

CHUKOTKA, KAMCHATKA AND MAGADAN (FAR NORTH-EASTERN RUSSIA): CRITICALLY ISOLATED COMMUNITIES

24 October, 2000

Appeal no: 05/99

Final Report

Period covered: 8 February 1999 - 30 June 2000

The Context

The programme started in the beginning of 1999, shortly after the socio-economic crisis of 17 August 1998. At that time the steady erosion of living standards and rise in unemployment, associated with a decade of difficult market transition and poor harvests in Russia, took a high toll in terms of living standards, brought with it economic inequality and heightened social instability, which was particularly devastating on the population of Far North-eastern remote regions of Chukotka, Kamchatka, including Koryak okrug, and Magadan.

The catalyst for starting the operation was the failure of the Far Northeast route, which in Soviet times, and during the 1990s, was the lifeline to the Far East. Food, fuel, clothes, medicines - all life's staples - were shipped in during the short season when the arctic ocean, and the rivers that feed it, were navigable. In 1998 that lifeline failed completely, leading to (unrealised) fears of a humanitarian disaster. Assessment teams, funded by the Federation, were sent to Kamchatka, Magadan, Koryak and Chukotka in late 1998, returning early 1999. Reports were made and analysed, and the Appeal was launched simultaneously in Moscow and Geneva on 8 February 1999.

The teams' reports agreed that geographic isolation (air transport and dog sleds are the only ways to reach some remote polar areas for many months of the year), harsh climate (with temperatures reaching -50 C during long winter months and +40 C in summer), poor infrastructure, lack of economic diversity, high cost of transport, over-dependance on imports and the loss of subsidies had all compounded the regions' difficulties.

Tuberculosis, venereal diseases, infant mortality, and anaemia among nursing mothers were increasing while hospitals were short of medicines and medical equipment. Hygiene was also difficult with melted ice often the only source of drinking water. Sewage systems were poor, and became easily blocked

during the winter, resulting in raw sewage freezing in the permafrost, thereby compounding health and sanitation problems. Over the past few years life expectancy among remote communities in Chukotka dropped to 34 years among both sexes. The area is also afflicted with environmental problems as a result of by-products released from nuclear and chemical stations.

The Appeal set out to mitigate the effects of cold and malnutrition, while at the same time assisting health facilities and also contributing to community development in small-scale, sustainable ways through the development of local Red Cross branches.

Objectives of the Operation

The objectives of the operation were:

- to alleviate the impact of cold, malnutrition, disease, stress, and lack of medical care to 82,000 people (multi-child families, single parents, former prisoners, pensioners, orphans, invalids);
- to deliver 90,000 ten-kg food parcels; 30,000 hygiene parcels; 10,000 sets of clothes and boots for children; 300 district hospital kits; 250 health centre kits; 8,000 blankets; 8,000 sets of bed linen sets; and 2,000 first aid kits;
- to maximise the use of available local resources (human, goods, and services);
- to strengthen local capacities by providing infrastructure support;
- to promote partnership between Participating National Societies and the RRC.

Originally the appeal time frame was five months. For a variety of reasons, including funding and recruitment delays, full-scale implementation began later than planned. In addition, there were delays for approval of contracts as a result of the Federation implementing new and more attentive procedures for such approval. As a result the operation had to be extended to 31 December 1999. Due to protracted delays in the field due to problems with weather, available transport, and difficulties in reaching the most isolated settlements, the programme was extended once again to 15 May 2000.

Objectives, Achievements and Constraints

Objective 1: To alleviate the impact of cold, malnutrition, disease, stress, and lack of medical care to 82,000 people (multi-child families, single parents, former prisoners, pensioners, orphans, invalids).

The population of the targeted regions included significant groups of indigenous peoples, as well as Europeans (Russians and Ukrainians). Some survived by supplementing their limited incomes by hunting, fishing and gathering mushrooms, berries, etc. Others were on the edge of poverty. The problem here was not of sudden-onset poverty as the result of an isolated disaster, but one of persistent poverty, exacerbated by the ongoing transition from centrally-planned to market economy. In Soviet times a loaf of bread cost the same across all eleven time zones regardless of production/transport costs: now the price can vary by a multiple of five.

