

Mid-Year report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belarus

MAABY002

31 August 2011

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



Belarus Red Cross youth volunteers in public action under the motto of the global campaign **Find the Volunteer Inside**. Belarus Red Cross.

In brief

Programme outcome: The Federation supported programmes in Belarus aim to reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disasters and public health emergencies; to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters; to increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability; and to promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme(s) summary: The overriding purpose of this programme support plan is to strengthen the Belarus Red Cross capacities in terms of increasing its role in the civil society to effectively address local vulnerabilities and to meet the humanitarian challenges facing Belarus today. These include the spread of infectious diseases – primarily HIV and AIDS – violence and trafficking, discrimination and marginalization of socially excluded groups.

The election of the National Society Presidium, Chairperson and Secretary General, adoption of a new strategy and statutes by the Belarus Red Cross Congress in May created a firm base for further national society development. The Congress emphasized the importance of strengthening that Belarus Red Cross has gone through over the past few years. This strengthening process has resulted in Belarus Red Cross becoming – and increasingly recognized as – a dynamic National Society with quality programmes, growing capacity and a strong focus on the most vulnerable. The increasing perception of Belarus Red Cross as a strong partner increases the organization ability to develop new partnerships and diversifying the funding base.

Financial situation: The total 2011 budget is CHF 1,067,719 of which CHF 530,534 (50 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). The budget will be increased due to income provisioned from European Commission for the joint IFRC/IOM anti-trafficking project running in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 296,837. Expenditure against budget was 28 per cent and expenditure against funding was 56 per cent. [Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

See also [Belarus Country Plan 2011](#)

No. of people we help: More than 90,000 people in Belarus benefited directly from the Federation Secretariat supported programme interventions. More than 250,000 people were reached indirectly through mass information campaigns.

Programme	People reached
Disaster Management	9,000
Health and Care	16,000
Organizational Development	53,000
Principles and values	12,000

Our partners: The Belarus Red Cross cooperates with eight partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), NGOs, the national centre for blood donation, national AIDS centre, ministries and governmental organizations, universities and other educational institutions, mass media as well as international and local enterprises. Concept notes and project proposals for EU funding were submitted by the Belarus Red Cross in cooperation with partner National Societies and IFRC.

Context

According to the World Bank, the official devaluation of the Belarusian rouble, held by the National Bank of Belarus on May 24, was the largest in the world for the past 20 years. Over the first five months of 2011, the official rate of Belarusian rouble has fallen by 71.6 per cent against a basket of currencies. After several months of uncertainty with currency restrictions, and with the resulting black market speculation, a Pandora's box of devaluation and inflation forces had spread throughout the economy. Trust in the government and the banking system is decreasing at the same speed that prices on most products are increasing. The first signs of an increase in unemployment showed up too. Many companies dependent on imports were forced to suspend their activity and fire employees. The Minister of Statistics and Analysis has already announced that about 600,000 people lost their jobs. But the actual number is probably much higher. What can be observed in Belarus' economy now resembles the breakdown of Soviet economic and political system. It is becoming obvious that the price of political and economic transformation, skipped by Belarus in 1990s, is going to be high. Pensioners, employees of state-owned industries, and the very poor, all of whom depend on the state for their survival, are in danger of losing their livelihoods. The risk of a humanitarian and political disaster developing as the economy falters is also very real, especially if Western governments take further steps to deepen the country's isolation.

The April 11 explosion in the capital's busiest subway station during an evening rush hour killed 13 and wounded more than 200 people – the first deadly bombing in a nation, where such serious security incidents have been rare. Belarus Red Cross staff was on the scene

immediately helping move out the injured, put on bandages, and trying to provide psychological assistance.¹

Trafficking in persons, especially women, remains a major challenge. Belarus is a source, destination, and transit country for women, men, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour. Reports continued of women from poor families forced into prostitution in the capital Minsk. Belarusian men, women, and children are found in forced begging, as well as in forced labour in the construction industry and other sectors in Russia and Belarus. Belarusian single, unemployed females between the ages of 16 and 30 and without higher education are at the greatest risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. Belarusian men seeking work abroad are increasingly subjected to forced labour. Traffickers often use informal social networks to approach potential victims. Some labour trafficking victims returned to Belarus with severe injuries, such as amputated limbs. According to the US Department of State², the Government of Belarus does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Despite these efforts, the government did not demonstrate evidence of increasing anti-trafficking efforts over the previous reporting period; therefore, Belarus is placed on a human trafficking watchlist. The *Trafficking in Persons Report's* recommendations for Belarus are to increase resources devoted to victim assistance and protection within Belarus; ensure all victims, including children, are provided with access to appropriate assistance and protection; cultivate a climate of cooperation with NGO partners providing critical victim protection services; and ensure that information is made publicly available on anti-trafficking efforts, including the number of prosecutions and convictions of trafficking offenders and the number of victims identified and referred to NGOs for assistance. In this context, Red Cross efforts to step up prevention and reintegration assistance to victims, as well as to cultivate non-tolerance towards exploitation, violence and forced labour play an important role.

