Annual report

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Serbia

MAARS001

30 April 2010

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

A young Red Cross volunteer joining Club 25 and donating blood. Photo: Serbia Red Cross Society/Šabac branch.

In brief

Programme purpose: The support from the International Federation of Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to the Red Cross of Serbia focused on development through long-term programmes. It aimed at increasing the capacity of the National Society to provide services and to meet the needs of vulnerable people, and enhancing its preparedness to respond to disasters. These components directly and indirectly strengthen the communities' ability to recognize, assess and address their own needs with the Red Cross as an integral and recognized partner. Sustainability of existing activities and development of a basis for future programmes are also priorities.

Programme summary: In 2009 some large-scale activities supported by the Federation secretariat, such as home care and organizational development, were scaled down and phased out as the National Society takes over the responsibilities for further development. **Disaster management** remained a large programme concerned both with building preparedness and response capacity of the Red Cross at all levels as well as with strengthening the ties between the Red Cross and other national and local level stakeholders. Training sessions in communication and coordination, disaster response and water and sanitation took place. Preparedness simulations were carried out in four municipalities. Two vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) manuals were translated and printed and are about to be distributed. The annual disaster management plan was approved and a sub-commission was established which will be in charge of creating and following up on disaster management projects. The law on disaster response passed in the Serbian parliament and recognized the Red Cross of Serbia as a reliable partner.

Federation supported programme components in **health and care** included public health, blood donation, and HIV and AIDS. The activities were scaled down to reflect limited funding.

Consequently the activities were designed to be meaningful parts of a bigger whole with a focus on HIV and AIDS and voluntary blood donation. Two additional 'Clubs 25' were established and the number of young blood donors increased. The Red Cross collected and stored a large amount of data on HIV and AIDS in the Chriss Database contributing to better overall coordination of HIV and AIDS activities in the country.

Meanwhile, in the field of **humanitarian values** the work with vulnerable Roma children and young people living with disabilities has entered into a new phase and is progressing very well showing a promising start of the three-year project. In 2009 totally 2,435 children were reached. Key achievements included: 120 Roma children successfully enrolled into formal preschool; 126 Roma children successfully enrolled into the first grade of primary school; 434 Roma children successfully passed on to the next grade in primary school; and 717 children living with disabilities improved their skills, self-esteem and prospects for social integration. Other focus areas included vocational training for refugees, migration and home care. More than 50 per cent of refugees taking part in the vocational training cycle found employment. Totally 243 people were assisted in detention facilities. The Federation support to the home care programme came to an end with the creation of a programme planning and design toolkit for Red Cross branches. Some 11,000 people were assisted.

Financial situation: The total 2010 budget is CHF 1,952,439 (USD 1,796,930 or EUR 1,362,270), of which 116 per cent covered in 2009. Overall expenditure was CHF 1,054,940. Some of the funds were received in the second half of 2009 and is funding for programmes that runs into 2010 and explains the balance.

Financial figures 2009	
Budget (final)	1,952,439
Income	2,263,498 (116)
Expenditure	1,054,940 (54)
Balance	1,208,558

Percentage of budget in brackets.

Click here to go directly to the financial report.

DREF Floods operation MDRRS002: http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/09/MDRRS002do.pdf

Number of people we have reached: Almost 13,400 people were reached, mainly within the humanitarian values programme. Key target groups were Roma children, children living with disabilities and vulnerable older people. Also Red Cross volunteers, members and staff benefitted from the programmes. Totally 3,210 people were planned to be reached by a floods DREF operation launched in mid-November.

Programme area	People reached
Disaster Management	160
Organizational Development	50
Humanitarian Values	13,359
Total	**13,569**
DREF Floods operation (MDRRS002)	3,210

Our partners: The British Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross, and the governmental Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development contributed as multilateral or bilateral donors and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contributed as a bilateral partner. Two ministries were programme partners and some 60 local governments and services were active as partners.

Context

The political situation in Serbia has been fairly stable in 2009. Some issues, such as the EU pre-accession process have yielded positive results, with Serbia, along with two other countries from the region being moved on to the so-called white (no visa required) list for Schengen Agreement countries. Moreover the economic portion of the pre-accession agreement has been activated. Other issues, such as the status of Kosovo, the political and legal authority of EU in Kosovo and the situation of displaced people still present significant challenges.

The global economic crisis has had its impact on the society and the economy as unemployment rose to 21 per cent at the end of the year, in comparison to 18 per cent in 2008. The GDP is

estimated to have declined by 2.5 per cent and the level of international investments went down from EUR 1.9 billion in 2008 to EUR 1.1 billion in 2009.

