# Plan 2009-2010

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

# Serbia

## Executive summary

The Republic of Serbia, a south-central European country with a population of 7,498,001[1] (excluding Kosovo) is currently going through a politically unstable period with frequent parliamentary crises, changing foreign policy, obligations towards the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and with Kosovo, which is under UN control since 1999, declaring independence in February 2008. There is no risk of a large-scale conflict at the moment, but there is a potential of further mass migration from Kosovo to central Serbia. There are already 140,000 refugees and over 200,000 internally displaced people (IDP) living in Serbia at the moment, as a result of conflicts in the 1990s.

Economically, Serbia is in a state of transition, not only moving from centrally-controlled economy to free market, but also away from the isolation and embargoes of the 1990s. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is encouraging with 7 per cent in 2007. However, the unemployment is still at 18.8 per cent; the inflation was 7 per cent in the first quarter of 2008 and the huge external debt (37 per cent of the GDP) and increasing export/ import deficit testify to a struggling economy and potential future problems.

According to the Poverty Reduction Strategy[2] data, 10.6 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line defined as 2.4 US dollars per day, and among them there are particularly vulnerable groups such as Roma people (an estimate of 150,000-400,000 living in Serbia), older people (16 per cent of the population is above 65) and people living with disabilities. The lack of public capacity to meet the needs of these populations and their reduced access to the existing health, education and social welfare services increases their vulnerability.

Seasonal emergencies such as floods and landslides cause substantial property damage and heavily influence the quality of lives of the poor/ vulnerable population through damaging their property, food reserves and land.

In addition to the existing body of refugees and IDPs, the position of Serbia on the fringes of the European Union means there is a steady stream of migrants trying to get political asylum in Serbia, on their way to the west. Some 500 asylum seekers are registered in Serbia every year. In addition there are between 40,000 and 150,000 rejected asylum seekers being slated for return to Serbia from Western Europe in the coming years, many of them at the risk of human trafficking upon return.

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[1] According to the census from 2002
[2] http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/

Official data shows that between 1984 and November 2006 there were 2,088 persons were living with HIV, 1,339 or 64 per cent of them had developed AIDS syndrome and 915 had died. The Red Cross of Serbia has been exploring the possibility of joining the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV to scale up its national HIV programming to reduce the vulnerability to, and impact of, HIV. A representative was present at the first round meeting held in Budapest in late 2007, and while they did not take part in the second, follow up meeting in Tashkent in mid-2008, a decision on whether the National Society will sign up for the alliance is still to be taken.

Practical interventions are guided by local needs and realities and the assigned role of the Red Crescent Society as part of the coordinated national HIV and AIDS programme. During the period 2009-2010, the National Society plans to reach people with messages on prevention and reducing stigma and discrimination, including those in key populations at higher risk through peer education, and to provide services for people living with HIV. The National Society is committed to deliver a consistent and predictable package of services in line with the strategy of the Global Alliance, Red Cross Red Crescent competence and comparative advantage, and resources that will be made available.

The Global Alliance framework is expected to strengthen and make better use of the combined capacities of the National Society and the International Federation, also by bringing in regional networks and other funding and operating partners to support community-level actions. It is currently in the planning phase and is expected to roll out in 2009.

The priorities of the Red Cross of Serbia in this context are dictated by the country's humanitarian needs and outlined in its Plan of Action 2006-2010 and the Red Cross law adopted in 2005. Through the definition of its public powers, the Red Cross of Serbia is recognized as an auxiliary to the government in the areas of health and care and disaster management. In 2009 and 2010 the Red Cross of Serbia will be building on the results achieved with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the last seven years and will work towards reaching the Federation's Global Agenda goals, while observing other essential documents, such as the resolutions of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. This work will consist of:

- Further enhancing the disaster management system through training and advocacy, improving coordination between stakeholders at local level as well as conducting risk reduction and vulnerability/ capacity assessment activities
- Direct assistance to the vulnerable population through education programme for 2,500 vulnerable Roma children, social support to people living with disabilities and to 10,000 vulnerable older people; as well as increased advocacy on their behalf
- Raising public awareness related to health topics such as HIV and AIDS and voluntary non-remunerated blood donation among youth
- Promoting the social inclusion of marginalized children/ youth as well as non-violent conflict resolution
- Assistance to refugees in seeking durable solutions for integration
- Direct assistance to asylum seekers and to the returning rejected asylum seekers
- Raising awareness about trafficking in human beings among youth
- Enhancing the capacities and efficiency of the Red Cross of Serbia through improving procedures and practices, improving its public relations and widening its volunteers and partners base

The total 2009-2010 budget is CHF 3,745,733 (USD 3,423,887 or EUR 2,385,817).

**Click here to go directly to the attached summary budget of the plan.**

# Country context

After the wars of the 1990s, Serbia had to deal with the effects of the international economic embargo, the loss of the membership in the United Nations, deterioration of the social security, rising poverty, internal political struggles and the loss of control over a part of its territory, following the large-scale 1999 conflict involving NATO.

