

# Programme Update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Central Europe (Focus on Serbia and Montenegro)

Appeal No. MAA66001

31 August 2008

This report covers the period 01/01/08 to  
30/06/08.



Front cover for the interactive software package for children aged 8-12 to disseminate Red Cross principles, values and information on activities.  
Photo: Red Cross of Serbia.

### In brief

**Programme purpose:** In Serbia and Montenegro the International Federation's support focused on development through long-term programmes to increase the capacity of the Red Cross to provide services to vulnerable populations, and to be prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters. These efforts also included addressing the National Societies' structure, procedures, staffing and organizational thinking. These components directly and indirectly contribute to the same goal of strengthening the communities to recognize, assess and address their own needs with the Red Cross as an integral and recognized partner. Sustainability of existing activities and development of a basis for future programmes were also priorities.

The two National Societies have gradually expanded their activities and moved from exclusively being a provider of assistance to being an advocate for the vulnerable. This transition continued through becoming a partner in, and the driving force behind, the process of civil society building at both national and local level.

The main programme areas in which the two National Societies have been working are aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda Goals:

- Disaster management aligned with Global Agenda Goal one and four
- Health and care aligned with Global Agenda Goal two, three and four
- Organizational development aligned with Global Agenda Goal four and related to the ten areas for improvement

**Programme(s) summary:** The activities of the National Societies in Serbia and Montenegro have been largely implemented as planned, allowing for some required adjustments during the period.

- The disaster management programme focused on disaster management capacity building and included training, simulations and provision of equipment.
- Health and care programme activities included home care and social welfare. The latter programme was slightly adjusted due to a peer review of the social welfare programme which identified both gaps and duplications. Changes were also made due to a British Red Cross initiative to ensure enhanced sustainability of the home care programme through additional short-term support.
- The organizational development programme focused on developing management and information systems and improving the public image and public relations of the National Societies. The two National Societies are at different development stages, with Serbia already working largely independently in management and information systems, so future focus would be on Montenegro subject to funding.

**Financial situation:** Total 2008 budget for Central Europe (MAA66001) was initially 6,404,721 Swiss francs (USD 5,822,474 or EUR 3,965,772). The revised budget is 6,229,682 Swiss francs (USD 5,663,347 or EUR 3,857,388), out of which 59 per cent covered. The overall 2008 budget for the programmes in Serbia and Montenegro is 2,595,522 Swiss francs. Other programmes under this appeal are run by the regional representation in Budapest, and the Federation offices in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina and are reported on in separate programme updates. The revision of the appeal budget is due to a slight decrease in the budget of the Federation office in Kosovo from 868,055 to 693,006 Swiss francs.

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

**No. of people we help:**

January – June 2008	Target population	People helped	% Male/ Female	% Children under 18	% Elderly
Home care	10,000	10,870	40/60*	Less than 10	90
Social welfare	3,000	2,918	50/50*	60	0
Asylum seekers and returnees	500	189	90/10	5	0
Vocational training for refugees	160	200	40/60	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,660</b>	<b>14,177</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

\* Estimations

**Our partners:** Three Red Cross Societies contributed as multilateral or bilateral donors (British, Danish and Norwegian Red Cross); the governmental Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development contributed as a donor; and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contributed as a partner. Four ministries in the two countries were programme partners and some 60 local governments and services were active as partners.

## Context

Montenegro did not experience any major socio-political, economic or natural changes or events during the reporting period and continued its discussions with various state ministries on priority programmes. In Serbia, however, the assembly of Kosovo declared its independence on 17 February causing unrest and confrontations. Demonstrations and damages to buildings also took place in Belgrade in Serbia. No population movements were observed as a consequence of the events.

Several of the National Societies' programme activities depended on governmental partners at different levels, such as the disaster management coordination agency, as well as on appropriate legislation being adopted including the law on disaster management, the law on volunteering as well as legislation which will allow local governments to sub-contract social-welfare work to commercial as well as non-governmental volunteer-based organizations. While addressing existing needs, the Red Cross Society of Serbia developed its programme activities expecting that proper legislation would be adopted as this is reflected in the activity plans.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Disaster Management

**Outcome/expected result:** Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

#### Disaster management capacity building

During the reporting period the **Red Cross of Montenegro** focused on disaster management capacity building and started restructuring its own disaster management system to enhance its disaster management capacity.

