

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

AZERBAIJAN

30 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 181 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal No. 01.77/2004; Programme Update no. 1.

Period covered: 1 January to 31 May, 2004;

Appeal coverage: 125 % Click below for live update

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/1-2-3%20-%20ap017704.pdf

Appeal target: CHF 1,309,523 (USD 998,000 or EUR 844,000); Note: the appeal received more money than originally requested. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent together with the Federation will review the plan of action and present a revised programme in September 2004.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society:** Elkhan Rahimov, executive secretary, email: redcrescent@redcrescent.az phone: 994 12 93 19 12; 994 12 93 84 81; fax: 994 12 93 15 78.
- **Federation delegation in Azerbaijan:** Hlin Baldvinsdottir, head of delegation, email: baku02@ifrc.org phone: 994 12 98 37 72; 994 12 98 16 7; fax: 994 12 98 55 01.
- **Federation regional delegation in Ankara:** Carl Naucler, head of regional delegation, email: ifctr06@ifrc.org phone: 90 312 441 42 92; fax: 90 312 441 38 66 or Ervin Blau, regional programme coordinator, email: ifctr36@ifrc.org phone: 90 312 441 42 92; fax: 90 312 441 38 66.
- **Federation secretariat in Geneva:** Sylvie Chevalley, regional officer, Europe Department, email: sylvie.chevalley@ifrc.org phone: 41 22 730 4276; fax: 41 22 733 03 95.

This Programme Update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is based on, longer-term, multi-year planning (refer below to access the detailed logframe documents). All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

Azerbaijan Red Crescent programmes have received CHF 1,460,943 in response to the Federation's appeal 2004. The appeal coverage is 111 per cent. Main donors are the governments and the Red Cross Societies of Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands. One project - Azerbaijan Red Crescent Community Development project - is supported by the Federation's Capacity Building Fund.

All programmes are fully funded, either bilaterally or through the Federation appeal, and most of them have received more money than requested. The Red Crescent in cooperation with the Federation will review its plan of action and a revised programme will be presented to our partners in September 2004. The plan will reflect the capacities of the national society to implement by the end of the year and the income the programmes received. Some contributions are expected to be transferred to support the continuation of activities during the first three months of 2005.



***Hear the voice of the people the Red Crescent works with:
‘My name is Nasiba Mammadova. I am 25 years old. I can hear, talk, but I cannot move. Two years ago I became paralyzed. Instead of assisting my old mother, I need assistance myself like a small child. I know that I am not alone, we are many. It is good to have somebody to show care for disabled people like me. My mother receives 20 US dollars every month. But how can you live on this amount?!’***

confirms the Red Crescent is on the right track. For the first time the Red Crescent conducted public campaigns jointly with other humanitarian actors. It is a significant achievement for the national society. It demonstrates the Red Crescent is respected and appreciated.

Another 2,315 people learned about HIV/AIDS and know how to protect themselves. The number is much higher than was expected. The original plan was to reach 2,600 people by the end of 2004. If volunteers continue working in the same way, the Red Crescent might reach as many as double of what was planned. Red Crescent’s work with sex workers is remarkable too. The national society sets an example of how to change the attitudes and behaviour in the communities.

The Red Crescent has also recruited 91 volunteer blood donors. One volunteer has pledged to be a regular donor to help a man ill with thalassemia.

Response of the Red Crescent to fires in Dashkesan and Gedebey districts has underlined, once again, the importance of investing into capacity building of the national society in disaster preparedness. The Red Crescent’s volunteer teams were on the scene of the disaster within hours and helped some 50 families.

Overall response to the appeal was good and the Red Crescent would like to thank its partners for their support. It enabled the national society to make a significant progress in achieving their goals and objectives in the four core areas:

- reduced health vulnerability of people of Azerbaijan (health and care)
- reduced impact of disasters on vulnerable communities (disaster management)
- more tolerant and less violent behavior in the community (humanitarian values)
- a better functioning national society able to provide assistance with greater impact and relevant to vulnerable communities (organizational development).

Under the health and care programme, the Red Crescent has trained more health promoters and educated more people on the main health problems. Thanks to the efforts of Red Crescent volunteers 3,900 people increased their knowledge on reproductive health, personal hygiene, prevention of infectious disease, nutrition and immunisation. Another 1,500 people were reached through the public education campaigns. The analysis of the simple survey the Red Crescent conducts after each training seminar reveals that people are keen to have more information on these issues. This

The Red Crescent trained 1,128 people on first aid. The continuous building of first aid knowledge and skills, together with the pooling of resources strengthens the self-help capacity in the community to cope with day-to-day crisis and disasters.

Mobile volunteer teams repaired 233 houses of vulnerable people, improving their living conditions. These are people living in far-flung, isolated areas and are the most vulnerable to social and economic crisis the country is experiencing.



These two boys, Shahuseynov Samir (15) and Taroyev Samir (16) are from IDP families from Shusha. Their families, as many others, were forced to leave their place of origin because of war in Nagorno-Karabakh. Now they are living in Ismayilli district, which is in the north-eastern part of Azerbaijan.

“We are living in Alchali village. Our families are large, five persons in each and we are the eldest sons. Our parents are not working. From our friends, who are volunteers of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent, we heard about activities of this organization and once were invited to Ismayilli Red Crescent local committee. There we met with other boys who told us about their work,” says Samir.

The boys became volunteers of the Red Crescent in September 2003. They were trained on the Movement’s history, values and principles. They learned how to offer first aid during emergencies.

“I had an opportunity to train others – schoolchildren, house women and elderly people, agsaggals as we call them,” continues another boy with an excitement.

“I am proud to be a Red Crescent volunteer. We are always at people’s service, sharing our knowledge and abilities, helping those who need our help and for whom, probably, we are the last hope. They need us. It is a nice feeling to help others.”

The anti-discrimination campaign the Red Crescent has launched under the promotion of humanitarian values programme has been successful too. The evidence comes from the stories Red Crescent volunteers tell. Through articles, press releases and TV reports, the population learned about the work of the Red Crescent and the number of people who share its principles and values has increased.

Progress has also been made in strengthening the membership and financial base of the national society. Since January 2004, the Red Crescent established 11 new primary organisations and enlisted 3,468 new members. That brings the total number of primary organisations to 3,574 and members to 171,005. Through membership fees, the Red Crescent collected CHF 3,910.

Another important achievement is the expansion of the Red Crescent’s community development work to local villages. Volunteers are better organised and the level of their participation in the work with the vulnerable has significantly increased too.

All programmes are directly implemented by the Red Crescent through its country-wide network of branches and volunteers. The Federation, through its delegations in Baku and Ankara, offers technical support and monitoring of the implementation to ensure the resources are deployed as planned. The technical support includes sharing with the national society experiences in other countries and expertise. For example, the training modules the Red Crescent is developing under the disaster preparedness project, are based on materials the regional delegation in Ankara has collected for the national society through the global network of the Federation.

The Federation also helps the Azerbaijan Red Crescent in its dialogue with the government to clarify its roles and responsibilities. Recent consultations, facilitated by the Federation delegation in Baku, with the Ministry of Ecology are a good example, which resulted in the development of a memorandum of understanding between the ministry and the national society.

The Federation also coordinates assistance to the national society from various partners to ensure consistency and avoid duplication of efforts. The three components of the Movement – the Azerbaijan Red Crescent, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Federation meet every month to discuss operational issues.

The Federation also helps the national society bond with other organizations/agencies. Thus the Federation assisted the Azerbaijan Red Crescent to establish contact with a psychosocial rehabilitation centre supported by the Danish Red Cross. The centre is interested in training Red Crescent volunteer team members. Another example is cooperation of the Red Crescent with a local non-governmental organisation *Buta*, with which the Federation facilitated a number of meetings. The NGO trains national society staff and volunteers on community mobilisation techniques.

