

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

14 August 2000

appeal no. 01.37/2000 (revision of budget)

situation report no.2

period covered: Half year review (situation report no.1 covered January-February 2000)

A difficult financial situation has resulted in slowing down of the programmes and delays in reaching the objectives from the Appeal. A thorough revision of the programmes and budgets has been made with the aim to reflect the existing stage of the operations and a new prioritisation for the coming months.

The context

Socio-economic and humanitarian evaluation •

Four years after the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still going through a protracted, painful and multifaceted transitional process. The country continues to grapple with the political, social and economic problems inherent in constructing a single state from two ethnically divided entities, whilst at the same time continuing the process of reconstruction from the effects of war as well as managing the transition from a centrally-planned economy to a free market economy.

Vulnerability Analysis •

A large proportion of the population of BiH remains vulnerable. The war had a major impact on the standard of living and created newly vulnerable groups without adequate coping mechanisms as a result of the deterioration in the social and economic conditions of the country. The main factors contributing to their vulnerability are a reduction in basic social services, deterioration in health care, high unemployment rates and low income. Although the impact is widespread, the Red Cross is mostly dealing with the elderly and the young, considering them the most vulnerable.

Analysis of the Funding and Assistance/Cooperation environment •

The focus of the international community's financial assistance has shifted to political, economic and infrastructural reconstruction. This has left the present welfare needs of the most vulnerable in BiH increasingly under-funded as the capacity of the authorities to implement welfare reform and establish

a safety net for the country's elderly, sick and poor still lags far behind the needs. Home care programmes, such as those of the Red Cross in BiH, are therefore still vitally needed.

At present, there are 185 international NGOs and 177 national NGOs registered with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and there are many more national NGOs which are not registered. Most of these NGOs have a limited target area, working locally in a region, canton or city. Of these agencies, over 100 are involved in some aspect of health, more than 150 in child and youth activities and almost 70 in women's activities, with a degree of overlap between them. Some of the international NGOs are scaling down their activities in 1999-2000.

One of the highlighted priorities for international agencies is building the capacity, sustainability and empowerment of local NGOs and their networks to focus on the priority of human development.

Latest events

In the first half of 2000, the issue of return of refugees and IDPs to their communities was in focus of all local and international agencies. Almost five years after the war in BiH, over one million refugees and displaced persons still wait to go back to their own communities or search for durable solutions to their situation. In spring, many refugees have spontaneously returned to their pre-war domicile without any institutional support from either the government or international institutions. In some cases, this move caused humanitarian problems as many now live in temporary shelters or accommodation. This situation can easily deteriorate into a humanitarian crisis with the approach of winter.

On 10 February, two days after the decision on the "Red Cross of BiH" has been adopted by the Council of Ministers (Government of BiH), this Council was declared unconstitutional. Regrettably, the final signature required for this decision to become a legal act was still missing at the time of this crisis. As of 25 June, the new Council of Ministers (BiH Government) is in place and will be in constant session until further notice. The new Government is viewed as a compromise made by nationalists and is not very well perceived by the international community in BiH.

On 30 June, the Constitutional Court of BiH made a decision to proclaim all three ethnic groups constitutional in the entire territory of BiH, and that Entity Constitutions should comply with this Court's rule within three months. This "historic" decision enables fuller compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement which views BiH as a country with "two multi-ethnic entities". Prior to this decision, Republika Srpska was defined as "an entity of Serb people", while the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was known as "an entity of Bosniaks and Croats", thus making each ethnic group a minority in the other's entity. The Constitutional Court of BiH considered this situation discriminatory and not in compliance with the country's Constitution.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

With the assistance of the International Federation and the ICRC, the Red Cross organisations in the two entities, the Red Cross of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (RCFBiH) and the Red Cross of Republika Srpska (RCRS), have been working together to form a new National Society. In July 1999, the first draft statutes for the National Society were produced, with elected officers from both Red Cross entity structures, the General Assembly at the national level and, initially, one joint programme in Tracing Services. At the moment, however, the two Red Cross structures continue working as separate but co-operating organisations, each retaining their operational responsibilities and their own General Assemblies at the entity level.

Both the RCFBiH and RCRS need to establish a stable and adequate funding base, improve their public information campaigns and image, establish a viable volunteer network, and maintain and upgrade traditional programmes in Home Care, First Aid Training, Youth, Blood Donor Recruitment, and Public Health Education. They have recently started with several new initiatives in the areas of Resource Development and Land Mine Awareness, and are at work on determining the type and extent of services in the area of Disaster Preparedness and Response thus, increasingly shifting, with support of the Federation, from relief to development activities.

