share information on the role and activities of the Federation and the Armenian Red Cross.

Impact: Humanitarian actors and Government authorities have improved knowledge of the Red Cross and its work. Image of the National Society has improved.

Constraints: More work is needed to strengthen partnership with the government and various humanitarian actors in the country to advocate better on issues related to the most vulnerable.

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