

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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With the exception for the First Aid and Population Movement activities which have received limited but adequate support from donors, implementation of most of the programme has been delayed due to the late arrival of funds. Other activities are primarily related to organisational support work, which, while quite important, are of a longer-term and less visible nature. The HIV/AIDS - Youth/VNS programme has made a successful debut considering the limited level of staff available for the project.

The context

The Moscow Delegation supports the Russian Red Cross (RRC) across the 21 republics, 49 oblasts, six krais, and ten okrugs, that make up the Russian Federation. The Delegation also serves as a regional financial management base for Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, and provides logistical and information support to other Federation Delegations and National Societies in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Latest Events

Russia has made a strong appeal to re-enter the International Monetary Fund lending programme. On 29 March, the Prime Minister announced that the IMF would resume lending to Russia, but most analysts agree the fund will most likely provide just enough money for Russia to pay \$4.5 billion to the IMF this year to service previous loans. While pushing for an IMF loan to avert a looming default on Russia's foreign debts, the government has stressed the need to identify further resources itself. The Prime Minister attended a meeting of agricultural officials on 7 April, and promised support to the ailing sector so that production could be increased.

The rouble again decreased in value as the exchange rate weakened dramatically against the dollar - the latest rate for the reporting period was RR 26.12 to one dollar. Since most workers salaries remain RR 900-1000 or the equivalent of \$40 (but raised by 50% for the first time since 1995) and consumer prices increased three times, the devaluation of the rouble implies grim prospects for the general population.

While the conflict in the Balkans had seriously strained Russia's relations with the West, it appears recent dialogue has been more positive. The strained relations however affected the Regional Delegation to some extent -- delegates working on the USDA bulk food deal are not being placed permanently in the regions as yet, and delegates have been advised to avoid obvious American hangouts.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Health w

The health care system continues to suffer from a lack of resources. Health workers salaries are low and in some places there are delays in payment. Public health services regularly receive only 30% of the planned amount from the Federal budget. There are shortages of medicine and the means to buy even simple medication. As a result, the state of peoples health also continues to decline. A sharp increase in infectious diseases is being observed. AIDS remains a growing problem across the country. Syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases are spreading, as well as virus-hepatitis.

Visiting Nurses Service

On 18 February a contest among ten regional RC committees (Tatar, Rostov, Ryasan, Nizhni Novgorod, Tver, Kaluga, Kemerovo, Tambov, Tula and Moscow) was held to win grants under the Russian-Swedish programme entitled "Visiting nurses in the conditions of a new financial and economic mechanism". Five winners (Moscow, Nizhni Novgorod, Kaluga, Ryasan, and Rostov) received RR 115,000 (some USD 5,000) and 15,000 membership cards each. Three computers, two printers and a copy machine were also purchased.

The following organisational and co-ordination work was held in the regions:

- { Kaluga regional committee: 15 visiting nurses were hired to work in the villages affected by the Chernobyl disaster to assist 150 elders and invalids;
- { Rostov regional committee: the repair social and medical assistance facilities;
- { Ryasan regional committee: 12 visiting nurses were hired;
- { Nizhni Novgorod regional committee: a contest to work as a visiting nurse was announced in the media. The repair social and medical facilities;
- { Moscow Red Cross committee: distribution of membership cards has begun; seven visiting nurses were hired. Assistance to the chairpersons of the regional committees in managing the programme activities is regularly provided.

HIV/AIDS - Youth/VNS

The programme activities have started with the purchase of necessary equipment for the Youth Department of the RRC central committee. The Kaliningrad regional Red Cross committee, Moscow city committee, and the Federation are also participating in the programme. Funding support was also sent to the participating regions to support the project.

A mission was undertaken to discuss an agreement with the Kaliningrad regional committee on the first step of the project, to gather information about regional activities and regional Youth Red Cross movement development. Several meetings with the regional administration and social institutions representatives were also held.

A meeting with the Moscow South-Eastern district administration was held to explore co-operation in the frame of the Youth project. A centre for AIDS prevention among youth and teenagers in the South-Eastern district was supplied with equipment, and a plan of action in the district was developed; nine volunteers were also recruited.

A two hours workshop on AIDS/HIV prevention for educational institutions and youth leisure centres and a system of informational meetings on AIDS/HIV prevention for parents and teachers were developed.

Two information meetings were held with the students of the Moscow State Pedagogical University; a workshop on AIDS prevention was conducted among school students in the South-Eastern district.

First Aid

The following training activities were undertaken:

Location	Public Courses Held	Public Trained	Commercial Courses Held	Public Trained	Instructor Courses Held	Instructors Trained
Nizhny Novgorod	4	65	1	14	-	-
Tomsk	13	172	2	26	1	3
St.Petersburg	54	644	-	-	1	5
Irkutsk	4	48	-	-	-	-
Archangelsk	59	669	5	62	1	9
Khabarovsk	15	182	-	-	-	-
Murmansk	3	34	-	-	1	14
Krasnodar	26	362	1	12	-	-
Tula	8	72	-	-	-	-
Chelyabinsk	2	24	-	-	-	-
Ulan-Ude	2	24	-	-	-	-
Vladivostock	3	72	-	-	-	-

Field assessment trips to 5 regions new to the programme (Khakasia, Kemerovo, Kazan, Krasnoyarsk and Yakutia) were completed. The first aid programme was introduced to the local administration and preparations for the training process were undertaken.

