

Report 2006-2007

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine

Appeal No. MAA67001

3 April 2008

This report covers the period of 01/01/06 to 31/12/07 of a two-year planning and appeal process.



Older people in Ungheni, Moldova are provided with a hot meal as part of the relief assistance programme. Photo: Moldova Red Cross

In brief

Programme summary: Supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine assisted the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in their countries such as children from disadvantaged and multi-child families, people living with HIV (PLHIV), injecting drug users (IDUs), elderly, disabled and chronically ill people, street children and the youth. The main focus of the programmes has been on countering the spread of HIV by raising public awareness about the disease, harm reduction and fighting stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV. In addition, promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups into the society and providing a timely response to people affected by disasters featured prominently. The organizational development programme concentrated on building and strengthening the capacities of volunteers and staff of the National Societies to provide high quality and sustainable services.

The main donors of this appeal were the Swedish, the Danish, the Swiss, the Finnish and the Norwegian Red Cross Societies, the Lars Amundsen Foundation and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The appeal mobilized funding to support youth response to HIV, humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable and organizational development of the National Societies, while the first-aid, anti-trafficking and disaster management capacity building programmes were suspended. In Belarus and Ukraine, many projects which were primarily funded by DFID concluded in June-July 2006. Some programme components, such as first aid in Belarus were funded from local sources. The appeal budget for 2007 was then revised to focus on capacity building in the areas most relevant to both the beneficiaries and the donors. However, this did not result in additional funding or new donors. Nevertheless, the implementation of the projects, even with the limited funding, had a positive impact.

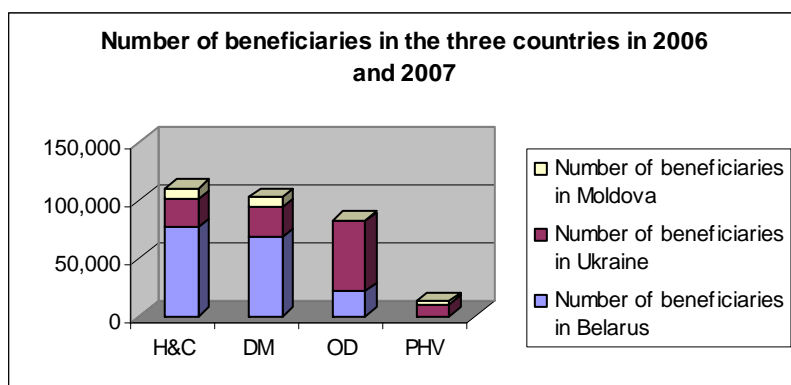
The three National Societies conducted five emergency operations supported by the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) with an allocation of 369,272 Swiss francs, including the regional operation in response to the severe weather experienced in early 2006 in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova.

Goal: The Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine focus on capacity building processes in health and care, disaster management, humanitarian values and organizational development to optimize their effectiveness in assisting the vulnerable population.

Needs: Total 2006-2007 budget CHF 4,949,130 (EUR 3,145,300, USD 4,960,042) out of which 74 per cent covered. Click here to go directly to the attached financial reports: [Report 2006](#); [Report 2007](#); and [Report 2006-2007](#).

No. of people we help: In the two-year period some 380,650 people benefited directly from the International Federation's programmes implemented together with the Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova Red Cross Societies.

Programme	Number of Beneficiaries		
	Belarus	Ukraine	Moldova
Health and Care	76,300	24,100	9,900
Disaster Management	67,900	25,500	9,600
Organizational Development	21,300	61,100	400
Promoting Humanitarian Values		10,200	2,350
Total number of beneficiaries	165,500	120,900	22,250



Our partners: The National Societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova worked with a total number of 200 partners during the two years, including government agencies, international organizations, NGOs and public organizations.

Current context

Belarus

Belarus is steadily demonstrating an increase in HIV-infection rates, due mostly to transmission by sexual contact (63.4 per cent of all cases in 2006 and 65 per cent over the ten months of 2007) and a rapid increase in the percentage of women in the overall HIV incidence rates (34.8 per cent) according to official governmental statistics. The rate of HIV transmission from mother-to-child remains very high. Eight per cent of all children born to mothers with HIV are themselves HIV-positive; which is up to three times higher than the European average.

