

Annual report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Central Europe (Focus on Kosovo)

Appeal No. MAA66001

30 April 2009

This report covers the period
01/01/2008 to 31/12/2008



Photo 1: Shelter training for disaster response Red Cross staff and volunteers. **International Federation**

In brief

Programme purpose: The overall goal for the Red Cross in Kosovo was to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. To this end all International Federation supported programmes in Kosovo were aligned with and contributed to the Global Agenda goals as well as the priorities of the Red Cross organizations. Focus was on disaster management, health and care, organizational development, participatory community development and principles and values.

Programme(s) summary: The International Federation supported the two Red Cross organizations to strengthen their organizational and operational capacities to better respond to the needs of the vulnerable populations. In disaster management the organizations were supported and implemented activities within risk reduction, including winterization assistance, capacity building and advocacy. In health and care general family health education was the main activity in addition to focus on non-remunerated blood donation and infectious diseases, prevention and control. Capacity development and youth volunteer development were emphasized within organizational development, while promotion of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian values, along with capacity building were addressed within the participatory community development and principles and values programme. The International Federation support and the work of the Red Cross organizations in 2008 can be described as very successful. Several objectives were reached and a number of longer-term development schemes were initiated. The programme implementation rate¹ was 70 per cent and significant progress towards the organizations' humanitarian goals was achieved.

¹ Expenses in 2008 as share of 2008 annual budget.

Financial situation: The total 2008 appeal budget for Central Europe (MAA66001) was initially CHF 6,404,721 (USD 5,822,474 or EUR 3,965,772). Following two revisions of the budget for Kosovo the total appeal budget was CHF 6,406,484. The initial 2008 appeal budget for Kosovo was CHF 868,055 (USD EUR). Owing to less income than anticipated the budget was first revised to CHF 675,305. Following new income the budget was revised again to CHF 869,817. In total 115 per cent of the budget was covered and overall expenditure was 70 per cent of the budget. A number of pledges arrived late in 2008 with an operating time frame into 2009, meaning that some of the funds received in 2008 will be spent in 2009.

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

No. of people we help: In total 10,791 people benefited directly from International Federation supported programmes implemented by the two Red Cross organizations in 2008. Including people reached indirectly² almost 50,000 people were reached in total. Significantly more people were reached in the latter half of 2008 compared to the first due to access to more funding.

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Programme	Target groups	People reached
Disaster Management*	Red Cross staff and volunteers	1,838
Health and Care	Women in rural areas, youth; health education trainers	8,504
Organizational Development	Red Cross staff and volunteers including youth	394
Humanitarian Values	Returnees; single female-headed households; youth; elderly without family support	55
Total number of people reached		10,791

Table 1: Focus areas, target groups and number of people reached by the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo, supported by the International Federation in 2008. *Including winterization support

Our partners: The International Federation office in Kosovo cooperates and coordinates its activities with a number of different partners be it within the the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement or others such as: the British Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross, UN Agencies, EU office in Kosovo, local and central authorities.³

Context

Kosovo has been under direct United Nations administration since 1999. On 17 February 2008 the Kosovo Assembly announced its independence from Serbia. So far 56 countries have recognized Kosovo statehood. The political, economic and social situation in Kosovo in recent years has been dominated by the issue related to its status. Consequently little or no progress has been made on vital internal issues and progress within health, social welfare, economics and education is lacking. The current political situation and the present humanitarian conditions are further complicated by the fact that Kosovo has been, and still is, undergoing a process of change to economic and democratic liberalism.

Significant parts of the population are exposed to severe and multiple vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the hardship people face intensifies during winter which brings cold weather with temperatures well below zero and heavy snowfalls. Many rural villages thus become inaccessible and local authorities are not capable of providing basic social services. The vulnerability among many groups, especially in remote mountainous areas, who are already living under poor conditions, is therefore even more precarious during winter. A wide range of factors contribute to their vulnerability throughout the year and include among others: non-payment of pensions; many single-headed female households with children and limited income or no means of living; high

² Indirectly reached here refers to family members of people reached directly.