Working in close contact with social welfare departments and administration in the regions local RRC committees collected statistical socio-economic information (poverty level, living conditions and number of vulnerable people) from each region and sent it to the RRC Central Committee and Delegation's relief team. Together they defined the most vulnerable groups of people - multi-child families, single parents, former prisoners, pensioners, orphans and invalids - to become Red Cross beneficiaries, and sent the information back to the regions, where local RC committees developed the lists of people to receive aid. Also, due to a poor state of health institutions in the targeted regions it was decided to provide support (medicaments, bed linen and blankets) to central hospitals and remote health centres to bring immediate help to patients.

Proceeding from the real picture of vulnerability in the settlements, sometimes family food parcels (FFPs) were handed out not to individuals as originally planned, but to families, and children were also considered beneficiaries, though they did not receive separate FFPs. Using this method of calculation, the number of beneficiaries increased from 82,000 to 191,270.

Water-sanitation assessment: It was recognised that many chronic diseases and common afflictions that the local population of the Arctic regions of Russia suffers are related to poor quality or lack of drinking water, especially in remote settlements; it is also often related to the existing sewage system and practices of disposal of liquid and solid refuse such as outhouse contents and household garbage. In the Russian Arctic, there are virtually no significant funds available for the repair, construction and maintenance of critical infrastructure. And lacking this, it is extremely difficult to effectively address the community health issues which are an integral part of development projects in the region.

The need for a specialised assessment of this sector was noted in assessment missions, and in response, the Canadian Red Cross sent a water-sanitation consultant to carry out a six-week assessment of water supply and sanitation (wat/san) conditions and suggest some solutions.

Due to the logistical problems and travel/weather constraints only two regions were to be assessed (Yakutia and Chukotka). Because no direct flights between Moscow and Chukotka were available, it was necessary to use an alternate route Moscow-Magadan-Anadyr. The Magadan region was added as another target area, and the layover in Magadan was used to get familiar with the wat/san conditions in the city of Magadan.

The assessment showed that problems related to wat/san conditions in the targeted regions were so severe and widespread that their elimination or correction in the near future is almost impossible unless large amounts of money become readily available. Taking into consideration the existing financial crisis of all levels of Russian government, only limited funds can be directed to improvement of wat/san conditions in the Arctic, although it severely impacts upon the majority of population, especially indigenous peoples in small remote settlements.

However, the consultant advised some recommendations for measures with immediate effect:

- collect clean ice and snow early in winter and boil melted water;
- haul water from nearby source of good drinking water;
- provide water filter systems to public facilities, then to individual families;
- install proper water treatment systems at the source of water used.

Measures with long term effect were also recommended as follows:

- build water treatment plants where needed;
- build water reservoirs and water lines equipped with proper water filtration systems;
- drill deep water wells and mix waters from deep aquifers, that sometimes lack basic minerals, with waters from shallow aquifers, that have them in overabundance (e.g. Yakutia) or are saline (e.g. Chukotka).

Objective 2: To deliver 90,000 ten-kg food parcels; 30,000 hygiene parcels; 10,000 sets of clothes and boots for children; 300 district hospital kits; 250 health centre kits; 8,000 blankets; 8,000 sets of bed linen sets; and 2,000 first aid kits.

Procurement for the Far North-east appeal was underway in March, 1999 with tenders sought for production of food parcels in Magadan and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

FFPs: Each 10 kg food parcel contained: 2 kg of wheat flour, 1 kg of sugar, 2 kg of macaroni, 1 litre of vegetable oil, 2 cans of meat, 2 cans of condensed milk, 1 kg of semolina, and 0.5 kg of tea. Approximately 200 distribution points were selected among all four regions.

