

DREF operation final report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Russian Federation: Mine blast in Kemerovo region

DREF operation n° MDRRU002
28 March 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this Final report: 26 November 2007 to 27 March 2008

Summary: CHF 105,000 (USD 86,415 or EUR 64,760) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 27 March 2007 to support the Russian Red Cross Society in providing psychosocial support to the families of miners affected by a blast in the Ulyanovskaya coal mine in Novokuznetsk, in the Kemerovo region of the Russian Federation through a period of six months.

Due to the increased need for psychosocial support after a second methane explosion at the neighbouring Yubileinaya mine in May 2007, the DREF operation was extended for an additional two months (until 26 November 2007) within the available funds, including further beneficiaries.

Almost 420 miners' families and their relatives (1,500 people) received psychosocial support through home visits, self-support group meetings and various public events conducted by the Russian Red Cross staff and volunteers. It facilitated their return to normal life after the tragedy and substantially reduced the stress. This operation was implemented over eight months and was completed by 26 November 2007. After the end of the DREF operation, the Russian Red Cross raised funds through local companies (CHF 70,000) and received full support of the local authorities to continue with same activities psychosocial support. The specific experience of psychosocial support in mining areas gained during the operation in Kemerovo was shared with the National Societies of Ukraine and Kazakhstan that have launched similar DREF operations after the mine blasts in Donetsk and Karaganda.



Meeting of a psychological support group of miners' widows – "psychodrama" in Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo region. Photo: Russian Red Cross, August 2007.

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The situation

On 19 March 2007, a methane explosion occurred at the Ulyanovskaya mine in Novokuznetsk in the Kemerovo region of the Russian Federation. Out of the 203 people who were in the mine at the time of the blast, the rescue workers were able to save only 93 while 110 died in the explosion. Two months later, on 24 May, a second methane explosion occurred at the Yubileinaya mine, also in Novokuznetsk, 60 km from the site of the first explosion. Out of the 217 people in the mine, 38 died in the collapse of the mineshaft and one miner died later in the hospital of burns and injuries. In total, the two blasts claimed 149 lives and directly affected another 271, twelve of them injured. Due to this second tragedy, the target group that needed psychosocial support increased, and the psychological problems of the miners' families aggravated. Both mines reopened a month after the respective accidents.

The affected families have received financial support from the local authorities. The coal mine administration and the regional authorities have paid compensation to each family that lost one of its members. The compensation amounted, on average, to 93,477 Swiss francs.

However, the affected families were in need of more than simply financial support. Psychological support to the relatives of the deceased miners was provided by 40 psychologists during the first five days, but two months after the accidents the local authorities and other governing bodies ceased all activities for providing assistance to the affected people.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

During the first days after the first explosion at the Ulyanovskaya mine, the Kemerovo branch of the Russian Red Cross responded by providing psychological support and first aid to the people who were waiting to hear news about their relatives caught in the mine. They also provided psychological aid to the affected families in the office of the mine administration, the morgue during the identification of the bodies, in the hospital, and they also attended the funerals. Light food and water was distributed. When the second blast occurred at the Yubileinaya mine, the Russian Red Cross at the request of the local government provided psychological assistance within hours. The needs assessment carried out by the Russian Red Cross and the information shared by psychologists from the Centre of Catastrophe Medicine (Ministry of Emergencies) showed that 134 families (from among the 149 families which lost a member in the two incidents) required urgent and systematic longer-term support. However, the scale of the disaster and the specific character of Novokuznetsk as a miners' city, led to the conclusion that, in addition to the families of dead miners, psychosocial support was required also for the miners who had survived, and their families (about 1,500 people).

The Russian Red Cross had developed a two-stage operation. The first stage envisaged home visits in the period of sharp stress to the families that lost their members. In the second stage the psychosocial support had to be expanded to the miners who survived the accident and their families through group meetings and public events.

Progress towards objectives

Psychosocial support and counseling

Objective: To minimize the psychological effects in the aftermath of the coalmine explosion by providing direct individualized psychosocial support to affected individuals and families.

Activities planned:

A trained psychosocial support (PSS) team consisting of 14 nurses and psychologists from the regional Red Cross branch worked systematically with all 149 families (667 people) that had lost one of their members in the accidents. Out of the 149 families, 134 received constant psychosocial support during the entire period, while 15 received more limited support according to their needs.

The Russian Red Cross staff and volunteers made 3,515 home visits lasting from 40 minutes to 3 hours. During the visits 2,180 individual conversations took place with 487 family members. Some people in the 134 families required two conversations per week. The topics and purposes of the dialogues included reminiscing about those who had died, accepting the loss, adapting to the new circumstances, and eliminating feelings of guilt.