³ Additional partners are mentioned throughout the report.

unemployment among whole families; lack of capacity to prepare for winters; lack of access to outside support; and lack of wood and coal as well as blankets and basic food items.

In 2008 the vulnerability of the population in Kosovo increased further due to a significant rise in the prices for basic commodities such as bread, cereals and vegetables, cooking oils and fat. Prices for fuel and gas also increased making it even more difficult for the population to acquire much needed heating materials. The ongoing financial crisis will also definitely impact on the population in Kosovo due to high unemployment rates, low income and decreased remittances from people working abroad who are themselves losing their livelihood due to recession and economic downturn. Consequently, the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo were, and still are, required to play an increasingly important role in assisting the most vulnerable.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

***Outcome/expected result:** The disaster response capacity of the local Red Cross organizations is strengthened through the development and building up of their disaster preparedness and response capacity and the development of a disaster management strategy, including detailed risk mapping and contingency plans.*

Risk reduction

Within the risk reduction programme the focus of the two Red Cross organizations was mainly on disseminating guidelines related to risk reduction. Work was also initiated to develop a Kosovo-wide contingency plan. Operationally the organizations provided winterization support to almost 1,530 vulnerable people, assisting them to cope with harsh winter conditions.

With financial support from the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) the International Federation supported both Red Cross organizations in Kosovo in presenting contingency planning guidelines, disaster response team guidelines and guidelines for basic equipment for disaster response teams. The mentioned guidelines were presented to the presidencies of both Red Cross organizations which appreciated the initiative and considered the guidelines as useful tools for their organizations. Also the International Federation office organized presentations of the guidelines, also including national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms guidelines to Red Cross of Kosova key staff and volunteers as well as for authorities at all levels. The total number of participants was 30. The Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija organized training for 30 participants supported by facilitators from the Red Cross of Serbia in contingency planning guidelines and disaster response team guidelines.

The International Federation office also translated the International Federation disaster response and contingency planning guidelines and the national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms guidelines into Albanian language. Thus the documents can be shared with other interested partners. As a result, the awareness of both Red Cross organizations on contingency planning tools and response mechanisms was raised. It also improved the visibility of the Red Cross and its cooperation with stakeholder organizations, and offered a good opportunity to inform other actors about the role and competencies of the Movement in disaster management. Both organizations procured 264 sets of uniforms for disaster response teams which are vital during response actions in terms of visibility and positive image building.

UNDP in Kosovo initiated meetings for preparing a Kosovo-wide contingency plan. All international agencies present in Kosovo, including the International Federation participated in the meetings. The International Federation along with UNDP is jointly leading the process and so far six meetings have taken place. A small task force consisting of the International Federation, UNDP and the Department of Emergency (DEM) was formed to spearhead the process. The translated Federation guidelines on contingency planning and national disaster response mechanisms were

shared with DEM. At present risk mapping and preparation of contingency plans at municipal level is ongoing. Local Red Cross branches in the respective municipalities are part of this process. The final outcome of these activities is expected in 2009.

The impact of the Red Cross's work within risk reduction was demonstrated when the Red Cross organizations provided winterization support to almost 1,530 vulnerable persons in Kosovo supported by the German and Swedish Red Cross respectively. Owing to harsh winter conditions the International Federation requested support from the German Red Cross⁴ to support the Red Cross organizations in providing winterization support to affected people through the project *Save Life over Winter*. The two organizations in cooperation with the International Federation carried out a needs assessment to identify target groups. The subsequent selection of families to be covered was based on where winter is known to be most severe and which locations would be inaccessible due to the amount of snow. Furthermore when defining the target groups in these locations, families not receiving social support from the government as well as families receiving very small allowances were prioritized. The International Federation supported the organizations operationally, particularly during the process of procuring winterization items. Items procured and distributed included food parcels, blankets and firewood. As a result of the project supported by the German Red Cross, the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo distributed items to some 1,310 families in 22 municipalities. As goods were purchased at lower prices than expected, the Red Cross managed to reach significantly more families than planned.

