

# **NORTH CAUCASUS COMMUNITY BASED REBIRTH PROJECT**

**Grant # 118-G-00-05-00070-00  
FINAL REPORT**

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Photo: Grozny, April 2006 CARE North Caucasus

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**Project Location:** Ingushetia and Chechnya, Republics of the Russian Federation

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## ACRONYMS

GBV	Gender Based Violence
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
TAC's	Temporary Accommodation Centers

## **1. Executive Summary**

The community based psychosocial project began on 1 September 2004 benefiting from BPRM funds and was initially completed by the 30th November 2005. Through USAID support, the project continued from December 1st in two community centers located in Chechnya and Ingushetia. The initial agreement was for a six months period of activities. However, activities have been completed on 30th August 2005.

Initially, the project focused on participants from Temporary Accommodation Centers (TAC's) in Grozny and at spontaneous settlements in Ingushetia. However, in both republics, governmental actions have involved measures aimed at closing Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs) hosting IDPs. Political pressures for "normalization" and on going reconstruction have also contributed to reducing the number of IDPs especially in Ingushetia. In February 2006, CARE was formally asked to leave the IDPs settlement. Between February and June 2006, few activities were continued in Ingushetia through the Mobile Team while CARE progressively increased the size its activities in Grozny center.

In Chechnya, the center offered a wide range of services to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals: including widows, youth with physical disabilities, Veterans of World War II and others, as well as psychosocial services for at-risk youths and adults.

## **2. Project Goal**

The project goal is to provide comprehensive community based psychosocial services to facilitate community healing and peace-building processes in the North Caucasus.

## **3. Project Objectives**

- a. Build the psychological and social resiliency of both communities in two different locations, where the populations do not have alternative access to psychosocial facilities.
  - **Met**
- b. To establish an Information Bureau at each site to provide relevant Community Information.
  - **Met**
- c. Support the formation of two Board of Governors consisting of local community members to ensure long-term guidance and sustainability.
  - **Met**
- d. To support one or more capacity building projects developed by community facilitators with input from program beneficiaries.
  - **Met**
- e. To provide training and consultation for community teachers to provide support and advice relating to management strategies for students.
  - **Met**
- f. To provide training and consultation to local community facilitators working in partner organizations providing similar services to displaced and vulnerable populations.

- **Met**
- g. To conduct monthly information seminars provided by invited experts for special interest groups on up-to-date community-based issues such as health and nutrition.
- **Met**
- h. To revive and promote social and cultural activities to foster tolerance and stability.
- **Met**
- i. To provide crisis intervention to local population to foster self-care and assist the residents in problem solving and managing daily difficulties. The above component should address the most vulnerable and isolated community members.
- **Met**

#### **4. Target beneficiaries:**

The project's target beneficiaries are vulnerable individuals comprised of a wide range of ages from young children to the elderly.

The Grozny Center has quickly extended its activities to the most vulnerable groups by trying to dismantle barriers, especially by opening the Center to very targeted groups: women and children who experience domestic violence, elderly Russians, Veterans from World War II those with physical disabilities, disenfranchised youth – all of the visible and invisible barriers, which contribute to the continuity of social dysfunction have come slowly and quietly began to find shelter, relief and hope in a project such as this.

#### **5. Project Indicators**

*Objective a: Build the psychological and social resiliency of both communities in two different locations, where the populations do not have alternative access to psychosocial facilities.*

In Chechnya, the Scarlet Sail Community Center, located in the center of Grozny city opened in December 1st. In Ingushetia, the center first opened in a large IDPs settlement (Auto Center 'Kamaz') located in Nazran and had to terminate its activities in February 2006. In the meantime, the activities of the Scarlet Sail Community Center have been considerably increased and diversified.

In Ingushetia, 2 Community outreach workers and 4 part time instructors run the activities since the beginning of the project. Due to the restructure, one outreach worker was transferred to Grozny in March 2006. From February to June 2006, the Mobile team offered its services to the residents of three TACs in Ingushetia (Kamaz, Kristall and Tanzilla).

In order to meet the needs of a volatile population, CARE chose to focus on alternative education (computer courses and sewing workshops for women) in accordance with the requests of the participants. Computer access has expanded quickly all over North Caucasus but the number of "specialists" remains limited, thus these courses have been very successful. In the meantime, computer courses (alternative education) and sewing workshops (as small income generation activities) have also proven to be a major asset for employment.

