

Annual report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Southern Caucasus

Appeal No. MAA69001

30 April 2009

This report covers the period 01/01/08 to 31/12/09.



Photo 1: Armenian Red Cross volunteers marching on World AIDS Day 1 December 2008. Armenian Red Cross Society.

In brief

Programme purpose: The programme activities of the southern Caucasus National Societies were aligned with and contributed to the Global Agenda Goals aiming to improve the lives and alleviate suffering among the most vulnerable people through disaster management, health and care, organizational development, and focus on the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian values.

Programme(s) summary¹: The National Societies in southern Caucasus implemented activities mainly within disaster management, health and care and organizational development. The main activities within the programmes were:

- *Disaster management* with special emphasis on disaster response capacity-building
- *Health and care* through HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and harm reduction, first aid, psychosocial support, blood donation and general health and care and social support.
- *Organizational development* focusing on capacity building, financial management, fund-raising and resource mobilization, communication and public relations, branch development, and youth and volunteer development
- *Humanitarian values* were indirectly targeted by other programmes and only to some extent directly with specific activities.

Although the National Societies managed to implement various programme activities, the total

¹ The 2008 annual report for southern Caucasus applies a more country-focused approach as opposed to the more thematic oriented approach in the 2008 update. This has been done to facilitate the change to country-based plans from 2009 on and the subsequent writing of country-based updates and annual reports.

progress towards the overall objectives was somehow hampered by the level of funding. Consequently not all the planned activities could be carried out and were either postponed or cancelled altogether. However, along with the actual funds available programme activities implemented during the reporting period nonetheless represented a continuation of previously International Federation supported and funded programme activities.

Financial situation: The total 2008 appeal budget was initially CHF 2,901,541 (USD 2,637,765 or EUR 1,796,620). The final 2008 budget after project budget revisions in all countries was CHF 2,435,106 (USD 2,215,747 or EUR 1,507,815) out of which 71 per cent covered. Expenditure overall was 45 per cent. In total 10 project budget revisions were done to adjust budgets to lack of income, while 2 project budgets were increased to reflect increased funding among others within disaster management in Georgia.

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

No. of people we help:

| Prog. area | Country | No. people reached | % Gender | | % Age | | | % | % Location | |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|--------|-------|-------|-----|----------|------------|-------|
| | | | Male | Female | 0-18 | 19-40 | 40+ | Disabled | Urban | Rural |
| DM | Armenia | 21,500 | 55 | 45 | 90 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 80 | 20 |
| | Azerbaijan | 81 | 56 | 44 | 2 | 26 | 72 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| | Georgia | 335 | 56 | 44 | 18 | 54 | 28 | 0 | 60 | 40 |
| HC | Armenia | 3,500 | 53 | 47 | 72 | 10 | 18 | 9 | 94 | 6 |
| | Azerbaijan | 24,078 | 52 | 48 | 22 | 46 | 32 | 14 | 38 | 48 |
| | Georgia | 7,421 | 32 | 68 | 6 | 73 | 21 | 3 | 100 | 0 |
| OD | Armenia | 6,700 | 60 | 40 | 70 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| | Azerbaijan | 2,910 | 54 | 46 | 24 | 42 | 34 | 15 | 28 | 57 |
| | Georgia | 600 | 42 | 58 | 8 | 75 | 17 | 0 | 81 | 19 |
| HV* | Armenia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Azerbaijan | 502 | 51 | 49 | 20 | 48 | 32 | 15 | 28 | 57 |
| | Georgia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | Armenia | 31,700 | 56 | 44 | 84 | 6 | 10 | 1 | 86 | 14 |
| | Azerbaijan | 27,571 | 54 | 46 | 18 | 40 | 42 | 8 | 26 | 66 |
| | Georgia | 8,356 | 43 | 57 | 11 | 67 | 22 | 1 | 80 | 20 |
| Southern Caucasus | | 67,627 | | | | | | | | |

Table 1: People reached disaggregated on country, gender, age, condition and location *Also targeted by other programmes indirectly.

Our partners: The southern Caucasus National Societies had at least seven partnerships within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Outside the Movement the National Societies cooperated with numerous actors including among others state bodies at different levels and with different functions, the United Nations (UN), organizations and institutes (please see *Working in partnership* for detailed overview).

Context

Southern Caucasus, comprising the three former Soviet countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, is a region characterized by unresolved conflicts, political instability, lingering economic crises, endemic unemployment and social problems as well as grave environmental problems. Furthermore a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are located in the region. Social and health indicators such as the number of injecting drug users (IDUs) and people living with HIV show an upward trend.