Adult and baby training dummies and accessories were received from the USA and Norway, and the process of distribution to the regions is well underway. Training equipment, including overheads, white boards, transparencies and other teaching means were procured locally and delivered to the training sites. The Canadian Embassy provided training equipment to the Yakutia Red Cross committee for the First Aid courses.

Training workshops were carried out in Khakasia and Kemerovo. In both oblasts the instructor-trainers trained 32 persons from general public and chose 16 participants with potential for becoming instructor candidates. Five First Aid co-ordinators were hired to work in the regions.

Two types of Certificates for the general public, instructors and instructor-trainers were designed, printed and distributed to the oblasts. The second edition of the Instructor's Manual and a new Manual for Instructor-Trainers were prepared for publishing. The booklet "Child Safe: a Parent's Guide to First Aid and Safety", is being translated into Russian and prepared for publishing.

A legal adviser was hired to research current legislation for references to mandatory first aid training and to initiate the process of having the RRC recognised as an accredited provider of that training.

Working relationships are being established and improved with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Interior Ministry and Emercom.

Blood Donor Recruitment Programme

No funding has yet been received, and the programme implementation is pending.

Disaster Preparedness and Response w

Responding to the warnings of potentially severe flooding predicted for many areas of Russia at the end of March - beginning of April, several assessment teams were sent to the possible disaster regions - Stavropol, Krasnodar, Saratov, Kasan, Kurgun, Tomsk, and Yakusk. A warning letter was sent to all the regions, suggesting closer co-operation with the Red Cross branches and EMERCOM at local level. A plan of action for the local Red Cross committees was developed in case of a sudden disaster.

Information meetings on what to do in the event of flooding were conducted through media services. Regular reporting lines to the central Red Cross committee about the situation in the areas was set up.

The RRC Disaster Preparedness programme representative attended a meeting in the Ministry of Health in connection with several fires in the Samara region.

Regular information exchange continues with the Ministry of Health and EMERCOM.

Population Movement Programme (PM) w

The PM activities were continued under the supervision of the RRC PM co-ordinator, including the psycho social rehabilitation rendered to refugees by the Moscow-city Red Cross Committee. A second element is the reception of migrants and the local population, managed by the Moscow RRC central committee. One hundred and twenty three persons and 32 migrants were assisted in February. The PM programme lawyer and the RRC PM team members met with Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) in Moscow to streamline the partnership. The categories of migrants for further assistance were discussed as well as ways of providing counselling and humanitarian support. MSF will organise an overnight shelter for the homeless and take on the responsibility to screen potential TB patients (in co-operation with a local polyclinic for further TB treatment).

The RRC lawyer for the reception point programme attended a briefing held by the Federal Migration Service in Moscow for elaborating further co-operation.

IOM agreed to continue its funding of two RRC medical rooms in Moscow until March 1999, in the framework of the agreement between the RRC and IOM on the Population Movement activities. The RRC PM co-ordinator continued planning and programme proposals for the social and medical assistance facilities in a settlement for forced migrants in Pskov, for summer camps, as well as for possible programmes in Orenburg, Oryol and Sochi.

The PM co-ordinator met the representatives from forced migrant organisations (NGOs) from Kirov and Penza, who approached the RRC to discuss co-operation possibilities.

Institutional / Resource Development and Capacity Building w

In March a Plenum in the RRC was held (representing all 89 regions) and a new management structure was presented.

Development of RRC Youth

The RRC Youth is developing several programmes for 1999-2000. An advertising campaign, information meetings, and volunteer recruitment is ongoing.

RRC Membership Card Project

Two kinds of membership cards were developed and issued: the first, a common card with a membership fee of RR 10 (less than 50 cents), and a second for honoured members with a membership fee of RR 300 (USD 12). In total 693,000 membership cards were released.

Over 235,000 membership cards were sent to the regional RRC committees and RR 185,000 (USD 7,400) was received in the first quarter of the year.

Outstanding needs

Most of the programmes are experiencing a serious lack of funds which remains the main problem for the RRC.

External Relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Collaboration with the local Red Cross branches is ongoing, as well as with regional administrations and social institutions.

Concerning media contacts, the launch of the TB initiative on March 11 and 12 was a major event, with the Federation Secretary General George Weber in attendance. The event organised as a media launch with a seminar in a Moscow press agency, followed by a gala event in the Bolshoi ballet the next night.

The Federation Information Delegate and the head of the RRC Press Department have collaborated on various news events, including the Red Cross Day on May 8, as well as planning for specific joint press releases related to millennium issues, TB, the Winter Appeal, Floods, and the Far East.

The Information Delegate participated in a regional information workshop in Tbilisi, covering Millennium planning, public relations, and other information events.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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