Another group among the most vulnerable in Kosovo, elderly people with insufficient means of coping with winter conditions, also received winterization assistance. Supported by the Swedish Red Cross financially and the International Federation operationally, both Red Cross organizations in Kosovo provided 216 elderly people in 30 municipalities with food parcels, blankets and firewood including help with chopping the firewood.

Disaster response capacity building

The main activities within disaster response capacity building, supported by the Federation office in Kosovo and the German Red Cross, were organization of and participation in trainings in order to increase the organizations' response capacity. Some of the trainings were followed up by conducting exercises in-field.

The International Federation and the German Red Cross supported a number of disaster response capacity building trainings for both Red Cross organizations. The Federation supported trainings covered more than 310 Red Cross staff and volunteers and the ones supported by the German Red Cross covered more than 280 staff and volunteers. Thus almost 600 staff and volunteers were reached. The trainings supported included among others first-aid trainings; psychosocial trainings including refresher trainings; logistics and radio communication trainings; branch level disaster response team training followed by a simulation exercise; trainings on risk assessment including regional ones; basic shelter and camp management trainings; management coordination and management mechanisms training; and disaster simulation exercise on flood preparedness.

Advocacy

Another important component of the disaster management programme was active advocacy. To this end the International Federation addressed the authorities in order to define the role and responsibilities of the Red Cross within disaster management. In case of Kosovo a promising outcome so far is that the Red Cross is now regarded as an important actor in disaster management by DEM which operates under the Ministry of Interior. Subsequently the Red Cross organization has now an important role in conducting Kosovo-wide risk mapping and contingency planning exercises. The Federation office was frequently invited to participate in meetings to provide guidance to the organization and local authorities based on Federation disaster management tools and guidelines.

⁴ With the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs as back donor.

Health and Care

Outcome/expected result: The capacity of the local Red Cross organizations' health and care programme to identify and effectively respond to the basic health and care needs has been strengthened in order to contribute to improving the general health of the population.

General health and care with a special emphasis on women

The Red Cross organizations in Kosovo continued implementing the family health education project throughout 2008. The project has proved to be the most effective, and an increasingly sustainable component of the overall health and care programme of both organizations. The aim of the project is to provide basic education on family health issues such as prenatal and natal care, family planning and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and to empower people to act in a preventive manner in their daily lives. In an environment where public health services do not cover even basic needs, this is of great importance.

As part of the education project, supported by Canadian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and British Red Cross, the Federation office assisted both organizations in conducting training of trainer's courses for voluntary health instructors.⁵ In addition to the Red Cross organizations, UNICEF and the Kosovo Institute for Public Health contributed in the trainings. In total 136 trained health instructors participated in six trainings. In total 90 per cent of the instructors were female. Participants were certified by the Institute for Public Health allowing them to conduct health awareness trainings in the field. Thus the network of trained health instructors increased significantly during the year.

Consequently, through its extended network of trained health instructors the Red Cross organizations were able to increase the awareness on public health issues among the population. The trained instructors provided health education courses to the most vulnerable people with a special focus on women. During the reporting period the Red Cross organizations conducted 448 family health courses with almost 7,200 participants benefitting directly and almost 28,700 indirectly when including family members of the former.⁶ One of the branches involved in the project conducted meetings with local communities and health institutions related to health education. Women in maternity received counselling services from the branch.

