

Programme Update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belarus

Appeal No. MAABY002

31/08/09

This report covers the period 01/01/2009 to
30/06/2009



In June the Florence Nightingale medal was awarded to Nina Bliznuk, a Belarus Red Cross visiting nurse for her exceptional devotion to people with disabilities and the persons who took part in the Great Patriotic War, liquidators of the Chernobyl disaster. During 42 years of work for the Red Cross she helped over 600 people.
Belarus Red Cross

In brief

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

Programme summary: In June, Belarus Red Cross nurse Nina Bliznuk was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal, one of the highest honours the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement can bestow. Over the decades, her patients have included victims of the siege of Leningrad, participants in the clean-up operations following the Chernobyl nuclear accident, disabled war veterans, death camp survivors and elderly people living alone. The last time the medal was awarded to a Belarusian person was 26 years ago.

There is a growing understanding at all levels of the Belarus Red Cross that developing volunteering is the main way to effective service delivery in local communities and fulfillment of the mission of the organization. Thanks to volunteers the activities in the district branches on social assistance for vulnerable people and promotion of humanitarian values are becoming more regular, planned and focused. Volunteer community-based activities raise the image of the Red Cross as a humanitarian non-governmental organization, attract public attention to the problems of vulnerable groups and serve as an effective tool for local resource mobilization. It is obvious that volunteer development and promotion, which is currently on the rise within the National Society, contributes significantly to

organizational development/capacity building and performance.

Progress has been made towards improving the National Society's disaster management capacity through cooperation between the Vitebsk branch of the Belarus Red Cross and the Visaginas branch of the Lithuanian Red Cross. An emergency response team of 12 people is being created and trained in first aid, psychological support and tracing activities.

Financial situation: The initial budget of CHF 961,174 for 2009 was revised to CHF 1,165,012 (USD 1,081,270 or EUR 764,104) due to an increase in the budget for the organizational development programme. Out of the total budget, 56 per cent is covered. Expenditure overall was 70 per cent of received funding.

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

No. of people we help: More than 17,900 people in Belarus benefited directly from International Federation supported programme interventions.

Our Partners: The Belarus Red Cross cooperates with nine partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies operating in the region, different NGOs, the national centre for blood donation, national AIDS centre, various ministries and governmental organizations at federal and local levels, universities and other educational institutions, mass media, as well as international and local enterprises.

A partnership meeting, aimed at strengthening collaboration with near neighbours, is being planned for September in Kiev. The EU and USAID missions are expected to participate and give insights on possibilities for collaboration.

Context

Due to the economic and social situation the main humanitarian needs in Belarus are related to poverty, health and disasters. Rampant inflation, devaluation of the local currency and the reduction of social benefits has had a negative impact on the most vulnerable groups of the population such as elderly people living alone, multi-child families, street children, people with disabilities, migrants and homeless people. These groups of people suffer from poverty and a lack of adequate health and social care; some depend entirely on humanitarian aid.

Economists predict that in the second half of this year the income of people who are paid from the state treasury will be cut. Foreign currency earnings of Belarusian enterprises between January and June were 10,832 billion US dollars, which is 41.9 per cent less than in the same period of 2008. Factories are cutting back output as income dwindles, plunging Belarus into a new stage of the social crisis.¹

The economic crisis sweeping Eastern Europe is leading to a sharp increase in people trafficking as people look to migrate for work amid rising unemployment and growing economic hardship. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) there is a growing number of men, especially in some of Europe's poorest countries like Belarus, falling victim to traffickers who put them into forced labour, mostly on construction sites. In Belarus alone it is thought that up to 800,000 "missing" people could be working in Russia against their will.

Although the general global economic picture appears to be slowly improving, the situation for the most vulnerable is most assuredly not. Worrying indicators include large factories working part-time, increased requests for humanitarian aid (especially second-hand clothes) and

¹ <http://www.marketresearch.com/map/prod/2299532.html>

increased migration. These real and current humanitarian challenges define the priorities of the Red Cross Society of Belarus.

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Outcomes/Expected results:

- Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection and reducing stigma and discrimination.
- Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) have increased.
- Capacities of communities and households to prevent and cope with avian and human influenza pandemic have increased.

Achievements: The Belarus Red Cross has involved 10,324 people in its HIV prevention activities of peer education and film-group sessions, youth actions and seminars (lectures, meetings with studying and working youth, parents, teachers and other educational specialists). Some 1,381 young people have received information they can trust through peer education sessions. In total 92 educational institutions and 9 enterprises were reached by the programme.

