

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

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO/ KOSOVO

30 July 2004

Appeal No. 01.74/2004

Appeal Target: CHF 2,684,669 (USD 2,000,400 or EUR 1,730,000)

not including Kosovo

Revised budget target: CHF 2,821,177

Programme Update No. 3 (First update specifically covering programmes in Serbia & Montenegro)

Period covered: January to June, 2004

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: 72.6 % Please check the following link for up to date information:

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/1-2-3 - ap017404.pdf

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,000,000 for the revised Federation appeal

Plus an additional CHF 1,000,000 for the Soup Kitchen Winter Programme, 2004-5, which could be bilateral or multilateral

Programme Summary: The main aim of the Federation delegation in the 2004 appeal had been the handover of programmes to the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society, together with a significant downsizing of the delegation and reducing support for service delivery. The first half of the year has, however brought more political uncertainty. The new Government in Serbia emerged after hard negotiations between political parties and its stability is still debatable. Negotiations with government about the auxiliary role and funding of the Red Cross have been much delayed due to this, though work has now started in earnest on the RC Laws in both republics. The March outbreak of violence in Kosovo moved the province further away from a solution, and involved a large new programme of assistance by the National Society. The country's economy has not yet made significant steps forward. With 207,000 refugees and another 270,000 Internally Displaced People in the country, humanitarian needs are still very much present. Federation activities therefore focused on the vulnerable population and service delivery more than expected, especially after the end of the UN/ICRC relief-distribution programme. It is now clear that Federation assistance to the National Society will need to remain active and strong while these issues are addressed, and while new opportunities for programme development and partnership in areas such as Commercial First Aid and Municipal Disaster Preparedness are explored. Funding and support for these two projects are still needed. The National Society has, with Federation support, provided direct assistance to beneficiaries through its Health and Care, Soup Kitchen and Population Movement programmes. Additionally, the National Society's capacity to meet the existing humanitarian needs has been enhanced through training, technical support and capacity building. The Organisational Development and Disaster Preparedness programmes have strengthened the

National Society and improved its position in the field of humanitarian work. Funding is still needed to finalise the Finance Development and Information Technology and Communications projects; to support the Soup Kitchens (with bulk food only) during the coming winter; to support home care, social welfare, Disaster Preparedness, Roma projects and health education; and to develop and support Population Movement activities. Partner National Societies and other partners in this period who deserve deepest gratitude are: Spanish Red Cross, Hellenic red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, French Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross and Swiss Agency for development and Co-operation.

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Operational developments

Over the past three years the Federation has been supporting a shift in National Society activities, moving from relief-focused to community-based programmes. The presumption was that the changed political environment, the end of conflict and the new economic and social climate would all mean improved political and economic stability at the end of the current three year programming period, 2001-2004. Therefore, the Federation has been supporting programmes intended to meet local needs and attract local support, in order to set the basis for sustainable, long term programmes and strategic thinking in the National Society. However, the whole transition process of the country is going much slower than anticipated. Politically, there are still strong opposing forces in society, clashing on a number of issues such as privatisation, the Hague tribunal and the restructuring of the education system. Meanwhile, the economy continues to stagnate. Large investments from foreign companies are unlikely to happen due to the political and economical instability. The amount of imported goods is still several times greater than the amount of exported ones. Unemployment remains very high.

The number of Refugees and Internally Displaced People has not increased (even after the ethnic violence in Kosovo in March), but it has not significantly decreased either. The established channels for the return of refugees to Croatia are still capable of serving only a small part of this huge population.

On top of it all, the future of the country as it is now (a union of two states) is still unclear. The way it looks at the moment, from 2006, Serbia and Montenegro could become two separate countries. The political future of Kosovo is also unresolved and tension remains high.

The National Society is, of course, affected by the uncertainty of its political environment. The organisation as a whole is struggling to thrive in an increasingly difficult environment. The government offers only limited direct support while at the same time is slow to provide indirect support through changing legislation and offering recommendations to potential local donors – although work on new Red Cross and related laws has now begun in earnest. The end of relief distribution means the end of the only reliable source of income for many branches. The organisation also needs to address staffing issues and find ways of using existing capacities not only to sustain its core activities but also to run programmes.

The Federation is working together with the National Society on both channelling external support to the most vulnerable population in the country and restructuring and repositioning the organisation in order to find the best way of assisting the most vulnerable population.

1. Health and care

Goal: The health status of the population is improved and awareness increased, through specific health promotion campaigns and the provision of targeted services to specific beneficiary groups.

Objective: To develop a holistic approach to health and care, that utilises national society capacities and resources and incorporates health promotion and awareness-raising. The Federation will enable a repositioning of the national society, confirming its position as a credible, influential actor within the sphere of health and care. To make this happen, the Federation will continue to support the national society-implemented social welfare programmes including homecare, ensuring that issues of sustainability are addressed.

Expected Results:

- **Advocacy:** The national society's role as an auxiliary provider of health and care services is understood, recognised, valued and rewarded by the authorities.
- **Health promotion:** The awareness of health-related risks and potential hazards among the general population in HIV/AIDS and other priority areas is heightened, prompting attitudinal and behavioural changes. Such changes will contribute to improved levels of general health.
- **Social welfare:** The mental health and quality of life of 6,000 families (consisting of families in collective centres, children with special needs and their families, and Roma children and their families) improves: the refugees have a clearer picture of their future, once collective centres have closed, children with special needs are more easily able to integrate with peers and the general population, and awareness of the importance of education within the Roma community is raised ensuring that higher numbers of Roma children enter and finish elementary school.
- **Home care:** Empowered local communities working through Red Cross branches identify and reach out to 20,000 vulnerable elderly people, advocating for their rights and providing them with assistance and support to maintain the dignity of their lives in their own homes

Achievements

Advocacy has not been a separate project. As it is a natural part of the Red Cross work, it was rather weaved into the activities of existing programmes, signifying the move from simple relief provision to more complex forms of assistance. Both Social Welfare Programme and Home Care Programme have featured this activity, with Home Care formalising an agreement with a number of other agencies active in this area of work and approaching the government with concrete proposals.

Home Care

The Home care programme entered this year as one of the most ambitious and effective activities of the National. Started in 2001 as a pilot programme, by early 2004 Home care was being implemented in 96 municipalities throughout the country (84 in Serbia and 12 in Montenegro). Over 8,000 beneficiaries have received regular visits every month. Nearly 2,000 trained volunteers and about 180 paid professionals are active on the programme, working with beneficiaries, but also networking in the local community in an effort to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the long run.

The Federation's original plan was for 2004 to be the final year of most financial support to the Home care programme; however the validity of this decision is currently subject to discussion. The programme was developed on the assumption that in three years time the general economical, political and legislative situation in the country would improve and that the recognition of the programme's value would lead to tangible support at the local and national level. Consequently, a plan to gradually phase-out the support was designed for this year, with the idea being to stop the support for service delivery completely by December and place future focus on development. This way, the National Society would have taken full ownership of the service delivery and

management of the programme with the Federation serving as a partner offering further technical assistance and development support.

Unfortunately, the political situation got more complex with the economy not only stagnating but regressing to some extent. Likewise, the changes in legislation are still awaited due to political uncertainty. The existing legal environment still discourages local donation (no incentive, unfavourable taxes) and the opportunities for Red Cross branches to launch commercial activities (to sustain the programmes) are still marred by a complicated registration process.