In April the British Red Cross deployed a consultant for a strategic options review of the project for possible future support to Federation supported programmes of the Red Cross of Kosova. The impact of the family health education project in terms of improved knowledge among reached people has been demonstrated through pre- and post-testing. Furthermore change of behaviour has been reported by the Ministry of Health as the number of woman seeking medical advice and couples seeking family planning advice has increased. However, the review did not fully confirm these achievements. Therefore, developing proper baseline data through a health survey to better demonstrate the tangible outcomes of the project was suggested. The aim of the survey is to measure the potential for impact on health conditions in communities. The Red Cross of Kosova and the International Federation recognizes the importance of developing proper baseline data. The survey will assist the organization to this end as well as in updating and revising the education courses. As the finalization of the survey design and methodology took more time than anticipated, the survey was postponed from November 2008 to March 2009. Meanwhile the organization was supported by a health adviser from the British Red Cross for preparing the survey.⁷ The survey will be conducted in four Red Cross branches assisted by both local and British Red Cross advisors.

⁵ Topics such as prenatal and natal care, family planning and STIs, good parenting and safe motherhood were covered.

⁶ Based on an average number of five family members per family in Kosovo. UNICEF supported 40 per cent of the courses.

⁷ Among others a questionnaire was jointly developed by the adviser, a local consultant, the Red Cross of Kosova health assistant and the International Federation.

The project, which aims at increasing the knowledge and better practice in the areas of reproductive health, better child care and development, and on family health issues, is in line with the Federation's Global Agenda goal number two and also contributes towards achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals four, five and six.

Voluntary non-remunerated blood donor motivation

The Red Cross of Kosova and the German Red Cross, with the assistance of the International Federation office, signed a bilateral agreement on a one-year voluntary blood donation project to raise awareness among communities on the importance of safe blood and voluntary blood donation. Furthermore, in order to reach an agreement on voluntary non-remunerated blood donation including the definition of partners' roles, meetings were conducted between the Red Cross of Kosova, the Ministry of Health and the Blood Transfusion Centre with the assistance of the International Federation office. The project is expected to be finalized by mid 2009.

Infectious diseases, prevention and control

The two Red Cross organizations' work within infectious diseases, prevention and control focused on raising awareness about the risk of HIV and AIDS, and campaigning against stigmatization and discrimination. With the support from the Federation office both organizations conducted peer awareness raising training of trainers for their volunteers. The total number of trained trainers was 45. Trained youth volunteers subsequently conducted peer education on awareness-raising in 15 primary and secondary schools. Some 1,200 children and youth in the schools took part and pre- and post-tests showed that the knowledge among the participants improved. As part of the programme the World AIDS Day was marked by both organizations through different youth activities such as awareness-raising in the streets using posters and brochures, petitions on HIV and AIDS, carnival, painting, plays by young amateur actors and firework.

Organizational Development

Outcome/expected result: The Red Cross organizations are better functioning with improved performance to meet the basic needs of vulnerable people including more responsive Red Cross organizations with good image, finance management, planning and more sustainable programmes with appropriate organizational structure with more supportive governance.

Capacity development

The International Federation supported a project management cycle workshop for 34 staff in the Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija at headquarters and branch level. The workshop aimed at enhancing the capacity of key staff in needs assessment, planning, monitoring, evaluation and budgeting. Under organizational development the International Federation supported the Red Cross of Kosova to procure first aid training manikins for first-aid courses. Also computers and accessories were purchased for a limited number of branches. The governance and management training for the Red Cross of Kosova governing board planned in 2008, was postponed to 2009 on the request of the organization due to elections to be conducted in the first half of 2009.

Youth volunteer development

As part of volunteer development the youth commission drafted a youth volunteer policy. The policy was later approved by the central presidency and will be disseminated to local branches. Five basic humanitarian activities at community level planned to be conducted in 2008 will be organized in 2009. These were postponed due to the heavy workload of youth volunteers in 2008.

Supported by the International Federation office, both Red Cross organizations observed the Red Cross Red Crescent Day on 8 May and conducted activities for a period of one week. The International Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as well as UN representatives and local authorities participated in the event. Following a rally various activities were conducted such as chess games for elderly people; membership drive corner for the public;

volunteer blood donation; a drawing competition for children; games for youth; and activities for people with disabilities.

