

Annual report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belarus

MAABY002

30 April 2011

This report covers the period 1 January 2010
to 31 December 2010.



Red Cross youth volunteer action on road safety in Dubrovno, Vitebsk region. Photo: Belarus Red Cross.

In brief

Programme outcome: The programmes supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Belarus are in line with the Strategy 2020 strategic aims to save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises; to enable healthy and safe living; and to build strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Programme(s) summary: There is a growing understanding at all levels of the Belarus Red Cross that developing volunteering is the main way to make its service delivery in local communities more effective and fulfilling the mission of the organization. Thanks to volunteers the activities in the district branches on social assistance for vulnerable people and promotion of humanitarian values are becoming more regular, planned and focused. Volunteer community-based activities raise the image of the Red Cross as a humanitarian non-governmental organization, attract public attention to the problems of vulnerable groups, and serve as an effective tool for local resource mobilization. It is obvious that volunteer development and promotion, which is currently on the rise within the National Society, contributes significantly to organizational development/capacity building and performance.

A revision of the Belarus Red Cross law has been initiated by the by Belarusian lawmakers. However the revisions proposed by the National Society, mainly related to tax benefits and financial support from the government, have not been included in the draft law. The Belarus Red Cross and IFRC continue lobbying for fiscal concessions from the government. A bronze bust of Henry Dunant was unveiled on the eve of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in Minsk. High level representatives from the European Union, the United Nations, ambassadors, ministries of health and justice, and city authorities attended the opening ceremony. The erection of the bust was made possible with the support of ICRC, IFRC, Japanese Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross, German Red Cross and Belarus Red Cross funds.

Financial situation: The total 2010 budget is CHF 1,673,018 of which CHF 919,607 (55 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). The budget was increased from initially CHF 1,281,297 due to increased funding. Overall expenditure during the reporting period

was CHF 728,727. Expenditure against budget was 43 per cent and expenditure against funding was 79 per cent. [Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

See also [Belarus Country Plan 2010-2011](#)

No. of people we help: More than 150,000 people in Belarus benefited directly from the Federation secretariat supported programme interventions. More than 450,000 people were reached indirectly through mass information campaigns.

Our partners: The Belarus Red Cross cooperates with nine partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), NGOs, the national centre for blood donation, national AIDS centre, ministries and governmental organizations, universities and other educational institutions, mass media as well as international and local enterprises. Concept notes and project proposals for EU funding were submitted by the Belarus Red Cross in cooperation with partner National Societies and IFRC.

Context

According to the World Bank Belarus remains one of the least reformed countries in the pre-1990 eastern bloc. Its state-dominated economy has depended heavily on cheap oil and gas from Russia, a benefit that has diminished as relations between the once-close allies have soured. IMF forecasts that the total external debt of Belarus in 2010 will reach the highest level in history to take up some 52 percent of GDP¹ while the state foreign debt would also reach its highest level ever to take up 24 per cent of the total GDP compared to 18 percent in 2009. The annual GDP of 2010 is estimated to grow 2.4 per cent. The government's statist economic model is expected to remain under strain in 2010 and 2011 as external demand remains below the level before the economic crisis and as Russia continues to raise gas prices and wind down concessions on terms of trade in the oil sector, which formerly bolstered government finances.²

In January-September 2010 Belarus ranked 2nd in terms of inflation among the European countries, according to the data of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, made on the basis of the Eurostat publications, national statistics services and the Internet data in accordance with the requirements of the Special Data Dissemination Standard of the International Monetary Fund. According to the data, inflation in Belarus amounted to 6.8% in January-September 2010. Inflation risk is estimated to be one of the most threatening to the Belarusian economy. According to some forecasts an inflation hike will take place in 2011, with the annual average inflation accelerating up to 20%.

The living standard for ordinary people in Belarus has worsened in recent years with poverty and unemployment rates becoming more acute as a result of the global recession. Poverty is widespread among unemployed people, the rural population, pensioners, and children in large families, families with unemployed and single parents. For the first time in several years the Red Cross is receiving a lot of requests for clothes, money and food support.

HIV and AIDS are of great concern in Belarus. As of 1 December, 2010, 11,661 HIV infection cases were registered in Belarus. Within 11 months of the year 2010, 971 patients were diagnosed with HIV-infection (within 11 months of the year 2009 – 972 people). The overwhelming majority of HIV-infected is young people aged 15–29 years old. The total number of HIV-infection cases in the above mentioned age group is 7,525 (the proportion of HIV-infected young people is 64.5%). The proportion of the age group 15-19 of HIV-infected cases accounted for 2.1 % over the 11 months of 2010.

Over the past few years non-medical use of psychoactive substances has become a pressing issue. Studies of drug abuse point to a fall in the average age of registered drug users and in the age at which drug use begins, an increasing proportion of “hard” drugs, and their growing availability. According to the Ministry of Health the number of drug users registered in

¹ Total external debt consist of state foreign debt plus private foreign debt (mainly state enterprises).