Therefore, the phase-out had to be changed. The only branches where support was finished are the six pilot branches (who were supported one year longer than the rest); these are all still running the programme, albeit with less capacity and fewer beneficiaries. The rest are receiving decreased amount of funds. While some of the branches have worked hard and finally managed to secure continuous local support for their work, many others have only received occasional or verbal support, with some struggling for mere survival. Stopping financial support at this point would mean the likely collapse of the programme in 50% of the currently active branches. Recognising the existing opportunities (the expressed government interest to support the programme in Serbia, the creation of an advocacy network) and aware that a functioning programme is more marketable than a formerly functioning programme, the Federation extended support to the end of the year. The level is decreased following the initial phase-out plan which still means all of the branches are hard at work trying to secure local support. This also means there is a need for additional funding for the programme and is reflected in the revised appeal budget.

That said, the programme implementation was steady throughout the six month period. Most branches have managed to preserve the number of beneficiaries despite the funding decrease. Local training for volunteers was routinely done either periodically or as needed. Two additional two-day training seminars were organised at the republican level in May and June. These seminars have covered the 29 branches that have joined the programme last (September 2003), providing advanced training for them. The topics ranged from communication techniques and healthy lifestyles, through volunteer management and humanitarian principles to community networking and lobbying.



Blood pressure check by a volunteer in Velika Plana

In line with the continuing development and capacity building of the programme, two projects the Federation was working on for most of the last year finally materialised, namely the Home Care Handbook and the customised software package. The Handbook is partly a reference document for volunteers/ professionals and partly a training tool at branch level. The range of topics is wide, from rules and procedures of the programme, through caretaking techniques to examples of good practices and suggested solutions to common problems. The handbook is designed as a two-ring binder in order to simplify future additions/ changes. It is a document that can evolve together with the programme. The feedback at branch level has been unanimously positive.

The software package was designed by a subcontracted software company who tailored it to the needs expressed by branch and headquarter-level Home care staff. The main purpose of this package is to simplify and facilitate

record-keeping and reporting at branch level, communication with the headquarters as well as statistical analysis and reporting in headquarters. The beta build of the package was shared with several branches in order to identify existing bugs and glitches but also to receive suggestions about the interface and the requirements it should satisfy. The final build with a printed guide to installation/ use/ troubleshooting has been distributed to all the branches in May and June. It will undoubtedly take some time for the software to be fully utilised by all the branches as the programme staff need to get used to working with it. After the main sources of confusion and unclear functions are identified, training for all the branches will be organised.

Serbian Red Cross had initiated the founding of the advocacy network for the needs of the elderly in the final quarter of the last year. After several meetings and discussions on the principles, methodology and main objectives, the network was finally officially formed in May when eleven organisations and agencies signed the Memorandum of Understanding (with another four announcing their intention to do so). Big and small, local and international, all these organisations share a common interest in assisting the elderly population. The network aims to influence the relevant government and parliamentary bodies and lobby for better support and changes in legislation in elderly care. A meeting with the Minister of Social Affairs will take place in July; it is worth noting that home care is a key priority of the social welfare section of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and this should provide a useful platform for advocating for the National Society’s auxiliary role in implementing the PRSP.

Impact

The programme has well proven its worth over the past period, providing care and assistance to over 8,000 elderly, vulnerable beneficiaries. Since the end of the UNHCR-funded food distribution programme in March, for many of these beneficiaries the need for assistance has dramatically increased. The help that Home care volunteers are able to provide in these cases (contacting and referring to other institutions, help with paperwork, advocacy) is indispensable.

The visibility of the programme has risen significantly at branch level, but also at a national level. In Serbia, the new government has been presented with the programme, the Ministry of Social Affairs speaking in very favourable terms about it and announcing concrete support.

Month	Number of beneficiaries	Number of professionals	Number of volunteers	Number of professionals’ visits	Number of volunteers’ visits
January	8,817	147	1,777	6,688	23,629
February	8,682	148	1,396	7,023	23,485
March	8,535	153	1,801	7,321	24,313
April	8,778	150	1,731	6,552	24,416
May	8,108	139	1,271	6,872	21,136

* Note: the oscillations in figures are mostly due to the fact that some of the branches have not sent the reports in time.

Constraints

There are external and internal constraints. The unstable political situation and the slow process of economic recovery of society as a whole are the main problems when it comes to programme sustainability. Service delivery, volunteer recruitment and management, reporting and training are all reasonably well developed at this point in the programme. The lack of substantial support on a local (and national) level despite the awareness of the value the programme, just mirrors the fundamental difficulties the whole country is still struggling with. Internally, the National Society could use some more initiative in acquiring means to ensure sustainability of the programme. As it is, the secretaries of both republic organisations seem to see the government support as the only way to sustainability worth pursuing and are only slowly realising the range of opportunities at their disposal.

Social Welfare Programme

Achievements

The Social Welfare Programme has entered 2004 with well established activities, well trained and skilled volunteers/ professionals and clear objectives. The initial selection of target groups was narrowed down to disabled children and Roma pre-school children as well as their respective families. The activities continued along two complementary paths: work with these target groups in parallel with the community-based work.

The work with disabled children and their families took the form of regular workshop meetings (once per week minimum and in many cases every working day of the week). These are aimed at broadening the spectrum of the children's experiences, increasing their self-esteem, strengthening their confidence, improving their communication skills, encouraging them to use their capacities and developing tolerance between different ethnic groups. In addition, some practical skills are being developed in line with encouraging socialisation: hygiene habits, painting, sports, acting and computer use. The parents are supported in care for their children, in engaging in more open communication with those parts of the community that offer support. Also, they are being motivated to understand the importance and potential benefits of their children getting proper (and legally obligatory) education.

The work targeted at the local communities is important for both the improvement of the beneficiaries' position in these communities and the future sustainability of the programme. The activities range from raising sensitivity and support within the local community, to creating bonds between families and various local organisations : such as the Red Cross branch, associations, schools and special schools and the media.

There are 50 projects in all supported by the Federation, run in 49 RC branches supported by their local partners (local government, Roma and disabled people's associations, companies, relevant educational and health institution, NGOs). Out of these 50 municipalities in Serbia and Montenegro, there are 31 projects targeting Roma pre-school children and their parents and 19 projects targeting disabled children and their parents. The Federation has supported the National Society in identifying and representing community needs, developing, implementing, managing, monitoring and evaluating the projects. In addition to technical support with evaluation, monitoring and reporting, The Federation has provided equipment for 22 of the branches to help them with starting their projects. Along the same lines, there have been two seminars organised, covering 51 active volunteers. Held in April and June, these focused on training volunteers to work with the specific target groups they are involved with. Communication skills, psychological lectures and examples of good practices were all part of the curriculum. The manuals for volunteers working with both target groups are in final stages of preparation and are scheduled for printing during summer.

By the end of May 2004, 774 pre-school Roma children and 360 disabled children from 50 municipalities directly benefited from the programme. The indirect beneficiaries of the programme were 670 parents of the children.

31 Projects for Roma Children and parents in 30 RC branches

Children	774
Parents	520

19 Projects for disabled children and parents in 19 RC branches

Children	360
Parents	254

TOTAL 1908

Roma constitute a uniquely marginalised and vulnerable group within Central Europe, and arguably the most significant reason for this is the lack of educational access due to stigma and discrimination. The inclusion of Roma children into kindergartens, and following advocacy with parents and schools into mainstream education, targets this crucial lack. The project is as much a humanitarian values initiative focussed on anti-stigma, as it is a social welfare initiative.