There have been set-backs too. The disaster preparedness and response project was slow to get started largely because of poor planning of the national society. A number of activities were delayed until the second half of the year, including the procurement of the emergency stock, for which 20 per cent of the total budget is allocated. Preparation of the guidelines for health promoters and a number of training sessions under the health and care programme, as well as training of volunteers under the youth development projects, have been delayed too. Reasons are the same – poor planning. Delays were also experienced under the mobile technical team project. Rehabilitation of a number of houses and printing of promotional leaflets will be done later during the year.

Also, funds for some programmes arrived later than expected. Humanitarian values and HIV/AIDS programmes received money only in April 2004 and consequently, the activities that were planned for the first three months of the year were rescheduled for June-August 2004.

The level of expenditure mirrors the progress in implementation and varies from programme to programme. The table below shows the expenditure in each project compared to the income.

Project	Expenditure (% of the income)
Health promotion and education	25
HIV/AIDS	16
Volunteer blood donor recruitment	0 ¹
Disaster preparedness and response	19
First Aid	17
Mobile technical teams	24
Humanitarian values	17
Programme planning and management	30
Branch development	21
Community development	51
Youth development	38

¹ The Red Crescent received CHF 25,000 (USD 20,000) – 50 per cent of the project budget - from the Norwegian Red Cross to implement the project on a bilateral partnership basis. The remaining 50 per cent - CHF 25,000 - has been covered by the Swedish Red Cross through the Federation appeal. The funding from the Swedish Red Cross has arrived recently and spending has not started yet. Achievements reported under the project (see expected result 3 of the health and care programme) have been implemented with the Norwegian Red Cross contribution.

Health and care

Goal: Health vulnerability of people of Azerbaijan has reduced.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society is a key humanitarian actor contributing to improving health of vulnerable people with a focus on preventive health.

Expected result 1 Health promotion and education: Knowledge of target communities of basic health problems - reproductive health, personal hygiene, prevention of infectious disease, nutrition and immunisation - has improved.

Project context: Health promotion and education are one of the core activities of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent because they can reduce risk - protect people from diseases and save lives. The Red Crescent plays an auxiliary role to the Government filling the gap in the work with the communities, that the local authorities have no resources to focus on. The Red Crescent educates communities on reproductive health, family planning, nutrition, personal hygiene, infectious and preventable diseases and the importance of immunisation through a network of trained volunteers across the country. In 2003, the Red Crescent reached 21,619 people. In 2004, it aims to expand the



'What is it all about?' – a woman in the street asks a Red Crescent volunteer in a T-shirt with a slogan 'TB can be cured'. The volunteer gives her a brochure, developed by the Azerbaijan Red Crescent that contains information on the disease and the way how it can be cured.

This was a common scene one could observe in the streets of Baku on 24 March, World TB Day. Red Crescent volunteers were campaigning to raise public awareness and reduce the threat of tuberculosis, which has killed several people in Azerbaijan over the last few years.

network of volunteers by recruiting and training more health promoters to reach more people. Main target groups include internally displaced people (IDPs) living in the southern camps² and the general population of the two biggest cities in Azerbaijan – Baku and Sumgait.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent has recruited and trained 22 new volunteers in Baku and Sumgait bringing the total number of Red Crescent volunteer health promoters to 31. The Red Crescent has also retrained nine health promoters working in the southern camps to refresh their knowledge on preventive health. The training included the sessions on breast cancer and safe sex, facilitated by experts from a women's health centre. Breast cancer and sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS, are becoming a big problem in the country. The national AIDS prevention centre estimates there are 614 people living with HIV/AIDS. Given the lack of countrywide surveillance, the figure is probably a gross underestimate.

² The Southern Camps were established by the Government of Azerbaijan in 1993 to shelter people fleeing the destruction caused by a military conflict with Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh. In 2003, the Government has started the resettlement of these people to more durable accommodations. The current population of the camps is 15,028 people (source: Government of Azerbaijan)

Shortly after the training, the volunteers started working in their communities. They conducted a number of individual and group sessions on health issues including family planning, healthy nutrition, personal hygiene and sanitation, as well as the importance of immunization for **3,900** people.

Additionally, the Red Crescent developed and printed health promotional materials including 6,000 booklets on healthy nutrition, immunization and intestinal diseases, and 2,000 leaflets on tuberculosis. The booklets and leaflets have been distributed to the communities through volunteer health promoters during the education sessions. After the sessions, volunteers also distribute questionnaires to people they work with to learn what other topics they are interested in and include them in their next sessions.

Apart from training and distribution of educational materials, the Red Crescent also actively participates in global campaigns to raise public awareness and reduce the threat of major health issues. On 24 March, World tuberculosis (TB) Day, together with other key actors such as Gesellschaft Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), a German NGO assisting the Ministry of Health to develop a national TB plan, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Open Medical Club. The Red Crescent carried out a campaign with the slogan *'Every breath counts – Stop TB now!'*. Red Crescent volunteers, together with employees of its partner organizations, distributed leaflets *'Let's say no to TB'* to pedestrians in the five underground stations in Baku. Leaflets were also distributed to students and professors of major universities in the capital. The Red Crescent also placed posters in the streets of the city with the message *'Tuberculosis can be cured'*. Additionally, Red Crescent volunteers visited children with TB at the sanatorium in Zagubala and brought them presents. The Red Crescent estimates more than **1,500** people were reached during the campaign.

Another public awareness campaign was organised on 7 April, World Health Day. The campaign included round-table discussions with students on the major health issues facing the country, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, alcoholism and blood donation. 143 young people participated in the debates, including representatives of a Debate Centre from the Open Society Institute. The idea behind these debates was to find out the level of awareness among students as well as their attitudes towards the issues. Students appreciated Red Crescent efforts enabling them to freely talk about the issues that are not covered by the school curriculum nor are they discussed at home because of taboos and cultural barriers.

Impact: It is early to measure the impact of the work on the communities. Without a proper survey among the targeted groups it is impossible to know whether they follow advice of Red Crescent volunteers or not i.e., whether their attitudes and behaviour have changed. What we know at this stage is that 3,900 people reached through training sessions and another 1,500 through the campaigns, are aware of the risks and measures to protect themselves.

There are indications, however, that Red Crescent efforts make a difference: it was encouraging to observe that women start talking about family planning during the round table discussions and education sessions; this was a taboo topic until recently. Also, 61 IDP women, who attended the seminars on personal hygiene and sanitation, mobilised the camp population and organised cleaning of the streets in the camps. This shows they have understood the message they had received from Red Crescent volunteers on the importance of hygiene.

The public campaigns were successful too. It was the first time the Red Crescent conducted such events jointly with other humanitarian actors. It is a significant achievement for the national society. It demonstrates the Red Crescent is respected and appreciated. There are more and more organizations who seek cooperation with the Red Crescent, because they view the national society as a credible partner which can make a difference.

The training sessions on breast cancer and safe sex were important too for Red Crescent health promoters. Now they know how to respond to inquiries of their beneficiaries. Training on these issues will be conducted for other health promoters too.

The analysis of the simple survey the Red Crescent conducts after each training seminar reveals that people are keen to have more information on family planning, prevention of communicable diseases, personal hygiene, immunisation, and healthy nutrition. This confirms the Red Crescent is on the right track.

Over the coming months, more volunteers will be trained. More education sessions will be conducted and more leaflets and brochures will be printed and distributed to reach more people. The Red Crescent volunteers are committed to the work. During the first five months of the year, they have reached more people than was originally planned. The plan is to reach 12,320 by the end of 2004. But if volunteers continue working with such a dedication, the number is expected to be much higher.

Constraints: There is a need for more educational materials Red Crescent volunteers can distribute during their education sessions. The new contribution the project received recently will enable the national society to print more in July 2004.

