

Annual report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Armenia

MAAAM002

30 April 2010

This report covers the period 1 January
2009 to 31 December 2009



Volunteers from Armenia Red Cross raising funds in the streets in Yerevan. Photo: Armenia Red Cross Society

In brief

Programme purpose: The programmes supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Armenia are aligned with the Global Agenda goals in the areas of disaster management, health and care, and organizational development.

Programme summary: The Federation supported activities implemented by the Armenia Red Cross Society are in line with the strategic priorities of the National Society and mainly directed towards disaster risk reduction, psychosocial support and resource mobilization activities.

Vulnerability and capacity assessments were carried out in ten communities in Tavush region. Disaster preparedness and prevention plans for each community were developed to guide future actions. As part of the process a training course on disaster risk management was organized for nearly 250 people. A number of seminars aiming at raising children's awareness on disasters were organized with the participation of 100 pupils. Simulation evacuations were carried out in which more than 3,300 schoolchildren and nearly 340 teachers took part.

In the area of social welfare youth volunteers provided psychosocial assistance to older refugees. For children living in dormitories daily educational sessions as well as social events were organized. A survey of the "Smiley Club" indicated that the children enjoy all the activities, but also showed that many children face difficulties in studying and in using computers. A key achievement in 2009 was joint excursions for vulnerable children and schoolchildren. The *psychosocial care* and the "Smiley Club" projects are excellent means of spreading respect and understanding between different generations and people with different backgrounds. In the field of HIV and AIDS the awareness of people on prevention was raised and stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV reduced. School sessions were organized for 4,400 schoolchildren. Three talk shows were broadcast, each targeting about 64,000 people. Totally 150 people living with HIV received food parcels and second-hand clothes and were offered psychological assistance. A country-wide survey showed a considerable improvement in levels of awareness and a significant change in attitudes towards people

living with HIV.

A cooperation agreement was signed between the National Society and the VivaCell-MTS mobile company. In order to develop its communication and fund-raising capacities the National Society implemented the multi-faceted public relations campaign “Red Cross for YOU and YOU for the Red Cross”. Skills training in proposal writing and fund-raising enhanced the National Society’s fund-raising capacity. A corporate sector survey showed widespread interest for cooperating with the Red Cross. Cooperation frameworks need to be developed. The survey results will guide the National Society’s resource mobilization efforts in 2010 and 2011. The National Society promoted volunteerism and celebrated the International Volunteer Day.

Financial situation: The initial budget for 2009 was CHF 550,000 (USD 512,090 or EUR 383,791). The budget was revised to CHF 621,585 (USD 578,741 or EUR 433,744), of which 81 per cent covered. Total expenditure was CHF 340,674. Some of the funds were received in the second half of 2009 and is funding for programmes that runs into 2010.

Financial figures 2009	
Budget (final)	621,585
Income	502,628 (81)
Expenditure	340,674 (55)
Balance	161,954

Percentage of budget in brackets

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

No. of people we have reached: The National Society reached more than 16,000 people directly. Most people were reached with health and care services. Key target groups were schoolchildren and teachers, older people and people living under poor conditions, as well as Red Cross volunteers, members and staff.

Programme area	People reached	
	Directly	Indirectly
Disaster Management	5,200	-
Health and Care	10,860	145,000
Organizational Development	100	64,000
Total	16,160	209,100

Our partners: Totally the Armenia Red Cross cooperated with about 15 international, 19 national and local state organizations, and 7 National Societies. The Armenia Red Cross continued and developed its cooperation and partnerships with international and local organizations such as UN agencies, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Elly Lily & Company, USAID, UNAIDS, MSF, GTZ and World Vision. The cooperation with state agencies and ministries continued as well. More detailed information is to be found in the *Working in Partnership* section.