Both Red Cross structures need to achieve realistic strategic development plans. While some work has been done in this area within the International Federation's and ICRC's yearly planning activities, comprehensive development plans have not been completed to date. With the support of the international community, there is an opportunity for the two entity Red Cross organisations (through the formation of a National Society and even closer operational co-operation) to play a significant role in moving communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina towards reconciliation and a stronger civil society. This would raise the profile of the Red Cross and promote the Movement's humanitarian values.

Home Care Programme •

Achievements

- The programme supported 15,000 beneficiaries. There was an average of 50,000 visits and 2,500 medical referrals each month during the last 6 months.
- The Home Care Programme has become not only a very effective vehicle for reconciliation and inter-entity co-operation, but has also been identified by the Entity Red Cross (ERC) organisations as a sound base for the Red Cross of BiH.
- The programme has received recognition at all government levels in BiH as an important and quality programme. It has been filling a gap and providing a major service which should have been otherwise provided by the government.
- Following this recognition, negotiations were held with cantonal/regional governments towards obtaining assistance in the running costs of the programme.
- One of the programme's greatest achievements is its strong base of over 1,000 volunteers through the promotion of the Red Cross principle of voluntary service in the country.

Objectives

- Despite budget constraints, the programme aims at continuing to support the ERCs reflecting the overall development support strategy of the Federation.
- Negotiations will continue, and be further intensified by the ERCs to obtain regular financial support to this programme from Entity cantonal/regional authorities.
- The Federation will continue to support the ERCs efforts to improve human and material resources of the programme with the objective to make it less donor reliant.
- The Federation will continue raising public awareness campaigns.
- The Home Care Programme volunteers will continue to be a source for the planned Institutional Development volunteer recruitment.
- The successful inter-entity co-ordination of staff training/volunteers meetings will continue.
- An external evaluation of the programme will take place in August.

Disaster Preparedness (DP) and Emergency Response (ER) Programme •

Achievements

Since Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a country prone to natural disasters, only a Disaster Preparedness assessment with a small budget was initially planned for the year 2000. Due to the prolonged instability in certain parts of the region, however, this decision was reviewed and the DP capacity building process got additional attention. The receipt of the Canadian contribution of CAD 250,000 to that effect will allow a broader approach once the assessment at national level is finalized by the end of August and the report becomes available in September.

In the meantime, a DP/ER working group comprising representatives of both ERCs, ICRC and the Federation was established as a result of the DP workshop held in March 2000. This group met regularly in the period from April to June.

A disaster preparedness assessment questionnaire encouraging local Red Cross branches to assess their needs and capacity was prepared in close collaboration with the working group. A risk mapping exercise was carried out and the role of ERCs in the national DP/ER plan was elaborated and recognised by the authorities of both entities.

Objectives

- The Federation will co-ordinate and advise ERC in their analyses of data collected from the assessment questionnaire.
- A national Red Cross DP/ER plan will be drafted.
- The Federation will support the ERCs in their continued discussions with Civil Defense, Government and other stakeholders to incorporate the Red Cross DP plan into the national DP / ER plan.

Youth Development Programme •

Achievements

- Assessments (internal and external) were carried out in the first quarter of the year and a joint plan of action was prepared, accordingly.
- In January, work started on a Youth Red Cross handbook.
- The reproductive health education peer counseling programme started in April with co-operation of two ERC youth departments and the support of the Federation.
- The ERC youth departments have made significant progress in becoming more integrated into the ERCs general programmes with the commitment to involve youth more extensively in the Home Care Programme.
- Youth Red Cross groups have been active in the International Red Cross Day celebrations and in representing BiH at international Youth Red Cross events. These activities have greatly improved the networking of different youth groups and represent yet another step towards reconciliation and inter entity confidence building.
- A basic leadership training course was successfully completed in June.

Objectives

The Federation will continue to:

- Facilitate the second level training course, and training of trainers course;
- Support, financially and technically, the ERCs in implementing their Youth Red Cross activities;
- Facilitate and support Youth Red Cross in BiH to network with other Youth Red Cross Departments within the region;
- Support the work on the Youth Red Cross handbook and newsletter;
- Support the Youth Red Cross involvement in other programmes such as Home Care and Health;
- Support the Youth Red Cross in disseminating Strategy 2010.

Health Programme •

Achievements

- The Federation together with the ERCs prepared the First Aid Manual for future drivers.
- The basic contents for the First Aid cabinets was determined by the ERCs headquarters in co-operation with the Federation and ICRC - fifty cabinets were purchased and distributed countrywide.
- Entity health officers worked together in the preparation of First Aid competitions and exchanged their experience and knowledge in order to improve the competitions.