The remaining challenges include developing guidelines for Red Crescent health promoters to help them in their work with the communities. Efforts will be made to expand health education work to other towns too - Sabirabad, Mingechavir, Ganja and Lenkoran, considering the success of the project in the previously targeted IDP camps, Baku and Sumgait. The Red Crescent is planning to train another 22 volunteers from these areas to work with the communities there.

Expected result 2. HIV/AIDS: The risk of the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS has reduced through strengthened Azerbaijan Red Crescent capacity to conduct improved awareness activities.

Project context: HIV/AIDS is a global problem and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent is part of a global effort to stop its spread. It is one of the key players in the country combating the spread of the disease through education. The focus is on young people, who are the most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Through training, debates, public discussions and campaigns, the Red Crescent increases people's awareness of HIV/AIDS, its ways of transmission and prevention. Young volunteers are encouraged to share knowledge on the disease among their peers.

The national society has been providing peer education among teenagers since 2001 through a network of trained volunteers. By the end of 2003, it had 79 volunteers trained as trainers working with young people across the country. The Red Crescent also works with sex workers, who are patients of a clinic in Ramani. Red Crescent volunteers organise in the clinic a seminar every week. In 2003 4,767 young people and 821 sex workers were reached. In 2004, the Red Crescent aims to expand the network of trainers, so that they could share information on HIV/AIDS prevention with more people.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent recruited and trained 83 volunteers. This brings the total number of Red Crescent regional volunteers trained on HIV/AIDS to **162**.

Shortly after the training, volunteers have started working with their peers. They conducted a number of seminars to **1,836** schoolchildren and students across the country on the human immune system, the effects of HIV and the ways of its transmission and prevention.

Additionally, two volunteers from the Surakhani branch conducted seminars on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health for **479** sex workers. The participants were provided with educational materials.

To improve knowledge and professionalism of its volunteers in various regions, the Red Crescent has initiated exchange visits between them: volunteers from Ganja attended the training sessions conducted by peer educators in Mingechavir. Peer educators from Sumgayit visited their colleagues in Baku to learn from their experience. Volunteers from Sabirabad participated in a session in Lenkoran.

Impact: As with health education efforts of the Red Crescent described under the expected result 1, it is early to measure impact of the HIV/AIDS educators' efforts. Towards the end of the year, the Red Crescent is planning to conduct a survey among the target groups to determine whether there has been any change in the behaviour of people they worked with.

In the meantime, the education work will continue. Volunteers are enthusiastic and keen to reach more people. As a result of their efforts some **2,315** people learned about the disease and know how to protect themselves. The

number is much higher than was expected. The original plan was to reach 2,600 people by the end of 2004. If volunteers continue working in the same way, as many as double of what was planned will be reached.

The Red Crescent's work with sex workers is remarkable too. These are people who are regarded as pariahs in the society. By working with them, the Red Crescent is breaking the established taboos and shows the true meaning of humanity, one of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. By doing it itself, the national society sets an example of how to change the attitudes and behaviour in the communities.

Constraints: Because of limited funds in the beginning of the year, the Red Crescent rescheduled printing of more educational materials and production of a video film on HIV/AIDS as well as the training of another 96 volunteers as HIV/AIDS peer educators. Additional contributions arrived in April 2004 that will enable the national society to carry out these planned activities during the summer months of 2004.

Expected result 3. Volunteer blood donor recruitment: The number of non-remunerated blood donors in the country has increased.

Project context: Millions of people owe their lives to people they will never meet – people who donate their blood freely and without any reward. However, the overwhelming majority of the world's population do not have access to safe blood. In Azerbaijan this is a major problem. Insufficient blood reserves in the country contribute to the growth of morbidity and mortality. According to the results of the sustainability analyses conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers, the number of blood donors in Azerbaijan has reduced from 173,000 in 1986 to 14,057 in 2002. The reasons are complex: after the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Government support to the blood banks has decreased; donor recruitment campaigns have stopped because of lack of funds and blood transfusion centres have lost their professional staff who have migrated abroad in search of employment opportunities. During the Soviet era, blood donors were receiving some incentives from the authorities, such as paid work leave. Today the authorities cannot afford this.

Evidence from around the world demonstrates that voluntary, unpaid donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply because they are least likely to transmit potentially life-threatening infections, such as HIV and hepatitis viruses, to the recipients of their blood. The Red Crescent is uniquely placed to contribute to improving the country's blood supply. In 2003, it has strengthened cooperation with a Scientific Research Institute of Haematology and Transfusion via a memorandum of understanding. The Red Crescent has undertaken to assist the institute in recruiting volunteer blood donors across the country through awareness campaigns, round-table discussions, seminars and active community mobilization.

To achieve this, the Red Crescent recruited and trained volunteers to educate the population on the importance of blood donation. A working group of representatives of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent, Federation Delegation in Baku, Blood Transfusion Centre, Blood Bank and Ministry of Health was also established to monitor the progress. The group meets once a month. In 2003, the Red Crescent recruited 96 blood donors. In 2004, it aims to increase the number.

Progress/Achievements: During January-May 2004, the Red Crescent recruited and trained another 40 volunteers with the help of doctors from the national blood bank. They were then divided into eight groups to work in various districts of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. Each group has a leader to coordinate the work. The leaders have been meeting twice a month to discuss experiences, successes and constraints.

Red Crescent volunteers conducted a survey among 310 people living in eight target districts of Baku to determine the level of their awareness on blood donation. Analysis of the survey results has demonstrated that people have limited knowledge. They feel insecure to donate in fear to catch communicable diseases and often do not know who to approach to donate blood.

The survey also revealed that people are willing to learn and many want to become a donor. Such surveys will be carried out every month to measure the impact of the Red Crescent volunteers' work.

Encouraged by this message, Red Crescent volunteers conducted a number of seminars and distributed hundreds of information materials to 1,625 students and professors of various institutions as well as employees of several organizations in Baku. 39 people became blood donors. Another 52 donors were recruited in Baku and Sumgait cities by the Red Crescent following the campaigns on 7 April, World Health Day and 8 May, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

The working group met five times during the reported period to discuss the progress. The group identified the need for more promotional materials.

Responding to the needs, the Red Crescent developed and printed 3,000 copies of a brochure '*Blood is a source of life and power*' and 3,000 copies of a leaflet '*Give blood and save life*'. The materials will be distributed by volunteers to the general public as well as medical institutions in the capital. The Red Crescent is planning to print an additional 3,000 leaflets in the summer.

Also, the national society produced 100 T-shirts and 100 caps with the message '*give blood and save lives*' for its volunteers.

The Red Crescent has started preparing for the celebrations of the World Blood Donor Day³. It will join many other Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the globe to create wider awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation and encourage more people to become regular blood donors.

A part of the celebrations will be an exhibition of the best drawings of children on the topic '*give blood and save lives*'. Also a video film about volunteer blood donation, which is currently being developed by the Red Crescent, will be shown on national television for the first time.

Impact: During the first five months of the year, the Red Crescent has recruited 91 volunteer blood donors. One volunteer has pledged to be a regular donor to help a man ill with thalassemia. The National Blood Reserves reported that the number of blood donors has increased by 13 % thanks to the Red Crescent's efforts.

The Red Crescent acknowledges the number is modest, but this was expected. The work has just started. It is difficult and time-consuming to change the attitudes and beliefs of people. It is hoped that the planned activities over the coming months will help achieve better results. Work will continue. More training sessions and round-table discussions will be organised for schoolchildren and students. The celebrations on the World Blood Donor Day will, hopefully, have an effect too.

Constraints: As mentioned above, the main constraint is the low number of volunteer blood donors the Red Crescent managed to recruit. Volunteer teams will continue working harder. The Red Crescent is planning to assess their needs to motivate them to recruit more donors.

