

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

GEORGIA

5 July 2005

In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA069; Programme Update no. 1.

Period covered: 1 January to 31 May, 2005

Appeal target: CHF 1,218,136.52 (USD 977,873.09 or EUR 788,948.52)

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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. 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

This is the third year of the Federation's re-engagement with the Red Cross Society of Georgia to help its member national society strengthen capacities, reinstate its credibility and play a more active role in improving lives of people in need. Donor response to the Federation appeal, however, has been at best modest. During the first two months of the year, the appeal coverage was only five per cent. With the arrival of a donation from the Federation's Capacity Building Fund (CBF), it has increased to 10 per cent to support some of the initiatives under the organisational development programme. The Norwegian Red Cross contribution (CHF 378,000) arrived at the end of May 2005.

The income from different sources has summed up to CHF 502,855.33 (USD 403,672.89 or EUR 325,683.50) which is only 41 per cent of what was requested (see table below). This has been disappointing considering the critical humanitarian situation in the country. Georgia continues to be one of the poorest former Soviet republics. It faces daunting challenges. Economic and social conditions remain dismal. Basic services function poorly or not at all. There are 300,000 internally displaced people in Georgia who live in deprivation. Many are not able to meet their basic food, health and shelter needs. The state welfare allowance barely provides for a loaf of bread each day.

The situation is dominated by high unemployment and rising prices. Sadly, after a decade of independence, much of Georgia continues to depend on assistance from the international community.

Table 1. Appeal coverage and expenditure per each project and programme as of 31 May 2005

| Programmes/Projects | Appeal budget (CHF) | Total income (CHF) | Appeal coverage (%) | Expenditure | | | Balance from the income (CHF) |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | CHF | % of the budget | % of the income | |
| Organisational development programme | 385,490.91 | 244,844.53 | 63.51 | 120,497.36 | 31.26 | 49.21 | 124,347.17 |
| Governance and management capacity building | 185,630.76 | 75,288.31 | 40.56 | 19,656.18 | 10.59 | 26.11 | 55,632.13 |
| Participatory community development | 199,860.15 | 169,556.22 | 84.84 | 100,841.18 | 50.46 | 59.47 | 68,715.04 |
| Health and care | 545,173.22 | 258,010.80 | 47.33 | 372.64 | 0.07 | 0.14 | 257,638.16 |
| Social support to vulnerable lone pensioners | 333,426.09 | 242,365.53 | 72.69 | 372.64 | 0.11 | 0.15 | 241,992.89 |
| HIV/AIDS | 211,747.13 | 15,645.27 | 7.39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15,645.27 |
| Disaster management | 248,993.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Humanitarian values | 38,479.14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1,218,136.52 | 502,855.33 | 41.28 | 120,870 | 9.92 | 24.03 | 381,985.33 |

Lack of support prevented the Red Cross to implement the disaster management and humanitarian values programmes. The first one was designed to help the national society build capacities to respond to disasters and empower vulnerable people to alleviate suffering, reduce casualties and damage caused by disasters. The second programme was to help the Red Cross Society of Georgia to contribute to the government's efforts to reduce violence and discrimination in the country by advocating for the respect of human dignity, peace and tolerance.

Other programmes have received only part of the funding that was requested. To strengthen its governance and management, for instance, the national society has received only 40.56 per cent of the budget. Their late arrival has also meant that most of the planned activities were delayed until the second half of the year.

Some progress, however, has still been made. Even with limited financial support, organisational reforms have continued. The Red Cross is finalising the revision of its statutes. It has developed a strategic plan for 2006-2009. It introduced clearer reporting procedures at all levels to achieve more accountability and transparency. The financial management system has been updated to bring it in consistency with the national tax code. 90 per cent of the financial transactions are channelled through a banking system as opposed to hand carrying money as was the case in the past.

While implementing reforms at the headquarters, the Red Cross has engaged at the local level too through a participatory community development approach to help target branches re-connect with the most vulnerable people. Two community projects were initiated in Gardabani and Kvareli. The projects have proved to be a success. In Gardabani a medical diagnostic centre has been established with support from the local authorities. The government has undertaken to pay salaries to the medical staff working at the centre and has allocated funds from its budget to support the centre with basic medication. A project in Kvareli will offer free medical services to the local population with no access to basic health facilities. Preparations have started to expand the participatory community development approach to three other branches in Telavi, Akhaltsikhe and Khelvachauri.