In addition, the Russian Red Cross workers carried out 443 individual consultations with family members on specific issues and arranged about 50 consultations with external specialists. Topics of these consultations included legal advice, employment, education, financial support, and raising children following the loss of their father. The Russian Red Cross also provided individual social support in 215 cases related to documents for the apartments or education, telephone installation, delivery of medicine, groceries.

As a result of the home visits and consultations, the National Society staff and volunteers have observed improvements in the emotional state of the beneficiaries. After having accepted the situation and the loss of a family member, many relatives have returned to work and their everyday responsibilities, reconnected with their families, made plans for the future, improved their health conditions and started to seek social activities.

In order to adjust the programme in the course of the operation, the PSS team held 29 special meetings to discuss the problems and constraints in their work and 9 training events to counteract professional burn out. Besides, three workshops were conducted by International Federation PSS consultants for the Russian Red Cross regional branch to share basic and specific knowledge, new techniques such as psychological drama, self-support group and "creative self expression".

The home visits allowed the Russian Red Cross to identify five different target groups that required additional support and were to be involved in the self-support group activities:

1. elderly parents who had lost their only son
2. widows aged over 45
3. widows aged less than 35
4. mixed male-female group (aged 20-50), who were not able to overcome after-stress situation

During the three last months of the project implementation the Russian Red Cross facilitated 46 meetings of self-support groups at which 259 participants expressed their feelings through narration, literature, art, science or contacts with the nature. The coordinator of one of the groups, Elena Kuleshova, recalls the participants' impression of the meetings: "*This method helps to find in oneself such features, on which one can rest in critical situations, to find resources, which help return to a normal life after the loss, and an opportunity to express one's feelings, to get support of the group*".

In the framework of the programme three leaflets and posters (4,500 copies in total) on how to cope with crisis related to psychosocial support for children and general recommendations on the strengthening of stress coping mechanisms were printed and distributed during group meetings, home visits and through educational, health and social institutions.

During the whole period the Russian Red Cross branch personnel organized five public actions aimed at reintegrating **the** affected people into the community and increasing their self confidence. These actions were held in association with major public events (Miners' Day, Start of the Scholastic Year, Day of Elderly, opening of the Miners Memorial). In addition, the Russian Red Cross used the presentation of the World Disasters Report presentation in December 2007 to attract public attention to the programme and for fund-raising.

Impact:

Providing psychosocial support through home visits and self-support group meetings helped the beneficiaries overcome the psychological consequences of the mine blasts. No one among the beneficiaries of the operation applied to the medical institutions for special therapy against post-traumatic syndrome.

The methodology of self-support groups proved its effectiveness because it gave an opportunity for the participants of the meetings to overcome their psychological problems through positive exchange of experience among themselves. The group facilitators reported that in the course of the meetings, the level of suffering, feelings of guilt and pain among the participants reduced. As some of the participants said: "*After our meetings I want to live*"; "*I have been flying for two weeks...*"; "*I am looking forward to the next meeting*". Members of the PSS team noticed that elderly parents benefited most from the meetings and their need for attention, recognition and care was fully satisfied.

Challenges:

Psychosocial support register cards, observations, diaries, analytical and statistical reports of the project staff showed some difficulties, requiring considerable attention:

- Home visits that lasted from 20–40 minutes to 3 hours and included various discussion topics revealed the need for better preparation of the Red Cross PSS workers to respond to the specific issues raised in the families.
- There are lots of families with many relatives staying in different parts of the town and in the neighbouring settlements. Responding to their needs requires much time, effort and transportation cost.
- The second mine blast in May 2007 drew human resources of the Russian Red Cross from the planned operation to the more urgent psychosocial support and increased the number of beneficiaries. It has been estimated that this led to an increase of 40 per cent in the workload.

Conclusion

The DREF psychosocial support operation in Novokuznetsk successfully realized its main goal of minimizing the psychological effects of the mine blasts. In the course of the operation, the psychological state of the beneficiaries who received psychosocial support has improved. The Russian Red Cross staff gained the trust of the affected families by delivering support in a very timely and professional manner. In addition, home visits to the affected families allowed the National Society to define urgent social problems and solve them through advocacy work.

Moreover, the Russian Red Cross's psychological support provided through social activities spread not only to the affected families, but also to the local communities as a whole, including rescue workers, miners who had survived the mine blasts and their families.

The niche for the Russian Red Cross in providing psychosocial support as a disaster response activity that was proposed during the Beslan programme was further defined in the Kemerovo PSS operation. This role of the National Society was fully accepted by the Russian authorities.

