

BELARUS, MOLDOVA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, UKRAINE: WINTER EMERGENCY 1998-1999

21 October 1999

*appeal no. 30/98
situation report no. 6 (final report)
period covered: 24 June - 31 July 1999*

The 1998-99 Winter Emergency programme has been completed during the reporting period, although activities related to the bulk food programme funded by the American Red Cross have not yet been concluded. This is the final narrative report on the programme, together with an interim financial report.

Despite less than full coverage of the cash requested in the Appeal, the majority of objectives were achieved. The lack of significant improvement in the economic situation of the targeted countries has increased the vulnerability of the programme beneficiaries. New appeals for this region will be launched shortly.

The context

The Winter Emergency Appeal (WEA) programme, launched on 30 September 1998, sought CHF 25,014,000 in cash, kind and services to assist 1,631,500 beneficiaries in Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. The Appeal budget was later revised to CHF 49,577,000 as the provision of bulk food was added to the programme's objectives.

The financial crisis of 17 August 1998 left millions of people struggling to survive in deteriorating economic and social conditions of inflation, unemployment, non-payments, bankruptcies, decrease of living standards, increase in crime, social degradation, disintegration of medical services, and the breakdown of science, technology and labour potential of the country. In ten years the GDP declined by 40%, industrial production by 60%, mechanical engineering by 79%, light industry by 90%, and investments by 80%.

At least 73 million are living below the poverty line in these four countries, including not only people from traditionally vulnerable groups - multi-child families, single parents, orphans, pensioners, severely handicapped and homeless - but also those who are not normally associated with underprivileged groups - teachers, miners, doctors, workers in institutes as well as those living in Russia's Far North regions

previously subsidised under the Soviet system. The pattern of vulnerability has changed during the decade from a mainly urban population before to the rural and remote communities today.

The complex political and economic situation has been accompanied by poor harvests, droughts and swarms of locusts, occupying Western Siberia - Novosibirsk region, moving from Kazakhstan and devastating sunflower, pea and barley fields as well as pastures. Other factors aggravating human living conditions are: pollution, stress, disease, fires, floods, earthquakes, technical catastrophes, military conflicts, social instability, displacement, and severe weather conditions.

The priority beneficiaries included families with many children, single parents, orphans, pensioners, severely handicapped adults and children — both at home and in institutions, unemployed, homeless, remote health stations and street children (unofficial estimates suggest there are at least one million in Russia - with proportionally similar figures in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova).

The objectives of the WEA programme were to relieve the impact of malnutrition, disease, and stress and to tackle the basic needs of the targeted population by supplying them with warm winter clothing, footwear and supplementary parcels of food and hygiene items. Soup kitchens were established to provide beneficiaries in urban areas with more than one million hot meals in a six-month period. Institutions catering for children, handicapped and the elderly received basic medicaments (nursing kits).

The Federation has also carried out two other operations in conjunction with this programme:

- { The Russian Far Northeast Appeal (No. 05/99) launched on 8 February to assist 82,000 beneficiaries in the rural regions of Chukotka, Kamchatka, including Koryak okrug and Magadan has been over 80% covered. A full complement of food parcels was produced in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and Magadan; distribution is ongoing in all four regions targeted by the Appeal, including Chukotka, where production of family food parcels is in the process. Hygiene kits were procured and sent to all the targeted regions for distribution. Some constraints are being experienced due to treacherous weather conditions, making air transport difficult.
- { The TB/HIV/AIDS/STDs programme, (Emergency Appeal No. 8/99) was launched on 12 March in response to the increase of these diseases in Russia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

Socio-economic Situation

Russia

About 60 million Russians, or 40% of the population, live below the poverty line, while average life expectancy in the country is 66 years for women and 60 for men according to the statistics from the Science Academy's Institute for Socio-Economic Research. According to the institute, 15% of the population has income less than half the necessary minimum and 14% is unemployed.

After the financial crisis of 17 August 1998, the country's currency started falling in value. Many people lost their savings and inflation spiralled. Store shelves began looking bare as people began buying everything they could.

Consumer prices had tripled, and salaries remained at RUR 900-1000 (USD 35-39) per month on average. After a year the situation has not changed for the better. For example, a doctor's salary in Kostroma region still amounts only RUR 200, which is less than USD 9, per month.

The value of money has collapsed. The payment of salaries and pensions is commonly delayed from between three months to more than a year.

Some 250 municipal workers in the town of Artem, near Vladivostok, continued striking for more than a month in August-September 1998 demanding salaries which hadn't been paid for a year. In Kaliningrad, regional agricultural infrastructure was destroyed during the *perestroika* period. The prices for basic

alimentary products went up drastically (by 300%-400%) since the crisis, but social benefits and state employees salaries were not changed. The last corn crop failed because of rains, floods and droughts. Today, even bread is supplied from abroad, and high import duties make it unaffordable for certain categories of vulnerable people, including multi-child families with single parents, many of whom lost their jobs after the economic collapse.

A garden plot is a way to survive in many cases for Bashkiria and Orenburg people, where growing vegetables forms 30% of a family's budget; but the 1998 drought affected 65% of agricultural lands, causing a loss of RUR 1.75 billion. People were unable to prepare food reserves for winter and could not purchase seeds for planting in the coming year.