In 2007 the government reduced social benefits for the retired, people living alone, multi-child and

single mothers, children and young people. Currently, over 15 per cent, or 1.5 million people, of the total population of Belarus is registered in the territorial centres of social service as in need of support.

Moldova

The drought that struck Moldova beginning in 2006 and continuing throughout 2007 had both an immediate and a longer-term impact on the population and the economy of the country, thus increasing its poverty rate. According to FAO, cereal production fell by 63 per cent last year and by 70 per cent on average over the past five years. Food production in home gardens, which supplies 70 per cent of food for rural families, has been severely affected. A quarter of the nation's cattle have been sold according to government statistics, leading to further risks of malnutrition. The World Bank puts the overall losses to the economy at around one billion US dollars.

According to statistics from the International Organization of Migration, one quarter of the economically active population in Moldova permanently works abroad. For temporary jobs this number is even higher. As a consequence, elderly people are often left without necessary care and support and suffer from social exclusion.

There has also been a dramatic increase in sexually transmitted infections. According to estimates from the National Centre for Preventive Medicine, by the end of 2007 cumulatively there have been 4,131 new HIV cases reported for both banks of the river Dniester, out of which about 33 per cent have been registered in 2006-2007. TB and drug abuse also continue to present a serious problem to the national health.

Ukraine

Ongoing political instability heightened the social problems affecting the country. Over 27 per cent of the population live below the poverty line according to UNDP. The most affected by the ensuing poverty and lack of adequate health and social care are elderly people living alone, multi-child families, street children, disabled people, migrants and the homeless. Ukraine's annual inflation rate rocketed to 16.6 per cent in December 2007, the fastest since 2000, and the highest in Europe.

Meanwhile, the incidence rates of infectious diseases such as TB and HIV have reached epidemic levels and show no signs of decreasing. Ukraine has the most severe HIV epidemic in Europe, with an estimated adult prevalence of 1.4 per cent, and is spreading rapidly among injecting drug users (approximately 44 per cent of new cases in 2006) and through heterosexual transmission (accounting for approximately 35 per cent of new HIV cases) according to UNAIDS. As a substantial proportion of all cases occur in people under the age of 30, this epidemic poses a major threat to the country's future. PLHIV all too often suffer from stigma and discrimination when it comes to employment and access to state services.

Progress towards objectives

Health and Care

Belarus Objectives:

- The Belarus Red Cross significantly contributes towards raising awareness about HIV, developing healthy lifestyles, and fighting the stigmatization and discrimination of PLHIV among the younger generation.
- The Belarus Red Cross further develops an effective community-based first-aid programme.

HIV: The Belarus Red Cross continued its youth peer education programmes to improve young people's knowledge of HIV, promoting safer behaviour, and reducing discrimination and stigmatization of PLHIV. In addition to educational institutions in 17 towns across the country, peer education visits for the working youth started at factories. Addressing stigmatizing attitudes towards PLHIV was also on the curricula. Important work was carried out to develop young people's initiatives, such as social

theatre, outreach to rural areas and summer camps. Such mini-projects have notably enriched the HIV prevention programme and enabled access to difficult-to-reach target groups. They have also become a powerful incentive for recruiting and motivating volunteers.

Across the two years 750 trained Red Cross instructors conducted in total 2,196 education sessions on HIV and 100 actions for some 74,600 young people. In addition, 150 meetings and 68 educational workshops for parents and teachers were carried out. Recognizing the need to scale up both its activities and capacities to better tackle HIV in the country, the Belarus Red Cross joined the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV at the end of 2007. This alliance, launched by the International Federation on World AIDS Day on 1 December 2006, is a collective worldwide commitment to “do more and to do better” to reduce vulnerability to HIV and its impact.

An analysis of the questionnaires filled out by the participants of educational sessions showed that the Belarus Red Cross activities significantly broaden the level of knowledge about HIV prevention. Results of focus group meetings, conducted with the target group representatives within five-six months after their participation in the project activities, showed that 96 per cent have reliable knowledge about HIV, ways of its transmission and prevention.

