

Report 2006-2007



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Russian Federation

Appeal No. MAARU001

3 April 2008

This report covers the period of 01/01/2006 to 31/12/2007 of a two-year planning and appeal process.



Young volunteers distribute leaflets about HIV and collect money in Belgorod market. Photo: International Federation

In brief

Programme summary: In 2006-2007, the Russian Red Cross pushed for development and innovation in addressing the four Global Agenda Goals. In so doing, together with the International Federation's regional representation it supported a deeper understanding of contemporary vulnerability through research and needs assessments, disseminated best practice through workshops and training sessions, and promoted effective service delivery through technical assistance and monitoring visits. As a result of the programmes, a decrease in the rate of Tuberculosis (TB) treatment interruption was reached, HIV prevention in penitentiary institutions was replicated in several other regions, and the increased involvement of beneficiaries in the Red Cross activities was ensured.

The National Society implemented five emergency operations funded by the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) totalling 338,143 Swiss francs. This included the regional operation in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova in response to the severe weather experienced in early 2006. Other operations were in response to a toxic spill in Khabarovsk region, the Koryakia earthquake, an outbreak of avian influenza and in 2007 a mine blast in Kemerovo region. This last operation drew on the experience that the National Society and the International Federation had gained from its programme run in Beslan offering psychosocial support to those affected. The lessons learnt have been used in other DREF operations across Europe and central Asia responding to people's needs following mine blasts.

Goal: In 2006-2007, the Russian Red Cross, in partnership with the International Federation, focused on:

- countering the spread of **HIV** and promoting care and support for people living with HIV
- assisting the regional authorities in developing an effective **TB control system** where

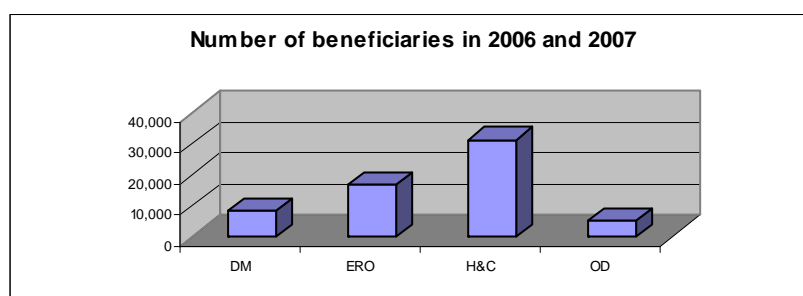
care and support is provided to the most vulnerable patients, thereby increasing adherence to the treatment

- promoting the **social inclusion** of marginalized groups by facilitating improved access to services and information
- providing timely **relief and support** to people affected by man-made and natural disasters.

Needs: Total 2006-2007 budget for the Russian Federation was CHF 6,059,637 (USD 5,420,069 or EUR 3,672,507) (out of which 105 per cent covered). While the disaster management and organizational development programmes were under-funded, the health and care programme was 119 per cent covered thanks to the funds provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and the British, the Swedish and the Italian Red Cross Societies. Click here to go directly to the attached financial reports: [Report 2006](#); [Report 2007](#); and [Report 2006-2007](#).

No. of people we help: In total 61,625 vulnerable people directly benefited from the programmes supported by the International Federation.

Programme	Target beneficiaries	No. of people we helped
Disaster Management	People affected by a disaster/suffering from trauma, Red Cross staff and volunteers.	8,402
Emergency Relief Operations	People affected by a disaster	16,982
Health and Care	TB patients, medical staff, ministry staff, people affected by TB, inmates and staff of penitentiary institutes, released PLHIV, friends and family of PLHIV, Russian Red Cross volunteers and employees, injecting drug users (IDUs) living with HIV, sex workers, students of schools for children with behaviour problems or orphanages, high school and university students.	31,216
Organizational Development	Older people	5,025



Our partners: The Russian Red Cross worked with eight partner National Societies, USAID and DFID, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies operating in Russia, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria,

different non-governmental organizations (NGOs), various governmental organizations at the federal and local levels, universities, medical research centres and educational institutions.