The number of persons registered as HIV-positive in Belarus reached 12,133 in May 2011. The most severely affected age group is 15–29 years old (63.4 percent of all HIV-infected persons). Most of the infected population is male (61.6 percent), although the share of cases reported among women (38.4 percent) is rapidly increasing. Sexual way of HIV transmission has been the most common in Belarus for several years. However, injection drug use is still responsible for a large percentage of HIV infections. Drug users are therefore also among the most HIV affected groups in the population of Belarus.

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Programme purpose:

Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disasters and public health emergencies

Component 1: HIV and AIDS

Component outcome 1: Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection.

Component outcome 2: Vulnerability of PLHIV decreased through reducing HIV stigma and discrimination.
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Component outcome 3: The capacity of the National Society to deliver and sustain scaled-up

¹ For the news story at IFRC website please see <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/europe-central-asia/belarus/belarus-something-horrible-is-happening-at-oktyabrskaya-station/>

² United States Department of State, *2011 Trafficking in Persons Report - Belarus*, 27 June 2011, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e12ee9589.html>

HIV programmes strengthened.

Since the beginning of the year Belarus Red Cross has worked to introduce gender oriented approaches in HIV prevention and harm reduction programming, to expand range and quality of services provided to female injecting drug users (IDUs), as well as to strengthen capacity of local organizations providing services to IDUs. This work is supported by IFRC and Italian Red Cross through the project *Enhanced access for female IDUs to HIV prevention and harm reduction services* piloted in Grodno region. The project is implemented in close cooperation with key HIV service organizations in the country. During the reporting period, the project saw the opening of a day care center for female IDUs and their children that is now equipped with washing machine, shower, microwave, computer and information materials.

A social survey *Evaluation of gender-oriented approaches in harm reduction projects* was commissioned by Belarus Red Cross in Grodno with the use of an external consultant. The survey was made by questionnairing female IDUs and holding two focus groups among female and male IDUs. The survey will help to assess gender issues and stereotypes among IDUs in Grodno in relation to their impact on HIV prevention and harm reduction projects, needs of IDUs in gender oriented approaches in HIV prevention and harm reduction services, and obstacles to the introduction of differentiated services. Preliminary analysis of questionnaires filled by 85 female IDUs indicates that 30 percent of responders face psycho-emotional problems, 30 percent reported an abortion over the past year. A number of respondents emphasized their dependency on male partners and violence. Based on results of the survey an expert in the field of work with IDUs will develop recommendations for introducing gender-oriented approaches in HIV prevention and harm reduction projects.

The project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* was accomplished in February 2011. The project purpose was to ensure that youth in pilot organizations has access to HIV prevention programmes and benefits from elaborated and improved HIV prevention policies at work places. HIV prevention and anti-discrimination activities under the project were carried out at the three largest national enterprises including Belarusian Auto Works (BELAZ), Belarus Steel Works and Belarus State Railways. The project assisted companies in informing staff and their families about safe sexual behavior, preventing HIV from affecting staff performance and creating more balanced labour relations. The project reached 26,006 people, 37 percent of them (9,632) are youth, under the age of 31. The coverage of the secondary target group was 28,695 people (family members of the staff) and 36,353 people (in local communities). In total 68 volunteers from the target group (enterprise youth staff aged under 31 years old) and 37 Belarus Red Cross volunteer students were involved in the project implementation. Above all, the three target enterprises adopted HIV prevention policies based on ILO's non-discrimination principles and including HIV prevention trainings for the staff during working hours. In line with their policies and action plans the enterprises continue their work towards reducing stigma and discrimination against PLHIV.