FFPs were initially planned for procurement in Moscow with air transport to the target regions. However research discovered the presence of qualified suppliers in the regions, and this was preferable from the standpoint of savings on transport and support to local economies. The average cost of one FFP was RR 325 (some USD 13 at that time - the dollar-rouble rate has changed in the meantime). And due to some savings in funds, a total number of FFPs produced increased.

Totally, 100,861 ten-kg family food parcels were distributed instead of 90,000 FFPs as originally planned. The table below shows production and distribution figures.

One container containing 1,083 family food parcels was sunk during a storm on the maritime route to Magadan.

There was a delay in producing FFPs in Chukotka, because the local supplier requested an extension of production with the imposition of penalties as per the contract. The supplier in Chukotka - the Chukotka Trading Company (CTC) - included delivery of FFPs to distribution points in their bid price, since there is essentially a monopoly environment in the region, under which the CTC, administration, and air service operate in collusion on any trade or transport.

Table 1. Family Food Parcels Distribution.

Region	No. FFPs	No. families	No. beneficiaries
Kamchatka region	37 500	30 953	86 767
Koryak AO	10 000	7 292	17 598
Magadan region	32 417	30 025	62 729
Chukotka AO	20 944	10 405	24 176
Total	100 861	78 675	191 270

Hygienic kits: were originally envisioned as consisting of basic items such as soap and candles. However, the Delegation's Resource Development department was able to source a large donation of hygienic items from Johnson&Johnson healthcare company. Consequently, each of 29,952 hygienic kits contained: 2 bars (200g) of baby soap, 2 tubes (200g) of baby cream, 300 ml of baby oil, 1 pack of baby wipes, 2 packs of sticking plasters, 1 tube (100 ml) of hand cream, 2 bottles (500g) of shampoo, 1 hygienic lipstick, 1 pack of sanitary towels, a tooth brush, 5 bars (1 kg) of household soap and 10 candles.

The kits were transported in containers by rail to Vladivostok, from where they were transhipped by sea to Magadan, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and Anadyr. The shipments arrived to the targeted regions in the second half of September. Distribution went as follows:

Table 2. Hygiene Kits Distribution.

Region	No. hygiene kits	No. families	No. beneficiaries
Kamchatka region	9 792	8 452	26 598
Koryak AO*	1 716	1 411	4 931
Magadan region	8 776	8 560	24 374
Chukotka AO*	6 704	5 883	9 934

Total	26 988	24 306	65 837

* Final distribution reports are under preparation. A detailed breakdown of all distributions is available on request.

Two hundred and sixty hygienic kits were sunk in an accident on the sea in Kamchatka, when a ship cut into the barge which was carrying the RC; 24 hygienic kits were damaged during container transportation; 48 hygienic kits were given to the RRC Central Committee to distribute among the RRC Ivanovo boarding school children.

In all, 26,988 hygiene kits were distributed to vulnerable people in the targeted regions instead of 30,000 originally planned.

Clothing: information on clothing needs in the targeted regions was gathered during field trips, and it was concluded that the most useful items were childrens' winter clothes and felt boots known as "valenki". The relief items were sent to the regions in April-May 2000 in the form of 3,000 clothes sets and 3,000 felt boots for Kamchatka, 2,000 clothes sets and 2,000 felt boots for Koryak, 4,000 clothes sets and 4,000 felt boots for Magadan.

Table 3. Children's Clothes and Felt Boots.

Region	No. clothes sets	No. beneficiaries	No. felt boots pairs	No. beneficiaries
Kamchatka region	3 000	2 950	3 000	2 800
Koryak AO	2 000	1 966	2 000	1 861
Magadan region*	3 999	3 479	3 953	3 019
Chukotka AO*	2 000		2 000	
Total	10 999	8 395	10 953	7 680

* Final distribution reports are under preparation. A detailed breakdown of all distributions is available on request.

Medical supplies: Due to some complications in the question of providing medical supplies (district hospital kits, health centre kits, blankets and bed linen) between the Federation's Secretariat and the Netherlands RC society, there was a delay in procuring medical supplies for the targeted regions.