First Aid: Financial support from local sources for the programme during the first six months of 2006 enabled the Belarus Red Cross to train 60 first-aid instructors and conduct 94 training sessions for over 900 individuals in Brest, Gomel and Vitebsk regions and the capital city of Minsk. In some branches first-aid trainings continued without external funding, thereby strengthening cooperation with the police departments, rescue departments, schools and health institutions.

Moldova Objective: The Moldova Red Cross effectively addresses the HIV epidemic through peer education, harm reduction and reducing stigma and discrimination among the target groups.

Fighting stigma and discrimination: The Red Cross addressed these issues by organizing peer education sessions for schoolchildren and teenagers, which at the same time promote healthy lifestyles. Poster painting contests and public exhibitions were organized around the theme of HIV prevention and round-table discussions with the stakeholders and the mass media discussed how discrimination affects individuals and has a negative impact on society. Advocacy campaigns and public events dedicated to International AIDS Day helped raise public awareness on the issue.

The *Youth against HIV and AIDS* programme, covering three areas of Moldova- Balti, Bender, Rezina- was built around a dedicated team of trained volunteers delivering peer education in secondary and high schools and universities. This approach transfers knowledge and teaches life skills intended to reduce stigma and discrimination among the targeted audience. Thus, in the framework of the action *Just be closer* held in Bender, the Red Cross peer educators established contacts through letter writing with inmates of penitentiary institutes living with HIV. A fragment from the letter of a prisoner, “...I am not a beast even if I’m a prisoner...I just made a mistake in my life. I am happy that someone in this world took interest in my person, nobody wrote to me until now”, underline how the programme can have a positive impact.

Harm reduction: Three harm reduction centres have operated in Bender, Rezina and Soroca with 240 permanent beneficiaries, constituting around one third of all 816 officially registered IDUs. Approximately 550 visits to the centres were registered monthly, with each injecting drug user visiting 4 or 5 times per week. Approximately 800 syringes and 300 condoms were distributed monthly. The centres were run by Red Cross teams, including a narcologist, a psychologist, a legal adviser and one or two nurses. Most of the regular clients were men aged 20-25 years of age.

Sport competitions, visits to the harm reduction centre and the Bender city prison have been organized for children and young people representing a key population at higher risk. These activities, in addition to the obvious promoting of healthier lifestyles through sport, also provided psychological, medical and legal counselling. Food stuffs, stationary, clothes and shoes were given out and the risks of using

drugs highlighted. Many young people from the target groups showed an interest in the various activities and some expressed a wish to become Red Cross volunteers. They were provided with information about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its activities, and invited to attend other public events on HIV and AIDS held by volunteers.

Ukraine Objectives:

- To enhance the capacity of the Ukraine Red Cross to manage HIV and STI related activities in the large-scale response to the spread of HIV-infection, STIs and drug abuse.
- To organize a vitamin supply for teenagers staying in penal institutions, to establish adequate sanitary conditions for them and to extend the detainees' knowledge about personal hygiene and healthy lifestyle, including the prevention of HIV and other infectious diseases.
- To reduce the risk of HIV transmission among injecting drug users in Ukraine.

Youth against HIV: In 2006 the Ukraine Red Cross raised public awareness of HIV and promoted healthy lifestyles. Around 23,000 young people took part in these sessions across Ukraine conducted by 154 young trainers. Thousands more received information through the mass media, informational materials and round tables.

As a result of the programme, the capacity of the Ukraine Red Cross to manage HIV and STI related activities has significantly increased and staff and volunteers in the regions where the project was implemented have learnt to work effectively with key groups at higher risk. Though there was no funding through the International Federation for these activities in 2007, the experience obtained was used in implementing similar bilateral projects funded by the Netherlands Red Cross and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Ukraine has expressed its intention to scale up the HIV programme it runs by participating in the first meeting of the Global Alliance on HIV organized by the Europe Zone for the National Societies of Europe in November 2007.