The introduction of the standard six-week model of work based on the peer education principle is successfully continuing in 20 educational institutions in the target regions. The model includes the following phases:

<i>Week</i>	<i>Activities</i>
<i>First</i>	<i>information meeting for parents and teachers; target group needs assessment</i>
<i>Second and third</i>	<i>peer education and film sessions; further group discussions and preparation for action</i>
<i>Fourth</i>	<i>public actions such as an information tent, art-technologies</i>
<i>Fifth and sixth</i>	<i>orientation meeting for newly recruited volunteers (out of the participants of the peer education sessions), informal meetings and basic induction for new volunteers</i>
<i>Sixth to eighth</i>	<i>evaluation of the results</i>
<i>In six months</i>	<i>evaluation of the longer-term impact through focus group meetings</i>

The nine best HIV prevention voluntary initiatives were selected on a competitive basis for granting:

- one in HIV prevention among working youth on trains going to Crimea and the Caucasus
- three in HIV prevention among youth from small towns and rural areas
- two in HIV prevention among youth with the help of innovative art techniques (forum-theatre, social theatre), training Belarus Red Cross volunteers in these methods
- one in encouraging target groups to take the HIV test
- two in HIV prevention among youth in summer recreational camps

A survey on HIV knowledge and behaviour among young people was conducted by the project team, supported by an external consultant. More than 600 answers were analysed, revealing that the level of HIV knowledge is generally low, youth practice risky behaviour and express low tolerance towards people living with HIV (PLHIV). The results of this survey will be used during the next project planning stage and in preparing campaigns and education sessions.

Big events dedicated to AIDS Memorial Day, St. Valentine's Day, World TB Day and World Day without Tobacco were held in the regions, attracting local NGOs. An exhibition named "*The city, where people live*" was held in Grodno to promote respect for civil and human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS, to debunk myths about HIV and AIDS and to promote humane and tolerant attitudes towards PLHIV.

Being a member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV, the Belarus Red Cross is scaling up both its activities and capacities to better tackle HIV. The programme coordinator has been consolidating all information on HIV activities within the Belarus Red Cross, taking advice and assistance on methodology from the global alliance approach.

With funds from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) the Belarus Red Cross runs harm reduction and HIV and AIDS palliative care activities.

Disaster Management

Outcomes/Expected results

- Improved ability to predict and plan for disasters to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities, and to respond to and effectively cope with their consequences.
- Improved capacity of the Belarus Red Cross in skilled human resources, and financial and material capacity for effective disaster management.
- Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of those people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition.

Achievements: In order to meet its disaster preparedness obligations, the Belarus Red Cross has maintained its disaster relief fund and emergency stocks pre-positioned in each region, and ensured that a sufficient number of staff and volunteers are on stand-by in case of disaster. Two per cent of the Red Cross's income from membership fees and local non-earmarked donations is allocated to the relief fund.

With financial support from the Swiss Red Cross, 9,635 food parcels were distributed to 3,590 individuals, including elderly people living alone and people with disabilities, homeless people, people with low incomes, people released from prisons and 1,793 multi-child families with low incomes in all regions of Belarus. Additionally, within the "*Twice Christmas*" operation the Swiss Red Cross bilaterally donated five trucks, which contained food, hygiene items, toys, second-hand clothes and shoes. All these have been supplied for further distribution among the vulnerable population in Minsk and the regions of Mogilev, Vitebsk, Grodno and Gomel.

In addition, four trucks of second-hand clothes and shoes were received from the Swedish Red Cross for further distribution in Minsk and the regions of Minsk, Mogilev and Brest.

Although no funds were received for the first and second outcome, certain progress has been made towards improving the National Society's capacity for effective disaster management through cooperation between the Vitebsk branch of the Belarus Red Cross and the Visaginas branch of the Lithuanian Red Cross. The Vitebsk volunteer team of 12 persons learnt some first-aid and psychological support skills, as well as a methodology for tracing people who get lost in the forest from their Lithuanian colleagues. By the end of the year the Belarus Red Cross plans to supply the team with the necessary equipment and first aid kits and conduct two additional joint trainings with the Lithuanian Red Cross. Thereafter, the emergency response team will be ready

for action. The initiative received support from the Vitebsk regional department of the Ministry of Emergencies.

Organisational Development

Outcomes/Expected results:

- Revised statutes in compliance with the Federation guidelines.
- Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels.
- Effective and transparent human resource management.
- Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines.
- Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems.
- Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication.
- Develop a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/ units at grass-roots level.
- Support branches/ units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.

Achievements: A project grant received from the Norwegian Red Cross at the end of December 2008 made it possible to start activities on strengthening the Belarus Red Cross's role in civil society. The main focus is on involving citizens in voluntary service delivery and support to social inclusion and empowerment approaches towards elderly people. The project started in January and is implemented in Mogilev region and the Railway Red Cross organization, with its capacity building elements benefiting the National Society as a whole. This is in addition to the youth volunteer activities run in Vitebsk region, supported by the Capacity Building Fund, and in Grodno and Brest regions, funded bilaterally by the Danish Red Cross.