The National Society made a significant contribution to the development of a disaster management law and a national strategy on disaster management. Thus the National Society has been integrated into the national disaster management structure and is expected to sign agreements with the authorities that will define the role and responsibilities for the Red Cross at all levels, as well as provide further directions for disaster preparedness and response activities. The Red Cross of Montenegro designed and equipped an effective disaster management system based on a regional structure consisting of three disaster management centres with disaster management teams. The National Society is working with bilateral partners, authorities and the International Federation in building the system to its full capacity. Furthermore, with the support of the International Federation the National Society established a partnership with the Austrian Red Cross which is expected to contribute to the development of additional regional disaster management centres within 2009.

The Red Cross of Montenegro also conducted training for trainers for the abovementioned disaster response teams as well as psychosocial support training. Furthermore, the National Society participated in regional training sessions for regional disaster response teams (RDRTs) and on vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA). The National Society continued its development of municipal disaster management coordination through disaster simulations in the municipalities of Pljevlja and Nikšić.

The National Society in Montenegro has become a credible and important partner to the national disaster management structure and has moved away from being a sole receiver of assistance to being a provider. This was demonstrated through the dispatch of emergency items to Albania following a series of explosions in March.

The **Red Cross of Serbia** has still not adopted standard operative procedures for disaster management and appropriate national and local legislation is still not in place. The National Society nonetheless continued its regular contacts with the authorities at all levels discussing a future national disaster management system and the Red Cross's role and responsibilities. A memorandum of understanding, which will strengthen the National Society's work in municipal level coordination in emergencies, was signed with USAID/DAI.

The National Society continued its grassroots work focusing on improving municipal disaster management coordination between stakeholders through disaster simulations and following up on the development of local disaster response plans. Three simulations in Šid, Bačka Palanka and Titel were conducted with totally 75 participants.

Equipment was provided for disaster management teams in 11 Red Cross branches and 165 disaster team members in 15 branches in Čardak and Bogovađa received municipal disaster preparedness trainings. Additional ten members of the national disaster response team (NDRT) received water and sanitation training. In Kosovska Mitrovica training was organized covering national disaster response guidelines, contingency plans and standard operating procedures. The branch secretaries of the Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija received training in contingency planning and the branches' team members attended first-aid training. At the Central European level the representatives of the Red Cross of Serbia participated in sessions for regional disaster response teams, vulnerability and capacity assessment and Emergency Response Units as well as in a UNICEF organized training on the protection of children in emergencies.

### Constraints or challenges

In Serbia the current absence of appropriate legislation and a national body to coordinate disaster management efforts is a significant challenge. Moreover, further disaster simulations were postponed due to the parliamentary and local elections in May. The Red Cross of Serbia nonetheless sought to promote its work on municipal disaster simulations through meetings and events.

## Health and Care

**Outcome/expected result:** Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

### Home care and social welfare

Within health and care the two Red Cross Societies implemented the home care programme and the social welfare programme. The National Societies reached approximately 10,000 vulnerable elderly people with direct household assistance through the **home care programme** during the reporting period. Various advocacy activities were also undertaken in 83 municipalities in Serbia and in 12 municipalities in Montenegro.

Further support of developmental bonus modules in 27 municipal Red Cross branches in Serbia and 1 municipal branch in Montenegro has led to the development of previously missing services in these communities, including among others health and social welfare support to rural communities in Herceg Novi in Montenegro, a municipal task force to the benefit of elderly people in Kragujevac and the set-up of a telephone helpline.

The HumanaS network of 15 NGOs working with elderly people chaired by the Red Cross of Serbia continued supporting the National Strategy of Ageing through mapping of local resources and stakeholders which is fed into a newly created database. A campaign against discrimination, neglect and abuse of elderly people was organized to raise the awareness and sensitivity to these issues among the public.

The work of the Red Cross of Serbia through direct assistance and advocacy has led to a better perception of the Red Cross in the communities reached. In many cases the Red Cross has acted as a catalyst in creating new capacities to support elderly people. Also, elderly people were more involved in the activities, particularly through the establishment of focal points of which many were representatives of pensioners' associations. The focal points aimed at coordinating the implementation of the National Strategy of Ageing.

