

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

ARMENIA

27 October 2005

The International Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. The Federation is the world's largest humanitarian organization, and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries. www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA067; Programme Update no. 2;

Period covered: 1 June – 30 September, 2005;

Appeal target: CHF 986,011 (USD 791,532 or EUR 638,608)

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All international assistance to support vulnerable communities seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, according to the SPHERE Project. Please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

In cooperation with its partner agencies, the Armenian Red Cross continues addressing a part of the humanitarian challenges that today tens of thousands of people face in Armenia. The main focus is on meeting pressing community needs and developing the national society capacity in the areas where the organisation can invest itself best, namely:

- improving health and social conditions of vulnerable people (health and care programme)
- decreasing vulnerability of the population to natural and man-made disasters (disaster management), and
- strengthening the organisation to deliver better services aimed at preventing and alleviating suffering (organisational development).

Since June 2005, around 9,584 people have been directly reached by the Armenian Red Cross: 2,412 people were reached with the messages on HIV/AIDS, TB, harm reduction and healthy life style. 50 drug addicts were

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given single-use syringes and condoms, 38 TB patients were helped by the Red Cross social workers, 100 schoolchildren participated in various sport competitions and other social events organised by Red Cross volunteers. More than 6,984 lone pensioners and other marginalised groups, including 490 refugees, were provided with basic social and health care. Around 100,000 people have been reached indirectly through a TV programme on basics of rapid response.

All programmes have been implemented directly by the Armenian Red Cross through its country-wide network of regional branches and volunteers. The Federation through its country delegation in Yerevan and regional delegation in Ankara has provided technical support and monitoring to ensure the resources have been deployed as planned.

On the whole, donor response to the appeal has been good. To help the Armenian Red Cross achieve its objectives of this year, the Federation raised CHF 1,021,025¹ (USD 789,045 or EUR 655,764). This is 103 per cent of the funding sought and includes CHF 330,419 (34 per cent of the appeal budget), the balance from the 2004 operation, which was carried over to support the continuation of projects in 2005. CHF 472,500, a donation from the Norwegian Red Cross, arrived in May 2005. In May 2005 another contribution, CHF 79,815, also arrived from the Finnish Red Cross to cover the costs of the Federation's head of delegation in Armenia. Later on in October, CHF 36,705 arrived from Finnish Red Cross for the same purpose.

The funding, however, was not evenly distributed among the projects. While some received over 100 per cent of what was required (see table below), others were under-funded. As a result, some of the important activities were not implemented. The Armenian Red Cross has been trying to fill the gap through bilateral partnerships, establishing contacts with in-country organisations, national agencies and businesses. For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has contributed CHF 30,000 to enable the Armenian Red Cross help around 150 asylum seekers. The Open Society Institute contributed CHF 10,517 to support the work of the Armenian Red Cross syringe exchange centre in Vanadzor. The Leon branch of the French Red Cross every year donates money (around CHF 12,000) to hold a summer camp in Armenia for children from poor families. In partnership with the Bavarian Red Cross, the Armenian Red Cross has started a programme in Sevan which aims at providing an ambulance service to people living in remote villages and towns. The Jinishyan Foundation, a local organisation, provided CHF 16,786 to promote safe behaviour among schoolchildren in 52 schools. The total value of the projects implemented by the Armenian Red Cross bilaterally sums up to CHF 69,303 (USD 53,557 or EUR 44,510). The funds raised locally, however, are far from being sufficient to cover the needs.

Table 1. Appeal budget, income and expenditure per each project as of September 2005

Programmes/Projects	Appeal budget in CHF	Total income in CHF	Appeal coverage (%)	Expenditure		
				In CHF	% of the income	% of the budget
Health and care programme	189,166	178,361	94	75,261	42	39
Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS	86,696	79,927	92	43,657	54	50
Social services for vulnerable people	102,470	98,435	96	31,604	32	30

¹ The total income includes pledge 0302107 (CHF 82,986) for the disaster preparedness project. This amount has not been paid, but the money was spent in 2003. The PMN needs to be cancelled in the system and a request to write this amount off has been done. However, since the cancellation is not done yet, the amount still shows as income for the Appeal and is included in the financial reports.

