



OPERATION UPDATE #5

Armenia, Europe Region | Population Movement

Emergency Appeal No: MDRAM012 Emergency Appeal launched: 30/09/2023 Operational Strategy published: 26/10/2023	Glide No: OT-2023-000180-ARM
Operation Update #5 Date of issue: 14/11/2024 ¹	Timeframe covered by this update: From 27/09/2023 to 30/09/2024
Operation timeframe: 21 months (initial 30/09/2023 - 31/12/2024, extended until 30/06/2025)	Number of people being assisted: 90,000
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 15 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 20 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 1 million

As of 30 September 2024, the Federation-wide Emergency Appeal in Armenia including IFRC Secretariat and other Partner National Societies, which seeks CHF 20 million, is 54 per cent funded. Further contributions are essential to enable the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), with the support of the Federation-wide partners, to continue with the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection to people on the move.

¹ This Operations Update is being republished to include the financial report. Following the IFRC's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system recent go-live, we are working to stabilize the system and deliver comprehensive reports, including donor financial reports. While we have made significant progress, we are still encountering some challenges that may impact the reports. We are committed to maintaining transparency, and therefore, inform you that the financial report we share may have potential discrepancies or limitations. However, any necessary adjustments will be reflected in the final report that will cover the entire reporting period of this operation.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Lusine, a cash recipient. Photo: IFRC

New Beginning: Lusine's Story

In September 2023, Lusine and her family of eight left Karabakh in an old Soviet car, seeking safety and a fresh start. Upon arriving in Yerevan, they quickly rented a home and began the daunting task of finding jobs to support themselves.

Lusine found her niche in baking, creating delicious treats from her kitchen for a local bakery. Among her specialties are *pakhlava*, cakes, and *jengialov-hats*—a traditional Karabakhi flatbread stuffed with 17 different herbs. This beloved bread is not only a culinary delight but also part of Armenia's intangible cultural heritage. However, not all the herbs grow in Armenia, so Lusine has taken it upon herself to cultivate them in her garden.

With two adults, five children, and two grandmothers to care for, having a stable home is essential for Lusine's family. They receive cash and voucher assistance from the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), supported by the IFRC, which helps cover a quarter of their rent.

Back in Karabakh, they lived in a large house, but now they are focused on building a new life in Yerevan. Lusine and her family are grateful for the support they receive, which is helping them navigate this challenging transition and embrace their new home.

—Yulia Bilenko, IFRC

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the Crisis

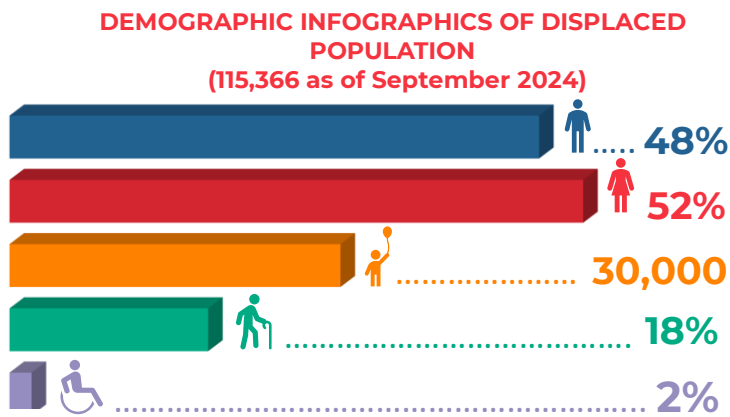
From 19 September 2023 until September 2024, a total of 115,366 people have arrived and been registered in Armenia following the escalation of hostilities in Karabakh. Among them, [over 100,000](#) arrived through Lachin corridor within the initial two weeks after the escalation. The displaced population accounts for nearly four per cent of Armenia's total [population of 2.7 million](#).

According to the UNHCR data 2024, the majority (around 76 per cent) of the total displaced population are residing in Yerevan and its surrounding regions. Almost 40 per cent of displaced individuals has settled in Yerevan with 16 per cent in Kotayk, 11 per cent in Ararat and 9 per cent in Armavir region, as seen on the map below.

Many displaced people choose to reside in Yerevan and nearest three regions, where they have existing family or social support networks, also considering better access to broader job markets, health care and better education opportunities. However, there are concerns that the government's housing programme contributed to rising prices, impacting affordability for displaced people, particularly in urban areas like Yerevan where demand for housing is higher due to better job opportunities. Most of the displaced people currently depend on government assistance, which includes monthly rental support of 50,000 drams (around CHF 125) available from October 2023 to December 2024. When this support ends, many families might face difficulties in paying rent or mortgage, increasing the risk of housing insecurity and potential homelessness.

As part of a long-term housing strategy, the [Armenian government](#) has launched an additional housing support programme to aid individuals who fled from Karabakh, offering grants between 2 million and 5 million drams (about CHF 4,500 to CHF 6,700) for families with specific needs, including those with children or disabilities. Eligibility for the planned housing funding is limited to Karabakh Armenians who apply for Armenian citizenship. The initiative is expected to benefit up to 25,000 families. Despite this, many displaced people are concerned that the financial aid may not be enough to afford housing in desirable regions, given the rising costs.

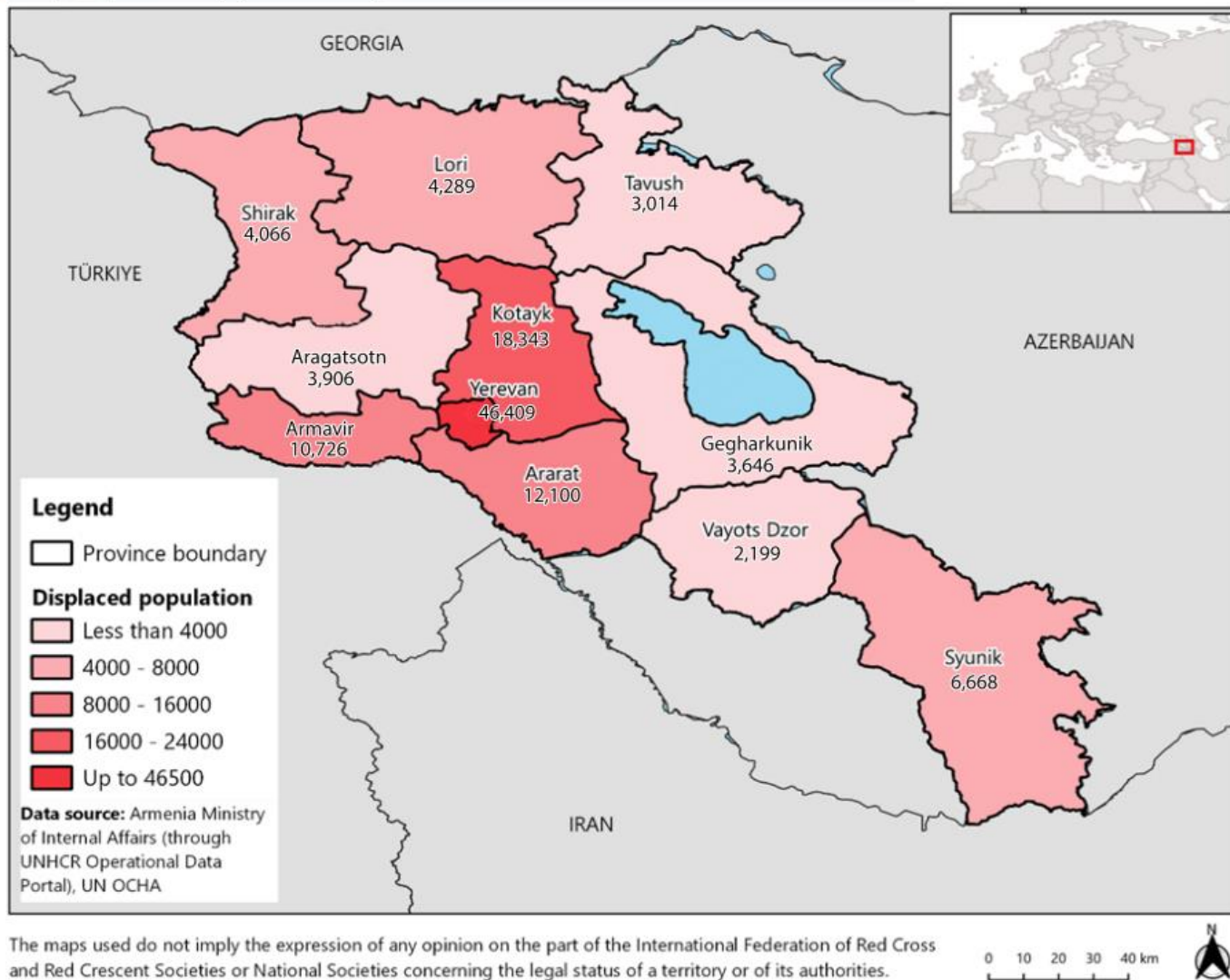
Given the various challenges the displaced population faces, the uncertainty of future of the country and situation surrounding the status of displaced people in Armenia adds another layer of complexity. Although the Armenian Government has pledged to grant them refugee status and citizenship upon request, confusion has arisen because many displaced people believed they were already Armenian citizens, as they held Armenian passports with limited citizenship privileges. On 17 October 2024, the Government of Armenia extended the temporary protection (TP) for refugees from Karabakh until 31 December 2025 through [Decree No. 1649-Ն](#) (TP Extension Decree). The initial provision of temporary protection was granted for one year by Government Decree No. 1864-Ն on 26 October 2023, which remains valid until 31 December 2024. Refugee status in Armenia provides a comprehensive range of rights and benefits. Refugees have the right to work, access healthcare services, receive social assistance, pursue education, and engage in entrepreneurship on an equal basis with Armenian citizens. Additionally, they are entitled to state-funded legal aid. After one year of local registration, refugees gain the right to vote in municipal elections and are eligible to hold public service positions at the local level. The path to naturalization is facilitated, with exemptions from residency and language requirements for refugees. Furthermore, those of Armenian ethnicity are exempt from the Constitution test. Acquiring Armenian nationality grants full political rights, access to all levels of public service, and the right to own agricultural land. As of October 2024, following the displacement from Karabakh in September 2023, a total of 5,600 individuals or around 5 per cent of those displaced people have applied for naturalization in Armenia.



Based on data from [UNHCR](#), [UNICEF](#), [WHO](#), [GoA](#)

Distribution of displaced people

As per September 2024, by Armenia Ministry of Internal Affairs



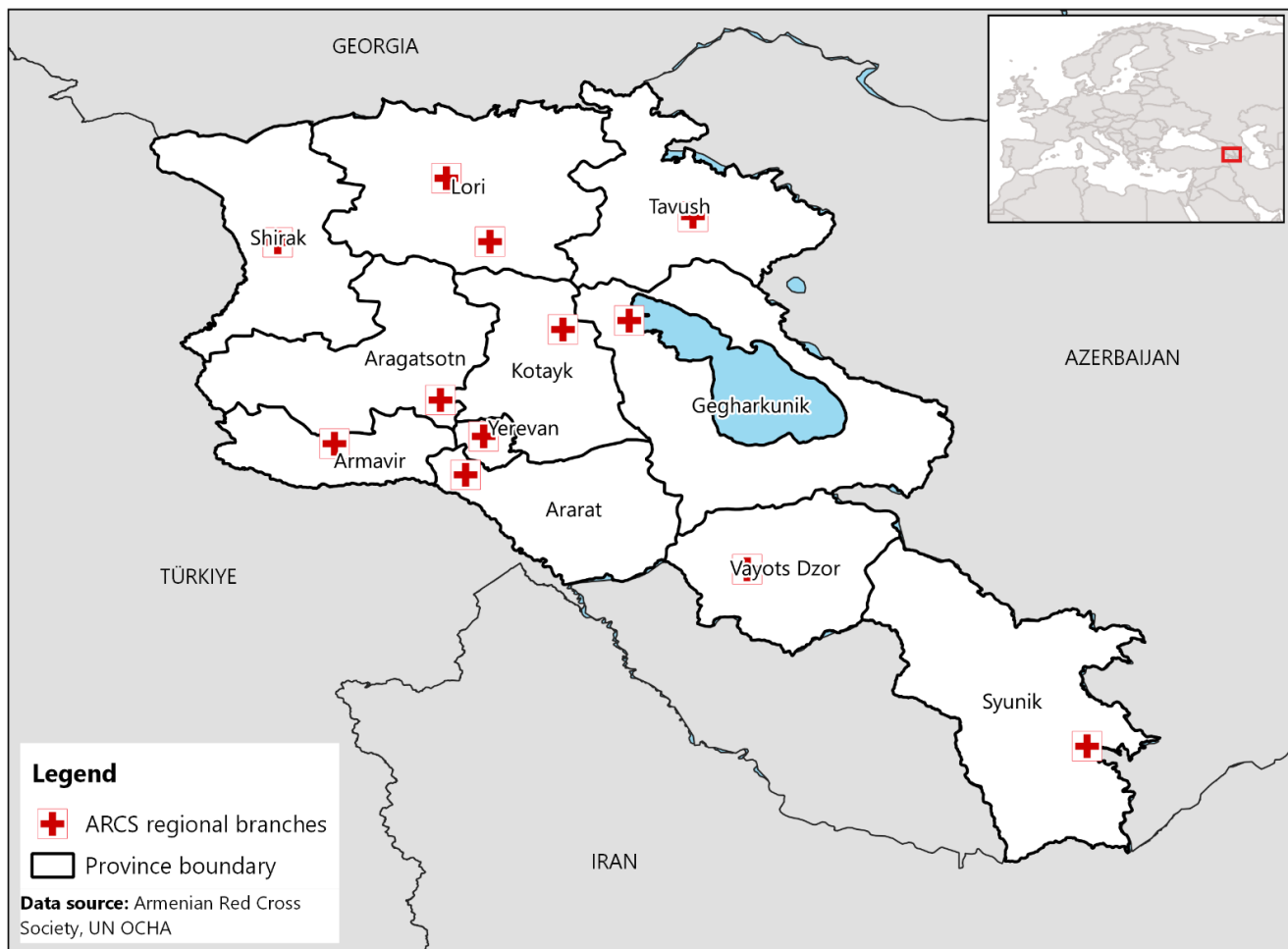
Adopted from the [UNHCR Operational Data Portal](#) as of September 2024. The map used does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the UNHCR or International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

As one year has passed since the arrival of displaced people in Armenia, the country is now transitioning from addressing immediate needs to focusing on longer-term ones. Both the ARCS and the IFRC are aligning their strategies with this governmental approach. This includes not only fulfilling the urgent humanitarian needs of the displaced population - such as shelter, food, healthcare, and psychological support- but also facilitating their integration and inclusion into the country and creating [employment opportunities through the distribution of seed grants for livelihood activities and migration support via the establishment of Integration Centres](#). All these efforts must be undertaken amidst the challenge of managing geopolitical uncertainties arising from [the ongoing dispute over the unmarked border](#) between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Summary of Response

The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) is the largest voluntary organization in Armenia, operating through a network comprising 11 regional branches and one territorial branch. With over 300 experienced staff and 9,028 dedicated volunteers, of which 1,792 have contracts concluded based on [the 2023 Law on Voluntary Work](#), which introduces contractual and insurance requirements for volunteers, ARCS enjoys a positive reputation and a high level of trust from both authorities and local communities. This enables ARCS to securely access all areas where displaced individuals have been located. During the initial critical days of the crisis, ARCS played a vital role in extensive registration efforts at registration centres, operating around the clock with staff and volunteers. They successfully registered displaced individuals and established temporary safe spaces, providing essential psycho-social support to those fleeing escalating hostilities in Karabakh. ARCS also distributed hygiene kits and installed bio-toilets at these sites. Their proactive engagement led to increased recognition as a humanitarian organization, resulting in numerous inquiries for support that informed the initial needs assessment and the planning of the Emergency Appeal.