Disaster Management

Goal: Vulnerability of the population of Azerbaijan to disasters has reduced.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent is a key humanitarian actor contributing to strengthening coping mechanisms of vulnerable communities and providing effective support to victims of disasters.

Expected result 1 Disaster preparedness and response: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has developed a comprehensive disaster management structure at the secretariat and branch levels with greater capacity in disaster response.

³The World Blood Donor Day is celebrated on 14 June. It is a collaborative activity between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Health Organisation, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion, with support from the Association of Donor Recruitment Professionals and many other groups.

Project context: Azerbaijan is at risk from a range of complex emergencies. Mechanisms to counter their effects, however, are weak. Since 1999 the Azerbaijan Red Crescent has been trying to improve its disaster management capacities to better address challenges of natural and man-made disasters and empower local communities to reduce their vulnerability to emergencies.

Progress to date: the Red Crescent established a mobile volunteer team of 12 to 17 members in each region and has trained them to help victims of small-scale crises. The teams have also been working with the communities during non-emergency times to raise their awareness on the risks and threats associated with the most common disasters in the region they operate in. Additionally, the Red Crescent established a warehouse in four regions to ensure quick and effective delivery of basic relief items to disaster victims. More recently, it conducted a nationwide vulnerability and capacity assessment to establish a picture of needs and appropriate response. Based on the findings of the assessment, the Red Crescent developed a disaster management policy that identifies strategic priorities of the organization in disaster preparedness and response.



Preparedness saves lives: Red Crescent volunteer teams were among the first on the site to assess the emergency needs caused by fires in Dashkesan and Gedebey districts. Within three days the Red Crescent dispatched basic relief items from a warehouse in Baku and delivered to the disaster areas. Some 54 families were provided with shelter, water and food.

2003. The Red Crescent established a working group to conduct consultations at all levels of the organisation and draft a two-year plan. The Federation, through its regional delegation in Ankara, provided relevant materials that will help the Red Crescent accomplish the task.

Mobile volunteer teams: The Red Crescent has translated into Azeri the Federation's standard definitions of the terms and glossary most frequently used in disaster management. This is important to ensure common understanding and effective training.

Translation of the standard Federation training modules for mobile volunteer teams is ongoing. The modules cover nine topics: introduction to disaster preparedness; disaster preparedness planning; risk reduction; increasing community disaster awareness; emergency needs assessment; information/reporting; coordination; improving basic training skills and project planning. Training will start in July/August 2004.

Focus in 2004:

- Develop a disaster management plan to enable the Red Crescent to consistently carry out activities to be better prepared to respond.
- Increase skills and knowledge of its volunteer teams through standardising training modules and training team members.
- Establish warehouse facilities in the regions where it does not have them – Sumgait and Sabirabad.
- Establish an emergency stock in each region and a centralised system of stock management.
- Equip each regional centre with basic telecommunication systems and train regional staff and volunteers in its utilisation.
- Conduct public awareness campaigns in each region on the most common disasters.

Progress/Achievements:

Disaster management plan:

Development of the plan has started in

Warehouse facilities: The Red Crescent continues consultation with the local authorities to identify premises for the warehouses in Sumgait and Sabirabad.

Emergency stock: Preparations have started to set up an emergency relief stock in each region. The Red Crescent has initiated consultations with key companies/providers on the purchase of basic relief items such as kitchen sets, mobile kitchen stoves, heaters, jerry cans, candles, hygiene sets, blankets, bed sheet, towels, cotton and mattresses for 350 families (approximately 1,750 people) in June 2004.

In the meantime, works have started to centralise the stock management system. The aim is to clarify and refine procedures on receiving and dispatching relief goods in Red Crescent warehouses. The Red Crescent has also started training of its staff in regions on logistics procedures, based on the Federation standards, including how to complete a purchase request form, requisition note and stock cards. As a first step, training of staff in Lenkoran regional centre has been completed. Over the coming months, more training of more people in other regions is planned.

Telecommunications system: VHF and HF radio stations were installed in Sumgayit regional centre, Nakhchivan local committee and in Baku central warehouse. The stations enable the Red Crescent to communicate between the Red Crescent Secretariat in Baku, Nakhchivan local committee, Sabirabad, Sumgayit, Lenkoran and Mingechavir regional centres.

Seven MT-2100 Motorola handsets were also provided to the Nakhchivan local committee, and Ganja and Sumgayit regional centres. Two vehicles of the Red Crescent were equipped with GM-300 Motorola, HF and VHF radio stations. In order to increase the coverage area, a mast antenna was raised in the Red Crescent Secretariat in Baku.

Intel com, a local communication firm that has agreed to help the Azerbaijan Red Crescent in programming its radio equipment and maintenance of radio handsets, tuned seven GP-340 Motorola handsets on the Red Crescent radio frequencies. The firm is also repairing the Red Crescent's CODAN HF radio station.

An ICRC expert trained telecommunication personnel of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent on how to programme the telecommunication equipment, so that they do not need external support.

Another, 69 people at the Secretariat in Baku, as well as members of mobile volunteer teams of Nakhchivan, Sumgayit and Ganja were trained on how to use the telecommunication equipment.

Public awareness: Red Crescent regional branches have started developing projects on how to raise awareness of the population in their regions on the risks and threats of the main disasters.

Coordination: The Azerbaijan Red Cross works to strengthen coordination with other actors in disaster management. For the first time, the national society invited major stakeholders to discuss their problems, interests and potential, and agree on cooperation modalities. Similar meetings have been also organised by health and youth departments of the Red Crescent with their partners. As a direct result of the meeting, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent signed an agreement on cooperation with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan. It was for the first time that a governmental structure signed an agreement with a non-governmental organization. The agreement defines roles and responsibilities of the Red Crescent and the Ministry during disasters to avoid duplication of efforts.

Impact: The best way to measure the impact of the capacity building efforts is to see how effectively the Red Crescent responds to disasters. The intervention of mobile volunteer teams to fires in Dashkesan and Gedebe districts has underlined, once again, the importance of investing into disaster preparedness. The districts were embroiled in fire triggered by strong winds. 63 houses were completely burnt. The Red Crescent acted quickly. Its mobile volunteer teams were among the first on the site to assess the emergency needs. Within three days the Red Crescent dispatched basic relief items from a warehouse in Baku and delivered to the disaster areas. Some 54 families were assisted.

Constraints: Translation of the training modules for mobile volunteer teams is progressing slowly, mainly due to difficulties encountered in interpretation of various terms and technical words. It is expected, however, that the work will be completed by August 2004 and training will start shortly thereafter.

Expected result 2 First Aid: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has strengthened capacities to provide effective and sustainable First Aid training to communities through trained volunteers at all levels.

Project context: First aid is a proven cost-effective, safe and simple way to save lives in an emergency. Millions of people are hurt or killed from injuries or ill health in the world every year. These may be the consequence of day-to-day health problems, accidents or crisis such as conflict or natural disasters. Whether it is managing outbreaks of major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria to providing treatment to heart attack or accident victims, first aid provides that initial rapid response to protect people and minimize the impact of a health emergency.

In Azerbaijan, the Red Crescent is a leading provider and trainer in first aid. It has three first aid instructors in each regional centre working with communities. It organises training and distributes educational materials. First aid training and services are used as entry points for disaster preparedness. Since 1996, the Red Crescent reached over 15,700 people. In 2004, the aim is to educate another 6,000 people.

Progress/Achievements: During the reported period, Red Crescent first aid instructors organised 70 training sessions for 1,128 people in Sumgayit, Baku, Ganja, Lenkoran, Mingechavir and Sabirabad. The participants included schoolchildren, internally displaced people living in cities and the southern camps, as well as Red Crescent volunteers.

