

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

30 June 2003

GEORGIA

Appeal No. 01.79/2003

Appeal Target: CHF 383,957 (USD 263,441 or EUR 260,888)

Programme Update No. 1;

Period covered: January-May 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: 40.9% (On 30 June, for live Contributions List click below)

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual03/1-2-3%20-%20ap017903.pdf

Outstanding needs: CHF 226,997 (USD 167,000 / EUR 145,000)

Programme Summary: After a long period of uncertainty in the leadership of the Georgian Red Cross, the Federation stepped up its engagement in Georgia in April 2003.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Federation and the Georgian Red Cross to provide a comprehensive framework of co-operation on Federation support to national society rehabilitation and capacity building efforts. The initial response to the appeal, however, has been low.

The major part of the activities has been implemented with the support of the Federation's Capacity Building Fund. This, however, is insufficient to ensure successful implementation of the programme. Donors are urged to support the Federation's efforts aiming at rebuilding the institutional capacity of the Georgian Red Cross to alleviate suffering of vulnerable communities in this poor country.

Operational developments

Since its independence, Georgia has experienced a decade-long disaster. It has suffered economic collapse, crushing poverty, disintegration of its social welfare and health systems, mass population movements, recurring political and military conflicts, and widespread institutional shortcomings at all levels.

The people of Georgia have endured periods of civil war and unrest as well as violence related to the independence aspirations of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It has resulted in the deaths of more than 100,000 people, displacement of another 300,000 people, skilled personnel emigrating en-masse from Georgia and industry virtually ceasing. Large-scale famine has only been avoided through substantial external humanitarian aid.



Although diplomatic efforts have brought relative stability in recent years, tensions over both regions persist. The loss of cheap Soviet energy and the rupturing of trading ties caused the economy of Georgia, once a relatively affluent part of the Soviet Union, to nose-dive.

Despite a recent improvement, the country remains in desperate circumstances and continued decline. The Georgian economy is sluggish. Living standards continue to plummet. Everyday life is an unremitting struggle for the most vulnerable groups of the population. The republic remains among the poorest countries of the former USSR. Add to this the changing demography, with increasing numbers of elderly people and a decreasing fertility rate, the situation becomes bleaker. According to the Georgian State Department for Statistics, Georgia's population shrank by 1.1 million people: from 5.5 million in 1989 to 4.4 million at the beginning of 2002¹. Generally, the decline, almost 20 per cent, has been caused by an outflow of workers to other countries. Most emigrants now live in the Russian Federation, and increasingly in Ukraine, Western Europe and the USA.

Georgia shares a border with Russia's troubled Chechen Republic and there have been angry exchanges between the two countries related to the conflict.

The country continues to be ravaged by crime and corruption. Recent years have seen institutional, legal and economic reforms, but many of the achievements have been undermined by corrupt practices. The recent abduction of UN observers underscored security concerns in the country.

Georgia, located in a seismically active zone, is extremely disaster prone. The earthquake in April 2002 caused relatively little damage, though its epicentre was close to the capital, Tbilisi. It triggered fear and concern. Floods and landslides often affect the country.

Findings from the recent assessment and other existing vulnerability and capacity assessments, indicate the main source of vulnerability in Georgia lies in the socio-economic crisis. This affects mostly elderly people living alone and internally displaced persons because lack of and insufficient access to services of social and health institutions.

The Federation has been assisting the Georgian Red Cross to reduce vulnerability in the country since 1992, mainly in relief with an increasing emphasis on development and capacity building. In 2001, however, due to uncertainty over the leadership of the national society, the Federation's presence in Georgia was reduced. It

¹ The census did not cover two conflict areas outside central government control. Georgian and international experts estimate the population of Abkhazia may be around 160,000 people at the moment, while South Ossetia is home to about 70,000 people.

maintained a small office, to ensure liaison between the Federation and the Georgian Red Cross, international organisations, and Georgian authorities. In early 2002, the new president of the Georgian Red Cross was confirmed. A new presidium was elected, and new senior staff members were appointed.

In September-October 2002, considering massive humanitarian challenges confronting the country and a relative stability in the national society, the Federation, with the involvement and assistance of the ICRC, conducted an assessment to identify areas for potential assistance to the Red Cross Society of Georgia in its work to meet the needs of vulnerable communities.

Guided by the results of the assessment, the Federation has launched a six-month project, which aims to support the national society to re-establish its basic institutional capacities. The project is a first phase of the Federation's re-engagement in Georgia and is an integral part of the Appeal 2003.

Health and Disaster Response at Community Level

Goal: Vulnerability of people affected by the socio-economic crisis is reduced through community involvement facilitated by well-functioning branches of the Georgian Red Cross Society.

Objective: Selected branches of the Georgian Red Cross will have the capacity to facilitate appropriate service delivery to the most vulnerable people in health and disaster response by involving the community.

Progress/Achievements: The Georgian Red Cross has made progress to provide relevant and high quality assistance to the most vulnerable people at community level. The immediate priorities for the Federation assistance include strengthening the national society capacities at the headquarters level so that it can provide effective support to the branches. This is achieved by:

- enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the new leadership and senior management staff of the National Society of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Fundamental Principles and mandate;
- establishing a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of management and governance functions in line with the provisions of the Georgian Red Cross Statutes;
- developing national society mission statement;
- identifying national society priorities and initiating strategic planning process; and
- consolidating the Georgian Red Cross legal base.