Improving living conditions of imprisoned youth: The project was implemented until February 2007 in penitentiary institutions for teenagers in the regions of Mykolayiv, Vinnitsa and Kremenchuk. Education sessions were delivered by trained young volunteers together with specialists from the local AIDS prevention centres, and hygiene kits were given to 900 young people in the institutions. Doctors and psychologists from the institutions, together with state authorities and NGOs working with imprisoned youth also took part in the activities.

Surveys conducted by the regional branches showed that awareness of HIV infection among young prisoners had increased. They also reported on their readiness to adopt healthier lifestyles and responsible sexual behaviour. In addition, the personal hygiene and general physical condition of the young people had improved.

Harm reduction: This project, funded by DFID and implemented between October and December 2006, ran syringe exchange and condom distribution, and provided information about HIV prevention and basic medical assistance to injecting drug users in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Nikolayev. These are two regions of Ukraine that are most seriously affected by HIV. The project was implemented by the Red Cross in close cooperation with local NGOs dealing with HIV prevention, greatly facilitating access to the target group. A seminar and a press conference for journalists were held to inform them and the wider public about the benefits of the harm reduction programme. These activities resulted in several stories supporting the programme approach appearing in the mass media of these regions.

In total, 200 IDUs benefited directly from the project. Many have adopted a safer approach to using syringes, becoming regular clients of the syringe exchange points.

Disaster Management

Capacity building cross-country Objective: Disaster preparedness and response capacities of the National Societies in the region are strengthened at the national and branch levels and community preparedness is improved.

In 2006 the Ukraine and Belarus Red Cross Societies both finalized their disaster preparedness and disaster response plans, with the Moldova Red Cross finalizing its plan in 2007. All three National Societies consolidated their existing disaster management branch networks based on these plans. A cooperation agreement signed in 2007 between the Belarus Red Cross and the Ministry of Emergencies defined the Red Cross's role as providing social support, for example distributing basic items and setting up first-aid points, to people affected by disasters. The ministry ensures that the Red Cross participates in its disaster response trainings and makes its warehouses available for its supplies, as well as informs it about disaster forecasts in Belarus.

The emergency response fund established by the Belarus Red Cross in May 2006 currently has 30,000 Swiss francs worth of material and financial resources. Furthermore, the emergency stocks created in each regional branch enable it to provide clothing, food and items of basic necessity to 800 people when disaster strikes. The Ukraine Red Cross has also continued replenishing its emergency funds at the local level and emergency stocks at national and local levels, while the Moldova Red Cross has emergency stocks situated only at the national level.

The International Federation's representation in Minsk created new and revised already existing, education modules in disaster response and disaster preparedness. Manuals were printed and distributed to all regional branches and were widely used by the National Societies in all three countries in training of staff and volunteers and while preparing DREF operations.

To better involve local populations in community-based disaster preparedness activities, 15 workshops for 627 participants were held in Belarus and Moldova on risk mapping, preparing community disaster response plans and evaluating basic needs. Subsequently, community response plans for fires and floods were designed and training sessions in fire response were held for local community members.

Public awareness events in Ukraine and Moldova around the launch of the Word Disaster Report, and information materials disseminated by all three National Societies on disaster preparedness, including avian influenza, reached around 3,657,000 people. In addition, more than 500 volunteers in Belarus conducted awareness-raising campaigns for the general public dedicated to the first global road safety week in 2007 and among children living in the most flood-prone areas in 2006, covering around 12,000 people.

As a result of the programme, the Red Cross Societies of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus better identified the capacities they need to effectively address disaster situations and their abilities to contribute to the regional response capacity. The new education materials and skills gained at international, regional and national workshops are a strong basis for future trainings in the region.

In 2007 no financial support was given for this programme, apart from 14,500 Swiss francs from DFID and ICRC to print 1,000 copies of the disaster response text book. However, all three National Societies tried to maintain the disaster management programmes from their own sources.

Belarus Objectives:

- The Belarus Red Cross strengthened its capacity to prevent human trafficking through raising the awareness of potential victims and the general public and providing reintegration assistance.
- The Belarus Red Cross is able to contribute to the nutritional status and provide social support to elderly people living alone, disabled people, people with TB and multi-child families, decreasing the impact of disasters and social isolation on the vulnerable populations.