In March Belarus Red Cross launched the project *Support and capacity strengthening of PLHIV* supported by American Red Cross in Zhlobin, Gomel region. The project team works to improve quality of life of PLHIV by enhancing their access to prevention, treatment and care services. The services include psychological, medical, social and legal counseling, humanitarian assistance, education on how to live with HIV and activities forming an enabling environment in the local community. The project also includes replication of the experiences/approaches gained and tested through IFRC-supported project *HIV prevention in the field of labour* to other enterprises in Zhlobin. In June 2011 representatives of six enterprises interested in introducing and implementing ILO standards on HIV/AIDS in workplace took part in a partnership meeting organized by Belarus Red Cross in Zhlobin, where the main educational module "What should everyone know about HIV/AIDS?" was presented. According to the participants, the session on HIV-related stigma and discrimination was the most effective. The session was facilitated by Anna Nazarova, consultant and representative of the Belarusian community of PLHIV, living with

disclosed HIV+ status. Moreover, during the meeting a plan for further action related to implementation of the program “Health @t work” was discussed. The partnership meeting was also attended by representatives of the Danish Red Cross (within the experience exchange visit). They highly estimated the mentioned meeting and highlighted the variety of forms and techniques of work and involvement of a representative of the PLHIV Community. Furthermore, the national society and regional administration agreed on participation of a Red Cross representative in meetings of the Regional Interdepartmental Council on Prevention of HIV and STIs, as well as defined a range of partner organizations to be included in a regional referral system among HIV-oriented organizations (governmental and non-governmental).

With Danish Red Cross bilateral support Belarus Red Cross continues its countrywide HIV prevention efforts through peer education and anti-discrimination activities in 30 educational institutions of the country. In the first six months of 2011 a total of 20,684 young people were reached through peer education sessions, youth actions, film group sessions, seminars and lectures under the project *Youth against HIV*. The project involves 135 active volunteers including 99 volunteer instructors.

Component 2: Community-based first aid

Component outcome 1: Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) have increased.
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After a terrorist attack at Oktyabrskaya metro station near Belarus Red Cross headquarters in Minsk it was decided to organize first aid trainings for all staff of Belarus Red Cross headquarters. In June 2011 about 50 percent of headquarters’ staff successfully passed first aid training conducted by the Red Cross Minsk city branch.

Even though the *pandemic preparedness* component is not included in Country Plan 2011, Belarus Red Cross has maintained its commitment to further increase capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with human influenza pandemic. In the reporting period, Belarus Red Cross successfully accomplished a three-month pilot project *Sustaining pandemic preparedness in orphanages* aimed at awareness-raising of the target group on pandemic influenza aspects, ways of self protection and promotion of healthy lifestyle. With the IFRC support, a peer education model was adapted to pandemic settings and introduced into the work of pilot orphanages in Minsk City and Minsk Region; eight volunteer-instructors were trained at ToT (two volunteer-instructors per orphanage); four supervisors were trained to guide and supervise volunteer-instructors (one supervisor per orphanage); 56 representatives of target audience received knowledge on pandemic influenza, its symptoms, ways of transmission and personal protection through information sessions; about 150 people were reached with prevention messages during Red Cross public actions. The project was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, local administration and mass media.

Constraints or Challenges:

Lack of donor interest is one of the stumbling blocks to further scaling up of HIV programming. Even though the achievements at the three pilot enterprises remain sustainable, the successful innovative HIV workplace programme is discontinued and the Belarus Red Cross is losing its important HIV prevention role in the field of labour. Thanks to the American Red Cross support the positive workplace experiences are being replicated to other enterprises in Zhlobin.

Disaster Management

Programme purpose:

Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters
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Programme component 1: Disaster response

Component outcome 1: Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of those
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people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition.

IFRC and the Swiss Red Cross supported the Belarus Red Cross in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable individuals affected by the socio-economic crisis. A total of 8,294 food parcels were procured and delivered to Belarus Red Cross regional branches to support elderly people living alone and people with disabilities, homeless people, people with low incomes, people released from prisons and multi-child families. Distributions to final beneficiaries have been completed by the end of June.

Through this six-month operation a total of 4,141 vulnerable people benefited from 8,294 food parcels. Taking into consideration the fact that each large family supported by the project consists of three or more kids, the number of beneficiaries reached over 8,932 people. Such support in supplementary nutrition is deeply appreciated by project beneficiaries. These 8,932 project beneficiaries not only improved their nutritional status, but also their health and psychosocial status through assisting them in breaking social isolation and raising awareness of the local community.

