

Mid-Year report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme (CHARP)

Appeal No. MAA67002

30 July 2011

This report covers the period from 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2011



Belarus: Specialists of Brest RC mobile diagnostics team are screening thyroid gland in a woman living in Chernobyl affected area. **Belarus Red Cross**

In brief

Programme outcome: Effective medical, social and psychological assistance is provided to targeted individuals in the regions affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Programme(s) summary: In the reporting period, CHARP provided general medical, social and psychological assistance in the seven regions of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia affected by the Chernobyl disaster. The main focus was on thyroid cancer screening in the priority group of people who were aged between 0 and 40 at the time of the Chernobyl accident and live in radiation contaminated areas. The Red Cross mobile medical teams (MDL) screened 61,998 patients out of which 38 per cent were screened for the first time. Totally 27,119 cases of thyroid pathologies, 44 per cent of all screened, were detected. Totally 8,951 patients suspected of having different types of thyroid gland cancer were referred to specialised medical institutions. Suspected thyroid cancer cases were confirmed in 60 patients.

Financial situation: The total 2011 budget is CHF 512,163, of which 42 per cent covered. Expenditure was 137,412. Expenditure against budget was 27 per cent and expenditure against funding was 86 per cent. So far in 2011 the programme has received contributions from the Irish government, the Japanese Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross.

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

See also (insert related appeals here) [CHARP Revised Country Plan for 2011](#)

No. of people we have reached: According to reports from the Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia from January to June 2011 about 125,000 people have benefited directly from CHARP interventions as follows:

- **Thyroid gland and breast screening:** 61,998
- **Psychosocial support:** 42,400 people
- **Distribution of multivitamins:** 20,700 children

It is expected that the implementation of CHARP in the second half of 2011 will directly target about 70,000 people.

Our partners: CHARP is being implemented by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) together with the Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in close cooperation with the ministries of health of all three countries.

Context

In the first six months of 2011, IFRC together with the national Red Cross societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia continued implementing the long-term Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme (CHARP). Since January 2011, the programme was enriched with inclusion of one more mobile diagnostics laboratory. This MDL was established bilaterally by Ukraine Red Cross with assistance of German Red Cross in Volyn Region (Ukraine) also affected by Chernobyl disaster. Thus the updated CHARP consists of seven MDLs: 3 labs operate in Belarus, 3 – in Ukraine and 1 – in Bryansk region of Russian Federation.

During the reporting period IFRC continued its work as a member of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. An international meeting of UN IATF was organized via videoconference which connected 11 different locations (NY, London, Vienna, Kiev, Minsk, Moscow and others) involving over 60 participants on 26 January 2011. The members of the IATF discussed the progress of implementing the UN Action Plan on Chernobyl for the third decade after the disaster i.e. until 2016. Representatives of IFRC, who participated in this event at Kiev UNDP Office, reported/presented the current CHARP activities and showed to the international community that the Red Cross fulfils appropriately its commitments in terms of assisting people affected by Chernobyl disaster. On the other side the results of CHARP implementation in 2010 show that the health consequences of Chernobyl disaster are still serious and that this important work should be continued.

In 2011, the international community commemorates the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. In this regard the international conference "Twenty-Five Years after Chernobyl Accident. Safety for the Future" initiated by President of Ukraine was held in Kiev on 20-22 April 2011. Prominent leaders of the international community were participating in this big event like the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, leaders of IAEA, WHO, World Bank and other international agencies. By the invitation of the Ukrainian government Red Cross delegation (10 people) consisting of representatives of Japanese Red Cross, representatives of IFRC, leadership of Ukraine Red Cross Society were present. The Red Cross delegation was headed by IFRC Under-SG Mathias Schmale who delivered a statement on behalf of IFRC President, highlighting Chernobyl-related activities of Red Cross.

Progress towards outcomes

Programme purpose: **Effective medical, social and psychological assistance is provided to targeted individuals in the regions affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.**

Outcome(s)

Component outcome 1: Six mobile diagnostic laboratories have screened 90,000 people for thyroid gland pathologies in the target group of individuals who were 40 years old or younger at the time of the accident and living in contaminated areas.