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Disaster management programme	275,059	185,370	67	74,881	40	28
Disaster preparedness and response	209,925	173,378	82	63,942	37	30
Population Movement	65,134	11,993	19	10,939	91	20
Organisational development programme	495,690	657,291	133	400,007	61	81
Branch development	273,793	266,030	97	167,528	63	61
Financial management development	51,889	59,123	114	31,814	54	61
Youth development	170,007	194,673	115	96,266	50	57
Coordination and implementation	26,096	137,466	526	104,399	75	400
Total	986,010	1,021,025	103	550,149	54	56

Basically, the programmes have progressed as planned. However, the late arrival of funding caused significant delays. Projects were adjusted to the new timetable and actual money arrived. This preparatory stage also took some time. As explained above, 63 per cent of the total income of the appeal, the contributions from the Norwegian and Finnish Red Cross Societies arrived only in May 2005, and another 36,705, arrived in October from Finnish Red Cross to cover the costs of the Federation Representative. Hence, expenditure is not high (see table above). It stands at CHF 550,149 (56 per cent of the appeal budget). Though the Armenian Red Cross is committed to pick up the pace, a number of activities will be implemented next year with the funds to be carried over to 2006. The estimated balance to be spent till the end of the year is CHF 378,489. The total funds to be carried over to 2006 are CHF 220,648.

Strengthening the National Society

1. Health and care

Goal

Health and social vulnerability of people of Armenia is decreased.

Objective

By the end of 2005, some 66,020 people have improved their health and social conditions through better Red Cross service delivery.

Achievements, impact & constraints

Reducing vulnerability to communicable diseases - sexually transmitted illnesses, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis

The project is designed to help the Armenian Red Cross expand the network of volunteer trainers to educate the local population on the factors that put them at risk of communicable diseases – sexually transmitted illnesses, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Since June 2005, the Red Cross trained some 80 volunteer youth leaders as peer educators on HIV/AIDS in Vanadzor and Stepanavan through six training sessions on sexually transmitted illnesses, HIV/AIDS and TB prevention. During the reported period, the trained volunteers initiated discussions in their communities and reached some 1,328 people. The issues discussed by the volunteers vary from how the disease is transmitted and how it can be prevented. The discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS was also discussed challenging the youngsters' misconceptions. Each of the participants were provided with leaflets, booklets - 'safe sex is your choice' and 'live without regret'- and posters and stickers on HIV/AIDS that include

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messages, such as *'you cannot get AIDS by... being a friend'*, *'You cannot get AIDS by... holding hands'* and *'You cannot get AIDS by... talking to someone'* to counter myths about HIV/AIDS transmission.

As there is still a necessity to control the alarmingly growing problem of TB² in the country, the Red Cross continues to focus on training and distribution of printed materials containing key information on TB and its transmission. Training is conducted through a network of volunteers in Lori region in north Armenia (one of the three regions with high prevalence of TB). The Red Cross also assists the state dispensaries in delivering medicines to TB patients, who cannot collect drugs themselves because of health problems and/or lack of money to pay for transport. The Red Cross's role is also to monitor the patient's compliance to the treatment. The treatment follows the internationally-recommended TB control course – DOTS³. Medicines are supplied by the German Government. Five Red Cross volunteer social workers - four in Vanadzor and one in Stepanavan – have been involved in the project. The Red Cross social workers bring them medicines and record progress of their treatment. During the reported period, four social workers have visited 38 patients with TB who have been just released either from the TB dispensaries or prisons. The Armenian Red Cross has developed a new manual on TB in cooperation with Association of phthisiologists. Soon the manual will be published and distributed to the regional branches equipping them with information on TB and how to work with people ill with TB.

The HIV/AIDS and TB prevention efforts of the Armenian Red Cross are a part of the national society's long-term strategy, an important component of which has been its harm reduction work with drug addicts. With funds from Open Society Institute, the Armenian Red Cross syringes exchange centre continues distributing syringes and condoms in Vanadzor city, one of the country's three big cities. Since June 2005, the centre has distributed 2,500 sterile syringes and 600 condoms to 50 drug addicts. The centre employs a social worker and a consultant narcologist. Most drug addicts visiting the centre are the former patients of the Red Cross consultant. The centre also has two volunteer outreach workers who take syringes, condoms and Red Cross educational materials on HIV/AIDS prevention to the places where drug addicts usually get together.

Social services for vulnerable people

The main objective of the project is to improve health and social conditions of some twenty thousand vulnerable people, including single elderly, internally displaced persons, refugees, disabled people, large families and orphans, through the Red Cross social centres. To achieve this, the focus is on helping the staff and volunteers of 13 most active centres⁴ to increase their professionalism and skills in order to develop more relevant activities to respond to pressing needs in their communities.