Unemployment became a big problem all across the country, including the targeted regions. Many highly qualified professionals are now living below the poverty line due to staff reduction in all institutions. The Ivanovo region was always famous for its textile industry. It was the main economic structure, bringing the biggest percentage to the regional budget. Now 80% of textile enterprises have closed due to the lack of raw materials, leaving more people unemployed with little means of support. Many pensioners, invalids and veterans are begging for money in the streets.

One factory in the city of Perm regularly pays its workforce in bicycles - which they then have to try and sell on the streets. Not even that stratagem is open to public servants. Large families found themselves in a very difficult situation, not receiving any social benefits for food, transport or other public services. Some families can not afford to buy bread and sugar, let alone medicine and hygiene items. As of 31 August 1998, child subsidy arrears in Omsk grew to more than RUR 180 million, prompting mothers to start a strike, which shut the Trans-Siberian railroad for six hours.

The re-emergence of poverty in Russia brought about by economic collapse has had a tremendous impact on the population, a growing number of which could no longer rely on governmental support.

Ukraine

The present economic situation in Ukraine is characterised by an almost complete lack of a normal market; the pace of transition is lower than in other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. Since 1991, when the Ukrainian declaration of independence was adopted, the GDP has declined 62%. As of the beginning of 1999, the country's external debt has reached USD 11.5 billion, and debt servicing problems are still growing.

In 1998 the total population of Ukraine was 50.1 million people, which is 1.7 million less than in 1989. The average mortality rate in the country is double the birth rate. Cardiovascular diseases accounted for 60.1% of deaths, cancer for 13.7%, suicides and accidents for 9.8% and respiratory diseases for 5%.

There are about 12 million pensioners in Ukraine, and some 3.7 million of them are disabled - they constitute the most needy group of elderly people. The average pension is UAH 60.4 (USD 13.1). Over 50% of the population lives in poverty.

The official unemployment rate has increased from less than 1% in 1995 to 2.5% in 1997, and according to a labour market survey, unemployment exceeds 8% in most regions. Unemployment and non-payment or delays in salaries compound the problem.

The official minimal survival level in the country is UAH 90.7 (USD 20) per month, while average income per capita is UAH 80-120 (USD 17-26) depending on the region. In 1998, the social welfare budget was only 40%-60% covered.

Belarus

Socio-economic conditions remain complicated, and there is practically no hope that the situation will take a turn for the better in the near future; moreover, the crisis is deteriorating. In July 1999, the GDP was 2% lower than in 1990, while in 1998 it was 7.5% higher than in 1990. Prices are increasing, and

the local currency is highly unstable. In 1999 salary delays (for 1-3 months) became a widespread phenomenon. As of the end of July 1999, total salary arrears amounted to BYR 5.9 billion.

The prevalence of tuberculosis (5,000 patients in 1998), heart, venereal and other diseases are worsened by the influence of radioactive-contamination in the wake the Chernobyl disaster. The lack of essential medicaments, vitamins and clothing compounds the situation.

Moldova

Moldova is now one of the poorest countries of the former Soviet Union, and the situation is progressively worsening. The average salary is MDL 260 (USD 24), which is only 50% of the minimal consumer basket and the average pension is MDL 82 (USD 7) or about 15% of the minimal consumer basket; payments are usually delayed for 8-9 months. The total state debt to the population is MDL 611 million (some USD 52 million).

As of 1 January 1999 the population of Moldova was 4.29 million people, which is 0,2 % less than in the previous year. Pensioners make up 22% of the total population.

The inflation rate from August 1998 to June 1999 increased by 245%. Some 38,000 people are unemployed and 200,000 are on forced leave; the unofficial unemployment rate is 24%. Some 80% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Russia

The operation started during October 1998 and was largely completed by the middle of July 1999, when a final workshop was held in Moscow (12-13 July) with all involved regional chairpersons and International Federation/Russian Red Cross (RRC) staff. A general overview of the results of the programme was presented by the Relief co-ordinator, regional chairpeople reported on their work, a financial report was given as well as a report on media collaboration.

Twelve regions were initially selected as targets of the programme: Murmansk, Kaliningrad, Ivanovo and Kostroma - in the European part of Russia; Bashkortostan, Orenburg, Perm and Chelyabinsk - in the Ural part of Russia; Buryatia, Kemerovo, Khakassia and Irkutsk - in the Siberian part of Russia. However, as per the Appeal, the targets were flexible and changed during the operation. *See Analysis of the operation for details.*

The objectives of the operation were the following:

- { to alleviate the impact of cold, malnutrition, disease, stress, and to protect the dignity of 1.63 million beneficiaries;
- { to maximise the use of local resources: human resources, goods and services;
- { to strengthen local capacities by providing sustainable infra-structural support and training to the national headquarters and branches of the local Red Cross societies and social welfare institutions collaborating with the RRC;
- { to promote partnerships between the Operating National Societies (ONS) and the Participating National Societies (PNS).

The Delegation's relief team worked out a plan of action according to the Appeal's objectives, and made modifications during the operation, as necessary.

October: conclusion of operational “model” contracts with ONS; preparations in the field; seminar conducted in Moscow for all RRC branches involved in the operation; transport of donated clothing and shoes to the operational areas for distribution; money transfers.