Economic conditions continued to be difficult although some improvements were registered such as a 25 per cent increase in the monthly pension in Georgia and considerable economic growth in Azerbaijan due to large and growing oil exports. However, poverty remains widespread and in 2008 the region was affected by soaring world food and energy prices exacerbated by the financial crisis. The crisis has led to significant monetary losses for the National Societies in terms of exchange rate fluctuations.

Presidential elections took place in both Georgia and Armenia in January and February respectively. The opposition in both countries brought allegations of fraud and irregularities and intense protests and violent confrontations between police forces and protesters followed. In Armenia the president declared a 20 day state of emergency in March and in Georgia extraordinary parliamentary elections took place in May.

In terms of security tensions grew between Armenia and Azerbaijan in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh area. However, the two countries' foreign ministers initiated talks to reach a peace settlement over the disputed area.

In Georgia increasing tensions over the two outbreak regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia accompanied by growing tensions in the relationship between Georgia and the Russian Federation erupted in conflict in August. The conflict, which ended a week later, was by far the most serious event in the region and resulted in many deaths and thousands fleeing their homes without possibility to bring their possessions. Thus the government and humanitarian organizations in the country were confronted with serious humanitarian needs. The thousands displaced by the conflict came in addition to the country's already 220,000 IDPs. Signs of growing internal discontent intensified after the war. In accordance with the Seville Agreement, ICRC was leading the Movement's operations in the country. Following the recommendations from an International Federation organized rapid assessment a Harmonized Operational Programme agreement between the International Federation and ICRC was signed to support the Georgian Red Cross. In this agreement an allocation of 233,690 Swiss francs from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) was also included. The agreement covered capacity building within disaster management, first aid, psychosocial support as well as increased visibility.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Outcome/Expected result: To reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters

Georgia: In Georgia, the International Federation-supported disaster management efforts were reinitiated following the August conflict. The conflict demonstrated that the National Society was in need of developing its *capacities for responding to emergencies*. Capacity building in disaster management was thus included in a Harmonized Operational Programme (HOP) agreement between the International Federation and ICRC along with psychosocial support, first aid and winterization support.² The signing of the agreement was recommended following an assessment undertaken by a Federation Rapid Assessment Team (RAT). The support helped the society with revitalizing and putting in place the very foundations for developing longer-term disaster management structures. In order to integrate the supported components in the HOP agreement, the International Federation revised its 2008-2009 country plan for Georgia.

² The agreement was funded by a DREF allocation on 27 August 2008 amounting to CHF 233,690 as well as funds from ICRC following a budget extension.

As part of the reinitiated disaster management efforts the society assisted more than 8,400 people countrywide. The National Society was furthermore included in a national disaster response plan approved by the Georgian government at the end of August. The regional disaster management coordinator for central Europe and southern Caucasus paid three working visits to Georgia and assisted the National Society in its endeavours to develop a disaster management strategy and plan of action. In order to further boost capacity building the International Federation, supported by ICRC, deployed a disaster management expert from the Danish Red Cross to support the National Society with strategy development and planning. Furthermore, a regional disaster response team (RDRT) member from the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived to assist the National Society in providing winterization relief. The Georgian Red Cross, in cooperation with the International Federation, conducted several trainings and put in place the foundations for the development of so-called Red Cross Action Teams (RCAT) in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Bolnisi, Gori and Batumi branches. These teams consisted of Red Cross personnel with competencies in disaster management, first-aid and psychosocial support, and was a unique model for integrating different programme components in areas in which the National Society work. Trainings conducted focused on needs assessments, planning, and implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Since the beginning of December much of the National Society's work within disaster management focused on winterization support to vulnerable people. These efforts directly contributed to the society's overall capacity building in disaster management. The programme aimed at providing winter clothing and blankets to 6,250 IDPs from 1,250 IDP families in collective centres in Bolnisi, Gardabani, Rustavi, Tbilisi and Kaspi. With technical assistance from the Federation disaster management delegate and RDRT member, and in close cooperation with National Society staff and volunteers, the society was supported in methods for direct distribution; establishment of programme best practices using a log frame³ and work plans; comparative bid analysis, supplier selection criteria, procedural documentation, targeting and selection criteria, and training exercises. The National Society's warehouse was assessed in terms of conditions and space for stockpiling winterization items. The procurement and distribution of items were mainly to be completed in 2009.

