

Annual report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Moldova

Appeal no. MAAMD002

30 April 2010

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



A flood-affected family who received humanitarian assistance under the floods operation which finished in 2009. Photo: Moldova Red Cross

In brief

Programme purpose: The programmes supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Moldova aim to mitigate the impact of disasters; to improve the health status of the population, especially that of vulnerable groups; to strengthen the capacity of the Moldova Red Cross to respond effectively to the needs of the most vulnerable people; and to promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme summary: In 2009 the Moldova Red Cross focused on the components which strengthen its capacities in disaster preparedness and response, development of volunteering, promotion of humanitarian values, gender equality and prevention of domestic violence against women and children, forging partnerships with public authorities and other stakeholders to help prevent and respond jointly to the community needs, specifically in times of disaster, and reducing vulnerabilities of marginalized groups through advocacy, public education and social support. Also, the Moldova Red Cross continued its efforts to improve its systems, structures and mechanisms to become a more effective organization.

Although funding for the health and care programme was very limited, the Moldova Red Cross jointly with the local administration and other NGOs endeavoured to carry out activities in the areas of human pandemic preparedness, reducing stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) and harm reduction.

The Moldova Red Cross with financial support from IFRC and other donors provided assistance to people affected by floods that hit Moldova in August 2008. The National Society, through its relief operation completed in May 2009, assisted in total 5,100 people with food and non-food relief items,

psychosocial support or repair of the damaged houses.

The National Society also made steps towards strengthening its volunteer management system through the elaboration and adoption of a volunteer strategy, elaboration of the new volunteer's toolkit and the development of community-based initiatives.

Within the principles and values programme, awareness-raising activities have been carried out about trafficking and domestic violence.

The Moldova Red Cross is facing a difficult financial situation and needs to urgently develop a strategy to get access to new funding sources. In line with the approach of getting more integrated within the National Society, the IFRC has been trying to identify a candidate who will provide technical support in external relations and resource mobilization, and will work from within the National Society.

Financial situation: The total 2009 budget is CHF 455,106 (USD 453,576 or EUR 313,866), of which 42 per cent covered. Overall expenditure versus received funding was 92.4 per cent.

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

No. of people we help: In 2009 some 37,301 people in the Republic of Moldova benefited directly from IFRC programme interventions. These include:

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Programme	People reached
Disaster Management	8,430
Health and Care	6,440
Organizational Development	1,431
Principles and Values	21,000
Total number of people reached	37,301

Our Partners:

The Moldova Red Cross cooperates with the Norwegian, Swiss and Japanese Red Cross Societies, the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), IOM, USAID, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Centre for Civil Protection and Emergency Situations, Peace Corps, La Strada, Service for Peace and local authorities.

Context

After more than 15 years of transition, the Republic of Moldova is still in the process of territorial consolidation, grappling with high unemployment, poor investment climate, an enormous foreign debt and pervasive corruption within its own borders. The widespread poverty and lack of job opportunities act as dominant push factors for labour migration; of the nation's 4.3 million citizens, as many as one million Moldovan nationals are working abroad (many illegally in Western Europe) and unofficial statistics refer to over a million migrants. The global financial crisis has worsened the economic situation of the vulnerable people. The amount of remittances from abroad, which is one of the main source of existence for more than 50 per cent of Moldavians, decreased significantly at the end of 2008. According to data provided by Red Cross branches, the number of vulnerable people requesting Moldova Red Cross assistance has increased. The most affected are older people, people with disabilities, multi-child families, single-parent families and people working in the construction industry who lost their jobs because of the financial crisis.

Over the last years poverty has affected about 75 per cent of the total population of the Republic of Moldova, with 45 per cent of the inhabitants of rural areas being extremely poor. The minimum subsistence salary in Moldova is about 1,368 lei (85 euros), whereas the average pension is about 665 lei (41 euros) and the minimum pension is 475 lei (29 euros).