² Economist Intelligence Unit.

dispensaries increased by 31 per cent from 2005 to 2009.³ At the end of 2009, a total of 8,058 drug users were registered. However the real number is assumed to be several times higher and in 2008 the estimated number of intravenous drug users was around 76,000 persons.⁴

Trafficking in persons, especially women, has become a major challenge. The government has demonstrated its commitment and made visible efforts to counteract irregular migration, trafficking in human beings and related crime. IOM, however, observes that the country's capacity to respond to migration challenges is limited and that additional efforts and support is needed. In this context, efforts to cultivate non-tolerance towards exploitation, violence and forced labour play an important role.

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Component 1: HIV and AIDS

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

Component outcome 2: Vulnerability of PLHIV decreased through reducing HIV stigma and discrimination.

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

Achievements: Under the *Youth against HIV* project the Belarus Red Cross involved 60,156 people through 321 HIV peer education sessions (5,779 people) and ten youth actions, four community-based micro-projects, 29 film group sessions, 83 workshops and 19 forum-theatre performances (54,377 people). Peer education sessions are an integral component of the standard HIV six-stage model which is successfully continuing in 60 educational institutions in 29 towns across the country. 430 (22 male/ 308 female) volunteers were actively involved in the project, including 132 (28 male/ 304 female) volunteer instructors.

In order to refresh and upgrade the qualifications of previously trained instructors, workshops covering both volunteers with and without work experience in HIV work were held. Furthermore, the most experienced volunteers were trained as supervisors that serve as an incentive for further involvement. A person representing people living with HIV (PLHIV) acted as a facilitator and expert-supervisor in the workshops. In total 65 new volunteer instructors were trained, out of whom 22 were trained to supervise the working process of peer educators. More than 35,000 printed information materials were produced within the project.

During the year the focus has been moved from fulfilling quantitative indicators to quality indicators as well as towards organizational capacity building. As a result, instead of eight planned micro-projects, only four were accepted for small grant support due to their effectiveness and sustainability.

HIV prevention and anti-discrimination activities within the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* continued at the three largest national enterprises including Belarusian Auto Works (BELAZ), Belarus Steel Works and Belarus State Railways. The project assists companies in informing staff and their families about safe sexual behaviour, preventing HIV to affect staff's performance and creating more balanced labour relations.

Public events dedicated to the AIDS Memorial Day, St. Valentine's Day, the World TB Day and the World Day without Tobacco were held throughout the country. The art-exhibition "A city, where people live" promoting respect for civil and human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS and tolerant attitudes towards PLHIV was held in Zhodino, Zhlobin, Minsk and Mozyr jointly with the *Belarusian community of PLHIV*. The exhibition was visited by a total of 5,000 people. Furthermore, the photo-exhibition "The Door?!..." organized in the Cultural Center of Metallurgists (Zhlobin) in cooperation with the NGO "Positive movement" and "Belarusian Steelworks, was attended by 1,298 people.

³ Aleksandrov A. A., Chief Narcologist of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus. Drug abuse treatment in Belarus / Medical newsletter, March 1, 2010 – <http://www.medvestnik.by/news/content/quick/4678.html>

⁴ Equalling approximately 1.3 per cent of the country's population between aged between 15 and 54. Belarusian Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addictions.

World AIDS Day activities took place in 36 towns with support of *HIV prevention in the field of labour* and *Youth against HIV* projects. On the 1st of December Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers organized a tea action "Do not disappoint!" to promote safe behaviour, in particular the use of condom and awareness of personal HIV status. Within the framework of the tea action information tents were put up, where participants who successfully completed the task (correctly answered questions on HIV, its transmission and prevention, HIV situation in Belarus, etc.) received a cup of tea and information leaflets with condoms. Those participants who had trouble answering the questions were offered assistance by Red Cross volunteers and afterwards could complete the task. Over 22,000 people took part in the tea action, including some 3,500 people at enterprises. The activities received local and national media coverage.

On 28 November – 3 December, Belarus Red Cross, Belarus Steel Works' administration, and Belarusian community of PLHIV organized a theatre performance "White Angel with Black Wings" – a story of a girl who discovered she was HIV-positive, the emotions she went through, misunderstanding and negative attitude of her surrounding. The performance aimed to reduce stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV. 650 people visited the event.

In 2010 the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* has covered 22,748 people 30 per cent of them (6,911) are youth, under the age of 31. The coverage of the secondary target group was approximately 22,695 people (family members of the staff) and 30,353 people (in local communities).

A training of trainers (ToT) was conducted in January 2010 for groups established at the enterprises.⁵ The most active training was held at Belarusian Steel Works where, upon the request of the director general the main module "*What should everyone know about HIV?*" was included into the mandatory training programme for the participants of skill improvement.