Armenia: The Armenian Red Cross continued developing its *disaster response capacity*. Enhanced response capacity was achieved by preparing and implementing guidelines, reaching agreements and cooperating with internal as well external stakeholders, participating in meetings and round-table discussions and through practical trainings, exercises and by responding to real-event emergencies. In order to define its role within disaster management in Armenia the National Society, together with the Armenian Rescue Service and the newly established Ministry of Emergency Situations, developed a memorandum of understanding which is to be signed in 2009. The signing was postponed due to comments made by the ministry that need to be considered and reviewed.

The society continued implementing its national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms (NDPRM). The project aimed to carry out theoretical as well as practical testing of preparedness and response guidelines and to prove its effectiveness in the Armenian context.

Since November, the society made a two-month long disaster *risk reduction* scoping study supported by the International Federation and funded by the World Bank. Building upon these efforts a three-year disaster risk reduction programme with a detailed plan of action, budget and briefing documents were developed and an application prepared for submission to the World Bank.

Trainings and exercises were essential activities in improving the society's response capacity:

³ Including objective setting, action planning, indicator identification and means of verification

- Volunteers were trained in national disaster response and disaster management respectively. The latter course was organized by the Crisis Management State Academy. Totally 37 volunteers were trained.
- In cooperation with the German Red Cross, lifeguard trainings were conducted in which 32 volunteers participated. The trainings aimed at developing lifeguard capacity in order to establish a Red Cross lifeguard service at the Sevan Lake.
- In total 22 volunteers were trained to enhance preparedness and response knowledge and practical skill. Another 15 volunteers in Kotayk took part in training and simulation exercise to consolidate and develop good relations between volunteers and gaining skills and experience of rescue and searching operations.
- National Society staff attended a humanitarian relief operation course in Sweden and a course on international environment operations in Croatia as well as regional disaster response team (RDRT) training in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Awareness raising and risk reduction were priority areas for the society as well. Federation supported activities in this regard targeted children and young people.

- A children's quiz and drawing contest were conducted for some 800 pupils from the four cities mostly affected by the 1988 Spitak earthquake. The children raised their knowledge on natural and man-made disasters and coping mechanisms, and learnt how to act in case of disasters and protect themselves during earthquakes.
- Totally 28 evacuations were simulated in schools countrywide with the participation of some 17,000 pupils and teachers. The simulations aimed to prepare and train them for how to organize and manage evacuations in a secure and efficient manner.

Responding to the local authorities' request the Armenian Red Cross responded to fires which occurred in February and March. The National Society provided blankets, second-hand cloths and ten sacks of flour to the people affected by the fires. Operational capacity was further built through the deployment of two RDRT staff members on missions in Moldova and Ukraine respectively for assessment, monitoring and survey purposes.

Azerbaijan: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent sought to play an active role in *responding to disasters* by conducting needs assessment and distributing non-food items, as well as building community preparedness through public awareness-raising about risks and hazards. So far the National Society has been able to create basic disaster management structures and systems, expand its network of well-trained staff and volunteers and establish relationships with governmental structures, UN agencies and other organizations as well as strengthen regional cooperation. Being highly dependent on support from the Norwegian Red Cross, the National Society focused on expanding partnerships within disaster management. A result of these efforts is the cooperation with Polish Red Cross in community-based first-aid activities in rural areas.

Future cooperation with Oxfam was discussed including assistance in developing the National Society's contingency plan. Furthermore Oxfam recognized the International Federation's and the society's support to the Sphere project which was translated into Azeri language. Federation and National Society representatives also attended a workshop organized by UNDP and UNICEF on UN contingency planning and became members of a working group with the purpose of strengthening links with UN agencies. The signing of agreements between the International Federation and UN agencies was simultaneously announced.

The National Society organized and attended several meetings within disaster management:

- Several training seminars on emergency needs assessment for 76 staff and members of mobile volunteer teams (MVT) were organized. MVT members were sought, motivated by the purchase of 35 chess boards. Four team members assessed the needs of a family which had lost its home in a fire and provided them with household items.
- The National Society along with the International Federation participated at the regional disaster management coordinators' meeting in Budapest in March. During the meeting

National Societies' knowledge and experiences were shared and updated information within shelter, relief and water and sanitation was presented. Disaster management priorities for each society were set up and coordination and cooperation was agreed.

- The head of disaster management department participated at a meeting following the conflict in Georgia to foster regional cooperation and support the Red Cross in Georgia.

Constraints or Challenges

The main challenges in Georgia were related to a lack of experience and skills in implementing disaster management activities. Together with the absence of a contingency plan this negatively affected communication within the National Society and weakened the possibilities among branches for rapid and complete situation assessments. The development of a disaster management strategy as well as contingency planning was not achieved due to changes in personnel and heavy focus on winterization relief efforts. In both Armenia and Azerbaijan limited funding, exacerbated by the financial crisis and fluctuations in exchange rates, led to some activities being postponed or cancelled such as local training sessions and simulations. The Armenian Red Cross recognizes the need to advocate for the integration of its contingency plan into the national contingency plan. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent did not manage to renovate its central warehouse and stocks at regional level were only partly replenished.