In addition, soon after the operation was over, the specific experience of psychosocial support in mining areas gained by the Russian Red Cross during the operation in Kemerovo was shared with the National Societies of Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Effective results reached in Russia served as an inspiration and practical example for similar DREF operations after the mine blasts in Donetsk and Karaganda. Specialists from the Kemerovo regional branch and the headquarters of the Russian Red Cross provided their Ukrainian and Kazakh counterparts with all training materials developed in the course of the current operation and consulted them on the specifics of psychosocial support after mine accidents.

Taking into account the rate of accidents at the mines in the Kemerovo region, the need for psychosocial support after the end of the current operation remains high. A team of 15 psychosocial support specialists trained in the framework of the DREF operation continues to work on the basis of local financial support and, through this, contributes to the overall disaster preparedness in the region.

Lessons learned:

- The PSS operation in Kemerovo region was initially based on the PSS and self-support experience gained in Beslan over the last two years. Nevertheless, specific features of providing psychosocial support to the people affected by mine accidents were identified. In contrast to other types of disaster, mine accidents have greater effect on everyday life because mines continue to be operational; some miners who had survived the accident often could not go back to work, and the families of miners who returned to work constantly worry about their lives.
- The effectiveness of psychosocial support depends on the urgency of response. The earlier psychosocial support is provided to the affected population the better. The type of assistance that was devised in the course of the operation "accompaniment of the family right from the start of the emergency situation" proved the most effective.
- Only an active approach of visiting the affected families at their homes allowed effective psychosocial support. These activities can be performed most effectively by Red Cross staff and volunteers that act as field workers responding to the needs, and not as office clerks.
- The Russian Red Cross's psychosocial support operation in Novokuznetsk revalidated the experience gained in Beslan, that switching from individual work to group meetings attracts more people and that social interventions, based on the work with the community, offer the affected people not only an opportunity to restore social contacts, but also to make their own decisions on matters important to them. This method allowed the beneficiaries to regain strength and resources as individuals and as a community, and helped restoring their "ordinary" life.
- The need to set up psychosocial support centers by regional Russian Red Cross branches was further highlighted. The objectives of such centres include prevention (education of the population in stress

resilience skills), psychosocial rehabilitation of the affected population, training of trainers and psychologists on psychosocial support that will constitute mobile teams, and finally psychological education work among population.

- An International Federation tool such as the World Disaster Report presentation could be used for successful fund-raising.

How we work

All International 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 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.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRRU002 - Russia - Mine Blast Kemerovo Region

Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2007/3-2007/12
Budget Timeframe	2007/3-2007/11
Appeal	MDRRU002
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
A. Budget		105,000				105,000
B. Opening Balance		0				0
Income						
<u>Other Income</u>						
<i>DREF Allocations</i>		105,000				105,000
C5. Other Income		105,000				105,000
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)		105,000				105,000
D. Total Funding = B + C		105,000				105,000
Appeal Coverage		100%				100%

II. Balance of Funds

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance		0				0
C. Income		105,000				105,000
E. Expenditure		-105,000				-105,000
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)		0				0

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III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
A							B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		105,000					105,000	
Supplies								
Food			8			8	-8	
Water & Sanitation			152			152	-152	
Medical & First Aid	621		620			620	1	
Utensils & Tools	615		421			421	194	
Other Supplies & Services	400		434			434	-34	
Total Supplies	1,636		1,635			1,635	1	
Transport & Storage								
Transport & Vehicle Costs	2,012		2,898			2,898	-886	
Total Transport & Storage	2,012		2,898			2,898	-886	
Personnel								
National Staff	1,684		1,805			1,805	-121	
National Society Staff	47,945		50,307			50,307	-2,362	
Consultants	6,756		6,431			6,431	325	
Total Personnel	56,385		58,542			58,542	-2,158	
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	21,030		19,407			19,407	1,623	
Total Workshops & Training	21,030		19,407			19,407	1,623	
General Expenditure								
Travel	9,905		9,797			9,797	108	
Information & Public Relation	2,192		2,191			2,191	1	
Office Costs	525		470			470	55	
Communications	4,290		3,060			3,060	1,230	
Professional Fees			177			177	-177	
Financial Charges	200		-1			-1	201	
Total General Expenditure	17,112		15,693			15,693	1,419	
Programme Support								
Program Support	6,825		6,825			6,825	-0	
Total Programme Support	6,825		6,825			6,825	-0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	105,000		105,000			105,000	-0	
VARIANCE (C - D)			-0			-0		