These developments have worsened the humanitarian situation for the most vulnerable people. Decreasing international funding for humanitarian activities is seriously affecting the capacity to address the needs. The amount of funding channelled through the IFRC multilaterally was notably reduced in 2009 with the second half of the year being particularly thin on funding as long-time partners like the British and Norwegian Red Cross Societies withdrew. This situation requires the National Society and the Federation secretariat to jointly ensure that funding realities are taken into consideration during Federation secretariat planning.

The Federation secretariat and the National Society work closely together on planning and implementing activities based on the strategic priorities of the National Society as well as the funding realities.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Programme purpose: Reduce the number of deaths injuries and impact from disasters

Training: Totally 100 first responders were trained in communication and coordination in disasters. Other training sessions included training of disaster response units at branch and national level; training of a national mobile technical team covering 30 participants; training of the national water and sanitation (WatSan) team along with members of branch WatSan teams covering 30 participants; and training of the national shelter team and two disaster response units.

Municipal disaster preparedness programme: Preparatory meetings for municipal disaster preparedness simulations were held in eight municipalities.[1] Subsequent simulations were held in four of the municipalities including Vlasotince, Lebane, Doljevac and Trstenik. Three follow-up meetings were held in Šid, Bačka Palanka and Rača municipalities. The municipal disaster preparedness programme was presented to the Police Academy in Belgrade based on their expressed interest to integrate the National Society's simulation module into its curriculum. Further cooperation will ensue. Discussions with the USAID/DAI PPES[2] programme about future financing of the simulations are still continuing.

Vulnerability and capacity assessment: Two vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) manuals were translated and printed on CDs. The manual will be distributed to the field as soon as there is a plan for VCA activities. Currently the IFRC is negotiating with USAID/DAI about financing a VCA exercise in one municipality as a pilot activity.

Other programme activities: The annual disaster management plan was approved by the National Society disaster management commission. Moreover a sub-commission was established which will in charge of creating and following up on disaster management projects such as municipal disaster preparedness and future schoolchildren risk reduction projects; standardizing and approving the newly established training curriculum of disaster management units such as shelter training and mobile technical teams; standardizing and approving all standard operative procedures and establishing new ones.

The law on disaster response finally passed in the Serbian parliament after long discussions where the Red Cross of Serbia was one of the major contributors. The law opens a variety of

[1] Vlasotince, Lebane, Doljevac, Trstenik, Uzice, Lucani, Zrenjanin and Aleksinac municipalities.
[2] Preparedness, Planning and Economic Security Program.

opportunities for the Red Cross in the future and will help better integrate its disaster management programme in state-led institutional preparedness and response activities.

Achievements: The National Society's municipal disaster preparedness programme was reduced in scope due to limited funding in the second part of 2009. However, the training and simulation exercises contributed to increased disaster management capacity at both local and national level, within and outside of the Red Cross. Risk reduction and VCA-related activities are planned in 2010 but are subject to funding and negotiations with partners.

Through the law on disaster response the Red Cross of Serbia is recognized as a reliable actor in case of disasters and as an institution which could provide training in disaster preparedness and response. The law states that all preparedness and response committees at municipal level must include Red Cross branch secretaries as members. Hence the Red Cross branch secretaries are now officially members of the committees and their tasks will depend on the need of the committees. Furthermore, according to the law Red Cross disaster response units enjoy equal status as the civil protection in terms of training, engagement and compensation. Unfortunately the component on international disaster response law (IDRL), although communicated on time to the Ministry of Interior, did not make it into this law. The state will deal with this issue through a sub-law to which the Red Cross of Serbia and the IFRC is currently contributing.

The Ministry of Interior is in charge of implementing the law. In agreement with the ministry the future national training centre for disaster management will be situated in the Red Cross of Serbia premises. The IFRC and the National Society will prepare proposals for future training programmes in disaster preparedness in schools, first aid and VCA.

Constraints or Challenges: Limited funding led to reduced scope of the activities, especially in the second part of the year.

Health and Care

Programme purpose: Reduce the number of deaths illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies

Public Health: An initiative was taken in the framework of the Red Cross of Serbia health programme in order to align the health activities with national strategies and to improve the ability to demonstrate the impact of the work of the National Society by providing qualitative and quantitative information from the field to the Ministry of Health. A workshop was conducted with Red Cross health committee members to outline a proposal for the public health framework.