On 19 February, 1999 (on the introduction of the appeal) the Netherlands RC announced that it intended to play an active role in funding and carrying out the medical portion of the appeal. It sent an assessment team to Kamchatka and Magadan, avoiding a field trip to Chukotka. In the absence of any clear decisions or instructions, it was decided by the Delegation to proceed with assistance only for Chukotka. After a certain delay, the Netherlands RC handed over the responsibility for Magadan, Kamchatka and Koryak okrug to the Delegation.

The relief items were procured in Moscow and sent to medical institutions in all the targeted regions in April-May, 2000* and distributed as follows:

* A dispute over control of Russia's cargo flights led to the grounding of all cargo planes for the month of April, further delaying the operation

Table 4. Supplies for Medical Institutions.

Region	Blankets	Bed Linen	No. Medical Institutions	CRH kits	FAP kits	No. medical institutions
Kamchatka	2 110	2 037	36	89	26	52
Koryak AO)	880	880	27	20	44	34
Magadan	3,000	3,000	41	110	90	82

region						
Chukotka*	2,000	2,000		71	160	66
Total	7 990	7 917	104	290	320	234

* Final distribution reports are under preparation. A detailed breakdown of all distributions is available on request.

Children's food: the Netherlands RC made a contribution of USD 15,000 for baby food for Chukotka, which is outside the appeal, but it was incorporated into the programme following instructions from the Secretariat.

After discussions among Delegation staff, including the health delegate, it was agreed to supply nutritionally important foods which are absent in the diets of children in Chukotka. Three tones of milk powder and three tones of dried fruit were procured to assist 12 kindergartens (906 children) in 6 settlements of Chukotka and Providenya districts and were sent to the regions in late November.

Objective 3: To maximise the use of available local resources (human, goods, and services).

Close co-operation between the RRC, the Federation, and the local RC committees and authorities continued through the operation with regular meetings, phone and fax contacts.

On 20 April a meeting with representatives of the Russian Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East (RAIPON) was held to discuss its assistance in the programme, particularly in monitoring. An important meeting with the governor of Chukotka was held on 30 April to discuss the questions of RC's collaboration with local authorities and also to meet with food parcel producers.

All family food parcels were procured locally in order to support local economy and provide people in the regions with jobs. Children's clothes, felt boots and medical supplies were procured in Moscow so as not to influence local prices with such a large purchase volume.

Objective 4: To strengthen local capacities by providing infrastructure support.

A five-day organisational development workshop for 15 representatives of all CIS National Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, organised by the Federation was held in Minsk on 2-7 May, 1999 with the participation of the RRC and Federation representatives, including the then HOD.

In order to strengthen the capacity of the regional RC branch it has been agreed that an RRC Central Committee representative will be located permanently in Chukotka to participate in future implementation and development.

Under the RRC strategic plan of action, the country was divided into eight zones allowing for eventual decentralisation of operations through the creation of eight zonal offices which provide support and co-ordination to the RC committees in that geographic area. In late July, the Delegation's HOD, the RRC president and the Federation's logistics co-ordinator conducted a field trip to Vladivostok to assess the situation and create of the office there. Soon after the trip the office was established to cover the ten committees in the Russia's Far East. The Canadian RC Society agreed to take upon themselves funding of this territory, and a Canadian delegate was placed in Vladivostok to assist local RC committees in improving their capacities and provide development assistance to the chairpersons and staff members involved.

On 28-29 August an International Conference on Humanitarian Operations in the Northern and Far East Territories was conducted by the RRC and Federation in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Governmental leaders and representatives of 18 Russian territories, chairpeople from the RRC Central and regional committees, representatives of the International Federation, national societies from Canada, Great Britain, USA, Iceland and Netherlands, government structures and NGOs also participated at the conference. The aim of the conference was to find strategic partners for implementing RRC humanitarian programmes in the Far East and Northern territories. A Declaration was signed by the participants, which summed up the results of multi-fold discussions.