Armenian Red Cross Society Branches

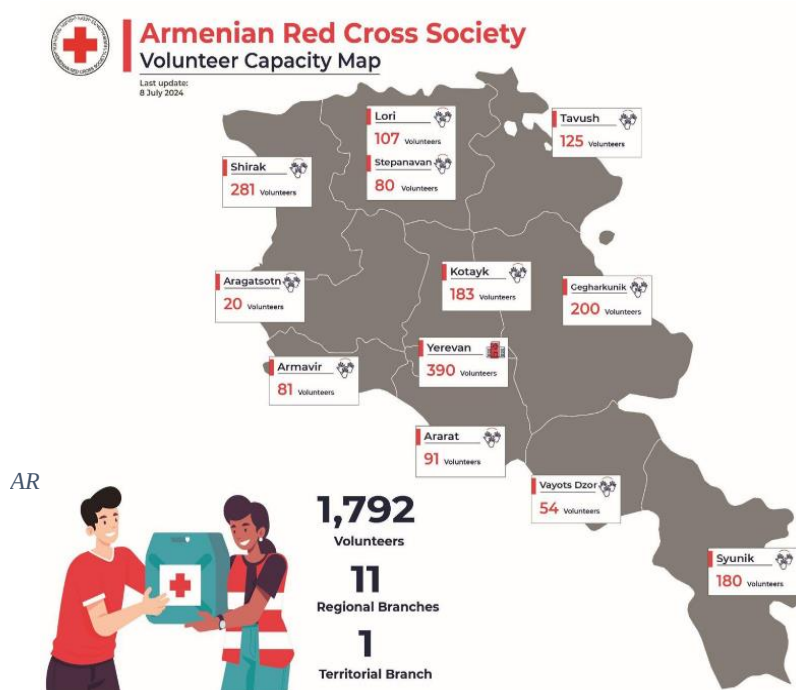


The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

ARCS branch locations. Source: ARCS/IFRC

The IFRC and partner Red Cross societies are working hand-in-hand with the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) to navigate a recent institutional crisis. IFRC's priority is to ensure uninterrupted assistance to vulnerable communities across Armenia. By coordinating closely with ARCS branches and local authorities, IFRC has made significant progress in delivering essential services, especially to displaced people. IFRC is dedicated to supporting ARCS through this challenge and will continue our joint efforts until the situation is resolved. Despite the challenges, progress has been commendable due to this temporary operating mechanism. Extensive capacity-building activities for ARCS are taking place, including additional training and workshops conducted in the country for staff members and volunteers. Furthermore, ARCS representatives have been engaged in external meetings, such as the Preparedness for an Effective Response (PER) workshop for facilitators in Budapest, MHPSS training in Copenhagen, and the Statutory Meetings in Geneva, alongside representatives from over 190 National Societies planned for the end of October. Additionally, the IFRC Country Office in Armenia got expanded, supported by surge personnel. The Joint Operational Task Force (JOFT) with the ICRC, IFRC, and Partner National Societies (PNS) continues its efforts, along with operational meetings involving ARCS heads of departments, IFRC, and PNS to coordinate operational business continuity.

Since the onset of the Karabakh conflict escalation, the ARCS, as an auxiliary organization to the public authorities of Armenia, has provided urgent humanitarian aid to displaced people, including food, clothing, hygiene items, and medical supplies.



ARCS volunteer capacity map, ARCS/IFRC

A total of 1,500 volunteers and around 50 staff members have been deployed within the response operation, working around the clock during the first phase, covering the end of September, October, and November 2023.

Volunteers continue to serve as the primary force in executing activities and offering services to displaced people, whose ongoing needs include basic household items, cash and voucher support, livelihood support for job opportunities, integration initiatives, continued mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and education services for both children and parents in CFS^{2,3}.

Response efforts are carried out with a commitment to quality assurance through the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) component while also considering gender-specific needs and safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse through the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) component.

Continuous efforts are being made to enhance the capacity of volunteers and staff across headquarters and ARCS branches in CEA and PGI.

² [People In Need: Refugee Crisis in Armenia Rapid Needs Assessment Report.](#)

³ UNICEF



Psychological First Aid training for volunteers. Photo: IFRC

The Emergency Appeal (EA) draws upon ARCS's extensive capacity and rich experience since its foundation in 1920; the EA was developed to address the wide range of identified needs of displaced people comprehensively. The initial needs were identified through interviews by phone or in person. Later, in May-June 2024, a livelihood needs assessment was conducted to identify long-term needs and design the recovery phase. Key findings from the report are presented further in the report.

Additionally, ARCS aligned with the Government's initiative for standardizing shelter support and food provision through the ["40+10" social assistance programme](#), which provided AMD 40,000 (CHF 100) for rent and AMD 10,000 (CHF 25) for utilities; and [a one-off multi-purpose cash assistance](#) (MPCA) of AMD 50,000 (CHF 125) designated for food and winterization needs reaching 20,290 people in total through cash assistance.

Continuing its MHPSS efforts, ARCS maintained activities with 570 trained staff and volunteers, reaching 93,795 people. Comprehensive measures were implemented through CEA to identify needs and PGI components to ensure quality in the planning and implementation phases, as well as to prevent instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. The infographic below summarizes and highlights the main achievements of ARCS's response as of 30 September 2024, covering one year since the crisis.

Emergency Appeal response – People reached Armenia Population Movement



IFRC seeks **15 million Swiss francs** to enable support to Armenian Red Cross Society to deliver emergency assistance and support the early recovery of displaced people.



CHF 8.7M (as of September 2024)
Emergency Appeal budget



To assist
90,000 people

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION



Shelter (NFI)
30,983



CVA
20,290



MHPSS
93,913



Education
9,933



WASH
43,619



Food
15,211



Migration
in progress



Livelihoods
in progress



PGI
3,834

PGI & CEA
as cross-cutting components



CEA
16,605



The ARCS has made significant progress in both emergency response and National Society Strengthening. A National Society Development (NSD) inventory was conducted, leading to the development of a draft NSD Roadmap. Key organizational advancements include orientation sessions on Statutory Meetings, Volunteer Management and Communication in Crisis for ARCS management and 100 volunteers, enhanced financial sustainability and quality assurance projects, and development of HR tools like a Recruitment Policy and Employee Wellbeing Guideline. ARCS also focused on communications, training 24 focal points and developing a Crisis Communication Strategy, while youth engagement and 10 PGI assessments further strengthened inclusivity.



Emergency Appeal National Society Strengthening Armenia Population Movement



VOLUNTEERS & STAFF



1,500
volunteers
deployed



100
attended induction
session



599
trained on
MHPSS



231
trained on education
service provision



179
trained on PGI



24
trained on
communications

ARCS POLICY, STRATEGY AND STANDARDS



- 10 PGI assessments conducted
- NSD Roadmap is developed (draft)
- Explanatory note on NSD for Emergency Appeal operations developed
- Strategy for communication in crisis developed
- Need assessment for a volunteer management database conducted
- Concept note for volunteer induction is developed



A joint monitoring visit to impacted population. Photo: ARCS

The IFRC team supports ARCS in daily activity planning and implementation. A budget scenario plan has been completed to align with the current funding status, prioritizing the distribution of household items, food parcels, cash and voucher assistance (CVA), MHPSS, educational activities within Smiley clubs, create employment opportunities for livelihood needs, establish integration centres for migration activities and national society strengthening, along with CEA and PGI as cross-cutting components.

Given the ongoing operational needs and in recognition of the institutional requirements, the IFRC and partner national societies (PNSs) in the country are actively reinforcing the implementation capacities of ARCS. This collaborative effort is facilitated by a joint operational task force (JOTF) involving ARCS, IFRC, PNSs, and the ICRC. The JOTF meets regularly to coordinate efforts, ensuring the functionality and support of the ARCS. These initiatives cover essential programs such as cash distribution, home-based and residential care, MHPSS, and educational activities in Smiley clubs. Despite some implementation challenges, overall progress has been commendable, ensuring that critical services reach vulnerable communities in Armenia, including displaced people. Close coordination with ARCS branches and collaboration among Secretariat and ARCS entities in-country remains pivotal. To strengthen the implementation capacity of the ARCS, the IFRC has increased its human resources capacity to support the response. For further details, please see the National Society Strengthening under Enabling Approaches section.

The **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** scaled up its response, working closely with the ARCS to respond to displaced people's protection and assistance needs in border regions (Syunik, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor) and Yerevan. As part of its response, ICRC set up a helpline with the ARCS to support people finding their loved ones. Other services include providing hospitals with supplies, MHPSS, food and essential household items, multi-purpose cash, as well as support in capacity strengthening of ARCS branches to continue responding to the needs of affected people. As part of the review process of the suspension of funding to ARCS, the ICRC conducted a due diligence assessment, the results of which will be presented shortly to ARCS management determine a roadmap for continued funding.

External humanitarian community and the Government of Armenia (GoA): The GoA, under the coordination of relevant ministries overseeing Protection, Education, Basic Needs, Resilience, Health, and Nutrition sectors, is collaborating with international organizations (including UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, IOM, and FAO), international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as ACTED, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children, and Caritas, as well as local NGOs like the Women's Support Centre, Armenian Progressive Youth (APY), Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), and Mission Armenia, among others, to address the needs of those who have arrived in Armenia. United Nations agencies are co-leading the GoA-coordinated technical working groups, with UNHCR taking the lead on both strategic and operational layers. A comprehensive approach and effective coordination among international and local stakeholders are imperative. Therefore, Movement partners (ARCS, ICRC, and IFRC) are actively participating in coordination forums to ensure coherent efforts to support the affected persons and communities.

Needs Analysis

Initially, the most pressing needs included shelter, essential items, cash assistance, food security, health services, education, and MHPSS, as identified through data collected from the ARCS database, including inquiries to the helpline, direct contacts with ARCS HQ and branches, and the [inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessment](#) (RNA) conducted with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and partners. One year into the operation, the main needs continue to focus on long-term interventions, including livelihood support and enhanced social integration, informed by a multi-sector needs assessment conducted by MoLSA and UNICEF from March, findings from ARCS and IFRC two post-distribution monitoring (PDM) results from May and August, and an extensive livelihood needs assessment conducted by ARCS and IFRC in April-May. The key sources used to identify the current needs are as follows:

Snapshot of immediate needs from the Rapid needs assessment (RNA): The November [\(RNA\)](#) report outlined the immediate needs of displaced populations in Armenia during the early stages of the crisis. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs were particularly concerning for children exposed to violence, while educational challenges persisted due to low kindergarten enrollment, infrastructure issues, and shortages of teachers and textbooks. Critical needs included food, shelter, essential household items, and cash support for rent and utilities. The need for employment support was emphasized, focusing on mid- to long-term interventions for social integration and economic empowerment.

MoLSA and UNICEF's multi-sectoral assessment: In March 2024, MoLSA and UNICEF shared a multi-sectoral assessment report identifying the various needs of displaced populations. The assessment prioritized employment support to help individuals secure income for accommodation and essentials. Additionally, challenges related to legal status and depleted savings highlight the need for enhanced mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and educational resources to aid in the integration of displaced individuals.

ARCS and IFRC's livelihoods needs assessment of the displaced population: Based on findings from the MoLSA and UNICEF multi-sectoral needs assessment, the IFRC jointly with the ARCS conducted a livelihoods needs assessment in April using the Household Economy Scale (HES) methodology to evaluate the socioeconomic impact of displacement and identify primary needs. The assessment revealed significant economic challenges, with employment support identified as the top priority for displaced populations, who primarily rely on government assistance, humanitarian aid, and savings to cover expenses.

Operational Risk Assessment

The operational risk assessment for Armenia remains high, with attention focused on five main areas of concern.

1. Conflict Resurgence

The ongoing peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are at a critical stage, particularly regarding the proposed "[Zangezur corridor](#)", intended to connect Azerbaijan to its exclave of Nakhichevan through southern Armenia. While both sides see the corridor as vital for a comprehensive peace agreement, differing views on its implementation could lead to renewed protests in Armenia. Recent territorial concessions by Armenia in [Tavush region](#) have also sparked local discontent. Amidst these tensions, Azerbaijan is preparing to host [COP29](#), aiming to enhance its international image through green initiatives and reconstruction efforts in Karabakh.