Serbia has, since a change of government in 2000 experienced a period of both political instability and economic development, with a GDP growth calculated at 7 per cent in 2007 by the Institute for Statistics of the Republic of Serbia. Agriculture, traditionally the strongest branch of the economy has been in decline over the past four years and is being replaced by wholesale and retail trade as the leading sector. The effects on the rural areas of the country are visible with the working population migrating to cities, leaving older family members behind.

| Development Indicators | SERBIA | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Population, geography and environment* | | *Economy and labour* | |
| Total population (millions) | 7.5 (excl. Kosovo) | GDP per capita (PPP in USD) | 10,400 (2007 est.) |
| Surface area (square km) | 88,361 (incl. Kosovo) | GDP real growth (%) | 7 |
| *Social indicators* | | Unemployment total (% labour force) | 18.8 |
| Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and older) | 96.4 (2005)[3] | Inflation | 10.1 (2007) |
| Pop. below 2.4 US dollars per day (%) | 10.6 | *Health indicators* | |
| *Refugees and IDPs* | | Life expectancy at birth (female/ male) | 76/ 71 |
| Number of refugees | 140,000 | HIV prevalence (% aged 15-49) | 0.2 (2005)[4] |
| Number of internally displaced people | 200,000 | Infant mortality | 8 (2005) |
| | | Health spending as % of GDP | 8 |
| Sources: *World Health Organization*; *World Bank; Economic Intelligence Unit.* | | | |

**Table 1:** Selected development indicators for Serbia

Inflation has been on a slow increase over the past few years, being at 10.1 per cent in 2007 and at 7 per cent in the first quarter of 2008. It has been curtailed mainly through the sale of large assets to foreign investors. The import/ export deficit has been on a steady increase since 2002 (46 per cent as against 40 per cent in the first two months of 2008) with Serbia exporting mostly low-value added products like metals and agricultural goods and importing consumer goods, capital goods and energy. The external debt has also increased in the last several years and is now estimated at 37 per cent of the GDP.

Political issues have become more pronounced in recent years. Significant points are EU and NATO accession and membership, the Kosovo situation, the national economy, corruption, education and Serbia's relationship with ICTY. Parliamentary crises have been frequent, with no government since 2000 managing to stay a full election period. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement signed with the EU in April 2008, was immediately frozen following the requests of Belgium and the Netherlands that Serbia first demonstrates full cooperation with ICTY before the agreement can be implemented.

Despite overall economic growth, considerable groups have yet to see improvements in their living standards, and social security remains poor. About 10.6 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line defined as 2.4 US dollars per day[5]. Particularly exposed groups are older people living in rural areas, Roma people and people living with disabilities. A Poverty Reduction Strategy was launched in 2005 and is addressing the situation with support from EU and UN institutions, but frequent

[3] This data is from the former state union of Serbia and Montenegro before the declaration of independence by Montenegro in 2006.
[4] Ibid.
[5] As presented in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, following the Survey on the Living Standard of the Population carried out in 2002

changes in administration at all levels have slowed this process down. The unemployment rate is estimated at 18.8 per cent by the Economic Intelligence Unit.

There are an estimated 150,000-450,000 Roma people living in Serbia, many of them in extreme poverty, with 70 per cent lacking even the legally obligatory primary education. The level of their integration into the society is low, employment opportunities are limited and the level of support from health and social welfare institutions is relatively low due to the majority of Roma people lacking necessary documents, knowledge and even language familiarity to access the institutions of the system. The participation of Roma children in primary education is very low, as demonstrated by the UNICEF study done in 2001. The regional initiative, the Decade of Roma Inclusion[6], implemented in nine countries, signed by their presidents and prime ministers and supported by the World Bank, the Open Society Institute (OSI) and UNDP is in Serbia focusing on several issues but mostly on the integration of Roma children into the process of education.

With the average age of 40.4 years, the Serbian population is among the oldest in Europe. Older people and people living with disabilities share the common problem of formally having access to the institutions of support but in practice frequently being unable to exercise their rights. Economic migration of the working population, loss of the traditional (family) support environment on the one hand and insufficient capacity of the health and social welfare systems on the other – for example only 9 per cent of people aged over 70 in Serbia are able to regularly use institutional support[7] – all contribute to the social isolation of older people and people living with disabilities. Their income is generally low – pensions increase notably slower than salaries, compared to the inflation; most people with disabilities do not work and receive modest financial support- and this puts them squarely among the most vulnerable population categories in Serbia.

Refugees and internally displaced people also belong to the most vulnerable part of the population. The return of refugees to Croatia is slow (around 1,000 persons per year), with mostly older people choosing to go back and the work-age population trying to stay and integrate. The return to Kosovo has been extremely slow due to security risks and the lack of durable solutions for the returnees under the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) administration and has essentially stopped with the declaration of independence in February 2008. Serbia still has some 140,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as well as over 200,000 internally displaced people from Kosovo[8].

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[6] http://www.romadecade.org/

[7] *Non-institutional protection of older people in Serbia*, a document produced in 2007 by Amity NGO, with support of EAR and UNDP.