Nine volunteer initiatives in Vitebsk and 16 volunteer initiatives (3 for youth and 13 for elderly self-support groups) in Mogilev on dissemination of humanitarian values, assistance to socially disadvantaged children and elderly people, creation of self-support groups of elderly people were selected for funding through a small grant competition. The competition has proved to be an effective capacity-building tool for local branches in the development of volunteering, sustainable service delivery, establishment of partnership and mobilization of communities.

Twenty-two self-support groups of elderly people are organized and function in Mogilev region and in the Railway Red Cross organization. Six trainings were held for these groups and about 200 people were trained in home care, first aid, communication and psychological support. A total of 70 volunteers in Vitebsk and Mogilev regions improved their knowledge and skills in community projects' development and management. Some 2,195 people benefited from community-based initiatives in the first six months of 2009.

Regional volunteer councils are established and function in Vitebsk and Mogilev regions. Moreover, Vitebsk volunteer council successfully organized a regional volunteer forum in March, while the council in Mogilev is planning to organize a similar event in the nearest future. These forums provide a platform for experience sharing and building new partnerships.

Two winners of the best volunteer 2008 competition participated at the Solferino youth meeting.

The Belarus Red Cross held a national press conference, dedicated to the World Red Cross Red Crescent Day. Public attention was attracted to Red Cross activities, to the insufficiency of national legislation for charity and donations' development in the country. At this event the National Society's secretary general stressed that sponsorship should be developed and legalized in Belarus. At present, if individuals, willing to donate to the Belarus Red Cross want to stay anonymous the organization cannot register funds legally.² After the Belarus Red Cross

² <http://en.ngo.by/news/1bda992b1d85.html>

secretary general statement other civil society organizations actively supported this issue and raised the topic in the mass media.

In April, the Belarus Red Cross established a working group to develop a human resource policy, regulations on the remuneration of labour and a system of evaluation and motivation for staff and volunteers. The group has already developed draft regulations on bonuses and encouragement for the staff. The International Federation facilitated a consultancy meeting with Ernst & Young on introducing and implementing the National Society salary scale. The International Federation country office continues to provide support in developing a fair salary system.

In terms of improving the legal base of the Belarus Red Cross, the revised statutes were adopted during the congress in April and officially registered by the Ministry of Justice.

Principles and Values

Outcomes/Expected results:

- Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general.
- The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and changing behaviour.
- Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Achievements: Due to the lack of funding no programmes under Global Agenda goal four were implemented in the first half of 2009. Nevertheless, components of the dissemination of humanitarian values and reduction of stigma and discrimination were incorporated into other programme activities such as volunteer actions.

With the support of IOM, the Belarus Red Cross continued its efforts to provide reintegration assistance to the victims of trafficking. However due to funding constraints, the activities were scaled down to registration, psychological support and some financial assistance to victims of trafficking.

Working in partnership

To achieve better results and generate high quality programmes, the Belarus Red Cross is cooperating with the key stakeholders in the field of health and care, disaster management, organizational development and humanitarian values. Traditional partners are the ministries of health, social welfare, emergency, justice, internal affairs and education.

The main international partners within the International Federation are the Danish, Swiss, Austrian, German, Norwegian, Swedish, French and Italian Red Cross Societies as well as the Consortium of Austrian, German and Swiss Red Cross Societies.

An agreement has been concluded with the Lithuanian Red Cross on cooperation and joint activities in youth and volunteer development, disaster preparedness and response. Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers participated in a youth camp and disaster management training in Lithuania.

Preparations for a partnership meeting scheduled for September 7-8 in Kiev have started. So far definite interest to participate in this event has been indicated by the Swiss, American, French, Italian, Austrian, Danish, German, Japanese, Bulgarian and Polish Red Cross Societies. The

European Union delegation in Kiev and the International Federation's zone office have also agreed to attend.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All the projects implemented by the Belarus Red Cross are aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda. The National Society follows the approach of gender equity and ensures the equal participation of women and men through appropriate information and publicity materials in the design of key project activities and access to the opportunities it offers. An appropriate male/female balance is also sought in the project management structure and the activities themselves.

The Belarus Red Cross continues to focus on developing the local network of its branch units and increasing access of vulnerable population groups in communities to sustainable and high quality services.

Looking ahead

The Danish Red Cross has been awarded a grant to establish a *Network against trafficking in Human Beings* within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers programme. This two-year project with an annual budget of 672,470 Danish crowns will start in Belarus in September.

The human pandemic preparedness proposal for Belarus is being finalised to reflect comments from the Geneva Secretariat. The project is expected to start in September 2009.

In September a new *HIV prevention at workplaces and in vocational schools in Belarus* programme with financial support from the German international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development (GTZ) is expected to be launched.

A dialogue is ongoing with the French Red Cross and the European Reference Centre for First Aid Education about possible support for the first-aid activities. Recently, a project proposal has been elaborated and is close to its implementation. Magen David Adom is also very motivated to deliver support in establishing emergency medicine systems, training personnel or training first-aid instructors in Belarus.

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