Further research will be undertaken by the Federation, together with Danish Red Cross and other partners, in to the situation of the Roma in Europe generally, with a view to developing a baseline document, a strategy and a series of projects to address their needs and specific vulnerabilities. Interested National Societies and partners are urged to contact the Federation for further information.

The social welfare projects have been supported by a new partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and in close co-ordination with bilateral support to branches by the Spanish and Danish Red Cross.

Impact

The significance of the programme to branches is great when it comes to development and capacity building, as well as strengthening the image of the Red Cross in the local community. Overcoming the initial difficulties through establishing relationships with relevant institutions at a local level has been mutually beneficial. It can also be said that it has contributed to the development of tolerance and the acceptance of basic humanitarian principles in local communities. Flexibility and initiative has been demonstrated with regard to beneficiary needs, as well as the choice of volunteers, methods of work and time schedule of the activities. Programme influence on beneficiaries is generally significant regarding intellectual, social and emotional development. The development of social skills, the expansion of practical skills, the increase of self-esteem and general trust through belonging to a peer group and simultaneously obtaining completely new experiences equips the children with social and psychological tools that help them move away from the social margin and participate in social life of their communities more freely.

Constraints

The project has the potential to become a catalyst for change in the local communities when it comes to accepting Roma and the disabled. Since the important representatives/ stakeholders of each municipality such as local government, Roma/ disabled associations, schools, pre-school institutions and relevant NGOs are involved with the project, a new approach to the issue will also be developed at a local level. Advocating for the vulnerable (Roma and disabled) in the community is an important part of Red Cross work. Discriminatory thinking and behaviour in the society as well as prejudice from both sides can be overcome and replaced with a new, positive mind-set. Local and national level networks of stakeholders and partners are being organised in order to advocate for improved visibility of these vulnerable groups, for policy changes to address their needs, and for sustainable funding from local sources. This has already begun and will be further developed by the end of the year.

However, the overall economic situation and the fact the branches are facing serious financial problems, accompanied by downsizing of external donor support and local donors not being motivated by the legislation to support humanitarian activities, are all putting sustainability issues on top of the agenda. The programme is still dependent on additional donor funding and does not yet have enough of its own resources to sustain the projects over longer periods. A major political change in the direction of a less democratic national or local government could create an obstacle for the programme. The programme in no small part depends on the support of the local community. If there are problems with one or several actors, the programme's success is also endangered.

Health Promotion

In the absence of a suitable initiative from the National Society, the only activities in this area were linked to other programmes (Home care, Social Welfare and Soup Kitchens). However, if the second half of the year brings about good ideas and proposals, the delegation will gladly offer support. Significant opportunities remain in HIV/AIDS, and some branches are carrying out positive initiatives in this area which will be followed up.

2. Disaster management

Goal: The country's most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and socially vulnerable people maintain their dignity, their minimum living standards and are well nourished. The effects of local and national disasters are mitigated by a rapid, well-resourced and coordinated response mechanism.

Objective: The national society is able to continue to provide cost effective relief assistance (food and non-food) to a well-targeted beneficiary caseload, while strengthening its capacity to be prepared for, and respond to, emergency situations.

Expected Results

- **Soup kitchens:** The delegation assists the national society to ensure the effective management, monitoring and reporting for the soup kitchen project, which delivers hot meals to 15,000 soup kitchen beneficiaries per month with support from bilateral national societies, government and other donors
- **Relief development and support:** The delegation supports the national society in the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting of the final phase of the UNHCR/WFP food distribution contract for refugees
- **Disaster preparedness:** A well-integrated disaster management system is developed with a network of disaster response teams who are trained, equipped and able to provide rapid assistance and host international relief teams and emergency response units. The role of the national society within a national and regional disaster management plan is clearly defined

Achievements

Relief

There is no doubt that the most important event of the past period is the end of UNHCR-funded relief distribution programme that has been going for more than a decade. The National Society has closed down all regional distribution centres as of 31/12/2003. The end of armed conflicts in the surrounding environment means the refugee influx has stopped, with the number of Internally Displaced People likewise stabilising (207,000 refugees and another 270,000 Internally Displaced People according to the UNHCR report from mid-June). Thus, despite the obviously high need (about 60,000 people covered by Red Cross of Serbia relief distribution from January to March, with UNHCR supporting just the costs at branch level), the programme has come to its end. The Federation relief and logistics department continue to offer advice and support to the National Society. Along the lines of reduced assistance, the National Society is working on an exit strategy concerning relief staff and the resources involved in the distribution system.

The impact of this event is greatest at branch level since the UNHCR flat-rate reimbursement of distribution costs was one of the most important sources of income for many branches over the past decade. Additionally, this was the main activity (or even the only one) for many a branch for a long time. Now they are facing the disappearance of one regular source of income in an economically unstable environment and the need to thoroughly restructure their programme activities. This is a stressful situation and a concern for the survival of programme activities (or even the branch as a whole) is often voiced.

Soup kitchen programme

The Soup kitchen programme has not been part of the Federation Appeal, as the decision to move away from the relief and into community based and development programmes has been central to the delegation's strategy since the political changes in Serbia and Montenegro of 2000. However, the obvious existing need in country following the end of other humanitarian assistance, the capacities of the National Society to implement and manage this programme and the interest on the side of donors meant that the delegation has been involved with assisting the National Society in implementation of bilaterally funded Soup Kitchen Programmes. Furthermore, the delegation's efforts in brokering these bilateral agreements have been crucial and it has supplied technical support to the Red Cross of Serbia throughout.

The plans for supporting this programme over the next winter are therefore already in place. With the implementation system and methodology already laid out, it is now a matter of obtaining funding - bilateral, under Federation co-ordination, or multilateral. The programme aims to support 16,000 beneficiaries across five regions over eight months. The results from this year are more than encouraging when it comes to efficiency, cost-effectiveness, dedication and impact.

Vojvodina, Sabac and Pozarevac regions have been covered by a programme that has been supported by Austrian Red Cross. A total of 8,000 beneficiaries in 22 municipalities were assisted for the period of four months. As the available funds were limited, the Red Cross of Serbia consulted the implementing branches and as a result a shortlist of six essential food articles was made. These were procured and distributed by the suppliers to three regional warehouses, and subsequently the RC branches themselves transported the food to their own warehouses making maximum use of transportation capacities available at branch level. Additional food articles were secured at branch level through donations from local governments and other local donors. A German Red Cross bilateral donation supplied five additional items that were distributed to the branches at the beginning of the programme.



Soup Kitchen in Sabac

Beneficiaries received one hot meal per day, five to six days a week (an average of 23 days per month). As an accompaniment beneficiaries also received 300 grams of bread per day. All meals were prepared either at Red Cross kitchens or in contracted facilities.

As with past programmes, a joint commission consisting of representatives from the Red Cross of Serbia, social welfare centres and municipal authorities carried out the identification of beneficiaries. Beneficiary needs were routinely reassessed to ensure that the most vulnerable are being served. Beneficiary lists were updated on a monthly basis.