In recent years the general economic crisis in the Republic of Moldova has caused a sharp deterioration of the demographic situation. Birth rates have dropped with most families having only one child or postponing having children indefinitely. A grave concern is caused by the fact that the decrease in population number is accompanied by the deterioration of the quality of life in general, and health in particular. Negative changes in health are observed in all age groups, including those who are in the prime of their lives. Social ills, among them alcoholism, drug addiction and domestic violence are on the increase. The problem of domestic violence has an impact on the society as a whole. Domestic violence is one of the root causes of child abandonment, institutionalization, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Very often domestic violence is a precursor to trafficking and exploitation. In this difficult situation the role of the Red Cross in providing humanitarian aid and social services to the population is extremely important, although the Moldova Red Cross continues to have difficulties in securing long-term funding.

As per January 2009, 4,733 cases of HIV infection were recorded in Moldova. The morbidity of people living with HIV per 100,000 inhabitants constitutes around 17.4 per cent. About 80 per cent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) are young people aged 15-29. According to the official data from the Ministry of Health in 2009 the spread of drug use remains high in Moldova and constitutes 316.1 per 100,000 population. The highest level of drug use is registered among men (91.9 per cent) and youth aged 15-19 (39.4 per cent).

Another problem affecting the population is the high level of vulnerability to disasters. The Republic of Moldova is prone to various disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, droughts and floods. Besides that, there are about 320 dangerous chemical plants on the territory of the country that produced 150 accidents in the past 10 years.

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Outcomes:

- *The capacity of the communities' visiting nurses service to provide socio-medical assistance to vulnerable people has increased;*
- *The level of HIV transmission amongst various target groups is decreased due to public awareness and behaviour-changing activities of the Red Cross;*
- *The National Society capacities in reducing stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV are strengthened;*
- *The preparedness and response capacity of the National Society to public health emergencies has been strengthened.*

Achievements:

Visiting nurses service

Japanese Red Cross funding enabled the Moldova Red Cross to continue supporting vulnerable people through medico-social rooms. In 2009, the Moldova Red Cross visiting nurses directly reached 1,400 vulnerable people through the provision of free of charge medical services, consultations and social services (house cleaning and shopping). The people assisted included older people, PLHIV and chronically ill patients.

HIV and AIDS

No funding was received for this component. However, with their own funds, Bender, Ungheni, Călărași, Anenii Noi and Glodeni Red Cross branches continued the implementation of activities aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV and increasing public awareness and harm reduction jointly with local administration and other NGOs. Some 75 volunteers trained in 2008 conducted 123 education sessions, 5 public actions, public relations campaigns and contests for 2,237 persons. In 2009 the harm reduction centre in Bender registered 1,355 visits of 103 injecting drug users and distributed 14,320 condoms and 15,000 syringes.

Influenza pandemic

In March 2009, with USAID funding through IFRC, the Moldova Red Cross launched a project on human influenza pandemic preparedness. To strengthen the knowledge of Red Cross staff and volunteers in this area, the National Society conducted workshops in six pilot branches for 150 persons. Later, in November 2009, the society continued its activities on human influenza preparedness under DfID funding, focusing on preparing trainers who will disseminate the received knowledge to Red Cross staff and volunteers. In 2009 in total 25 volunteers from 5 branches were trained.

To consolidate the knowledge and to improve coordination with other stakeholders, the National Society, jointly with its partners, organized simulation exercises in the pilot regions. The project staff also organized information sessions disseminating global pandemic messages and teaching protective techniques for 2,700 people. The protection of staff and volunteers involved in the pandemic preparedness project was ensured through the provision of necessary protection equipment.

Constraints or Challenges

Limited funding and lack of human resources available for health and care projects hampers the implementation of more ambitious activities in the future.

Disaster Management

Outcomes:

- *Disaster management plan is reviewed and updated;*
- *National Society's disaster preparedness and response skills and material resources for emergency relief are strengthened;*
- *Communities are better informed and prepared to act effectively in case of disasters;*
- *The nutritional and hygiene status of people affected by disasters and their access to quality social services is improved.*

Achievements: The disaster management programme focused on strengthening the capacities of Moldova Red Cross to effectively respond to emergencies. One national and three regional disaster management seminars for 20 Red Cross branch directors and 73 volunteers were held jointly with the Department of Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Eight coordination meetings with project partners were conducted, where the roles and responsibilities of the Moldova Red Cross in disaster situations were discussed. Jointly with the Department of Emergency Situations, a vulnerability assessment of the districts prone to disasters was conducted.