[8] Commissariat for refugees of the Republic of Serbia

| Country disasters | SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO[9] | |
|---|---|---|
| *Type of Disaster* | *Date* | *Affected people* |
| Flood | July 1999 | 70,678 |
| Flood | April 2006 | 35,000 |
| Flood | November 1992 | 6,000 |
| Flood | April 2000 | 4,000 |
| Flood | April 2005 | 3,790 |
| Flood | June 2002 | 2,400 |
| Flood | December 2000 | 2,000 |
| Flood | February 2006 | 1,200 |
| Epidemic | August 1999 | 699 |
| Flood | December 1999 | 330 |
| Source: *EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database* | | |

**Table 2:** Natural disasters in Serbia since 1990 including dates and the number of people affected

Situated on the fringes of EU, Serbia is a transition country for irregular migrants. In addition to the 140,000 refugees and 200,000 internally displaced people from Kosovo, and around 500 migrants per year seeking political asylum in Serbia, an unknown number of trafficked persons and an estimation of between 40,000 and 150,000 are to be returned from the western European countries after asylum rejection. The readmission agreements signed between Serbia and host countries, states that the returnees are to go back to their municipalities of origin. However, many of the returnees are Roma people originated from Kosovo, where they cannot go back for security reasons. Accordingly, they are expected to stay, adding to the vulnerable populations of Serbia. Additionally, there is a risk of them being trafficked upon return.

Disasters have been frequent in recent times, as Serbia has experienced winter and spring floods for the last three years, while also having droughts and widespread forest fires during the hot summer months. These disasters have not claimed lives but have caused private property damage which in turn affects the population. The damage to the living quarters, the loss of winter food reserves and the inability to grow their own food has dramatically decreased the quality of lives of thousands of people across Serbia. The country's administration still lacks a dedicated disaster management body, with most of the responsibilities left to the municipal administrations, but without the necessary coordination between governmental services, the business sector and other stakeholders and without the satisfactory legal base.

# National Society priorities and current work with partners

### General

The Red Cross of Serbia priorities, laid down in its Plan of Action for 2006-2010 are informed by both the humanitarian landscape of Serbia and the Red Cross Law of 2005. The Red Cross of Serbia has a comprehensive health and care programme targeting a number of vulnerable groups, and is very active in disaster management.

### Disaster Management

The disaster preparedness programme is developed in line with the Red Cross Law, and has been scaled up from basic training and equipping to improving the disaster management coordination in local communities and to reducing potential risks. A memorandum of understanding signed in 2007 between the Red Cross of Serbia, USAID, and the International Federation signifies the dedication to long-term work in improving the local capacity to plan and respond to disasters as well as to work on reducing the potential risks. The Red Cross of Serbia has its representatives in the regional disaster response team (RDRT) and it has participated in disaster response operations in Romania during the floods of 2006 and during the Pakistan earthquake of 2005. The Red Cross of Serbia also runs a life-saving programme and is through its representatives in appropriate working groups very active in the work on defining and advocating for the International Disaster Response Laws (IDRL).

[9] Data is only available before the dissolution of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro.

## Health

As defined in the Red Cross Law in 2005, the Red Cross of Serbia is active in the provision of first-aid training to the general population, in the promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation and general health promotion (focusing on the prevention of drug abuse, HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted infections as well as the promotion of healthy lifestyles). This work covers the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia with every municipal branch of the Red Cross implementing these activities. The continuing work in first aid has granted the Red Cross of Serbia two consecutive victories (in 2006 and 2007) at the European First-Aid Competition.

The Red Cross of Serbia has been exploring the possibility of joining the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV to scale up the national HIV programming to reduce the vulnerability to, and impact of, HIV. A representative was present at the first round meeting held in Budapest in late 2007, and while they did not take part in the follow up meeting in Tashkent in mid-2008, a decision on whether the National Society will sign up is still to be taken.

## Organizational Development

Organizational development is an important activity at all levels of the organization, ensuring increased efficiency, transparency and quality of the humanitarian work. In recent years, the programme has moved on from strengthening the IT and finance management capacities of the National Society to working on the improvement of general programme management and improving public relations, volunteer management and work with partners.

The Red Cross of Serbia entered a two-year partnership deal with Telenor in 2008 to scale up the communication capacity of the Red Cross of Serbia, internally for better, more efficient operational communication and externally for clearer, more effective communication with partners and the general public, through the provision of equipment and expertise.

## Principles and Values

A comprehensive home care programme addresses the needs of isolated old people, with funding from the British and Norwegian Red Cross Societies and, with funding from USAID, supports the implementation of the National Strategy of Ageing, also running a public campaign against discrimination, neglect and abuse of older people.

Pre-school and school-support activities for Roma children and work with young people living with disabilities is done with the support of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development who has a long-term interest in supporting such activities, especially in the light of the ongoing Decade of Roma Inclusion. A target group is also young people living with disabilities, with the Red Cross of Serbia focusing on their integration in the community and on building advocacy capacities. The Danish Red Cross is a long-term bilateral donor in this area.