Moreover in the framework of the projects *HIV prevention in the field of labour* and *Youth against HIV* the representative published views on the events on the website of the PLHIV community.⁶ 32 articles and 16 coverage reports about activities of the National Society within implementation of the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* were published in mass media of Belarus, Russia and Western Europe during the reporting period⁷. In total 46 volunteers from the target group (enterprise youth staff aged under 31 years old) and 37 Belarus Red Cross volunteer students were involved in implementation of the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour*.⁸

The above activities prompted the companies to adopt policies on HIV prevention and prohibiting discrimination towards people living with HIV. For the first time in Belarus enterprise managers approved regulations based on ILO's basic principles aiming to prevent discrimination on the basis of health status and included HIV prevention trainings for the staff during working hours. In line with their policies and action plans the enterprises will continue their work towards reducing stigma and discrimination against PLHIV.

In March the Belarus Red Cross presidium approved its own policy on HIV prevention and prohibition of discrimination towards people living with HIV. The policy is aligned with the Federation policy on HIV and AIDS. By end of the year HIV in workplace policy and programmes were developed and adopted for all Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers.

At the XVIII International HIV/AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010, 18-23 July, 2010, Vienna, Austria) Belarus Red Cross presented its best practices, particularly in HIV prevention at work place and forming an adequate attitude towards PLHIV. Belarus Red Cross team also brought home a number of technologies and ideas which can be adapted and used in its HIV programming, such as theatrical and creative methodologies (comics for youth), role plays (live library), dancing methodologies, public interviews with PLHIV and other vulnerable groups. Exhibition-installation

⁵ The training was organized in cooperation with the Institute of Professional Skills Improvement for managers and specialists. The training was provided by highly professional staff of the Russian representative office of the Global Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), who has experience in implementing the awareness programme "Health @t work" at Russian and Ukrainian companies. In Belarus "Health @t work", upon request of the Belarus Red Cross is targeting companies, enterprises and organizations.

⁶ www.hiv.by

⁷ <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/europe-central-asia/belarus/hiv-in-belarus-reminding-people-that-ignorance-still-kills/>

⁸ <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/europe-central-asia/belarus/belarus-reaching-people-vulnerable-to-hiv-wherever-they-are/>

“A city where people live” presented by Belarus Red Cross was the only presentation by Belarusian NGOs at the Conference’s Global Village.

The XIV Annual Meeting of the European Regional Network of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on HIV and Tuberculosis (ERNA) was held by the Belarus Red Cross Society in Minsk on September 24-27, 2010. More than 80 members of 27 National Societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent from Europe and Asia, ERNA Board and representatives of the Asian Regional Red Cross and Red Crescent Network discussed issues of strengthening capacities of vulnerable populations and organizations representing their interests, in order to prevent further HIV-infection and Tuberculosis within European and Asian region. Belarus Red Cross together with its partners involved in the implementation of the project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* presented their experience in HIV prevention at workplaces and in forming adequate attitude towards PLHIV. During the Conference the ERNA Secretariat was elected. Its duties will be performed by the Belarus Red Cross for the next three years. Supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) the National Society runs harm reduction and HIV and AIDS palliative care activities.

Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers also took part in several trainings:

- Supported by IFRC Red Cross staff took part in TB advocacy training of trainers for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries held by Advocacy Partnership (UK) and IFRC in June;
- Supported by IFRC two representatives from Belarus Red Cross regional harm reduction centers participated in trainings organized by the Italian Red Cross at Villa Maraini;
- One youth volunteer attended HIV prevention training for trainers organised by the Bulgarian Red Cross.

In March the society organized World TB Day activities in 35 cities. More than 1,000 volunteers disseminated 150,000 copies of information materials. Movies were shown in 11 movie theatres throughout the country free of charge.

Component 2: Community-based first aid

Component outcome 1: Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) have increased.

The first-aid component was not supported through IFRC. However, with bilateral support from the French Red Cross, Estonian Red Cross and the European Reference Centre for First Aid Education a sustainable first-aid training system is being developed through courses and training and development of a first-aid manual. During the reported period 163 first aid trainings were conducted. 2,501 persons of local population were trained. 42 instructors were trained in refreshment training. 8 instructors were trained in ToT training.

Component 3: Human pandemic influenza

Component outcome 1: Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with avian and human influenza pandemic have increased.

Initially it was planned to implement H2P project in only eight pilot areas of the country, however, when the epidemic started to roll-out progressively, it was decided to expand project activities and cover the whole country with prevention measures. The Belarus Red Cross developed its own country plan and implemented it in 158 district organizations. 67 out of them organized and held various information activities with different categories of people, communities, staff of enterprises and organizations. The remaining 91 Red Cross branches disseminated printed materials among different categories of population, staff of organizations and enterprises, in the communities. IFRC supported the making of a film on H2P project activities.⁹

Railroad Red Cross organization used its volunteers to inform train passengers of influenza symptoms and prevention measures - simple steps they can take to protect themselves.¹⁰

⁹ A short movie was uploaded on the YouTube website http://www.youtube.com/user/ifrc#p/u/6/5L5S6Y_IU0c

¹⁰ <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/europe-central-asia/belarus/belarus-pandemic-preparedness-and-response-remain-on-track/>

All population groups were covered, including vulnerable populations (children, elderly, victims of human trafficking, people in closed institutions, homeless). The project activities emphasized key simple principles that can be applied by every person to protect themselves. In total 311,380 inhabitants of 67 districts were reached by H2P information activities.