The implications of these developments on population movement along the bordering territories and the operations of the ARCS are significant. Displaced people may face heightened demands for assistance in housing, healthcare, and psychosocial support.

2. Unclear Legal Status

The Government of Armenia's decision to grant [refugee status](#) to the displaced population from Karabakh introduces complex legal dynamics. These individuals possess Armenian passports classified as "travel documents," which do not provide citizenship. Under Armenian law, refugee status is limited to foreign citizens or stateless individuals, complicating the status of those seeking protection. The temporary protection status, now extended until the [end of December 2025](#), allows displaced persons to apply for citizenship. This situation raises significant implications for their integration into Armenian society, particularly regarding future military service and employment in government roles, given that many previously held such positions in their home regions.

The evolving legal status of displaced individuals may influence migration trends, as uncertainty about their rights and potential integration could lead some to seek opportunities abroad. The ARCS may face increased demands for assistance, particularly in housing, healthcare, and employment support, as displaced individuals navigate their new status. Furthermore, advocacy for the rights of these populations will become essential to ensure their needs are considered in national policies and programs. Strengthening community engagement will also be crucial for fostering resilience among displaced individuals and integrating their perspectives into ongoing discussions about their future in Armenia.

3. CVA Programme Related Risks

The findings related to employment, legal status, and rental accommodation highlight a substantial risk of eviction for families renting homes after December 2024, particularly if they fail to secure employment or ongoing support. This situation underscores the importance of explicitly recognizing this risk within the context of the CVA programme-related risks. Consequently, the ARCS may see rising demand for assistance as housing insecurity grows. This situation calls for heightened advocacy for displaced populations and proactive strategies within the CVA framework to support vulnerable groups. Effective communication and coordination among stakeholders will be crucial for addressing eviction risks.

4. Tackling Financial Fraud Risks

During the PDMs and assessments, participants expressed concerns about unauthorized transactions and theft from the bank accounts of displaced individuals. The Armenian government has established a requirement to open bank accounts to receive cash assistance. However, incidents of fraud have raised worries about the safety of these funds. Reports of bank card fraud among displaced people underscore a significant vulnerability at a time when many are trying to rebuild their lives. Addressing these issues is crucial for restoring confidence in the support systems meant to assist them. In response, ARCS has developed and translated information-sharing materials to prevent such incidents and advises individuals not to share confidential bank information, regardless of the identity claimed by the caller.

5. Constraints Posed by Armenia's New Volunteer Law

[The new Volunteer Law in Armenia](#), effective October 2023, introduces several requirements that could significantly impact the ARCS ability to mobilize volunteers and respond to emergencies. Key provisions include the necessity for formal contracts outlining volunteer roles and insurance coverage, which aim to enhance safety and accountability but also create administrative burdens. These requirements may slow down the mobilization process, potentially reduce the number of volunteers—particularly among younger individuals—and divert resources from humanitarian activities to compliance-related tasks. Furthermore, ARCS will need to invest in training staff on the legal aspects of volunteer management and reevaluate engagement strategies to attract and retain volunteers while ensuring compliance. Although the law seeks to improve volunteer safety and effectiveness, it presents significant challenges that ARCS must navigate to maintain its responsiveness in emergencies.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Gayane, a cash recipient. Photo: IFRC

Building a New Home: Gayane's Story

Gayane's family is among the hundreds who had to leave their home in Karabakh in September 2023. With her seven children, she moved to the Ararat region, seeking safety and stability.

The house they now live in has a partially intact roof and only basic facilities. When they moved in last autumn, it was an empty shell. However, Gayane and her family rolled up their sleeves, repaired the house, and filled it with furniture and toys, turning it into a home. They are committed to leaving it in good condition for the next family if they ever have to move on.

Thanks to monthly cash assistance from the ARCS and the IFRC, Gayane's family can cover rent and utilities, easing their financial burden during this challenging time. As winter approaches, Gayane and her husband remain hopeful that they will receive a certificate for the house, providing them with more security and stability.

—Yulia Bilenko, IFRC

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update On the Strategy

No changes have been introduced since the last report in the [Operation Update #4](#).
Figures reported throughout the document reflect people reached by the IFRC Secretariat. If the reported number includes federation-wide reach, this is indicated in the narrative.

DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

		Shelter, Housing and Settlements		People reached (phase 1): 21,825
				People reached (phase 2): 9,158
Objective:		Population arriving to Armenia and host communities restore and strengthen their safety, well-being and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target	
	# of people (and households) provided with household items that support the restoration and maintenance of health, dignity and safety and the undertaking of daily domestic activities in and around the home	30,983 people (7,746 HHs)	6,600 people (1,650 HHs)	
Household items ARCS has distributed the essential household items such as blankets, pillows, heaters, mattresses, kitchen sets, school bags and foldable beds, reaching a total of 7,746 households (30,983 people) to date. Funding from the initial Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF), prior to launching the current Emergency Appeal, was allocated to procure essential household items for people affected. In 2023, the majority of non-food items were successfully distributed across all impacted areas, marking a strategic adjustment from previous operations. Based on actual needs of January-June 2024 the assistance was tailored to address only the most urgent requirements, identified through a coordinated verification process with the municipality. This coordinated needs-based approach enabled support for 7,746 households, a substantial increase from the original plan of 1,650 households. The distribution process was conducted on-site with active involvement from community representatives in Yerevan, as 40% of displaced individuals reside within the city or in nearby districts. Remaining items have been allocated to emergency stock, as information from ARCS branches and local municipalities indicates that the immediate basic needs of the displaced population are currently covered. Next immediate steps: <u>Household items</u>: ARCS aimed to distribute this remaining stock by mid-June 2024. Ultimately, it was decided to keep these items as part of the emergency stock. With the support of other funding sources:				

- Distributions of pre-stocked items from other funding sources, including a pre-established IFRC-USAID's BHA project and a UNICEF partnership.⁴
- 315 households were supported with relief items, including food parcels in Yerevan, Sevan, Gyumri, Gegharkunik, and Shirak. Additionally, 315 households in the same locations received non-food items, including electric heaters, water boilers, blankets, and pillows.



Multi-purpose Cash

People reached: 11,306 people

Objective:

Households are provided with unconditional/multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

of targeted people reached with Multi-purpose Cash Assistance to address basic needs (new indicator)

20,290 transfers to 11,306 individuals

20,000 transfers

The Government of Armenia initially introduced a ["40+10" social assistance programme](#) for the first six months, from October 2023 to March 2024. The Cash Working Group, led by the MoLSA and UNHCR, decided to extend this programme until the end of 2024, since most displaced people stay in rented accommodation and need cash support to cover daily expenditures. As part of the Emergency Appeal, the ARCS aligned its cash support programme with the government's initiative, covering the months of November and December from 2023, as well as March, April, May, June, and July of 2024.

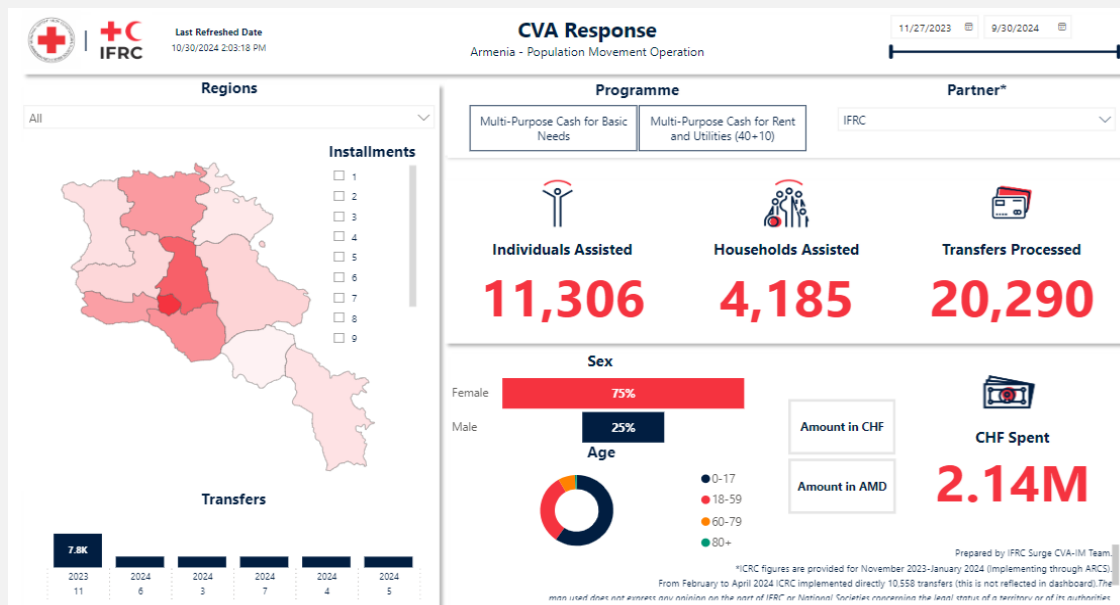
Selection criteria for the rental and utility programme (AMD 40,000+10,000 assistance project) were established collaboratively by IFRC and ARCS, with input from the Cash Working Group. Targeted households include those recently displaced with three or more children, as well as families with disabled members. ARCS volunteers verified and validated recipient lists received from Unified Social Service (USS) before initiating payments, ensuring eligibility criteria were met. Recipients were notified via SMS after each transfer, with helpline numbers provided for feedback.

IFRC Secretariat MPC:

The IFRC Secretariat jointly with the ARCS has distributed a total of 20,290 MPC transfers since the beginning of the Emergency Appeal, a screenshot of the Dashboard is provided below. These transfers have reached a total of 11,306 individuals (equivalent to 4,185 households), with the number of instalments ranging from 1 to 10. Every month, the government provided a list of families based on IFRC's selection criteria, which prioritized families with three or more children or those with a member with a disability. Some recipients remained on the list, while others were adjusted based on their continued eligibility under these criteria. The amount of each transfer was set at AMD 50,000 (CHF 125).

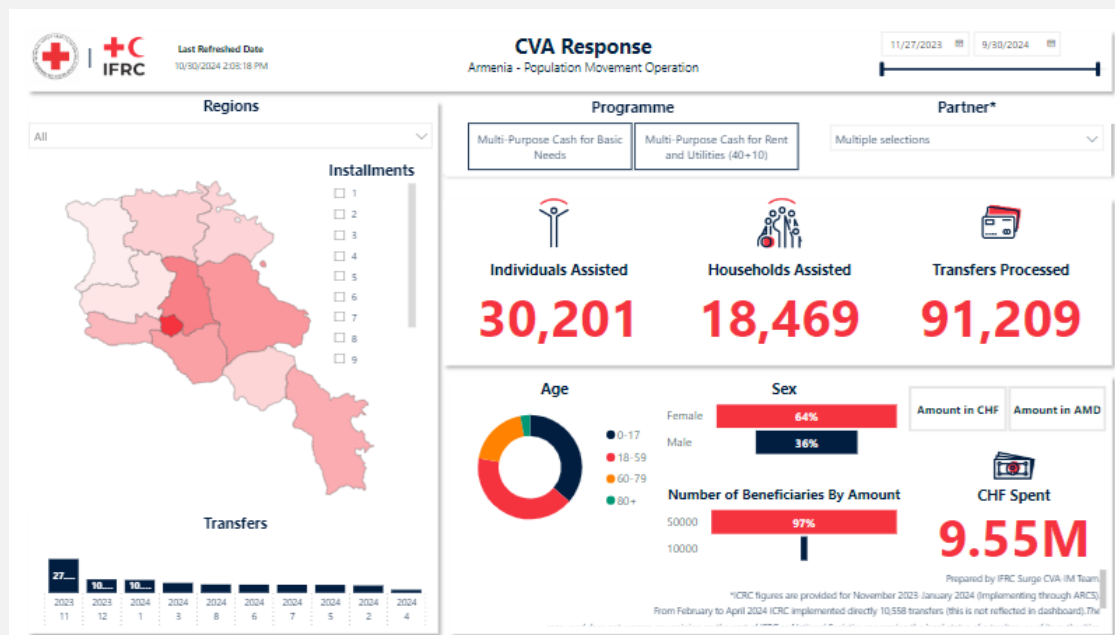
As shown in the dashboard below, majority of recipients are female (75%), indicating an important gender imbalance. Most of the recipients are minors (0-17 years old), although only one adult per family receives the cash on behalf of all family members.

⁴ Based on a pre-agreed ARCS-UNICEF partnership on preparedness and response, covering Child Protection, Education, WASH, Humanitarian Relief, Warehouse Management, Cash Assistance, and Communication, the following activities have been activated through formal letters in the current response: 10 bio toilets and hygienic supply have been installed at registration points; Case managers for child protection have been engaged in all branches, reaching 2,000+ children by now; 11 Temporary Learning Spaces (Child-Friendly Spaces) have been established; Blankets, schoolbags, diapers have been distributed to approx. 570 families.