November: distribution of clothing; set up and open soup kitchens; purchase and transport of food and other commodities to the operational area for distribution

December: first distributions of food and commodities; continued operation of soup kitchens

January: monitoring of beneficiaries; continuation of soup kitchens; purchase and transport of food and other commodities ready for second distribution

February: distribution of food and other commodities; continuation of soup kitchens

March: monitoring of beneficiaries; continuation of soup kitchens; purchase and transport of food and commodities ready for third distribution; impact analysis and report

April: final food distributions; last month of soup kitchens; distribution of seeds; monitoring of beneficiaries and start of final reports

Although the cash coverage of the original Appeal was only about 60%, the RRC/Federation proved capable of working with low funds in difficult socio-economic conditions and achieved the set objectives, providing: 1,241,069 beneficiaries with family food parcels; 900,062 beneficiaries with second hand clothing; 173,074 beneficiaries with hot meals and 307,812 beneficiaries with seeds.

At the end of October a two-day starting-up seminar on the programme was held at the RRC sanatorium Druzhba, outside of Moscow, for chairpersons from twelve selected regions and representatives from neighbouring regions (Yakutia, Penza and Evenkiya). The seminar was followed by a resource development workshop for 40 chairpeople, including 25 involved in the WEA programme.

The objectives set in the appeal were met as follows:

Programme	Planned in the Appeal	Actual achievements	Region	Comments
Family food parcels (FFPs)	474,000 FFPs to assist 620,000 beneficiaries	334,400 FFPs provided to 1,241,069 beneficiaries	All the WEA regions	Despite low funding, some USD 300,000 was saved in the first round of production due to good negotiations and to the fact that all purchase contracts were made in local currency.
Hygiene kits	150,000 kits to assist 172,000 beneficiaries	0	0	Cancelled due to low funding. Shampoo distributed to some regions as in-kind donation.
Medical kits	1,000 kits	550 kits	Orenburg, Chelyabinsk, Kemerovo, Irkutsk and Evenkiya autonomous okrug	Only partly implemented due to low funding.
Hot meals in soup kitchens	1,080,000 hot meals	1,184,164 hot meals to 173,074 beneficiaries	All the WEA regions	Higher number of meals served due to good price per meal negotiations.

Seed sets	90,000 sets to 306,000 beneficiaries	92,224 sets to 307,812 beneficiaries	All the WEA regions	Higher number of seed sets purchased due to local procurement - some regions managed to decrease the accepted per set price.
Vehicles	5	4	2 for the RRC; 2 for the Federation	One Toyota bus; one Toyota sedan and two locally produced Volga vehicles.
Computers / Software	15 computers	8 computers	5 for the RRC; 3 for the Federation	Low funding.
New winter clothes sets for Siberian children	0	612 sets, consisting of boots, hats and jackets	Irkutsk, Buryatia and Chita	Earmarked donation from the Singapore RC Society
Second hand clothes	1,400 tons for 600,000 beneficiaries	1,128 tons for 705,015 beneficiaries	All the WEA regions	In kind donation of the Swedish and Icelandic RC Societies. Through close targeting a higher number of beneficiaries was served.
Baking mixture	0	40.5 tons (4,695 packages) to 42,874 beneficiaries	Tartar Republic	An in-kind donation from Pillsbury company.
Shampoo	0	37,556 bottles	Ivanovo, Kostroma and Penza	In-kind donation from the Oriflame cosmetic company, distributed to a limited number of areas together with FFPs.
Food parcels for Yekaterinburg	0	1,300 FFPs for 2,874 beneficiaries	Yekaterinburg	An earmarked donation from the Baden Wuerttemberg branch of the German RC.
Frozen herrings and capelins	0	526,154 kg of capelins; 175,000 tins of herrings	Moscow, Saint-Petersbug, Novgorod and Pskov received capelins; Arkangelsk, Vologda and Ryasan received herrings	An in-kind donation from the Icelandic RC Society

Family Food Parcels: were produced and distributed in three rounds and procured locally in all the targeted regions. The first round of production and distribution started in December and ended in February assisting 381,981 beneficiaries (100,985 families) with 108,236 food parcels. It was calculated that the first round of 158,000 parcels was produced for USD 1,337,468, which made a saving of USD 303,988 or almost 20% of the approved in Geneva value, i.e. USD 1,641,456. Some 49,764 food parcels were stored for the second round.

All eleven producers supplied the food parcels according to the plan apart from a delay in Bashkortostan, where the agreement with the original supplier was cancelled due to financial difficulties and a new supplier was found. All partial payments for the food parcels have gone smoothly due to close co-operation between the WEA team and the financial department.

Almost all producers accepted to continue production for the second round, which started in March, based on the former contract signed in the mid-December and have supplied food parcels on a timely basis with only a slight delay from Kemerovo due to late deliveries of cardboard boxes from the sub-supplier. The second round of production and distribution was completed by the end of April assisting 383,663 beneficiaries (93,495 families) with 95,409 food parcels. The consequences of low funding were reflected on the production of parcels for the second round, which only reached about 65% of the planned number.

Potential suppliers for the third round were proposed to Geneva at the end of April, and procurement started at the end of May. The third round of family food parcels production and distribution ended in the beginning of July, assisting 476,425 beneficiaries (127,164 families) with 130,755 parcels. Each food parcel in all three rounds contained: 4 kg of flour, 1 kg of sugar, 2 kg of macaroni, 1 kg of vegetable oil, 4 cans of beef, 2 tins of condensed milk, 200 g of tea and 40 g of dry yeast.

