

Programme Update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Palestine Red Crescent Society

Appeal No. MAAPS001

31/08/2008

This report covers the period 01/01/2008 to
30/06/2008.



Palestine Red Crescent has started reviewing its current strategic plan through conducting a number of workshops in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, involving staff and volunteers of the National Society at all levels. Branches in the Diaspora have also been involved in the process. **Ola Skuterud/International Federation**

In brief

Programmes purpose: The purpose of the programmes is to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable people in occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.

Programmes summary: Despite huge financial challenges and tighter closure of the oPt, effectively separating cities and villages from each other and making it almost impossible for Palestine Red Crescent (Palestine RC) staff and volunteers to travel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the National Society has been able to continue carrying out its humanitarian mission for the most vulnerable people. This has been possible thanks to the strong commitment of its employees, volunteers and partners. While health and other social services provided in oPt by Palestinian Authority (PA) for longer periods have been crippled by staff strikes, the Palestine RC has without any interruption continued all its programmes in oPt as well as in the Diaspora. The vast majority of programme support is received through bilateral agreements, of which most are medium or long-term partnerships.

Through introducing the operational alliance (OA) concept, the coordination of programme and project support from partners has been improved, which is referring to and based on the strategy of Palestine RC and the central and leading role of the National Society in the whole process of planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Financial situation: The total 2008 budget channeled through the International Federation secretariat was revised from CHF 1,985,509 (USD 1,890,961 or EUR 1,214,379) to CHF 3,428,206 (USD 3,264,958 or EUR 2,096,762), of which 66 per cent covered. During the reporting period, the overall expenditure was CHF 113,695. Further pledges are expected in July 2008 which will allow the Appeal to be almost fully covered; and most of the existing and expected funds will be transferred to the Palestine RC starting from August 2008, increasing the implementation rate in the second half of the year.

[Click here to go directly to the financial report on the International Federation secretariat component of the total budget. An additional financial report including bilateral contributions and based on information received from the OA partners, is available at the representative office in Palestine \(see contact details at the back of this report\).](#)

No. of people we help: For the first six months of 2008 the total number of direct beneficiaries and consultations of the programmes was more than 920,000. It is expected that the same number of people will benefit from the programmes during the second half of the year.

Our partners: 45 community-based and four government-based partners, 15 international organizations, three United Nations and several developmental agencies, and 21 partners within the Movement including sister National Societies and International Federation representations.

Two private donors, Japanese Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Swedish government through Swedish Red Cross, and Norwegian Red Cross have been the main contributors to the International Federation component of the Appeal during the reporting period.

Context

While the Palestinian people in the oPt together with the millions of Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora in 2007 were commemorating 40 years since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, they have in 2008 been commemorating 60 years since the creation of Israel, with the consequence that hundreds of thousands Palestinians had to flee the country and live as refugees ever since. After the outbreak in 2000 of the second intifada, the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has experienced a constant deterioration of the economic, humanitarian, security, and political situation in the oPt, leaving a rapidly growing part of the population unemployed, fighting against poverty, completely dependent on foreign aid, and in some areas on the brink of starvation. While the Gaza Strip is under siege and almost completely isolated from the rest of the world, the population of the West Bank is facing ever growing problems with their life, as movement restrictions imposed on them through a travel permit system, and roadblocks and checkpoints create huge obstacles for all groups of life. A major part of the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora is facing growing isolation and poverty, with very limited options for covering their own financial needs.

The economy in the Gaza Strip has almost completely collapsed, with more than 80 % of the population being dependent on financial or other kind of support from the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) Movement, UN agencies, and on the few international organizations still being able to operate under the tight blockade of the area, causing shortage of all possible commodities. With very limited import of fuel, spare-parts, building material, or even the most basic goods, the people and the international organizations are struggling to cope, and international concern for the short and long term consequences is growing rapidly. In the West Bank, movement restrictions for the entire population and the separation wall are leaving the Palestinian government and a growing part of the population with few alternatives; making them reliable on foreign aid and the economy being dependent on financial injections from the European Union (EU), USA, the Gulf states and other donor countries.