Context

In Armenia the economic crisis caused slowdown in economic growth and has led to increasing unemployment rates. Household income has been affected due to the reduction in remittances and loss of employment as well as substantial pay-cuts in the private sector. Combined with increased living costs, meaning that people’s purchasing power has been reduced, this made the living conditions for thousands of people more difficult. Market dependency to meet consumption needs is thus affecting the population’s ability to access sufficient food and to cover other basic needs, in particular health and education. Those below and not far above the poverty line have been hardest hit.

The developments in 2009 mean that some of the gains in poverty reduction made in recent years are about to be reversed and according to the World Bank as many as 172,000 people could be pushed below the poverty line within the end of 2010, increasing the number of poor to more than 900,000 which amounts to about 30 per cent of the population.

The on-going blockade related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, high rates of emigration and widespread corruption threaten social stability and undermine sustainable economic growth. Normalization of the relations between Armenia and Turkey, including an opening of the border between the two countries, has been on the agenda for some time. However the final outcome of these efforts remains uncertain as the issue is being linked to other complex political subjects.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Programme component 1: Disaster management planning

Component outcome 1: *The Armenian Red Cross disaster response mechanisms and tools are strengthened through different trainings and simulation drills and is ready to respond to disasters.*

Programme component 2: Organizational preparedness

Component outcome 1: *Effective tools for strengthening disaster preparedness of the communities in high risk areas are in place through organizing VCAs and disaster risk reduction activities.*

Programme component 3: Community preparedness

Component outcome 1: *Vulnerability of communities to disasters has been decreased through public awareness and educational campaigns carried out by the National Society.*

Ten communities in Tavush region were selected for disaster risk reduction activities. Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) was carried out in each region in order to identify risks, hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities typical to the communities. Assessment reports were compiled and included recommendations on disaster preparedness and prevention, and mapping of risk areas. Moreover community hazards, threats and vulnerabilities were defined and disaster preparedness and prevention plans for each community were developed jointly with the regional Rescue Service Department. The plans were shared with the communities to guide their preparedness and prevention actions. Throughout the assessment process, regional authorities' ownership was ensured. As part of the process a basic training course on disaster risk management was organized for community leaders, the general public and representatives of local organizations in each community. Nearly 250 people took part in the trainings.

A number of seminars focusing on earthquakes, floods, mudflows and landslides, aiming at raising children's awareness on disasters, were organized with the participation of 100 pupils in each community in which the assessments took place. In addition simulation evacuations were carried out in the schools. All together more than 3,300 schoolchildren and nearly 340 teachers took part. Finally a quiz competition was organized with the participation of one team from each community. About 300 pupils participated. Posters and booklets were distributed to the population with the aim of raising awareness of disasters.

A new memorandum of understanding between the Armenian Red Cross and the Ministry of Emergency Situations was developed some time ago. However, the signing of the agreement is postponed until later in 2010 in order to consider comments from the ministry.

Health and Care¹

Programme component 1: Social welfare

Component outcome 1: *Professional and skilful Red Cross staff and volunteers respond to psychosocial and health needs in target communities.*

In social welfare youth volunteers continued providing psychosocial assistance to older refugees through weekly visits. Additionally, food parcels were distributed to 400 older refugees and 160 older people living under poor social conditions. For children living in dormitories daily educational sessions were provided. In order to reduce their exclusion a number of social events were organized such as evening gatherings, outings to cultural places and visits to theatres and cinemas. Two summer camps were held for vulnerable children.

A survey was carried out in order to ensure that Smiley Club activities meet schoolchildren's needs and have an impact on their lives, as well as finding out about the children's preferences for future activities. The survey covered children, their parents and school teachers. Findings indicated that the children almost equally enjoy all the activities organized by youth volunteers.

¹ Programme component 3: Community-based first aid was not supported through the International Federation.

Most popular were gateway camps, sport games and language lessons, followed by homework support and group outings. It also showed that a significant number of children face difficulties in studying and in using computers. Suggestions for continued activities thus included homework support, distribution of books, improvement of conditions for studying, and computer lessons. These findings will be guiding the work of the Red Cross in the coming period.

A key achievement in 2009 was the joint excursions for vulnerable children and schoolchildren participating in the peer education programme aiming at supporting the integration and socialization of the vulnerable children into the society. The children had an opportunity to make friends with other children and acquire social skills.