Objective 5: To promote partnership between Participating National Societies and the RRC.

On 27-28 June a PNS meeting was held in the Central Committee of the RRC with the participation of the American, Canadian, Danish, Icelandic, Netherlands, Norwegian, Swedish, British and Russian Red Cross Societies, ICRC (Moscow), Federation (Moscow) and Federation (Geneva) representatives to discuss strategic partnership opportunities and RRC's reform process. Contributions were made to a tripartite MoU that will establish a uniform approach in the content and methodology of future partnerships.

The Netherlands Red Cross is supporting Russian Red Cross and conducting its own bilateral programmes in 15 regions, including Magadan. They donate money in order to manufacture FFPs and medicine to support 140,000 beneficiaries. In Altai Netherlands Red Cross is assisting three children's hospitals. The programme is worth USD 75,000 and is aiming to feed 1,000 children during the year.

The Canadian Red Cross-funded co-ordinator for the operation arrived in the middle of April 1999 to participate in meetings with NGOs and regional RC societies and thence work 50 per cent in the field, 50 per cent in Moscow. A relief delegate from the Swedish RC arrived on 3 May, 1999 and was based in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky for six months to assist in logistics of the operation, and a health/logistics delegate from Canada arrived on 1 May 1999 to concentrate on assessment and training in the Far Northeast.

Conclusions/Lessons learned

- There is no doubt that the nature of the region and its collapsed infrastructure combine to frustrate even the most conservative time frames. To have fully implemented the programme can be seen as a remarkable achievement, however, the Delegation and RRC relief team was constantly prevented in efforts to keep within the planned time frames. The lesson learned is that future planning must openly declare more realistic operational windows and budgets should reflect worst case scenarios.
- Budgets for supplies were not exceeded, quality was as requested and items were appropriate for their use. More stringent procedures introduced by Geneva during this operation did delay purchasing but lessons have been learnt and this is no longer an issue. Buying items locally did prove to be difficult but stays the aim. In particular long delays were caused by the major contractor in Chukotka failing to carry out its obligation.
- The targeted regions are situated in an extremely harsh environment over 9,000 km east of Moscow. There are obviously enormous logistical difficulties. However, these difficulties are not specific to the region. The Federation and RRC are also operating in similar conditions in the Far North of Russia under appeal 29/99 which although extended due to late funding is progressing as planned. This is as a direct result of logistical lessons learnt from this operation.

- It is the view of the Delegation's relief department that more monitoring both of programme delivery and programme design would have been beneficial. There is a need for local, Federation-trained monitors operating full time in each of the regions. This policy is being carried out for appeal 29/99 and is an intention for appeal 24/00. Despite negotiations with RAIPON the relief team was unable to agree on terms for monitoring. More efforts will be put in this direction in the future. The Federation monitor presently working in Chukotka belongs to the indigenous population.
- Development of Red Cross branches has moved along substantially as a result of this programme. It is obvious that those chairpersons involved with this programme are able to take a lead and impart their experiences to others while implementing other relief programmes in the North. Red Cross membership, volunteer numbers as well as credibility with the public and local authorities has increased. Each of the regions is now working on their own branch development plans so that future relief operations may address their needs.

The latest relief Appeal to cover this region “Severe Poverty in the Northern Territories” can be seen as an object lesson from this appeal. It is far more targeted, focussed and realistic in its objectives, and includes the possibility of an exit strategy in one or two years.