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: A total of 404 people aged 18-35, out of which 75 per cent were female and 25 per cent male, who had been trafficked either to western Europe or Russia were referred to the Red Cross for assistance in reintegrating into society. The needs of each person were met through giving medical examinations, running professional courses or employment assistance and welfare payments as required. Five *Helping Hand* centres offered psychological, legal and social counselling. As part of the awareness campaign, lectures were organized for more than 30,000 people in small towns and villages.

Humanitarian Aid to the Vulnerable: With the funds donated by the Swiss Red Cross, 20,703 food parcels were distributed to 11,384 people, out of 76,000 who receive assistance at home from the Belarus Red Cross, in all 6 regions of Belarus. Additionally, 10 trucks of second-hand clothing donated by the Swedish, the Danish and the Finnish Red Cross Societies were given to 9,122 individuals. The groups selected to benefit were the elderly, the homeless, the disabled, people released from prisons and 16,181 multi-child families with low income who could not afford clothing. As a result, the humanitarian situation of the most vulnerable people and families was improved and their opportunities to lead a more active social life, including seeking out new sources of income, were strengthened. In addition to the clothing, many also benefited from nursing care, mainly those beneficiaries who were bed-ridden and mostly affected by social isolation.

Moldova Objectives:

- To address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable people- PLHIV from vulnerable families, street children, orphans, disabled children from vulnerable families and single elderly people with minimal pensions- affected by the socio-economic crisis.
- To reduce the scale and the impact of human trafficking in Moldova by addressing the humanitarian need of vulnerable people.

Relief assistance to the most vulnerable: Short-term nutritional support was given to the most vulnerable people in Chisinau, Balti, Hincesti, Criuleni, Basarabeasca and Tiraspol. This included a daily hot meal for eight months for street children, orphans and elderly people with minimal pensions. Beneficiaries that could not be provided with hot meals received food parcels and hygiene kits. The total number of beneficiaries who were provided with hot meals in the period of 2006-2007 was 2,460 or about 11 per cent of the total number of vulnerable people from the target areas. The number of beneficiaries who received food parcels and hygiene kits was approximately 2,000. However, due to the long running drought that affected Moldova in 2006–2007 the number of vulnerable people increased significantly.

In December 2007, a regional disaster response team mission was sent to Moldova to assess the needs of the population following the droughts that hit the country in the last two years and to prepare a response. The mission led to a DREF operation commencing in February 2008 to distribute food parcels and investigate possible sustainable interventions to help the long-term fight against chronic poverty and recurring droughts.

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: In the frame of this project, the Moldova Red Cross jointly with the International Organization for Migration and NGO *La Strada* have performed two peer education trainings with volunteers and staff, three seminars on preventing trafficking in women and children and informational sessions in schools and lyceums. In addition, 10,000 leaflets “Want to work abroad? Yes? No?” were published and disseminated among the population.

Ukraine Objective: The Ukraine Red Cross has contributed to strengthen the coping mechanisms of vulnerable communities.

Relief assistance to the most vulnerable: The Ukraine Red Cross distributed 170,000 kg of second-hand clothes from the Finnish and the Swedish Red Cross Societies to 480,000 vulnerable people in all 27 regions of Ukraine. The clothes were distributed through the regional branches, medico-social

centres to elderly people living alone, multi-children families and disabled persons.

Organizational development

Belarus Objectives:

- The Belarus Red Cross leadership is supported through leadership trainings and the branch set-up is developed through management staff trainings.
- The youth involvement and its role in decision-making in the Belarus Red Cross are increased.
- The level of self-organization and sustainability of groups of older persons is raised by providing access to information and organizing self-support groups.

Leadership and management strengthening: The Belarus Red Cross is engaged in a change process, with an external consultant from the International Federation assisting with specific organizational development issues. The society was supported in revising its statutes, amendments to which is a precondition to advancing organizational development, and elaborating a new strategic plan for 2008-2011. Consultancy missions were combined with workshops on governance, human resources management, project and strategic planning, financial management and resource mobilization. These were initiated and organized by the consortium of the Austrian, the German and the Swiss Red Cross Societies for 30 members of the senior leadership and management. In the course of the programme, the leadership has gained a much clearer idea of financial management and in 2008 is ready to proceed with the practical steps needed to revise the National Society's structure.