Programme component 2: HIV and AIDS

Component outcome 1: *Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection and reducing stigma and discrimination.*

Component outcome 2: *Vulnerability of PLHIV reduced through rendering psychosocial support and advocacy.*

Component outcome 3: *The capacity of the National Society to deliver and sustain scaled up HIV programmes strengthened.*

The awareness of people on the prevention of HIV was raised and stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV reduced through public events and peer education school sessions. Totally 70 trained peer educators organized school sessions on HIV for 4,400 schoolchildren in 46 schools. Three talk shows were broadcast, each targeting about 64,000 people. Moreover, through 16 talk shows, film screenings and round-table discussions people in all regions were covered. Other events included basketball tournaments with the slogan “We play against AIDS’ and celebrations of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial on 17 May and World AIDS Day on 1 December. Thousands of mobile text messages were sent out for spreading information and as a call to join the actions responding to HIV.

Totally 150 people living with HIV received food parcels and second-hand clothes. They were also offered psychological assistance to help overcome personal challenges. Young people in six regions were trained on HIV prevention and stigma and discrimination.

A country-wide survey of the National Society’s HIV and AIDS activities was carried to assess their effectiveness in raising awareness among young people. Findings showed a considerable improvement in the levels of awareness only after few months of work, and a significant change in attitudes towards people living with HIV was reported. Moreover the survey revealed that schoolchildren prefer learning about HIV and AIDS through non-formal education and peer education sessions, whereas young people aged 18 to 25 give preference to learning through public entertainment and interactive events. The survey contributed to a better understanding of the needs among young people and how to improve capacities and tools.

With the aim of raising people’s awareness on HIV and AIDS the Armenia Red Cross started implementing public awareness campaigns in October. The activities will run until the end of September 2010. The programme is being implemented within the framework of the national HIV programme and is funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Organizational Development

Programme component 1: Financial resource mobilization

Component outcome 1: *Developed resource mobilization system including a strategy, plan, mechanisms and tools will enable the National Society to have diversified income sources and decrease dependence on international donors.*

Component outcome 2: *The National Society has transparent and efficient financial management system and external audit conducted every year.*

Among the most significant achievements in 2009 was the cooperation agreement between the National Society and the VivaCell-MTS mobile company. As part of the strengthened cooperation

the company offers financial and technical support in disaster preparedness, health and care and youth programme activities.

In order to develop its communication and fund-raising capacities the National Society implemented the project “Red Cross for YOU and YOU for the Red Cross” which is a multi-faceted public relations campaign. The project is supported by the IFRC through the specific organizational support modality within the Capacity Building Fund. Totally 30 billboards promoting the society’s HIV and AIDS activities were placed in and nearby Yerevan in cooperation with VivaCell-MTS.

Red Cross youth leaders and volunteers’ skills in grant proposal writing and fund-raising were improved through training courses supported by British Red Cross volunteers; this was an essential contribution to enhancing the National Society’s fund-raising capacity.

The Armenia Red Cross carried out a corporate sector survey to assess the prospects for forging new relationships and attracting new partners and donors. The findings showed that the sector lacks corporate social responsibility policies, and has a limited understanding of the benefits of cooperating with the Red Cross. The sector anticipates support in financial terms only, and this has been the main reason for lack of support. However, the survey also showed that there is widespread interest for cooperating with the Red Cross and a great interest in providing in-kind donations was expressed. This implies that broader cooperation frameworks need to be developed with clearly defined expected results, and suggests a great potential for cooperation between the Armenian Red Cross and the business community. These results will be guiding the National Society’s resource mobilization efforts in 2010 and 2011. A step-by-step model for approaching the corporate sector with clearly defined purposes, outcomes and activities will be developed to allow better communication and cooperation.

In order to raise the awareness of the National Society and to promote a better understanding of the principles and values of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, meetings were organized with private companies and the authorities. Moreover totally 20 project proposals were submitted to local authorities, the American and German embassies, the Eurasia Foundation, UNDP and the Civil Society Institute.