The Moldova Red Cross also focused on increasing the awareness of the population on the risk of disasters. Red Cross volunteers trained in disaster management conducted 56 information sessions for the people living in locations prone to landslides and floods reaching 1,680 beneficiaries. Information materials on the disasters that hit Moldova the most often were

developed and distributed to the general population in these areas during home visits and information sessions conducted by volunteers. In order to replenish the Red Cross emergency stock, 106 winter uniforms for national disaster response team members were procured..

Under the relief component, the Moldova Red Cross provided 700 supplementary food parcels and 800 hygiene kits to 1,500 vulnerable families in Chisinau, Glodeni, Rezina, Bender, Anenii Noi, Calaras, Orhei and Briceni. The activities included selecting beneficiaries jointly with the Ministry of Social Protection, distributing food and hygiene kits to the most vulnerable groups including street children, orphans and older people with minimal income.

Floods operation in Moldova

The August 2008 storms, described as the worst in over two centuries, led to devastating flooding in some of the most impoverished parts of Ukraine and Moldova. 40 people were killed and some 30,000 people displaced. Hours after the disaster, the Red Cross teams were in the disaster affected areas saving lives, distributing emergency relief items, soothing pain and bringing hope. Red Cross staff and volunteers showed admirable dedication, professionalism and humanity.

The Moldova Red Cross provided vital services to the flood affected communities. In total, 5,100 beneficiaries in Moldova received food items, hygiene parcels, blankets, pillows and bed-linen sets. The Moldova Red Cross also distributed 500 water filters (one per family) to ensure that local communities have clean drinking water.

The National Society also deployed a mobile response team to do minor repairs for families whose homes had been damaged by the floods. The team repaired 82 houses. Red Cross visiting nurses travelled together with the mobile response teams to offer basic nursing services and psychosocial support to the disaster affected families.

Organisational Development

Outcomes:

- *The Moldova Red Cross management structure, systems and procedures are strengthened;*
- *Branches and units are supported with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.*

Achievements: The organizational development programme is complementary to other programmes implemented by the Red Cross and focuses on strengthening the capacities of the National Society headquarters and branches and promoting active participation of youth/ volunteers and representatives of vulnerable groups in volunteering for service delivery and advocacy. Also, the programme focused on strengthening the sustainability of the National Society through improved local resource mobilization.

To improve local fund-raising efforts, the National Society promoted the development of community-based initiatives through financing two small projects in Bender and Calarasi Red Cross branches. These projects focused on raising awareness on HIV and AIDS. After the projects had been completed, the activities continued with the Moldova Red Cross' own funds.

Red Cross staff and volunteers also conducted Christmas fund-raising campaigns in schools, lyceums and business enterprises, and collected food products, clothes, small gifts and toys for older people, people with disabilities and orphans.

Under this programme area the Moldova Red Cross organized leadership competence-building workshops, both at central and local levels, as well as specific thematic trainings targeting about 40 Red Cross staff and 76 volunteers.

The Moldova Red Cross strengthened its volunteer management system through the elaboration and adoption of a volunteer strategy, elaboration of the new volunteer's toolkit (job description, volunteer pre-application form, activity report form, work analysis form, and volunteer's service plan), and the development of community-based initiatives. A unified volunteer database was developed to facilitate the management of volunteers. More than 1,000 volunteers from 22 branches have been already registered.

Constraints or Challenges:

One of the challenges encountered during programme implementation was the high turnover of volunteers. Out of 76 volunteers trained in leadership only 30 per cent will continue Red Cross activities, others most likely will move abroad for study or work.

