

Mid-Year report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Serbia

Appeal No. MAARS001

31/August/2011

This report covers the period from 01/01/20 11 to 30/06/2011.



Assistance with homework to a Roma child from a poor family. Photo: Red Cross of Serbia

In brief

Programme outcome: The Serbian Red Cross Society's programmes are aligned with the aims of Strategy 2020 to save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises; enable healthy and safe living; and promote social inclusion and culture of non-violence and peace. The capacity-building efforts are in line with Enabling Action One to build strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Programme(s) summary : The International Federation continues to support the Red Cross of Serbia in its efforts to provide efficient and quality services to the most vulnerable groups within the following programmes:

- **Disaster management.** Disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities will be intensified in the second half of 2011 with fresh funding available. The National Society was supported in continuing municipal level disaster response simulation exercises through brokering and helping to organise eight sessions.
- **Health and care.** The focus is on HIV and AIDS as well as Voluntary Blood Donation activities that will take place in the second half of the year.
- **Organizational development.** The focus is on developing sustainable systems, procedures and increasing the staff's capacities. Funding for these activities is still required.
- **Principles and values.** Work with vulnerable populations on their strengthening and integration, as well as advocacy: vulnerable Roma children, young people living with disabilities, older vulnerable people. Funding was available only for the activities related to the work with vulnerable Roma children and also children / young people living with disabilities where the third year of a three-year project is under way. In that project, 1,699 Roma children and their parents have been reached, along with 1,080 children / young people living with disabilities and their parents. These beneficiaries were supported in integration into the society through help with education and obtaining various skills. Additionally, 993 school-children have been reached with activities related to promotion of human values covering the topics of children's rights, tolerance, personal and cultural identity and diversity, nonviolent conflict resolution, combatting

discrimination and stigmatization, promoting gender equality and fighting Internet violence).

Limited funding dictates that some of the activities have to be postponed until times when there are means to implement them. The International Federation continues to support the Serbian National Society in looking for new sources of funding to invest into priority areas and achieve the planned results.

Financial situation: The total 2011 budget is CHF 586,675, of which CHF 228,622 (39 per cent) was covered during the reporting period (including the opening balance). The overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 186,569 (31 per cent of the budget).

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

No. of people we have reached:

A total of 3,772 people benefited directly from Federation supported programmes.

January - June 2011, Serbia	Targeted groups	People reached
Humanitarian Values	Vulnerable Roma children and their parents	1,699
Humanitarian Values	Children / Young adults living with disabilities, including their parents	1,080
Humanitarian Values	Schoolchildren	993
Total number of people reached		3,772

Our partners: The Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development contributed as a multilateral donor. The Danish and the Spanish Red Cross Societies have contributed as bilateral donors on programmes coordinated by the Federation. Two Serbian Ministries were programme partners, and some 30 Serbia local governments and services were also involved.

Context

The economy in Serbia has nominally experienced a modest growth in the first half of 2011 with Gross Domestic Product increasing by 2.2%. The unemployment, however, continued to rise, reaching 22.2 percent (from 20 at the beginning of the year). At the same time, the inflation has reached 12.7% at the end of June 2011 (while the value planned by the National Bank was 5.3%). The standard of living in Serbia has been stagnating and deteriorating, and, as a result, more than 700,000 people (9.5% of the population) live below the poverty line.

The stagnating economy is being kept afloat through credit arrangements with the International Monetary Fund with the latest negotiations being described as pre-emptive in the expectations of the second wave of the international financial crisis to affect Serbia.

At the same time, the two main political concerns of Serbia – the accession to the European Union and the Kosovo situation – are becoming more pressing. The Kosovo authorities are moving to strengthen their hold on the northern part of the territory, which makes the ethnic Serbian population there feeling threatened and reacting explosively with an uneasy stalemate reached only for the situation to be further tackled in autumn. The EU accession process, on the other hand, is perceived as slowing down after the full compliance with International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia has been reached and the topic of Kosovo's status has subsequently been flagged by EU representatives. Both these issues are frustrating the nation and are sure to impact the general elections tentatively scheduled for early 2012.