Despite difficulties connected to changing perceptions and mindsets, the involvement of the International Federation and other partners contributed greatly to improving the society's structure. This in turn led to better quality programmes that deliver real impact and were attractive for key national partners to cooperate with. The positive progress that has been made however requires consolidation through on-going technical and financial support in order to be sustainable.

Youth volunteer movement and participation: The youth programme was supported in 2006 by the International Federation's Capacity Building Fund, DFID and the Danish Red Cross and in 2007 solely by the Danish Red Cross. Through a small grant competition, the programme mobilized 161 young people in 2006 and over 600 young people in 2007 to develop and implement a total of 75 community-based services to over 20,500 vulnerable people in the regions of Brest and Grodno. The public, the mass media and the authorities have shown an interest in the programme and in the rights and needs of young people. The initiatives were also successful in local fund-raising, with over 70 per cent of the total budget coming from local contributions.

In 2007 youth and volunteer policies were developed in assistance with the Danish Red Cross delegate on the basis of the policies of the International Federation and adopted by the Belarus Red Cross presidium. The revised statutes guarantee at least one seat in the National Society presidium for a youth representative and a seat at the presidiums of the regional branches.

Older People: During six months of 2006 initiative groups made up of people from the self-support groups for older people were formed to give older people themselves the opportunity to ensure they have access to legal information and to decrease the intolerance and discrimination that can lead to their social isolation. In the pilot region of Mogilev region, 200 older people attended training workshops, 2,000 received reference materials and 10 self-support groups were created involving 1,000 older people in group activities. The Red Cross agreed with the Belarusian railway to distribute brochures, posters and broadcast an audio recording advocating support and understanding for older people on trains. The programme was also highlighted by the mass media. Thus, the Belarusian population became more familiar with the problems of elderly people.

Moldova Objectives:

- The quality of assistance for vulnerable families and their sick members in the selected regions of Moldova is improved through quality home-based services provided by a strengthened visiting nurses service (VNS).
- Governance and management of the National Society is strengthened; effective management structure, systems and procedures are established and implemented; a stable, capable and motivated management team and efficient support staff and volunteers are trained; material infrastructure for management and programme implementation at key branches is improved.

Nursing Care: Visiting nurses assisted 84 bed-ridden patients, 186 disabled people, 500 elderly people living alone, 75 PLHIV in medico-social centres and 100 disabled children from vulnerable single-parent families. The support covered taking blood pressure and assisting with medicines. Hot meals were provided to 120 of the beneficiaries.

Families that have one or more chronically ill member were helped to provide quality daily care within the family. An added bonus was that the volunteer movement within VNS has also increased, due to youth involvement in the round-table meetings, workshops and other activities organized by the branches.

Despite the lack of transport, prolonged spells of bad weather and high staff turnover due to the harsh economic and social situation, VNS provided effective support to the vulnerable people. In order to achieve the programme's goal and increase the human potential of VNS, in 2006 the Red Cross started elaborating its *Strategy for disaster preparedness and intervention in case of disasters*, its *Health Strategy* and its *Volunteering Strategy*.

Governance and management: Training in fund-raising, reporting and monitoring of humanitarian programmes for 160 Red Cross staff and volunteers was run in 2007. A booklet called *Red Cross*, reflecting the activities of the Moldova Red Cross, was edited and 15,300 copies distributed to branches. About 60 per cent of the materials have been already distributed at seminars, information sessions in schools, universities and during public events. Many volunteers report that they have become familiar with the Movement for the first time during the information sessions held by Red Cross staff and volunteers. The official web-site of the Moldova Red Cross was launched in December 2007.

However, in spite of these impressive developments, the efficiency of projects is limited because the National Society does not have a warehouse for temporary stocking equipment, but rents one at an expensive rate.