The Baden Wuerttemberg branch of the German RC Society made an earmarked cash donation to procure food parcels for Yekaterinburg. The Perm supplier agreed to produce 1,300 FFPs for Yekaterinburg, which assisted 2,874 beneficiaries.

American Red Cross Bulk Food Programme - As a response to the WEA Appeal 1999, the American Red Cross, through a donation from United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), made a sizable donation of 24,500 MT of bulk foodstuffs (flour, rice, peas, vegetable oil) valued at USD 14.5 million, including international transportation, for delivery to 6 primary regions in Central Siberia including: Kemerovo, Khakassia, Evenkia, Irkutsk, Buryatia and Chita. By the end of September, almost three-fourths of all cargo had been received at central warehouse locations with close to 10,000 MT having been distributed.

Programme objectives were divided into two phases. Phase one, to be completed by the end of October 1999, has focused on distribution to 1,444 institutions including orphanages, homes for the elderly, and boarding schools. Breakdown of distribution is as follows:

<u>Institution Type</u>	<u># of Institutions</u>
Orphanages/Shelters	209
Hospitals	565
Boarding Schools	441
Rehab. Centres/Sanitoriums	110
Homes for Elderly	57
Prisons/Juvenile Detention	62
TOTAL	1,444

In total, more than 434,000 beneficiaries were assisted in this phase of the programme.

Phase II, targeting 434,000 beneficiary families (over 1 million people) involves distribution of 28.5 kgs mixed foodstuff to each of the most vulnerable families. Following guidelines established in earlier WEA parcel distributions, beneficiary categories included multi-children families, single elderly pensioners, single parent households, invalids, and other. In two of the six regions, distribution of Phase II commenced at the start of October.

TOTAL COMMODITY TO ALL SIBERIAN REGIONS

Commodity	Total Received	Total Distributed	Balance
	MT	MT	MT
Flour	7,971	4,371	3,600
Rice	3,434	2,062	1,372
Peas	3,603	2,025	1,578
Oil	2,496	1,242	1,254
TOTALS	17,504	9,700	7,804

For safe storage of cargo long-term warehousing was contracted in four primary locations with a fifth temporary storage area hired in Krasnoyarsk for cargo to Evenkia. In total, more than 12,754 square metres was hired for this operation.

Four trucking companies and one shipping company were contracted to transport cargo to all 6 locations in Siberia. Where both winter and summer conditions prohibit access by those means, helicopters were utilised to reach those far off settlements. At full operational capacity, the RRC has managed to load and distributed approximately 400 MT per day.

In addition to the involvement of Russian Red Cross staff in the regions, the operation managed to hire and train over 30 additional persons for the programme, many of whom will be an excellent resource for the local Society on future operations. All new staff were put on contract by the local Russian Red Cross.

Further to developing the human resources of the *oblast* committees, operational support has enabled the purchase of four new vehicles (two for the RRC and two for the Federation) and five new computers/printers for the RRC. Computer training and other skill training is being provided to over 20 members of the committee RRC teams.

Soup kitchens: started in December and ended in May, assisting 173,074 beneficiaries in all the targeted regions with 1,184,164 hot meals, containing soup, second dish, bread and tea with sugar. Contracts and agreements with local soup kitchens were signed and monthly payments were regularly transferred to all the regions. Some 892 soup kitchens were fully operational across the country. A lot of schools were additionally included to attend the soup kitchens, which was affordable due to good price negotiations.

Second hand clothes: distribution was ongoing from October-July, based on in coming Swedish and Icelandic RC Societies' in-kind donations, which were distributed as soon as they were released from customs. A total of 900,062 beneficiaries (254,997 families) received 1,149,753 kg of second hand clothes in all the targeted regions.

Seeds: offers for seeds were received in all regions and preparations were made for local procurement and distribution in April. A full compliment of 92,224 seed sets were distributed during May to 307,812 beneficiaries (76,700 families) in all the targeted regions.

No hygiene parcels were procured due to low funding, but 37,556 bottles of shampoo were delivered to all the regions from an in-kind donation by a cosmetics company during the third round of family food parcels distribution.

The Singapore Red Cross Society made an earmarked cash donation to purchase new sets of clothes (winter jackets, hats and boots) for Siberian children, which were procured locally in March-April and distributed in May: 232 sets in Buryatia, 200 in Irkutsk and 180 in Chita.

Almost 41 tons of baking mixture donated by the Pillsbury company were distributed to more than 43,000 beneficiaries in Tatarstan in February-March.

Some 526 tons of capelins and 175,000 tins of herrings were received from the Icelandic Red Cross and distributed in west and north-west Russia as follows:

	Region	Delivered	Distributed	Number of beneficiaries	
Capelins (kg)	Moscow	72,576	72,576	39,000	
	Saint-Petersburg	199,584	107,685	14,300	
	Saint-Petersburg region		55,019	39,862	
	Octiabrski Dorcom		36,880	9,311	
	Novgorod	126,989	72,595	57,412	
	Yaroslavl		18,495	8,617	
	Tambov		18,486	12,852	
	Tver		17,413	8,075	
	Pskov	127,005	90,064	21,798	
	Smolensk		18,445	7,101	
	Briansk		18,496	6,813	
		Total	526,154	526,154	225,141
Herrings (tins)	Arkhangelsk	175,000	112,100	10,978	
	Vologda		31,900	4,507	
	Riazan		31,000	3,401	
		Total	175,000	175,000	18,886
		Grand total			244,027

Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine

According to the Appeal, CHF 5,033,000 in cash, kind and services were requested to assist 211,500 beneficiaries in the three countries: Ukraine (CHF 2,857,000), Moldova (CHF 768,000) and Belarus (CHF 1,408,000). The Appeal was not fully covered - CHF 3,224,570 were received for the three countries: CHF 1,910,245 for Ukraine, CHF 1,056,325 for Belarus and CHF 258,000 for Moldova. The target groups of beneficiaries in these countries were the following:

Beneficiary groups	Belarus	Moldova	Ukraine
Multi-child families	4,000	4,000	55,000
Lone elderly	7,000	10,200	80,000
Handicapped and bedridden	3,000	3,500	20,000
Orphans	3,300	2,500	11,000
Homeless	700		
TB patients	3,000		
People in institutions			4,000
Refugees	300		
TOTAL	21 300	20 200	170 000

The original plan of action envisaged that the operation would take place from October 1998 to April 1999. However, first donations were received in November-December 1998, and the programme was still ongoing in July 1999. Thus, the plan of action outlined in the Appeal, had to be adjusted to correspond to the arrival of donations.

October: a training manual for the project proposals, implementation and reporting was worked out; training on the project cycle, reporting, local fund-raising and need assessment was conducted; training at the headquarters level in Moldova was held; a model for contracts with the Operating National Societies was worked out; the first operational contract was signed.

November: seminars for the chairpersons and financial administrators of the regional committees were held in Ukraine and Belarus; a framework agreement was signed; first donations (Canadian donation for Ukraine and Danish donation for Belarus) were received; donated clothes and shoes were delivered to the operational areas for distribution; distribution plans were prepared and the lists of beneficiaries were established; second-hand clothes and shoes distribution started.

December: distribution of clothes and shoes; soup kitchens were set up and opened in Moldova and Belarus; consumer market was analysed, and suppliers were selected; food parcels, hygiene kits, water filters and medicine were purchased and transported to the operational areas for distribution; reporting on the utilisation of funds.

January: visiting beneficiaries; monitoring the operation of soup kitchens; relief supplies (Danish RC) and second-hand clothes (Swedish RC, German RC) distribution; lists of beneficiaries for further distribution of hot meals and relief supplies (British donation) were established; financial and narrative reports were prepared. In Moldova, the operation had to be stopped in January, February and March due to lack of funds.

February: further distribution of food and other commodities; continuation of soup kitchens (only in Belarus from Netherlands and Danish donations). In Ukraine, the operation had to be stopped in February due to the lack of funds.

March: visiting beneficiaries; preparation of financial and narrative reports; transfers of money (British donation); purchasing and transporting relief supplies (Ukraine, Belarus); end of March - transfers of money to Moldova (British donation); continuation of soup kitchens.

April: transfers of money; distribution of relief supplies; last month of soup kitchens in Belarus; monitoring soup kitchens; visiting beneficiaries; preparation of financial and narrative reports.

May: transfers of money (British donation); distribution of relief supplies; continuation of soup kitchens; preparation of financial and narrative reports.

June: final food distribution; monitoring beneficiaries and preparations for the final report.

July: in Moldova soup kitchens were closed on 12 July; finalising of the utilised funds; preparation of the final report.

Family Food Parcels: In most cases, the Belorussian RC conducted two or three rounds of food parcel distribution. The Ukrainian and Moldovan RC societies distributed family food parcels in one round. The distribution has clearly increased the Red Cross image, having a reassuring impact on the population that their needs are being addressed by someone.

Nutritional value of the family food parcel

Food item	Quantity	Protein	Kcal
Flour	3 kg	330.00	9,330.00
Macaroni	2 kg	274.00	7,400.00
Sugar	1 kg	---	4,000.00
Cereals	3 kg	150.00	3,600.00
Oil	1 lt.	---	8,990.00
Canned meat	0.75 kg	90.00	700.00
Total	10.75	744.00	34 020

Economic value of the family food parcel (average price for three countries)

Food item	Quantity	Market costs (USD)
Flour	3 kg	1.00
Macaroni	2 kg	0.80
Sugar	1 kg	0.40
Cereals	3 kg	1.35
Oil	1 lt.	1.15
Canned meat	0.75 kg	1.40
Total	10.75	8.30

Soup kitchens: were the most effective part of the operation. A three course meal was served. The beneficiaries were happy with the quality of food.

Hygiene parcels: the need for hygiene items is the greatest in rural areas. In Belarus, each hygiene parcels contained: soap, washing mixture and shampoo. Moldova chose a different option and assisted the beneficiaries with a very sophisticated parcel containing up to 10 different items: In Ukraine, a hygiene parcel consisted of household soap and washing powder.

Bilateral Programmes**Norwegian Red Cross**

The Norwegian Red Cross, in co-ordination with the Swedish Red Cross, assisted beneficiaries in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. Every month vulnerable people received 10 kg food parcels, consisting of flour, butter, powder milk, pasta, sugar, meat and chicken. The Norwegian RC had its own distribution system, including vehicles in the regions. The total value of the programme was USD 10,000,000.