Principles and Values

Outcomes:

- *Capacities of the Moldova Red Cross to promote the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values are increased;*
- *The level of tolerance and respect for marginalized groups is increased in Moldova;*
- *Vulnerable communities are equipped with the necessary knowledge to prevent trafficking;*
- *Capacities of the Moldova Red Cross to combat trafficking are strengthened.*

Achievements: The Moldova Red Cross disseminated the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values through country-wide youth workshops, information sessions and youth events. A total of six seminars were carried out for Red Cross staff and volunteers in Chisinau, Glodeni, Ungheni, Anenii Noi, Calarasi, and Bender Red Cross branches, eight coordination meetings for project partners (local authorities and educational departments), and eleven public events dedicated to the International Day of Red Cross and Red Crescent. Also, a nation-wide essay contest on human rights and humanitarian values was launched. The trained volunteers conducted 135 information sessions for senior pupils from schools and lyceums on human rights and humanitarian values covering more than 2,700 persons.

The Moldova Red Cross continued to run activities on preventing trafficking and domestic violence against women and children. In 2008, with financial support of the Norwegian government, the Moldova Red Cross started implementing the "*Combating domestic violence against women and children*" project in four branches which continued in 2009 as well. The project will strengthen the capacities of the National Society in dealing with this important issue. Although the project was implemented in four branches, the seminars and workshops were attended by all Red Cross branch directors. In 2009 six regional workshops on peer education were conducted for 92 volunteers. The trained volunteers conducted 276 information sessions in schools and lyceums. Two radio quizzes were broadcast by the national radio, and a national draw contest was launched in all 26 Red Cross branches. To strengthen partnerships with other organizations working in the field (such as Peace Corps, La Strada and Service for peace), an experience sharing meeting was organized and attended by 15 Red Cross volunteers from the project regions.

All activities carried out under these two components proved to be of great interest amongst children and Red Cross volunteers. More than 400 volunteers took part in the trainings, seminars, information sessions, essay contests, drawing/ poster contests, radio talk-shows organized by the Moldova Red Cross jointly with other partners on the issues of HIV and AIDS, the reduction of stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV, and trafficking and

domestic violence. According to surveys conducted by Red Cross branches, the level of awareness of the general population on the problems of HIV and AIDS, trafficking and domestic violence increased. The total number of youth reached through this programme is estimated at 21,000 people.

Constraints or Challenges:

Among the challenges encountered during programme implementation were limited possibilities to collect data about violence against children and women in Moldova due to the fact that many of the cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation are not reported, being perceived as "family business" rather than a crime.

Working in partnership

The IFRC, through its zone office in Budapest, regional representation in Moscow and country office in Chisinau, assists the Moldova Red Cross in strengthening its capacities to deliver high quality services to vulnerable groups of the population.

At community level the Moldova Red Cross cooperates with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child, the Ministry of Education, the Centre of Civil Protection and Emergency Situations and the local authorities. The National Society has regular contact with the government. It is noted that governmental officials are showing respect and acceptance for the independence of the Red Cross. The material assistance from the authorities is, however, mainly limited to providing free office premises and transportation.

On a bilateral basis the Red Cross cooperates with the Swiss Red Cross in the framework of the project *Social canteens for vulnerable people*. Another bilateral cooperation is the *Twice Christmas* programme implemented jointly with the Swiss Red Cross.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The Moldova Red Cross Society will continue to build its organizational capacity and strengthen its programme management, financial management, as well as volunteer and staff management systems. This will not only make the National Society a more effective organization, but will also reinforce its role as an important player in civil society.

Looking ahead

The Moldova Red Cross is facing a difficult financial situation. The application submitted to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the continuation of funding was not successful. Since it has been almost the sole funder, the Moldova Red Cross needs to urgently develop a strategy to get access to new funding sources.

The Moldova Red Cross has requested additional support from the IFRC, and in line with the approach of getting more integrated within the National Society, IFRC has been trying to identify a candidate who will provide technical support in external relations and resource mobilization, and will work from within the National Society.

Due to the low salaries the Moldova Red Cross is able to offer, and the short duration of most of the positions (linked to project grants), working for the Moldova Red Cross is very insecure and demanding. Staff turnover is high, and a lot of time and efforts have to be invested into new staff members. This creates special challenges when building organisational capacities in the fields of anti-trafficking, HIV and AIDS, drug abuse or domestic violence.

However, the Moldova Red Cross continues its efforts to strengthen its capacities to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

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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