Federation-wide MPC:

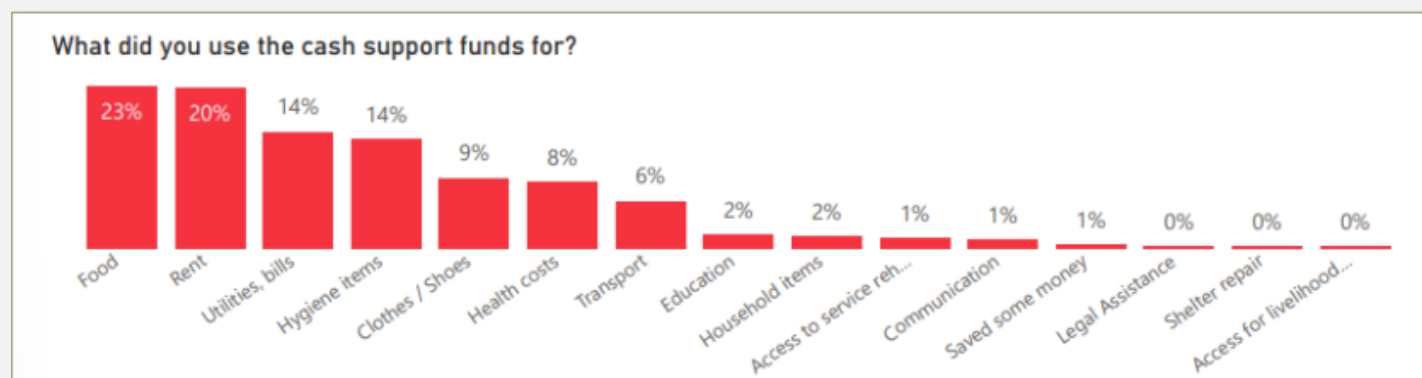
In addition to the IFRC Secretariat's contributions, the ARCS implemented MPC through bilateral funding from various partners. This included 3,954 transfers funded by the Swiss Red Cross, 2,750 transfers supported by the Austrian Red Cross, 43,900 transfers from UNHCR, and 20,315 transfers provided by the ICRC. The IFRC Secretariat's portion of the MPC program, in collaboration with the Government of Armenia, accounted for a total of CHF 2,140,000 since the start of the operation. Overall, Federation-wide MPC funds implemented through ARCS and the IFRC Emergency Appeal (EA) reached CHF 9,550,000. In total, the Federation-wide cash transfers since the beginning of the Emergency Appeal reached 91,209 transfers to 30,201 unique individuals (18,469 households), with each receiving between 1 to 10 installments.



Source: IFRC GO, CVA Dashboard: [IFRC GO - Emergency](#)

To evaluate the impact of the MPC assistance, which was the largest intervention of the ARCS within the Federation-wide Emergency Appeal both in terms of the number of people reached and budget, two post-distribution monitoring

(PDM) exercises were conducted over a seven-month period. The first PDM in April-May 2024 included 208 participants, with 60% female and 20% having disabilities. Most respondents (88%) lived in rented accommodations, and the assistance primarily addressed essential needs such as rent, utilities, and food. Notably, 40% covered their rent fully, and 73% reported an improvement in their situation. The second PDM in August 2024 involved 239 households, with 97% confirming receipt of cash assistance from the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS). A significant 99% preferred cash as the most favorable assistance, with 55% able to fully cover their rent and utilities. Respondents primarily spent the cash on food (23%), rent (20%), and utilities (14%). In total, 447 people have been interviewed, 4% of the total 11,306 unique beneficiaries who receive MPC. The representative sample size was calculated with 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error.



Overall, 54% received the assistance in a timely manner, and 98% confirmed receipt of SMS notifications. Most beneficiaries (82%) were satisfied with the information provided, and nearly all indicated that the cash assistance alleviated their stress, underscoring its positive impact on their well-being.

In addition to PDMs, IFRC conducted a FGD with 25 people in Ijevan and Tavush, who had received cash assistance. The purpose was to collect more detailed feedback on the effectiveness of the cash assistance, assess whether it covered their basic needs or improved their situation, evaluate if the assistance was provided in a timely manner, and understand the beneficiaries' priority needs.



FGD in Tavush region. Photo Credit: IFRC/ARCS

Similar feedback to PDM was received from the group discussion participants. The main findings indicated that all participants were living in rented apartments and rated their living conditions as average, due to lack of necessary conveniences.

All the beneficiaries noted that the assistance was on-time, without which they would have struggled to cover rent and utility expenses. Many participants also used the received amount to purchase food.

Overall, the assistance helped them meet their basic needs. However, housing remains a priority for these families. Income generation opportunities and health needs are also critical for the beneficiaries, as some have complex health issues, and not all can afford necessary medical services.

Since most of the displaced individuals do not own property in the country, it is unclear how they will manage their shelter needs once the government's cash support programme concludes. This situation poses the risk of leaving people homeless or forcing them to migrate abroad in search of work, which could expose them to additional challenges on top of those already caused by displacement. There is uncertainty on the continuation of MPC Government programme for 2025, depending on resources available, needs and Government and objectives, there is a possibility of a more targeted MPC programme for 2025, but not official announcements yet. The government of Armenia as well as ARCS/IFRC are focusing on Livelihoods for 2025 as an exit strategy (see details below).



Livelihoods

People reached: 0⁵

Objective:

*Immediate response: People arriving to Armenia meet their food and other basic needs and protect their livelihood assets.
Recovery: People's capacities arriving to Armenia are enhanced for restoring their livelihoods and increasing their prospects for local integration*

Key indicators:

Indicator⁶

Actual

Target

of people attended through job placement counseling

0

300

of people attending vocational/language/business trainings

In a preparation phase

50

of people supported with participation in exhibitions

In a preparation phase

25

of people, who received cash for livelihoods (including cash for child/elderly care or transportation)

In a preparation phase

300

% of people satisfied with received cash for livelihoods (including cash for child/elderly care or transportation)

In a preparation phase

80%

Food assistance:

The ARCS distributed food parcels to a total 15,211 households since the operation began. In addition, ARCS distributed wheat flour (50 kg per family) to families with more than seven members living in rural areas. Furthermore, 315 households (1,260 people) were supported with food parcels provided by the Kuwait Red Crescent in Yerevan, Sevan, Gyumri, Gegharkunik, and Shirak. In total, 15,526 households were reached with food support.

Livelihoods:

Planned activities for livelihood support include job placement counseling for 300 individuals, which has yet to begin. Language trainings are in the preparation phase and will target 50 participants. In December 2024, 25 beneficiaries are planned to be supported in participating in Christmas exhibitions. Additionally, cash support for livelihoods, including assistance for child/elderly care and transportation, will be provided to 300 individuals, with the final Selection Committee review starting on 21 October 2025. A beneficiary satisfaction survey is planned for 2025, aiming for an 80% satisfaction rate.

The Livelihoods programme commenced in June 2024, with IFRC/ARCS announcing the initiative through various channels. This outreach resulted in two cohorts of applications: 1,611 applicants in the first cohort (application period 26 June - 31 July). The second cohort (application period 01 Aug - 30 Sept 2024) are currently in preparation stage for group information session.

⁵ Please note that the actual number reported in this report is lower than in the last OU due to a counting error.

⁶ Indicators have been modified based on needs analysis report.



Posters in English and Armenian

From 5 August to 6 September ARCS/IFRC conducted 61 online and offline information sessions to inform potential beneficiaries about the program's activities, procedures, and application processes with deadlines. A total of 637 individuals attended these sessions, detailed breakdown of whom is provided below. In addition, through ARCS hot-line the IFRC/ARCS Livelihoods team members have received and provided necessary consultation to over 100 phone calls.



Group info sessions in Yerevan ARCS Office.
Photo Credit: ARCS/IFRC



Group info sessions in Masis Town of Ararat Region jointly by ARCS/IFRC. Photo Credit ARCS/IFRC

The Livelihoods Assistance for people displaced from Karabakh in September 2023 has started in June 2024. This assistance aims to promote business activities of displaced people and support their integration. The assistance includes providing counselling for job placement supported by Austrian Red Cross, conditional cash grants by attending a basic business skills training, supported by IFRC. Both activities are managed by ARCS case managers.

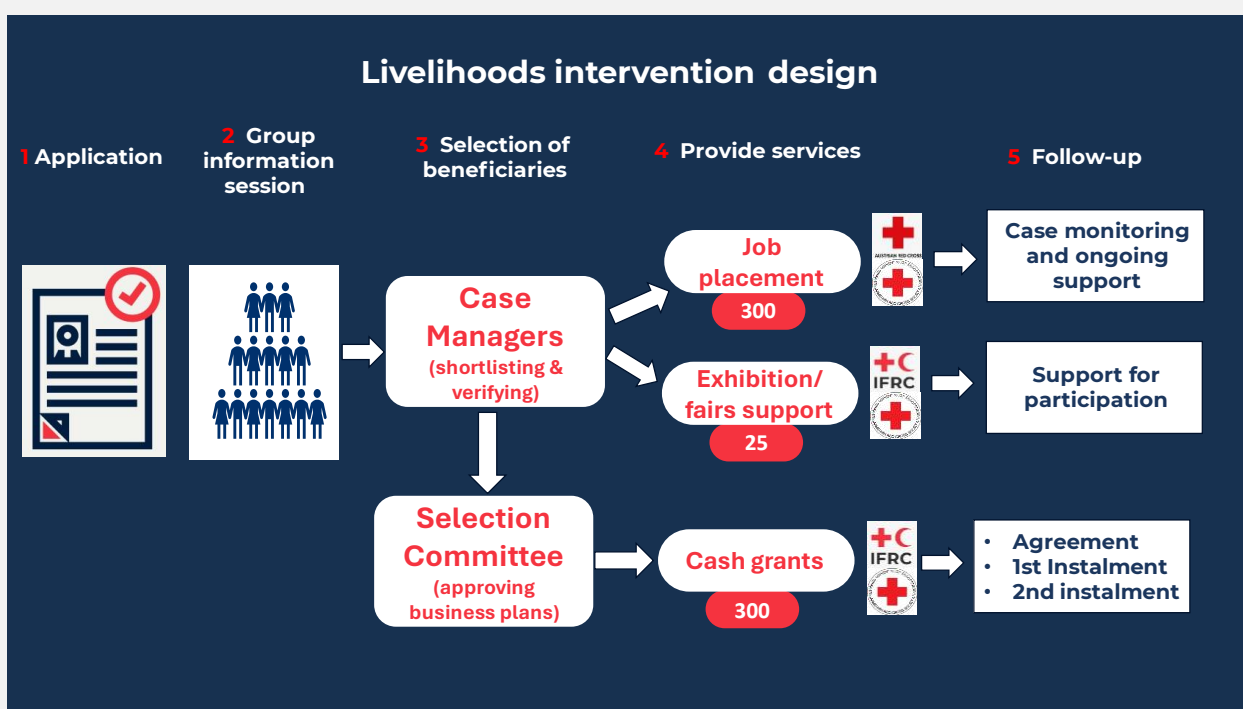
- In June 2024, the ARCS has announced about this livelihood assistance through various channels, informing about how/when to apply. The announcement has resulted two cohorts of applications: 1,611 during the first cohort (26 June to 31 July).
- After group information sessions, the deadline for 1st cohort to submit business plan submissions was 13 September. 406 people submitted their business plans. ARCS/IFRC team conducted initial shortlist by

evaluating individual business plans based on criteria such as feasibility, sustainability, and social impact. A total of 377 business plans were shortlisted, with priority given to female-headed households, single parents, and households with disabilities or multiple children. The shortlisted business plans will be verified physically between 30 September and 15 October before reaching the Selection Committee which will start from 21 October.

- The deadline for 2nd cohort applications (01 August to 30 September 2024) is on 30th September. ARCS is in process to analyse the applications and will organise group information sessions for 2nd cohort.

Most applicants expressed interest in sectors such as beauty salons, cosmetology, tailoring, confectionery, and bee-keeping—activities they had previously engaged in before displacement. A complete dashboard will be developed to provide a breakdown of selected beneficiaries by age, gender, and location.

As part of the Federation-wide Livelihoods approach, IFRC, Austrian Red Cross, and ARCS are coordinating activities through weekly meetings to address challenges and track progress. Job placement applicants are referred to the ARCS job placement programme funded by the Austrian Red Cross.



Next immediate steps:

- ARCS will verify shortlisted business plan applicants through in-person visits by case managers.
- IFRC will launch an open tender to procure and select a provider for basic business training.
- A Selection Committee formed by ARCS, IFRC, Austrian Red Cross, USS, and other INGOs will select final beneficiaries based on business plan quality and household vulnerability.

Challenges:

- Delay in hiring case managers by the ARCS due to HR capacity bottleneck.
- Delay in starting Livelihoods activities in the Emergency Appeal as IFRC did not prioritize Livelihoods during the first months. It is recommended to plan for Livelihoods staff from the beginning of emergencies. Protection of Livelihoods and assessments should be implemented during the first three months of an emergency, so to start implementing livelihoods activities earlier.

With the support of other funding sources:

- In collaboration with Austrian Red Cross, ARCS started the implementation of the RENEW project, funded by the ECHO HIP. The livelihood component allows to support 1,000 persons with proper referrals and job placement support. ARCS will need to provide updated information on the number people already received this support.
- ARCS continues the implementation of economic integration activities with the support of UNHCR which includes provision of income generation tools, financial literacy, and business trainings.

	Health & Care <i>(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)</i>	People reached (phase 1): 85,902 People reached (phase 2): 10,206	
Objective:	<i>Access of affected populations to essential health services (emergency, primary, secondary, community/public health) is facilitated, including mental health and psychosocial support</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of people who receive mental health and psychosocial services in emergency situations from RCRC (Phase 1: Arrival and Initial Support)</i>	85,902	61,850
	<i># of people who receive mental health and psychosocial services in emergency situations from RCRC (Phase 2: Long-term Support)</i>	8,011	9800
	<i># of people trained in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (including Psychological First Aid and other MHPSS related trainings)</i>	599	350
	<i># of people reached with health promotion activities related to NCD management in emergencies</i>	De-prioritized	20,000
	<i># of First Aid community volunteer teams</i>	De-prioritized	50

Through MHPSS service, the newly arrived were supported in two phases:

Phase 1 - Arrival and Initial Support (September 2023 – November 2023):

In this initial phase, the ARCS offered Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) by trained staff and volunteers to approximately 70,000 individuals arriving to Armenia, at the reception points. The ARCS helpline was scaled up to provide emotional support, active listening, and referrals, with four additional operators trained to offer online PFA and remote counseling in response to increased demand; see [Operation Update #4](#) for further details.