The Red Cross is also supporting 1,500 lone pensioners in Tbilisi, the capital city, to improve their living conditions. Funding for the project, however, arrived only at the end of May 2005. Hence, there has not been much progress so far. The project is now 73 per cent covered and the National Society is hoping to pick up the pace over the coming months. Some activities, however, will inevitably be postponed until 2006 (see below for more details).

Another area prioritised by the Red Cross is reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and discrimination of people living with the disease by increasing awareness of the communities, particularly young people via Red Cross promotion and education campaigns. The project, however, is only seven per cent covered, which means only a fraction of the planned activities will be implemented. More external support is needed to make the most of current opportunities. The Federation believes 2006 represents a critical moment in the development of the Georgian Red Cross. A significant increase in partner engagement is indispensable to achieve all set objectives.

Strengthening the National Society

1. Organisational development

Goal

The Red Cross Society of Georgia is a key humanitarian actor working in partnership with local authorities to improve living conditions of people in need.

Objective

The Red Cross Society of Georgia has become a better functioning national society helping people prevent and alleviate suffering.

Achievements, impact & constraints

Red Cross governance and management capacity development

The revision of the Red Cross statutes, which was initiated by the national society in 2003, has entered the final phase. It is to achieve several objectives: (1) to establish clearer definitions for the Red Cross governance and management functions, (2) to eliminate discrepancies between different articles and (3) to ensure the compliance of the statutes with the country legislation and the Federation's minimum requirements. The statutes revision has been a long and painstaking process and the bulk of the work has been done during the last two years. This year, the task was to consolidate all comments, including the input from the joint Federation and the ICRC commission in Geneva, and adopt it by the national society's general assembly. The joint commission has reviewed the latest draft, which will now be presented to the national society general assembly for adoption. An extraordinary session of the assembly will be convened in July 2005.

In the meantime, to improve the understanding of the governance and management functions, the Red Cross organisational development coordinator held four training sessions for branch leadership. One training session was held on a central level for 15 people from the headquarters.

The Red Cross, supported by the Federation country and regional delegations, has started drafting a strategic plan for 2006-2009. Consultations are ongoing with main partners and discussions are held within the organisation to establish priorities for the coming four years. The strategic plan will form the basis of the Federation support strategy to the Red Cross Society of Georgia in 2006-2009.

The national society introduced a standard narrative and financial reporting procedures and formats to facilitate a quick resolution of management related issues. It also established an internal and external telephone and internet communication network at the headquarters in Tbilisi. Red Cross staff can now access various Federation tools, such as FedNet¹ and DMIS². A position for an information officer has been advertised. Construction of a Red Cross web page has started too.

¹ FedNet is the Federation's web-based working tool made accessible only to Red Cross and Red Crescent staff working in National Societies, delegations and Geneva headquarters to share information on operations, programmes, contact details etc.

² The disaster management Information System (DMIS) is a web-based working tool made accessible only to Red Cross and Red Crescent staff working in National Societies, delegations and Geneva headquarters. It is a system from which users can access real time information on disaster trends, online internal and external resources, tools and databases.

Efforts continued to improve the financial management of the national society. The system has been upgraded to bring it in consistency with the new national tax code and new national accounting standards adopted by the Government of Georgia in January 2005. The finance people both at the headquarters and 12 regional branches were trained on national society new financial management rules and procedures, including reporting. 90 per cent of the Red Cross financial transactions are done through the banking system. This allows the Red Cross to monitor its financial operations with branches via internet.

The Red Cross also completed the mapping of the national society financial and material resources. An inventory of assets owned by each branch has been compiled. This will be followed by an external audit, which will identify gaps and recommend on how to improve resource management by the Red Cross.

In an attempt to attract more members, the Red Cross Society of Georgia has simplified its rules and regulations on membership. 12,000 new membership cards with protective signs were printed and will be distributed to all Red Cross members.