The Red Cross has furthermore contributed to a better understanding of and more concrete planning at local level within the National Strategy of Ageing.

Activities within the **social welfare programme** covered 60 municipalities in Serbia and 9 municipalities in Montenegro. The activities included preschool socialization classes, preschool preparations, homework support, social inclusion and support to parents. In addition the programme

facilitated training for teaching staff in active teaching, and training in fund-raising, writing of project proposals and reporting for the programme's field coordinators. A peer review of the programme done by other stakeholders and its recommendations will serve as basis for the planning phase for the activities in the following three years.

More than 1,000 vulnerable Roma children were supported to prepare for and to enrol in primary school as well as to continue their primary education. Nearly nine hundred young people with disabilities have been involved in group activities with peers, increasing their mental well-being and providing them with skills necessary for everyday life. Families of both groups have been supported through direct assistance and knowledge sharing. Public awareness of the needs of the population and underlying social issues was increased through socio-inclusive activities, advocacy and information sharing.

### Constraints or Challenges

Both National Societies continue to be excessively dependent on external funding to implement their direct assistance activities through their home care programmes. Discussions with relevant state ministries are currently ongoing addressing among other things the lack of appropriate legislation. Within the social welfare programme the duties and responsibilities among stakeholders need to be clearer as there are needs not being addressed and in other cases work is being duplicated. These issues will be addressed during the planning process for the next three -year period.

### Organizational development

**Outcome/expected result:** Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

### Management and information systems

Through the organizational development programme the National Societies have further developed their **management and information systems** as well as improved their **public image and public relations**. These processes were initiated five years ago. In the reporting period emphasis was on closing recognized gaps and limiting the National Societies dependency on external support.

Both National Societies now have in operation **a management software package**, the HUBIE-Erp, which makes the National Societies more efficient and more transparent in their daily work within planning, reporting, warehouse management and accounting. The transition from the previous tools being used is still ongoing. The Red Cross of Serbia has hired a full time software engineer which has significantly contributed to ironing out problems in the software and ensuring full functionality. In total 70 branches regularly use the software in Serbia. In Montenegro an updated version of the HUBIE-Erp software was installed along with a new universal database module. Furthermore, the national society IT officer received necessary training. In Montenegro the headquarters and three other branches use the management software regularly.

### Public image and public relations

The Red Cross of Serbia designed and produced **tools for dissemination** of Red Cross principles, values and information about its activities including an interactive game package for children aged 8-12 and a website covering the 17 branches within the Belgrade Red Cross. The interactive game package is considered as a springboard for further work with schools and children. The work on the interactive game package and the webpage has contributed significantly to enhancing the Red Cross image and its public relations.

### Constraints or challenges

The work within management development and public image and relations development until now are merely a foundation for future development. The five year project cycle has so far demonstrated that transforming and enhancing managerial efficiency and thinking is challenging. The most significant

risk in image and relations development is the potential failure to integrate the total process, leaving it at the level of isolated activities, individually useful but not ultimately producing long-lasting effects.

## Humanitarian Values

**Outcome/expected result:** Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

### Migration

Within the migration programme, **detained irregular migrants** in Serbia, who are waiting for repatriation, are the main beneficiaries of the programme. During the first 6 months of 2008, 189 irregular migrants have been accommodated and some of them have been deported back to their country of origin. The Red Cross of Serbia visited the irregular migrants in the detention facilities once a month to monitor their conditions as well as to provide hygiene items. Furthermore the staff at the centre received first aid training.

Assistance to **rejected asylum seekers** returning from Western Europe through the readmission procedure continued during the first six months of 2008. The number of rejected asylum seekers returning to Serbia has decreased during the reporting period and merely 20 people in average return monthly. Moreover most of the persons returning have opted for voluntary return, which implies financial support from the country they return from. There is, however, still a need for support to returnees. The Red Cross of Serbia regularly cooperated with the agency for minorities and human rights to assist returning families, and links has been established between the agency and local Red Cross branches.

Furthermore the National Society participated in a round-table discussion on readmission and return experiences and initiated a bilateral cooperation with the Swedish Red Cross on assistance to vulnerable returnees. Furthermore a dialogue with the German Red Cross to establish an assistance programme for the most vulnerable returnee families continues as a majority of returnees come from Germany. An agreement is, however, difficult to reach due to different returnee practices in Germany's 16 districts.