Also with support from the Federation office, the organizations organized basic volunteer training for new youth volunteer leaders. The support for youth volunteer development helps the local Red Cross organizations recruit and retain new volunteers in order to strengthen its volunteer management system. Some 60 new youth volunteers were trained and now contribute to the overall youth development work. The programme is also being supported bilaterally by the Finnish Red Cross which has been present in Kosovo for one year

Participatory Community Development and Principles and Values

Outcome/expected result: The behaviour in local communities through the promotion of humanitarian values has been changed and local communities have been empowered with strengthened capacity to cope with the vulnerabilities and their root causes through participation and community action.

The Fundamental Principles the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian values

The promotion of the fundamental principles and humanitarian values are an integrated part of all programmes in the two Red Cross organizations in Kosovo and thus a natural element in all trainings conducted by the Red Cross. The focus on principles and values contributes towards influencing the behaviour of people by combating discrimination, intolerance, violence and social exclusion. To further enhance and scale up this work, the International Federation supported training of trainers for 25 volunteers. Trained volunteers from the Red Cross of Kosova subsequently organized activities for promoting and raising the awareness about humanitarian values in schools to reduce discrimination, intolerance and social exclusion. The organizations' overall efforts in promoting the fundamental principles and humanitarian values are aligned with Global Agenda goal four and are considered as particularly important in Kosovo where deep rifts between different ethnic communities still exist. This work thus increases the prospects for a peaceful development of civil society.

As part of the programme a Swedish-supported project on returnees to Kosovo was started. The project aims to facilitate the return of rejected asylum seekers from Sweden to Kosovo. The project is currently being piloted and the main activities have been the creation of a database⁸; information gathering by communicating; and networking with other stakeholders and authorities, local and international NGOs and agencies.⁹ So far some 30 returnees have been provided with guidance and support for reintegration in Kosovo after returning from Sweden. The Swedish Red Cross has indicated support for another year after the pilot phase has been completed.

Increased capacity of the Red Cross and the local community to address vulnerabilities

Participatory community development (PCD) activities were planned to be implemented in the second half of 2008 through support from the International Federation. However, the financial means available did not allow the Red Cross to go ahead as planned.

Constraints or Challenges

There were neither challenges nor constraints as such that seriously hampered the overall implementation of programme activities in Kosovo. A few activities were cancelled, but are planned to be implemented in 2009. Although successful in 2008, it must be emphasized that there is still

⁸ Maintained in Sweden

⁹ The project involves an impressive range of actors: Red Cross of Kosova, Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims, Kosova Women's Network, European Commission, UNDP, UNHCR, Swedish Liaison Office, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Internal Affairs-Department of Borders, Asylum and Migration, Ministry of Administration and Local Governance, Department for Returnees-Ministry for Community and Return, IOM, International Catholic Migration Commission, AGEF, URA (NGO "Bridge"), National Health Institute, Psychiatric Clinic..

sufficient room for assisting both Red Cross organizations in Kosovo them to be able to respond better to the needs of the most vulnerable people. The International Federation will strive to provide this support in order to build the organizational and operational capacity of the Red Cross in Kosovo in the coming years.

Working in partnership

The International Federation in Kosovo and the two Red Cross organizations continued their work to strengthen partnerships. Furthermore they sought and coordinated support from other National Societies, the authorities, UN and international donor agencies, diplomatic missions and non-governmental organizations for humanitarian emergency operations and capacity building. As part of these efforts the organizations increased their participation in coordination and planning meetings with existing and new partners and stakeholders. Regular information and coordination meetings took place in which all the Movement partners present in Kosovo took part including ICRC, the Spanish and the Finnish Red Cross and the Saudi Red Crescent. The Swiss Red Cross closed their office in Pristina at the end of February 2008. The Red Cross of Kosova signed several agreements with partner National Societies in 2008:

- Two one-year bilateral agreements with the German Red Cross on voluntary blood donation and disaster management capacity building.
- A one-year bilateral agreement between the British Red Cross and the Red Cross of Kosova to continue the implementation of ongoing social welfare activities in two Red Cross of Kosova branches.
- A six-month bilateral agreement between the Bavarian Red Cross and the Red Cross of Kosova for implementing a project targeting Roma children and mothers in one branch.