Netherlands Red Cross

The Netherlands RC Society conducted its own bilateral programme in 15 regions (Primorsky krai, Magadan, Amourskaya oblast, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Ulianovsk, Volgograd, Ryasan, Vologda, Tver, Nizhni Novgorod, Kazan, Bryansk, Arkhangelsk and Moscow), providing cash support to manufacture FFPs and medicine to support 140,000 beneficiaries. In Altai, the Netherlands RC assisted three children's hospitals (support worth USD 75,000) and fed 1,000 children during the year.

Finnish Red Cross

The Finnish RC donated USD 1,000,000 for programmes in Karelia (six regions), assisting children with food, second hand clothes and shoes, assisting with institutional development, disaster preparedness and implementation of health programmes.

Analysis of the Operation***Russia*****Needs Assessment**

In August-September 1998 an assessment was carried out through all the areas which were not covered by the WEA 1997-1998 and proposed to be the targeted regions for the WEA 1998-1999: Murmansk and Kaliningrad in the European part of Russia; Perm, Bashkortostan, Chelyabinsk and Orenburg in the Urals; Kemerovo and Irkutsk in Siberia. Ivanovo, Kostroma, Buryatia and Khakassia were assessed during the previous year and were included in this appeal, no new assessment was conducted. Assessment teams were a combination of the RRC Central Committee representatives and Moscow Delegation national staff and delegates.

During an early stage of the programme some additional assessments were carried out and the following changes were implemented: due to Norway's bilateral programmes in north-west Russia, Murmansk was excluded from the Appeal, and additional regions were included: Penza and Chita received full assistance, Chuvashia received full assistance with an exception of family food parcels and Evenkia did not receive hot meals or seeds due to its remoteness and climate.

Objectives and Plan of Action

The objectives mentioned under paragraph 3 were appropriate and well implemented. Regarding the plan of action it seemed accurate at the time when the plan was structured, not knowing that new procurement procedures would be introduced by the Secretariat in Geneva, which delayed implementation of the WEA by over two months.

The operation was carried out as originally conceived but had to be adapted to the reality of the incoming donations, as cash contribution reached to about 60% of the needs, procurement and distribution of hygiene kits had to be cancelled, food parcels were reduced by 30% and only 55% of the planned medical kits were procured.

Selection of beneficiaries

The main difficulty was to find the most needy people among the selected targeted groups (multi-child families, single parents, orphans, pensioners, severely handicapped adults and children), and the need was always a lot greater than the actual resource delivered. For example, as it was set in the Appeal, three food parcels were to be delivered to one family during the programme, but in reality this could not be implemented due to lack of funds, so the allocation for one family was often divided among two or three families. Additional families were sometimes selected in the field during distribution and assisted with one or two food parcels.

Organisation of distribution

A humanitarian committee consisting of local administration, social welfare department and RRC representatives was established in every region to ascribe humanitarian aid as fairly as possible to the different districts of the targeted regions. On the district level, local RRC branch or social welfare department representatives were final distributors to the beneficiaries. Sometimes assistance was spread to all districts in the region due to the poor socio-economic situation. Distribution was done according to the objectives and assistance was distributed to the selected beneficiaries; the biggest category was multi-child families.

In-country purchasing

All the food parcels, medical kits and seeds were purchased in Russia. Regarding the procurement of food parcels, three rounds of purchases were done. More than 50 offers were received from different suppliers. The aim was to find local suppliers close to the region of distribution. Considerable work went into finding reliable suppliers of food parcels, with a well recognised reputation in the region. All potential suppliers were visited by the WEA team.

As for medical kits, the procurement procedure was a lot simpler, as all suppliers were based in Moscow. Seeds were purchased locally in the regions, as near as possible to the distribution area. In order to serve hot meals, contracts were signed with local canteens (*stolovayas*) and food coupons to a value of USD 0.25-0.30 per meal were issued and given out to beneficiaries.

In-kind donation

A great majority of the in-kind donations were second-hand clothing donated primarily by the Swedish Red Cross. Unfortunately not enough winter clothes and boots were delivered. At the beginning of the programme there were some difficulties caused by regional customs. In some cases bales of clothes were ripped up and some items missing.

Five hundred and twenty six tons of frozen capelins donated by the Icelandic Red Cross were requested for distribution in the west of Russia, which was not part of the WEA programme. The boxes weighted 8-10 kg, meaning only institutions could be chosen as beneficiaries. Distribution time had to be reduced

to a minimum as cold-storage had to be used for transportation - special trucks with freeze containers were contracted for the operation. Unfortunately 20.8 tons of fish had to be destroyed due to the presence of salmonella. Furthermore, the Icelandic RC also donated 175,000 tins of herrings which were distributed in Arkangelsk, (also not part of the WEA programme), within 10 days.

Role of the Secretariat

Appropriate and immediate support from the desk officer in Geneva and valuable advice from the Logistics department regarding local procurement, documents and contracts was always received. But new requirements for in-country procurement slowed down the entire operation by more than two months. There was confusion about distribution of funds between the four countries, because information on the division of cash was delayed.

Role of the Russian Red Cross

The WEA programme was a joint operation of the RRC Central Committee with the Federation, but due to limited personal and financial resources in the Russian Red Cross, the vast majority of the WEA staff were employed by the Federation. The majority of communication and financial transfers to the regional branches were conducted by the RRC.