Achievements

In the period from January to June 2011, the specialists of seven mobile diagnostics laboratories working within CHARP examined 61,998 people or about 59 per cent of the annual plan. Examined persons were aged 0 to 40 at the time of the accident and living in remote contaminated areas. The priority was given to areas which have not been screened recently or were not screened at all in the past were prioritized. About 38 per cent of examined people were screened for the first time since the disaster.

Among the screened people, MDL specialists detected 27,119 cases of abnormal scans, i.e. pathologies. This means that about 44 per cent of all screened people have pathologies of the thyroid gland in various stages of development. Among these abnormal scans the three primary thyroid pathologies detected by the medical teams were nodular pathology (about 38 per cent of all cases), diffuse goitre (38 per cent of all cases) and thyroiditis (16 per cent of all cases). The patients diagnosed with these pathologies are under constant monitoring by Red Cross mobile teams because if left undiagnosed or untreated, there is a risk that these conditions may develop into thyroid cancer.

Totally 8,951 patients suspected of having different types of thyroid gland cancer were referred to specialised medical institutions for in-depth examination and surgery if needed. Suspected thyroid cancer cases were confirmed in 60 patients by cytological examinations; information on these cases was provided by clinics to the Red Cross. The patients with confirmed cancer have received necessary treatment and are also being monitored by the mobile teams and health care institutions.

Along with thyroid examinations the medical team doctors conducted breast screening. In particular those women who had been diagnosed with thyroid nodular pathologies also passed through thyroid screening. In total 11,464 women passed this type of examinations. While conducting breast screening, in addition to examining patients women were also taught how to do self-examinations. Moreover the teams provided HIV counselling to the target group and helped the National Societies organize HIV activities such as peer education and information dissemination.

Component outcome 2: Stress and anxiety linked to radiation is reduced for 30,000 people through psychosocial support.

In the reporting period CHARP continued rendering psychosocial support focused on diminishing stress and anxiety, reducing risks of radiation exposure in the population. These efforts were also contributing to providing healthier lifestyles, combating alcohol and drug abuse as well as risky sexual behaviour.

In December 2010, the National Societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia conducted psychosocial workshops for the mobile medical teams and Red Cross staff and volunteers on methods and tools for providing psychosocial assistance to the victims of Chernobyl disaster. In the reporting period the knowledge obtained at these workshops helped the MDL staff, Red Cross staff and volunteers to better inform the population of the consequences of Chernobyl accident and how to deal with these problems and cope with crisis situations.

In addition, especially in the connection with 25th anniversary of Chernobyl disaster, the medical team doctors and Red Cross staff published articles in newspapers, gave interviews on local radio highlighting the consequences of the accident, explaining preventive measures against stress, related diseases and social problems.

Component outcome 3: Immunity is improved for 30,000 children living in highly contaminated areas through winter supplies of multivitamins containing the C, D and B groups with iron, folic acid and stable iodine.

At the end of 2010, CHARP distributed multivitamins containing C, D and B group with iron, folic acid and stable iodine in order to strengthen immune system of children living in radiation contaminated areas. That was provided with assistance of Federation's logistics service in Geneva which supplied in November 2010, 157,500 tabs of multivitamins to Belarus Red Cross and 150,000 tabs to Ukraine Red Cross. Russian Red Cross arranged local procurement of 300,000 tabs because it had been problematic to deliver the consignment from Europe to Bryansk Region.

The National Societies provided the distribution of these multivitamins among children in February-April 2011. These are the months when the lack of vitamins in the natural food products is highest. The multivitamins were distributed by regional/district RC organisations, RC MDLs, volunteers in children institutions: schools, kindergartens, children hospitals etc.

In particular, in Belarus the distribution of multivitamins was provided in Brest Region (Luninets district), in Gomel Region (Bragin and Gomel districts), Mogilev Region (Bykhov, Slavgorod, Cherikov, Krichev, Klimovichi, Chausy district and in Dribin town). In total 1,750 children received multivitamins.

In Bryansk Region (Russian Federation) the multivitamins were distributed in Novozybkov district highly affected by the Chernobyl disaster (contaminated by caesium 137 with density 15 Ci/km²). With assistance of Red Cross activists the vitamins were handed to 6,100 children and adolescents in kindergartens and schools in the course of prophylactic medical examinations provided annually by local health authorities.