Current context

High crude oil and natural gas prices throughout 2006 and 2007 contributed to economic growth and stability. Past difficulties, nevertheless, have left many social problems in the Russian Federation unsolved. Certain categories of vulnerable people such as the elderly, children, the disabled and people living with HIV (PLHIV) suffer from social exclusion, discrimination and poor

access to services. The challenge for the Red Cross in this period was to meet the needs and promote the interests of these vulnerable people who do not have effective access to governmental economic and social programmes. The International Federation played a significant role in coordinating support for the Russian Red Cross work.

Public health problems put vulnerable groups at additional risk. Diseases such as multi-drug resistant TB and the expanding HIV epidemic contribute to increased vulnerability. In the past two years the HIV epidemic was characterized by increased cases of sexual transmission and mother to child transmission. The number of PLHIV in need of treatment and palliative care distinctly increased, first of all among injecting drug users (IDUs). The problem of HIV and TB co-infection became even more acute. The Russian government has allocated significant resources to HIV prevention. However, these resources are channelled mainly through government bodies while NGOs have limited access to them. Although the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria continue its support to the programmes in Russia, the interest of many other international donors has reduced.

The absence of a national legal base built upon internationally recognized best practices that define regiments and recording systems seriously weakens the efforts to respond to TB in Russia. Direct results of it are the high number of treatment defaults and the high number of multi-drug resistant (MDR) clients. Thus, compliance with treatment is a major challenge in TB control.

Older people, roughly 26 per cent of the population, with low pensions tend to benefit least from the economic growth that has taken place. Many of them suffer from poor housing, difficult to access health care, and often experience social isolation. In a rapidly changing economic environment, they have limited coping strategies.

Progress towards objectives

Health and Care

Objective:

- To counter the spread of HIV and promote care and support for people living with HIV
- To decrease stigma and discrimination in the society shown towards the target groups of the programme
- To assist regional authorities in developing an effective TB control system where care and support is provided to the most vulnerable patients thereby increasing adherence to the treatment

During 2006-2007 the Russian Red Cross, with support from the International Federation's representation, worked in the 15 regions of the Russian Federation towards limiting the spread of **HIV** infection. This was carried out by developing and implementing effective reproducible models of prophylaxis and complex support to vulnerable groups. To achieve maximum effectiveness of the services, the Russian Red Cross put special emphasis on strengthening the potential of its regional branches, wide involvement of target group representatives in peer to peer educational activities, and on building stable partnerships with governmental agencies, NGOs and PLHIV communities. Financial support from USAID, the British, the Swedish and the Italian Red Cross Societies received in the framework of all HIV prevention programmes was used for a systemic training of Russian Red Cross staff on the complexity of questions related to HIV-infection and managerial development in 11 regions of the Russian Federation.

Peer to peer education activities provided access to reliable information on HIV prevention and healthy lifestyles to students of schools for children with behaviour problems or orphanages. It

allowed the information vacuum in this target group to be filled and the level of injecting drug use and unsafe sexual behaviour to be reduced. Results were reached mainly by including students in the programme who subsequently shared knowledge with their peers.

To overcome the resistance from parents, teachers and staff of the penitentiary system towards prophylactic HIV programmes that provide information about safe sex to the youth groups, these groups were also involved in the education activities and trainings on how to overcome the burning out syndrome.

Another example of the effective work of the Russian Red Cross was ensuring access for injecting drug users to medical support and rehabilitation free of charge. At last, thanks to the combined efforts of the Russian Red Cross and the Russian Federal Service for Sentence Execution (FSSE), the experience of HIV-infection prophylaxis and support for PLHIV in the penitentiary system of the Russian Federation is a unique model that was developed. All programmes of HIV prevention included a component aimed at decreasing stigma and discrimination.

Russia 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. The 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.

The regional representation jointly with the Russian Red Cross implemented the **TB programme** in accordance with internationally recognized best practices and recommended strategies of WHO. In practice it was carried out through various trainings, systematic monitoring trips, coordination efforts among the partners and by implementing a patient-centred approach.

Programme statistics indicate that the rate of treatment interruption among patients receiving Red Cross incentives is not more than 2 per cent, compared to a rate of approximately 15 per cent among patients not receiving incentives. This is especially true for inmates of penitentiary institutions awaiting release, who were advised by the Russian Red Cross on social reintegration issues.