Phase 2 - Long-term support (December 2023 – September 2024):

During the second phase of ARCS MHPSS activities, the focus remains on delivering PFA via the helpline and face-to-face counselling sessions. Additionally, this phase witnessed a substantial expansion of support programmes, including group and individual psychosocial support sessions, along with information and sensitization sessions. ARCS hired two instructors from Karabakh to help overcome the dialect barrier and to better handle challenges around communication and cultural sensitivity. The helpline remains active in addressing the needs and inquiries of the vulnerable population, directing them to relevant services as needed.

During the reporting period, in addition to psychosocial support activities, the ECHO-HIP project established peer support groups in four regions where most of the displaced population resides. The helpline and the provision of PFA continued. Supportive supervision is provided to the helpline team by an external psychologist, while the MHPSS team also supports the Gyumri Care Centre and the Austrian and Swiss Red Cross Home Care Project in their multi-disciplinary health team.

The ARCS Social and Health Care Department staff participate in different meetings and discussions such as Inter-agency Working Group, WHO WG and Network of older people, to present ARCS services and to keep up to date on the MHPSS activities provided by other organizations.

Information-sensitization sessions have been carried out in communities to inform and educate people about ARCS's MHPSS activities for those aiming to reach out to other services. To further expand and enhance MHPSS services, 599 staff and volunteers were trained to provide PFA and basic psychosocial support within different departments.



Summer camp in Tavush region. Photo: IFRC

A psychosocial support-based summer programme was designed and implemented in the Child friendly spaces/ Smiley Clubs established by ARCS, during the months of July and August for children in 10 regions of Armenia. This programme aimed to engage children and parents from Smiley Clubs in recreational life skills program, to provide psychosocial support (PSS) and promote wellbeing among the target population and to foster community spirit and resilience through structured activities. A Delivery of a 4-day yard programme with interactive play-based activities

were facilitated for children followed by a parent and child day on the 5th day to close the event. The programme covered the following themes on each day:

- Life Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Climate Change and Social Responsibility
- Social and Cultural Exchange
- Building Parent and Child Relationship

A maximum of 25 children were invited to participate in one group, while groups were divided based on children age categories of 6-10 and 11-14. A volunteer leader and four volunteers were oriented for 38 Smiley Clubs. A total of 104 volunteers including volunteer leaders from each smiley club participated in an orientation programme of the summer activity to carry out the 5-day program. This programme alone during the month of July and August reached 1,291 children, who were unique beneficiaries, out of which, 708 were girls and 583 were boys.

Based on the survey findings, which included input from 40 children, 40 parents, and volunteer facilitators, the summer programme held in Ararat, Armavir, and Syunik was widely valued by all stakeholders. Evaluations confirmed a positive impact on both host and displaced populations. Volunteers appreciated the opportunity to build positive relationships and engage in creative activities with children who usually were not members of Smiley Clubs. Children aged 6-10 and 11-14 expressed satisfaction, highlighting their ability to make new friends and enjoy the 5-day program's games and excursions. Parents noted improved social behavior in their children and encouraged similar programs during every school holiday. Key recommendations included extending the programme to 10 days and hosting it outside school premises.

Next immediate steps:

- Identify and engage MHPSS focal points in regions for community-level interventions
- Orient MHPSS team of ARCS in sustaining their ongoing activities until the end of EA

Challenges:

- Delays in implementing activities due to internal challenges within ARCS have affected our ability to reach beneficiaries in all regions of Armenia. The lack of accessible MHPSS services, particularly in areas outside of Yerevan, is a significant concern.
- There has been a delay in the implementation of activities attributed to differing perspectives among ARCS management and team members.
- Lack of MHPSS activities and services present in all regions of Armenia as resources are centralised in ARCS HQ.

With the support of other funding sources:

- With the support of Austrian Red Cross, ARCS continues to implement community group and individual activities in Ararat, Armavir and Kotayk regions under the ECHO HIP project.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

People reached: 43,619

Objective:

Improve access of affected population to WASH services to reduce their immediate and medium-term risk of waterborne, water-related, and vector-borne diseases

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

	# of people reached by WASH assistance	43,619	23,200
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Since the beginning of the operation, 10,025 households received hygiene kits and 5,600 children received hygiene items, reaching 43,619 individuals in total.

Item name	Quantity distributed on the 1 st round	Quantity distributed on the 2 nd round	Quantity distributed on the 3 rd round	Total
Hygiene kits (HH)	7,400	450	2,175	10,025
Hygiene items (child)	2,000	3,600	0	5,600

During December 2023, more than 25,000 families received basic information on water sanitation and hygiene through trained community volunteers.

With the support of IFRC Emergency Appeal funding:
The initial DREF fund was used to procure hygiene material (1,150 HH hygiene kits and 4,033 hygiene items).

With the support of other funding sources:

- Distributions of pre-stocked items from other funding sources, including USAID funded preparedness project.
- 1,567 hygiene items for children procured with UNICEF support.
- 315 households in Yerevan, Sevan, Gyumri, Gegharkunik, and Shirak were supported with family hygiene kits, funded by the Kuwait Red Crescent.

	Education	People reached (phase 1): 7,096 People reached (phase 2): 2,900
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Objective:	Support safe, continued, and equitable access to education for affected populations, especially children and young people, vulnerable and marginalized groups		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of affected children, adolescents and young adults receiving any form of education support provided by RCRC in affected area (Phase 1: Arrival and initial Support)	7,096	-
	# of affected children, adolescents and young adults receiving any form of education support provided by RCRC in affected area (Phase 2: Long-term Support)	2,837	3,700
	# of teachers and education personnel (incl. volunteer facilitators) trained by RCRC in improved teaching and learning approaches in affected areas	231 ⁷	450

Smiley Clubs from the beginning
According to UNICEF data, over 30,000 children arrived from Karabakh after 19 September 2023, requiring immediate attention, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities such as art therapy, reading, dancing, and singing. Additionally, they needed supplementary education to aid in their adaptation process. In

⁷ Please note that the actual number reported in this report is lower than in the last Operation Update (OU No. 3) due to a counting error.

response, children and youth were assisted upon their arrival in September 2023 through Child Corners established by ARCS. These secure environments catered to 7,096 young individuals during their arrival and initial stage.

Smiley Clubs as long-term support

As part of its long-term support, the ARCS is actively advancing its initiative to establish more Child-Friendly Learning Spaces, called Smiley Clubs. A group of volunteers, mainly composed of schoolteachers, are recruited and trained to deliver Smiley Club services. The selection of schools, classrooms, volunteers, and students are then conducted using the Smiley Club selection criteria. Children aged 6-14 receive homework support, PSS activities, as well as social and cultural events aimed at fostering the integration of children and cultivating a sense of community bond and social cohesion. Since January 2024, Smiley Clubs have reached a total of 2,900 children in response to the 2023 displacement. In September, as school classes began, Smiley Clubs opened after the summer holiday. Currently, there are 40 active Smiley Clubs supporting 2,075 displaced children aged 6-14 and their host communities. There are an additional two dormitories in Yerevan and Abovyan cities that ARCS operates outside of the Emergency Appeal response.

Smiley Club Summer Camps

During the summer, the ARCS ensured that the Smiley Club children and their families were engaged in fun psychosocial activities to improve their well-being and foster deeper connections between displaced children, host community children, between children and their parents, and children and volunteers, by organizing a series of summer yard camps in the Smiley Clubs. This non-formal well-being focused activity supports the Smiley Clubs to deepen relationships and improve overall child well-being. It additionally allows students to feel that the Smiley Club is a safe space, which will hopefully lead into greater educational gains and continued involvement in the Smiley Club throughout the school year. More details about the summer camp activities can be found under the MHPSS section.

2024-2025 School Year

In September 2024, 40 Smiley Clubs reopened after the summer holidays. Volunteer leaders were provided with refresher training online by ARCS on the role and function of the Smiley Club at the end of August 2024. All volunteer leaders had been previously undergone full training in December 2023 and January 2024. In total, an additional 168 (89 boys, 79 girls, 1 child with a disability) joined the Smiley Clubs in September 2024. Of the 45 Smiley Clubs supported by ARCS, three have stopped functioning due to scheduling conflicts with the schools, while two additional clubs are operating in dormitories. In contrast, there is a growing need for and enrollment in the Smiley Clubs in certain locations (Metsamor, Goris, Geghanush, Syunik, Tegh, Masis). Therefore, ARCS is diverting resources to support the expansion of services in these areas to meet the needs of the additional children attending the clubs. This leaves 40 active Smiley Clubs operating under the Emergency Appeal response, along with two additional clubs operating in dormitories outside of the response.

Volunteer support

Currently, there are 440 active volunteers in the 40 Smiley Clubs. To support these volunteers, ARCS has three Smiley Club coordinators and five field officers who manage the operation and provide assistance to the volunteers in the Smiley Clubs. To address ongoing challenges, ensure supplies are sufficient, and share experiences, the ARCS Youth, volunteering and education department Smiley Club field officers hold weekly meetings with volunteers. These meetings contribute to the regular weekly activities, while monthly field visits to the Smiley Clubs foster stronger connection with cooperating schools.

The ARCS Smiley Club team also provides capacity-building support to volunteers on essential topics such as Psychological First Aid (PFA), PSS for children, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), the Children's Rights Convention, the Child Safeguarding Policy, and volunteer safety and security. Training has been provided to 429

volunteers across 40 Smiley Clubs. In addition, 80 volunteers and 378 volunteer teachers have received specific training focused on promoting Healthy Lifestyle, enabling them to effectively deliver these programs.



Children engaged in recreational activity in Smiley Club in Armavir. Photo: ARCS

Renovations

To support learning and creating a safer, more-child friendly environment, ARCS will renovate some of the Smiley Clubs. Starting in August 2024, needs assessments were conducted by the ARCS engineer, who provided recommendations for structural and environmental improvements to the Smiley Club rooms in the schools. ARCS has received written agreements from the schools to carry out these renovations, and currently, five Smiley Clubs are moving forward with their renovation plans. Under the Austrian Red Cross-supported ECHO funds, three additional Smiley Clubs are already in the process of renovation, with completion expected in October. Other Smiley Clubs will be considered for renovations in a second phase.

Community Engagement and Accountability

A dedicated community feedback mechanism has been implemented to ensure that the voices of children, parents, and volunteers are heard and respected. This system manages sensitive complaints and collects feedback in various ways:

- Child-friendly suggestion boxes are placed in Smiley Clubs, allowing children to anonymously share their thoughts, fears, wishes, and complaints. Additionally, children participate in needs assessment focus groups, providing insights that help tailor activities and services to better meet their needs.
- Parents' Feedback: Parent meetings and focus group discussions gather valuable input, as parents' perspectives play a critical role in shaping project activities and development.
- Volunteer Teachers' Feedback: Regular feedback sessions and informal discussions with volunteer teachers foster ongoing communication, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

According to the majority of feedback from parents, there was a need for greater arts and non-formal educational activities within the Smiley Club, therefore from September there is an increase in activities such as pottery, pottery, dance and other hobby groups. Feedback from both children and teacher volunteers suggested to organize entertainment with children during summer vacations, therefore in coordination with ARCS MHPSS team to the Smiley Clubs were able to fulfil this need through summer backyard camps and give children a new motivation to attend school in the new school year.

In terms of monitoring visits, field officers conduct monthly monitoring visits to ensure quality and assess the impact of the initiatives. This holistic approach ensures that the needs of the community are addressed in a comprehensive, responsive, and sustainable way, keeping children's well-being and development at the heart of the Smiley Clubs' mission.

Smiley Club Sustainability Planning

The Smiley Club programme has been part of ARCS programming since 2001, and due to the success and capacity of ARCS to provide educational and psycho-social support through the Smiley Club model, it has been used to respond to the different emergencies in Armenia (2020, 2022, 2023). As the funding for the Smiley Clubs is decreasing, all partners to the Smiley Clubs have begun to create a sustainability plan. The first stage of this planning is the Smiley Club evaluation, which seeks to produce evidence of the benefits of the intervention, which can be used for learning, fundraising and advocacy.

Smiley Club Evaluation

Over the course of activity implementation comprehensive evaluation is planned to assess the effectiveness of the SCs programs focusing on the following three areas:

- Education access and attainment: Evaluating the program's effectiveness in improving educational and learning outcomes for participating children.
- Mental health and psychosocial support: Assessing the impact on children's mental health, social emotional skills, and overall resilience.
- Social cohesion and integration: Analysing how the programme fosters social cohesion and integration between children and families displaced from Karabakh and host communities.

In addition, the evaluation will collect lessons learned and provide evidence-based recommendations for future programming and resource mobilization for sustainability of the programs.

Training

Series of trainings were held in August and September for volunteer teachers, volunteer facilitators and children. In August 2024, an online Smiley Club Orientation training was conducted for 40 volunteer teachers, primarily in Yerevan. On 27 September 2024, the "Healthy Lifestyle" Training of Trainers (TOT) session was held online in Armenia for 80 volunteer teachers (75 women, 5 men) to introduce them to the Healthy Lifestyle project and prepare them for individual sessions. Subsequently, from 28-30 September, 378 children (360 girls, 18 boys) attended Healthy Lifestyle sessions across 40 Smiley Clubs.

Next immediate steps:

For the next three months, ARCS, in collaboration with IFRC, Austrian Red Cross and ECHO HIP funding implemented through the Austrian Red Cross, will continue supporting 40 Smiley Clubs through ongoing activities. Key steps include volunteer training in PSS, safeguarding, climate change and the children's resilience program; regular procurement of educational materials; and completing renovations in Smiley Clubs creating safe and welcoming spaces. Monthly monitoring visits will be conducted, and feedback collection tools will be strengthened to incorporate input from children and parents into programme improvements.

Key training activities planned for the rest of 2024 include Healthy Lifestyle sessions, with facilitators and volunteers trained through October and sessions for children in November and December. Climate Change Awareness will involve focal point selection, training, and awareness sessions from September through November. Promotion of Human Values sessions and projects will run from September through December. Additionally, the Child Resilience Programme will offer trainer sessions in November, with broader implementation in December. The Smiley Club evaluation will continue for the remainder of 2024. Final reporting for all activities is planned for December.