In the southern part of Serbia, Kraljevo and Nis regions, another 39 municipalities were covered by a Soup Kitchen Programme supported by Norwegian Red Cross (NRC). The initial objective, to cover about 9,450 beneficiaries for six months (October to March) was surpassed thanks to the careful management of funds and some lucky situations on the market. Thus, the programme was extended for another month and has covered around 12,000 beneficiaries. Most of the branches in the programme had previously been implementing the same programme, supported by German Red Cross and have, in the interim been maintaining some level of activity with contributions from the local community. Thus, the NRC support for many of them meant just an increase of beneficiary figures. Moreover, the condition for the inclusion of branches in the programme was to obtain local government support for the programme after the winter period ends, which in most cases worked well. Almost all of the branches were using additional local donations in kind to supplement the menu with fresh vegetables (potatoes and cabbages) and fresh meat from time to time, and local government normally paid the running costs.

	Kraljevo region	Nis region
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	Total number of Beneficiaries	Total number of Distributed meals	Total number of Beneficiaries	Total number of Distributed meals
October	5650	117750	6350	147179
November	5650	129725	6350	149595
December	5650	136965	6350	159481
January	5650	122206	6350	146418
February	5600	125260	6400	134345
March	5658	137185	6228	151593
April	5697	136176	6256	131392
Total	39,555	905,267	44,284	1,020,003
Total number of distributed meals	1,925,270			

Red Cross of Serbia handled the management and implementation of the programme, while The Federation supplied logistical support, as well as technical and financial advice. The Federation Soup Kitchens Programme officer took part in all phases of the programme, working closely with Red Cross of Serbia in planning, tendering and procuring phases. Additionally, his activities included producing monthly, mid-term and final reports to the donor, as well as field monitoring of the implementation in branches. Moreover a Soup Kitchen Programme Monitor was recruited and tasked with visiting all the branches involved with the programme, checking on the quality of food, food preparation, distribution and stocking conditions. Based in the area and equipped with a Federation vehicle, the Monitor at National Society request made several beneficiary interviews each month to find out if there were any complaints regarding quality and quantity of received meals. A total of 118 monitoring visits to the implementing Red Cross branches in the period of seven months were made.

The Federation has funded printing of 2000 posters to mark the International day of Eradication of Poverty, which was an awareness-raising activity, linked to the work of the Red Cross branches and to the Soup Kitchen programme in particular. The branches have for their part organised local events, inviting the media, marking the day and presenting their own activities in the Soup Kitchens programme – an opportunity to advertise the work of the organisation as well as to raise awareness of the needs in the local community. Additionally, the Federation has prepared and printed beneficiary cards, monthly beneficiary meal distribution lists as well as stickers with information on the programme that were used as information sharing tools at distribution points.

Some branches introduced a minimal monthly participation fee to the beneficiaries. Funds collected this way were used to cover a small part of the food preparation costs as well as to buy some additional food articles such as fresh meat and vegetables. The reaction on the side of beneficiaries was overall very positive. They felt they were contributing to their own meal cost, thus not just receiving a hand out, but actually partly paying for the received food. This had an invaluable psychological effect, in addition producing a more regular turnout of the beneficiaries to collect their meals.

After the programme was finalised, an external audit and review was conducted by the MGI auditing agency. The scope of this audit covered the secretariat of RCS and their financial records, as well as field spot checks of four branches (reviewing the warehouse documentation, meals distribution lists, stock level, participation of local

authorities or donors etc.). The audit report can be summarised as positive (“the Financial Report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Soup Kitchens Programme”), with recommendations given for areas where improvements should be made.

Preparations are under way for the Soup Kitchen programme for the 2004-5 winter. Municipal government support for running costs will be ensured, and the Red Cross of Serbia has, together with the Conference of Towns, approached the government for the provision of bulk food from State Reserves. Local and commercial donors will continue to be ensured, and Red Cross volunteers and kitchen facilities will ensure a true partnership in the implementation of the programme. Discussions will continue with the government about the future of the programme, perhaps moving towards targeting home-delivery those who are unable to cook for themselves, as an alternative to institutional care, and perhaps linked to Home Care and Social Welfare programming, an approach familiar in western Europe through Meals on Wheels and similar social support activities, which in Serbia the Red Cross would be well-placed to provide as an auxiliary to government.

Donors are requested to pledge their support for the purchase of bulk food for the Soup Kitchen programme, either bilaterally or through the Federation, and to support the minimal costs of the Federation’s technical advice to the Red Cross of Serbia. A proposal and budget is available on request.

Impact

The Soup Kitchen programme was designed to meet the actual needs of vulnerable people in regions recognised as socially depressed (especially true for the southern part of Serbia). These needs were met well within the context of the programme with 30% more beneficiaries covered than was initially targeted in the case of southern regions. The beneficiaries were assisted with one hot meal per day which alleviated the effect of high food prices (compared to their income) and ensured a minimal calorific intake needed for the winter season.

Constraints

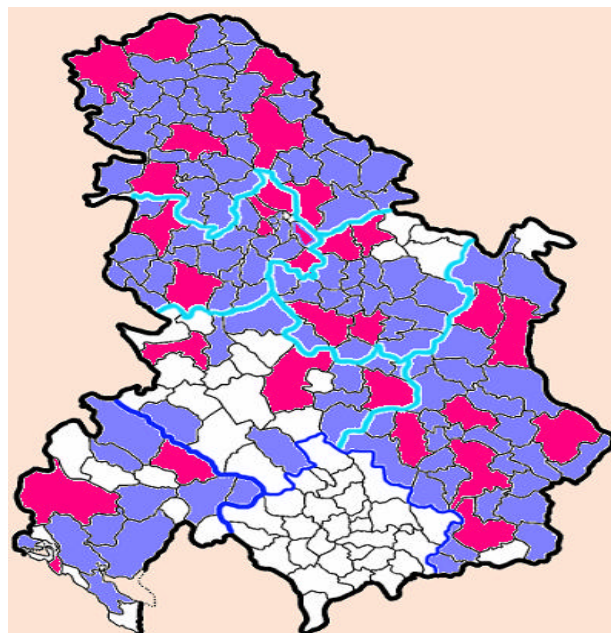
Since the beginning of the year, the political situation in the country has somewhat deteriorated with the possibility of further downslide after presidential and local elections in the near future. The economical and social developments will be closely linked to these and even the slow improvements noticed in recent months might be swept away if political clashes increase. The need for the Soup Kitchen Programme will most certainly exist next winter. The Federation intends to meet this need and the planning process is already underway. Discussions about future sustainability and programme direction with the government will be key.

Disaster Preparedness

In the absence of a fully formalised role within a national response plan, the National Society has, with Federation support, set about strengthening its network of volunteers and branches so as to maximise capacity in times of crisis. To this end, the Federation has and will continue to support an intense programme of training, developing local, municipal, regional and national response teams that are compatible with national and international disaster response mechanisms. The National Society demonstrates the ownership of the programme and an eagerness to shape it along the lines of regional and European standards through numerous activities not funded through the Federation. The continued talks with the government on one side (slowed down by the effective absence of government in Serbia in the first several months of the year) and the non-stop information exchange and networking with other national societies in the region testify to the National Society’s intention to play an important role in national and regional disaster management.