Health and Care

Outcome/Expected result: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

In southern Caucasus the National Societies, supported by the International Federation, implemented activities within HIV and AIDS; tuberculosis (TB); first aid; psychosocial support; social support to vulnerable elderly people; general health and care; and blood donation.

Georgia: In responding to the existing *HIV and AIDS* situation in Georgia, the National Society focused on increasing the number of prevention interventions especially among youth. The society successfully increased the number of regions covered from five to seven. Some 6,000 trained community leaders disseminated information on HIV and AIDS and anti-stigma among some 8,000 community members and 5,000 knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) questionnaires were filled in. During the World AIDS Day 1 December staff and volunteers organized events in Tbilisi and six other regions. Leaflets on HIV and AIDS and harm reduction as well as condoms were distributed.

The society, supported by the International Federation with "Ely Lilly" as back donor implemented *drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) control activities* focusing on taking part in the national DR-TB control programme; raising community awareness; and combating stigma and discrimination. A total of 271 clients were consulted and as a result 234 clients agreed to treatment. Nurses trained in DOTS⁴ served 51 clients and conducted 2,500 home visits.

The National Society continued building its network of trained social workers providing *social support* to elderly people. The social support aimed to reduce isolation, increase self-respect, inform about rights and entitlements and facilitate opinion exchange, provide food and non-food items and help with daily tasks. Volunteers paid 22,500 visits to 1,500 elderly people. In order to develop a social support model building upon past experiences the society will closely integrate support activities implemented in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. An assessment of social conditions among the elderly and the effectiveness of the social services provided showed serious needs and demonstrated the necessity of establishing a strong and wide advocacy network for promoting the interests' and rights' of elderly people. To this end a working group was established with the participation of the National Society and several governmental and non-governmental

⁴ Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course

organizations. A promising outcome so far is the authorities' recognition of the society's contribution in supporting vulnerable elderly people and the exploration of opportunities for further cooperation. Capacity building activities were organized for volunteers and elderly people involved in the project including management training; volunteer recruitment; information gathering on rights and entitlements; service delivery; and intergenerational interaction. Trainings on community-based first aid, healthy lifestyle and active aging; infectious diseases; and disaster preparedness and response were conducted as well. The benefit of increased knowledge and skills among the elderly was greatly demonstrated during the August conflict in which the elderly as a social grouping actively participated in the National Society's response activities.



Photo 2: Volunteers in Rustavi, Georgia, involved in psychosocial activities. **International Federation**

Following the conflict in August the National Society started providing *psychosocial support* to traumatized people. With technical support from the International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support an assessment was carried out recommending the society to implement basic psychosocial activities. In order to further build its psychosocial support capacities a Federation delegate arrived in November in order to establish the very foundations for an effective psychosocial programme and ensuring its sustainability. Almost 30 volunteers were recruited for the programme following a thorough recruitment process.

The National Society successfully implemented other activities which were not funded through the appeal, but which nonetheless were closely related to and supportive of funded activities including first aid social mobilization for measles immunization in Kvemo Kartli region. The society reached almost 110,000 people with messages on the importance of immunization out of which almost two-thirds got vaccinated. Moreover the society managed to establish strong partnerships with national authorities, agencies and international organizations. Consequently it extended its network, and together with the successful outcome and credibility gained, the campaign worked as a door-opener for participation and cooperation in future interventions.

Armenia: A major and promising achievement for the Armenian Red Cross was the increase of *people living with HIV* (PLHIV) approaching the National Society and receiving support on a regular basis. This resulted from work providing PLHIV with food parcels and second-hand clothes as well as psychological support. Also medical services, unaffordable for the target group such as dental care, were provided with the assistance of the National Society.

Besides direct support to PLHIV, the programme aimed to raise awareness and combat stigma and discrimination. In this regard youth has become a driving force. Some 70 trained youth peer educators successfully realized school sessions for about 2,200 schoolchildren aged 13 to 16. Questionnaires and surveys showed increased interest and tolerance towards PLHIV. Youth volunteers furthermore demonstrated great innovative skills when spreading prevention messages and condoms through "surprise boxes" in public places. Moreover ten information campaigns were organized by youth disseminating information materials and condoms. Also with the purpose of raising public awareness and reducing stigma and discrimination a number of public events, supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, were successfully implemented.