While the statutes of the national society are being finalized, the Red Cross has also started internal discussions on its branch development strategy, which is a priority for the Red Cross because effectiveness of the organisation hinges on the capacities of its branches to deliver good services to vulnerable people.

Participatory community development



While continuing reforms at the headquarters, the Red Cross Society of Georgia has engaged with local communities piloting a participatory community development approach. On photo: Red Cross volunteers in Gardabani, where the national society established a medical centre within the pilot initiative

The project continues from last year. It was designed to assist the target Red Cross branches to strengthen the links with communities and develop more relevant programmes to reduce vulnerability of the local population. To achieve this, the national society has launched a pilot initiative to encourage its branches to work in a participatory community development (PCD) approach. PCD is helping people to reduce the causes of their own predicaments and mobilise community action. Red Cross community networks bring vulnerable groups together with local government, non-governmental organisations and other relevant parties, asking them to identify problems, design projects to address them, and make the most of local resources.

The Red Cross identified two communities - one in Gardabani with a total population of 11,500 and another one in Kvareli with a population of 10,500 - to pilot the approach. In each of the target communities, the Red Cross established a participatory community development volunteer team (of 10 and 11 people respectively). Team members include local residents, Red Cross staff and volunteers, representatives of local

authorities, businesses and other organisations. All team members were trained on participatory community development, as well as, participatory rapid appraisal methodologies. Both approaches aim to increase community involvement in Red Cross work. After the training, the volunteer teams conducted needs assessments. The lack of accessible medical services was found the most acute problem in both places.

To respond to the need, in Gardabani, a medical diagnostic centre was established. A renovated space for the centre was provided by the authorities without a cost. The authorities have also undertaken to cover the salaries of two doctors and to supply the centre with basic medication of 100 Georgian Lari (USD 55) every month. The Red Cross has contributed the medical equipment, ultra-sonography and ambulatory blood pressure monitor. It is also

procuring a cardiograph for the centre, which has been operational since the end of May 2005 offering qualified medical assistance free of charge to all residents of Gardabani.

In Kvareli, a medical cabinet was established in a local hospital to provide medical support to people with goitre i.e., 70-80 per cent of the population. The hospital did not have proper medical equipment for early detection of the disease. The equipment, hence, was procured by the Red Cross, while the authorities provided a renovated space for the cabinet, which is scheduled to start receiving patients early June 2005. The cabinet will have two doctors and a nurse.

The Red Cross engagement with the communities in Gardabani and Kvareli worked really well. People were actively participating in the prioritisation of needs and designing the micro-projects to respond to what they identified themselves as the most pressing problem. The local authorities have been also extremely supportive of the Red Cross initiative. There are concerns, however, about sustainability of the medical services started by the project. The national society is exploring the local fundraising opportunities to ensure the centres in Gardabani and Kvareli continue functioning.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross is expanding the project to three more branches in Telavi, Akhaltsikhe and Khelvachauri. Project coordinators have been appointed in each of the targeted branch and were trained on the participatory community development and rapid appraisal methodologies. Needs assessment will be conducted shortly together with the community representatives. The Red Cross has started a dialogue with local authorities to encourage their involvement in the community work.

2. Health and care

Goal

Health of vulnerable people has improved.

Objective

Red Cross Society of Georgia has strengthened capacity to improve health of vulnerable people.

Achievements, impact & constraints

Red Cross social support to vulnerable lone pensioners in Tbilisi

The progress made in this project has been limited because funding arrived only at end of May 2005. It is to help 1,500 home-bound lone pensioners with food and non-food items. The Red Cross believes this group is the worst affected by the socio-economic instability and ongoing changes in the country. The project will be implemented through a network of trained volunteers. Recruitment of volunteers and preparation of beneficiary lists has started. The Red Cross has also engaged with the local authorities to secure their support and cooperation during the project implementation. The government has pledged to help find space for five social centres, planned to be established in Tbilisi for elderly people, Red Cross staff/volunteers and youth to meet each other, initiate discussions on common issues, plan and organise different social events. Distribution of basic food and non-food items will also start this year, but, unfortunately, not all rounds will be carried out by the end of 2005, as it was originally planned. Some will inevitably be delayed until 2006.