During the first six months of 2004, the National Society has nearly completed the training programme for municipal disaster preparedness teams. Started last year, this training is an ambitious enterprise aimed at forming and preparing teams in almost all municipalities in Serbia and Montenegro to react to a number of different disasters and emergencies. Implementation through Red Cross branches and using their volunteer resources was the most logical way to go in the absence of an official national disaster response strategy. In 2004, by May, 73 municipal Disaster Preparedness teams have been trained, with 832 people receiving training, which, with 49

municipal and 31 regional teams already trained in 2003 leaves only 28 teams (20 in Serbia and 8 in Montenegro) to complete training by the end of June.



- Municipal teams trained by May 2004 : 122 teams with 1,738 volunteers.
73 teams with 832 members in 2004 only
- 31 district teams with 637 volunteers trained
- Remaining municipal teams to be trained: 20 in Serbia and 8 in Montenegro

The training covers a broad spectrum of topics and skills, from first aid through water sanitation, containment of chemical spills and mountain rescue techniques to psychological first aid. The unpredictable nature of emergencies and likely disasters means that preparedness has to be as diverse as possible.

The National Society has also received radio equipment from the Federation in order to form and train mobile communication teams to be used in case of large scale disasters. This is a highly pragmatic solution, after the idea of establishing stationary communication network proved to be too expensive and of questionable efficiency. The training will be designed during summer and implemented during the autumn.

There are remaining needs to supply equipment for municipal Disaster Preparedness teams to the National Society that the Federation has failed to meet due to the lack of funding. Discussions with several National Societies are ongoing and bilateral support for this part of the programme may be obtained. However, to ensure transparency, the Federation has initiated an overview of the existing Disaster Preparedness stock in the National Society. The LCRS computer system, that has been devised for relief distribution record-keeping, is now being used to record Disaster Preparedness stock and equipment. All the branches have entered their present stock into the system and it is currently being systematised by the National Society. The stock will then be spot-checked by the Federation in order to confirm the figures, thus reaching clear information on the existing stock, the work already done and outstanding needs.

Impact

The capacity of the National Society to respond to the potential disasters and emergencies has increased significantly through forming 73 new municipal teams with 832 members in the first five months of 2004.

Furthermore, the Municipal Disaster Preparedness project, undertaken as part of the Organisational Development programme, has demonstrated the importance and value of establishing and/ or strengthening the ties between Red Cross and other agencies (Police, Fire Department, Medical Emergency Department) whose mandate is to be involved in disaster management. Combined with the ongoing talks with the government and the ties with neighbouring National Societies, the Red Cross of Serbia and Montenegro is moving towards becoming the key non-governmental player in developing the national Disaster Preparedness strategy.

Constraints

It is impossible to say whether the freshly forged partnerships with government structures will survive the turbulence of everyday political life in Serbia and Montenegro. Furthermore, there apparently is a lack of interest on the side of donor societies to contribute funds for the equipment necessary for the trained teams. The capacity for disaster response is thus lower than it should be.

3. Humanitarian values

Goal: Civil society in post-conflict Yugoslavia has become more tolerant and respectful of humanitarian values; the needs of the internally displaced, refugees and the socially vulnerable are recognised and met as far as possible.

Objective: SMRCS is publicly recognised as a neutral and impartial promoter of humanitarian values and a key provider of volunteer-based services to the vulnerable at community level.

Achievements

Expected results

- SMRCS with support from the Federation has developed a communications strategy and operational plan to strengthen its image in the media and elsewhere as both an effective deliverer of relief assistance and an organisation that delivers essential volunteer-based community-level services especially in health and care
- Humanitarian values are effectively disseminated in training courses, web sites, the media and publications, in order to promote tolerance and diversity and foster conflict resolution

Impact

SMRCS has developed a project proposal for communications and the promotion of humanitarian values, which includes an operational plan and budget and which has been submitted to some potential donors. This does address the expected results indicated, but has not attracted any funding so far. SMRCS and the Federation have pursued the same goal and objective through other programme areas. With support from Danish RC, the project Exploring Humanitarian Law has been run in pilot branches and is being evaluated in July, in preparation for a possible second phase expansion. Regular press releases, press conferences and interventions advocating for the needs of refugees and the socially vulnerable have raised the positive profile of the National Society and its position as auxiliary to government at central and local level. The negative media reports of 2001-2 have largely been replaced by positive reports of the National Society, in particular regarding relief assistance to Kosovo during the recent ethnic violence. National Society service delivery in home care, social welfare and disaster preparedness is widely known and respected. Humanitarian values have been included as a key element in the Volunteer Training System which is being designed. Efforts continue to foster relations between ethnic communities in the post-conflict environments of southern Serbia and Kosovo.

Constraints

No funding was received for this section of the appeal

4. Organisational Development

Goal: Before the end of 2004, the NS has a significantly improved image and reputation among its key stakeholders (including beneficiaries, local government, the Red Cross Movement, media, and Ministries of Social Welfare and Health) for the quality and integrity of its work.

Objective: The NS has improved its management of human and financial resources, its ability to make and implement strategic decisions, and its capacity to develop delivery of community services.

The Organisational Development programme has been through a very dynamic period with its numerous projects – some of them nearing their finalisation and some only just gaining full momentum. The biggest addition to the programme is the Municipal Disaster Preparedness project, developed with an awareness of existing opportunities on one side and painfully slow progress in other areas on the other. Not part of the original Appeal text (due to the strict nature of publication deadlines), this project has been in implementation since fall 2003 and has brought forth concrete results. The end of the pilot-phase and proposals for entering a broader implementation period mean search for stronger support as well.

Achievements

Finance Development Project expected result: The National Society has improved financial systems and management of its financial resources, with new financial management procedures, trained staff and standard computerised accounting systems.

The National Society has begun to implement a new computerised accounting system at headquarters and 17 pilot sites around the country. The system was selected with the assistance of expert consultants, and is modified to ensure that it can cope with managing donor funds—not a standard function for most business software. Ninety-one staff in the pilot sites for the finance software have been trained in basic computer literacy, in preparation for using the new system. The pilot sites should be using the new software by the end of the third quarter, and roll-out to a planned 100 branches will have begun by the end of the year. It is planned that the finance systems in each branch be connected via internet connections (see under Communications & IT project).

The Red Cross of Serbia has appointed an experienced finance director, and has committed itself to an external audit for the financial years 2002 and 2003. The secretariat office of the Serbia & Montenegro Red Cross Society has also committed itself to an external audit for 2003. The audits are expected to take place in the autumn. This will be the first time that the National Society has undergone a regular annual external audit, and is a significant step towards greater financial transparency and accountability. From 2005, it will be a legal requirement for both organisations to conduct such audits.

Donors are sought for the implementation of the final phase of the Finance Development Project and the audits.

Human Resources Project expected result: The National Society has more effective staff performance; the human resources project has developed commitment to good human resource management practices, including recruitment, reward and development of key staff.

There has been little progress with the human resources project to date. The key precondition (“Demonstrated willingness of Secretaries and boards to implement reform in Human Resource practice”) has not been achieved. As a result only relatively small actions could take place. This year to date the project is financially supporting the Red Cross of Serbia finance director and providing training in business planning to twenty staff at headquarters.

Volunteering Project expected result: More suitably qualified and motivated volunteers are available, and the use of volunteers in services is improved; the volunteering project has developed better volunteer management practices at the level of service delivery.

Youth Development Project expected result: The National Society delivers improved community services by and for young people.