The Red Cross of Serbia renders humanitarian support to detained asylum seekers and works on raising awareness among the general population in relation to human trafficking. In addition, special educational/ sensitisation workshops are being conducted with the members of services dealing directly with victims of trafficking. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has expressed interest in working closely with the Red Cross of Serbia in preventing trafficking or retrafficking of returning rejected asylum seekers.

## Networks

The Red Cross of Serbia is a member of several important networks. Essential ones include the European Red Cross and Red Crescent Network on HIV/AIDS (ERNA), whose headquarters the Red Cross of Serbia is hosting from 1 January 2008, and one of the vice presidents of ERNA is the president of the Red Cross of Serbia; the International Life Saving Federation Europe (ILSE), where the Red Cross of Serbia is a member of the executive board; and the Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants (PERCO), where they are co-chairing

meetings. These memberships inform its strategic directions of planning and action. In the area of HIV and AIDS the Red Cross works alongside specialized NGOs such as JAZAS (Yugoslav Association for Combating AIDS).

The Red Cross of Serbia is a founding member of the HumanaS network of humanitarian organizations dealing with issues of concern to older people. As a coordinator of the HumanaS network, which currently has 16 NGOs as members, and with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and funding from USAID, as mentioned above, the Red Cross of Serbia is supporting the implementation of the National Strategy of Ageing, as well as running a public campaign against discrimination, neglect and abuse of older people.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a regional office in Belgrade and works with the National Society on a number of programmes, primarily on conflict and post-conflict preparedness, dissemination and tracing. The ICRC and the Red Cross of Serbia have signed memoranda of understanding for all three areas for the period of 2007-2010.

**Auxiliary role**

The Red Cross of Serbia gives emphasis to the development of its auxiliary role with the government. In migration it works closely with the Ministry of Interior on the provision of assistance to asylum seekers and the Agency for Minorities and Human Rights on assistance to returning rejected asylum seekers. Its work on prevention of human trafficking is being done in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is cooperating with the Red Cross on the implementation of the National Strategy of Ageing, on the public campaign against discrimination, and on abuse of older people. In disaster management the Red Cross has extensive cooperation with all the stakeholders at municipal level (paramedics, fire fighters, local authorities, and police), but also interacts with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence, who are key players at the national level.

The Red Cross Societies of Luxembourg, Denmark and Spain are also present in the country with their own programmes focusing on returned asylum seekers, the work with Roma children and the promotion of human values respectively.

The Red Cross of Serbia is exploring ways to address the priorities defined in Resolution 1 of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent[10], with a campaign on environmental degradation and climate change already being in place in 2008.

Similar efforts are being made to follow up on the commitments made at the VII European Regional Conference of the International Federation[11], as well as to pursue General Assembly decisions and the Global Agenda goals.

The Red Cross of Serbia performs regular annual audits in an effort to enhance its transparency and accountability and has had positive audit reports year after year.

# Secretariat supported programmes in 2009-2010

## Disaster Management

The disaster management programme builds on the work done since 2000, with training and equipping municipal, regional and national teams. The Red Cross of Serbia has focused on improving the coordination between different stakeholders at municipal level in disaster preparedness and response, through joint work on disaster simulations/ contingency planning, in anticipation of the national

[10] http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/conf30
[11] http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/idrl/istanbul-commitments-n.pdf

legislation on disaster management as well as a dedicated national body responsible for disaster management being set up. A risk reduction component has been introduced as a new element to the programme. The Red Cross of Serbia is ready to support the development of public disaster management capacity/ plans once the required legislation has been passed.

Utilizing the equipment received from ICRC, the Red Cross of Serbia plans to set up a radio network in Belgrade, using one or two radio transmission stations and equipping two 4X4 vehicles with VHF radios received from ICRC. This network will be the primary communication channel in case of disasters. Expansion of the network beyond Belgrade will be considered upon testing the system.

### a) The purpose and components of the programme

| **Programme purpose** |
|---|
| Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. |

This programme focuses on strengthening local and national disaster response mechanisms, contingency planning, risk reduction and community-based disaster preparedness and prevention.

The disaster management programme budget is CHF 571,840 (USD 522,706 or EUR 364,229).

| **Programme component 1: Disaster preparedness/ Municipal disaster preparedness** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The capacity to be prepared for and respond to emergency situations at national and local level is increased, through better coordination of the work of all the stakeholders, leading to a reduced number of deaths, injuries and property damage. |
| **Component outcome 2:** National disaster management bodies are formed with the role of the Red Cross at national and local levels recognized and officially defined. |

| **Programme component 2: Development of IT and telecommunication network for disaster response** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** A radio network is established and fully functional for the territory of Belgrade by the end of 2009. |

| **Programme component 3: Risk reduction** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** Risk-prone areas within five highly disaster-prone municipalities are mapped, identifying risks and capacities. The data collected is further presented in the form of GIS,[12] an additional tool for disaster management at municipal level. |
| **Component outcome 2:** The safety of schoolchildren in three municipalities is increased through education on hazards and the promotion of safety procedures in emergency situations. |

Within the risk reduction component municipalities will be supported in creating or adjusting contingency plans following the results of the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) with the long-term objective being a nation-wide VCA.