The Armenia Red Cross became member of the National Volunteer Involving Organisations’ Network² which aims at forging more effective collaboration between members, sharing of experiences and promoting volunteerism and civil society development. The National Society facilitated a number of workshops on volunteer management for NGO network members. Moreover the society took active part in a number of meetings aimed at promoting volunteerism and improving draft legislation regarding volunteering.

A writing group composed of Red Cross youth volunteers who participated in journalist and photography training courses was established. A number of articles about the National Society were published in newspapers and on websites. The project will continue until April 2010.

On 8 May Red Cross youth volunteers were actively involved in celebrating the International Red Cross Red Crescent Day and the 150th anniversary of the Red Cross. The event was part of the Movement’s global campaign and included a march through Yerevan. Youth volunteers and 25 vulnerable children living in dormitories participated.

The National Society celebrated the International Volunteer Day on 5 December calling for volunteerism on popular social-networking websites. The most active volunteers received diplomas and rewards.

In order to be able to follow standard financial procedures more effectively, the National Society upgraded its finance system to the internationally accepted 1C accounting software.

² Within the framework of the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programme.

Constraints or Challenges: Although the Armenia Red Cross has resource mobilization and fund-raising as key priorities, the socio-economic situation in Armenia makes it difficult to obtain funding from domestic and international sources. In 2009 limited funding meant that the National Society's work to improve its disaster preparedness and response structure and to strengthen the skills and knowledge of volunteers in rapid response teams did not materialize. Besides, this results in inactiveness and low commitment among volunteers. Also, low funding limits the possibility for practising the society's contingency plan and thus affects its response capacity. The Armenian Red Cross is advocating for integrating its contingency plan with the governmental one.

External audits for 2008 and 2009 were not carried out due to limited funding. The National Society plans to conduct the audits in 2010 with funding from the Spanish Red Cross.

Working in partnership

The Armenian Red Cross is working in partnership with a range of actors both within and outside the Movement and is involved in several working groups, alliances and networks. The National Society cooperates actively with other national and international NGOs to share experiences, to avoid duplication and to adopt best experiences.

The Federation secretariat plan was supported by the Norwegian Red Cross, the American Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the Japanese Red Cross and the British Red Cross Societies. Specific support was provided through the Capacity Building Fund and the Federation Psychosocial Reference Centre. Moreover the U.S Department for Population, Refugees and Migration supported the National Society.

The German Red Cross supported the National Society bilaterally focusing on disaster awareness, education and exercises reaching more than 38,000 schoolchildren and almost 2,700 teachers in 85 schools. World Vision Armenia contributed with stationery, sport equipment and clothing. Bilateral peer support was also offered by the Bulgarian Red Cross in resource mobilization and fund-raising. Recommendations provided by the Bulgarian Red Cross helped the Armenia Red Cross in finalizing its fund-raising strategy and improving resource mobilization activities, leading to a more focused approach to fund-raising at both local and national level. A national and local fund-raising plan was developed promoting a step-by-step approach including training courses for staff and volunteers, identification of partners and stakeholders, the design and organization of minor social projects and fund-raising campaigns.

In consultation with the Armenian Rescue Service and the Emergency Situations Ministry the Armenia Red Cross developed a memorandum of understanding. Signing is pending. Moreover, in cooperation with the rescue service, the Crisis Management State Academy, the National Survey for Seismic Protection and the Ministry of Science and Education emergency education campaigns and evacuation simulations were held in schools. With the support of GTZ and in coordination with the Emergency Situations Ministry and Tavush and Lori regional authorities vulnerability and capacity assessments were carried out in 11 communities.

With financial support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria the National Society supported TB patients to improve treatment adherence and to raise knowledge about TB. The project activities were implemented in cooperation with the national Tuberculosis programme and the Ministry of Health.