The draft framework was presented to the health commission of the National Society and following its comments, the final version is now being prepared. Besides links with national strategies, the IFRC's Global Agenda, and eventually the Millennium Development Goals, the framework also contains objectives and indicators of the Red Cross of Serbia's corresponding activities. This system for data gathering and reporting will allow periodical prioritisation of key activities by the health committee and focusing of Red Cross public health activities in line with the ever-changing environment.

Blood Donation/Club 25: The Red Cross of Serbia has established two additional 'Clubs 25'.[3] The new clubs were founded in Kraljevo and Bujanovac municipalities. The club previously created in Kikinda provided support to the new clubs.

The municipality of Kikinda and the Kraljevo and Bujanovac municipalities were selected bearing in mind regional aspects, hoping that once a substantive number of clubs have been

[3] The aim of the *Club 25*-concept is to make young people donate blood at least 25 times before the age of 25.

established, the remaining branches will form their own 'Clubs 25' without financial support from the headquarters. The three branches will act as regional support centres.

In addition promotion materials such as leaflets and T-shirts were prepared for the implementing branches. Some 200 youth volunteers who are also blood donors organized public activities as part of the 'World Day of Blood Donors' campaign.

HIV and AIDS: The Ministry of Health has developed the 'Chriss Database' with the aim of gathering and maintaining relevant information about HIV in Serbia as well as the actions of institutions and organizations taking place all over the country. The system was designed based on indicators outlined in the national HIV response strategy. The database is located in the National Institute for Public Health, while all relevant partners have the software installed in their headquarters, including the Red Cross of Serbia. The IFRC supported the National Society in gathering relevant data from local branches and storing them in the database for the first time. All the available data for 2009 was processed and stored in the database.

Achievements: More strategically developed and clearly presented information to the public and the authorities will help in making the health programmes of the Red Cross of Serbia more efficient and relevant to a rapidly changing environment.

The Club 25 campaign has contributed to increasing the number of young blood donors in the selected communities. The main achievement still is the building of an active base of volunteers who not only commit themselves to regular blood donation but also to promote the National Society. Existing blood donation clubs and new ones will be supported by the headquarters until branches across the country can help each other in establishing and running clubs independently.

The Red Cross managed to collect a large amount of data related to HIV and AIDS activities in Serbia and the Red Cross Chriss Database is now fully up-to-date. This contributes to better overall coordination of HIV and AIDS activities in the country.

Constraints or Challenges: Limited funding meant that more ambitious activities could not be planned. In terms of impact the activities implemented in 2009 will only be producing significant change in a longer-term perspective.

Organisational Development/Capacity Building

Programme purpose: Increase local community civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability

Improvement of public image and public relations: The Red Cross of Serbia seeks to ensure that its activities are recognized and paid attention to by the public as well as to ensure that the Movement principles and values are recognized and adopted as widely as possible, granting in turn more support to the organization and the activities targeting vulnerable people.

The National Society pursues these objectives in two ways: disseminating essential messages through own media and promoting Red Cross activities through systematic and comprehensive work with external media. The dissemination of essential messages through own media was pursued by providing the information department of the Red Cross of Serbia with necessary equipment including two photo cameras, one laser printer/fax and one portable voice recorder.

Work with external media was mainly pursued through a one year-long HIV and AIDS awareness campaign. The capacity-building component of this campaign is the learning process of preparing campaigns, creating promotion materials and working with the media. This is the first of its kind for the Red Cross of Serbia and is considered as both a learning experience and a blueprint for future promotion work.

Two training sessions for 50 volunteer HIV and AIDS peer educators were keystones of the campaign. The sessions incorporated street actions, distribution of materials, television and radio guest-spots, newspapers and magazine interviews as well as direct work with young people such as distribution of condoms and broadcasts of the movie 'The Boy who was shy'.

Achievements: The Red Cross of Serbia information department is now well equipped to present information about the work of the Red Cross efficiently and with high quality. The department now produces regular news updates for the media. Moreover it works closer with the Red Cross programme department and programme managers now recognize the contact with the media as an essential responsibility.

The lessons learned from the HIV and AIDS campaign will be collected in a simple toolkit, detailing in several steps the activities necessary for Red Cross activities and programmes to be presented to the public in a satisfactory way. The longer-term results, such as an increased number of volunteers and partners, depend on the discipline the National Society demonstrates in following the steps.

Constraints or Challenges: The longer-term results of the National Society's work in organizational development require that the society recognizes the importance of information gathering and spreading. Activities related to other management issues such as programme design and staffing did not take place due to lack of funds or only partial coverage of the same areas by other programmes supported through the IFRC.