The team of trainers and volunteers were prepared according to IFRC standards. The knowledge received and the skills developed during the training can be applied to any other pandemic situations in the country. All available communication materials and information boards will be used in future everyday activity. Information on safe behavior in case of pandemic, key preventive principles and creation of responsible attitude to one's health (in the context of the awareness campaign *Your Best Defense is You*) will continue to be spread in cooperation with health, education and mass-media agencies at regional and district level.

Constraints or Challenges: Integrating the cycle of the six-stage HIV peer education model into the education for pupils in schools remains a challenge. Recommendations were developed on how to organize meetings with school administrations to support regional coordinators and peer educators so that agreements can be reached on hosting the full cycle.

Volunteers in several regions in Belarus are interested in organizing HIV prevention events and adopting new working methods. The volunteers are particularly interested in the international movement *Dance4life*. Owing to limited resources for coordinated implementation, volunteers adopt *Dance4life* activities based on information received from peers and the Internet. This contradicts the general concept and principles of the *Dance4life* movement and can impede project implementation should it be officially extended to Belarus in the future. The Red Cross requested the Moscow-based *Dance4life* coordinator to consider including Belarus into the list of participants and provide training for Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers. Regrettably, since Belarus is not included in the areas of project expansion National Society staff and volunteers cannot be covered by the above mentioned trainings.

Disaster Management

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| Programme component 1: Disaster management planning |
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| Component outcome 1: Improved ability to predict and plan for disasters to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities, and respond to and effectively cope with their consequences. |
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| Programme component 2: Organisational preparedness |
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| Component outcome 1: Improved capacity of the Belarus Red Cross in skilled human resources, and financial and material capacity for effective disaster management. |
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Achievements: No funds were received for disaster management planning and organizational preparedness. However the National Society maintained its domestic disaster relief fund and regional emergency stocks, and ensured that a sufficient number of staff and volunteers are on stand-by in case of disaster. Two per cent of the Red Cross's income from membership fees and local non-earmarked donations is allocated to the relief fund which enabled the Belarus Red Cross to procure relief items for domestic spring floods. Through support from IFRC and ICRC and local fund-raising almost CHF 18,000 was contributed from the Belarus Red Cross to the Federation Haiti operation. Due to local funds \$2,200 were transferred to the Russian Red Cross in order to assist in overcoming the consequences of the fires.

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| Programme component 3: Disaster response |
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| Component outcome 1: Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition. |
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With financial support from the Swiss Red Cross, 9,710 food parcels were distributed a total of 6,915 (2,569 multi-child families and 4,346 individuals) beneficiaries including elderly people living alone, people with disabilities, homeless people, people with low incomes, people released from prisons and multi-child families with low incomes. In addition, the Belarus Red Cross procured 1,970 food parcels locally with funds from the Swiss Red Cross as part of the project *Humanitarian Assistance to the Vulnerable*. These were distributed additionally to 1,100 families and individuals in remote villages of Minsk region. Finally, within the *Twice Christmas* operation the Swiss Red Cross bilaterally donated food, hygiene items, toys, second-hand clothes and

shoes in Minsk city and the regions of Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno and Gomel. Some 38,000 people were reached.

Through bilateral support from the Icelandic Red Cross 2,000 baby parcels, 600 blankets and 95 pairs of shoes were distributed during the winter to multi-child and single-parent families in remote villages in Minsk oblast so supporting some 2,000 families. Moreover a documentary film about the situation of the needy people in Belarus and the distribution of baby parcels was produced.¹¹

In order to help those who are in need, the Belarus Red Cross headquarters and its regional and district branches also mobilized local community resources for the total value of 341,982,369 Belarusian roubles (approximately 120,000 Swiss francs) in the first half of 2010. These local resources included in-kind contributions like food, hygienic items, footwear, clothes and stationery and were distributed through regional, district and town Red Cross branches reaching around 40,000 beneficiaries in addition to external support.

In October-November 2010 the Belarus Red Cross launched a national campaign *Care* aiming to assist single, elderly people living alone and disabled persons. The total of 360 activities reached 20,569 people. The main activities carried out by 5,443 volunteers included visiting lonely people and disabled persons, organizing concerts and entertaining events, providing with humanitarian aid and personal hygiene items, delivery of medicines, cleaning services, etc. The total cost of the provided assistance is 156,016,284 Belarusian roubles (about 54,759 Swiss francs). The campaign was widely covered by regional newspapers, radio and local TV news reports.