The Federation office contributed as a facilitator in all the above mentioned agreements. Though several agreements exist there is still a need and room for partners to provide assistance to the local Red Cross organizations in order to build their operational capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Externally networking activities to improve working relationships were reinitiated. Relations with UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, the Institute of Public Health, the Ministry of Health, the Department of Youth, the Department of Disaster Response as well as Kosovo liaison offices of various potential donor countries were instigated and further developed.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All the International Federation's programmes in Kosovo are aligned with and contribute to the International Federation's Global Agenda goals. Hence the Red Cross organizations, supported by the International Federation, strive to build up their capacity to reduce the impact of disasters; improve the general health situation of the population; enhance people's ability to effectively meet their basic socio-economic needs; increase the capacity of the Red Cross organizations to support vulnerable groups and communities to become more resilient; and build the capacity and management structure of the youth to better support vulnerable groups.

The Red Cross organizations play an important role in strengthening local communities and developing civil society. To this end the Red Cross implements its programmes by applying a participatory methodology which empowers the communities to identify and address their most urgent situations of vulnerability. The programmes' strong focus on gender issues, including the family health education project contributes further to this end.

Traditionally the Red Cross organizations have been supported multilaterally through the International Federation through a programme-based appeal.¹⁰ The emphasis of the Red Cross continues to be on supporting the implementation of programmes through direct services. In doing so capacity building is pursued in parallel. However, in order to ensure the sustainability of its programmes, and subsequently to contribute to longer-term impact, the Red Cross needs to develop a stable financial resource base. The transformational context in which the Red Cross is operating underscores this.

Looking ahead

In the coming period the International Federation will have a particular focus on two core areas. First the International Federation will assist the Red Cross organizations in improving their level and quality of services to the vulnerable population. This will be achieved through family health education, focusing on reproductive health education, better child care and development and family health issues with a special emphasis on women; awareness-raising activities on HIV with a special emphasis on youth; increased response and support to people affected by natural disasters through better trained and equipped disaster response teams; and decreased vulnerability and impact of disasters through risk reduction activities. Second the Red Cross organizations will further strengthen their operational capacities. This will result in a more effective use of available financial and human resources for the greater benefit of the vulnerable population. This will be achieved through enhanced capacity and skills of management and governance structures; increased number of trained volunteers actively contributing to the work of the Red Cross through improved volunteer training and management; increased number of partnerships through enhanced transparency, a strong and positive public image and better relationship management capacity. The International Federation will closely monitor the situation on the ongoing financial crisis, particularly its impact on the most vulnerable population in Kosovo.

Also Operational alliances will be encouraged and pursued in order to combine capabilities to make an even greater impact within communities. The two Red Cross organizations already have multiple set of partners and will continue these efforts along operational lines.

How we work	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
<p>For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Federation Office in Kosovo: Shafiquzzaman Rabbani, Head of Office, Pristina; phone: +38138 228187; fax: +381 38 228599; email: shafiquzzaman.rabbani@ifrc.org • In the Regional Representation for Central Europe and Southern Caucasus: Elias Ghanem, Regional Representative, Budapest, phone: + 36 1 888 4502; fax: +36 1 336 1516; email: elias.ghanem@ifrc.org • In the Europe Zone Office: Leon Prop, Deputy Head of Zone, Budapest, phone: +36 1 8884 502; fax: +361 336 1516; email: leon.prop@ifrc.org 	

¹⁰ From 2009 through a *Kosovo support plan*.