### b) Profile of target beneficiaries

- The main part of the **disaster preparedness** training and equipping is targeting the National Society itself. Members of national teams receive basic training and qualification to facilitate trainings for members of the municipal teams. Training and equipping these teams will shorten the response time to disasters in the future and increase the quality of response and recovery activities. About 150 members of the teams at different levels are to be trained. Experiences from the GIS mapping might imply regional benefits/ information exchange.

[12] Geographic Information System: http://www.gis.com/

- Additionally, the **municipal disaster preparedness** project targets around 20 municipalities in Serbia, involving members of local authorities and relevant services (such as civil protection, paramedics, and fire fighters) as well as the local Red Cross in simulations/ workshops to increase the efficiency of local disaster preparedness and response, through better coordination and use of capacities, as well as the development of municipal response plans.
- Red Cross branches and members of local disaster response teams will participate in mapping and planning activities, supporting primarily disaster-prone communities often near the rivers.
- In mapping the high-risk areas of disaster-prone municipalities, risk reduction will be the ultimate outcome, making the population safer while identifying and utilizing local capacities.
- Around 10,000 primary and high school students will be covered by promotional/ educational activities related to hazards and behaviour in disasters/ emergencies. This is a pilot programme implemented in several schools in Belgrade. The results of these activities will be used to offer the project to the Belgrade city Secretariat for Education (to be expanded to all the municipalities) and potentially to the Ministry of Education.

### c) Potential risks and challenges

A major challenge related to disaster management in Serbia is the yet undefined legal framework within which the disaster management response system is supposed to be developed. There are certain outlines of how the system should work, such as the Law on Self-government, but no final documents and decisions. Two draft disaster management laws have been under development for several years, but the government has yet to decide which body (agency, ministry or other) should take charge of disaster management. This means that the Red Cross, which has been given disaster management responsibilities in the Red Cross Law, is doing groundwork for the future and establishing good practices rather than working within the established system itself. Ongoing advocacy takes place with the authorities through existing forums, but also through direct work with the authorities in the municipal disaster preparedness project.

## Health and Care

The health and care programme focuses on prevention and promotion to ensure raised awareness among the general population in relation to public health threats, including HIV, TB, and safe blood.

### a) The purpose and components of the programme

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

The National Society through advocacy and promotional activities addresses the general public in relation to HIV and other public health threats.

The health and care programme budget is CHF 36,364 (USD 33,239 or EUR 23,162).

| **Programme component 1: Health promotion with focus on HIV** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The national HIV and AIDS database (CRIS system) is updated and maintained through the collection of data on activities at local level, using the resources of the Red Cross of Serbia and serving as a basis for coordination of HIV activities nationwide. |
| **Component outcome 2:** HIV awareness is increased among high school students. |

| **Programme component 2: Voluntary blood donation: Youth club 25** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The number of young people who have donated blood 20 to 25 times by the age of 25 is increased raising the percentage of blood donors among the general population to reach the target of 4 per cent. |

### b) Profile of target beneficiaries

- The implementation of the National Strategy on HIV and AIDS names the Red Cross of Serbia as an important actor in collecting data on all local-level activities related to the issue. The target population of these activities are beneficiaries of various national and local HIV related programmes as well as institutional stakeholders, all benefiting from improved coordination.
- The increase in the number of young people who regularly donate blood benefits people in need of blood transfusion across the country.

### c) Potential risks and challenges

The awareness among the general population about the importance of voluntary blood donation is very low with family donations being the prevalent model. Changing the mentality of the population is a difficult task and a long-term goal of the Red Cross of Serbia.

## Organizational Development/Capacity Building

The organizational development work in the past years has focused on the priorities defined in 2001 and 2004. IT and financial development have been the primary topics, but with these areas now being for the most part managed by the National Society, the Federation support has shifted towards public image and relations, the development of the information service and the creation of more efficient management procedures and practices. The efficiency and capacity of the National Society to support the vulnerable population will be increasing as the management efficiency, volunteer numbers and diversity as well as the number of partners increase.

### a) The purpose and components of the programme

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

The National Society capacity to address the vulnerabilities in the society is increased through more efficient management procedures, a growing and more diverse volunteer base as well as a wider partner base at national level.

The organizational development/ capacity-building programme budget is CHF 415,230 (USD 379,553 or EUR 264,478).

| **Programme component 1: Improvement of public image and public relations** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The National Society has a larger and more diverse volunteer base, reaching different profiles of people through upgraded information activities in relation to concrete programmes and actions. |
| **Component outcome 2:** The National Society has a larger number of national and local partners and donors, from business, non-governmental and governmental sector, attracted through improved information about the Red Cross work and opportunities to support it. |
| **Component outcome 3:** The information department of the Red Cross of Serbia works more closely with the programme department, ensuring all the important programme activities are covered with appropriate announcements, updates and reports. |

| **Programme component 2: Development of a well-functioning organization with sustainable systems, procedures and staff with the desired level of managerial and technical competencies.** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The National Society has efficient and transparent management and information systems, lending it accountability and effectiveness in working with multiple vulnerable populations and various local, national and international partners. |

| |
|---|
| **Component outcome 2:** The Red Cross staff and volunteers are well trained in managing and creating projects and programmes and are proactive and creative in the pursuit of opportunities for partnerships and donations. |

### b) Profile of target beneficiaries

The organizational development programme mostly targets the staff and volunteers at all levels of the National Society providing them with different skills and knowledge. In the component addressing public image and relations, the target population for the activities will be selected groups of the general public, as well as the business sector, aimed at attracting non-traditional volunteers and partners.