Humanitarian Values

Programme purpose: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity and reduce intolerance discrimination and social exclusion

Vocational training for refugees: The Red Cross of Serbia, supported by the IFRC, continued implementing a vocational training programme targeting refugees from Croatia and Bosnia to facilitate their access to the labour market. The Red Cross is coordinating the training, the selection of people to be reached and, most importantly, the follow-up of people. The National Society has been cooperating with the National Employment Agency to determine the content of training courses to match labour market needs.

A training cycle ended in March 2009. Out of 90 participants that followed the courses 48 have found employment. Courses covered during the cycle included business secretary and management courses, accounting courses and courses for fiscal cash register service, computing and driver's license.

Achievements: This training project has showed consistent success rates. The employment rate within six months after the training cycles is over 60 per cent. In 2009 the rate was somewhat lower in line with the rising unemployment in the country. The 48 refugees that managed to find official employment improved their own and their families' situation with another 42 increasing their capacity for employment.

Migration *(Asylum seekers/Rejected asylum seekers):* Detained irregular migrants in Serbia, waiting for repatriation, are the main beneficiaries of the migration programme. In 2009, 243 irregular migrants have been accommodated in the centre and some of them deported back home. The Red Cross of Serbia visited the migrants in the detention facilities once a month to monitor their situation and to provide hygiene items. Furthermore the staff at the centre received first-aid training.

The number of rejected asylum seekers returning to Serbia is approximately 20 returnees per month. Most returnees have opted for voluntary return, which implies financial support from the country they return from. The government has established a re-admission service at the

Belgrade airport which means that currently there is no need for the Red Cross of Serbia to include airport presence in its programme.

Achievements: Totally 243 people were assisted in the detention centre for irregular migrants, their hygiene was maintained through the provision of hygiene items and clean clothes, and the respect for their human rights was ensured through monitoring.

Home care: In home care some 11,000 people were assisted. In 2009 the multi-year support from several sister National Societies for the home care programme came to the end. The British Red Cross covered some of the field-level costs until June on bilateral basis, resulting in a slight decrease in the number of older vulnerable people assisted in comparison with 2008. Owing to the end of external funding, the number of active branches implementing the programme went down from 84 to 61, covering approximately 7,000 people. Considering that there is presently no external funding for the home care programme, meaning that implementation at branch level is funded locally, this shows a high level of self-sufficiency and is a testimony to the importance and quality of the programme that was started in 2002 in most communities in Serbia. The programme is coordinated from the headquarters.

A project design manual for branches was produced and distributed to all branches. The manual is a comprehensive guide for creating local level projects related to social welfare and is based on projects that the branches in the home care programme have been designing and implementing in the past years.[4] It uses best practices from these projects as examples as well as experiences of other organizations working in the same field.

The Red Cross of Serbia, as member of the HumanaS network[5] took part in a survey on discrimination, neglect and abuse of older people. The survey showed that older people do not define financial exploitation as abuse and are most sensitive to verbal abuse. The findings were presented to the public on 15 June during the International Day of Awareness of the Abuse of Older People. The Red Cross of Serbia and HumanaS are using these results as basis for their ongoing advocacy campaign.

Achievements: The Red Cross of Serbia is individually and through HumanaS scaling up its advocacy efforts on behalf of older people, bringing the issue of discrimination, neglect and abuse of older people to the attention of the public. It is also advocating for the introduction of social pensions in Serbia.

At the same time local capacities for independent and sustainable programme design, implementation and fund-raising were significantly increased through tailor-made tools sourced from the best Red Cross practices in the home care programme as well as experiences of other local organizations.

Open kindergarten for Roma and other children from marginalized families / Work with young people living with disabilities: The implementation of the new phase of the *Joint programme for inclusion of marginalized groups through education* started as planned in January 2009.[6] The programme targeted 2,435 vulnerable Roma children, children and young people with disabilities and their parents, and siblings during this implementation period. Of these 1,461 vulnerable Roma children, parents and siblings were supported through mentor classes, the preschool preparatory programme and homework support, as well as with meals during the activities, school accessories and basic hygiene items.

Preparations for implementing the *Promotion of Human Values* project were completed and educational workshops started in ten municipalities targeting vulnerable Roma pupils in

[4] As part of the so-called 'Bonus Module' initiative
[5] The HumanaS network consists of 15 NGOs working with older people.
[6] Previously named the "Social Welfare programme".

elementary school and their peers. The workshops aimed at facilitating their inclusion into the education system.

Another 974 vulnerable children and youth with disabilities and their parents were supported through interactive workshops which aimed at facilitating their social inclusion, acquisition of life and work skills and development of intellectual, perceptive and motorics abilities.

