

Appeal 2008-2009



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme (CHARP)

Appeal No. MAA67002

Date: 14/12/2007

This appeal seeks Swiss francs 1,179,405 (USD 1,054,924 or EUR 714,791) to fund the planned programmes that are to be implemented in 2008-2009.

In a world of global challenges, continued poverty, inequity, and increasing vulnerability to disasters and disease, the International Federation with its global network, works to accomplish its Global Agenda, partnering with local community and civil society to prevent and alleviate human suffering from disasters, diseases and public health emergencies.



Belarus: A thyroid cancer screening performed by a CHARP mobile diagnostics laboratory doctor. Photo: Belarus Red Cross

Current context

The explosion in the nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl power plant in northern Ukraine over twenty years ago on 26 April 1986, sent tons of cancer-causing isotopes around the world and contaminated vast areas of Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The United Nations (UN) estimates that nearly five million people are living in lands polluted by radiation, where the level of thyroid cancer remains high.

Programme summary

Since 1990 the International Federation, together with the Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia have been running the Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme (CHARP) to address the basic health needs of those living in the regions of the three countries affected by the Chernobyl disaster.

The programme is aligned with the Federation's Global Agenda, in particular with goal two, to meet the mission to reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health

emergencies. Effective medical, social and psychological assistance is provided to targeted individuals in the regions most badly affected.

It is projected that the CHARP programme will be needed throughout the coming decade. In order to provide sustainability, the strategy envisages handing over more programme responsibilities to the Red Cross Societies and gradually integrating the activities into their respective health care systems.

Programme summary

Medical screening

Target population: 180,000

Thyroid screening in remote areas will remain a main component of the CHARP strategy. Six mobile diagnostic laboratories will screen 60,000 people each year for thyroid gland pathologies in the target group of individuals who were 40 years old or younger at the time of the accident and living in contaminated areas.

In addition CHARP is studying the health consequences of the disaster in order to define what else should be included in the programme's objectives. For instance breast cancer screening is one area that is being investigated to scale up the reach of the programme. In 2008-2009 the programme plans to screen 60,000 women.

To successfully carry out the activities, the Red Cross National Societies will have well-trained and equipped mobile diagnostic laboratory teams. These will carry out diagnosis and treatment of the ailments of the affected population in remote rural areas of the six highly-affected regions of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.

Psycho-social support

Target population: 60,000 (including elderly people)

Another important CHARP activity will be providing psycho-social support to the population affected. This work will be carried out by mobile diagnostics laboratory (MDL) specialists, Red Cross workers and volunteers. The psycho-social support aims to diminish the levels of stress in the population by delivering accurate information about the long-term health effects of the accident.

Distribution of multivitamins

Target population: 60,000

The CHARP will continue supplying multivitamins containing the C, D and B groups with iron, folic acid and stable iodine for children living in radiation-contaminated areas in order to strengthen their immunity.

Capacity building

After 17 years of programming, CHARP specialists have accumulated unique practical expertise, which helps them provide medical screening in remote areas, giving psychosocial support and performing fine needle biopsies in the field. The results are quality and cost-effective services to the most vulnerable people. From the beginning, the programme has contributed towards a better understanding of how to support the affected populations, establish methods of the early detection of serious diseases, improve the quality of life of the target group and provide necessary psychological support. It has also highlighted the important role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the preparedness for, and response to, technological disasters. This expertise is available to others through the International Federation and National Societies engaged in Chernobyl.

Principles and Humanitarian Values

In the implementation of the Chernobyl programme, the Red Cross Societies take into consideration the interests of every group, social status and gender equity. For instance though the priority group for the screening is those who were 0-40 at the time of the disaster, the Red Cross MDL doctors never refuse people who want to be examined and who do not belong to this priority group. CHARP is also expanding its activities to include breast cancer screening among women in the affected areas.

In the course of thyroid screening special attention is paid to the group of people who were children and adolescents at the time of the Chernobyl disaster. In this risk group (people aged 0-18 at the time of the disaster) in particular the radioactive iodine that accumulated in the thyroid gland damaged the cells that were growing for many years and eventually developed into thyroid cancer. Another concern is children currently living in the areas contaminated by radiation. CHARP supplies multivitamins containing the C, D and B groups with iron, folic acid and stable iodine in order to strengthen the immune systems of these children.

In providing psycho-social assistance the MDL teams, Red Cross workers and volunteers take into consideration the specific needs of individuals and groups. A good example of this is the attention given to pregnant women living in radiation polluted areas who fear for the health of their future babies. In addition lonely elderly people are also provided with psycho-social support within the CHARP.

Needs

The annual budget of the programme is 603,072 Swiss francs. In total, there will be 50 people directly involved in the project implementation. As outlined in this plan, health screening is the core activity and requires 24 people medical staff for the MDLs. Therefore, around 308,000 Swiss francs will be spent on personnel. For supplies including reagents for biopsies and multivitamins for children living in radiation-contaminated areas, 141,000 Swiss francs is required. A further 12,000 Swiss francs is envisaged for psychosocial support and doctor's training, 61,000 Swiss francs will be spent on transport and 41,800 Swiss francs on general expenses with the coordination from the Federation being 39,200 Swiss francs.

Working in partnership

Since the start of the programme, CHARP has received support from a number of Red Cross Societies and the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO). Since 2006, the main donors of the programme have been the Irish Government and the Japanese Red Cross Society. The Federation will approach partner societies in order to provide further funding for the programme.

In the implementation of CHARP, the International Federation and the National Societies cooperate closely with the ministries of health, radiological centres, dispensaries and many leading experts in each country. Together with the authorities, the regional Red Cross branches in all three countries fund part of the operating costs.

How we work	
<p>All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering quality and accountable assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at http://www.ifrc.org</p>	
<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.
Contact information	
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[Click here to access the detailed 2008-2009 plan and here for the planning and resource summary matrix](#)