Support to ongoing programmes and activities of Palestine RC in the oPt and Diaspora

In recent years, a growing number of international partners have expanded their cooperation with and support to the Palestine RC and its humanitarian programmes all over the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as for the Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt). Bilateral agreements have been signed and direct cooperation between the Palestine RC and its partners has become the dominant mechanism for the Palestine RC in raising funds for its operations. Hence, the role of and support from the International Federation secretariat to the National Society in the oPt has been more as a facilitator, coordinator and capacity builder, in particular within organizational development and administration. For a number of years, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has provided substantial general financial support to Palestine RC, funding for national and regional programmes, and for programmes mandated by the authorities to the National Society. Starting from January 2008, the monthly allocation transferred was increased from USD 850,000 to USD 900,000. The Palestine RC received these funds for the first five months of the year. However, due to serious financial problems for the PNA, at June facing a deficit of about USD 2 billion, the transfers to Palestine RC was temporarily stopped, leaving the National Society in a very difficult financial situation. So far Palestine RC, due to good support from its partners and by using internal funds, has been able to continue implementing programmes in most areas without major difficulties. Nevertheless, there have been some interruption in few branches, and there is some concern on what might happen if transfers from PNA are not resumed soon.

Progress towards outcomes

Palestine RC is implementing a range of programmes with bilateral support, coordinated and further developed within the OA concept. All these will have special reports, which may be obtained on request to the National Society.

Disaster management objective: Effective operational linkages between disaster management and other programmes are established; thus contributing to improved Palestine RC disaster management capacities and adjustments to its organizational structure.

Primary health care (PHC) objective: Affordable and quality PHC services and health education are regularly delivered to people in the oPt.

Secondary health care services in oPt and Diaspora objective: The Palestine RC hospitals in oPt and the Diaspora continue providing secondary health care services to the Palestinian population.

Emergency medical services (EMS) objective: People residing in oPt have access to emergency medical services.

National blood transfusion services objective: Safe blood is provided from healthy voluntary donors to all Palestinians who need it at all times.

Social welfare programme objective: Vulnerable and disadvantaged Palestinian people are socially and psychologically supported.

Rehabilitation and ability development objective: Quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families in the Palestinian community are improved through rehabilitation and development of their abilities towards better integration.

Psycho-social support programme (PSP) objective: Individuals from the Palestine RC staff and volunteers, beneficiaries, and selected underserved groups are equipped with skills and individualized tools that aid in the reduction of personal damages and negative external effects and behaviour.

Capacity development objective: The Palestine RC organizational systems are increasingly efficient, effective and able to contribute proportionally to the well being of the most vulnerable in oPt and Diaspora.

Youth and volunteers objective: Potentials and deepened knowledge about the Palestine RC principles and goals are promoted among volunteers, which bring about investment in social development.

Information, dissemination and international humanitarian law (IHL) objective: All the Palestine RC staff and volunteers are sensitized and trained on humanitarian values according to the National Society's code of conduct and the knowledge of public about humanitarian values is increased.

Programmes supported by the International Federation secretariat

Disaster Management

Outcome/Expected result

- Impact of earthquake hazard and conflicts on communities and properties is reduced.

Achievements

In the Gaza Strip, the National Society has been providing significant support to Palestinian families and individuals facing extreme hardship and suffering due to destruction of their houses, land, and properties. Not only the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, but also the internal Palestinian conflict has left thousands of people in poverty and struggle for their daily life. The National Society has also, in close cooperation with other stakeholders in the area, conducted a mapping exercise of available resources and capacity in terms of disaster response.

As a member of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) zone disaster management team reference group, the Palestine RC has been attending several meetings and workshops. With funding provided by the International Federation's disaster policy and preparedness department in Geneva, the disaster management unit at the Palestine RC was, through workshops in the West Bank, testing the national disaster response team (NDRT) contingency plan guidelines as part of the disaster management action plan of the International Federation. This exercise was found to be useful, and the report has been submitted to the team members.

Constraints or Challenges

The lack of access to certain parts of the territory, mainly those between the internationally recognised border between Israel and West Bank, and the separation wall, has been a constraint. The ongoing conflict between Gaza Strip and Israel, as well as the internal Palestinian conflict, has made programme implementation a challenge. With the support of the Movement and coordination by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the National Society has been able to tackle most of these constraints.

Health and Care

Primary Health Care

Outcomes/Expected results

- People in the oPt benefited from reproductive, child health services, and curative health care services provided by the Palestine RC.
- People affected by the current conflict and other patients in need benefited from regular home based care.
- The participation of the targeted Palestinian communities in promoting health knowledge has increased.
- People in rural and remote areas benefited from PHC emergency services in response to the current emergency situation.