A decrease in the rate of treatment interruption was also achieved by strengthening the diagnostic capacities of the medical institutions through training TB doctors and laboratory staff, increasing logistics capacity and providing new laboratory equipment.

The lessons learned from the project implementation have been captured in training modules and shared with the National Societies of Serbia and Montenegro. The manual has been included in the International Federation’s TB guidelines and has been approved by the health commission. By introducing a proper reporting system, the Russian Red Cross was able to show the direct impact of the programme to the local authorities. This resulted in financial support for the programme at the regional level.

The difficulty of coordinating with many partners in TB intervention was overcome by effective communication by the Russian Red Cross with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice. Thus, the beneficiaries of the Russian Red Cross programmes were provided with support regardless of administrative barriers.

Disaster Management

Objectives:

- To facilitate the integration of forced migrants into society by providing highly-qualified free

- of charge legal, psychological, medico-social and humanitarian support
- To provide timely relief and support to people affected by man-made and natural disasters

The **population movement** programme, implemented until March 2006, provided forced migrants with complex psychological, legal and social assistance at the Russian Red Cross regional reception points in Moscow and Orenburg, and in railway stations where permission was granted to operate. All Russian Red Cross branches participating in the programme perform complementary functions in relation to governmental structures. From January-March 2006, 855 persons - including 556 migrants - applied to the Red Cross's regional reception points and received counseling from a jurist, psychologist or a social worker. During the same period 372 persons - including 157 migrants - applied to Red Cross jurists at the railway station for legal assistance and received counseling. In addition, a number of public actions involving migrants and the local population were organized to assist in integrating migrants into the local communities.

As a result of the programme, public awareness on issues of forced migration has increased with migrants and the general population having been provided with qualified social, legal and psychological services. The Red Cross strengthened its contacts with the regional and local authorities, migration departments and public organizations which address the problems migrants often experience.

Research conducted in spring 2006 showed that the vulnerability of migrants no longer differed much from that of the local population. Therefore, a decision was taken to stop the programme and switch efforts to other issues, such as HIV prevention.

The **Beslan programme** worked in two main directions:

- To improve the quality of life, health state of children and members of the families affected by the Beslan hostage crisis
- To alleviate the consequences of the crisis by long-term rehabilitation and psychosocial help to the affected population

In 2006 and 2007, 11 Russian Red Cross visiting nurses, 3 social workers and 3 psychologists provided social and psychological support to the affected families at their homes, and encouraged them to join various activities at the Red Cross centre. Through volunteering, the local community was involved in the social organization process and self-support. The results of the work of the Red Cross centre in Beslan has shown that the programme is effective and in demand. Red Cross public events and public relations had a strong impact on restoring social ties and values. Within 2 years the programme has covered more than 7,000 people.

The Russian Red Cross staff enriched their psychosocial support and communication experience with new skills in social mobilization. They organized social events for the community, involved volunteers, developed projects, attracted local sponsors, worked with the media, received additional training in organizational development and mastered the art of psychosocial education for the community. Two mini-projects established by the Red Cross staff- *Ray of hope* and *Puppet Theatre*- got support through the programme and were launched in February 2007.

In addition to the main programme activities, the Beslan programme was extended with a disaster management capacity building component implemented until November 2006. The Red Cross's headquarters tried to consolidate the efforts already made for creating a solid basis for the disaster response system. This was largely through improving the knowledge and skills of its staff and volunteers, strengthening cooperation within and outside the National Society, disseminating knowledge on disaster preparedness and raising public awareness in disaster-prone areas.

The Russian Red Cross's strengthened capacity in disaster response manifested itself during the

emergency relief operations conducted by the Red Cross branches as response to five mid-scale disasters by launching DREF operations and several dozen small-scale operations in response to road and aircraft accidents, domestic fires and floods. In total, the Russian Red Cross provided assistance to around 17,000 people affected by disasters, besides the Beslan programme, in 12 regions of the Russian Federation.