In *harm reduction* the main achievement with potential positive long-term effects is an enhanced understanding of sexually and blood transmitted diseases and changes in behaviour among injecting drug users (IDUs). Sterile syringes as well as alcohol pads and condoms were distributed to IDUs at centres and through outreach work. Other harm reduction activities

included trainings on HIV and TB prevention and drug use in ways that would prevent transmission of different infections.

Funded by the Global Fund and part of the national TB programme, the National Society implemented activities aimed at strengthening *TB control*. A key achievement was the delivery of psychosocial support to more than 1,000 patients contributing to treatment adherence and a positive treatment outcome. In 2008 the society became member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV and TB and developed a three-year strategy and plan to fight HIV and TB in Armenia.

Azerbaijan: Some 1,000 peer educators conducted sessions and showed video clips on *HIV and AIDS* for almost 14,500 school children, youth and university students. To further enhance its peer work the National Society organized experience sharing and discussion of achievements and project difficulties for 25 peer educators from two regions. With support from the International Federation the society is working towards joining the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV and TB. As part of its HIV efforts involved actors were encouraged to strengthen their partnership with the Republican AIDS Center and between each other.

As part of its endeavors in *infectious diseases prevention and control* the Red Crescent cooperated with partners to secure access to updated information on TB and patients to avoid delays in future treatment. The society participated at a regional meeting in Istanbul on TB organized by the Turkish Red Crescent. As a result agreements were reached on common purposes and tasks, indicators, budget development and activities.

The society implemented activities targeting former inmates with TB, encouraging them to continue treatment on a regular basis and complete it, as well as providing them with social support and information. The National Society met with representatives from the Institute of Pulmonology. During the meeting the role of Red Crescent nurses in implementing the DOTS programme and further cooperation was discussed as the nurses play an important role in detecting cases and registering patients, and the National Society was informed about the opening of DOTS offices in Baku. The Red Crescent was actively involved in the celebration of the World TB Day in March.

A main activity within general *health and care* was dissemination of information. Hence Red Crescent health promoters disseminated information on preventive health to more than 4,200 children with disabilities, orphans, youth, women and elderly people. As a result 85 women registered for, and underwent, medical examinations which uncovered 6 cases of mastopathy, 11 cases of breast cancer and 121 cases of anemia. Furthermore timely immunization of children resulted from joint prophylactic events by the Red Crescent and the Ministry of Health.

Supported by the International Federation office in Azerbaijan the National Society initiated work towards *Human Pandemic Preparedness (H2P)* activities which will be funded by USAID. A concept paper was submitted to the Federation Europe zone office in Budapest.

More than 125 people attended events during the World Mental Health Day in October. In November the head of the society's health department participated at the health managers forum of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Europe and Central Asia in Budapest.

The National Society now has 87 non-remunerated *blood donor* recruiters which conducted sessions for more than 1,000 people on the importance of donating blood. Almost 3,100 new blood donors were recruited as a result of joint blood donor campaigns with the Ministry of Health and the Thalassemia Association. Moreover, the society participated at the 11th international voluntary blood donor recruitment colloquium arranged by the International Federation, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society and WHO for mobilizing people give blood.



Photo 3: Red Crescent volunteer checking blood pressure. **Azerbaijan Red Crescent.**

In community-based first aid totally 15 first-aid trainers conducted first-aid skills training for 660 employees in Garadag Cement Trust and community members, Red Crescent staff and volunteers. During the first-aid day the National Society demonstrated first-aid skills and distributed leaflets on first aid to more than 500 participants.

Constraints or Challenges

All the National Societies experienced challenges related to delayed or limited funding. The immediate consequences were activities being postponed or cancelled, or a decrease in the number of people reached or volunteers involved. Nevertheless, the societies on several occasions managed to reach the people planned and even beyond. The Georgian Red Cross managed to reach almost 6,000 within HIV and AIDS activities and managed to serve the planned number of people with social support although merely 30 out of 50 volunteers were active due to limited funding. This indicates that the training of social service volunteers and the skills gained had a significant effect as to continue and uphold the scope and level of the services provided and developing advocacy activities.

Operationally the main challenge in HIV and AIDS, including IDUs, is to gain the trust of PLHIV and to involve them in project activities. Stigma, deeply rooted traditions, shame and convictions to some extent hampered the work of the societies and its access to the target group. However, among others the Georgian Red Cross progressed in this respect through good relations and cooperation with the Foundation for Support of People Living with HIV through which the society seeks to gain the target group's trust. Owing to hot weather during summer time the national blood bank requested a temporary stop in blood donor recruitment which reduced the number of recruited blood donors.