Constraints or Challenges: The main challenge encountered by the Belarus Red Cross during this operation is that many vulnerable people cannot be covered through distributions by food parcels and other humanitarian items. There is an obvious need for the Red Cross to launch relief programmes in light of a worsening situation for the most vulnerable, when economic crisis is turning into social crisis.

Because of limited resources for implementing programme components one and two joint efforts were made by GTZ, IFRC and the Austrian Red Cross for obtaining a tender for the EU project for strengthening the Prevention, Preparedness and Relief capacity for man-made Disasters (PPRD) in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Caucasus.

Organisational Development

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| Programme component 1: Improving the Belarus Red Cross's leadership capacities to develop and implement strategies, to ensure good performance and accountability |
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| Component outcome 1: Implementation of the revised statutes. |
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| Component outcome 2: Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels. |
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Limited resources meant that no activities were implemented for improving leadership capacities.

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| Programme component 2: Ensuring a well-functioning organization with sustainable systems, procedures and staff with desired level of managerial and technical competencies. |
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| Component outcome 1: Effective and transparent human resource management. |
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| Component outcome 2: Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines. |
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| Component outcome 3: Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems. |
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| Component outcome 4: Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication. |
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In 2010 the Belarus Red Cross established a working group to develop a human resources policy, salary regulations, and a system for evaluation and motivation for staff and volunteers. As a result, in 2010 the position of human resources manager was introduced at headquarters level and a manager was recruited. Moreover bonus regulations and staff incentives were adopted. IFRC continues to provide support in developing a fair salary system.

¹¹ For the movie please see <http://vimeo.com/12017289>

The National Society, among some other National Societies in Europe, accepted to participate and to collect and report data for the Federation-wide reporting system¹² (FWRS). This allowed to test the FWRS guidance, training and data collection for the first time with National Societies to identify key challenges and lessons to better prepare the system for its full implementation.

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| Programme component 3: Developing a nation-wide coverage of grass-roots units and services |
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| Component outcome 1: Develop a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/ units at grass-roots level. |
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| Component outcome 2: Support branches/units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures. |
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Achievements: Although the third year allocation from the Federation Capacity Building Fund (CBF) supporting the *Volunteer promotion and development* project was confirmed only in April, the project team was active since the beginning of 2010. A number of actions and fund-raising activities were organized with support of other projects in order to allow Red Cross staff and volunteers in Vitebsk region to have a shared understanding about ensuring the sustainability of the volunteer project. As a result, nine youth actions including promotion of blood donation and the annual marathon for disabled people were implemented reaching more than 3,830 people.

12 community-based initiatives¹³ were developed by youth volunteer groups and approved by the selection committee in September. Ten initiatives were awarded with small grant support from the volunteer development project and two initiatives had the potential to be fully implemented with own funds. By the end of their implementation period in February 2011 these community-based initiatives are expected to reach over 3,000 people. 75 staff and volunteers acquired basic skills in project writing and leadership in volunteering with CBF support. A total of 480 volunteers were involved in project planning and implementation. A total of CHF 4,490 was a local Red Cross and partners' contribution to the overall budget of micro-projects, which exceeded the funds allocated by CBF for this activity almost by two times.

In October 50 volunteers attended Vitebsk Regional Youth Volunteer Forum to elect new chairperson of the volunteer council, to elaborate a work plan and to acquire new skills through master-classes in disaster management, pandemic preparedness, clown-therapy, conflict resolution, working with children with disabilities. Regional and city volunteer councils in Vitebsk oblast enjoy extensive cooperation with several partners¹⁴, which contributes to implementation of the volunteer development project. Volunteer councils' members serve as resource persons in planning and implementation of activities, fundraising, and facilitation of trainings at local level. The regional volunteer council regulations ensure that youth from rural areas are also represented in the volunteer councils.

Training on leadership, communication, team-building and project planning as well as promotion of tolerance towards refugees through the *Youth on the run* project jointly with UNHCR were held in Vitebsk region for 55 Red Cross staff and volunteers in May.

Through bilateral cooperation with the Danish Red Cross activities aiming at promoting youth volunteering continued in Grodno, Brest, Mogilev and Gomel regions. A model for mobilizing volunteers in rural areas and small towns and initiating cooperation with local authorities in strategic planning, needs assessment, and project management was developed. However, time is required for institutionalizing achieved results and to allow the model to gain wider geographical coverage.

On 26-30 July Belarus Red Cross hosted Youth Leaders International School 2010¹⁵. Some 80 young people, representing the seven countries of Belarus, Denmark, Georgia, Poland, Lithuania,

¹² The Federation-wide reporting system is a system for National Societies and the Secretariat to reliably monitor and report on key data on an annual basis to improve the performance and accountability of the Federation as a leading global actor in the humanitarian field.