Migration

People reached: -

Objective:

Specific vulnerabilities of populations arriving to Armenia and people on the move are analysed and their needs and rights are met with dedicated humanitarian assistance, protection, and humanitarian diplomacy interventions, in coordination with relevant stakeholders

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

of people reached by RCRC social cohesion activities to improve relations between migrants / people arriving to the country and host communities

In a preparation phase

20,000

Based on the gaps found in the services provided to the population by the different actors in the country, work is being done to strengthen the ARCS regional offices in order to implement various activities aimed at the socio-economic and socio-cultural integration and inclusion of displaced persons. Each of them can be turned into integration centres. These centres can adopt an approach similar to the modalities of other National Societies to support integration and inclusion, offering a wide range of services in a holistic manner. These services can include mental health and psychosocial support, employment support, educational support, protection and the incorporation of a community care approach through meaningful participation.

In addition, a collaboration has been established between the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society through a memorandum of understanding for the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society to use part of the Red Crescent facilities in Echmiadzin to support migrants. Activities that could be included here may be mental health and psychosocial support and legal counselling as key activities for the integration process of individuals. The IFRC is currently seeking an Integration Centre Specialist among National Societies in the Europe region who has experience in setting up such multi-function centres. The Specialist will support the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Society in setting up the new integration centre where many of the services will be provided.

Next immediate steps:

- Coordinate with stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in integration, inclusion and migration.
- Finalise the tender for the equipment for the integration centre.
- Continue discussions with the government to explore possible collaboration and support to establish such facilities. This will ensure the sustainability of the activities.
- Review the budget in the ERP and monitor the implementation of migration-related activities. These may include awareness-raising campaigns, information dissemination, socio-cultural integration initiatives, social cohesion activities, humanitarian aid, job placement assistance, mental health services and psychosocial support, vocational training programmes and guidance to improve livelihoods.



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

People reached: 3,834

Objective:

Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety are mainstreamed throughout the operation to ensure the unique needs of people from all groups, including marginalized groups, are met. An emphasis on keeping the people the IFRC network serves safe from harm in the form of violence, discrimination, and/or exclusion is ensured.

Key indicators:

Indicator	Actual	Target
# of sectoral or PGI assessments conducted using the PGI Minimum Standards	10	4
# of people trained on implementing the PGI Minimum Standards	179	200
# of people reached by protection, gender, and inclusion services	3,834	15,000

With the support of IFRC Emergency Appeal funding:

ARCS and IFRC representatives actively engage in sectoral coordination working groups led by the Government of Armenia and co-led by UN agencies, such as the Protection Working Group and the Child Protection Sub-Working Group. Within these coordination groups, ARCS contributes to information coordination, facilitating coordinated approaches with other partners to address protection, gender and inclusion needs on a case-by-case basis.

The Child Safeguarding Policy that was drafted in 2023 continues to be implemented (for more details refer to the last Operations Updates). To date, 179 people were trained on the safeguarding policy and/ or PGI minimum standards, including social workers, psychologists, teachers, and volunteers working in child protection and at the ARCS Smiley Clubs as well as focal points from regional branches, HQ department representatives and individuals responsible for CEA and organizational development. The sessions focused on fundamental aspects of Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), emphasizing safe referrals and adherence to ARCS's child safeguarding policy. ARCS is committed to extending PGI training to all essential personnel. Additionally, 82 people were trained on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) through an UN online training.

A new PGI Coordinator is being recruited to lead PGI training for staff and a cascade training model for volunteers, with the position expected to be filled in October 2024. Once trained, each department and branch will select a PGI focal point to lead PGI initiatives alongside their regular duties. Under the PGI budget, two child protection case managers were filled and are actively working in child protection case management, as a continuation of the ARCS previous work under UNHCR funding and partnership.

Additionally, the ARCS PGI team collaborated with the CEA and capacity building fund (CBF) teams to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for handling sensitive feedback. They remain actively engaged in this process and currently serve as the primary focal point for managing sensitive feedback. In coordination with CEA, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been developed, including a diagram for call centre workers to easily follow the SOPs. Once the new PGI Coordinator is onboarded, he/she will provide a PGI training for the call centre workers, including on handling sensitive feedback and making safe referrals. Sensitive feedback SOPs were created jointly between ARCS Sensitive Feedback focal point, IFRC Armenia CEA Coordinator, IFRC South Caucasus Cluster EiE/PGI Delegate, and IFRC Europe Regional PGI and CEA Delegates.

Furthermore, PGI assessment analysis continues to be integrated into case management. PGI assessment of individual needs are conducted through requests that come to ARCS via email, helpline, and branches. Through this individual assessment, needs based on gender, disability and protection needs are evaluated to meet the specific necessities of each person. This may include providing furniture to institutions for vulnerable older people (complementing the renovations by UNDP) or providing specific mobility aids and medical equipment to individuals.

As part of the technical work to conduct the PGI trainings, a four-hour PGI induction course was developed which can be delivered to all ARCS staff and volunteers and will fit within the NSD onboarding training scheme. Topics include PGI DAPS framework (Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety), Safeguarding, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), safe referrals, survivor centred approach, and sensitive feedback. The trainings should begin in late October.

Next immediate steps:

- Seven training sessions are scheduled for PGI development, encompassing two PGI Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions tailored for ARCS staff focal points and volunteer leaders. The remaining five sessions will focus on PGI training for new staff members, volunteers, and Smiley Club volunteers with designated responsibilities.

Challenges:

- Conducting PGI specific and/or integrated assessments is challenging, as the government is leading in needs assessments. The respective indicator, therefore, can be interpreted as integrated into analysis, such as case management, through internal assessments that will be conducted through the PGI training, and individual activity assessments, for instance through design of individual Smiley Clubs.

With the support of other funding sources:

ARCS implemented Child Protection Case Management to ensure the timely identification and response to children's protection needs within the framework of a UNICEF-funded project. Case managers for child protection have been engaged in all branches, reaching 4,475 children by the end of March. These case managers handled 1,251 child protection cases and provided support to 2,774 children (1,414 male, 1,360 female). The cases were referred to child protection through the ARCS helpline and directly from ARCS branches.

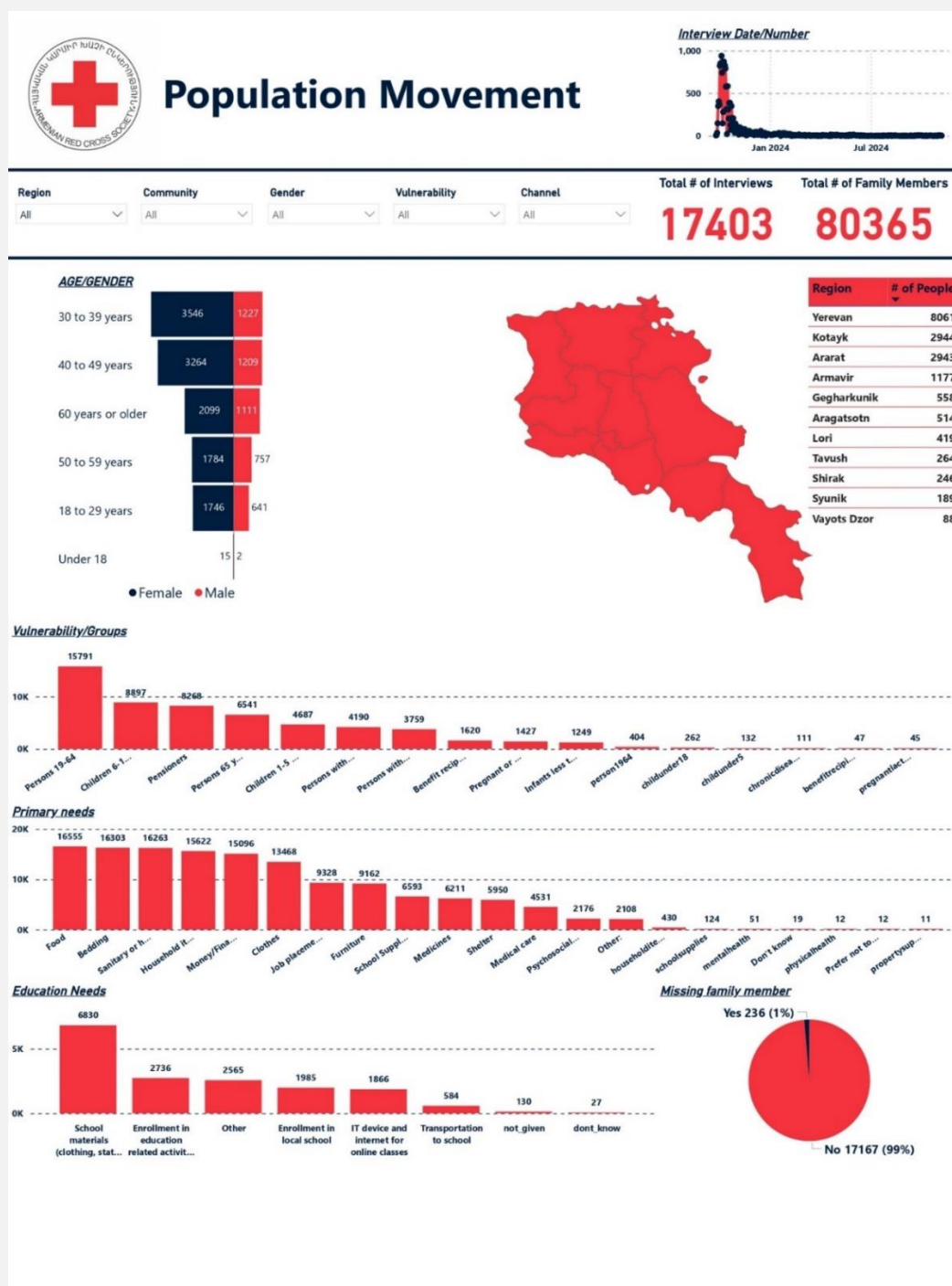


Community Engagement and Accountability

Objective:	<i>Strengthen engagement with and accountability to communities through integrating mechanisms for communication, participation and feedback and complaints within programmes and operations</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	% of people surveyed who report receiving useful and actionable information	In progress	70%
	Number and % of complaints or feedback about the RCRC operation which receive a response through established community communication	In progress	70%
	% of community members who feel their opinion is taken into account during operation planning and decision-making	In progress	60%

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is a crucial component of the IFRC Emergency Appeal in response to the displacement crisis from Nagorno-Karabakh. CEA empowers affected individuals by actively involving them in decision-making processes, ensuring that humanitarian assistance is relevant, responsive, and tailored to their specific needs.

The Appeal was designed with a commitment to understanding and addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of the displaced population, as gathered through CEA channels. Between September 2023 and September 2024, a total of 17,403 interviews were conducted via phone and face-to-face interactions, reaching individuals who collectively represented 80,365 people. This registration process aimed to identify key needs and assess vulnerabilities, enabling the response to effectively target those most in need of support.



Total number of people interviewed and registered disaggregated by sex, age and location.

Between September 2023 and September 2024, ARCS recorded 3,523 interactions, 75% (2,653) of whom were among those displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. The helpline was the primary communication channel, accounting for 94.9% of interactions, while 52% of those contacted were identified as vulnerable individuals, including pregnant and lactating mothers, women-led households, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities. Key issues raised included urgent needs for food, shelter, and non-food items (NFIs) (2,484 contacts, 94%); cash and voucher assistance (CVA) (1,239 contacts, 47%); and health and social services (70 contacts, 2.6%), similar to previous needs analyses.

Types of feedback received included encouragement or praise (0.07%), incident or concern including complaint (7.8%), Observations, perceptions and beliefs (52%), questions (12.5%), requests and suggestions (27.5%).

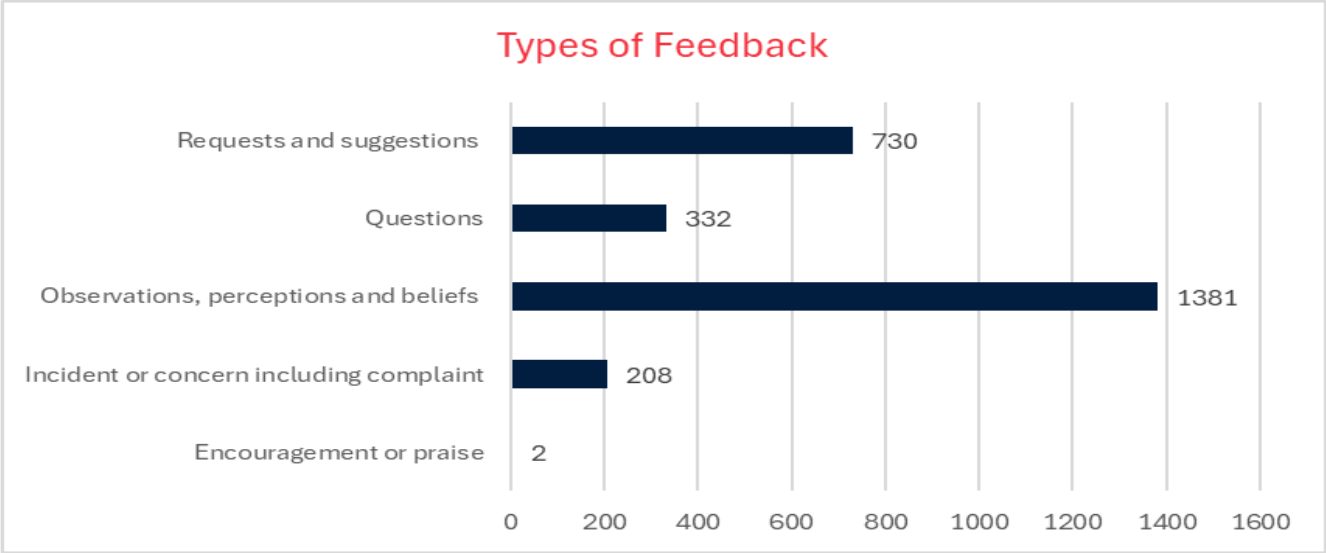
Progress of indicators

As a cross-cutting component, CEA progress against indicators has been derived from CEA interventions integrated into other sectors, such as Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) for CVA. Additionally, CEA gathers information through the helpline, feedback boxes, face-to-face outreach in branches and HQ. Further progress is expected from upcoming CEA findings, which may lead to adjustments in the indicators based on progress made.