### c) Potential risks and challenges

The activities should lead to the National Society in Serbia being more efficient in managing all the programmes and more transparent in its work. At the same time, there is a need to be recognized as a credible partner by the government and be included in the changes in legislation and practices of government at all levels. For this to happen, Serbia needs a stable government, and the volatile political situation therefore represents a risk.

## Principles and Values

This programme targets the vulnerable and marginalised population including older vulnerable people, vulnerable Roma children, young people living with disabilities, refugees, and migrants. It aims to enhance the capacity of communities, informal networks and vulnerable people themselves to provide non-institutional support where needed (whether due to the inadequate capacity of institutions of support or the expressed wish of the vulnerable people to stay outside of the institutions), to integrate marginalised people, families and communities in the wider society and to assist migrants with integration or return.

### a) The purpose and components of the programme

| **Programme purpose** |
|---|
| Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion. |

The National Society works closely with local communities and, through direct services, advocacy and promotional activities empowers them to identify needs and capacities, to meet the needs of older vulnerable people, vulnerable Roma children and young people living with disabilities.

Violence among young people aged between 8 and 14 is reduced, through the improvement of their communication and non-violent conflict resolution skills.

The principles and values programme budget is CHF 2,537,913 (USD 2,319,848 or EUR 1,616,505).

| **Programme component 1: Home care programme** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** Empowered local communities working through the Red Cross branches identify and provide services to vulnerable older people, advocating for their rights and providing them with assistance and support to maintain the dignity of their lives in their own homes. |
| **Component outcome 2:** The coordination between stakeholders is improved and the use of capacities and resources becomes more efficient. |
| **Component outcome 3:** The Red Cross is leading the advocacy efforts in the area of health and social protection of older people, contributing to their social security, reducing discrimination, neglect and abuse. The older people themselves are actively participating in planning and implementing the activities. |

| **Programme component 2: Open kindergarten for Roma and other children from marginalised families and work with young people living with disabilities** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The education and social participation of Roma children and children with disabilities have been improved through continued work with Roma children and children with disabilities as well as their families. |
| **Component outcome 2:** In 30 communities where Roma kindergartens exist, the Red Cross branches have forged formal partnerships with local stakeholders forming local teams for assessing and improving the situation of local Roma population. The Red Cross of Serbia secretariat representatives have become members of the National Team for Implementation of the Action Plan for Roma Education, as part of the Roma Inclusion Decade 2005-2015. |

| **Programme component 3: Promotion of humanitarian values** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The social inclusion of elementary school students belonging to minority groups is facilitated/ strengthened. |
| **Component outcome 2:** The ability of elementary school students to stand up to discrimination, intolerance and violence is enhanced, as well as their capacity for non-violent conflict resolution. |
| **Component outcome 3:** The awareness of elementary school students related to tolerance, personal and cultural identity, discrimination and stigmatisation, as well as gender equity is raised. |

| **Programme component 4: Skills training for refugees** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** The quality of life of 300 refugees and their families who have opted for local integration is improved and their capacity to sustain themselves through work is increased. |

| **Programme component 5: Assistance to migrants** |
|---|
| **Component outcome 1:** Asylum seekers are protected by appropriate legal framework; their accommodation conditions and treatment are improved.[13] |
| **Component outcome 2:** Returning rejected asylum seekers are assisted in reintegration. |
| **Component outcome 3:** Awareness of trafficking in human beings is raised among the general population, the members of services dealing with trafficking victims are appropriately trained and sensitised for their tasks, and returning rejected asylum seekers are protected from trafficking. |

### b) Profile of target beneficiaries

- The **home care programme** works almost exclusively with vulnerable older people, living alone or in couples, with no close relatives, low level of income or no income, and no assistance from other programmes; and aims to cover approximately 10,000 beneficiaries, about 60 per cent of them being female. This population receives regular direct assistance in their homes by Red Cross volunteers, as well as support through advocacy on their behalf, improving their quality of life in their own homes, reducing health risks and increasing participation in community activities.
- The social welfare programme works directly with vulnerable Roma children and children with disabilities, as well as the members of their families, aiming to cover between 2,339 and 2,500 people. The children will be provided with access to alternative pre-school education and informal social networks, aimed at empowering them to continue integration into the society as they grow up. Equally essential is continued work through workshops and meetings with their parents to educate them about the importance of formal education and the inclusion of their children in broader social context.
- The main target group of the **promotion of humanitarian values** component is elementary school students belonging to the majority population aged between 8 and 14, and indirectly their

[13] The National Society works to influence these outcomes, which are largely beyond its control.

parents and family members. Continued project promotion and result presentation through the local media have an effect on attitudes of the wider society.

