

Programme Update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Regional Representation for Central Europe and Southern Caucasus

Appeal no. MAA66001

31 August 2009

This report covers the period 01/01/2009 to
30/06/2009.



Learning about IT in emergencies should boost effectiveness and efficiency. Photo: International Federation.

In brief

Programme purpose: The main programme areas in the first half of 2009 were disaster management, health and care, organizational development and participatory community development. Focus areas are aligned with the core areas of *Strategy 2010*, and the Istanbul Commitments made at the VII European Red Cross Red Crescent conference.

Programme summary: The regional representation for Central Europe and Southern Caucasus works with and supports a total of 11 National Societies; *Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia*, including the two Red Cross organizations in *Kosovo*.

Recently the regional representation held consultations and negotiations with all National Societies regarding the future structure of country representations. The decision was made to integrate the International Federation within the office of the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to merge the Federation office with the Italian Red Cross. This decision is in line with the International Federation's policy to be closer to the National Society and to provide more efficient membership services. The same process was finalized in Azerbaijan and discussions were also completed with the Serbia Red Cross related to the country representation in Serbia. All decisions were made in close consultation with the Europe zone office and the secretariat headquarters in Geneva.

In the first half of 2009, the regional representation continued to engage with the National Societies in the region in the area of **disaster management** with focus on contingency planning and building the capacities of National Societies in disaster preparedness and disaster response. The regional disaster management coordinator provided technical support to the Romanian Red Cross in developing plan of action on strengthening the disaster preparedness and response capacity of the Romanian Red Cross financially supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Within the **health and care programme** the main focus was the support provided to the Romanian Red Cross regarding the implementation of the psychological support pilot programme for multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) patients and DOT (directly observed treatment) supporters for MDR-TB patients for one year including the provision of social coupons and transportation tickets. This activity was supported from the global programme through Elly Lilly funds. Social welfare and health promotional and prevention activities implemented by the Albanian Red Cross and Macedonian Red Cross supported by the Canadian Red Cross were concluded successfully and as no funds were received for continuation of the projects no further support was provided by the International Federation. However, all these activities are continuing within the National Societies with their own funding.

The **organizational development programme** faced severe funding gaps and as a consequence no direct funding support was provided to National Societies. All major activities had to be postponed or cancelled. The only activity supported was the project on volunteer development implemented by the Bulgarian Red Cross. Despite the financial constraints the regional representation continues to have a mutual cooperation with all National Societies in the region on a range of issues including fund-raising initiatives, knowledge sharing, strategic planning, capacity building and other priority organizational development issues.

With the decreased funding the **participatory community development (PCD) programme** had to target only three National Societies. The National Societies of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia utilized the PCD approach in their work with the most marginalized groups of the society. As a consequence of this funding constraint only 3 vulnerable communities were selected instead of the 17 planned.

No. of people we help:

Programme Update (January - June 2009) – Regional Representation		
Programme	Target groups	People reached
Disaster Management	Red Cross staff and volunteers	100
Health and Care	Elderly people living alone, targeted women and children, TB patients, Red Cross staff and volunteers	600
Organizational Development	National Societies	11
Participatory Community Development	Vulnerable communities, Red Cross staff and volunteers	2,800
Total number of people reached		3,511

Financial situation: The total 2009 budget was originally 967,401, but this is now revised to CHF 698,058 (USD 643,152 or EUR 457,827) of which 62 per cent covered. The regional representation received no income in the first half of 2009. The only income was from the global funds related to the implementation of the MDR-TB project in Romania. The activities reported on in this programme update were implemented with funds carried over from 2008.

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

Our partners: The main donors supporting the regional programmes are the Norwegian Red Cross,

Swedish Red Cross, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, American Red Cross, UK's Department for International Development (DfID), ECHO and the International Federation's Capacity Building Fund. The regional representation and the National Societies have established partnerships with various stakeholders, international organizations, governmental agencies and UN agencies.

Context

Across both regions, western Balkans and southern Caucasus, the global financial crisis had a drastic impact on the most vulnerable groups and contributed to widening the gaps within the society. The poorest are being driven into deeper poverty while the signs of wealth are clearly apparent among the economic elites. In addition, large disparities exist in the wealth and services between regions within the same country. These factors are being aggravated by the global food and energy price increase which hits the poor parts of the populations hardest and contributes to increased vulnerability as they are not in a position to afford the higher prices.