¹³ Youth initiatives address such topics as social re-integration of 'problem' teenagers, socialization of children with special needs, disaster preparedness and response, volunteer development, disease prevention and health promotion, combating trafficking in human beings, dissemination of humanitarian values and assistance to the vulnerable.

¹⁴ Totally 23 partners are involved. Partners include Vitebsk city and oblast executive committees, education, and youth affairs departments, the city cinema hall and the zoo, orphanages and hospitals. Volunteer councils' members serve as resource persons in planning and implementation of activities, fundraising, and facilitation of trainings at local level.

¹⁵ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/redcrossredcrescentyouth/4907011249/in/set-72157624586455226/>

Russia and Ukraine gathered in the recreation center “Na rosstanyah”, Minsk region. The main objectives of the school were to develop leadership qualities and skills among young people and further involve them in volunteer movement, strengthening friendship and cooperation. As part of the officially organized activities of the school, there were workshops in public relations and effective communication, first aid, international humanitarian law, human trafficking, psychosocial support through clown therapy, as well as other activities to promote inter-cultural understanding and dialogue such as an evening of nations and a forum-theatre. The participants from Belarus were selected from local branches, and the opportunity was promoted across the country through use of social media, which continues to become a powerful tool for young volunteers who want to connect with peers in their own country and beyond. Over the five days the participants not only improved their skills and knowledge, and shared ideas and success stories, but also learned to find the way out in a difficult situation and assist others.

The School also included classes on HIV prevention, the focus was on protection of rights and interests of people living with HIV. The session with a PLHIV, who openly disclosed her HIV status, made a deep impression on volunteers. After the main module volunteers took part in discussions aiming to highlight some aspects of living with HIV and to form adequate attitude towards PLHIV.

Red Cross volunteer and youth policies were shared with the Federation regional representation in Moscow to support the Russian Red Cross in developing a strategy on volunteering.

The Belarus Red Cross held several national press conferences and participated in numerous exhibitions attracting attention to Red Cross activities and volunteer development. For the first time a charity concert was organized by the National Society in May in Molodechno town in Minsk oblast to attract local donations and contribute to a positive image of the Red Cross. The concert yielded some CHF 4,400 in cash and kind.

In November 2010 an annual competition *Volunteer of the Year* was held. As a result of the event 12 winners were selected and awarded at a press-conference on the International Volunteer Day. In addition to the best volunteer award, the Belarus Red Cross also awarded best partners and best volunteer initiatives. This annual competition is a practical tool for volunteer recognition and motivation also contributing to the identification of best practices and lessons learnt. The best partner award serves as inspiration not only for partners but also for Belarus Red Cross to form partnerships.

On 3-5 December 2010 the National Volunteer Forum of the Belarus Red Cross was held. The event was organized by the Belarus Red Cross with the support of the International Federation and the Danish Red Cross. The motto of the event was "Volunteers are the heart of our organization". The forum was attended by eighty volunteer leaders from all regions of Belarus, the coordinators of youth programs and projects of the Belarus Red Cross, as well as guests from Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Denmark.

Constraints or Challenges: Limited resources was a major constraint leading to scaling down of successful activities which are focusing on involving citizens in voluntary service delivery and activities aimed at social inclusion and empowerment of older people.

The Belarus Red Cross financial manager recently left the post. The National Society is now seeking a replacement. Meanwhile a number of processes in building financial management capacities have slowed down. In order to fully computerise financial systems and develop internal procedures, time and additional resources are required.

Principles and Values

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| Programme purpose: |
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| Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion. |
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| Programme component 1: Promotion of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values |
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| Component outcome 1: Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general. |
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| Component outcome 2: The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and |
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changing behavior.

Achievements: The promotion of humanitarian values is an integral part of key National Society programmes. In addition dissemination of humanitarian values and reduction of stigma and discrimination are incorporated into other programme activities such as youth volunteer actions and community-based initiatives.

In May the Belarus National Library held the book exhibition “The grandeur of humanity, charity and voluntarism” dedicated to the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. More than 60 books, brochures, periodicals and booklets in Russian and English were presented.

In 2010 the Japanese Red Cross supported the installation and opening of a bust of Henry Dunant in Minsk.¹⁶ A bronze bust of Henry Dunant was unveiled on the eve of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in Minsk. Top representatives from the European Union, the United Nations, ambassadors, ministries of health and justice, and city authorities attended the opening ceremony. The small statue in a mini park in the centre of Belarusian capital now symbolises humanity in its complexity. Several press articles and some TV broadcasts were devoted to the history of Red Cross Movement and to the life and personality of Henry Dunant.

The new Belarus Red Cross website www.redcross.by was created to address the following groups of users: Red Cross staff, members and volunteers, beneficiaries, private and corporate donors, partner organizations, general public in Belarus and abroad with a special focus on youth, journalists and others. With the help of the new website the general public, Belarus Red Cross partners, donors and clients have received a broad access to information on International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the National Society.