The initial focus has been put on the national society headquarters as this, it is believed, will create a solid foundation to ensure the Georgian Red Cross implements relevant and effective programmes at community level making a significant difference to the lives of the vulnerable people, which is the overall goal of the programme.

To enhance the knowledge and understanding of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, its Fundamental Principles and mandate, the Federation conducted a workshop for 19 members of the Georgian Red Cross governance and management, including President, Vice-President and the Secretary General. The training materials were translated into Georgian and distributed to the participants. To enhance the training skills of the National Society, some of the staff members had been involved and trained in the preparation for the workshop. They also acted as co-facilitators and will now carry out similar training for Red Cross staff in the regions.

To establish a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of management and governance functions in line with the provisions of the Georgian Red Cross Statutes, the national society has set up a working group consisting of members of governance and management. The working group has reviewed how the roles and responsibilities are divided and developed recommendations to improve the system. Also, a new organisational chart of the Georgian Red Cross has been developed, which together with the recommendations will be submitted to the governing board of the Society for approval in July 2003. A monitoring group will then be established to follow up on implementation.



Georgian Red Cross staff discuss the characteristics of a well-functioning national society

Work has started to develop the national society mission statement through internal consultations. In July 2003, the draft statement will be submitted to the Presidium for review and adopted at the General Assembly due in August-September 2003.

The Georgian Red Cross has initiated internal discussions to establish the strategic choices facing the National Society by incorporating an analysis of the:

- country external environment and the main issues relating to vulnerability, socio-economic trends, the aid and development environment.
- strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the external environment facing the Georgian Red Cross as it aims to build the effective delivery of its mandates of humanitarian work.
- achievements of the National Society in 2000-2001 to increase impact on vulnerability through its programmes.

The discussions, facilitated by a working group established by the Georgian Red Cross leadership, are held at all levels of the Society. The group will consolidate recommendations and submit them to the Presidium in July 2003. Based on the agreed priorities, the Georgian Red Cross will develop a two year strategic development plan. A statutory commission and a working group were established by a decision of the Georgian Red Cross presidium to proceed with the revision of the National Society Statutes. This process is to serve several purposes:

- decentralisation and restructuring of the national society;
- division of management and governance; and
- separation of responsibilities and functions between the President and the Secretary General.



New national society staff enhance their understanding of Red Cross Red Crescent principles at a Federation workshop

The statutes will be reviewed in conformity with the Federation's global Guidance for National Society Statutes and will follow an internal, participatory process engaging Federation and ICRC technical and legal expertise and assistance. The improvement of the current statutes will be done in two phases. The first phase will assume amendments to the existing Statutes at the General Assembly that will be convened later in the year. This will be a significant step in the change management process initiated by the National Society, which aims to deliver clear, unified and measurable outcomes in the overall management and programme capacity building within the Georgian Red Cross.

Further consultations will then be carried out in the national society and the new statutes will be drafted. This process will continue into 2004.

Impact: It is difficult to assess the impact at this stage, as the project is in its early phase. Considerable progress, though, has been made:

- the national society has embarked on an honest and serious self-reflection, which it is hoped, will provide the next important and strategic steps in the Red Cross efforts to improve the organisation and effectiveness of its programmes and activities.
- the leadership of the National Society is committed to change;
- it has a basic understanding of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, its mandate and Fundamental Principles.
- the National Society staff has confidence in their capacities to ensure successful implementation of the change management process;
- they are enthusiastic and keen to become a well functioning national society;
- there is a clear understanding in the Red Cross that the effective way to reduce the vulnerability in the country is through strengthening local communities.

All this constitutes a solid basis for effective capacity building efforts. A more comprehensive analysis of the achievements and impact of the operation will be carried out after the first phase in August/September 2003. In the case of implementation of the first phase, attention will then be directed towards the health and disaster response initiatives at the community level.

Constraints: The implementation of the first phase of the programme, aimed at strengthening capacity at the headquarters level, is taking longer than was anticipated. Although relative stability has been achieved in the leadership of the Georgian Red Cross, further work is required to help the national society build its organisational structure. Only after implementation of capacity building efforts at headquarters, will it be possible to direct attention towards the health and disaster response initiatives at the community level. A strong headquarters will ensure the unity of the Red Cross in the country and the ability of strong branches to implement effective and relevant programmes.

Both the national society and the Federation remain committed to launch the participatory community development programme in target branches, as described in the appeal 2003. The Georgian Red Cross, supported by the Federation, is now developing a detailed plan of action to strengthen the branches. Work will be concentrated at the community level in the priority areas of disaster response and health through participatory community development. This, it is hoped, will connect the Red Cross with the most vulnerable people in communities as well as with potential actors at the community level. The plan will be finalized after the mid-term evaluation of the programme in August/September 2003 to determine if the national society is ready to engage in the second phase at the community level.

To ensure successful implementation of the change management strategy, it is important that the national society leadership maintain their commitment to change and that there is stability within the Red Cross, as well as the political environment in the country. Initial low response to the Federation's appeal also raises considerable concerns.

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