Organizational Development

Objective: To promote the social inclusion of marginalized groups through facilitating improved access to services and information

In 2006, the focus of the programme shifted from service delivery to advocacy and the promotion of social inclusion by working more closely with older people in order to ensure that their needs are met. Following the adoption of Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods, which involved 750 people in needs assessment and subsequently in programme activities, the *Older people* programme consisted of three main components:

- The Russian Red Cross's socio-medical rooms provided venues for older people to access information on their rights, socially interact and receive basic medical services. Fifteen advocating and information centres have been created with up to 1,500 older people taking part in their work on a regular basis. There were 30 information boards functioning, and more than 27,000 information leaflets and booklets were distributed to 5,000 older people.
- The Russian Red Cross utilized its position as auxiliary to the public authorities in providing social welfare services to facilitate mobilization and advocacy opportunities. It increased the capacity of older people to influence service delivery and social policy. Up to 20 information workshops and 60 lectures on legal issues, psychology and proactive life attitudes were held for more than 2,200 older people. Fifteen members of the Red Cross's regional branches participating in the programme gained knowledge and practical skills in fund-raising and business planning thanks to two organizational development trainings. As a result, the attitude of the branches towards their relationship with local businesses and local authorities- their potential donors- has changed, and they agreed that fund-raising work was essential for the programme's sustainability. In addition, 20 social and medical workers from the Red Cross and the state system were educated on better ways of working with older people and the *United Nations Principles for Older Persons*.
- Social policies and services have been reviewed, developed and implemented at the local level in order to reflect the needs of the elderly and reduce their vulnerability. Ten round tables and 30 meetings with local authorities involving active groups of older people were held and one concluding conference at the end of the year focussing on programme results. Following this initiative, the Red Cross's recommendations for working with older people were included in the regional social development programme for 2008. In Tomsk and Samara the new law on Second World War Veterans was enforced, giving more privileges to older people and veterans of war. Due to Red Cross advocacy, a new regional centre for the veterans in Tomsk will be built. In Samara the regional budget for 2008 for social and medical expenditures increased and a Civil Council defending older people was created in Novgorod under Red Cross auspices.

However, not many older people are ready to take a more active position vis-à-vis creating self-run volunteer and advocacy groups and making a stronger effort to change the current situation. For the most part the impact is limited to the beneficiaries of the Red Cross centres. In each region this amounts to several hundred people only. In some cases however, there is evidence of policy change as a result of advocacy, and this is impacting on the wider groups of older people.

Working in partnership

The Russian Red Cross, together with the International Federation's regional representation, expanded its partnership links and strengthened cooperation with various national and international partners. The programmes receive full support from the state authorities at all levels—federal, regional, and local. Various ministries, local authorities, legislative bodies, medical institutions, universities, schools and social welfare services actively participate in the Red Cross activities. The Ministry of Justice and the Federal Service for Sentence Execution (FSSE) provide full support for the Red Cross HIV and TB programmes targeting people living with HIV or TB within the state penitentiary system. A multidisciplinary team was formed and at the present moment is developing a model for complex support of PLHIV in penitentiary institutes awaiting release. The Russian Red Cross also participates in hearings of the Public Chamber on public health issues and is a member of the high level working group that advises the Ministry of Health on infectious disease control. At the regional level, the Red Cross has developed partnerships with public organizations of PLHIV that provide an opportunity for local branches to carry out trainings for PLHIV. In addition, several regional branches take an active part in the harm reduction network.

Working with older people, the Red Cross enjoys close collaboration with Russia's largest NGO focusing on support to older people – the Veterans' Association. Likewise, as is the case with child welfare, there is an important partnership with the social welfare services.

Within the International Federation, the Russian Red Cross has established close contacts with the American, the British, the Norwegian, the Swiss, the Austrian, the Danish, the Finnish and the Swedish Red Cross Societies bilaterally or multilaterally through the International Federation. The Norwegian Red Cross worked in Russia under an operational alliance agreement designed to promote a reduction in child vulnerability. In the framework of HIV programmes information exchange was intensified with the National Societies of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova, central Asia, and southern Caucasus and within the European Regional Network on AIDS and TB (ERNA). Experience of the Russian Red Cross in psychosocial support was shared with the National Societies of Ukraine and Kazakhstan that launched DREF operations to provide support to the people affected by mine accidents.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) are major partners outside of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. USAID provides major technical and financial assistance to TB and HIV programmes while DFID's financial support focused on the disaster management and regional capacity building programmes.