Progress against indicator ‘% of people surveyed who report receiving useful and actionable information’: The first round of PDM for the CVA programme was conducted in August 2024, and calls received via the helpline that same month brought the total number of respondents to 77, with 97% of them reporting that they received useful and actionable information.

Progress against indicator ‘% of complaints or feedback about the RCRC operation which receive a response through established community communication’: will be made after setting up the Digital Engagement Hub and adoption of standard operating procedures which offer a mechanism of closing the feedback loop and follow-up after complaint referrals.

Progress against indicator ‘% of community members who feel their opinion is taken into account during operation planning and decision-making’: in September 2024, 46 calls were received, with 96% of callers reporting that they felt their opinions were considered in operational planning and decision-making. This data has been collected since September 2024, with operators regularly asking this question during calls. Among the topics discussed, approximately 85% were related to CVA, 96% pertained to food, shelter, and NFIs, and 22% involved health and social services. Of the callers, 39 (about 85%) were women, while 7 (approximately 15%) were men; additionally, 31 callers (about 67%) had a family member with a disability.



Apart from above mentioned helpline channel, CEA specific questions were included in the recent post-distribution monitoring surveys (PDM), conducted in August 2024. According to its results out of 138 respondents 134 were informed about the reception of the cash through SMS messages (97%). Sixty-four of the respondents received the cash assistance in a timely manner according to their needs (46%), three received earlier than expected (2%), 60 (43%) received later than expected and nine did not have any particular expected date (6.5%). 93 (67%) of the respondents knew how to contact ARCS to report complaints/provide feedback on the cash assistance programme. Thirty-one have contacted the hotline with regard to cash assistance programme (22%), nearly all of whom were satisfied with the support provided by the hotline (30/97%).

NSD component in CEA

To ensure the efficient implementation of CEA, continuous support is provided to ARCS through various initiatives. These initiatives include building the capacity of staff and volunteers, digitalizing the feedback mechanism for easier tracking and data analysis, and developing handout materials for distribution within ARCS. Additionally, CEA channels and information boards are being established at ARCS activity sites, along with SMS notifications sent to cash assistance recipients. The CEA community of practice is being established with HQ and branch focal points, who have received introductory training. In November 2024, they will participate in in-depth sessions on community engagement and feedback mechanisms, enabling them to integrate CEA approaches within their departments and branches.

Series of Trainings

In September 2023, the ARCS CEA Coordinator conducted briefings for staff and volunteers on effective communication with communities during emergencies, enhancing their confidence in managing community interactions. A collaborative training with MHPSS addressed communication challenges during the registration of displaced individuals, equipping participants with necessary skills for better engagement. Initial steps have been taken to establish a CEA community of practice, with local focal points nominated and an introductory training session held. Comprehensive in-depth training sessions are planned for November 2024, covering essential CEA topics, feedback mechanisms, and community engagement.

CEA Digitalization

The ARCS is enhancing its central feedback mechanism with support from the IFRC and the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) 510 Team. This initiative involves developing a digital feedback tool, the Digital Engagement Hub (DEH), which will improve feedback case management and data analysis. The setup of DEH is underway and is planned to be launched in November 2024. The SOPs on central feedback mechanism, sensitive feedback and call centre operations have been drafted in collaboration with IFRC and ARCS CEA Coordinators and PGI focal points. Upon the setup of DEH, training of trainers will be held by NLRC 510 team among CEA coordinators and IM specialists with further trainings to be provided to the call centre staff and CEA focal points by December 2024.

Handout Materials Developed

ARCS is focusing on disseminating helpful and up-to-date information among both ARCS personnel and in public by developing FAQs to empower staff and volunteers in addressing community inquiries, as well as the public being able to access up-to-date information on various programs and initiatives, implemented by ARCS.

ARCS Call Centre

Initially, ARCS has been operating two separate helplines – one including the short number, answering general inquiries and another specific line for cash assistance. To ease and improve central feedback mechanism, plans of establishing and launching a general call centre within ARCS have been initiated. The hiring process of the call centre staff has been concluded and the call centre staff has been trained in skills and areas of psychological first aid, community engagement and accountability and feedback collection. The staff will be further trained in protection, gender and inclusion package of trainings and usage of DEH. After conclusion of the mentioned trainings on crucial areas and skills the call centre will be launched in November 2024.

Coordination within the RCRC Movement

To improve coordination on accountability to affected population (AAP)/CEA activities and to improve efficiency across the Movement-wide response, an AAP/CEA technical working group was proposed in discussions among ARCS, IFRC and ICRC. A ToR was drafted in November 2023, though it has not yet been adopted. Collaboration to this end was revived in April 2024 and the ToR is again shared for agreement.

Next immediate steps:

Preparations are underway for launching the central feedback mechanism and FAQs, with training sessions ensuring consistent use by the ARCS team. Following the launch, ARCS will regularly analyze feedback trends, collaborate with departments to strengthen CEA, and train focal points across HQ and branches; the call center launch is planned for November 2024.



Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery

People reached: 1,500

Objective:

Affected people are not put at increased risk, and their vulnerability to future disasters and crises is reduced, including to climate change impacts

Key indicators:

Indicator	Actual	Target
<i># of branches that have the capacity to lead the operation at local level</i>	longer-term indicator	12
<i># of volunteers involved in the response operation that have increased their skills in response and management of operations</i>	1,500	2,000
<i>Operational strategy is climate smart</i>	longer-term indicator	Yes

Disaster management

Disaster Preparedness sessions were recently conducted for 60 ARCS volunteers, with a primary focus on ensuring safety in humanitarian response operations and upholding minimum standards. These sessions are part of a broader effort to enhance the organization's capacity to respond effectively to crises.

Within the ARCS planning process some sectors are essential for strengthening ARCS's overall disaster risk management and include key areas such as the development of risk management policies, improvements in the supply chain to support rapid emergency response, and the adoption of climate-smart programming and response strategies. In addition, ARCS is focusing on enhancing volunteer management systems and financial mechanisms to ensure efficient and accountable operations.

In line with the priority of making the operation climate smart, ARCS has established a dedicated Climate Change Unit at its headquarters. ARCS Staff members have undergone foundational training to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to incorporate climate considerations into their programs and responses.

Following a recent logistics and procurement assessment, several improvements have been recommended. These include strengthening ARCS's current logistical systems, upgrading warehouse facilities to maintain optimal storage conditions for emergency supplies, and introducing a digital tracking system to enhance the efficiency and transparency of inventory management. To further build capacity, an experience-sharing workshop has been proposed to allow ARCS staff to learn from best practices and strategies implemented by similar organizations. As part of the

continuous improvement processes, specific actions have been implemented in the area of logistics, for example ARCS courses on supply chain, warehouse management and purchasing.

To support rapid emergency response, ARCS has plan to pre-position relief items in high-risk areas across the country. This proactive measure ensures that essential supplies are readily accessible in areas most likely to be affected by natural disasters, improving response times and effectiveness in emergencies.

Next immediate steps:

- The Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) full circle self assessment.
- To build the capacity of ARCS volunteer leaders, a 5-day Disaster Response Team (DRT) training will be conducted from November 25 to November 29.
- ARCS Contingency Planning Workshop is scheduled for November 27 and November 28.

Enabling approaches

	National Society Strengthening		
Objective:	<i>Further strengthen the ARCS' institutional and emergency response capacities, complementing and building on the ARCS's Country Plan and Master NSD Action Plan</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator⁸	Actual	Target
	# of sessions conducted for NS leadership, staff, and volunteers;	3	20
	NSD plan developed and endorsed, with roadmap and branch development strategy	Yes	Yes
	# of updated NS policies & procedures aligned with IFRC standards, including code of conduct, recruitment procedures and procurement procedures	1	8
	# of trainings on volunteer management, including database support	1	10
	# of strategies developed / revised (incl. emergency communication strategy, first aid strategy, fundraising strategy, and corresponding PoAs)	1	4

As part of the ongoing National Society Development (NSD) initiatives, the ARCS has made significant strides in both its emergency response and institutional strengthening. Over the past year, **1,500 volunteers and ARCS staff** have been deployed in response to the crisis, with substantial capacity-building efforts accompanying these deployments. A total of **599 people** were trained in **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)**, while **231** individuals received training in **Education Service Provision**, and **179** in **Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI)**. These figures reflect the ARCS's commitment to ensuring that its volunteers and staff are well-equipped to deliver essential services in the face of ongoing challenges.

⁸ The indicator "National Society has successfully articulated short-term emergency and NSD objectives with long-term NSD ones" for easier tracking purposes was replaced by five indicators

ARCS has also made considerable progress in its broader strategic and institutional development. A comprehensive **NSD inventory** (2021-2022) was conducted, assessing existing activities and outcomes to guide future interventions. This assessment led to the development of an **NSD Roadmap**, which is currently in draft form and will be further discussed with ARCS and key partners to ensure alignment and sustainability. In support of the Emergency Appeal operations, an **Explanatory Note on NSD Activities** was developed to clarify ongoing activities and priorities.

To bolster **organizational capacity**, orientation sessions were conducted for ARCS management on key topics such as Statutory Meetings, Volunteer Management, and Communication in Crisis. Additionally, around **100 ARCS volunteers and staff** participated in orientation sessions focused on the Red Cross and Red Crescent mandate, enhancing their understanding of the Movement's roles and responsibilities.

ARCS has taken steps to ensure its **financial and operational sustainability**. A Context Report on business continuity was submitted to the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) Commission, and efforts to restore an NSIA-supported project aimed at developing ARCS's commercial First Aid system are underway. Similarly, ARCS has reactivated a CBF-supported project on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) digitalization after submitting a business continuity report to the CBF Commission.

In terms of **human resources development**, ARCS has supported the training of its HR specialists in national HR requirements and regulations. The organization is also in the process of developing a Recruitment Policy, an Employee Wellbeing Guideline, and a tool to monitor Movement partner allocations and staff salary support. These efforts reflect ARCS's focus on improving internal processes and staff well-being.

ARCS has also invested in enhancing its **communications capabilities**. 24 Communication Focal Points across ARCS branches have received training in humanitarian content development, including photography, while a Communication in Crisis Strategy is being developed to strengthen the organization's outreach and response efforts. In the realm of **volunteer management**, ARCS conducted a needs assessment for a volunteer management database and collaborated with its partners to draft a concept note for a volunteer induction process, which includes introduction informational sessions on Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), PGI, Psychological First Aid (PFA), and First Aid.

Finally, **youth engagement** has been a priority, with ARCS supporting the participation of youth leaders in international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement events. Moreover, ARCS conducted 10 PGI assessments, ensuring that protection, gender, and inclusion remain integral to the Society's activities and response efforts.

Next immediate steps:

- Engage RCRC partner in country to align foreseen HR contributions to ensure feasibility of the ongoing operation.
- Fully integrate the Emergency Appeal operation into the ongoing wider NSD support, ensuring compliance with existing plans, goals, and frameworks.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:

To guide the operation in accordance with the principles of Collective Movement Response, and strategically harmonize it with response efforts by the public authorities and other actors on the ground, ensuring efficiency and complementarity.

The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) remains committed to its core mission of alleviating human suffering and promoting humanitarian principles. Despite recent challenges, ARCS continues to play a vital role within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, collaborating closely with the IFRC, ICRC, and Partner National Societies (PNSs).

While some partnerships have temporarily adjusted their level of support, ARCS is actively working to rebuild and strengthen these relationships. The new management team is focused on capacity building and operational efficiency to ensure the continued delivery of essential humanitarian assistance.

Through the Federation-wide Emergency Appeal, ARCS has made significant strides in supporting displaced populations. Key achievements include:

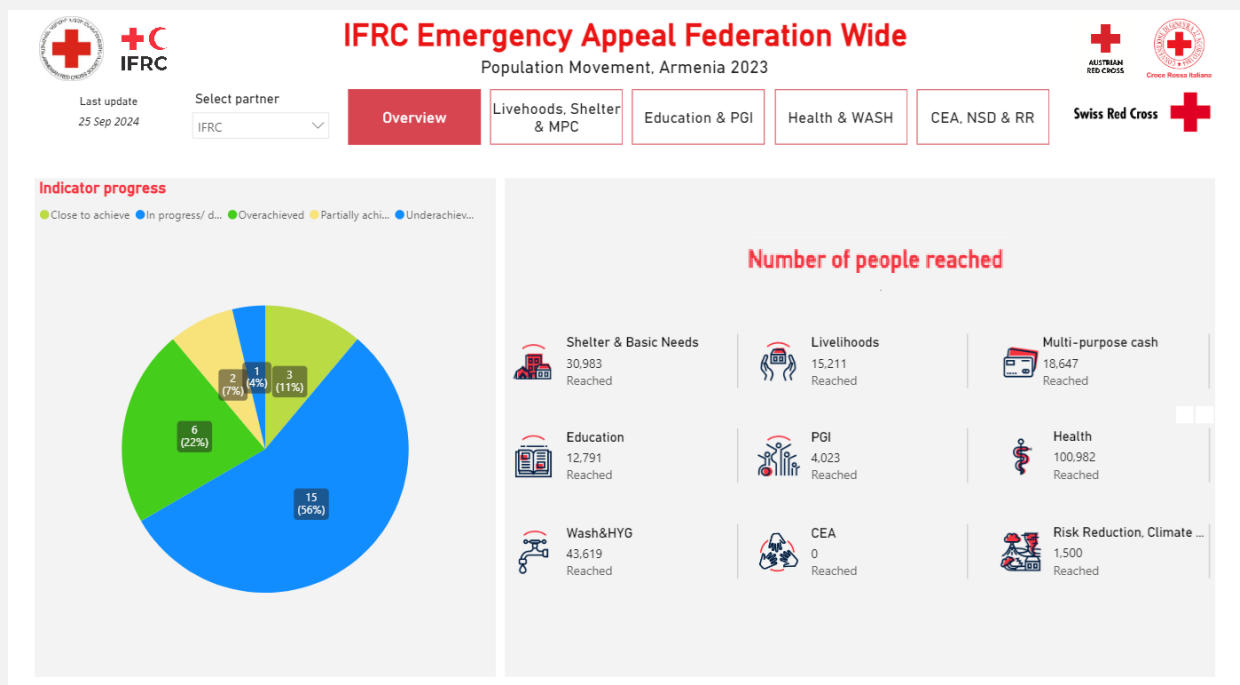
- Distribution of essential items: Providing NFIs to 31,533 individuals and hygiene kits to 49,879.
- Cash assistance: Delivering CVA to 91,209 individuals.
- Food security: Supporting 16,471 people through food relief efforts.
- Livelihoods: Facilitating job placement and counseling for 2,970 individuals.
- Mental health and psychosocial support: Assisting 95,627 people and training 920 individuals as MHPSS providers.
- Protection, Gender, and Inclusion: Conducting assessments, training, and support for 3,834 beneficiaries.
- Education: Reaching 9,933 children through Smiley Clubs and training 252 educators.
- National Society Development: Implementing NSD plans, policies, and procedures, and training volunteers.