The National Societies in these regions are tackling the effects on people through their programmes and new initiatives. Through this work, their capacity and experience to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable has been constantly growing. Such development can, in many aspects, be attributed to the many years of investment and joint development efforts put in by the National Societies themselves, and to the support of their partners from within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The impact of the global financial crisis on the vulnerable is closely monitored by the regional representation and country representations together with the National Societies. Interviews related to the impact on National Societies and vulnerable people have been concluded with the respective National Societies from the region and the outcomes have been shared with the Europe zone office.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Programme purpose The number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters has been reduced.

Achievements: Continued International Federation disaster management support to the National Societies in the previous years has significantly improved the capacities of the National Societies in terms of rapid assessment, coordination and better service delivery to the affected population. However, due to the lack of sufficient funding in the first half of 2009, the disaster management activities had to be implemented within the available budget. This meant that some of the activities related to disaster risk reduction, strengthening national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms at various levels, regional disaster response team (RDRT) trainings and disaster management capacity building had to be postponed to the second half of 2009.

The regional meeting for disaster management coordinators in Central Europe and Southern Caucasus was held in Montenegro in May. The main objective of the meeting was to update national disaster management coordinators on the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction activities, to discuss common disaster management activities in the region and how the National Societies can cooperate and coordinate their disaster management activities during 2009 and beyond.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the ICRC, the Romanian Red Cross and the Federation regional representation on strengthening the disaster preparedness and

response capacities of the Romanian Red Cross. The implementation time frame was April-June 2009. The specific achievements related to this activity will be reported in the second half of the year as the report has yet to be finalized by the National Society.

Constraints or Challenges: In some countries of the region, the governmental response to issues of disaster management remains weak and disaster preparedness planning at the national level is underdeveloped. With the decreased funding there are limited possibilities for the regional representation to follow up on the above mentioned issues. The departure of the regional disaster management coordinator put another challenge ahead with the remaining issues left to be addressed by the Europe zone office.

Health and Care

Programme purpose: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

Achievements: The health and care programme received no funding and consequently all activities planned in the regional plan 2009-2010 had to be postponed or cancelled.

However, social welfare and health prevention activities implemented by the Albanian Red Cross and Macedonian Red Cross were concluded successfully. The social care activities for elderly people targeted three branches in Albania while harm reduction, blood donation awareness, breastfeeding and HIV prevention activities in Macedonia targeted eight branches which started in early 2008 with support from Canadian Red Cross.

With the support from Elly Lily company through the International Federation global programme the regional representation supported the Romanian Red Cross in implementing the MDR-TB project. The main goal of the project was to demonstrate the need for associating treatment of Tuberculosis with psychological support in order to increase the treatment success rate. Voluntary psychologists were interviewed and supervised with the support of professional medical personnel to provide support to MDR-TB and TB patients. The support included psychotherapy sessions, psychosocial support and health education. Several hundred TB patients were reached including MDR-TB patients, new TB patients and relapse TB patients.

To address the recent outbreak and escalation of Influenza A (H1N1) on a global level, the regional representation shared with all National Societies materials, developed by the Europe zone health department, to provide rapid orientation for the staff and volunteers.

Constraints or Challenges

Due to lack of funding no other activities planned within health and care could be implemented during the first half of the year. This has particularly hampered implementation of some of the priority activities as planned in the regional representation plan for 2009-2010.

Organizational Development

Programme purpose: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability

Achievements: The funding gap has affected all organizational development activities in the first half of the year and as a consequence no activity support was provided to National Societies. Technical support and advice, however, was provided to all National Societies on various organizational development issues. In this regard the regional representation worked closely with the organizational development team of the Europe zone office.

With the limited funding provided, the Bulgarian Red Cross continued implementing the second phase of its volunteering policy for regional branches. The support from the regional representation aimed to ensure progress in implementing the policy following the main steps of the volunteering management cycle. Fifteen Red Cross experts are involved in the project facilitating mini-seminars and meetings to evaluate the policy. To date ten mini-seminars were organized and attended by volunteers, staff and governance of the regional branches.