Programme component 2: Anti-discrimination and violence prevention/reduction programmes

Component outcome 1: Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Component outcome 2: Improved access to psychosocial support, healthcare and legal counselling services for migrants and victims of trafficking.

Reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking was provided and an anti-trafficking network with other National Societies was established supported by IOM and the Danish Red Cross. Because of funding constraints the activities were scaled down compared with previous years. The National Society currently runs five regional consultation centres called “Hands of Help” and two district centres¹⁷ offering support to victims of trafficking. By mobilizing its own resources and building new partnerships, the Red Cross strives to sustain the work of the centres.

In June the Belarus Red Cross hosted the international workshop *Networking against Trafficking in Human Beings* with financial and technical support of the Danish Red Cross and IFRC.¹⁸ The participants shared best practices and developed profiles of risk groups, brainstormed ways to change the behaviour of risk groups, how to evaluate the effectiveness of Red Cross interventions, and discussed future plans for networking and cooperation.

In July 2010 *Youth volunteering to prevent trafficking in human beings* project, supported by IFRC and Icelandic Red Cross was launched. The project objective is networking, capacity building and cooperation between Belarus and Icelandic Red Cross Societies through assistance and prevention activities for actual and potential victims of trafficking and abuse involving the civil society and authorities in Gomel, Belarus. Since summer 2010 a good base for project development has been established. A qualified and committed project team is in place, both at national and regional level. Working meetings were held with the regional branch to present the project, to discuss implementation and reporting modalities and to draw up an action plan. Volunteer groups were mobilised and provided with the necessary induction, training and tools for developing and implementing their own community based initiatives targeting those at risk of being trafficked or abused. A drawing contest on the issues of trafficking was organized involving about 250 young people from the whole country (including about 35 participants from Gomel

¹⁶ For the news story about opening of the bust of Henry Dunant please see <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/europe-central-asia/belarus/belarus-bust-of-henry-dunant-unveiled-in-minsk/>.

¹⁷ In Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel and Mogilev, and Novopolotsk and Mozyr respectively.

¹⁸ The workshop was attended by representatives of the Belarusian, British, Croatian, Danish, Polish and Serbian Red Cross societies.

region). The Red Cross centre 'Hand of Help' continues to meet the needs of 12 VoT in Gomel region.

In October Belarus Red Cross endorsed eight volunteer initiatives for small grant support under the project *Youth Volunteering to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings*. The project ideas developed by youth groups include awareness raising and behaviour change activities through peer education, movie group discussions, essay/drawing competitions, quizzes, role plays, and forum theatre; psychological assistance; secure internet use; and activities aiming at development of self-esteem and professional education. These eight community-based initiatives developed by 65 volunteers are targeting 700 people in four locations to raise their awareness of human trafficking issues and help adopt safe behaviour models. Implementation of the approved micro-projects will start in January 2011.

In the period from 1 July to 31 December 2010, a total of 129 at-risk youth aged 14-35 living in towns and villages benefited from awareness-raising campaigns. Over 2,000 representatives of local communities (parents, townspeople, teachers, friends of volunteers and target group representatives) were mobilized by the project through more than 130 active Red Cross volunteers and staff.

Constraints or Challenges: Limited resources are the main constraint for the Principles and Values programme, in particular for the components targeting migrants and victims of trafficking. IFRC and the National Society continue to explore new funding opportunities, including participation in EU thematic calls. A joint application of IFRC and the Icelandic Red Cross to the Icelandic Foreign Ministry resulted in a three-year funding for the Belarus Red Cross anti-trafficking activities in Gomel region. The Belarus Red Cross has also become part of a joint grant application prepared by IFRC and IOM under the EU thematic programme of cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum. A successful application will help strengthening national mechanisms for reintegrating and rehabilitating of victims of human trafficking in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

Working in partnership

To achieve better results and generate high quality programmes, the Belarus Red Cross is cooperating with the key stakeholders in disaster management, health and care, organizational development and humanitarian values. Traditional partners are the ministries of health, social welfare, emergency, justice, internal affairs and education. The main international bilateral and multilateral partners within the Movement are the ICRC delegation in Moscow, the Danish, Swiss, Austrian, German, Icelandic, French, Italian and Swedish Red Cross Societies as well as the consortium of German and Swiss Red Cross Societies.

Belarus Red Cross Vitebsk regional branch continues its active cooperation with the Lithuanian Visaginas Red Cross branch in disaster response training and youth development. Regular meetings and trainings in Lithuania and Belarus are conducted.