The 13 target regional social service centres have continued providing their traditional services. During June – September, the centres supported 6,494 vulnerable people. These were mainly lone pensioners, single mothers, veterans of war and disabled people. Services included: psycho-social consultations, medical check-ups, measuring of blood pressure and glucose, and intramuscular injections. The Red Cross centres also distributed food, clothes, hygiene items and medicines. Some people were helped with cash (four to six US dollars). In Ararat, Armavir, Vayots Dzor, Shirak and Sevan, the centres manage clubs (separate rooms in Red Cross branches) for lone pensioners to socially interact - meet with each other, watch TV and play games.

² The number of tuberculosis cases in Armenia has increased alarmingly from 590 in 1990 to 8,082 in 2004. In 2004, 1,558 new cases were registered.

³ DOTS: once patients with infectious TB have been identified using microscopy services, health and community workers and trained volunteers observe and record patients swallowing the full course of the correct dosage of anti-TB medicines. Sputum smear testing is repeated after two months, to check progress, and again at the end of treatment. A recording and reporting system documents patients' progress throughout, and the final outcome of treatment. For more information on DOTS please see [What is DOTS](http://www.who.int/gtb/dots/whatisdots.htm) at <http://www.who.int/gtb/dots/whatisdots.htm>. Complete treatment of TB requires at least six months of daily therapy with three or more antibiotics following the initial treatment period.

⁴ In total, the Red Cross has a network of 23 social centres.



A social centre volunteer is measuring the blood pressure of an old lonely pensioner

Red Cross continuously trains and develops its staff to better serve the communities. Thus, in June and July, it organized seminars on participatory rapid appraisal and project planning for staff and volunteers of the regional branches. Seminars enabled the regional branches to improve the micro-projects implemented by the social service centers aimed at responding health and social needs of their communities. The projects developed by the regional branches were reviewed and approved by a joint Federation and Armenian Red Cross working group. The micro-projects started in August and vary from distribution of food, medicine, second hand clothes to small-scale repairs, measuring blood pressure and glucose level.

About 300 volunteers were involved in the operation. They regularly visited home-bound beneficiaries to clean their houses, change electrical bulbs, chop fire-wood, repair a door or a window, do shopping, bring newspapers, or simply, chat to show their care and moral support, which was often more welcomed than anything else. Many elderly people not only face daily problems but, separated from children and grandchildren, they begin to feel useless and isolated. The Red Cross, through its volunteers, helped them grow in confidence. The centres also offered sessions on health issues, including HIV/AIDS and healthy life-style. During the reported period, in total 1,084 people were trained. The table below shows the type of services provided by the centres and the number of people reached during the reporting period.

Table 2. Services provided by the Red Cross social centres in June-September 2005

<i>Service provided</i>	People assisted
Food distribution	263
Clothes distribution	287
Distribution of medicines and medical supplies	244
Psycho-social consultations	820
Blood pressure measuring	646
Measuring sugar level in blood	193
Injections	226
Home visits	203
Minor home repairs	16
Club visits	96

Medicines, food and hygiene supplies were procured with the project money; some items were donated by the population, private enterprises or in-country organisations in response to the Red Cross appeal for community support for marginalised people, voiced regularly on local television. For instance, the Tavush, Stepanavan and Lori social service centres received donations of stationery and second-hand clothes from different local companies and entrepreneurs.

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Since 2004 the Armenian Red Cross has been cooperating with Armenian Branch of a non-governmental organization (NGO) called International Relief and Development. During September, 3,500 people in Tavush and Armavir regions have received 157 bales (7,850 kg) of second-hand clothes.

2. Disaster management

Goal

Vulnerability of the population to natural and man-made disasters is decreased.

Objective

The Armenian Red Cross positions itself as a key humanitarian actor in disaster management.

Achievements, impact & constraints



Rapid response team members practice their first aid and response skills during the second national competition of rapid response teams

Strengthening Armenian Red Cross preparedness for disasters

Since June 2005, the Armenian Red Cross held three training sessions on basic rescue principles and tracing during disasters for over 60 volunteer members from nine regional response teams. In addition, the Red Cross organized theoretical and practical training sessions in five regions on basic rescue issues to prepare regional response teams for the upcoming Second National Competitions of Armenian Red Cross Rapid Response Teams. The Competition was organized for four days for 170 participants from 12 rapid response teams and was aimed at strengthening the practical knowledge and skills of Rapid Response Teams in disaster response. The participants had to demonstrate their skills and capacities providing immediate assistance to the injured people in different situations, such as helping them out of ruins and car

accidents. The participating teams were awarded with certificates and prizes. Yerevan Rapid Response team took the first place, followed by Aragatsotn and then Sevan teams. The event was highlighted through mass media.