Beyond that, CARE also offered various services in each TAC (Auto Center Kamaz, Kristall and Tanzilla) and has provided a various range of recreational activities (support of a youth musical group, dancing, fitness, newspaper production, mobile library...) to 300 participants monthly.

In Grozny, three permanent community outreach workers were hired as well as temporary staff. During the life time of the Center in Grozny local media (TV, newspapers, and radio) have largely covered the activities of *the Scarlet Sail* Community Center. Activities were implemented with regular collaboration with national authorities (Ministry of Education, Youth Committee, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans Committee).



Beyond recreational activities organized on a daily basis, the Community Center has provided a large range of regular activities: computer courses, fitness, Russian and English courses, national dancing course, vocational trainings for targeted groups, newspaper workshop, seminars and professional training for teachers, pregnant women and youth, socialization and cultural opportunities for veterans of World War II.

Additionally, a Mobile team provided extra services in remote areas.

Within the Center of Grozny, the followings activities have been carried out:

- A program of activities has been established to address the specific needs of various vulnerable groups of individuals
- Classes/meetings have been provided on a daily/regular basis for a broad range of regular activities such as computer, English courses, Russian tutorials, national dancing and musical groups, newspaper and media workshops, free access to computers and a library as well as a variety of sports equipment, and pre-kindergarten day-care to allow mothers the opportunity to work
- Organization of adapted vocational training for vulnerable groups in order to increase their employability and break exclusion
- Educational and psychosocial opportunities offered to disabled youth
- Outreach Workers reach homebound persons (elderly, disabled), identify their unique needs and provide assistance through home visits

During the whole duration of the project, the following activities have been carried out:

<b>№</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Community Center</b>	<b>Nb of Beneficiaries/Month</b>	<b>Age Category</b>
1	Computer courses	Both	100	13 – 50
2	Fitness	Both	30	15-50
3	National dancing – concert group	Both	33	13-20
4	Russian & English courses	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	30	7-12
5	Newspaper workshop	Both	40	18-25
6	Manicure training	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	20	18-28
7	Sewing workshop	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	15	40-50
8	Tiling course	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	10	13-60
9	Hair dresser courses	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	23	13-60
10	Sign language course	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	25	13-25
11	Education & Recreation for invalid children and teenagers	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	20	13-25
12	Library	Both	100	13-60
13	Widows group	Scarlet Sail/Grozny	12	25-50
14	Kids' refuge	Both	20	6-9

***Objective b: To establish an Information Bureau at each site to provide relevant Community Information:***

In Grozny and in Ingushetia, 40 youth organized an Information Bureau. In Grozny, the newspaper “*The Young Wave*’ facilitated by a professional journalist was published three times. In Ingushetia, due to the closure of the center, this activity couldn’t be continued.

Discussions about specific issues such as Gender Based Violence or ‘Living with disabilities’ as well as free expression were included in each publication. The newspaper was then distributed to the Community Center participants and others institutions (schools, universities, TACs residents) at 5 000 exemplars. In the same workshop, a short film about the Center activities has been produced and distributed to our main partners.<sup>1</sup>

***Objective c: To support the formation of Board of Governors consisting of local community members to ensure long term guidance and sustainability.***

During the first months of the project, a Board of Governors was set up in each center. The Board of Governors comprises of 4 community members and 2 outreach workers. As stated in the Interim report, since the closure of the center and the dispersion of the activities, it has not been possible to maintain the Board in Ingushetia.

In Grozny, special attention was given to the most vulnerable participants so that they can initiate and implement activities that meet their specific needs. Therefore, in addition of youth, the Board of Governors in Grozny has included veterans, special needs teenagers (mute and deaf) and widows.

<sup>1</sup> The film is translated into English and available upon request.

The Board became very quickly a strong element of the center life and had a major influence in the shift of activities especially in terms of professional development, employment and socialization for targeted groups as disabled youth or widows.

***Objective d: To support one or more capacity building projects developed by community facilitators with input from program beneficiaries.***

All these projects have been decided by the Board of Governors with a focus on long-term impact regarding the fulfilment of the main needs of the participants.

***i. Psychosocial support and Food distribution for the Veterans of World War Two***

150 veterans from World War Two have received monthly food parcels and one set of linens. These veterans were identified in collaboration with Veterans Local Committee. Additionally, a meeting was organized on a bi-monthly basis in the centre. These meeting aimed to:

- Introduce veterans to program participants and especially youth. For example, in order to issue one exemplar of the newspaper dedicated to the 'Victory day', a regular collaboration meetings were held between veterans and young journalists.
- Establish self-help groups to share experiences and create a venue for companionship and emotional support.