- The local Red Cross First Aid competitions for school children were completed in Republika Srpska.
- The ERCs were recognised by the Government and WHO as key players in blood donor recruitment and blood donation within the community.
- Information and educational material was prepared for the World Health Day and the World Blood Donors Day.
- The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the reproductive health peer education project in BiH. In April, the project was officially approved by the Ministries of Health in both entities. The initial training and activities were well-accepted by the students. This project also enables the reconciliation process.

Objectives

In the next six months, the Federation plans to:

- Conduct a course for blood donor project co-ordinators in regions and cantons;
- Prepare the First Aid management team course;
- Send fourteen trainers of trainers to the international summer school for peer education at Palic, Yugoslavia (in August);
- Continue with training of trainers;

Institutional Development Programme (ID) •

Achievements

- Assessments were conducted in both Entity Red Cross organisations to ensure that the ID programme is relevant to the needs perceived by the key governance and management.
- A stakeholder assessment with a public opinion survey as its major component was carried out. To complement the public opinion, a survey of interviews of other stakeholders was also made.
- Plans and budgets with strategic objectives and a range of activities within the ID programme were prepared.
- Communication systems including hardware were upgraded in 19 cantons and regions and at headquarters level.
- A financial training seminar was organized with financial experts from each entity delivering the training through lectures and discussion.
- The programme continued to provide financial support to the Red Cross headquarters in both entities, cantonal/regional offices and local branches.
- During the first half of 2000, significant steps towards creation of a National Society were taken through financial and technical support for the Inter-Entity Contact Group (IECG).
- A mission statement and statutes seminar with assistance from externally recruited lawyers were carried out to help strengthen the mission statement and statutes of the RCFBiH.
- The Federation contributed to strategic planning meetings organized to discuss the Home Care Programme development aspects.

Objectives

The Federation will:

- Continue to facilitate the NS formation process by providing financial and technical support to the Inter-Entity Contact Group and ERCs in statutory and legal matters;
- Integrate the ID approach into other Federation supported programmes;
- Support the ERCs disseminate Strategy 2010 throughout their structures and other stakeholders;
- Review and revise the current RC strategic plans to incorporate the strategic directions identified in 'Strategy 2010';
- Update the branch profile database and review branch sustainability levels and develop plans to provide institutional development support to identified branches;
- Establish a branch seed fund for small scale projects;

- Support the ERCs design a clear policy that defines the roles and responsibilities of branches within the organisation and establish guidelines and bench mark standards;
- Design and produce a volunteer induction course for branches;
- Facilitate the ERCs production and disseminate their annual report;
- Continue to provide financial support for staff and administrative expenses according to agreed, phased down schedule;
- To cooperate with ICRC in ensuring co-ordination on NS formation and development issues.

As regards promotion of humanitarian values and information and media activities, in the next six months, the activities will include:

- Training in communications skills for the two information officers of the ERCs.
- A public awareness campaign, promotion of the fundamental principles and dissemination of humanitarian values for local and international journalists.
- Before the end of the year, publication of issues number "0" and "1" of the "RC of Bosnia and Herzegovina" Newsletter-cum-Bulletin.

Resource Development Programme (RD) •

Achievements

- A pin campaign was organised in May 2000 during the Red Cross week. The final results in terms of income generation were disappointing.
- There is a growing acceptance that RD is an essential part of the ID process and a means to break the dependency syndrome.
- Initial contacts were made with the World Bank to discuss their experiences in implementing and funding small scale revenue generating projects.

Objectives

- The RD programme will be re-focused and aligned closer with other programmes within the CAS for 2001-2002.
- Exchanges with other organisations working in this field in BiH and the region will be instigated. The RD programme will be more closely tied with the regional programme.
- Fund-raising activities will be redirected to fulfil certain predefined objectives in line with practice, norms and experience in ERCs;
- Clearly defined criteria will be developed for the application and selection of small scale projects for the branch seed fund.
- Clarification of the role, objectives and potential for success of small scale revenue generating projects in the Red Cross context will be presented to both entities.
- Training to build capacity at branch level will be carried out according to the needs as identified in various assessments.

CABAC - Children Affected by Armed Conflict (Danish Red Cross project delegation) •

Achievements

- The Banja Luka CABAC project caters for 1,538 students in 17 schools assisted by 93 specially trained teachers/RC activists.
- The Bihac CABAC project caters for 556 students in 12 schools assisted by 36 specially trained teachers/RC activists.

Objectives

Five years after the Dayton Agreement, there is still acute need for psycho-social programmes for children of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Danish Red Cross is likely to continue with these two projects in BiH in the academic 2000/2001. Further needs, though, will have to be covered from other sources, either through an international or a special national Appeal and/or through other donors.