Effective collaboration was ensured with ICRC, and a number of UN agencies represented in the Russian Federation (WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNODC, UNFPA, UNDP, ILO) and various NGOs (AFEW, TPAA, ITPC, AIHA, Healthy Russia, La Strada, Credinta, Positive Movement, Fialta Acasa, Benonta, Charity Aid Foundation, Rosinka, Partners in Health, National AIDS forum of service organizations).

Contributing to longer-term impact

The potential of the Russian Red Cross's regional branches to react in a timely and effective manner to the HIV epidemic, to attract resources, and to develop programmes independently has increased significantly. Wide involvement of vulnerable people in volunteer activities contributed to decreased intolerance, discrimination and social isolation. Within the framework of the programme special accent was put on women's vulnerability in the face of the HIV epidemic, in particular in the penitentiary system. To provide internationally acknowledged standards in the

quality of services, United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) and Global Alliance indicators for programme monitoring and evaluation were accepted in 2007. All the achievements mentioned in this report promoted the progress of one of the Millennium Development Goals- HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases prevention.

Experience gained through the implementation of the USAID funded TB project provided the basis for the Russian Red Cross to receive funds from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to be implemented in 20 regions of the Russian Federation.

Beneficiaries of the *Older People* programme describe improved access to services and reduced vulnerability through better cooperation with social policy-makers. They feel that their interests and opinions are taken into account in the design of policies and budgets in the regions; their improved feelings of self-worth and self-respect with their greater knowledge and familiarity with their rights; and social interaction with their peers and increased involvement in the wider society.

The Beslan programme has demonstrated a niche for the Russian Red Cross in the provision of psychosocial support, both during post-crisis and in addressing the psychosocial consequences of long-term vulnerability. It is a niche that has been recognized by the state and the community. On the basis of the experience gained, a *Strategy of Psychosocial Support in the Russian Red Cross* was adopted in November 2007.

Looking Ahead

Taking into account that financial support to the Russian Red Cross's HIV programmes by international donors is secured only until the end of 2008, the efforts of heightening Russian Red Cross attractiveness for local funding will be undertaken to achieve stable self-development of programmes and activities. Thus, in accordance with the results reached in 2006-2007, the Russian Red Cross's strategy of HIV epidemic prevention will be developed and new models of HIV and TB prophylaxis will be worked through, providing injecting drug users living with HIV with palliative care, street teenagers and people released from penitentiary institutes with medico-social support. Actions will be held to collect resources of private donations for the peer to peer programme development.

The TB programme will be continued in two directions. Firstly through developing a model to address HIV and TB co-infection and secondly by ensuring the Russian Red Cross niche in assisting the Ministry of Health in TB diagnostics is reinforced. Clients' further involvement in project implementation is also planned for the coming future.

The HIV programme's harm reduction component will be developed in the direction of better service provision to PLHIV especially in palliative care intervention. In 2008 the *Older People* programme will concentrate on:

1. capturing the main learning points from the pilot projects and disseminating empowerment and advocacy as part of the Red Cross's policy towards working with older people
2. including training in volunteer management and fund-raising in project design to increase sustainability
3. working out the cost benefit of the Red Cross social centres as opposed to state services and advocating with state authorities for their replication
4. developing strategies for extending and implementing similar social programming and advocacy work with vulnerable groups in other areas of Russia and the region.

In 2008 the Russian Red Cross's psychosocial support (PSS) programme in Beslan with the support of the International Federation shall include three main components:

1. support for the people affected and still suffering from trauma (28 families), social mobilization and dissemination of the PSS programme in North Ossetia and other regions of Russia through the Red Cross resource centre in Beslan
2. the support programme *Our New World* for children with disabilities in Beslan
3. spread of PSS knowledge through pilot workshops in other regions of Russia

The regional representation in Moscow will focus on assisting the National Society to strengthen its 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	
<p>For further information on this Appeal, contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Representation for Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova: Tore Svenning, Regional Representative a.i., Moscow, phone +7499 126 15 66; email: tore.svenning@ifrc.org • Europe Zone Office: Leon Prop, Deputy Head, Budapest, phone: +361 248 33 00; fax: +361 248 33 22; email: leon.prop@ifrc.org 	