Within the *Twice Christmas* operation supported by the Swiss Red Cross more food parcels will be procured and distributed. A tender for the purchase of additional food parcels will be completed in July.

Furthermore, the Swiss Red Cross commissioned an important evaluation to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of humanitarian aid projects in Belarus and Moldova. The results and lessons drawn from this evaluation shall advise on the opportunities for future humanitarian aid projects in Eastern Europe countries.

In February 2011, a representative of the Icelandic Red Cross visited Belarus with the aim to monitor distribution of in-kind assistance supplied to Belarus Red Cross Grodno regional branch. The assistance contained clothes, footwear and other items for children. Being satisfied with the results of the visit the representative of the Icelandic Red Cross expressed the wish to continue assistance for Belarusian children.

The National Society also maintained its own disaster relief fund and regional emergency stocks, and ensured that a sufficient number of staff and volunteers are on stand-by in case of disaster. Two per cent of the Red Cross's income from membership fees and local non-earmarked donations is allocated to the relief fund which enabled the Belarus Red Cross to procure relief items for domestic spring floods.

After a massive earthquake and tsunami in Japan the Belarus Red Cross launched a national fund-raising campaign in support of the affected population. As a result of a 2.5 month campaign Belarus Red Cross collected 213,084,648 Belarusian roubles donated by private entrepreneurs, legal entities, and individuals. In addition Belarus Red Cross allocated USD 3,000 USD from its emergency fund. In total, Belarus Red Cross transferred euro 30,000 to the special account of the Japanese Red Cross.

Local fund-raising campaign in support of blast victims in Minsk subway has yielded some USD 60,000 which will be used for their rehabilitation. Estonian RC contributed Euro 1,000. With IFRC support Belarus RC has already trained a core team of 15 volunteers who visit the blast victims and their family members (82 people), assess their needs, assist in daily chores those living alone, and extend moral support. Belarus RC is now preparing to supply the blast victims with medication and rehabilitation items, as well as to meet other needs of the affected families.

In May 2011 the month of Belarus Red Cross under the slogan *Mercy without borders* became a part of the global campaign *Find the Volunteer Inside You*. Moreover, in May 2011 the Belarus Red Cross celebrated its 90 Years Anniversary. Charity events and volunteer activities to support the most vulnerable, especially single pensioners and disabled people, the elderly living

in nursing homes and nursing hospitals, were held by the Belarus Red Cross during this month in all regions of the country. Among the most notable public events were concerts, motor rally, actions in maternity homes, and a steamboat excursion for the disabled on wheelchairs with a press-conference and a visit to the church on the way. A fest was organized on 21 May 2011 in Central Gorky park as a final event of the campaign. Over the month, 21,502 people received Red Cross assistance for the value of 770,636,552 Belarusian roubles (CHF 153,000). A total of 48,163 people were involved in the activities including 9,751 volunteers and 154 new Red Cross primary organizations were set up.

Constraints or Challenges:

The use of locally raised funds for the benefit of Minsk blast survivors is strictly limited to victims' rehabilitation, therefore Belarus Red Cross capacity building needs are still not fully covered. So far Belarus Red Cross efforts to establish psychosocial support service are continued with Austrian Red Cross funds (CHF 18,600) while the total cost of the project *Psychosocial support in crisis* is CHF 57,800. CHF 39,200 are still required in order to fully meet the project objective. The Belarus Red Cross is also interested to join ENPS (European Network for Psychosocial Support) however their participation in the ENPS Annual Forum is questionable due to funding constraints.

Organisational Development

Programme purpose:

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

Programme component 1: Improving the Belarus Red Cross's leadership capacities to develop and implement strategies, to ensure good performance and accountability

Component outcome 1: Implementation of the revised statutes.

Component outcome 2: Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels.

The revised statutes were adopted by the Belarus Red Cross Congress in May 2011.

Limited resources meant that no activities were implemented for improving leadership capacities.

Programme component 2: Ensuring a well-functioning organization with sustainable systems, procedures and staff with desired level of managerial and technical competencies.

Component outcome 1: Effective and transparent human resource management.

Component outcome 2: Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines.

Component outcome 3: Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems.

Component outcome 4: Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication.

Belarus Red Cross Congress was held on 20 May. The Congress elected new Governance (Belarus RC presidium, chairman and secretary general), adopted Belarus Red Cross strategy for 2012-2015 and endorsed revisions and amendments to the National Society statutes.