Harm reduction activities aimed at reducing the vulnerability of injecting drug users against HIV, hepatitis and other blood-borne and sexually transmitted infections, and were supported by the Open Society Institute. The activities were carried out in Vanadzor city in Lori region.

The Armenia Red Cross provided direct observation of treatment (DOT) to TB patients and gave social support, as well as food parcels and hygiene kits as incentives for adhering to TB

treatment. Moreover the patients received psychological assistance and nursing. A core element of the project is home-based care. The DOT-treatment was implemented within the frame of the national TB programme “Stop MDR-TB³ in Armenia” and was funded by Eli Lilly and Company. Moreover a memorandum of understanding was signed with Médecins Sans Frontières. The organization will act as technical partner to the National Society in TB.

The Armenia Red Cross increasingly addresses the corporate sector for financial as well as in-kind support. In terms of resource mobilization and fund-raising the National Society signed a memorandum of understanding with the Viva Cell MTS mobile company. Eli Lilly and Company supported 20 multi-drug resistant TB patients receiving treatment by the Avan community policlinic.

The Armenia Red Cross is member of the following working groups, alliances and networks: the United Nations Disaster Management Team Working Group; the Global Alliance on HIV; the European Red Cross Red Crescent Network on HIV/AIDS (ERNA); the Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants (PERCO); the European Network of the Development of Volunteering (ENDOVS); Every Child Matters (ECM); and United Nations Volunteer Network (UNV).

Contributing to longer-term impact

The Federation supported programmes were managed by experienced programme coordinators. Monitoring was carried out through field visits and regular meetings with people responsible for implementation. Surveys were conducted to assess the needs of and the impact on vulnerable people as well as to map their preferences. Questionnaires were developed to find out people’s awareness on HIV and AIDS. Monthly, mid-term and annual reports were submitted for all programmes.

The Armenia Red Cross, recognizing that the empowerment of women and integration of gender perspectives will greatly benefit the society, considered gender balance in programme design. The balance between male and female of people reached was 48 to 52 per cent. The participation of women in decision-making processes and at international conferences was given priority. The percentage of men and women working in the management of the National Society is 44 to 56 per cent.

In deciding, designing and implementing its activities the National Society ensures the participation of targeted people, such as youth and schoolchildren. The youth department worked under the slogan “For Youth and With Youth”.

Looking ahead

As most activities related to enhancing the National Society’s disaster preparedness and response structure, and rapid response teams were not implemented, this needs to be addressed in 2010. However, the achievements in school preparedness are vital for future planning of preparedness activities in schools. The vulnerability and capacity assessments and the disaster risk reduction activities demonstrated that a number of preparedness and mitigation activities needs to be carried out at community level and thus has to be a key priority for the National Society.

In summing up the achievements in social welfare, the National Society recognizes the need to develop volunteers’ programme management skills through training and support from the Federation psychosocial reference centre. The survey of the “Smiley Club” will serve as a basis for identifying future priorities and programme design. In HIV and AIDS the increased awareness among people is promising for future programming in that experiences can be drawn upon. Past

³ Multi-drug resistant TB.

experiences will help the National Society in improving the quality of programme activities and as such, address vulnerable people's needs in a more effective and efficient way. The Armenia Red Cross seeks to increase the number of people covered and to scale up its activities.

In the coming years the National Society aims to establish new partnerships with local businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations. Based on past experiences the Armenia Red Cross will develop tools to more effectively put cooperation into practice. An agreement will be signed with the Ministry of Education on joint awareness-raising projects and campaigns covering issues related to disaster management, migration, social development, health and youth issues. The cooperation with VivaCell MTS is to be continued. The Italian Red Cross is currently considering increased cooperation with the Armenia Red Cross.

The Armenia Red Cross succeeded with an application for DIPECHO funding and will implement disaster risk reduction activities in nine communities in Shirak region starting in April 2010. The key features of the programme are mitigation activities at school level; strengthening coordination of disaster risk reduction activities at regional level; and improvement of the preparedness in local communities through voluntary-based teams with skills in vulnerability and capacity assessment, preparedness and response planning.

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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