

# Programme Update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Communications and Advocacy

Appeal No: MAA0008

08/08/2008

This report covers the period of 01/01/08 to 30/06/08.



The recent flooding in Uganda is a disaster of great dimensions. Many people are contracting malaria every day, there are fears of a cholera outbreak, people have nothing to eat and all their crops have rotted away. And all of this is happening in a country where a large part of the population is living under the poverty line (one US dollar per day). **Danish Red Cross Society/Jakob Dall**

### In brief

**Programme purpose:** The programme aims at better profiling communications as a leverage to develop National Societies, and better position the Red Cross Red Crescent as a leading organization in strategic areas such as disaster preparedness, response and recovery, health, food security, migration and the humanitarian consequences of climate change.

**Programme(s) summary:** Within the past six months, most of the efforts have been concentrated on building an effective and responsive communications culture within the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. A global communications workshop, held in Washington, gathered communicators from 60 National Societies to identify joint priorities and outline a common agenda in communications and advocacy. In the meantime, priority has been given to deliver quality products on emergency communications and disaster preparedness in the context of climate change. The overhaul of the department has been carried out by better aligning its services to the membership, while creating synergies between the Geneva secretariat and the newly established zones. Lastly, a new internal communication process is being implemented.

**Financial situation:** The total 2008 budget is 1,647,562 Swiss francs (USD 1,569,107 or EUR 1,012,638), of which 3 per cent is covered. Expenditure overall was 5 per cent.

The low coverage and expenditure results from the focus the communications department has made on strengthening its capacities and reinforcing its foundations to deliver communication and advocacy activities in an efficient and responsive way. In the meantime, the department has been identifying the best ways to fund its activities in a sustainable manner.

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

**Our partners:** National Society communications departments have been the major partners during the past six months, especially the French, Spanish, Canadian, British, American and Finnish Red Cross societies.

## Context

The International Federation is the world's largest humanitarian network. However, it is not able to fully capitalize on this highly enviable asset because of its undeveloped communications element. As a result, the Red Cross Red Crescent brand is poorly understood, and the International Federation is losing ground to other humanitarian actors in a highly competitive global communications environment.

Evidence shows that investing in communications and advocacy generates greater internal cohesion, brand awareness, profile and, more importantly, in greater resources for our overall operations. Most of our major competitors are already massively involved in this process.

The overall strategic objective is to make the Red Cross Red Crescent **the global reference** when it comes to both the delivery of effective programmes of the highest quality to vulnerable people, and clear advocacy on their behalf.

To achieve this objective, the Red Cross Red Crescent must become **the global preference** for the media, the public and private donors. This will be accomplished through clear, focused, coherent, and consistent communications throughout the Red Cross Red Crescent network.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

- Internal communications: Enhance the International Federation's organizational culture by aligning the goals and values of all the components within the International Federation.
- External communications: Increase the overall visibility and positioning of the International Federation in strategic areas, and create new resources to strengthen the communications of National Societies.
- Foster synergies and facilitate joint approaches engaging communicators in the zones and from National Societies.
- Deliver services adapted to the needs, especially in terms of the communications development of National Societies.

## Achievements

- A new internal communications strategy is being set to streamline the editorial work and redesign internal Federation tools on priority areas, namely the four goals of the Global Agenda and migration, climate change, violence and health crises.
- The 2008 global communications forum, gathering communicators from 60 National Societies, has resulted in a joint approach to better profile and fund common communications and advocacy initiatives on key areas (climate change, malaria, avian/human influenza, disaster response and disaster recovery). A final statement has been endorsed to create an effective and responsive Federation-wide communications culture.
- Six communications managers have been recruited (out of seven zones) to handle external communications and capacity building in a decentralized way. A new division of labour between the secretariat at Geneva and in the zones has been adopted to empower Federation communications capacities, as well as foster synergies.
- Communications packs have been produced, related to malaria, HIV/AIDS, and the humanitarian consequences of climate change and food security.
- A 2009 global campaign is being designed, driven by a universal call to action related to vulnerable groups and today's humanitarian battlefields. Marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Solferino battle and the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Federation, 2009 will be the year of the Red Cross Red Crescent. A series of events will be organized to mobilize the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement at both the national and global level, and to position the Movement as a unique organization and leader in addressing today's most critical humanitarian challenges.
- The website and FedNet are in the process of being redesigned to improve both external (website) and internal (FedNet) communications and impact.

## Constraints or challenges

- A solid methodological and accountability framework is being completed. It is a necessary tool to assess the impact and measure performances of communications/advocacy initiatives.
- The linkage between communications and programmes needs to be clarified and strengthened, as well as included in programmes' funding.

## Working in partnership

- **National Societies:** The Spanish, British, French, American, Finnish and the Canadian Red Cross Societies were the main National Societies supporting communications through cash contribution or ad hoc support.
- **Climate Centre in The Hague:** The department has coordinated a communications pack on climate change focused on the "*early warning, early action*" concept with the Climate Centre in The Hague.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

- To professionalize the coordination and facilitation role of the communications department, while allowing it to become a resource centre to set collaborative platforms and deliver high-quality products in communications and advocacy for media and donors.
- To strengthen the operational role in the zones to address disasters in a proactive way, develop communications in National Societies where required, and improve communications to beneficiaries.
- Set an effective capacity in knowledge and skill sharing amongst National Societies, as a key leverage to mutually empower their communications and advocacy activities.

## Looking ahead

- Start implementing the 2009 campaign. Engage sponsors and donors.
- Deliver communications packs on migration and principles and values.
- Complete the accountability framework.
- Implement the new internal communications process.
- Set collaborative platforms of National Societies communicators on common interest areas (branding, knowledge sharing etc).
- Launch a campaign for Africa at the occasion of the Pan-African conference.

How we work	
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".	<b>Global Agenda goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters</li><li>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies</li><li>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability</li><li>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.</li></ul>
Contact information	
For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pierre Kremer, head, communications department, Geneva; email: <a href="mailto:Pierre.kremer@ifrc.org">Pierre.kremer@ifrc.org</a>; phone +41 22 730 4914; and fax: + 41 22 730 03 95.</b></li></ul>	