

RUSSIAN FEDERATION: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE, HEALTH, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

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period covered: July - September, 1999

Sufficient funding has allowed the Federation and the Russian Red Cross to proceed with the planned programme, with effective assistance being provided especially in the health sector activities, and more particularly in the Visiting Nurses Service and First Aid training.

The context

The Federation's 1999 programme in Russia was intended to respond to the effects of the crash of the Russian rouble in August 1998 and the ensuing economic and political uncertainty, a situation which caused new depths of poverty for a population already suffering from the socio-economic collapse of the Soviet era and the hardships imposed by a transition to an alternative economic system. The side effects of this situation, particularly in the health arena, were dramatic, with increased vulnerability to disease, alcoholism and malnutrition. With the harsh living conditions of many vulnerable people aggravated further by disasters such as floods, drought or fires, the Federation programme was also intended to focus on improving disaster response and preparedness mechanisms.

Latest Events

The economic, political, and security situation continues to create uncertainty and concern, seriously affecting the vulnerable groups and beneficiaries targeted for the programme. The most serious security incidents occurred when three explosions rocked Moscow during the reporting period, killing over 200 people. The first one destroyed part of a shopping mall at the end of August, killed one and injured more than 40 people. Another bomb exploded on 9 September at night in a nine-floor apartment block, killing 92 people. On 13 September a similar blast ruined an eight-floor apartment house in another district at 5:00 in the morning, killing 118 people. From both blasts, 95 people were hospitalised

and 1,265 suffered injuries. The Russian Red Cross (RRC), in collaboration with the Russian Emergency Ministry (EMERCOM) immediately reacted to the disasters by assigning rescue teams, and the Federation allocated funds through which 796 bed linen kits were procured for distribution among the victims.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Health •

- Visiting Nurses Service (VNS)

The Visiting Nurses project, funded by the Swedish Red Cross, started on 1 January 1999 and was planned to last one year. Five regions were selected to participate - Moscow city, Rostov, Nizni Novgorod, Kaluga and Ryazan) and received a grant of USD 5,000 each. A programme co-ordinator and assistant were appointed for monitoring and control in the RRC Central Committee. The RRC Visiting Nurses Service Statute was written during the implementation of the project and agreed with the Ministries of Labour and Social Protection and Health. It was also discussed at the RRC Central Committee Presidium and approved on 29 September 1999. The project is now coming to an end, and an interim report was prepared by the RRC has been submitted to the Moscow Delegation. In addition, the following activities were undertaken: the visiting nurses service was also restored in seven districts of the Kaluga Red Cross committee, where 15 visiting nurses were hired to assist 233 lone elderly and ill people. A medical and social assistance facility was started, and assisted 167 beneficiaries during the reporting period; in the Rostov regional committee 50 people were hired for the programme implementation, including a project co-ordinator, three doctors, 43 visiting nurses, a washing lady and two drivers, who assist 1,200 lone elderly and ill people; in Ryazan some 108 lone elderly and ill people were treated during the reporting period. The city council provided the VNS employees with a right of free transportation within the city; the Nizhni Novgorod Regional Red Cross committee VNS hired eight visiting nurses during the reporting period. They assist 103 elderly and ill people; the Moscow City Red Cross committee held a seminar on visiting nurses training. A co-ordinator and 10 visiting nurses were hired to assist 16 seriously ill people.

In total, 105 visiting nurses work under the programme assisting 1,660 lone elderly and ill people.

Under the German RC financed project in Sverdlovsk region, six visiting nurses were hired to assist eight people each. Regular monthly payments are being transferred for salaries (DM 125). Three rooms of medical and social assistance were equipped and a training seminar was held.

- HIV/AIDS - Youth/VNS

A six months long project funded by the Swedish RC ended on 30 June with a final report written and submitted to the donor society and the Secretariat. The project was implemented by the RRC Central Committee Youth department, Kaliningrad regional RC committee and Moscow South-eastern district RC branch. Organisational and information activities were implemented during the project and may be continued, depending on further funding. Regional co-ordinators were appointed and offices established, furnished and equipped with computers, video, TV and necessary software. Groups of volunteers were recruited and consultant-psychologists hired to train the RRC staff and volunteers. Information meetings were held in Moscow and Kaliningrad high schools and universities/institutes to motivate youth to fight against HIV/AIDS and drug abuse and to conduct preventive work on these issues. Agreements were reached with potential collaborators in HIV/AIDS related institutions and non governmental organisations. A library, containing information and education materials on HIV/AIDS prevention was established in the Moscow South-eastern youth centre. The Delegation's health department representatives visited the South-eastern district committee and youth centre together with the RRC Youth co-ordinator in order to find some way to continue the project, and found out strong and capable staff eager to work. It was agreed that the Project Proposal will be developed and submitted to the Federation Secretariat.