The most vulnerable population remains the same: older vulnerable people, poor Roma people and people living with disabilities; however the growing number of unemployed people decreases the capacity of the society as a whole to support the vulnerable groups.

Natural disasters are also a concern with the damages of a strong earthquake in Kraljevo region from November 2010 still being mended, notably through Red Cross of Serbia activities on relief and reconstruction.

Nonetheless, the Red Cross of Serbia was also very successful in collecting funds to support the Japanese Red Cross in responding to the cataclysmic earthquake/ tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011. The citizens of Serbia, the institutions and companies have, through the Red Cross of Serbia, sent USD 2,312,000 to the people of Japan.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

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.

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.
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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.

There was no funding for these activities in the reporting period. However the Federation has, through its programme manager, supported the eight simulation exercises in Serbian municipalities where the Red Cross of Serbia used the USAID funding to gather stakeholders and analyse response capacities / initiate updates of procedures and drafting of contingency plans. The Federation's Disaster Management programme coordinator was active in the exercises as well as in the preparatory activities. The direct support for this activity will be provided in the second half of 2011 using the funding provided in the meantime through a global agreement between the Federation and DFID.

The new law regulating Disaster Management in Serbia was adopted at the end of 2009, and national disaster management bodies are in the process of forming. Most bylaws planned to be adopted in the six-month transitional phase between the adoption of the law in the Parliament and its full functionality are still in preparation. However, some have been adopted, notably the decision on establishing a National Fund for Emergency Situations which now grants the Red Cross of Serbia the opportunities to apply for funds (sourced from the national budget) with its Disaster Preparedness projects. At the same time, the adopted bylaw that regulates the work of local level headquarters for emergency response grants the Red Cross of Serbia branches the opportunity to discuss their roles in emergency response at municipal level.

Another five bylaws have been adopted with 26 more planned to be adopted by the end of the year 2011.

Programme component 2: Risk reduction
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Component outcome 1: Risk-prone areas within five highly disaster-prone municipalities are mapped, identifying risks and capacities. The data collected are further presented in the form of GIS, an additional tool for disaster management at municipal level.

Component outcome 2: The safety of schoolchildren in ten municipalities is increased through education on hazards and the promotion of safety procedures in emergency situations.
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No funding was available for these activities in the reporting period.

Health and Care

Programme purpose

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

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

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.

These activities are planned for the second half of 2011 with modest funding provided to the Serbian National Society only during summer upon receiving plans of action and budgets.

Organizational Development / Capacity Building

Programme purpose

Increase the Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

Programme component 1: Improvement of public image and public relations
Component outcome 1: The Serbian National Society has developed a systematic promotion procedure relying on ongoing activities and contacts with the media.
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 undertaken a capacity / needs survey and has based its strategic planning on the results.

No funding was available in the reporting period.

Humanitarian values

Programme purpose

Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme component 1: Home care programme
Component outcome 1: Empower local communities working through the Red Cross branches to 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 Serbian 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 are actively participating in planning and

implementing the activities.

There was no funding for these activities in the reporting period.

Programme component 2: Open kindergartens for Roma and other children from marginalized families / Work with young adults living with disabilities

Component outcome 1:

Education and social participation of Roma children and children / young people with disabilities has been improved through continuing work with 2,700 Roma and disabled children as well as their families.

The programme was designed using the right-based approach, and it consists of four distinct components:

1. Service delivery
2. Advocacy
3. Capacity building
4. Cooperation

Component outcome 2:

By the end of 2011, the level of enrolment, retention and inclusion of vulnerable Roma children and YPWD in the official education system is higher, in order for them to receive education in accordance with their needs and rights achieved, with the support of the Serbian Red Cross;

Component outcome 3:

By the end of 2011, parents, family, community, social system and the Red Cross of Serbia provide better support for personal psycho-social development for vulnerable Roma and YPWD involved in the programme;

Component outcome 4:

By the end of 2011, there is an evident increase of confidence in the health care system and use of its services and raised awareness of the vulnerable groups of healthier life styles

Component outcome 5:

By the end of 2011, both vulnerable Roma and YPWD involved in the programme have better access to social services to meet their needs and rights, with the support of the Serbian RC;

Component outcome 6:

By the end of 2011, communities in which the programme is implemented and both mentioned vulnerable groups have developed a higher degree of mutual understanding / acceptance;

Component outcome 7:

By the end of 2011, the YPWD involved in the programme have developed appropriate skills with support of the Serbian RC that empower them to be recognised as active job seekers in the labour market.