- **Skills training for refugees** covers about 300 persons per year directly, providing them with carefully targeted vocational training in line with their wishes and the current trends on the job market that enables them to find employment quickly, thus increasing their own sustainability as well as the capacity to sustain their families.
- **Migrants:** The asylum seekers in the Serbian detention centre (between 200 and 300 people) regularly receive material assistance in the form of hygiene parcels, clean clothes and phone cards; and are assisted in maintaining contacts with their families. The returning rejected asylum seekers from Western Europe (estimated at about 500 per year, judging by the 2007 rate) receive verbal and written guidance about action towards reintegration into the society, detailing which documents are needed, in which sequence, and where to obtain them. Potential victims of trafficking, including youth and particular risk-groups such as economically and/ or socially vulnerable populations (e.g. unemployed persons, ethnic minorities, returnees) are being informed on trafficking risks. Front line workers from medical or social welfare institutions at local level are addressed on the same issue and attention is drawn to groups and persons identified as victims of trafficking.

### c) Potential risks and challenges

There is an obvious gap in the treatment of the returned Roma asylum seekers, with no follow-up provided on their integration after they are admitted back into the country. The Red Cross of Serbia has the capacity to provide support in this work, but currently this does not seem to be the priority of the Serbian society.

The capacity of the Red Cross in Serbia to successfully run large-scale community-based programmes is proven; however, the capacity to fund them is still lower than needed. The combination of the decline in international donors' interest for the region and the as yet underdeveloped local/ national donor environment means potential difficulties in maintaining the existing level of activities and upgrading them to envisioned levels of services and advocacy. The International Federation secretariat is aware of the issue and works to overcome it through building the capacity of the National Society at all levels to be more proactive and more efficient in fund-raising as well as to lobby for a more donor-friendly national environment. Roma children integration will require long-term follow up. The International Federation supports the National Society in its efforts to advocate for the government to take responsibility in a long-term perspective.

## Role of the secretariat

The secretariat's budget for its support role is CHF 184,386 (USD 168,542 or EUR 117,443).

### a) Technical programme support

The International Federation secretariat has a country representation in Serbia, consisting of a country representative and nine skilled and experienced local staff working on programmes and administrative issues, supported by the regional/ zonal offices subject to need, especially in areas of health and care and organizational development. The representation supports the National Society in line with key humanitarian needs and National Society priorities in implementing and managing all the above mentioned programmes through technical assistance, liaising with the International Federation at different levels and other National Societies, providing training and other materials and developing monitoring/ evaluation procedures. It also strives to ensure evaluations subject to funding in conjunction with the regional/ zonal offices.

### b) Partnership development and coordination

The long-term nature of the majority of programmes and the efforts to integrate them into the wider context, meaning the implementation of national strategies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy or the National Strategy of Ageing, work of other international organizations, regional initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, necessitates working with different partners. Locally, the activities are increasingly relying on partnerships and collaboration between the Red Cross and governmental/ non-

governmental partners and stakeholders as is natural for programmes that are focusing on community empowerment and the use of existing local resources.

At local level:
The **home care programme** involves informal agreements and formal contracts between implementing Red Cross branches and centres for social welfare, healthcare institutions, NGOs and associations of pensioners. This reliance on partnerships and networking has been boosted since 2005 through the introduction of a participatory approach to local programme design.

The **social welfare programme** relies on partnerships with local Roma NGOs and local schools in its systematic work with pre-school and school-age Roma children. At local level, partnerships are built with health centres, centres of social welfare, local government, media, Roma and other NGOs, schools and pre-schools, special schools and associations of people living with disabilities.

The **skills training programme** is based on a crucially important cooperation with the national employment agency and its municipal offices. This ensures the proper selection of vocational courses for the beneficiaries and comparatively high employment rate after completion of the courses. Currently around 60 per cent of trained beneficiaries are employed within three months of the end of the course.

The **municipal disaster preparedness programme** is based on the participation and coordinated work of all important local stakeholders in target municipalities such as police, medical services, fire fighters and local government.

Globally, two important large-scale partnerships started in 2007 and will continue in the coming years. A tripartite memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Red Cross of Serbia, USAID/ DAI and the International Federation, outlining joint work in **municipal disaster preparedness** in the following five years. In **home care**, the HumanaS network of 16 non-governmental and civil society organizations, led by the Red Cross of Serbia has embarked on a one-year project, with a potential three-year extension, supported by USAID that provides support to the implementation of the National Strategy of Ageing throughout the country and raises awareness of discrimination, neglect and abuse of older people. The project involves Red Cross, other civil society partners and representatives of older people and has official backing from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

One of the goals in the coming period will be for the Red Cross of Serbia to become a member of the National Team for Implementation of the Action Plan for Roma Education, as part of the Roma Inclusion Decade 2005-2015. This will involve closer cooperation with partners such as the National Secretariat for Roma minority, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and selected NGOs. Similarly, the Red Cross of Serbia will make efforts to contribute to the implementation of the National Strategy for the Improvement of Health of Young People, working closely with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, selected NGOs and the Belgrade University Faculty for Special Education and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

Internationally, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Danish Red Cross have been important multi-year donors to the **social welfare programme**, discussing and influencing the development of the programme through their offices/ representatives in Belgrade. The International Federation is working closely with SDC on monitoring and developing the programme. Alongside this agency, the current donors to the Federation-assisted programmes are the Norwegian and British Red Cross Societies. The Red Cross Societies of Luxembourg, Denmark and Spain are also present in the country with their own programmes focusing on returned asylum seekers, work with Roma children and the promotion of humanitarian values respectively.