- **First Aid**

From July to September, 256 first aid courses were held for 3,761 people, including 130 16-hour courses for 1,749 individuals, 126 short courses for 2,012 people, three instructor courses for 22 people and 14 commercial courses for 172 people. During the reporting period all participating committees were provided with instructor and instructor-trainer manuals, and preparation work was done for the publication of *A Parent's Guide on First Aid*. Planning and organisation activities were conducted to hold four Resource Development seminars for 27 regions participating in the First Aid programme to raise their self-sustainability. Two were held in Volgograd and Moscow for the following 16 Red Cross committees: Volgograd, Astrakhan, Nizhni Novgorod, Samara, Orenburg, Rostov, Kazan, Krasnodar, Moscow, Moscow region, Tula, Voronezh, St. Petersburg, Petrozavodsk, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. Two new regions will participate in the programme: Penza and Stavropolski krai. The RRC First Aid programme co-ordinator and the RRC Vice Chairmen participated in the Health Ministry meeting on the concept of civil defence improvement from 2000-2005. A question of providing first aid courses to the public and special services employees was discussed.

- **Blood Donor Recruitment Programme**

A plan of action and a budget for a seven-month long programme was developed and approved.

Disaster Preparedness and Response ●

Humanitarian assistance was provided to the victims of flooding in Vladimir, Ryazan, Tambov, Orlov and Kursk regions in the form of some 200 sacks of clothes and a Swedish Red Cross donation of 24 bags of foot wear.

Assistance was also provided to the victims of explosions in Moscow and Volgograd. The first blast destroyed a nine-floor apartment house on 9 September. The RRC rescue service was quickly on the scene and started to search for victims in the ruins and to render medical assistance. Another blast struck at five o'clock in the morning on 13 September in an eight-floor apartment house, and again the RRC rescue service reacted promptly. All rescue efforts were conducted in collaboration with the Emergency Situations Ministry (EMERCOM) and the Moscow City Red Cross Committee. Some 796 bed linen kits were sent to Volgograd to the victims of the 16 September blast.

Population Movement Programme ●

Summer camp for forced migrants in Ivanovo region was conducted on 23 June-13 July for 155 child-migrants, children from low-income families and the International Boarding School of the Red Cross. Some 120 children attended First Aid courses; 300 (including other children in the camp) and attended a lecture on International Humanitarian Law. Eight psychologists worked with the children, and a poster contest entitled "The Red Cross in Our Lives" was held.

At the reception point for forced migrants in Moscow, 109 legal advice consultations were carried out; 67 beneficiaries received humanitarian aid and 106 people were given food coupons for a hot meal in a nearby canteen; 77 hygiene kits were distributed. Some 76% of the beneficiaries were forced migrants or refugees. Reception points for forced migrants are also located in the RRC regional committees of Sochi, Orenburg, Oryol, Tambov, Rostov-on-Don, Omsk, Voronezh and Kirov. During the reporting period some 2,450 beneficiaries were assisted. The beneficiaries were supported with soup kitchen coupons, legal advice (Orenburg, Sochi and Oryol - 195 consultations) and psycho-social counselling (119 consultations).

In the RRC Central Committee, the Telephone Hotline project started in October by providing legal advice to refugees and forced migrants. The hotline is a joint project implemented with the NGO "International Legal Assembly".

Pskov medical centre: The Pskov Red Cross committee Population Movement project is carried out in a forced migrants' settlement, some 50 kms outside of Pskov. Its main activity is the supply of primary health care to the 368 inhabitants.

Institutional / Resource Development and Capacity Building ●

A logical framework seminar was held on 8-9 July, with a particular focus on improving RRC programme clarity and the management structure. Under the RRC restructuring, a decision was taken to establish eight regional zones for better overall functioning. On 19-23 July the RRC General Director visited Vladivostok to officially open a regional office, which was established with the Federation's support. Further discussions with the Canadian Red Cross were held for a longer term support of the Vladivostok office. Funding for the reform process from the Swedish Red Cross was confirmed.

During July the Head of Delegation and the RRC General Director conducted a field trip to Penza to meet local Red Cross and administration representatives to discuss the reforming process and future restructuring.

Agreements with the RRC General director on a resource development workshop for Russian Red Cross Central Committee leadership were reached, and the seminar will be held on 2-3 December for about 20 people.

Four Resource Development / First Aid workshops were held during the reporting period, in Moscow, Novosibirsk, Voronezh and Irkutsk for 22 regional committees.

Development of RRC Youth ●

A grant application for several Youth Group institutional development seminars was developed. The application will be sent to "Parents in Non-profit Sector", a programme associated with the UK government. Final work on the grant proposal for Youth Organisational Development Seminars for the British Charity Know-How fund was made in co-operation with the RRC.

RRC Membership Card Project ●

All of this year's programme membership cards were sent to 82 regional Red Cross committees. Russian rouble 679,169 were already collected in membership fees, and a further 1,345,337 is planned to be collected as soon as the membership cards are distributed in the regions.

Outstanding needs

With some 81% of the appeal target covered, CHF 600,000 is needed to complete the programme.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

A press release/interview with the Far Northeast co-ordinator in Chukotka was circulated to over 90 papers in Canada and helped to highlight that although the operation had a slow start, it was effective. A three day field trip was conducted to Irkutsk, where the Information Delegate carried out filming in orphanages to use as supporting material for submission to USDA programme co-ordinator and Media Service.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and
Reporting Department

Bjorn Eder
Director
Europe Department