Joint programme for Inclusion

The programme is run in Serbia and Montenegro in parallel, managed by the same team and with similar activities in both countries. In Serbia, the Joint Programme for Inclusion was implemented in 30 municipalities targeting 1,121 vulnerable Roma children, in 12 municipalities targeting 993 pupils – peers of vulnerable Roma pupils (see Component 3) and in 30 municipalities targeting 689 children and young people with disabilities.

The Joint Programme for Inclusion in Serbia was successfully implemented in this reporting period thanks to the hard work of 401 Red Cross volunteers, 197 Red Cross employees and staff on loan, nearly 102 associates from partners' organisations and 41 supporters of other status involved in the programme implementation.

Vulnerable Roma children, and children and young people with disabilities, have actively participated in a number of various Red Cross activities together with Serbian Red Cross volunteers and other children, which is beneficial in the light of inclusion.

The third project activities cycle for vulnerable Roma children in progress

In September 2010, new education groups were formed. The breakdown of beneficiaries in the new project cycle lasting until August 2011 is as follows:

Beneficiaries	Serbia
Mentor classes	447
Preschool preparatory programme	119
Homework support classes	555
Total number of children	1,121
Programme for parents	578
Total number of beneficiaries	1,699

Key segments of service delivery for vulnerable Roma children were the following.

- **Mentor classes:** support to preschool children (age 3-6) to enrol into the formal preschool preparatory programme was implemented by 25 Red Cross branches encompassing 447 vulnerable Roma children in Serbia;
- **Preschool preparatory programme:** in communities where the capacities of formal preschool institutions or accessibility for vulnerable Roma children are limited, the Red Cross branches provided replacement programmes. This was done by 6 Red Cross branches encompassing 119 vulnerable Roma children in Serbia;
- **Homework support classes:** support to vulnerable Roma pupils in elementary schools was provided by 22 RC branches encompassing 555 pupils in Serbia.
- **Programme for parents:** currently organised in the form of parents' meetings and thematic workshops based on the local needs, this programme was implemented by 29 RC branches encompassing 578 parents.

Service delivery for children and young people with disabilities in progress

Key segments of service delivery for the vulnerable children and young people with disabilities included various activities in the form of interactive workshops aiming to:

- Stimulate social development and inclusion;
- Help beneficiaries acquire practical life skills;
- Stimulate intellectual development;
- Stimulate perception and fine movement control motorics;
- Improve skills that are relevant for active job seeking;
- Support the parents.

Here is an overview of the four segments of work with children and young people with disabilities:

- Children / YPWD attending regular schools who are supported to complete primary and secondary education through the homework support classes (13.00% of all children and young people with disabilities encompassed by the project);
- Children / YPWD who attend schools for pupils with disabilities who are supported to complete primary and secondary education through the homework support classes (54.37% of all children and young people with disabilities encompassed by the project);

- Children / YPWD outside the education system who are supported to acquire compensatory education and life skills necessary to achieve appropriate level of independent functioning related to the present disability through various training programmes and workshops (28.25% of all children and young people with disabilities encompassed by the project);
- YPWD in the job market who are supported to acquire job-seeking skills through various training programmes and workshops (4.38% of all children and young people with disabilities encompassed by the project).