Ukraine Objectives:

- The Ukraine Red Cross resource development via corporate partnerships: developed mechanisms and means of fund-raising, as well as improved skills of the Ukraine Red Cross staff in fund-raising and marketing.
- The Ukraine Red Cross has enhanced the capacities of its branches in finance reporting and analysis.
- The Ukraine Red Cross has adopted and improved a new functional model, featuring introduction of legal, social, and psychological assistance as well as of quality assurance component.

Fund-raising: The project, funded only in 2006 by DFID, helped the Ukraine Red Cross to improve its fundraising capabilities and receive practical skills in organizing tenders. Through the seminars on fundraising in the headquarters 35 Red Cross staff members were trained on how to organize regional training sessions. Training received during seminars enable the staff to collect effectively local funds in addition to DREF during emergency situations like the severe cold in February 2006, the floods in Crimea during August 2006 and the massive storm in the Volyn region in August 2007.

Finance Service Development: The project, funded by DFID until June 2006, completed accounting processing in all regional Red Cross branches. Updated software ("1C-Accountancy") was installed and became operational. Appropriate training for finance specialists was held by the system administrator

employed for the project. This project strengthened the Red Cross's capacities by ensuring regular updating of the financial services, speeding up the report submission process and improving the quality of reporting.

Visiting Nurses Service (VNS) Development: The project was funded by DFID until July 2006, and by the Lars Amundsen Foundation for the rest of the two-year period. Thanks to these funds, 5,000 copies of a handbook on regulations for visiting nurses when providing legal, social and psychological assistance were distributed and 575 bicycles and 756 first-aid kits given to the nurses, enabling them to work more efficiently. In each of the pilot regions- Volyn, Ternopil, Chernivtsi- lawyers and volunteer psychologists gave free-of-charge legal and psychosocial assistance to the clients of the VNS either in their own homes or at a Red Cross medico-social centre. These specialists also consulted and taught visiting nurses on how to provide psychosocial assistance to beneficiaries. A total of 50,000 leaflets on first aid were sent to all branches across Ukraine.

Humanitarian values

Moldova Objective: The Moldova Red Cross has the capacity to promote the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values.

The Moldova Red Cross disseminated humanitarian values by organizing meetings for young people with a purpose to educate and actively promote tolerance and respect towards marginalized groups (e.g. elderly, people living with HIV and TB, unemployed, people with disabilities, members of minority groups); to involve PLHIV in various activities (based on the experiences gained through the programme *Youth against HIV*) and to organize activities fostering the public's accepting attitudes towards PLHIV. A contests of essays and drawings about Red Cross were held for schoolchildren. Two seminars and 11 round-table meetings were organized for Red Cross staff and volunteers. Public discussions dedicated to human dignity topics organized jointly with local authorities, local schools and non-governmental organizations were attended by 773 participants in five regions of Moldova.

Monitoring was carried out by the national programme coordinator during field visits and questionnaires distributed to participants at seminars and meetings. Pupil's essays and drawing competitions showed that the children's level of knowledge on the Movement, its activities and values had increased. As a further result, the expertise of Moldova Red Cross in disseminating information increased. Cooperation between the branches, local authorities, mass media and other non-governmental organizations has been strengthened.

Promotion of voluntary blood donation: Some 11,200 copies of information flyers on promoting blood donation were designed and distributed to Red Cross branches and the National Centre of Blood Transfusion. In addition, a publicity display called *Donate blood- save life!* was placed in Chisinau.

Ukraine Objective: The Ukraine Red Cross has been advocating for greater respect for human dignity and tolerance. With the financial support of the Swedish Red Cross in 2006 an information campaign with visual, audio and printed materials targeting the general population was developed to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Press conferences and round-table discussions, including PLHIV as participants, and educational sessions were conducted. The international arm-wrestling tournament *Athletes against AIDS* was an innovative anti-stigma activity where spectators during the breaks between rounds received anti-stigma leaflets and information about how HIV is transmitted. All funds raised were donated to orphanages in Kharkov where children with HIV receive treatment.

Working in partnership

All three National Societies in the region have established effective coordination with their national governments and local authorities. The ministries of emergency, health, education, labour, justice and different social welfare services actively participate in the Red Cross activities.