Relations with RRC

Relations between the Delegation and the RRC were excellent both at the Central Committee and regional levels. Close contact was maintained with the chairpeople during the entire period of the programme implementation with an only exception in one of the regions, where relations were negatively effected by poor performance of the regional committee.

Relations with local and national authorities

Before starting the WEA programme, several national authorities including the Ministry of Civil Defence and EMERCOM (Ministry for Emergency Situations) were approached. Local administrations and social welfare departments were of great help to the WEA team in terms of giving detailed information and feedback on the local situation. Partnerships were drawn up as transportation and warehouse facilities were needed. At the district level, where no local RRC branches exist, social welfare department representatives distributed the aid, and in some cases received payment for this.

Financial resources

Substantial cash pledges were received in the very beginning of the programme. Unfortunately the cash flow slowed down and consequently reached only about 60% of the required cash. Feedback regarding programme expenditures was not received on a regular basis. Monthly financial support of USD 1,500 per month was sent to the local RRC branches to cover the costs of programme implementation and to upgrade office equipment (computers, software and telephone).

Staffing

The WEA team consisted of a relief co-ordinator (delegate) and two experienced programme managers initially. A further two relief/logistic officers, a monitor, a consultant and an assistant were employed. The WEA team was also heavily involved in the Yakutia flood relief operation and the Far Northeast programme. The entire WEA team consists of professionals who have vast experience in international missions.

Communications

As the time difference between Moscow and the operational regions is up to five hours, early mornings were used for telephone conversations. All regions were equipped with fax-machines and responses from the field were received rapidly. Telephone line quality has generally improved and access to the operational areas was not a major problem. Difficulties were met in communication with districts in reference to distribution reports. Several mobile phones were purchased in order to facilitate communication with the WEA staff in the field.

Warehousing

Warehouses were used only locally. In several regions storage space was provided free of charge due to local administration's efforts and generosity of the food parcels' suppliers. Warehouses were used on a short term basis between the rounds of distribution of either food parcels or second hand clothes.

Transport

In order to facilitate staff transportation, several vehicles were purchased both for the RRC and the Federation's Moscow Delegation. Regarding second hand clothes transportation, all costs were covered by the donor. Regarding food parcels delivery, procurement contracts covered the transportation. The final transportation of food parcels, clothes and footwear from the regional committee to the districts was arranged by the local administrations free of charge.

Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine

Needs Assessment

Assessment missions were completed by July 1997 in Moldova and by August 1997 in Ukraine and Belarus. Assessment teams, consisting of representatives from National Societies and the Federation concluded that living conditions were unbearable for the poorest, with economic stagnation and a shortage of basic necessities for socially weak segments of the population. The assessment was not revised or redone during the operation, which was based on information and statistics provided by the ONS, which was, however, not well grounded or analysed. Local authorities tended to be driven by their own interests and thus political considerations influenced beneficiary selection.

Field visits were carried out in Minsk and Vitebsk regions in Belarus; Cherkassy, Kiev, Kirovograd and Zaporizhzhya in Ukraine; and Kishineu, Khynchesht, Ungen and Pridnestrovye in Moldova. The objectives of the assessment were to assess the implementation of the WEA according to the original programme objectives and to provide an overview aimed at improving the understanding of needs, local coping mechanisms and programme options to assist in designing future humanitarian programming.

Beneficiary selection

Income per capita was selected as a basic indicator for identification of beneficiaries. Other criteria were the presence of chronically ill children or child-invalids; inability to work; physical incapacity to care for oneself due to age, infirmity or disability; absence of relatives who could support a person; living in urban or rural area.

In most cases beneficiaries were selected from the lists prepared by local social protection authorities. The most vulnerable groups had to be selected, as well as specific ways of assistance to each group. Some regions developed a database of the most needy beneficiary groups. The data was used to identify the needs and methods for humanitarian assistance.

However, the criteria set in the WEA were not always met: on some occasions it was found that connections with RC personnel was an asset or in one district Visiting Nurses were considered to be a vulnerable group. In another district, all hospital employees, including the chief doctor, were beneficiaries.

Each NS worked in close co-operation with local authorities when choosing beneficiaries. State social services and organisations like the Council of Veterans played important roles in the selection process.

Organisation of distributions

The organisation of distributions varied in different regions and districts. If the ONS had a good set-up at the village level they organised distribution, otherwise they were supported by social protection departments, which often had human resources, distribution facilities and space for storage. Distribution was mainly maintained by Visiting Nurses, local authorities and volunteers (students, medical personnel, etc.).

In-country purchasing

In Belarus, procurement was made both at the headquarters and the regional level, based on the availability of relief items and the capacity of RC branches to make local purchases. In Ukraine, all purchases were carried out locally. In Moldova, the headquarters did all purchases. There are many advantages of local purchase: immediate availability of items, support to the local economy, reduction of transport, storage and insurance costs, no time and effort lost to get the shipment cleared from customs, respect of beneficiaries' habits, and improved relations between local RC branches and local enterprises.

In-kind donations from abroad

All three ONS have a system of second hand clothes banks - storage spaces in health and community centres, which makes for efficient distribution.

Role of National Society

The ONS were in charge of the programme implementation, including purchase of relief items, distribution and reporting. Local RC branches are in most cases insufficiently equipped and staffed, many don't even have telephone lines available and have only one staff member. Often chairpersons or officers tried to compromise and carry out two positions.