Constraints or Challenges: Funding remains the main constraint in the programme implementation thus delaying all efforts in provision of membership services to National Societies in the region.

Participatory Community Development

Programme purpose: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion

During the first half of 2009 the National Societies of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have utilized the participatory community development (PCD) approach in their work with the most vulnerable groups of society.

In Macedonia, one introductory workshop was held for the key branch staff and volunteers. The main purpose of the workshop was to give a general introduction of the PCD approach and methodology including the tools that are used during the project implementation. Following the workshop and formation of the PCD team the branch conducted a field assessment in the targeted Roma community which enabled a more proper analysis of the needs in the community. All together 100 families were visited in the community, covering approximately 700 family members. Most of the population lives on social welfare assistance and only about 3 per cent is regularly employed and approximately 90 per cent is illiterate. Based on the analysis of the field work and needs identified a large group workshop with larger participation of the community will be organized in order to determine which micro-project will be implemented. This will be done in the second part of the year.

A similar process was conducted in Serbia and Montenegro, each targeting one vulnerable community with a Roma population. In Serbia all stakeholders and local authorities involved in the PCD project showed a high consideration for the project and in particular for supporting the targeted community. This, so far had a very positive impact on the project and it is expected that it will have a greater impact on the micro-project and the future cooperation with the Red Cross.

The three National Societies that have implemented PCD methodology benefited, as secondary beneficiaries, from the increased efficiency in carrying out participatory needs assessment and from establishing new links with different stakeholders. By advocating on behalf of vulnerable communities, the National Societies have contributed to better recognition of the problems that exist in vulnerable communities and have encouraged the social integration of Roma people and other marginalized groups into the society.

Constraints or Challenges: In Serbia the Roma community is showing less motivation in participating in the PCD project. There is still a high level of perception of their personal issues rather than the issues of the community as a whole. It is expected that this will be changed at the large group workshop and through the project planning process.

The regional PCD project successfully initiated and implemented through Norwegian Red Cross funding, will come under threat following the unsuccessful application to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, it is most likely that if no alternative sources are found, the planned evaluation of the programme will not be completed.

Working in partnerships

The main partners for the regional representation are the 11 National Societies in the region. All National Societies in the region have partnerships with their respective governments and other partners support their work with the most vulnerable groups of society. Several partner National Societies are also working bilaterally supporting various programmes and activities.

A large number of local stakeholders were involved in all stages of the PCD process. As members in the local PCD teams, representatives of various local authorities, institutions and NGOs took part in the participatory needs assessments (using participatory rural appraisal methods), planning, implementing and monitoring of the community micro-projects. The participation and better understanding of local community needs will enable different stakeholders to contribute with their resources to the micro-projects and to support other community initiatives. At local level, all relevant actors were mobilized during the implementation, especially local municipalities, centres for social welfare, private companies and NGOs.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The regional representation has developed a practice of utilizing the best practices and experience available in the region through its human resource roster mechanism. This is a pool of expertise from all the National Societies in the region and from the International Federation's offices in the region who have competence and experience in various fields and are available to assist National Societies in need.

Some of the National Societies using the PCD methodology have trained other branches that are not familiar with the participatory methodology. This is enabling National Societies to expand their activities using this approach with the most vulnerable people in particular in identifying and addressing their needs and also using it in other programme areas. The PCD method is intended to be introduced and applied in other programmes within the Red Cross of Serbia. The National Society has already developed its capacities to work according to the participatory approach with local communities through its TB protection programme. In addition, monitoring of the programmes was carried out by the regional representation through visits and interviews with staff and volunteers and meetings with local authorities.

Looking ahead

The regional representation, together with the Europe zone team, will continue engaging with the National Societies in Central Europe so as to access alternative funding at local level or through international sources, as well as to provide ad hoc support in different fields of capacity building and expertise in programme areas. A new programme is being supported by the Norwegian Red Cross to enhance the capacity of the Central European National Societies in planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting which will make them confident in establishing partnerships with different organizations. Additional emphasis will be put on the National Societies of Southern Caucasus, also covered by the regional representation, who are making progress in their capacity-building and are actively working towards financial autonomy.

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".

Global Agenda Goals:

- 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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