Latvian Red Cross is very keen to continue the cooperation with Belarus Red Cross started under the peer support project. In 2010 the peer support project made it possible to re-establish the links between the Belarus and Latvian Red Cross societies, to identify possible areas of cooperation, to share experiences and to develop joint cooperation initiatives and plans. Latvian Red Cross together with Belarus Red Cross will search for possibilities to raise funding for strengthening disaster management capacities, especially in cross border region. The dialogue between the two National Societies is ongoing and joint plans will hopefully materialize soon with EU and other partners support. Invitations of the Latvian Red Cross to attend Summer Camp for volunteers and Baltic Summer academy on International Humanitarian Law in 2011 are well received by the Belarus Red Cross. This will enable staff and volunteers of both national societies to continue learning from each other, to build up new local cooperation initiatives and peer support groups, thus re-enforcing a mutually enriching and beneficial partnership.

Supported by the Austrian Red Cross, community care support was continuously provided to families with children with disabilities in Grodno region through mobile Red Cross team services. More than 60 families were covered. Moreover the families attended the Red Cross Day Centre.

The National Society is member of the "Anti-AIDS" and "Y-peer" youth organizations. A standardized concept of peer-to-peer training for educational institutions in Belarus is being

developed jointly with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. The qualifications of the Red Cross in peer-to-peer education have been acknowledged and recommendations, experience, best practices and techniques within *Youth against HIV* are taken into consideration.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All projects implemented by the Belarus Red Cross are aligned with IFRC's Strategy 2020. The National Society works to ensure gender equity and ensures equal participation and access of women and men through appropriate information materials and in the design of project activities. Gender balance is sought in project management structures.

Competence-building is a key element in all project activities carried out by the Belarus Red Cross as it encourages knowledge, skills and experience development. The activities have built competencies and capacities both at the national and local level, enabling the society to provide young and older people with opportunities to carry out social initiatives and advocating for their rights and needs in the local communities.

Local authorities played an essential role in the development of volunteer service delivery through providing administrative support, expertise and resources, and in establishing new mechanisms for interaction between local authorities and civil society organizations. At lower administrative levels Belarus Red Cross local branches worked closely with local administrations and educational and social welfare authorities to ensure access to the target groups, as well as to increase the sustainability of the community-based initiatives and to ensure exchange of information about best practices. The Red Cross continues to focus on developing its local network of branch units and improving its access to vulnerable people with sustainable and high quality services. To this end supported by the IFRC secretariat and other National Societies the Belarus Red Cross actively strives to attract EU funding.

A quality self-assessment under *Volunteer promotion and development* project carried out with active participation of volunteer leaders, members of volunteer councils and branch staff concluded that over the past three years the CBF-supported project in Vitebsk region has contributed significantly to building wider, sustainable and diversified volunteer services. The assessment highlighted such key trends featured in Vitebsk region as increased reliance on locally raised resources, involvement of volunteers in decision making processes and structures, change in the minds of volunteers and staff towards self-reliance, responsibility and action, involvement of vulnerable or unprivileged people as volunteers and active participants in community-based initiatives, and more accountability to the public through an increased focus on informing and showing outputs.

In the end of 2010 Belarus Red Cross started to work at elaboration of its new Strategy for the period of 2012–2015 on the basis IFRC's Strategy 2020, experience of implementation of the Strategy 2008–2011 and the current needs. The Belarus Red Cross also took part in the test run for Federation Wide Reporting System and in 2011 will continue to report on the agreed indicators.

Looking ahead

In 2011 Belarus Red Cross will start functioning as the Secretariat of ERNA. Belarus Red Cross is aimed at strengthening and promoting the exchange of experiences, information and best practices among member National Societies and with others, facilitating collaborative actions in the prevention of HIV, AIDS, TB and other communicable diseases with UN agencies, EU, nongovernmental organizations, Global Fund and other organizations.

The American Red Cross and the Italian Red Cross will support Belarus Red Cross HIV projects in Gomel and Grodno regions. Project proposals were developed by Belarus Red Cross with the support of the IFRC. The implementation of the project starts in 2011.

The Icelandic Red Cross will support anti-trafficking activities in Gomel region over three years, as well as continue to supply humanitarian aid to vulnerable population groups.

The National Society has approached the Polish Red Cross and the Ukrainian Red Cross for a joint EU application for cross-border cooperation. The first working meeting was held in Lviv with

the support of the Austrian Red Cross. A concept note was discussed and agreed upon. The second meeting will be held as soon as the call for proposals will be announced.

In 2011, with support of the EU programme *Youth in Action* Danish Red Cross Youth will implement a volunteer exchange project between Belarus and Denmark. The Danish and Belarusian Intercultural Exchange project supports the Danish and Belarus Red Cross partnership. Through this project two Danish Red Cross youth volunteers will, by being stationed in a regional branch for several months, contribute to financial sustainability in Belarus Red Cross youth projects by supporting development of local fundraising methods and contribute to Belarus Red Cross's anti-trafficking work by supporting youth peer education activities.

In the framework of the EU call "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities" the Danish, Austrian and German Red Cross societies in partnership with Belarus Red Cross submitted concept notes for volunteer service development.

All Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to:

Inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

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