Additionally, the Red Crescent, together with a local organisation, *Project Harmony* has implemented a project *first aid in schools*. Within the project, the Red Crescent's partner organisation provided three secondary schools in Baku with free access to the Internet and established a virtual forum so that children can discuss and ask questions on first aid related issues. The Red Crescent conducted seven first aid courses for 175 schoolchildren in the targeted schools and was answering questions from children on the internet.

Also, the Red Crescent printed 300 copies of the first aid guidelines it developed in 1996. The guidelines will be distributed to regional first aid instructors to refer to during their work with the communities.

The Red Crescent also organises first aid courses for those who can pay to generate income for the organisation. Since January 2004, it trained 47 employees of the Caspian Steam Navigation.

Impact: A large network of Red Crescent volunteers at the grass roots level provide a strong base for the development of expanded first aid services and training. Key people are trained as trainers, who subsequently train other people in the community. This continuous building of knowledge and skills, together with the pooling of resources strengthens the self-help capacity in the community to cope with day-to-day crisis and disasters. Operating from within the community also enables the Red Crescent to bring about vital behavioural changes, such as the regular practice of hand-washing and personal hygiene to reduce the chance of diarrhoea.

Constraints: The total number of people trained on first aid during January-May 2004 is 1,175. It is less than was planned. The reasons are poor planning by the Red Crescent which did not enable to train 72 new instructors to work with the communities. The training will start in June 2004 and the Red Crescent expects it will be able to reach the original target of 6,000 people by the end of the year. The remaining challenges also include developing and printing educational and promotional materials - booklets and posters - on first aid.

Expected result 3. Mobile technical team: Living conditions of lone elderly and other vulnerable groups in remote areas has improved through minor home repairs provided by Azerbaijan Red Crescent mobile technical teams.

Project context: People living in far-flung, isolated areas are the most vulnerable to the social and economic crisis the country is experiencing. They have many problems – bad roads, lack of electricity, water, heating, low salaries, poor health care and social support from the Government. The most affected are lone elderly people, who live on the equivalent of 7 US dollars a month and single-mother headed families with four to seven children. Unemployment is high. Those who work receive a salary of 18-20 US dollars, which is not enough to cover even basic needs. The houses are in a dilapidated condition, as they have not been repaired for years. Cracked windows and doors do not protect inhabitants from harsh winter winds, rains and snow. Their frail health is aggravated by frequent illnesses such as rheumatism, cold and pneumonia. The government does not have the capacity to help them.

To fill the gap and alleviate suffering of these people, the Red Crescent is running three mobile technical teams – one in Geranboy, western region of Azerbaijan and another two in Lenkoran and Ismayilli regions. The teams visit the far-flung areas and offer minor home-repairs: install electrical systems, fix roofs and windows and cut fire-wood.

The success of the teams encouraged the Red Crescent to establish another two teams in Guba and Nakhichevan. The current project is assisting the national society to achieve this.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent recruited people for a new team in Guba. Team members were trained on first aid, safety during construction and selection of beneficiaries. A three-day training workshop was also attended by the staff of the Red Crescent branches as well as representatives of the local authorities.

Shortly after the training, the Guba team has joined the other three teams and started to work. Since January 2004, the four mobile technical teams have repaired **233** houses of vulnerable people, who had been identified in cooperation with Government social welfare structures and local authorities. Beneficiaries mainly include lone elderly people and families without a bread-winner. The repair works included: fixing windows, doors and roofs, installing electricity, plastering and painting walls.

The teams mobilize local communities, mainly schoolchildren and neighbours, to help them during the work. They clean houses and their grounds around after the repair works have completed, do shopping and visit elderly people regularly to keep them a company. Some 177 people volunteered to help the Red Crescent during the reported period.

The Red Crescent is collecting materials for a leaflet on the work of its mobile technical teams. The leaflet is planned to be printed in October 2004. It will be distributed to partner organizations and the local communities to increase the population's awareness on the plight of the people in far-flung areas, raise the image of the Red Crescent and encourage people to support the national society's project.

Impact: The Red Crescent mobile technical teams improve living conditions of people in far-flung areas. They also lift the image of the national society and strengthen its link with the communities as well as government authorities.

Constraints: The main challenge that the Red Crescent is yet to address is the sustainability of the project after the external support ends. The issue has been raised with the national society and discussions will continue to find a solution.

Humanitarian values

Goal: Behaviour of people has changed to increase tolerance, non-discrimination, mutual understanding and respect for human beings.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has strengthened capacities to promote a culture of non-violence and non-discrimination.

Project context: Because of its special status and its thousands of volunteers and members all across the country, the Red Crescent is in an ideal position to promote tolerance and humanitarian values.

In Azerbaijan, the turmoil and violence in the country and the surrounding region after the break-up of the Soviet Union and other factors such as stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS, have shown how much the country requires a neutral, unified and able humanitarian organisation such as the Azerbaijan Red Crescent.

The Red Crescent continues to rise to the challenge of seeing beyond the different labels that divide the people of the world. Using the Fundamental Principles to influence people's behaviour, the national society is championing individual and community values that encourage respect for others and a willingness to work together to find solutions. This process of community bridge building is crucial: without it, social and political harmony and future development are doubtful.

The action to reduce discrimination is one of the key areas of activity currently being promoted by the Federation in the area of humanitarian values.

Expected result 1. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society advocates for and with vulnerable people on safety on roads, harm of drugs and stigmatisation.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent has stepped up its efforts to challenge violence and discrimination in all its forms and promote tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. It has started a series of training for volunteers across the country so that they will share the message with other people in their communities and try to change their attitudes and behaviour.

As an initial step, the Red Crescent trained ten volunteers from six Red Crescent regional centres. During the training, volunteers discussed the harm of stigmatisation and discrimination towards people living with HIV/AIDS, drug users, disabled people and other marginalised groups.

The training also included the history of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its Fundamental Principles. The principles, which state that the Movement 'makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions', constitute the foundation of the Red Crescent's commitment to combat stigma and discrimination. Volunteers were provided with stigma-related materials developed by the Red Crescent.

After the training, volunteers returned to their communities and started their work with people there. Seminars against discrimination and stigmatisation were organised in Ganja, Mingechavir, Sabirabad and Baku with the participation of 73 Red Crescent staff and volunteers and some 37 students and schoolchildren.

The Red Crescent has also conducted a drawing competition with the theme *'discrimination is unacceptable'* among schoolchildren. Some 500 children took part. The competition was one of the many other events organised by the Red Crescent on 8 May to celebrate the World Red Cross Red Crescent day. The global theme of the day this year was *'stop discrimination'*. The best drawings were exhibited at the Red Crescent Secretariat in Baku on 1 June, International Children's Day. The drawings will also be used to develop posters with the anti-stigma message.

Additionally, the Red Crescent developed and printed 1,500 posters on the Fundamental Principles of the Movement. The posters will be distributed in main towns and cities through Red Crescent branches.

Impact: It is difficult to measure the impact of this programme, particularly at this stage. The anti-discrimination campaign has just started. It takes time to change people's behaviour and the work has to continue.

There are indications, however, that it is possible to make a difference and evidence comes from the stories Red Crescent volunteers share: after a seminar against discrimination, Red Crescent volunteers in Mingechavir region put on a performance in a local school. The story they played was about a disabled girl, who was isolated by her

class-mates and was laughed at many times. Faces of the children, who were watching the play, carried the realisation of the pain the disabled girl in the play lived with.

Constraints: Changing people's behaviour takes time. The Red Crescent will continue working with the communities by organising more seminars and round-table discussions. Over the coming months, another training course is planned for volunteers to help them strengthen public relations skills and improve their performance. The training will be facilitated by an expert in sociology, who will also evaluate the impact of the seminars against discrimination conducted by Red Crescent volunteers in the regions. The expert will identify the areas volunteers have to improve in. Based on findings, further training courses for volunteers will be designed.