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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

					Interim report
					Annual report
					Final report
					x

Far North-Eastern Russia: Critically Isolated Communities

Appeal No: AP 05/99

Period: January - September 2000

Currency: CHF

I - CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE TO APPEAL 05/99

FUNDING	CASH		KIND		TOTAL INCOME
	Contributions	Reallocations	Goods/Services	Personnel	
Appeal budget	6,584,000.00				
Balance carried forward					20,619.01
<i>Contributions consolidated by donor:</i>					
American Red Cross	858.29				
Australia - RC	20,714.34				20,714.34
British RC	608.38				
British Govt. via RC	471,228.30				
Canada - Govt.	45,589.56		44,649.00		90,238.56
Canada - Govt. via RC	2,938,640.00				2,938,640.00
Canada - RC	25,460.11		163,960.00	60,000.00	249,420.11
Denmark - RC	42,980.25				42,980.25
Finland - RC	53,941.74				53,941.74
Iceland - RC	65,149.19				65,149.19
Japan - RC	124,200.00				124,200.00
Monaco - RC	9,748.00				9,748.00
Netherlands - RC	22,222.55				22,222.55
Russia - PD	296.30				296.30
Singapore - PD		1,500.00			1,500.00
Sweden - RC	179,000.00			30,554.00	209,554.00
Switzerland - RC	100,000.00				100,000.00
United States - PD	228.60		732,250.00		732,478.60
United States - RC				45,174.00	45,174.00
Other income		46,368.00			46,368.00
DREF		161,750.00			161,750.00
TOTAL	4,100,865.61	209,618.00	940,859.00	135,728.00	4,773,244.65
Coverage	62.29%	3.18%	14.29%	2.06%	72.50%

II - Balance of funds - CASH ONLY

		Opening balance	20,619.01
		INCOME Rcv'd	4,310,483.61
		EXPENDITURE	4,541,905.46

		BALANCE	(210,802.84)

III - Budget analysis / Breakdown of expenditures						
Description	Appeal	CASH	KIND		TOTAL	Variance
	Budget	Expenditures	Goods/services	Personnel	Expenditures	
SUPPLIES						
Clothing & Textiles	751,000.00	465,069.89			465,069.89	285,930.11
Food/Seeds/Water	1,512,000.00	1,845,735.20			1,845,735.20	(333,735.20)
Medical & First Aid	1,316,000.00	1,091,647.21			1,091,647.21	224,352.79
Other relief supplies		95,762.42	1,000,859.00		1,096,621.42	(1,096,621.42)
Sub-Total	3,579,000.00	3,498,214.72	1,000,859.00	0.00	4,499,073.72	(920,073.72)
CAPITAL EXPENSES						
Computers & Telecom equip.	18,500.00	28,738.23			28,738.23	(10,238.23)
Other capital expenditures	4,500.00	15,767.28			15,767.28	(11,267.28)
Sub-Total	23,000.00	44,505.51	0.00	0.00	44,505.51	(21,505.51)
TRANSPORT & STORAGE						
	2,452,000.00	634,103.84				
Sub-Total	2,452,000.00	634,103.84	0.00	0.00	634,103.84	1,817,896.16
PERSONNEL						
Personnel (delegates)	150,000.00	44,782.78		127,500.00	172,282.78	(22,282.78)
Personnel (local staff)	50,000.00	96,339.35			96,339.35	(46,339.35)
Training	44,000.00				0.00	44,000.00
Sub-Total	244,000.00	141,122.13	0.00	127,500.00	268,622.13	(24,622.13)
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION						
Assessment/Monitoring	20,000.00				0.00	20,000.00
Travel & related expenses	35,000.00	59,611.58			59,611.58	(24,611.58)
Information expenses	15,000.00	25,352.08			25,352.08	(10,352.08)
Administrative expenses		12,258.56			12,258.56	(12,258.56)
Professional services		625.48				
Financial charges		(23,280.01)				
Sub-Total	70,000.00	74,567.69	0.00	0.00	97,222.22	(27,222.22)
SECRETARIAT SUPPORT	216,000.00	197,720.57	0.00	0.00	197,720.57	18,279.43
OPERATIONAL PROVISIONS		(48,329.00)			(48,329.00)	48,329.00
TOTAL BUDGET	6,584,000.00	4,541,905.46	1,000,859.00	127,500.00	5,692,918.99	891,081.01
Consumption rate - Total Expenditure vs. Total Income:				119.27%		
Execution rate- Expenditure verses budget				86.47%		