The International Federation will work on broadening the spectrum of partners through continued dialogue with all potentially interested parties within and outside the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and through organizing regular partnership meetings at least once a year where various National Societies and other organizations will discuss the issues of interest with the Red Cross of Serbia.

### c) Representation and Advocacy

In Serbia, the Red Cross has, partly helped by advocacy from the International Federation, a good relationship with the government. The legal basis for the Red Cross work and its auxiliary role to the government are defined by the Red Cross Law, which also provides funding support for Red Cross activities by defining them as public powers.

Therefore, the future Federation advocacy activities will be focused more on international actors, governmental agencies of countries active in Serbia such as Switzerland and the USA and EU agencies.

# Promoting gender equity and diversity

The Red Cross of Serbia has a good record of promoting gender equity in terms of staff and volunteers. At the moment the split is 50-50 per cent among employees and around 65-35 per cent among volunteers in favour of women. The jobs and tasks are divided fairly equally with both women and men occupying managerial positions and being coordinators of programmes. The governing board features representatives of both genders and the current secretary general of the Red Cross of Serbia is female.

This means that there is attention paid to gender equity in the programmes and activities as well as to ensure equitable approach to the needs of different beneficiary groups. For instance:

- In disaster preparedness, psychosocial support is part of the standard and advanced training for the members of disaster response teams. A section of the psychosocial support specifically focuses on gender, ensuring that the needs of each family member are adequately assessed and met.
- In skills training for refugees, great attention is being paid to providing training in professions appropriate and available for the two genders.
- In activities promoting humanitarian values, part of the focus is to promote humanitarian values through a project designed and implemented by young volunteers, and the guidelines for this project stipulate explicit gender focus.
- Home care and open kindergarten for Roma and other children from marginalised families and the work with young people living with disabilities programmes by their own nature target the most vulnerable of a vulnerable population, catering to the needs of older people or children with specific needs. Roma children normally receive very little support from their immediate surroundings to get any kind of education. Families of children with disabilities often consider them unfit to ‘mix’ with the ‘general population’. The Federation is trying to address these challenges.
- In the work with migrants, particularly the anti-trafficking activities, the intervention strategy is based on experiences gained during the past three years of implementing anti-trafficking activities and on the advice and recommendations received via stakeholders and through the Danish Red Cross evaluation carried out in 2007. No specific gender analysis or assessment has been conducted, but as the trafficking field is often closely linked to the gender debate, it has been subject to thorough consideration how to balance this. The project will provide preventive information to women and girls who are often considered more at risk of being trafficked. Meanwhile, the project will also reach men and boys, who rarely consider themselves to be at risk of being trafficked, as data shows increasing numbers of male victims of trafficking.

# Quality, accountability and learning

Since the adoption of the Red Cross Law in 2005, the Red Cross of Serbia has made visible efforts to ensure that its activities and programmes are up to the required standards and support the domestic and international reputation of the organization. This includes ongoing development of **standard operating procedures for disaster response**, internal regulations that will facilitate optimum Red Cross response to disasters. The fact that no similar document exists in a national context, gives the Red Cross of Serbia an edge.

Moreover, the **municipal disaster preparedness** project is largely based on the inputs of other relevant organizations and stakeholders, with the Red Cross initiating the process and providing the forum in which the representatives of the community can discuss priorities and response coordination.

This **participatory approach** to programme design has also been introduced into the **home care programme** in 2005 through an assessment of needs conducted at local level, with involvement of local stakeholders and, crucially, potential and existing beneficiaries. The representatives of older people are members of the home care programme council (a body tasked with discussing programme performance and suggesting directions of further development to the implementing team), and the networking activities done through HumanaS place emphasis on the participation of potential and existing beneficiaries in the decision-making process.

That said, many of the field-level activities done in any of the programmes and projects should be considered pilot-projects, even widespread activities such as Roma kindergartens and home care. Their focus is on temporary support to communities through the Red Cross in order to build functional, efficient, sustainable models that can then be replicated or adapted in other communities. This is an ongoing, long-term process, and the constant work within the organizational development programme aims to ensure that the National Societies is efficient, transparent and accountable in all its activities.

Many of the programmes are informed and influenced by their prolonged contact with beneficiaries. Not only in ongoing service delivery programmes such as home care or social welfare, but also in work with refugees, through skills training where Red Cross branches actively follow the recipients of the training, assisting them with employment, and asylum seekers. This ensures that the Red Cross acts with accountability for its actions towards beneficiaries always in mind.

## How we work

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| 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:**<br>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.<br>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.<br>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.<br>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity. |

## Contact information

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