Expected result 2. The image of the National Society as one of the key humanitarian actors in the country preventing and alleviating suffering of vulnerable people and addressing issues of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for human being has increased, in line with the Federation's global action to reduce discrimination and violence in the community.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent has been regularly disseminating information on its work through local newspapers and television, as well as internally through Federation communicating channels, such as its web site. Several articles and press releases were issued on the Red Crescent's anti-TB campaign. The campaign was highlighted by a Turkish and local TV channels.

Impact: Through articles, press releases and TV reports, the population learns about the work of the Red Crescent and the number of people, who share its principles and values, increases.

Constraints: Results from a recently conducted public opinion survey reveal the necessity to strengthen the public relations work of the national society. Of 300 people interviewed during the survey in Baku, only 30 per cent knew about the work of the Red Crescent.

Organisational Development

Goal: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has positioned itself as an effective partner to vulnerable communities supporting them to confront their challenges.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent is a better functioning national society providing assistance with greater impact and relevance to vulnerable communities.

Expected result 1 Programme planning and management skills development: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has strengthened capacity to provide more responsive and focused services to vulnerable people by strengthening programme planning and management skills of its staff and volunteers, systematising its membership scheme and diversifying financial sources.

Project context: The project supports the national society in organising a number of training sessions for Red Crescent staff and volunteers on planning and management related issues, as well as the strategic priorities and the statutes of the organization. At the same time, it prioritises strengthening financial self-sustainability of the national society by helping it expand the network of primary organisations (community groups linked to the Red Crescent) and members⁴ both of which are income sources. The focus is on four regional centres in Baku, Lenkoran, Ganja and Mingechavir and 44 local committees.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent conducted three training courses during the reported period for 63 staff and volunteers from Baku, Lenkoran and Ganja: 47 people were trained on programme planning and management related issues, as well as the strategic priorities and the statutes of the organization. Another 16 people from 12 committees of Ganja were trained on fundraising techniques.

⁴ By the end of 2003, the Red Crescent had 3,563 primary organisations and 167,537 members.

The Red Crescent has also established 16 new donation boxes. Ten boxes have been placed in different places in Baku. Location for the remaining six boxes is being identified.

Impact: Since January 2004, the Red Crescent established 11 new primary organisations and enlisted 3,468 new members. That brings the total number of primary organisations to **3,574** and members to **171,005**.

Through membership fees, the Red Crescent collected **CHF 3,910**. The amount was used to procure food parcels, school supplies and bedclothes for 656 schoolchildren, including the disabled patients of the Shagan psychoneurologic dispensary, and lone elderly people.

Constraints: The Red Crescent is making efforts to increase the number of members and income generated through the membership fees. The major constraint, however, is that members do not pay consistently their fees. To demonstrate, since January 2004, as reported above, the Red Crescent has recruited 3,468 new members. Theoretically, collectively they should have paid to the national society CHF 5,458. However, in reality the Red Crescent collected only CHF 3,910. The issue will be raised with the branch chairmen of the Red Crescent local committees.

Expected result 2 Branch development: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has stronger branches contributing to empowering communities to exercise the basic right to be involved in decisions directly affecting their lives.

Project context: The project continues the efforts the Red Crescent initiated in 2003 to bring the Red Crescent closer to local communities and ensure its programmes are responsive to local needs and focused on the areas where the organisation could have had the greatest impact.

It pilots a participatory community development (PCD) approach. PCD is supporting people to reduce the causes of their own predicaments, mobilising community action. Red Crescent local branches are bringing vulnerable groups together with local government, non-governmental organisations and other relevant parties, asking them to assess priority problems, design projects to address them, and make the most of local resources.

In particular, the project focuses on :

- strengthening the programme management capacity of Red Crescent staff in targeted branches. To achieve this, the Red Crescent organizes a number of training courses for branch staff and volunteers.
- working with targeted communities. The work includes the development of training modules on first aid, preventive health, social care and disaster preparedness and training of communities on these areas through a network of trained volunteers.
- promoting humanitarian values and improving the image of the Red Crescent.
- securing the sustainability of the targeted branches through the development of small-scale income generating projects and local fundraising activities.

Some training sessions were conducted last years, others are planned for 2004. The approach is piloted in six branch committees in Sumgait and Mingechavir regions and is implemented in 10 targeted communities: in Ismayli, Ujar, Mingechavir, Sumgayt, Shamakha and Zakatala districts.

Progress/Achievements: Strengthening the management capacity of Red Crescent branch staff and volunteers has continued. The Red Crescent trained six branch chairpersons, six youth coordinators and 12 volunteers from six target branches on public relations. They were taught modern techniques of communication with mass-media, partners and beneficiaries. Another training focused on reporting skills of branch staff. Ismayilli, Mingechavir and Zagatala branches were assisted to systematise their work with volunteers. The branches have established clear roles and responsibilities of its volunteers. 32 branch chairpersons, volunteers and youth coordinators from six branches were trained on how to improve fundraising in the regions. During the training they reviewed the local opportunities and discussed a regional fundraising strategy.

Strengthening self-sustainability is important for branches to be able to continue providing services to people in need after the external support has ended. The project has helped the branches initiate three income-generating activities: an incubator in Ujar and Internet clubs in Sumgayit and Mingechavir. Premises for the clubs were

allocated by local authorities. In Mingechavir the club is already operational and offers internet services, as well as computer and English language courses. The Sumgayit local committee is planning to carry out minor repair works first.

So far, the incubator in Ujar has raised CHF 4,469 (USD 3,463). In Mingachevir, no income has been registered yet. The reason is the high price set by the Red Crescent branch that is losing its clients to other organisations offering the same services for a cheaper price. The branch is going to reconsider its price list to attract more people.

The club is also open for vulnerable youth who can use the services without any charge. To date, 35 young people who cannot afford to pay used the internet services.

The branches are also planning a fundraising campaign in their regions. Detailed plans are being developed.

In the meantime, Red Crescent volunteers, trained in 2003, have started working with their communities:

- 16 Red Crescent health promoters trained 871 people on reproductive health, family planning, healthy nutrition, personal hygiene and other health related issues and distributed 2,000 booklets on immunization, intestinal infection, personal hygiene and healthy nutrition
- 24 first aid trainers reached another 1,289 people;
- 12 dissemination trainers held sessions on the history of the International Movement, its Fundamental Principles and the basics of the International Humanitarian Law for 2,105 people.

Another 54 community members participated in the training on project planning and management, as well as their ability to design projects, organize and implement events and work with donors and non-governmental organizations.

The branches have also initiated a number of social activities in their communities:

- Volunteers from the Ismayli branch helped children in Alchali village organise a small theatre to put on performances for the community. They also conducted a competition among schoolchildren in Istisu and Alchali on the best composition. The theme of the competition was *'How do we understand the humanity'*;
- Additionally, Ismayilli branch volunteers held a campaign with a slogan *'Youth against Drugs'* among schoolchildren in Istisu and Alchali. The campaign included the distribution of brochures, developed by volunteers, on risks and threats associated with drug addiction. Volunteers in this region have also conducted a survey to identify main health problems in the communities. Results from the survey will form the basis for planning of future activities.
- The communities in Mingechavir, Sumgayit and Ismayilli organised celebrations of the World Red Cross Red Crescent Day on 8 May. Some 280 people took part, including representatives of local municipality and various organisations/agencies. The celebrations included a concert, quiz on the Movement history and the Fundamental Principles, an exhibition of handcrafts, cleaning of streets and tree planting carried out by the community together with Ismayilli branch volunteers.
- In Sumgayit, a play ground for children has been built.

To profile the work of its branches, the Red Crescent has developed a brochure that includes information on the work with the communities. The brochure is expected to be finalised in June 2004.