The youth and volunteering projects have merged partly in recognition that much of the National Society’s work is carried out by young volunteers, partly as a measure to recognise young people as volunteers, and partly to ensure

that the work done in developing volunteer training for young people also applies and extends to older volunteers. The extensive consultation with 62 branches was completed, and the findings presented to the Secretary General, senior staff and the youth commissions. A concept for a revised modular training system has been produced. This is in line with the government's vocational education reform programme, and emphasises the standardisation of learning outcomes over teaching methods. This concept has been accepted by the youth commissions, and the next step is to produce an implementation plan.

Funding & Fundraising Project expected result: The National Society has an increased level of reliable and sustainable funding; the funding project has analysed the total funding requirements of the National Society, and identified work to be done to ensure the sustainability of the National Society after the end of the relief distribution.

A final detailed analysis of the feasibility of delivering first aid training as a means of income generation was produced. This identified one existing potential market—the workplace in certain types of organisation—and one potential market that would exist once proposed legislation is passed—that for learner drivers. This feasibility study was discussed with senior staff and governance members, and is now passing through the governing boards for approval of the recommendations. Donors and partners are sought for the implementation of the pilot phase of the implementation of this project

Needs Assessment Project expected result: Branches have a methodology that can be locally resourced, to analyse local vulnerability and develop services and projects which address local needs.

Progress has been slow this period. An opportunity was identified in south Serbia where international funds (through UNDP) are available for municipalities to support service delivery by non-governmental partners. Next period work will begin on using the Budapest Regional Delegation's From Needs to Action methodology to develop project proposals that would meet needs of identified vulnerable people.

Branch Capacity Building Fund expected result: The National Society has a transparently managed fund which supports the development of new and existing community services in the branches; the Branch Capacity Building Fund has developed the National Society's decision-making capacity, distributed funds according to its strategic priorities, and ensured the accountability of decision-making.

No progress this period, as discussions with the National Society have not yet reached agreement on how decisions would be made about allocating the fund.

IT & Communications Project expected result: The National Society has improved communications between branches and headquarters.

The Federation has supported the installation of a network of telephones and computers for Serbia & Montenegro Red Cross Society, Red Cross of Serbia and Belgrade City branch, which share the same building. A plan for the second phase of the project, which aims to connect all 180 branches to internet and e-mail has been developed, based on an IT strategy proposed by consultants working on the finance development project. The second phase would benefit greatly from co-operation with PTT, the state telecommunications company. The negotiations are based on an existing growing partnership that brings together effective communications and disaster preparedness (PTT has a significant role in the Civil Protection system). Donors are sought for the final roll-out of this project to include branches.

Municipal Disaster Preparedness Pilot Project expected result: A joint Red Cross-government project proposal for the development of national and local disaster preparedness capacity.

This pilot project is a new addition to the OD programme portfolio as a result of slow progress in other areas of branch development (capacity building fund and needs assessment). It was not included in the appeal 2004-2005 because of publication deadlines. This project had two components: a baseline survey to examine the situation of disaster preparedness and disaster management at municipal level, and the development and testing of a simulation methodology that would improve disaster management co-ordination between the responsible parties. As a result of the successful completion of both these components (10 municipalities surveyed and two two-day simulations

held, involving local stakeholders: Red Cross, Fire Department, Medical Emergency Service etc.), a draft project proposal for a three-year disaster management programme is now available and being negotiated with interested parties. The National Society also has a methodology for working with disaster services at municipality level to carry out a risk assessment, implement a 'table-top' disaster simulation, and support action planning to improve disaster co-ordination. This project has had full support and involvement of the government of Serbia, and the UNDP, and has significantly boosted the National Society's level of co-operation with government. The pilot project was completed on schedule in April 2004, and work is beginning on the preparatory phase for a national disaster preparedness project for which further funds are being sought.

Impact

The Society, particularly in Serbia, has moved a long way towards openness and accountability. External audits are now accepted as necessary and normal, procurement is competitive and open, and according to stringent local legislation, and open staff positions are routinely advertised. All this will contribute to greater confidence among local and international donors. The National Society's relationship with government has improved both at the political level when the Red Cross responded significantly to the public demands for action in Kosovo in March this year, and at the middle management level through projects such as the municipal Disaster Preparedness project. Internally, communications and particularly information and document sharing has improved dramatically, and this is expected to rapidly improve further as more branches get e-mail and internet connections.

Constraints

Much of the sustainability and progress for change is based upon foundations of good governance and good human resources. These are two areas in which there has been little change or progress. The National Society has still been unable to change its statutes as a result of persistent differences between Montenegro and Serbia. This means there are still many staff on the governing boards, governance is complex, top-heavy and focused on operational rather than strategic matters. Legal ownership of the society and ultimate responsibility for performance and accountability between staff and governance remain unclear. There is a continuing hope that a new Red Cross law will clarify the role and significantly improve the funding situation for headquarters and branches, and the present government — with its heavy emphasis on law as the solution to most problems — is committed to helping the National Society in this area.

There is little willingness to address the problem of under-performing staff. At the beginning of the year permanent staff salaries at the Red Cross of Serbia headquarters were halved, a measure that reduced costs, but also cut motivation. Reluctance to deal with this is in part because of a strong staff association that resists change, and partly because senior managers' attention is focused on other issues (the new law, internal conflict between Red Cross entities and funding problems). Dealing with the HR issue would be stressful and difficult in the short-term, but rewarding, ultimately, in the long term. For any senior manager to be successful he or she would need strong board support.

5. Coordination, Cooperation and Strategic Partnerships

Goal: In partnership with civil society and the Red Cross Movement, the National Society is able to deliver appropriate, needs-led, volunteer-delivered assistance to persons in need, in a cost-effective and transparent manner

Objective: To develop a set of clearly defined National Society operational priorities that accurately reflect National Society capacity and added value, which are understood, respected and supported by a diverse range of partner organisations

Achievements

Expected Results

- Restated National Society priorities serve as the platform for improving co-operation within the Red Cross Movement and with other partner organisations.
- A process for improving co-operation is initiated. The process may result in a co-operation agreement strategy (CAS) document.

The period from mid-2001 to mid-2004 marked a three-year programming phase which was intended to help the National Society move from relief distribution to sustainable needs-led programming in health, care and disaster preparedness delivered by volunteers through branches. The move from relief has largely been achieved, though soup kitchens continue to be required as a final safety net following the end of bulk food distribution; and relief distribution to isolated communities in Kosovo continues. Service delivery in health, care and disaster preparedness has been effectively developed. Political uncertainty, changing governments and the poor performance of the economy have meant that the financial sustainability of these activities is still questionable, however. Poor prospects for local funding mean that continued external assistance will be needed to ensure that essential service delivery continues, while focussing on the underlying need to broker partnerships and obtain funding from local sources to ensure sustainability. A more active Federation presence than had been anticipated will still therefore be needed in future; a Head of Delegation and an active team will be maintained during 2005, to broker and co-ordinate external funding, partnerships and technical assistance as well as taking the lead on advocacy with government, international organisations and assisting the National Society with strategic planning, and the adoption of improved statutes and laws.

Co-ordination and dialogue with sister National Societies remain strong priorities, though the production of a CAS document has been put aside in favour of a Europe-wide CAS process. The Belgrade delegation has co-ordinated closely with the development of the Regional Strategy for Central Europe and discussions continue about working in future more as a regional team particularly in areas of common concern such as Roma programming.