At the international level the Red Cross of Serbia continued its active engagement within the **European Council for Refugees and Exile (ECRE)**. The National Society participated actively in the implementation of ECRE projects in the whole of Europe and a special ECRE meeting on return is to be held in Belgrade in September 2008. The National Society also continued its involvement in the **Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants (PERCO)** and in its Steering Group. The Red Cross of Serbia is currently co-chairing the PERCO-network, and hosted its biannual meeting in Belgrade in April 2008. In total 19 members of the National Society participated.

### Vocational training for refugees

The Red Cross of Serbia, supported by the International Federation, implemented a **vocational training programme** targeting refugees from Croatia and Bosnia to increase the prospects for labour market participation. The Red Cross is co-ordinating the training, the selection of beneficiaries and, most important, the follow-up. The National Society has been cooperating with the National Employment Agency to determine training courses to match labour market needs.

A training cycle ended in March 2008, and of 110 participants that followed the courses 61 have been employed. A new cycle started in April 2008 with 90 participants. Courses covered during the cycles include business secretary and management courses, accounting courses and courses for fiscal cash register service, computing courses, courses for gerontology nurses, various craft courses and driver's license courses.

## Constraints or Challenges

In migration, the overall national strategy dealing with returning asylum seekers rejected from western European countries is unclear and as yet there is no proper link between the national level (readmission service at the airport) and local level. The Red Cross of Serbia is participating in all related discussions and is actively seeking ways to assist with reintegration of returnees through its local branches. At the same time, after the adoption of the Law on Asylum in Serbia, the system for granting asylum seekers their rights is in place, yet there is a gap concerning irregular migrants. The Red Cross of Serbia is addressing this issue in official meetings using the ECRE and UNHCR data.

## Working in partnership

The Serbia and Montenegro National Societies worked in partnership with the International Federation and received funds from the British and Norwegian Red Cross Societies through the International Federation appeal and bilaterally from the Danish Red Cross. Furthermore the Austrian Red Cross, with support from the International Federation, has become a partner for disaster management development in Montenegro. Besides Red Cross donors the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation also contributed funds. USAID is a supporter of both the disaster management programme and activities within the health and care programme. The health and care programme is further implemented through several partnerships at local level including local authorities, centres for social welfare, schools, Roma NGOs and pensioners' associations. At the national level HumanaS, the Pomoć deci NGO and UNICEF are partners to the programme.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

The work with vulnerable populations in Serbia and in Montenegro 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 Global Agenda and its emphasis on preventing deaths and illnesses as well as the building of communities' capacities to combat their own vulnerability.

Programme components are aligned with the Global Agenda and compatible with local and regional initiatives such as *The Decade of Roma Inclusion* and the *Poverty Reduction Strategies* in both countries. 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 both countries as large-scale disasters, both natural and man-made, seem to become more frequent.

All programmes have gender as an integrated and important component. Within disaster preparedness the psychosocial component puts special emphasis on gender to ensure that the needs of each family member are adequately assessed and met. In vocational training for refugees, professional trainings are multiple 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

Changes in the plans for the second part of 2008 are mainly caused by the current lack of funding. This is especially so for disaster management and organizational development activities in Montenegro. While gaps in disaster management will mostly be covered through the partnership agreement with the Austrian Red Cross, it will be a challenge to support the Montenegro Red Cross's

organizational development. The Federation representation in Belgrade is in the process of preparing a partnership meeting for both National Societies later in the year, aiming to strengthen and develop partnerships.

Within home and care the social welfare programme will focus on planning together with all other relevant stakeholders in order to create a viable and an efficient plan of action for the next three years. Main changes in activities targeting vulnerable Roma children and people living with disabilities will be in making a shift to a rights-based programme and in a clearer division of work between partners. For the home care programme the British Red Cross's decision on how to use leftover funds will influence this year's plans as well as the plans for 2009.

The Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Societies are encouraged to pursue operational alliances with the support of the International Federation. A combined effort by several actors, including the Red Cross, offers improved response to humanitarian needs and alleviation of human suffering as such alliances combine highly developed and mutually supportive capacities.

How we work	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p><b>Global Agenda Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.</li> <li>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.</li> <li>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.</li> </ul>
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