Field Offices •

The Delegation still maintains two Field Offices, a Liaison Office with an international delegate in Banja Luka, the Capital of Republika Srpska and a Field Office in Trebinje to support and supervise the ongoing operations and establish more efficient co-operation with the Red Cross branches and local authorities in order to facilitate the ERCs development efforts. These Offices also ensure the "political" presence of the International Federation in Republika Srpska, with more specific tasks related to reconciliation and formation of the Red Cross of BiH.

Achievements

- Contacts were made with the entity Government through meetings with the Ministries concerned, in particular the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. On all these occasions, the issue of the NS has been raised.
- Contacts with Heads or Deputy Heads of the main international organisations i.e. OHR, OSCE, UNDP, IOM, UNHCR were also established and maintained.
- Regular contacts with the ICRC Sub-Delegations in Banja Luka and Trebinje have been maintained;
- The visibility of the International Federation clearly benefited from the above. In addition, those meetings yielded a better understanding about the respective roles of the ICRC and the Federation as well as about the need of the Red Cross of BiH.

The future role of the Field and/or Liaison Offices

Very positive relations have been established with the public authorities in Republika Srpska and it is important now to maintain them. New challenges, including shifting from relief to development, efforts to establish a NS and commitment of ERCs to accept more responsibilities in the Red Cross operations, make the presence of Field Offices even more justified. The future role of the Field Offices should be advisory with ERC branches fully involved in branch development.

Constraints •

ERCs

- The absence of a NS implies double efforts and resources resulting at times in different approaches to these two ERCs.
- The ERC management were slow to understand or accept the ongoing reduction in international funding at all levels. This resulted in weak efforts in developing adequate opportunities for self reliance and sustainability.
- There is a lack of clear priority in the ERCs with a desire to implement diverse activities. Focusing on specific needs which could be covered by existing capacities is weak.
- There is a poor understanding in the ERCs of the concept and importance of ID/RD and capacity building as a continuous process leading to a well-functioning NS.
- There are competing views about the role of youth in Red Cross activities, their place in the Red Cross structures and their significance as Human Resource. These differences ultimately lead to a confusion in the approaches.
- There is a very poor communication and informational flow between the headquarters and the branches.
- There is an over-centralised structure for decision-making within the ERC headquarters, causing difficulties in co-operation and project co-ordination.

Outstanding needs

Due to delayed firm confirmations of pledges and slow recruitment process for delegates, most activities planned for the year 2000 started off very slowly.

By the end of June, cash contributions (hard pledges) covered only around 42% of the funds sought for the activities in 2000. This situation has seriously affected the activities of the ERCs, specially the Home Care Programme and the Youth Development Programme.

The funding for the Federation Liaison Delegate in Banja Luka is presently also in question. The Federation may lose credibility if this problem is not solved in favour of the continued presence there.

The outstanding minimum cash requirements in order to ensure the implementation of the programme in BiH with the revised budget is CHF 2, 500,000. See Annex 2 for details.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Information sharing about the work of the International Federation, in general, and in BiH, in particular, continues to be high on the agenda. This is of paramount importance in mobilising support for, and creating better understanding of, the Federation operations in BiH, including the humanitarian assistance as well as capacity building of the ERCs and development of the Red Cross in BiH.

Contacts have been maintained, regularly and at different levels, with representatives of both the Central Government and the two Entity Governments, the Office of the High Representative, the OSCE, SFOR, EU/EC, several UN agencies as well as the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a number of Diplomatic Missions and bilateral Aid agencies, the NGO community and the ICRC Delegation in BiH.

Continued efforts in the field of external relations at all levels are necessary both in relation to the process of establishing the Red Cross of BiH and in order to continue mobilising necessary resources for humanitarian assistance in BiH.

The Strategy 2010 and the summary of the World Disasters Report were translated into the three official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and disseminated widely in BiH.

The World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day was duly observed and an inter-entity press conference, with participation of the ICRC and the Federation, took place on 9 May.

The World Health Day was also covered by the media. Promotional material for both ERCs was prepared and distributed.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

With the continued decrease or even complete withdrawal of donor governments and international organisations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement stays alone in addressing the needs of the vulnerable population. At the same time, the ERCs have to cope with the increased pressure both from the community and from the respective authorities.

In co-operation with the ICRC, the International Federation will continue with efforts to form the Red Cross of BiH. It will also maintain its capacity-building programmes over the next two years (until the end of 2001) in order to help the Red Cross structures assist vulnerable groups in both entities with an increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

The International Federation, in co-operation with the ICRC, will have to continue and to consolidate its efforts. Additional support from the interested donor National Societies will be, therefore, needed for the implementation of the objectives outlined in the "Appeal 2000-2001: Central and Southern Europe - Strategies and Programmes".

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Björn Eder
Director
Europe Department

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