The Armenian Red Cross is a part of 'Arzagank' (response) project implemented by the Emergency Management Administration (EMA)⁵ jointly with the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency. The above agencies organised theoretical and practical tests in Lori and Syunik regions to evaluate the first phase results of 'Arzagank' project. 20 Red Cross volunteers and four instructors from these regions passed the tests. These activities are organized to have well trained people on the ground that can help government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies respond to the needs of the affected population in case of emergencies.

⁵ Emergency Management Administration (EMA): A government body that develops policies and acts on behalf of the government to protect the population of Armenia in times of emergency and/or military situations

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Strengthening community capacities to mitigate the effects of disasters

In tandem with strengthening its own capacities to cope with emergencies, the Red Cross Society of Armenia has been strengthening that of communities too by raising their awareness of the most common hazards, including earthquake, floods, landslides and fire that annually affect thousands of people.

The national TV1 channel of the Republic of Armenia organized a special debate programme on rescue issues with participation of the Armenian Red Cross volunteers and EMA professionals. The goal of the programme was to inform population about the basics of rapid response and what one needs to know to act in emergency situations till professionals arrive. It is estimated that the programme was watched by 100,000 people.

Jointly with Crisis Management Academy acting under EMA and Armenian National Survey for Seismic Protection, the Armenian Red Cross developed a new educational material on earthquake to raise public awareness on steps to be done before, during and after an earthquake. The booklet will be printed in November.

Population movement

The project aims at strengthening the Armenian Red Cross capacity to help victims of human trafficking - a growing problem in Armenia. It is estimated that several thousand individuals were trafficked between 2000 and 2004. Most are women and children, who are offered work abroad but in reality, find themselves in brothels subject to exploitation. The trafficked people are not only victims in the receiving countries, but in their home countries too, where they stumble across harsh and unforgiving attitude. They need help to be reintegrated into their communities.

The project was planned to finish in June through production of a documentary on Trafficking. However, because of overloaded activities, the documentary was ready only by the end of July. It lasts 20 minutes and was titled "Trafficking or sold fates". Interviews with victims of trafficking and imprisoned traffickers are included. For the production of the material, great support has been received from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and an NGO called "Hope and Help". Presentation of this film took place in UN Armenia House with participation of a number of NGOs working in the sphere and UN offices (UNDP, International Organisation for Migration). The copies of the film have been distributed to all of them. The movie was also broadcast in Gyumri on the local TV channel.

3. Organisational development

Goal

The Armenian Red Cross has strengthened its organisational capacity and become a better functioning national society helping to prevent and alleviate suffering.

Objective

The Armenian Red Cross has increased accountability to its beneficiaries and partners, strengthened links with local communities and increased the network of active young volunteers who are valued members of the organisation.

Achievements, impact & constraints

Branch development

To help its branches strengthen the capacities, the Armenian Red Cross works in participatory community development (PCD) approach. The approach enables to prioritise community projects based on local needs and strategic directions of the national society embedded in its strategic plan. The PCD was first piloted in 2003 and was since implemented in 26 communities (13 communities in 2003 and other 13 in 2004). It proved to be a successful tool. This year, the project focuses on the other 13 communities with the involvement of 13 community or regional branches.

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The process has already started in the new 13 communities. The needs assessment in these communities (1 community in each of the 13 regions) was carried out and the projects developed by them were reviewed jointly by the Armenian Red Cross and the Federation Delegation in Armenia. Approval is pending. The projects include integration of disabled children into civil society, employing the previously established gym for disabled children, regular check-ups and care for TB patients, etc.

Since at the end of the year the regional branches are going to present their strategic plans, the Armenian Red Cross held a workshop on the shortcomings and achievements of regional branches. The discussions touched upon all activity spheres (social, disaster preparedness and response, youth, regional branch development) and community needs. The workshop would help them to better plan and formulate their strategic plans.

Another workshop on project planning process was organized for Red Cross headquarters by the Federation Delegation in Armenia. The workshop was facilitated by the Turkey Delegation Regional Organizational Development Delegate. It aimed to refresh the knowledge of the Red Cross staff on the above process and enhance their skills on local fundraising through discussions and watching a video film prepared by the Federation.