Combating HIV/AIDS and stigmatisation

The project received only seven per cent of its budget, which is not enough to pursue the original plan of action. The plan envisaged to:

- establish two youth centres in Tbilisi and Batumi (the main town in Ajara region) and train peer educators to organise discussions on sexually transmitted illnesses and HIV/AIDS prevention as well as the stigma associated with it with some 3,000 schoolchildren and university students.
- Develop, print and distribute educational and promotional materials such as brochures, posters and t-shirts with messages on HIV/AIDS.
- Procure and distribute 10,000 condoms.
- Establish a Red Cross mobile team in Tbilisi, which would organise trips in cooperation with the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Centre, to local communities (an estimated 2,000 people) to distribute

information materials and condoms, and talk about the disease prevention and harm of stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS. [<Click here to read full project logframe>](#)

With the poor appeal coverage, however, of all the planned activities, the Red Cross will be able only to train five volunteers as peer educators so that they can start promoting HIV/AIDS prevention from the Red Cross social centres in Tbilisi, planned to be established within the social support project.

HIV/AIDS is spreading rapidly. The World Health Organisation estimates the number of those infected has exceeded 1,500. Most infections (71 per cent) have been found among injecting drug users who share needles³. In 2001, over 87 per cent of all new AIDS instances were detected in people of 26-35 years old. Over 46 per cent of those live in Tbilisi, the capital with a population of 1.5 million and 16 per cent are in Ajara region, where a major seaport is in western Georgia. The Red Cross Society of Georgia can play an important role in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS by undermining one of the factors – lack of awareness, but it needs more external support to be able to achieve the objective.

3. Disaster management

Goal

Vulnerability of communities to natural and man-made disasters has reduced through an effective disaster management system of the Red Cross and better coordination between the local authorities and other key actors in the country.

Objective

The Red Cross Society of Georgia has strengthened capacities to respond to disasters and empower vulnerable people to alleviate suffering, reduce casualties and damage caused by disasters.

Achievements, impact & constraints

The lack of funds did not enable the Red Cross to make any progress under this project, which is dismaying given the challenges Georgia faces. It is a disaster prone country, the mechanisms, however, to cope with the effects of natural and/or man-made hazards are weak. A national disaster management system does not exist. The preparedness to a large-scale disaster is poor increasing the probability of many deaths, injuries and destruction, if a disaster strikes. The recent floods serve a vivid illustration of this. The floods were sparked by heavy rainfall, warm temperatures and a sudden onset of the seasonal snow melt. A striking aspect of this emergency was that the areas affected by the floods and landslides are geographically dispersed and embrace the regions in the east, west and north of the country. Fortunately there has been no loss of human life, but damage to already poor infrastructure, residential buildings and agriculture has been extensive. On 28 April 2005 the Georgian government appealed for international assistance. On the same day (28 April 2005), the Federation launched a minor emergency alert to inform the international community on the disaster. CHF 50,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) was deployed to collect information, identify the needs, recommend on Red Cross action and initiate an appropriate response to the disaster. Based on FACT team findings, the Federation launched an emergency appeal to help 16,000 people in Mestia district (16 villages), Oni, Akhmeta and Khulo for seven months. See emergency appeal for more details on the proposed operation [<hyperlink to the emergency appeal>](#). The Red Cross Society of Georgia supported by the Federation delegation is actively engaged in the disaster response. The activities undertaken by the national society in the frame of the emergency operation will be reported through separate operations updates.

In parallel, the Federation takes part in the United Nations Disaster and Coordination (UNDAC) mission which works to establish needs and capacities of various stakeholders and to recommend on how the national disaster management system should be organised in Georgia.

4. Humanitarian values

³ Source: World Bank *HIV/AIDS in Georgia. Addressing the Crisis*

Goal

Violence and intolerance triggered by armed conflicts in Georgia have reduced and respect for human dignity has increased.

Objective

The Red Cross Society of Georgia has contributed to the government's efforts to reduce violence and discrimination in the country by advocating for the respect of human dignity, peace and tolerance.

Achievements, impact & constraints

No progress has been made under this project either as it has not received any funding yet. The project envisages organising a summer camp for 40 children from different ethnic and social groups to foster coexistence, tolerance and friendship.

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