In Ukraine the distribution of multivitamins was conducted mainly in April 2011. Some 12,850 children were provided with multivitamins in Volyn Region (Kamin-Kashirskiy, Lyubeshivskiy and Manevitskiy districts), in Zhitomir Region (Luginy, Korosten and Narodichi districts) and in Rovno Region (Dubrovitsa and Zarichne districts).

Regional Red Cross Committees received reports from schools, kindergartens, and children's hospitals located in radiation-contaminated areas that after taking multivitamins the children complain less of fatigue and headaches, and they are more rarely subject to acute respiratory diseases.

Constraints or Challenges

In the reporting period the main constraint for programme implementation was lack of funding due to delay with transfer of expected contribution from Irish government in amount of EUR 180,000. At present the Irish government is the main donor of CHARP. Because of this delay there were arrears in paying salaries to the staff working in the programme.

Working in partnership

CHARP is a cross-country project being implemented by IFRC together with the Red Cross societies of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in close cooperation with the ministries of health of the three countries. At present the local input constitutes about one third of the overall budget and the rest is provided via international support. The donors of CHARP are Irish government, the Japanese Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross. Besides, the newly created laboratory in Volyn Region in the first half of 2011 was supported by German RC.

In connection with commemorating 25th anniversary of Chernobyl disaster Kiev IFRC Office organised together with Ukraine RC a CHARP regional round-table meeting held on 14 April 2011. Taking part in this event were representatives of local authorities, embassies, international NGOs and mass media. Speeches were delivered by the Secretary General of Belarus RC, President of

URCS, Head of international department of Russian RC, IFRC Representative for Belarus and Ukraine and two leading Ukrainian scientists. CHARP coordinator made a presentation on the programme. They answered numerous questions and mass media took their interviews.

On 19 April 2011, a delegation of Japanese Red Cross, after had participated on international conference "Twenty-Five Years after Chernobyl Accident. Safety for the Future", visited Zhitomir Region. They got acquainted with CHARP activities, in particular with work of RC mobile laboratory, distribution of multivitamins supplied with support of Japanese Red Cross to children living in radiation affected areas. The delegation also visited abandoned areas affected by Chernobyl disaster.

Contributing to longer-term impact

During the reporting period senior staff from the three operating National Societies organised regular visits to the field for monitoring and ensuring share of experience and communication between the branches.

In the connection with 25th anniversary of Chernobyl disaster several international mass media agencies arrived to highlight CHARP. In particular in March-April correspondents of French newspaper "Liberation", journalists from Great Britain, Switzerland, Ireland, Russia, Belgium led by EZO communications manager visited Chernobyl nuclear power plant and CHARP mobile diagnostics laboratory in Zhitomir Region. The materials about CHARP activities were published in numerous international mass media.

Norwegian Red Cross and Japanese Red Cross allocated funds (CHF 5,375 and CHF 5,000 accordingly) for producing a film about CHARP activities. For this a professional film-maker from London, UK, was employed. He visited Chernobyl nuclear power plant and Ukraine and collected appropriate materials. The produced film profiles the health consequences of Chernobyl disaster and highlights work of RC mobile laboratory team doctors. The film was demonstrated at National Society Consultation Forum on nuclear weapons arranged by Japanese RC, Austrian RC and Norwegian RC held on 12-14 May in Oslo, Norway.

The film is placed on the website <http://dustandscratchesfilms.com/chernobyl/>

Looking ahead

In the second half of 2011, CHARP is going to operate on same conceptual basis. The core activities will be thyroid screening in remote areas of those aged 0 to 40 at the time of the disaster and providing psychosocial support for the affected population. Along with this MDL teams will conduct breast screening and general checks when necessary. In particular lab specialists will carry out blood testing for detecting sugar diabetes.

One of important issues is providing sustainability of programme. This will be discussed at the next meeting of the International Chernobyl Coordination Committee (ICCC) that is the coordination body of the programme, composed of the presidents of the Ukraine and Russian Red Cross Societies, the Secretary General of the Belarus Red Cross, and IFRC. The next meeting will be held in Lutsk (Ukraine) in September 2011. The participants of the meeting will discuss issues of programme sustainability, in particular the ways of mobilizing further international support and how to increase local input that in long-term perspective, in conformity with the CHARP strategy, to gradually hand over the programme to the governmental health care system.

How we work

All Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

<p>The IFRC's vision is to:</p> <p>Inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.</p>	<p>The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises. 2. Enable healthy and safe living. 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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