The Congress also highlighted the national society achievements over the past five years. 11.7 percent of the Belarusian population are members of the Belarus Red Cross. 17,400 volunteers are involved into Red Cross activities all over the country. During five years over 250,000 vulnerable people (orphans, elderly living alone, people with physical and mental disabilities,

children with cancer, at-risk teenagers, large families, underprivileged children, etc.) benefited from Belarus Red Cross activities.

New Belarus Red Cross strategy was aligned with IFRC Strategy 2020. It was developed with active involvement of all regional branches and in consultation with relevant national and international partners. There are four strategic directions in the strategy: health and care, promotion of the Movement's fundamental principles, disaster preparedness and response, organizational development. The strategy sets out priorities for implementation of Belarus Red Cross statutory activities for the next four years in the context of the current situation in the Belarus. The National Society auxiliary role is reflected in addressing pressing social issues by increasing access of vulnerable groups to health and social services, implementing activities to prevent negative social phenomena that result in population's vulnerability, and attracting financial, material and human resources to the Belarus Red Cross.

In 2011 Ludmila Lelikova, visiting nurse of the Belarus Red Cross Mogilev city branch was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal, one of the highest honors the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement can bestow. It is the second time over the recent years when Belarus Red Cross visiting nurses are internationally recognized.

Programme component 3: Developing a nation-wide coverage of grass-roots units and services

Component outcome 1: Develop a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/ units at grass-roots level.
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Component outcome 2: Support branches/units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.
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In February Belarus Red Cross accomplished the three-year project *Development of youth volunteer movement and participation* supported by the IFRC Capacity Building Fund in Vitebsk region. In the end of the project period a quality self-assessment was carried out with active participation of volunteer leaders, members of volunteer councils, branch staff and partners. The whole exercise was an honest reflection over the past three years highlighting key results and providing guidance for potential future youth projects in the region (the report is available with the Zone office and IFRC representation in Belarus).

Over three years, 29 youth volunteer initiatives were supported and implemented. Adding to this, seven initiatives were supported with own funds of Belarus Red Cross Vitebsk regional branch. At total of 8,326 vulnerable people benefited from the implementation of these community-based initiatives. Besides, 4,932 people benefited from youth actions and at least 39,545 people became the secondary target group reached with information about Belarus Red Cross activities. 234 youth leaders, volunteers and staff were trained in leadership, volunteer management, planning of community-based initiatives during the project period. They transmitted their knowledge and skills to more than 450 volunteers. By April 2011, four Volunteer Councils (VC) were established and continue to execute their functions: Vitebsk City VC, Vitebsk region VC and two district VC. Electronic volunteer database was developed and introduced in 2009 and is updated regularly. To date, the data base contains data about 1,145 volunteers from 18 districts of Vitebsk region. All these volunteer-led initiatives enjoy support from the local authorities and other stakeholders (e.g. letters of support to the volunteer initiatives, permissions to use local administration's bank accounts for cash transfers to volunteer groups and to provide free-of-charge support by administration's finance officers to process accounting documentation). Local authorities also supported the establishment of a Steering Committee on volunteering issues initiated by Vitebsk Red Cross branch. The Steering Committee will support and promote further development of volunteer movement in Vitebsk region, especially in remote areas.

Partnership with the Danish Red Cross in volunteer development continues. The exchange with the Danish Red Cross Youth volunteers was organized in May-June 2011. The objective of the Danish and Belarusian intercultural exchange project was to give youth in Belarus and Denmark increased awareness of alternative ways to conduct Red Cross projects. By sending two Danish youth to volunteer in the local Belarus Red Cross branch in Brest the project made Belarusian youth aware of the cultural and social challenges in Denmark. Contrary the Danish volunteers learned about Belarusian culture and received inspiration to take new Red Cross activities back to Denmark.

Constraints or Challenges:

Limited resources were a major constraint leading to scaling down of successful activities which are focusing on involving citizens in voluntary service delivery.

There is a need in elaboration of common approaches in collecting and sharing data (statistics, performance indicators) in all regional Belarus Red Cross branches and headquarters.

Principles and Values

Programme purpose:

Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.
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Programme component 1: Promotion of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values

Component outcome 1: Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general.