Impacts

A planning workshop was held in June 2004, which identified National Society strategic priorities for the current period and for coming years, in the context of the National Society Development Plan (2002-2005) and the Federation Regional and Country Strategies. This will form the basis of the 2005 appeal and will inform partner National Societies about priority areas for support.

Draft Red Cross Laws have been prepared for both republics, and strongly advocated to government. Indications are that the new law will be positively considered in Montenegro, while in Serbia a working group has been set up with the Red Cross, the Federation and relevant Ministries in order to finalise the proposed text.

Discussions are under way with potential partners in the United Nations, European Union, European Agency for Reconstruction and elsewhere regarding coherent programme planning and potential partnerships. A contract has been signed with Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation to support the Social Welfare programme. Partnerships have been brokered and supported with the Danish, Luxembourg, Norwegian, Spanish, British, Icelandic, Finnish, German, Italian, Austrian, Belgian and Netherlands Red Cross Societies, on a bilateral, multi-lateral or co-ordinated basis, and Technical Service Agreements signed with the Norwegian and Luxembourg Red Cross.

A long relationship with WFP and UNHCR in food distribution has now ended; embroiled in scandal due to diversion of commodities three years ago, the situation by early 2004 was much improved, and the National Society had developed the trust of its partners such that the Federation was no longer needed as an intermediary and guarantor. A programme co-ordination group has been agreed between the National Society, the Federation and the Ministry of Social Affairs, and a further co-ordination group established to address the return of failed asylum seekers from Western Europe. An inter-agency advocacy network has been set up between Serbian Red Cross and a group of NGOs on home care for the elderly, and similar advocacy platforms have been set up at municipal level between the Red Cross branches, social services, NGOs and beneficiary groups. Strong linkages have been developed between the Red Cross, the government and other organisations through the municipal disaster preparedness project, and discussion has begun on the formation of a Serbian Refugee Council. A partnership is being developed between the Danish Refugee Council, Croatian Red Cross and Serbian Red Cross concerning the return of refugees to Croatia. Further work is required to develop deeper partnerships in social welfare, Roma issues and to better position the National Society as a partner to government in the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Constraints

Political uncertainty has delayed efforts to position SMRCS with government; three failed attempts to elect a Serbian President, the assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister, a change of government and of most senior officials at the end of 2003, uncertainty over Kosovo and over whether the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro will survive, have meant that political attention was not focussed on the Red Cross. A whole new set of relationships with government has had to be developed during 2004, in an environment where personal complicity is key. Reversals of government policy and approach have characterized the swing between pro-Western leaders and those who look more to the country's socialist past.

A seemingly stable government has emerged at the time of writing and good relationships are developing with relevant ministries – though the outcome of the Serbian presidential elections in June may again throw the political context into confusion.

6. Population Movement

Introduced in the last couple of years at the HQ level of Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society, the Population Movement Programme has become recognized as an important humanitarian tool for Red Cross activities covering foreign migrants in the country. Such a profile has been accepted by partners and stakeholders in the country, namely, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the NGO sector and also by Red Cross volunteers. Red Cross presence at the Centre for Detained Asylum-Seekers, which was completely impossible five years ago, is a regular practice now. Networking at international and domestic levels brought the National Society into the position to be a pro-active player in the field of international refugee law and the disseminator of the latest standards vis-à-vis migrants in Europe.

Goal: Asylum-seekers' detention period in Serbia and Montenegro has been alleviated thanks to the visits of national Red Cross and the provision of its humanitarian assistance.

Objective: A working relationship with the government is established, regarding the issue of detained asylum-seekers; the visibility of the programme is enhanced and the awareness of the vulnerable population raised; international position of the National Society is improved.

Achievements:

SMRCS has conducted regular visits to the shelter/centre for detained asylum-seekers in Padinska Skela, near Belgrade, every three weeks since March 2004. During the visits, representatives of the National Society are entitled to speak with the occupants of shelter in privacy and find out their needs. As a result, Red Cross now provides relief assistance to detained asylum-seekers in Padinska Skela, namely bed sheets, mattresses and phone cards (important for restoring the links with their families).

On February 24th, the National Society signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Serbian Ministry of Interior on Red Cross visits to detained asylum-seekers. A practice of mutual briefings has been established. In this process, Red Cross has taken the opportunity to inform the authorities on recent developments in terms of international refugee law and contemporary trends in practice of the Council of Europe towards migrants in Europe. Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross became a member of the Working Group producing a Draft of a National Law of Asylum in March 2004. The Group is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro and its objective is to finalize the Draft by the end of 2004.

Mass media was involved in the promotion of the Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Interior. Preparations for the marking of June 20th (International Refugee Day) started with the presentation on Red Cross detention visits in the Web-Site of Red Cross of Serbia. Additionally the National Society has worked with UNHCR on preparation of the event marking the International Refugee Day.

Since last year, SMRCS has been a member of the European Council on Refugees and Exile (ECRE). A representative of the National Society attended ECRE's Biannual Meeting, held in the Netherlands in March. In addition, the Society was present as an observer during the meeting of the Platform of European Red Cross Societies on Refugees (PERCO) in Croatia in April.

The Federation and SMRCS raised the question of the return of rejected asylum-seekers from the EU countries to Serbia and Montenegro in accordance with readmission agreements signed in the last two years. It seems that due to their vulnerability they might become potential Red Cross beneficiaries. Therefore, a coordination meeting was organized at SMRCS in April, attended by UNHCR, IOM, UNHCHR, UNICEF, ICRC and several European Embassies and national authorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior). Participants shared information and experiences on their latest engagements with rejected asylum-seekers, and the matter was also raised at recent PERCO meetings. Further research will be carried out regarding the return of failed asylum seekers which may lead to a project of advocacy and assistance. Partner National Societies in western Europe are urged to share information on this subject with the Federation and SMRCS.

The main coordination in terms of the programme is accomplished through contacts and briefings with national stakeholders (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights), through advocating for detainees and promoting Red Cross activities. Also, within the ECRE structure, Group 484 (NGO from Belgrade) has been assigned to be a focal point in the country for coordination of other ECRE members in Serbia and Montenegro. This channel has been used widely by the National Society to obtain more information on international refugee law and legal practice in Europe.

Impact

The principal beneficiaries of the Population Movement Programme are detained asylum-seekers. Due to the commitments about confidentiality of its activities at the detention place agreed with the Ministry of Interior, the Red Cross is not allowed to speak publicly on reflections resulting from its visits and activities with asylum-seekers. Nevertheless, it can be said, for instance, that enabling the access of the asylum-seekers to phone communication (through the provision of phone cards) decreased a lot of personal frustration among them. In addition, advocating for their rights and promoting humanitarian standards for detained asylum-seekers within the Working Group on the Draft of Law of Asylum, the Society has invested into future improvements of treatment and status of those beneficiaries.

Constraints

The work on amendments of the Society's Statutes has been not finished yet. The main objective of this process is to delegate more responsibilities from the HQ to the Montenegrin and Serbian RC organisations, leaving, more or less, programmes with international attributes to the HQ. It has been expected that detention visits to asylum-seekers should stay at the HQ level, but this must be formalised in order to start a long-term planning. Externally, slowing down of the process of harmonisation of national legislation with the EU legislation has affected the preparations for the national Law of Asylum. Politically, this Law is not considered as a priority which leads, among other things, to the decrease of interest for humanitarian activities with asylum-seekers in the country despite their ongoing needs.