Achievements

The Palestine RC continued providing health care services through its PHC centres in oPt to a total number of more than 250,000 beneficiaries through medical consultations, laboratory tests, X-rays and dental services. The population affected by the separation wall in the areas of Qalqilya, Jenin, Jordan Valley, and Hebron were served by mobile clinics, while other health centres of the National Society provided services also during extended opening hours. With financial and technical support from Swedish RC and Norwegian RC, 20 PHC centres in the West Bank are providing reproductive health services as part of their regular programme. Health education is part of the programme in the centres as well as in a number of schools. The community based development programme and home visits continued, with the PHC social workers and nurses visiting a number of patients on regular basis and responding to calls from new patients who are not able to go to the clinic.

With financial and technical support from German Red Cross together with Finnish Red Cross, the safe motherhood programme has been expanded also to include an income generating component through micro-credits. The safe motherhood committee members benefited from workshops, and PHC staff and community committees attended workshops carried out in the West Bank. Training courses and workshops were conducted for PHC service providers and community teams. A training session to evaluate clients' satisfaction through using questionnaires has been followed up and provided important information to the efforts always improving health services provided by Palestine RC. The Spanish Red Cross support to PHC centres in the Gaza Strip, together with the yearly financial support to the programme from Japanese RC through the International Federation has been of utmost importance for the continuation of these services. In PHC clinics of the National Society, which have merged with those of the Ministry of Health (MoH), immunization services are carried out by staff of the MoH.

Palestine RC Lebanon branch has over time been moving its focus and resources in the nine PHC clinics over to preventive health care, becoming more of community centres. In the refugee camps, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has the mandate to provide curative health care services, which means the National Society will play a more important role with the preventive approach through information and training.

Towards the end of this first six months period of 2008, there have been two major private donations in response to the Appeal. Another private donation will be received in July. The Palestine RC has decided to allocate most of these funds to health and care programmes. As the amounts received and expected are collectively beyond the initial appeal budget, and the funds will cover activities within 2008, the PHC project was revised and to a great extent will give Palestine RC good chance to carry on with its health programmes for the rest of the year.

Due to reliable funding and support from its many partners, the Palestine RC has been able to continue providing PHC services from its 30 clinics around West Bank and Gaza Strip, while health personnel from the MoH for shorter or longer periods are on strike. The positive effect of this is obvious, but it is also creating growing expectations from communities that the National Society should expand its network. Community based activities with safe motherhood and health committees are contributing to increasing the awareness of local communities towards their own health problems and strengthening capacities to decrease the vulnerability. Using mobile clinics is the only way through which people in remote and isolated communities between the separation wall and the internationally recognised border between Israel and the West Bank can receive health services.

Constraints or Challenges

The PHC centres in oPt continue working under challenging conditions due to the security and political situation, sometimes requiring ad hoc solutions to be able to respond to some of the most needed interventions requested by the communities. Many staff members every day face difficulties in getting to work due to movement restrictions imposed by the Israeli military, the more than six hundred checkpoints, the separation wall far into the West Bank, and the constant security problems in the Gaza Strip. Lack of qualified health personnel, especially physicians and nurses, is still a problem in some areas. In the Gaza Strip it has also most of the time been difficult to bring through the tight closure of the area the necessary medicine and medical supplies.

Capacity Development

Outcomes/Expected results

- The capacities of the Palestine RC leadership are improved.
- The operational and communications management systems of the Palestine RC are improved.
- The planning and management systems of the National Society are improved.
- The OA concept is further refined and supported by all partners.

Achievements

The head of the organizational development department, in close cooperation and with facilitation of the International Federation representative, has been leading the work in reviewing and revising the strategy of the National Society. In February, the Palestine RC president invited the “Friends of Palestine RC” for a meeting, asking for collaboration and support in drafting the new strategic plan for the years 2009-2011. Based on recommendations from this meeting and the following terms of reference, a task force was established, and a number of workshops and meetings took place, analysing possible political and humanitarian scenarios and the response expected to these by the National Society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as for the branches in the Diaspora. SWOT analysis and different working groups were among the methodologies being used. Staff and volunteers at all levels of Palestine RC, as well as politicians in Ramallah, were invited to contribute to the process. Representatives of RC/RC partners present in the country were also part of the process, which is expected to provide the new strategy 2009-2011 before the end of the year.