Component outcome 2: The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and changing behaviour.
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The promotion of humanitarian values is an integral part of key National Society programmes. In addition, dissemination of humanitarian values and reduction of stigma and discrimination are incorporated into other programme activities such as youth volunteer actions and community-based initiatives. The activities in promotion of humanitarian principles and values are supported by ICRC.

Programme component 2: Anti-discrimination and violence prevention/reduction programmes
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Component outcome 1: Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence.
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Component outcome 2: Improved access to psychosocial support, healthcare and legal counselling services for migrants and victims of trafficking.

The National Society currently runs five regional consultation centres called “Hands of Help” and two district centres³ offering support to victims of trafficking. By mobilizing its own resources and building new partnerships, the Belarus Red Cross strives to sustain the work of the centres.

Joint IFRC/IOM project *Strengthening national mechanisms for the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking* (supported by EC) starts rolling out in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Following a coordination meeting between IOM and IFRC in Kiev, country coordination meetings were held with participation of Red Cross societies, IFRC and IOM in Belarus and Ukraine. Project staff is in place and action plans are updated. In Belarus the project will be implemented in Brest, Gomel, Grodno, Vitebsk and Mogilev regions on the basis of consultation centres “Hands of Help”.

³ In Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno, Gomel and Mogilev, and Novopolotsk and Mozyr respectively.

The project *Youth volunteering to prevent trafficking in human beings* (supported by IFRC, Icelandic Red Cross and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland) continued throughout 2011 and in June entered the second year of the three-year implementation cycle. During the past year youth groups in Gomel region developed and implemented their own volunteer initiatives targeting those at risk of being trafficked or abused. The initiatives included awareness raising, peer education, movie group discussions, essay/drawing competitions, quizzes, role plays, and forum theatre; psychological assistance; safe internet use; and activities aiming at development of self-esteem and professional education.

These community-based initiatives were implemented by 241 volunteers (including 88 newly-attracted) and reached 1,201 people in four locations raising their awareness of human trafficking and helping adopt safe behavior models. 95 representatives of the target group also became Red Cross volunteers. 3,657 hours of work were spent by the volunteers for the initiatives (in average 185 hours per volunteer). In addition, a total of 1,345 at-risk youth aged 14-35 living in towns and villages of Gomel region benefited from awareness-raising campaigns, training and educational sessions. Over 9,025 representatives of local communities (parents, townspeople, teachers, friends of volunteers and target group representatives) were mobilized by the project through active Red Cross volunteers and staff. Campaigns and volunteer-led initiatives help to reach a much wider audience and promote increased awareness of risks in the society, but also assist both potential and actual VoT.

A training on effective job search was organized in April 2011 in Gomel for 17 people from the trafficking-risk group. The training covered the following topics: motivation to find a job, how to set targets and objectives, how to analyze your own resources, how to behave during the interview, how not to get into situation of trafficking, etc. Four VoT were assisted in finding a job.

A new system of support of victims of trafficking and violence is being established in Belarus Red Cross in 2011. The *mentoring system* will give the possibility to a victim to be integrated into normal life with the help of a Red Cross volunteer. Trained mentors will be rendering day-to-day support. The workshop on mentoring was organized with the *Networking against trafficking in human beings* project support in March 2011. However, it was discussed that it can be difficult for the volunteers to work with VoT, so the system will be first piloted in Grodno region and will target victims of violence.

On 6-8 June within the project *Strengthening Visiting Nurses Service* Belarus Red Cross conducted a workshop on advocacy for vulnerable people in local communities. Among the participants were representatives of advocacy groups of vulnerable people in local communities and staff of the Belarus Red Cross from Vitebsk and Grodno regions as well as representatives of the Bulgarian and the Swiss Red Cross societies. The aim of the workshop was to teach vulnerable people (elderly, disabled living alone, disabled children and their families, orphans) the advocacy elements such as how to find information, communicate with local authorities and the media, not just demanding but together finding ways of solving problems in order to improve their standard of living.

Constraints or Challenges:

Limited resources are the main constraint for the Principles and Values programme, in particular for the components targeting migrants and victims of trafficking.

Limited resources were a major constraint leading to scaling down of successful activities aimed at social inclusion and empowerment of older people. IFRC efforts to mobilize resources for this area from DFID succeeded in the second quarter of 2011 and the Belarus Red Cross will soon revitalize its work aimed at community development through participatory approaches.