The current breakdown of beneficiaries of the project is as follows:

Beneficiaries	Serbia
Children/YPWD who attend regular schools	91
Children/YPWD who attend schools for pupils with disabilities	360
Children/YPWD outside the education system	199
YPWD in the job market	39
Total number of children	689
Programme for parents	391
Total number of beneficiaries	1,080

Cooperation Development

Implementation of cooperation building workshops in Serbian Red Cross branches in progress. Cooperation building workshops were organised in six more municipalities of Serbia in this reporting period.

Cooperation of the Serbian Red Cross with local institutions continues

Over the years of programme implementation, the established cooperation between the Red Cross branches and relevant local institutions and organisations has continued. The cooperation of the implementing Red Cross branches with Roma health mediators has particularly strengthened in Serbia, which was facilitated by recommendations elaborated in the Standardisation Paper.

Advocacy

Second series of short films about the Joint Programme is under development

Initiated by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Belgrade, the production of the second promotional series of short films about the Joint Programme in Serbia is in progress. The second series focuses on achievements in the programme and in this period, the synopsis and shooting for the episodes has been completed. Editing and finalisation of new episodes are expected during summer 2011.

Informing the community – key prerequisite for inclusion

Information sessions on inclusion were organised by the implementing Red Cross branches in Serbia in order to better inform the Roma parents and sensitise the general public.

Concept paper on advocacy under development

Following a brainstorming meeting and the training on public relations and lobbying, a first draft concept paper on advocacy has been developed, containing definition of advocacy, objectives, tools and an outline of the process for implementation. The second draft is being prepared after

consultation process within the project team has been completed and feedback received. Training programme for field staff is under development and will be implemented in the second half of 2011 to facilitate implementation in the field.

Local advocacy initiatives in continuum

A number of implementing Serbian Red Cross branches have carried out various events related to inclusion of marginalised groups drawing attention of general public, local institutions and media.

Capacity Building

Roll-out of standardized model of projects completed

The roll-out of a standardized programme model in the field has been completed and carefully monitored by the Headquarters. Feedback and assistance to Red Cross branches is being provided as needed.

Accreditation of the Promotion of Human Values – the second attempt

The second attempt to obtain accreditation of the “Promotion of Human Values” training programme for teachers, which programme has been submitted to the National Agency for Improvement of Education (‘Zavod za unapređivanje obrazovanja i vaspitanja’) has not been successful yet. The feedback provided by the agency qualified 18 out of 19 criteria as eligible. Yet, one criterion which was not fulfilled was apparently the critical one.

Preparations for the next phase

A meeting of senior managers of the Red Cross of Serbia, the Red Cross of Montenegro, the Danish Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the International Federation was hosted by the Federation Zone Office in Budapest at end of March 2011 to discuss the future cooperation between Red Cross partners in relation to the Joint Programme for Inclusion, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The key conclusions are as follows: the Red Cross of Serbia and the Red Cross of Montenegro will be the direct partners of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the next phase of the programme (2012-2015); possible roles of the other Red Cross partners (consultancy, etc.) will be identified during the planning process that will follow the evaluation of the programme; current phase of the programme will be managed and closed by the Federation who will be responsible for reporting, evaluation, planning for the next phase and financial review; the Red Cross of Serbia and the Red Cross of Montenegro will take over the full responsibility for programme management as of 1st January 2012.

External evaluation completed

External evaluation of the Joint Programme for Inclusion carried out by two independent consultants hired by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has been completed. Focusing primarily on the cooperation matters between the Red Cross, UNICEF, NGO 'Pomoc Deci' and the Swiss Cooperation Office in Belgrade, the evaluators have concluded that the benefits of such model have not been fully exploited and have issued a set of recommendations that will be used as input for the planning of the next phase of the programme.

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

As planned, twelve Serbian Red Cross branches have been implementing educational workshops for vulnerable Roma pupils and children with disabilities in elementary school and their peers, to facilitate their inclusion into the education system.

The project included 993 pupils in 38 classes from 23 schools. In this reporting period, 133 Serbian Red Cross youth volunteers supported by 68 teachers have carried out a total of 570 workshops for

pupils and a great number of additional activities covering the topics of children’s rights, tolerance, personal and cultural identity and diversity, nonviolent conflict resolution, anti-discrimination and anti-stigmatization, gender equality and combating Internet violence. The following table gives details.