With Palestine RC being one of the pilot societies in the introduction of the OA concept, many initiatives and processes have taken place during the first six months of 2008. A document developed by the National Society together with the International Federation representative focusing and elaborating on the seven ones¹ was shared with all RC/RC partners and technical departments/branches of the National Society. Working groups presented proposals for standard reporting formats, baseline study

¹ One set of working principles; one plan; one set of objectives; one shared understanding of division of labour; one funding framework in which multilateral and bilateral funding can co-exist; one performance tracking system; and one accountability and reporting mechanism.

forms, and monitoring/evaluation procedures. These have been sent to the management of the National Society for adoption. With reference to the final report and recommendations of an external evaluation team of the OA process in the pilot societies, the Palestine RC turned out to be in the lead of the process. In addition, new procurement procedures have been worked out in cooperation with the PSP department and the bilateral delegate of French Red Cross.

Harmonization of planning, monitoring and reporting for all departments has contributed to a common understanding of unified systems, and has improved the quality.

Constraints or Challenges

The general security situation in the Gaza Strip has been a challenge in including these branches fully in the developmental process. However, commitment and enthusiasm to contribute to further development, building a better and stronger society is there, which is very encouraging for all parties involved.

Working in partnership

With the ICRC being the lead agency for partner National Societies (PNSs) in oPt and together with the Palestine RC and the International Federation being responsible for coordination of Red Cross and Red Crescent activities, all such initiatives have been further developed within existing structures. Palestine RC has been working with bilateral and multilateral partners for years in an area facing extreme conditions and huge challenges, and is highly respected as a reliable actor in the field of providing humanitarian services to the vulnerable people. By being an active partner in further developing the new operating model of the RC/RC Movement, the National Society has further improved its relationship with partners through full transparency and invitation to contribute to development processes.

In addition, many international volunteers have for a number of years made important contributions to the programmes of the National Society in terms of voluntary work and capacity building. The main financial support to the Palestine RC at the moment is through bilateral agreements, in most cases on long term basis, and through the International Federation and ICRC. The strong request from the National Society to the International Federation to appeal for additional funding is a natural consequence of a long and close relationship, and with the confidence that this support is vital for the Palestine RC to develop further and be able to deliver expected services to the most vulnerable people in the oPt and to the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.

With its wide range of health and social programmes implemented all over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and in the Palestinian refugee camps in the neighbouring countries, the Palestine RC has enjoyed close relationship with local and central authorities, and with a number of local humanitarian actors. This relationship has improved further, as the importance of the Palestine RC as a reliable provider of humanitarian services has become even more obvious in the shadow of financial crisis and security problems in oPt.

Contributing to longer-term impact

Palestine RC is through its programmes contributing to all four goals of the Global Agenda. Through its expected support, the International Federation is increasing the capacity of the National Society, the local communities, and the civil society by encouraging and facilitating close relationship with and including local communities in the planning and implementation processes of programmes and projects. Awareness campaigns are run and capacity building initiatives undertaken. Social services and development programmes for children with disabilities are based on the positive philosophy of developing abilities instead of treating disabilities, where integration between all groups in the society is a key factor. Following this working modality, the National Society reduces intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promotes respect for diversity and human dignity within the Palestinian

community. The emergency medical service, disaster management activities, and the health programmes are actively reducing the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters and emergencies. In programmes such as PHC, with safe motherhood, reproductive health care, and health committees, the Palestine RC is taking an active part in reducing deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. Women play an important, active, and central role in these preventive activities not only as beneficiaries, but also through their contribution to improving the knowledge and capacity in the communities.

Collaboration between the Palestine RC and its international partners and other humanitarian actors in oPt, and with those working for Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora, thanks to continuous financial support to the programmes, has contributed to provision of reliable services. In addition, improvement in the quality of services has been registered in particular in the health sector through the joint Palestine RC-MoH PHC centres.

Looking ahead

Due to the implementation of the OA concept in oPt, all partners of the National Society should benefit from better coordination at programme level. This will contribute to better integration of all support from partners to the Palestine RC strategy and plan of action. Implementation, coordination, monitoring and reporting will be based on the same principles and should help the National Society and its partners in further development towards optimal use of financial and human resources to the benefit of the most vulnerable people. Better and more systematic collection of statistics and financial data will give the National Society's management more reliable and useful managerial tools for further planning and implementation of programmes.

| How we work | |
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| <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. |
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