Additionally, all branches maintain a good contact with local newspapers and TV channels. Mingachevir, Ismayilli and Sumgayit Red Crescent project coordinators published interviews in the local newspapers about the ongoing activities within the branch development work. A chairman of the Ismayilli branch also gave an interview on branch activities to the local radio. Since the start of the project, a total of 10 TV programmes on the Red Crescent's branch development work and other activities were broadcasted by a local TV.

Impact: The most important impact is that branches strengthen links with their communities. They become viewed as a reliable partner that helps people solve their problems. At the same time, communities become stronger too. They receive basic knowledge and skills to protect themselves from the most common disasters and health problems.

People have a positive attitude towards the Red Crescent-initiated participatory community development approach and show a great interest in the activities launched within the project. A vivid illustration of this is a willingness of two communities in Mingechavir to be included in the project in addition to another two communities from that region which had been selected to pilot the activities.

Another important impact the project has had is that it has prompted the realisation in the Azerbaijan Red Crescent that the organisation, as it changes its focus from relief to more developmental approach, has to change people's mindsets and attitudes too to be successful in its new role to work effectively with the communities. Two chairpersons – one in Shamkha and another one in Zagatala – having realized they do not have enough capacity to help the Red Crescent achieve its goal to strengthen links with the communities, have resigned. New people with new ways of thinking and working will soon be elected to replace them.

Constraints: Overall the project has been progressing well. The start has been promising. There have been, however, setbacks too. For years people in Azerbaijan have been passive recipients of humanitarian aid. The shift of the Red Crescent focus from large-scale emergency relief to community-based programmes that encourages active community participation, triggered confusion and mistrust among our beneficiaries, as well as reluctance to contribute. Their attitude and behavior has been changing slowly compounding the task of the Red Crescent. The branches have been experiencing challenges in mobilizing people and applying the new tool into practice, as this was the case in the regions of Shemakha, Ujar and Zakatala. Regular meetings with the communities need to continue.

The plan also envisaged training of the communities on disaster preparedness but was delayed until September 2004 as the work on training modules has not been completed yet.

Expected result 3 Community Development: The national society has increased capacity to improve self-reliance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and local vulnerable communities.

Project context: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent, supported by the Federation, has been assisting IDPs from Nagorno-Karabakh since 1993. The work concentrated on people living in the seven camps, established by the Government in Sabirabad, Saatli and Bilasuvar regions.

In the beginning, the focus was of an emergency nature. Eventually, however, the priorities shifted to stimulate IDPs to take a more proactive role in their own development. In 1998 a number of community development projects were initiated. These projects included: setting up of women committees that would contribute to solving day-to-day problems of their communities, organizing children activities such as drama, fine art and sport, and various skills training such as sewing, hairdressing and mechanics. In January 2003 the Federation handed over the project to the Red Crescent regional centre in Sabirabad. This was an important step towards strengthening the branch capacity to implement and manage community development activities. The Federation continues to offer financial and technical support through training, consultations, and sharing with the national society the analyses of its monitoring results. Currently, the project is 100 per cent funded by partners through the Federation appeal.

In 2003, the government has initiated the resettlement of IDPs that have been living in the camps for over ten years, to improve their living conditions. Some camps were closed, but others continue existing⁵. Work with the IDPs remaining in the camps continues. In parallel, however, the current project is supporting national society efforts to expand the community development work to local communities too.

The resettlement of IDPs is expected to be finalized by early 2005. The camps will be closed and the Red Crescent work in the camps will end too. In 2005, Red Crescent efforts in Sabirabad region will concentrate on local communities through participatory community development approach under the organisation's branch development initiatives.

⁵ The current population of the camps is 15,028 people (source: Government of Azerbaijan)

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent identified three villages - Akhmedabad, Bulagli and Garatape – in the Sabirabad region to extend its community development work. Volunteers and their leaders in these communities were recruited and a number of traditional community development activities have been initiated since January 2004. Namely, three women committees were established; eight skills training courses were started and a number of competitions/tournaments were organised among children.

The most important task for the Red Crescent is to empower local communities so that they become more active in solving their own problems. To achieve this, the Red Crescent encourages them to identify their own needs and discuss how to address them. Thus, for example, in Bulagli, people have agreed that lack of toilets in a local secondary school is a problem that needs to be solved to avoid the outbreak of dysentery. Community volunteer leaders then approached the local municipality to request construction materials. The materials were provided and communities built the toilets.

The Red Crescent has also trained 49 volunteers on project planning and development.

Where possible the Red Crescent also invites its partner organisations, such as International Rescue Committee (IRC), to share their knowledge and expertise. The IRC conducted four-days training for ten Red Crescent staff members on learning facilitation techniques.

The Red Crescent continued providing various training sessions for women committees to strengthen their skills and knowledge. During the first five months of 2004, information and dissemination volunteers of the Sabirabad regional centre conducted a number of one-day seminars on the history of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its Fundamental Principles for 117 women from the three Southern camps as well as members of the newly formed community groups in Bulagli and Akhmedabad villages.

Women committees play an important role in coordinating distribution of various relief supplies from the Red Crescent's existing stocks or donations from various organisations, to the most vulnerable people in their communities. During the reported period, the committees in the camps carried out needs assessment among 295 IDPs and helped the Red Crescent deliver six soft beds for disabled children. 43 pregnant women received baby sets donated by the Swedish Red Cross.

On 8 May, the World Red Cross Red Crescent Day, members of the women committees in Garatape organised cleaning in the houses of lone elderly people and brought them some presents, procured with money from a community fund. The fund has been created with contributions from community members to help the most destitute people.

Volunteers in one of the camps assisted the Red Crescent in establishing a gymnasium for children. A volunteer trainer was identified who will work with children after school.

Different competitions, such as football, boxing and chess tournaments, were organized among 230 schoolchildren in the camps and three local communities. Winners were provided with gifts. The aim of the competitions is to provide children with a meaningful pastime, encourage them to take part in out-of-school activities and prevent them developing harmful habits.

On the occasion of Novroz Bayrami in March, the day when people in Azerbaijan traditionally celebrate the beginning of spring, linked to the Muslim New Year, the Red Crescent delivered presents to children. Novruz is believed to be the time of reconciliation, when families, friends and neighbors come together and leave their concerns and fears in the past. Celebrations in the camps included a number of performances put on by children – drama, folklore, drawing and sport.

Additionally, the Red Crescent supported volunteers to organise puppet shows for children in the camps. The shows deliver an important message on health related issues such as personal hygiene and prevention of malaria and infectious diseases. There are six groups at the moment organising shows two or three times a month, but more volunteers are interested to take part. This year, the Red Crescent trained another 17 volunteers and 23 children

from drama and folklore circles in the camps and three local villages. Children were shown how to make puppets and how to conduct shows. After the training, the new groups have started working with their communities.

The Red Crescent has also delivered 1,484 copies of an Encyclopedia, donated by a private company in Azerbaijan, to schoolchildren and teachers in Saatli and Belasuvur districts. Additionally, 17,000 copies of the *Shakar villasi* children newspaper were distributed among schoolchildren in the camps and Bulagli village. The newspaper is issued with the financial support of the Norwegian Refugee Council and includes stories, poems and drawings prepared by children from all over the country.

22 IDPs completed a six-month training course on sewing, weaving and hairdressing and another 68 joined. Currently, the Red Crescent is running 11 courses varying from hairdressing and barbershops to sewing and weaving. Training is facilitated by volunteers from the camps and local villages. Many trainers are former students.

Impact: The most important impact the project has had is that it helps the targeted communities believe in their own capacities. People in Bulagli know that if they try they can succeed. This is an important achievement for the society, which has been a passive recipient of aid for many years.