Relations with local and national authorities

Good relations with the Ministry of Health, Social Security and Labour are very important as well as with local authorities. Great support in providing transport, human resources and warehouses is a result of these good relations. Practically all chairpersons of regional Red Cross committees have excellent working contacts with local authorities at all levels, which helps them to implement their duties.

Staffing

The Federation's Relief co-ordinator monitored the programme in all three countries. Four or five national staff members were appointed to assist to the programme in each country, although they were also involved in other programmes, and RC vice-presidents were their main counterparts.

Warehousing

Local authorities supported relief teams with storage space in their warehouses.

Transport

All purchases were done locally, and the need for transport was limited. Sometimes suppliers distributed relief items; local authorities have to some extent given the RC good support to carry out distributions efficiently by supplying trucks and on some rare occasions, fuel. However, transport, or the lack thereof has been a problem, especially in rural areas.

Financial Analysis

Attached is a financial report and list of contributions. This report is provisional as the accounts have not yet been closed for this operation as provisions and advances remain to be cleared. A final financial report will be provided once the accounts are formally closed. Note that the income statement for the financial report only lists actual contributions received - the list of contributions includes all pledges, both paid and unpaid. Note that some CHF 7 million remain outstanding as unpaid pledges. A balance of CHF 499,308.22 was brought forward from the previous Winter Emergency Appeal. Any unspent balances from this Appeal will be brought forward to the 1999-2000 Winter Emergency Appeal. Where quantities of in kind supplies exceed the Appeal targets they have been reported as additional to, or not requested in the Appeal.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The programme received regular media coverage in local newspapers, radio and TV and attracted international/regional media interest, comment and debate. All the Red Cross committees provided local

media with information about the WEA implementation, and the programme has received regular coverage in national media in all four countries. Regular interviews were conducted with the HoD, Logistics, Relief and Information delegates and with national staff/chairladies in the regions.

The launch of the programme in Russia was attended by 30 journalists (newspaper, radio and television); good coverage was given - especially abroad (foreign journalists outnumbered their regional counterparts by three to one). The operation commanded considerable media interest, particularly among the Swedish and British press, but also from Australian and US TV, wire agencies and Voice of America radio. Several international journalists conducted field trips, resulting in positive coverage in major newspapers and on TV. The leading English-language newspaper in Moscow carried an editorial called *Red Cross Does Food Aid Right*.

Meetings were held with USDA, the Humanitarian Aid Commission and other US agencies contracted to distribute food as well as with the UN, EU and World Bank. A general meeting with most of the chairpersons involved in the WEA programme was held on 2 March in Moscow. The UN system encourage its donors to support the Federation in the absence of UN relief programmes.

Conclusion

RRC/Federation centrally

The programme should be considered as a major relief operation with minimum expatriate staff. Due to strong collaboration between the RRC and the Federation's WEA team, the programme proved to be successful. With the help of positive media coverage, expressing the success of the operation and its targeting of the most vulnerable, the profile of the RRC had risen considerably both centrally and locally. Many new volunteers signed up thanks to the WEA programme.

Due to local procurement of food parcels, contracts were made in roubles, which saved almost USD 500,000 as the rouble dropped in value.

RRC locally

Regional RC committees' joint efforts with local administrations and social welfare departments reached a huge group of the most vulnerable people in the targeted regions. Development support improved local committees, and in several offices computer equipment was purchased and installed. Several evaluations were carried out, more than 500 beneficiaries were visited by monitors and no corruption was found.

Beneficiaries

The WEA programme gave hope and real assistance to the most vulnerable people, who felt unprotected and forgotten. The Red Cross provided them with support, where the social network failed. A larger than planned amount of beneficiaries was assisted despite low cash coverage. The programme was well balanced and well suited to the targeted regions.

Regions

In-country procurement had a positive effect on the local market in terms of support to the local food industry and suppliers. On the other hand strong support in purchasing transport and warehouses was received from local administrations.

Federation headquarters in Geneva

A lot of resources were spent for six different ECHO applications which were not met with a positive response. Far too bureaucratic procedures for local procurement slowed down the operation by more than two months. Very poor financial feedback both from Geneva and locally complicated the planning process. Having several countries under one Appeal without clear guidelines on how to divide non-earmarked donations proved to be very complicated.

RC/Federation centrally

Donations in-kind should correspond to what is required in the appeal. Transport/distribution costs should be provided by a donor when an in-kind donation is given. Financial reports from the RRC both centrally and locally were not regular.

RC locally

More development and sustainable projects should be integrated to the programme. Management training should be arranged during the “start-up” seminars and should be followed up during the programme. Emphasis should be given on capital investments at the local level (i.e. vehicles and communication tools).

Beneficiaries

The need was always greater than the available support, consequently there was a dichotomy while distributing food parcels; three food parcels for one family, as per the appeal, could not always be followed. More winter clothes and winter shoes should be distributed. More vitamins (e.g., dried fruit) should be included in food parcels.

Regions

Due to bad communication with districts, there were delays in reports. Too democratic distribution (all districts) diluted the programme. US bulk-food distribution started too late and unfortunately did not give a possibility to reduce WEA activities in six Siberian regions.

A two-year practice of WEA implementation showed that the programme is very important both from the quantitative and moral sides. It has helped to increase the Red Cross' capacity and strengthen its image. Regional administrations and beneficiaries emphasised that through the WEA programme they felt international support and attention.

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