A methodology for facilitating municipal cooperation has been launched in Serbia and the National Society continued cooperation with relevant partners and participated in national activities in the framework of the *Decade of Roma Inclusion*.

A series of short films about the joint programme is being developed and a rather interesting initiative was launched on the world wide popular social network Facebook, allowing youth volunteers in Serbia to share thoughts and experiences on the implementation of the *Promotion of Human Values* project.

Achievements in terms of development included standardisation of projects, development of regional resource centres, better understanding of knowledge management and revision of monitoring tools.

The programme set-up in Serbia now includes five International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners: the Red Cross of Serbia and the Montenegro Red Cross as operating National Societies; the Danish and Spanish Red Cross Societies as supporting partner National Societies; and the IFRC with overall coordination role. Moreover the programme is implemented through partnerships with UNICEF, the NGO 'Pomoc Deci' and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Joint planning organized by SDC with the Red Cross, UNICEF and Pomoc Deci resulted in a revised logical framework matrix and a plan of action for implementing joint activities in cooperation of the partners.

Achievements

- The development of a proposal for a Red Cross advocacy framework has started and will result in a comprehensive manual in 2010.
- A revision of the programme documentation templates improved programme standardisation and harmonisation.
- The participatory community development methodology was adapted and training of trainers completed and improved the cooperation between the implementing branches and local stakeholders by involving the latter in local project planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Preparations for a baseline study are in progress.
- Registration of people reached in 2009 was completed and data gathered from the field are now being analysed.
- A resource group mainly including field associates and headquarters managers was established. The aim of the group is to set up regional resource centres whose role will be to provide practical support to the implementing branches in the region and to facilitate experience and knowledge sharing.

Key achievements

Kindergarten for Roma/ Children with disabilities

- 120 Roma children successfully enrolled into formal preschool.
- 126 Roma children successfully enrolled into the first grade of primary school.
- 434 Roma children successfully passed on to the next grade in primary school.
- 717 children living with disabilities were covered by workshops, improving their skills, self-esteem and prospects for social integration.
- 257 parents were also covered by the programme.

Working in partnership

The Red Cross of Serbia worked in partnership with the IFRC and received funds from the British Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross through the Federation secretariat plan. The National Society was supported bilaterally by the British Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. Besides Red Cross donors the Swiss Agency for Development and

Cooperation contributed with funds. USAID is a supporter of the disaster management programme and is still looking into supporting activities within the health and care programme. The health and care programme is implemented through several partnerships at local level including local authorities, centres for social welfare, schools, Roma NGOs and pensioners' associations. At the national level HumanaS, the Pomoć Deci NGO and UNICEF are partners contributing to the programme.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The work with vulnerable populations in Serbia through addressing health practices, access to health and social support institutions and education, and ensuring a community-wide response to needs, is in line with the IFRC's Global Agenda and its emphasis on preventing and reducing deaths, injuries and illnesses as well as the building of communities' capacities to combat their own vulnerability.

Programme components are compatible with local and regional initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the Poverty Reduction Strategies. Work towards disaster preparedness pursues the Global Agenda goal of reducing the number of deaths and injuries and impact from disasters, a much needed endeavour in both countries as disasters seem to become more frequent.

All programmes have gender as an integrated and important component. Within disaster preparedness the psychosocial component puts special emphasis on gender to ensure that the needs of each family member are adequately assessed and met. In vocational training for refugees, professional training is provided to meet the needs of both genders. In health promotion gender balance is presented as one of the priorities resulting in projects addressing reproductive health as well as sexual hygiene and specific activities for target groups of both genders. In volunteering and youth activities the organizational development programme promotes humanitarian values through a young volunteer project with a clear gender focus.

Looking ahead

The Federation secretariat and the National Society work closely together on planning and implementing activities based on the strategic priorities of the National Society as well as the funding realities. As more of the programmes are taken over by the National Society such as home care, the IFRC focuses its capacities on those areas needing more development. A one-year contract was signed with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for a new implementation phase of the social welfare programme focusing on Roma children and children with disabilities. Several other partners participated, including the Spanish Red Cross and the Danish Red Cross, and there is a possibility for extension to three or more years. Other programme activities depend on funding available such as USAID support to disaster management and the National Society priorities.

The National Society will continue to gradually expand its activities from exclusively being a provider of assistance to also being an advocate for the vulnerable, through its role as a partner and driving force behind processes of civil society building at both national and local levels.

How we work

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".

Global Agenda Goals:

- 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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