The training courses the Red Crescent is running are also important, because people learn new skills and knowledge to compete for limited job opportunities, earn money and sustain themselves and their families without external support. Different competitions and tournaments, give an opportunity to children to enhance their intellectual capacity and improve their physical state.

Constraints: The Federation has been encouraging the national society to initiate new community development activities in addition to what the Red Crescent has been traditionally implementing. Response from the national society was positive, however, lack of coordination between the regional centre in Sabirabad and the Secretariat in Baku in combination with poor planning has prevented the realisation of new ideas. Following consultations with the Secretariat of the Red Crescent in Baku and the Federation delegation, it was agreed to organise a summer camp for 100 children in July 2004.

Expected result 4 Youth development: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has a more participative youth volunteer network assisting in the provision of services to vulnerable communities.

Project context: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has more than 14,000 volunteers. They are the backbone of all its activities, helping the national society run successful programmes and assisting thousands of vulnerable people in need. The dedication of volunteers reduces the cost of activities and enables the Red Crescent to reach more people. Their motivation and energy inspires other people to join. Many give when they are in need themselves. However, because of the socio-economic difficulties in the country, widespread poverty and high unemployment, it is difficult for the national society to retain volunteers. The current project assists the Red Crescent to find new ways to manage them better.

Progress/Achievements: The Red Crescent has started creating an electronic data base of its volunteers. To date, 274 volunteers from six regions have been registered. Work continues. Regional branches are collecting registration forms from their volunteers and forwarding them to the Secretariat in Baku. The system will help the Red Crescent have a clearer picture of the number and profile of its volunteers. It will also enable the organisation to determine in which areas its volunteers need support to strengthen their skills and professionalism.

In tandem, the Red Crescent has developed its first training module to systematise the capacity building work with its volunteers. The module was a joint effort of various departments of the national society and includes various topics, such as the history and activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its three components, the seven Fundamental Principles and volunteer work, as well as brief information about the Red Crescent's work in community-based health, first aid, HIV/AIDS, tracing, disaster preparedness and international relations. The module includes interactive methodology and is based on fun – it has many icebreakers and group-work sessions. Such methodology has not been practiced by the national society before.

The Red Crescent has trained 44 people – staff and volunteers, including youth coordinators, members of the national youth board and youth instructors - according to the module. Over the coming months the training will continue in the regions: at least 10 new volunteers are planned to be trained in each regional centre of local committees based on the new module.

The Red Crescent has developed guidelines for its youth. The guidelines define who can be a volunteer, what it means to be a volunteer, which programme volunteers can participate in and how they should communicate/act in various situations. The guidelines will be printed and distributed to all volunteers.

The guidelines complement the youth policy the Red Crescent adopted last year. The policy recognises the roles and value of volunteers. It sets rights and responsibilities of volunteers and ensures that young people are supported not only as beneficiaries, but also as partners in the management of the organisation and programmes.

The Red Crescent has started preparation works to set up a youth organization within the national society. The organisation will have a mandate to represent youth in the governance. The existing youth boards that were established by the Red Crescent last year on national and regional levels, do not have this mandate. The youth organisation will also have a clearly defined election system, rules and procedure and will help the Red Crescent address the youth related issues in a structured and focused way. The creation of such an organisation was discussed and decided at the General Assembly of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent that took place on 10 March 2004 in Baku. Similar organisations exist in other national societies too in Germany and Bulgaria, for example. They have members, the eldest being 29 years old; some have their own statutes, chairmen and are represented in the governing board of the national societies.

The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has formed a working group of youth volunteers and staff members to develop recommendations on the future structure of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent youth organization based on the analysis of experiences in other national societies. The group is expected to present its findings in June 2004.

In the meantime, youth and volunteer boards⁶ of the national society, established in 2003, continue coordinating the work of youth volunteers. They have been meeting regularly to discuss progress, constraints and future plans.

Based on the feedback from volunteers, the boards have discussed and prioritized to:

- Establish a youth club in each region where young people can meet and take part in the work of various circles, such as drama or sport: in Ganja, Mingechavir, Sumgayit and Lenkoran regions, the local authorities have allocated premises for the clubs. In Sabirabad, it was decided to establish a club in the office of the regional centre. The office will be repaired and basic equipment will be procured in summer 2004.
- Organise a summer camp for 60 orphans and disabled children on 25 June-10 July 2004. The camps will be run by volunteers: 12 from Norway and 10 Azerbaijan Red Crescent volunteers. Preparation works have started: the location for the camp has been identified. Additionally, seven Red Crescent volunteers will visit houses for disabled children in Norway to learn from the experience of their colleagues there.
- Establish a hot-line for youth with psycho-social problems. The hot line is expected to get started in 2005. In the meantime, the focus will be on training of volunteers, who will work in shifts according to the pre-established schedule.
- Carry out educational activities on HIV/AIDS: plan of action is being discussed.
- Advocate with local and international organizations to prioritise their work with youth and volunteers: a number of organisations have expressed interest to cooperate with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent in organising joint activities, such a summer camp for displaced children and printing of promotional materials.

The Red Crescent is encouraging its volunteers to take an active part in the work of the national society and initiate new activities to help people in need. Thus, volunteers from Lenkoran and Ganja regional centres have developed a number of social care projects. They vary from organising music entertainment for orphans to establishing a weaving course for young people and helping children from disadvantaged families do their homework. The projects are planned to start in June.

⁶ The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has a national and seven regional boards across the country.

In the meantime, 69 Red Crescent volunteers have continued providing social service to 192 orphans and disabled children in Shagan, Ganja, Lenkoran and Sumgayit regions. 20 volunteers visit these children four times a week and spend three hours with them playing different games, reading fairy-tales, doing some quizzes together, visiting museums or just going out for a picnic. Volunteers are also assisting disabled children to learn how to look after themselves independently without anybody's help thus helping them regain self-confidence.

Volunteers also actively participated in different events and campaigns carried out by the Red Crescent, such as:

- Debates on healthy way of life conducted in one of the universities on the World Health Day (see Health and Care programme);
- Visits to children with TB in a sanatorium in Zagulba on the World TB Day (see Health and Care programme);
- Blood donation campaigns organised on World Health Day and 8 May, International Red Cross Red Crescent Day (see Health and Care programme);
- Public opinion poll, carried out by the Red Crescent to find out the level of awareness of population about the Azerbaijan Red Crescent and its work (see Humanitarian Values programme).

Red Crescent volunteers also develop a monthly bulletin that contains news on Red Crescent youth and volunteer activities. With the Federation's support the Red Crescent printed and distributed three issues of the bulletin within and outside the organisation. The fourth issue is in the printing house and will be distributed in early June 2014.

The Red Crescent strives to strengthen partnership links with the Government authorities and other organisations. Its youth department held a number of meetings with the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism of Azerbaijan, World Islam Youth Assembly and Youth Support Fund, who offered their support in organizing a summer camp, as well as sewing and computer courses for youth and volunteers.

Impact: Red Crescent volunteers are better organised. The electronic data base will enable the Red Crescent to mobilise its volunteers more rapidly when needed. Management of volunteers will improve too. The organisation will be able to support its volunteers better by designing and offering them relevant training opportunities.

The training modules will help the national society bring in consistency its work and systematise it. The modules will also assure improved quality of training provided to volunteers. Consequently, volunteers will be better qualified to contribute to services for people in need.

The level of participation of youth volunteers in the work with the vulnerable has significantly increased too. Their contribution is important. They bring fun into the life of disabled children and orphans. Much more, however, is planned to be done and the impact remains to be seen.

Constraints: The project is half way through. Many of the planned activities have yet to be implemented. At the end of the year, the Red Crescent in cooperation with the Federation is planning to evaluate the impact of its work. The evaluation will look both at achievements and constraints, and findings will form the basis of the future planning.

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