In Armenia the unstable political situation following the presidential elections required some changes in the timetable of some activities and limited funds occasionally resulted in expressions of discontent as the society was not being able to fully meet the expectations of some vulnerable groups. Also lack of cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education, which hampered the access to educational institutions, affected programme implementation

Organizational Development

***Outcome/Expected result:** Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.*

In organizational development the three National Societies implemented activities related to capacity building, fund-raising and resource mobilization, financial management, communication and public relation, branch development youth and volunteer development

Georgia: Within organizational development in Georgia the *organizational structure* at management level was adjusted and clear reporting lines were created to strengthen internal communication and to enhance accountability. The National Society continued developing its branch structure and worked towards implementing its branch development strategy. Trainings aiming to forge implementation of statutes and enhancing leadership competence, communication and integration of newly elected members and management staff were conducted. As part of branch development four new branches were established. Support from the Europe zone organizational development coordinator was provided in order to develop the National Societies organizational structure.

The National Society improved its *financial management* system and strengthened the material technical base of local branches. Seven computers were purchased for seven branches. Furthermore 45 branch representatives and staff received trainings on revised procedures of financial management and inventory process. Training on project planning was organized for 32 volunteers and 20 volunteers attended two trainings on leadership skills.

In *fund-raising* three trained staff conducted fund-raising workshops for 65 local branch representatives and staff. A fund-raising strategy aiming to diversify sources of funding and ensure programme sustainability was developed. A donation box was placed at Tbilisi International Airport on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, 8 May. The same day youth volunteers managed to raise funds as well as in-kind contributions from various actors present in the country. Other fund-raising initiatives by the society included regular donations from local companies for youth activities not covered through programme funding; donation through the National Society's webpage; donation by mobile phones or landline; and a fund-raising event at public sites.

In order to improve external *communication* the society created a media club coordinating media groups aimed at promoting Red Cross activities and strengthening its visibility and advocacy initiatives. Media groups were established in four branches for implementing the National Society's communication strategy at the local level. For better internal communication and information sharing with local branches, the society published and distributed bulletins, brochures about activities and its five-year strategic plan.

Within *volunteer and youth development* the National Society developed and disseminated youth and volunteer policies and strategies, and code of conduct for volunteers among 160 leaders, staff and volunteers. Assessments of local capacities within volunteer management were conducted in six branches and a database was created. The conflict in August brought a large number of new volunteers to the National Society. Thus the society conducted a workshop on volunteer management for 20 volunteers in Gori. "You are not alone" was the slogan of a project jointly implemented by youth volunteers and five public schools in Tbilisi aiming to integrate vulnerable children into society through establishing Red Cross youth units in schools. The same slogan was the motto of the Red Cross week in Georgia in May in which more than 2,000 Red Cross staff and volunteers participated.

Georgia Red Cross Youth organized two international youth camps, each gathering 15 Red Cross and Red Crescent youth volunteers from Georgia, Italy, Israel and Turkey. The aim of the camps was to form close relations with youth volunteers in sister National Societies, to enhance the knowledge about the Movement and to discuss joint future plans. Youth volunteers also organized competitions for 11 public schools in Tbilisi to raise funds for an orphanage in Tbilisi, facilitate communication between youth, and disseminate information about the Red Cross and Red Crescent as well as to recruit new volunteers.

Armenia: Although the Armenian Red Cross has accumulated considerable experience in *resource mobilization*, there is a pressing need to further develop practical and country specific

fund-raising tools. A newly established fund-raising group took several initiatives for raising funds and efforts have resulted in support from local authorities. The National Society systematically mapped potential local donors and awarded donors and benevolent organizations contributing to the work of the National Society with medals. Cooperation with the Copper-Molybdenum Factory of Kapan in Syunik and with the regional administration in Armavir was established, setting up two Red Cross soup kitchens for the most vulnerable in these regions.

To generate additional income the National Society placed donation boxes at crowded community venues. The society will continue its resource mobilization efforts in 2009 and develop a resource mobilization plan based on its 2009-2010 plan. In order to improve its communication with potential donors and the public, and thus raise more funds, the society successfully applied and received funds from the Federation Capacity Building fund.

Youth activities focused on social care, integration of refugees, awareness-raising on HIV and IHL, the fundamental principles and humanitarian values. In total 80 youth volunteers reached 600 elderly refugees and 125 children living in dormitories with psychosocial care, educational and cultural programmes. To this end cooperation with the Federation Psychosocial Reference Centre was established. The youth department extended its cooperation with national and international organizations and youth exchange programmes.⁵ A newly established fund-raising group worked towards raising funds, mobilizing human resources and searching for grants. About USD 1,300 was raised through campaigns, charity boxes, distribution of volunteer-made greeting cards and jewellery.