Working in partnership

The main international bilateral and multilateral partners within the Movement are the ICRC delegation in Moscow, the Danish, Swiss, Austrian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese and American Red Cross Societies as well as the consortium of German and Swiss Red Cross Societies. In the national arena traditional partners are the ministries of health, social welfare, emergency, justice, internal affairs and education.

In 2011 Belarus Red Cross started to function as the Secretariat of ERNA. In this capacity Belarus Red Cross works to strengthen and promote the exchange of experiences, information and best practices among member National Societies and with others, facilitating collaborative actions in the prevention of HIV, AIDS, TB and other communicable diseases with UN agencies, EU, nongovernmental organizations, Global Fund and other organizations. Acting as the Secretariat of ERNA Belarus Red Cross conducted preparation to the General Meeting planned to be conducted in September 2011 in Slovenia, coordinated evaluation of ERNA activities in 2007-2010.

Within the framework of partnership with the Danish Red Cross the volunteers exchange was made in May-June 2011. The aim of the exchange was to learn the experience of the corresponding national societies in the sphere of fundraising and international humanitarian law in order to improve the quality of volunteer working in the native country. One of the tasks of the exchange was to discuss the development of the role-play on human trafficking. During the exchange the Danish volunteers visited Gomel and participated in the forum-theater activities of one of the initiatives.

With financial support of the Austrian Red Cross community care for children with disabilities in Grodno region is provided. 54 families with children with disabilities are supervised through home visits of the Red Cross multifunctional team. Twice a week 12–14 children attend Grodno Red Cross Day Centre. In addition, family members are involved in Parents' Club and self-help group meetings. Engagement of volunteers and the awareness building activities enhance the social integration of children with disabilities.

Belarus Red Cross representative as a member of Belarus delegation took part in European Conference *HIV in European Region - Unity and Diversity* held on 25-27 May in Tallinn. During the conference Belarus Red Cross and Belarusian Community of PLHIV presented their best practices and experiences of cooperation aiming at reduction of stigma and discrimination. The joint initiatives of Belarus Red Cross and Belarusian Community of PLHIV were rated by the participants as effective and successful example of such partnership. These innovative approaches in HIV prevention will be also shared through ERNA which Secretariat is currently hosted by Belarus Red Cross.

Belarus Red Cross also established cooperation with the International Alliance on HIV/AIDS in Ukraine. A preliminary agreement on further joint efforts was achieved in the area of staff training, internships, work of experts.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All projects implemented by the Belarus Red Cross are aligned with IFRC's Strategy 2020. The National Society works to ensure gender equity and ensures equal participation and access of women and men through appropriate information materials and in the design of project activities. Gender balance is sought in project management structures.

Competence-building is a key element in all project activities carried out by the Belarus Red Cross as it encourages knowledge, skills and experience development. The activities have built competencies and capacities both at the national and local level, enabling the society to provide

young and older people with opportunities to carry out social initiatives and advocating for their rights and needs in the local communities.

Local authorities played an essential role in the development of volunteer service delivery through providing administrative support, expertise and resources, and in establishing new mechanisms for interaction between local authorities and civil society organizations. At lower administrative levels Belarus Red Cross local branches worked closely with local administrations and educational and social welfare authorities to ensure access to the target groups, as well as to increase the sustainability of the community-based initiatives and to ensure exchange of information about best practices. The Red Cross continues to focus on developing its local network of branch units and improving its access to vulnerable people with sustainable and high quality services. To this end supported by the IFRC secretariat and other National Societies the Belarus Red Cross actively strives to attract EU funding.

Looking ahead

Belarus Red Cross started preparations for applications to the EU call for proposals under the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities Programme and Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine.

Belarus Red Cross will be also a partner in the application to EuropeAid for *Regional capacity building programme for improved access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care* currently being developed with the support of the Danish Red Cross.

The interest towards gender-oriented approaches in HIV services delivery (particularly, needs of female IDUs) is constantly growing and the need for their introduction is being increasingly recognized in Belarus. The National Society and the International Federation are in the process of preparing a concept note for the next year of project implementation taking into account lessons learned to date.

In addition, Belarus Red Cross proposal that aims to reduce stigma and discrimination of PLHIV, was selected for support (USD 23,800) by the US Embassy Small Grant Program. The project will start in September and will contribute to forming tolerant attitudes in local communities and an enabling environment for PLHIV and their families; building community capacities for effective reduction of stigma; and improvement of interaction and partnership between civil society and authorities to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS.

<p>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>	
<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.

Contact information

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