Youth and volunteer development

One of the most important assets Red Cross has is its volunteers. They are involved in various activities to help Red Cross fulfil its goal and reach its beneficiaries countrywide. One of the areas the volunteers are actively involved in is the ecological problems and preservation of Lake Sevan. Traditionally, the Armenian Red Cross organizes youth summer camps to clean the coastal areas of the lake and draw the public attention to ecological problems of the country. Weekly meetings were arranged for the 13 youth leaders to discuss organizational issues of the camp. 120 volunteers from 11 regions of Armenia were involved in four camps set up on different coastal areas of the lake. Along with clean-up activities, participants arranged various workshops on Red Cross work and priorities, ecological, cultural, and other issues, debates and discussions on the problems of youth. Sport contests, tours to historical sites, where they cleaned the surroundings were also organized. During the official closing ceremony of the camp, the results of the workshops were presented, the winners of different contests and nominations were announced. The contests also included a team contest which aimed to raise knowledge on International Humanitarian Law among volunteers. About 50 guests from donor organizations, youth NGOs, Mass Media attended the ceremony, which was concluded with an evening visit to the church on lake Sevan peninsula, where the volunteers made a huge cross with torch-lights.

The youth volunteers raised about USD 200 for the continuation of the “Clean Sevan” project through organising sale of items with Red Cross Youth and “Clean Sevan” emblems in crowded places.

The Armenian Red Cross is continuously improving the existing mechanisms of the volunteer management system. Election process of youth leaders in the regional branches is currently completed. 11 youth leaders were elected. The leaders will organize and direct the work of volunteers. Elections of Youth boards with three to five members in five regional branches have also been completed. The boards will make decisions concerning important issues of volunteer management and activity spheres.

In tandem, the Armenian Red Cross developed a new project package called “Youth Development” and presented it to the regional chairpersons and youth leaders. During the presentation, all questions connected with youth strategy, current activities, reporting system and report formats for the work with the regional branches were clarified.

The lists of schools where the sessions on ecological issues, harms of drugs and smoking are to be held were formed and agreements with appropriate institutions were obtained. Training material for the facilitators and the schoolchildren was developed. Besides, a meeting with the regional branch youth leaders was organized to discuss the most pressing problems the volunteers have faced within the project and the ways of solving them.



Red Cross volunteers organise summer camps for 100 refugee children to entertain them and teach benefits of healthy lifestyle

two branches who are to visit the elderly. During the training, the experienced volunteers shared their skills with the newly recruited ones.

Providing assistance to vulnerable children has always been vital for Armenian Red Cross. 20 youth volunteers offered daily workshops on English language, computer skills, painting, singing and sport games to 100 refugee and non-refugee children aged 6 -12 living in “Aeratsia” and “Artsakh” dormitories. The volunteers helped the children with home work and organized picnics, outgoing tours, performances, contests, cultural and entertaining events. During summertime, youth volunteers organized two tent camps to provide summer rest for children involved in the project. The children learnt how to put up tents, make fire, etc. Funds were also raised for the continuation of the project, where two youth delegates from Norway were actively participating.

The fourth edition of “YOUTH RED CROSS road” newsletter was released, which provided information on the Red Cross Youth activities, important upcoming events in the regions, particularly on the preparatory activities for the “Clean Sevan” ecological camp. The newsletters were distributed among educational institutions, international organizations and youth NGOs.

Armenian Red Cross gives great importance on how to recruit and retain new volunteers. To encourage and stimulate participation of the youth volunteers in Red Cross activities, in 13 regional and community branches minor events such as hiking tours, historical trips, and two-day camps, social evenings were organized.

Financial management development

The project aims at helping the Armenian Red Cross improve its financial management to provide transparent accounting and better donor reporting. The focus is on the Red Cross regional branches. This is important as more and more Red Cross projects are implemented in the regions, which means, the amount of money managed by regional branches has increased. To illustrate, a few years ago the headquarters was making an average of 30 transfers a year to the regional branches. In 2004, it made 30 transfers every day.

The Armenian Red Cross has been quarterly renewing its subscription to a national financial newspaper ‘IRTEC’ (Legal Information Searching System) to keep abreast of any new changes in the national legislation. The SoftMaster computer software was also upgraded to match new legislative and financial reporting requirements.

One of the main priorities of the Armenian Red Cross has always been the care for lonely elderly refugees. Within the reported period, 70 volunteers from seven regional and one community branches have visited 490 lonely elderly refugees living in the dormitories, talked to them, helped with household duties, shopping, provided psychological and material support. 72 elderly refugees got gifts on their birthdays. Food parcels containing vegetable oil, condensed milk, rice, buckwheat were distributed to the beneficiaries. Starting from September two more regional branches, Vayots-Dzor and Syunik, have been included in the project. Training was organized for 50 volunteers of the above