Close and effective collaboration was established with the partner National Societies, primarily the Danish, the Swiss, the Norwegian, the Finnish, the Swedish, the Austrian, the Italian, the Spanish, the Netherlands, the Japanese and the German Red Cross Societies through the International Federation as well as bilaterally. A number of local branches of the Belarus Red Cross maintain twinning relations with local branches of other National Societies, especially in the delivery of humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable people. Effective implementation of HIV prevention programmes is ensured by the partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, networks of PLHIV, national AIDS centres and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine.

In addition, several European development agencies, such as DFID, ECHO, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Austrian International Development Agency actively support Red Cross activities.

Cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) includes disseminating international humanitarian law, youth and anti-trafficking programmes in Ukraine and tracing services in Moldova and Belarus. The National Societies of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are increasingly seen by UNHCR, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNAIDS as reliable partners. Close partnership was established with NGOs including La Strada, Positive Movement, Fialta, Children's Christian Fund, Credinta, PATH (Programme for Appropriate Technologies on Health), and different youth clubs.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The programmes implemented are aligned with all four Global Agenda goals of the International Federation. The health and care programmes, in alignment with goals two and four, raise public awareness on HIV and AIDS, promote healthy lifestyles and fight stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV. By participating in the project young people have adopted safer behaviour in their lives. The National Societies have strengthened their capacities to prevent human trafficking through raising public awareness and providing reintegration assistance. Strengthened disaster preparedness and response capacities at national and branch levels are also contributing to longer-term sustainability.

The promotion of humanitarian values component helped the Moldova Red Cross encourage voluntary blood donation and attract youth volunteers to the Movement. This in turn encouraged the young people to act as agents for a positive change and to promote humanity and tolerance within their communities.

Recognizing that empowering women and integrating a gender perspective will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the organizations, both the Belarus and Ukrainian societies emphasize gender balance of all their projects. This particularly manifests itself in ensuring equal participation of women in decision-making processes, attendance at international conferences or workshops and mobilization of volunteers. The Belarus Red Cross is also starting to develop systems to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on membership, volunteers, staff and beneficiaries.

Looking ahead

Programmes in the field of health and care and disaster management, as well as capacity building, are identified by all three National Societies as major priorities for the next two years. HIV work will concentrate on providing comprehensive information to young people to help them change their attitudes and behaviour towards safe sexual behaviour, on building on the harm reduction projects and on combating discrimination and stigmatization of PLHIV. The quality of services will be increased and programmes expanded to new target regions and groups, such as the working youth in Belarus. TB control and palliative care programmes will be also continued.

Another priority programme, disaster management, will focus on improving disaster preparedness and

the response skills of Red Cross staff and volunteers through training and competitions. Efforts will be made to re-establish the Belarus Red Cross's first-aid programme which builds the capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies.

For programmes running in 2008 and 2009, the Belarus Red Cross will incorporate a component addressing gender issues through promoting human dignity and changing risky female behaviour in order to combat human trafficking. An extraordinary congress will be convened in Belarus to confirm the change process embarked upon and introduce new approaches towards the National Society's legal base, its governance and management structures, and further develop its strategic planning and policy-making principles.

The Moldova Red Cross will concentrate on establishing partnerships with civil society actors and local authorities to influence the policy and action of the government, international organizations and the private sector in favour of vulnerable people. Coherent advocacy and communication actions will help to reduce discrimination towards marginalized groups.

Depending on the availability of funds for the coming years, the Ukraine Red Cross will conduct programmes aimed at capacity building, including developing and promoting its youth volunteer movement, to address the needs of vulnerable groups. It will also strengthen the local community's capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability and raise the quality of services provided by the visiting nurses service by upgrading its resources.

The regional representation in Moscow and the Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine Representation will focus on assisting the National Societies to strengthen their capacities to better contribute to the Global Agenda Goals and to take forward the *Istanbul Commitments* of the 7th European Regional Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference, as well as to follow up on International Conference, General Assembly, Council of Delegates decisions, declarations and pledges.

How we work	
<p>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 (Sphere) in delivering quality and accountable 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</p>	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
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