In total 20 youth volunteers involved in the Smiley Club project organized daily sessions on various school subjects and other recreational activities for 165 children. Youth volunteers arranged monthly events, visits to cultural institutions and tours as well. In total 260 youth in another project focused on HIV and AIDS for volunteers from 13 regional branches.

In cooperation with Armenian university law faculties, volunteers were recruited for the international humanitarian law (IHL) programme. Information seminars on IHL for newly recruited volunteers were organized. A dissemination seminar targeting students and volunteers was arranged in January and a final gathering promoting humanitarian values took place which saw 20 pupils involved in the project presenting the work carried out.

Azerbaijan: In Azerbaijan the Red Crescent developed a new *strategic plan* covering 2008 to 2010. The process involved 865 staff and volunteers, members of primary organizations and other stakeholders. Furthermore the society developed a 2009-2010 *resource mobilization plan* to diversify its sources of funding and thus enhancing the prospects for longer-term and sustainable programme implementation.

The society's *fund-raising* coordinator organized training for 26 staff and volunteers on project planning aiming to develop project writing skills. She also organized training for 27 book-keepers, their assistants, staff and volunteers involved in fund-raising events on financial development and fund-raising. The aim is to develop financial system at the regional level as well as encourage Red Crescent staff and volunteers to become active in raising funds.

Significant *income* was secured through various activities including membership fees⁶, private donations, first-aid courses and donation boxes⁷ the National Society collected almost CHF 1,000,000 out of which most was spent directly for the benefit of vulnerable groups. An exhibition

⁵ Including the Polish Robert Schumann Foundation and the Lithuanian Youth Exchange Agency.

⁶ In 2008 membership fees increased from CHF 1,35 to CHF 2,7.

⁷ The number of Red Crescent boxes at commercial venues is 68.

of posters made by 100 orphan children, bringing together community actors and corporate sector representatives, generated almost CHF 1,300 for orphans.

Branch development continued and was implemented in five branches focusing on identifying target groups and a more active promotion of Red Crescent activities with the involvement of volunteers. Links with local communities through participatory community development (PCD) were strengthened. In this connection the National Society held training for 114 staff, volunteers and community members on marketing, reporting both financial and narrative, leadership and planning.

The Polish Red Cross provided financial support to implement *community based first-aid* activities among 72 community members and later conducted a monitoring and evaluation visit. There is a need to develop first-aid system, but the professional skills of staff are insufficient.

Internal and external *communication* and public relations development were priority areas for the society. Some 45 articles covering the activities of the National Society were published and it distributed 1,500 copies of the annual 2007 report in both Azeri and English to various actors. The National Society along with the International Federation participated in ICRC meetings on collecting data on missing or dead persons and on developing a communication strategy. A meeting for communication officers from Europe and Central Asia for experience sharing and better cooperation was arranged by the Europe zone and attended by the society.

Within *youth* volunteer recruitment campaigns were held in two regions and as a result more than 330 new volunteers were registered bringing the total number of volunteers to more than 19,000. Youth board meetings were organized in which information on branch activities, challenges faced and events planned were exchanged. Several trainings were conducted:

- Red Crescent youth conducted training on health promotion and education, HIV and AIDS, first aid and humanitarian values for 530 schoolchildren from fourteen schools.
- More than 50 volunteers paid visits to and arranged events for almost 650 orphans and children living with HIV to provide moral support, teaching new skills, exploring cultural activities and distributing items.
- The National Society organized leadership and planning training, training on social activities and the history of the Movement for 115 volunteers aiming to enhance skills among youth volunteers.

Constraints or challenges

Muted interest from external partners for organizational development is a challenge which has become even more profound with the economical crisis. The dramatic drop in currency exchange rates put further strain on the societies' efforts and led to postponement or cancellation of activities, or reduced scope and quality of activities. In Georgia there is thus a need to become more proactive in establishing new partnerships to sustain and replicate activities. The current dependency on external and short-term funding hampers longer-term development efforts together with difficulties in retaining volunteers. As a result of the society's active response to the needs of vulnerable groups since August, its image improved and expectations increased. Nevertheless, taking into account the society's limited operational capacities and resources available it may become a challenge to meet these expectations without support in the longer-term. The society's realization of the 2007-2011 strategy came partly to a halt in August due to the conflict which forced the National Society to revise its annual action plan for 2008 and focus more on emergency response measures. In Armenia limited funding led to a revision of priorities and the 2008 plan as well as postponement and cancellation of some activities including volunteering development and capacity development and promotion of tolerance and respect for diversity. Despite the increase in number of elderly refugees the society had to reduce the number of people to be reached from 600 to 400. Limited financial resources also affected the targeted number of children living in dormitories. The annual financial audit, aimed at increasing the society's transparency and accountability, was

postponed for 2009 and extensive turnover of staff overloaded existing staff. Thus the person responsible for fund-raising had to take on several other responsibilities. A concrete consequence of the limited funding situation in Azerbaijan is that local branches still use paper blankets for registering volunteers as computer equipment is missing.