Local Community Development Project

Local community development is a part of the Population Movement Programme of the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society, but it is implemented exclusively within Red Cross of Serbia. In the beginning both SMRCS and the Red Cross of Serbia were involved in all Population Movement activities, but very soon SMRCS started focusing on assisting detained asylum seekers and international networking, while the Red Cross of Serbia started with operational implementation of "gap" programmes (the focus of which falls midway between assistance and development) for refugees (with Federation coordination and support), and Internally Displaced People (with bilateral support from other National Societies). In that way both SMRCS and RCS have kept a pro-active role in assistance to all kinds of migrants.

Goal: Vulnerable refugees in "gap" status are assisted to integrate locally and are empowered to take care of their needs on their own, in a community oriented approach.

Objective: Local Community Development programme (LCD) reaches out to identify the most vulnerable and appropriate refugees and provides vocational training to them.

Expected results

1. Establishment of Local community boards in order to assess the needs and decide upon assistance programmes
2. Selection of the programme beneficiaries on a branch level, implementation of the projects and follow up
3. Sustainability, attraction of local donors, visibility

1. Very soon after LCD initiation local boards were established within all five implementing Red Cross branches: Sombor, Ruma, Stara Pazova, Zvezdara and Cukarica. All of the local stakeholders were represented within these boards, including representatives of the refugee population. During the first six months of 2004 the implementing Red Cross branches have implemented the following activities in order to improve the skills of the beneficiaries and to help them to get a job:

Sombor

As one of the best branches within the Red Cross of Serbia in First Aid, and a pilot municipality for Commercial First Aid, the local board has decided to organise First Aid courses for refugee youth, which can help them find employment when First Aid training becomes commercial. Within two training cycles 80 young refugees were trained to be First Aid instructors.

Stara Pazova

As a municipality with over 10,000 refugees, the priority was to scan the population and get a clear picture about their real number, their needs, hopes and expectations. This assessment was the first project defined by the local board, and with very good data provided by the assessment the Red Cross branch has succeeded in getting an assistance project supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs of Serbia. The second project of the local board was a First Aid course in order to treat the injuries resulting from agricultural activities with the same refugees who were already included in the agricultural course in autumn 2003. Approximately 150 people have passed this basic First Aid course.

Ruma

The same rural surroundings as in Stara Pazova and big number of registered refugees led to the same decisions for projects. The only difference is that Ruma Red Cross branch was not successful in getting the assistance for the project from the Ministry of Social Affairs of Serbia. First Aid training was organized for the same number of beneficiaries as in Stara Pazova, and all of them have also passed agricultural course in autumn 2003.

Zvezdara, Cukarica

Two central urban municipalities in Belgrade; both boards have decided that the basic and advanced computer courses would be the most helpful for the employment of their beneficiaries, knowing that computer skills are wanted for any administrative job, and that refugees are usually too poor to have a computer of their own. During the last two courses 80 people in Zvezdara and 74 in Cukarica have obtained a computer literacy certificate, signed also in the employing papers of the ones who have them (students who were never employed before and do not have papers were also included,).

Branch	Type of Training	Number of Training Cycles	Number of Beneficiaries Trained	Support from the Ministry of Social Affairs
Sombor	First Aid	2	80	No
Stara Pazova	First Aid	1	150	Yes
Ruma	First Aid	1	150	No
Zvezdara	Computer skills	2	80	No
Cukarica	Computer skills	2	74	No

2. RC branch selection was done respecting all requests (vulnerability, gender, impartiality), and the implementation was always within predicted time and budget frames. Follow up is the only constraint, because the country is in economic and political transition and the majority of the jobs on offer still fall under the “grey economy” umbrella, so it is difficult to obtain official information about how many people got a job.

3. Irregular financing on the level of the Red Cross branches, as well as the complexity of the need of the branches to be registered for commercial activities are the main reasons this programme is still not sustainable. For instance, Cukarica and Zvezdara both have their own premises equipped with computers, but they can not obtain registration for commercial computer courses, and have to subcontract an official computer school in order that beneficiaries can obtain certificates after the completed course.

Due to the fact that unemployment is still on the increase, it is almost impossible to attract local donors

All of the projects were very visible and received strong media coverage. In the case of three implementing RC branches in Vojvodina province (Ruma, Stara Pazova, Sombor) all of the local media have followed project activities. For Belgrade branches the situation was even better. The Red Cross Secretary of Cukarica branch was a guest on “Povratak” (special TV show for refugees on the Serbian National TV) during the implementation of the last computer course. After that more than 100 refugees have applied for the next course. However, it is still true that future of this programme heavily relies on external funding.

The Federation Delegation in Belgrade and the Red Cross of Serbia have started a dialogue about a redesigned Local Community Development becoming a part of 2005 Appeal for the SMRCS. With the decline of assistance programmes refugees are almost left hopeless. Vocational training programmes offer them an opportunity to reclaim their own destiny and improve the quality of their lives through their own efforts.

BUDGET SUMMARY

PROGRAMME BUDGETS SUMMARY

Appeal no: 01.74/2004

Name: Serbia & Montenegro

PROGRAMME:

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	Emergency	Total
	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF
Shelter & construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clothing & textiles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food	90,000	0	0	0	0	0	90,000
Seeds & plants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water & Sanitation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical & first aid	0	13,500	0	0	0	0	13,500
Teaching materials	0	13,500	0	0	0	0	13,500
Utensils & tools	0	37,381	0	0	0	0	37,381
Other relief supplies	46,500	2,500	0	0	0	0	49,000
SUPPLIES	136,500	66,881	0	0	0	0	203,381
Land & Buildings	0	0	0	17,360	0	0	17,360
Vehicles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computers & telecom	18,045	27,000	0	218,180	0	0	263,225
Medical equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other capital exp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL EXPENSES	18,045	27,000	0	235,540	0	0	280,585
Warehouse & Distribution	0	0	0	1,500	0	0	1,500
Transport & Vehicules	84,170	51,270	0	0	0	0	135,440
TRANSPORT & STORAGE	84,170	51,270	0	1,500	0	0	136,940
Programme Support	56,057	36,828	0	74,909	15,583	0	183,376
PROGRAMME SUPPORT	56,057	36,828	0	74,909	15,583	0	183,376
Personnel-delegates	20,000	61,270	0	116,000	224,160	0	421,429
Personnel-national staff	250,415	88,868	0	206,477	0	0	545,760
Consultants	23,870	0	0	259,000	0	0	282,870
PERSONNEL	294,285	150,138	0	581,477	224,160	0	1,250,059
W/shops & Training	33,220	167,500	0	121,965	0	0	322,685
WORKSHOPS & TRAINING	33,220	167,500	0	121,965	0	0	322,685
Travel & related expenses	9,300	13,400	0	58,950	0	0	81,650
Information	117,217	2,084	0	13,689	0	0	132,990
Other General costs	113,615	51,480	0	64,415	0	0	229,510
GENERAL EXPENSES	240,132	66,964	0	137,054	0	0	444,150
TOTAL BUDGET:	862,409	566,581	0	1,152,445	239,743	0	2,821,177