ARCS is committed to transparency and accountability. A public dashboard has been created to track progress and share information with stakeholders. Additionally, the organization is actively seeking feedback from beneficiaries and implementing lessons learned to improve future operations. Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ARCS plays a pivotal role in fostering effective coordination and partnerships. Following the internal institutional crisis in February 2024, there has been a renewed focus on reestablishing key partnerships. Changes in management have prompted efforts to strengthen relationships with both Movement and non-Movement partners. Notably, some partners, such as the ICRC, have temporarily suspended their activities, while PNS, namely the Austrian, Italian, and Swiss Red Cross, have reduced or suspended funding to ARCS headquarters until the full capacity is regained. However, essential activities at the branch level continue to receive support.

The new management team, in collaboration with the IFRC, is actively engaged in capacity building within the NSD component to align operations with the principles of the Collective Movement Response. The team is committed to maintaining initiatives established by predecessors and has successfully completed a unified planning process that facilitates joint analysis and strategic planning for 2025, despite the initial intention for multi-year planning covering 2025 to 2027.

Although the common accountability framework and harmonized resource mobilization plan are temporarily suspended, ARCS remains focused on a collaborative approach to ensure efficient humanitarian responses. These partnerships are crucial for delivering effective humanitarian assistance and are integral to compiling Federation-wide reports within the Emergency Appeal context that is available on a Dashboard ([ITT Dashboard - Power BI](#)).

To enhance transparency and showcase achievements, ARCS has created a dashboard that highlights interventions, and the number of individuals reached. This dashboard is updated monthly, with contributions from all partners involved in the response to displacement from Karabakh. A screenshot is provided below for Federation-wide coverage:



ARCS also actively participates in the Cash Working Group, a vital platform for inter-agency coordination with government bodies and UN agencies, enabling a comprehensive response to humanitarian needs. However, during the reporting period, there were no updates regarding ongoing cooperation with the Armenian diaspora and private enterprises.



Secretariat Services

Objective:

IFRC Secretariat provides strategic orientation, facilitation, and coordination to enhance the ARCS response to the current situation and toward the long-term positioning and further capacity development of the National Society. This will be done building on the existing Country Office and Country Cluster Delegation, toward strong stewardship and accountability for all programming. The IFRC Secretariat will facilitate channelling global resources to sustain the localized response and recovery efforts.

Since the launch of the Emergency Appeal, the IFRC has actively supported the ARCS response in several key areas:

- **Strengthening response capacity:** To enhance the effectiveness of the response to the evolving humanitarian needs in Armenia, the IFRC has significantly expanded its team on the ground to support ARCS. This expansion has enabled to provide comprehensive support across various thematic areas, including Disaster Management, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), Livelihoods, Education, Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), and National Society Development (NSD).
- **Collaboration with the Government:** In partnership with the Government of Armenia, specifically the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, IFRC signed an agreement to enhance the capacity for delivering humanitarian assistance across the country using CVA as a tool.
- **Resource mobilization:** IFRC in the country, region and headquarter levels continues to be dedicated to mobilizing resources not only within the IFRC Membership but also from external donors, ensuring that ARCS has the necessary support for its activities.

- **Enhanced communication:** IFRC efforts to scale up communication with the global public include media engagement in Armenia and internationally, alongside strategic use of social media to raise awareness and garner support. The ARCS strategy for communication in emergencies has also been developed.
- **Information Management:** IFRC prioritizes improved information management and data analysis to aid the ARCS in effective crisis and disaster management, providing them with the tools they need to respond efficiently.
- **Data visualization:** Utilizing from the information management capabilities, IFRC produces data analysis and visualization products that help inform decision-making and improve operational effectiveness, including the dashboards representing Federation-wide efforts made in response to the population movement.
- **Support in planning and reporting:** IFRC's ongoing support includes planning, monitoring, and reporting. IFRC emphasizes structured data collection and analysis to track achievements and assess impact comprehensively.
- **Strategic positioning of ARCS:** IFRC jointly with Movement partners work to strengthen the strategic position of ARCS, particularly in areas where it offers unique advantages and added value.
- **Coordination with partners:** Effective coordination with Movement partners and external stakeholders is essential. IFRC strives to align objectives and resources to maximize the impact of our collective efforts.
- **Knowledge capitalization:** IFRC enjoying from its network around the globe emphasizes the importance of capturing learnings from its operations and broader programming in the country, ensuring that these insights inform future initiatives.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Anahit, a cash recipient. Photo: IFRC

A New Beginning for Anahit and Her Family

Anahit and her family arrived in Yerevan on 29 September 2023, after being displaced from Karabakh. Back in Karabakh, Anahit worked in a bakery, a skill she has carried with her into this new chapter of life. Now, she bakes from home and sells her cakes to local confectioneries, determined to contribute to her family's livelihood. Her husband, once employed at a restaurant, has adapted to a new role as a taxi driver in the city.

The family of nine, including their seven children, is facing significant challenges in adjusting to their new circumstances. With no relatives nearby to offer support—Anahit's parents and sisters have also been displaced—providing for everyone has been difficult. However, the cash assistance they received from the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) and IFRC has made a crucial difference. This financial support helps cover a portion of their rent, alleviating one of the family's major burdens.

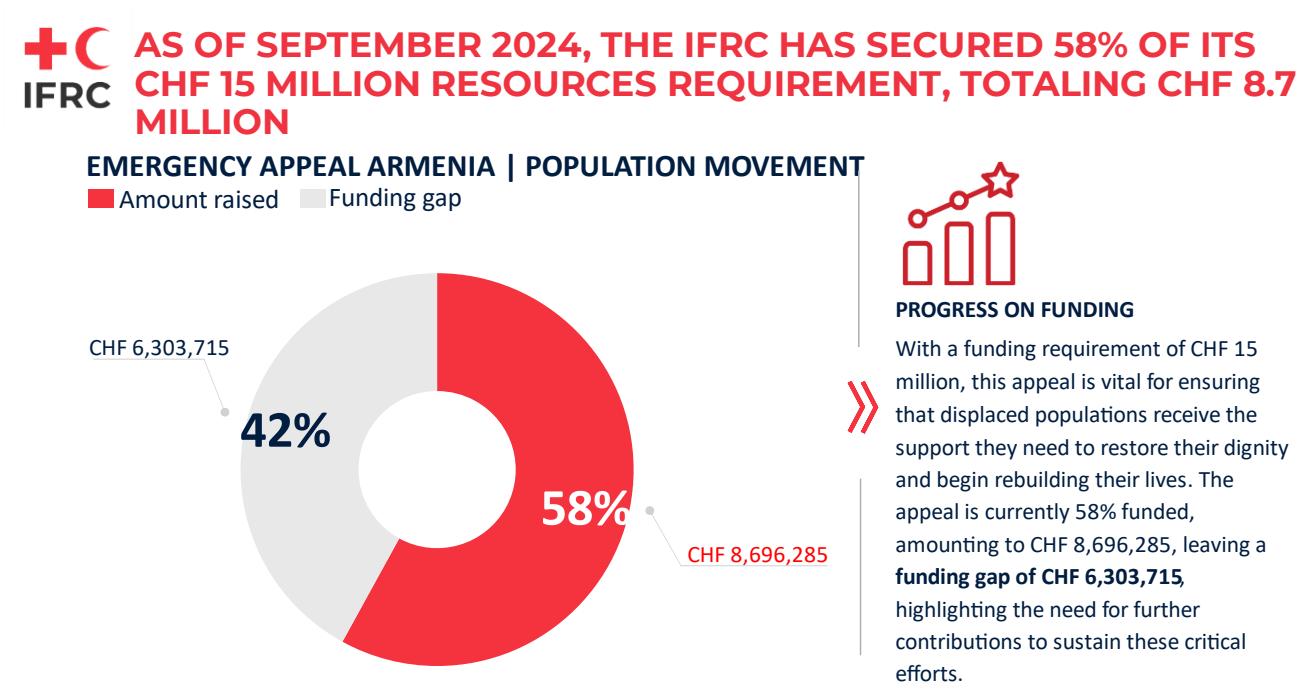
Despite the hardships, Anahit is proud that all of her children are now enrolled in kindergarten and school in Yerevan. Her daughter Anyuta has discovered a passion for knitting and embroidery, skills she taught herself by following tutorials on TikTok. This new hobby has provided her with a creative outlet and a sense of achievement amidst the uncertainty of displacement.

Anahit and her family's resilience in the face of adversity is inspiring. With the support from ARCS and IFRC, they are slowly rebuilding their lives, finding new ways to adapt and thrive in their new environment.

—Yulia Bilenko, IFRC

C. FUNDING

As of 30 September 2024, IFRC has mobilized CHF 8,696,285 representing 58 per cent of the IFRC Secretariat’s request of CHF 15,000,000. Please note that some of these pledges are still in the process of being finalized, which may account for the minor discrepancies in the financial report provided below. Additional funding is being negotiated.



Emergency Appeal funding requirement, IFRC

Operational Strategy

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/9-2024/9	Operation	MDRAM012
Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 03 Dec 2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAM012 - Armenia - Population Movement

Operating Timeframe: 28 Sep 2023 to 30 Jun 2025; appeal launch date: 30 Sep 2023

I. Emergency Appeal Funding Requirements

Total Funding Requirements	15,000,000
Donor Response* as per 03 Dec 2024	8,353,871
Appeal Coverage	55.69%

II. IFRC Operating Budget Implementation

Planned Operations / Enabling Approaches	Op Strategy	Op Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	8,982,000	3,385,563	1,568,322	1,817,241
PO02 - Livelihoods	795,000	733,199	26,217	706,983
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	0	0	1,303,384	-1,303,384
PO04 - Health	495,000	475,667	158,261	317,407
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	466,000	213,850	0	213,850
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	91,000	63,961	159	63,801
PO07 - Education	433,000	342,522	124,015	218,507
PO08 - Migration	246,000	0	52	-52
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	703,000	726,405	61,526	664,879
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	50,000	49,523	10,611	38,911
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability	5,000	5,325	0	5,325
Planned Operations Total	12,266,000	5,996,015	3,252,547	2,743,467
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships	0	0	0	0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	1,145,000	1,036,669	843,104	193,565
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	1,589,000	725,720	860,466	-134,747
Enabling Approaches Total	2,734,000	1,762,389	1,703,570	58,819
Grand Total	15,000,000	7,758,404	4,956,118	2,802,286

III. Operating Movement & Closing Balance per 2024/09

Opening Balance	0
Income (includes outstanding DREF Loan per IV.)	8,074,441
Expenditure	-4,956,118
Closing Balance	3,118,324
Deferred Income	43,341
Funds Available	3,161,665

IV. DREF Loan

* not included in Donor Response	Loan :	1,000,000	Reimbursed :	1,000,000	Outstanding :	0
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Operational Strategy

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/9-2024/9	Operation	MDRAM012
Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 03 Dec 2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAM012 - Armenia - Population Movement

Operating Timeframe: 28 Sep 2023 to 30 Jun 2025; appeal launch date: 30 Sep 2023

V. Contributions by Donor and Other Income

Opening Balance						0
Income Type	Cash	InKind Goods	InKind Personnel	Other Income	TOTAL	Deferred Income
American Red Cross	373,806				373,806	
Bloomberg	4,737				4,737	
Danish Red Cross	106,716				106,716	
European Commission - DG ECHO	192,910				192,910	
Finnish Red Cross	113,861				113,861	
French Government	2,466,713				2,466,713	
Italian Government Bilateral Emergency Fund	1,900,332				1,900,332	
Italian Red Cross	103,183				103,183	
Japanese Red Cross Society	29,917				29,917	
On Line donations	203				203	
Other	-192,724				-192,724	
Slovenian Red Cross	9,667				9,667	
Spanish Government	193,564				193,564	
Swedish Red Cross	83,243				83,243	
Taiwan Red Cross Organisation	8,812				8,812	
The Canadian Red Cross Society	38,452				38,452	
The Canadian Red Cross Society (from Canadian Gov	25,907				25,907	
The Netherlands Red Cross (from Netherlands Govern	279,069				279,069	
United States Government - USAID	2,336,074				2,336,074	43,341
Total Contributions and Other Income	8,074,441	0	0	0	8,074,441	43,341
Total Income and Deferred Income					8,074,441	43,341

Contact information

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

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For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

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For In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation table support:

- **Global Logistics Services,** Stefano BIAGIOTTI, Head, Global Humanitarian Services & Supply Chain Management, Europe, stefano.biagiotti@ifrc.org

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Link to IFRC Emergency landing page](#)
- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [IFRC GO Platform](#)
- [Emergency Appeal](#)
- [Operational Strategy](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. 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.