Humanitarian values

Outcome/Expected result: Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

The Azerbaijan Red Crescent is making efforts to advocate for the respect of *human dignity and promote a culture of non-stigmatization and tolerance* as well as change people's attitudes and behaviour towards marginalized groups. A seminar on humanitarian values for 127 staff and new volunteers addressing among others how personal initiatives can contribute to reducing stigmatization and discrimination was organized.

The National Society marked World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day by organizing small scale events in Baku and four regions. Press releases to local newspapers and humanitarian values brochures were distributed. The number of participants was more than 220. World AIDS Day was marked by carrying out various events with the participation of 155 representatives from different governmental and non-governmental organizations, PLHIV, Red Crescent staff and volunteers; press conference with journalists, a musical festival under the slogan "Stop AIDS. Keep promises".

Constraints or challenges

Apart from the funding situation no major constraints or challenges occurred. Financial limitations led to the cancellation of some activities. In Georgia and Armenia humanitarian values as a separate programme was not supported financially, but was still targeted though other programme areas.

Working in partnership

The National Societies cooperated with Movement partners and a wide range of central and local governmental, non-governmental, national as well as international organizations and institutes including:

- The International Federation at zone, regional and country level and ICRC
- Sister National Societies including the British, German, Norwegian, Italian, Polish and Estonian Red Cross Societies and Israel's Magen David Adom. Furthermore the three National Societies plan to establish additional or new partnerships with the German, Finnish, and American Red Cross Societies and the Turkish Red Crescent
- Ministries and public authorities, agencies and centres covering health, social affairs and labour, science and education, culture, sports, youth, emergency, crisis and rescue and mine clearing
- UN bodies and agencies including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Southern Caucasus Anti-Drug programme as well as the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)
- Organizations and institutes such as Save the Children, the Open Society Institute (OSI), the European Voluntary Service (EVS), the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Youth Exchange Organization
- Networks or memberships working towards harm reduction, HIV and AIDS and TB including European Red Cross Red Crescent Network on HIV/AIDS and TB (ERNA), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the Global Alliance on HIV and TB.

In addition the Georgian Red Cross received support from numerous sister National Societies following the August conflict. The National Society also organized a partnership meeting in November in which more than ten partner National Societies attended and which generated further support in terms of financial and in-kind support.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The National Societies monitored and evaluated their programme activities to ensure the most efficient use of the limited amount of resources available and to continuously assess programme progress towards the overall objectives. Monitoring included a continuous collection of data and analysis of programme activity information. Internal as well as external monitoring was carried out. Tools for data gathering included data collection in general, field visits and meetings, reporting and final evaluation.

Gender issues were addressed by ensuring that all activities carried out by the National Societies benefited the most vulnerable regardless of gender. Internally equal access and opportunities for participation and decision-making for both genders are an imperative for the National Societies. In the planning process towards 2009-2010 gender equity and diversity was taken into account and emphasized.

Looking ahead

To varying degrees, the southern Caucasus Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies struggle with financial shortcomings. This situation must be addressed in a proper and adequate way, requiring investments of more resources to ensure a solid, sound and sustainable financial base for future programme development and implementation. Initiatives have been undertaken in all three societies to this end and these will continue in the latter half of 2008. From an operational point of view insufficient funding contributed to numerous activities being postponed or cancelled, or reduced in scope and quality. Although funding remained a difficult issue and affected the work towards overall objectives, the societies did manage to work within the four programme core areas of the Global Agenda.

National Societies within the region have been working actively within HIV and AIDS for years and are currently working towards joining the Global Alliance on HIV and TB. Armenia joined the alliance and both the Azerbaijan Red Crescent and the Georgia Red Cross have cooperated with the International Federation to facilitate their engagement in the alliance. The National Societies are also encouraged to continue their extensive partnership work and to establish other operational alliances in order to combine capabilities to make an even greater humanitarian impact within local communities. In this respect the National Societies already have experience in partnership work which may prove essential in their work towards pursuing operational alliances with the Movement, as well as external partners.

| How we work | |
|--|---|
| <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. |

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