Beneficiaries	Serbia	Total
Pupils of Roma nationality	78	78
Peers of pupils of Roma nationality	698	698
Pupils with disabilities	7	7
Peers of pupils with disabilities	210	210
Total number of beneficiaries	993	993

The share of pupils belonging to marginalised groups, pupils of Roma nationality and children with disabilities who are included in the project, is 8.57%. The share of vulnerable Roma children in eleven Red Cross branches that are targeting their peers through the project activities is 7.86%, while the share of pupils with disabilities in one Red Cross branch that is targeting their peers is 0.71%.

Achievements

The vulnerability of Roma children and young people living with disabilities is reduced through their systematic integration into the mainstream society, support in adopting necessary social skills and knowledge, as well as through continuing work with their families, peers and general population.

Constraints or challenges

There were slight non-compliances with the Plan of Action during the implementation of some activities due to the need for prioritisation to implement some joint activities. However, these will not jeopardise the final outcomes of the programme.

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.
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 victims of trafficking are appropriately trained and sensitised for their tasks, and returning rejected asylum seekers are protected from trafficking.

There was no funding for these activities in the reporting period.

Constraints or challenges

While the activities related to vulnerable Roma children and young people living with disabilities are progressing according to plan, the limited availability or the total lack of funding for the rest of the activities in the programme (components 1, 4 and 5) means that they are taken over by the national society who implements them using its own resources in a scaled down form.

Working in partnership

The Red Cross of Serbia has worked in partnership with the International Federation and has received funds from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through the Federation secretariat plan. The Serbian National Society was supported bilaterally by USAID, Yanos NGO, the Danish Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. At national level HumanaS network, the Pomoć deci NGO and UNICEF are partners contributing to the programme.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The work with vulnerable populations in Serbia through addressing health practices, access to health and social support institutions and education, and ensuring a community-wide response to needs is in line with the International Federation's Strategy 2020 and its emphasis on preventing and reducing deaths, injuries and illnesses as well as the building of communities' capacities to combat their own vulnerability.

Programme components are compatible with local and regional initiatives such as The Decade of Roma Inclusion and the Poverty Reduction Strategies. Work towards disaster preparedness pursues the Global Agenda goal of reducing the number of deaths and injuries and impact from disasters, a much needed endeavour in Serbia, as disasters are becoming more frequent.

All programmes have gender equality as an integrated and important component. Within disaster preparedness, the psychosocial component puts special emphasis on gender equality to ensure that the needs of each family member are adequately assessed and met. In vocational training for refugees, professional training is provided to meet the needs of both genders. In health promotion, gender balance is presented as one of the priorities resulting in projects addressing reproductive health as well as sexual hygiene and specific activities for target groups of both genders. In volunteering and youth activities the organizational development programme promotes humanitarian values through a young volunteer project with a clear gender focus.

Looking ahead

The Federation secretariat and the Serbian National Society work closely together on planning and implementing activities based on their strategic priorities as well as the funding realities. As more of the programmes are taken over by the National Society such as home care, the International Federation focuses its capacities on areas needing more development. The Serbian National Society will continue to gradually expand its activities from being a sole provider of assistance to also being an advocate for the vulnerable, through its role as a partner and driving force behind processes of civil society building at both national and local levels.

How we work	
<i>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.</i>	
The IFRC's vision is to: 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.	The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims: <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

For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:

- **In the Red Cross of Serbia:** Vesna Milenović, Secretary General; email: secretary@redcross.org.rs; +381 11 30 32 117; fax +381 11 634 348
- **In the IFRC Country Representation for Serbia and Montenegro:** Uroš Smiljanić, Head of Office; email: uros.smiljanic@ifrc.org; phone: +381 11 3282 202; fax: +381 11 3281 791
- **In the IFRC Europe Zone Office:** Elias Ghanem, Head of Support Services, Budapest; email: elias.ghanem@ifrc.org; phone: +361 888 4518, fax: +361 336 1516