Photo: Grozny, March 2006 CARE North Caucasus

Home-visits by the Centre's Mobile team to veterans revealed that many of them, especially Russians (non-ethnic Chechens), live in extreme poverty.

During the forty years following WWII, veterans were known as the "ones who saved the world." The collapse of the Soviet Union, exacerbated by the Chechen wars has left them in states of isolation and deprivation. Russian veterans live precariously with chronic insecurity in Chechnya, their plight aggravated by a near complete lack of family or government support, resulting in them relying on the humanity and generosity of their equally impoverished Chechen neighbours.

During the project, CARE also chose to focus on capacity-building projects that would have a direct impact on employment as well as addressing the needs of specific marginalized groups such as women who especially face special difficulties related to their status and sex. Most war widows lead single headed households and are the exclusive income earners and care givers.

Among the requests of the community, CARE also chose to support the following projects:

*ii. Vocational Training courses for widows and disabled youth.*

These courses were developed aiming at promoting self-employment. 98 women, teenagers and young adults have participated in fitness, manicure, hairdresser, sewing and tiling courses. Since completion of the course, 36 participants found a job while created their own job.

**Sign language course:** This course was unique in the Chechen Republic. It attracted 25 youth and had a significant impact on the life of the young participants.



Sign language Course  
Grozny, May 2006

As a result of the war, the proportion of physical disabilities among the population had significantly increased. Some disabilities are directly war related (landmines, bombings, shootings) but medical professionals also indicate an increase in the number of birth defects.

CARE is the only organization that has proposed basic sign language courses to the mute and deaf youth. Only one bilingual teacher was available all over the Republic.

Special educational and psychosocial activities were proposed on a daily basis to a group of 20 children with disabilities (cerebral palsy or war trauma) to develop sensory, motor, psychosocial and social skills. As a result, 3 of them have been able to reintegrate regular educational structures at the end of the project when others have been registered in the national program of 'Education at home'.

**Sewing workshop** at Grozny center: 12 widows produced bed linen within the center. Linens were distributed to 360 vulnerable old people identified by the USAID Mobile team and to the Elderly House in Grozny. Part of the production was then sold by the participants themselves who were given the possibility to generate some income.

*iii. National dancing group.*

This project has been inherited from previous BPRM funded psychosocial projects. 18 teenagers in Grozny and 15 youth living in TACs (center Kamaz and Crystal) in Ingushetia established a successful dance group, facilitated by a professional choreographer and a musician. This project was supported in consideration of the several attacks against and the need to revive Chechen cultural traditions. Chechens have a very specific etiquette, which is at risk because of ongoing instability in Chechnya and consequent damage to social structures.

***iv. Widows' group Meetings***

Widows' groups meet twice a week in Scarlet Sails center. This group functions as a self-help group facilitated by a CARE outreach worker. Problems such as health problems, material or psychological difficulties are raised and discussed in a "safe environment"<sup>2</sup> where everyone can support each other. Specific activities have been initiated through this group. A great innovation of the group was to initiate a tiling course that provided employment to 4 women at the end of the project.

***Objective e: To provide training and consultation for community teachers to provide support and advice relating to management strategies for students.***

After agreement with the Chechen Ministry of Education, 68 teachers coming from technical colleges, attended training sessions focused on drug prevention, tolerance and conflict resolution skills and issues related to teenagers behavior (aggression, depression).

***Objective f: To provide training and consultation to local community facilitators working in partner organizations providing similar services to displaced and vulnerable populations.***

275 social workers referred by the Department of Social Affairs and from all over Chechnya participated in the trainings. Training sessions aimed at promoting good practices in social care and providing opportunities for professional development.

Parts of the trainings were held in the remote areas of Chechnya (Urus-Martan, Shalinski, Achkoi-Martan, and Gudermess districts). This was particularly essential as most education opportunities are only available in Grozny and very few professionals of others areas can afford to participate.

***Objective g: To conduct monthly information seminars provided by invited experts for special interest groups on up-to-date community-based issues such as health and nutrition.***

In Chechnya, seminars facilitated by various organizations or professionals (such as the Center of Prevention of HIV, individuals general practitioners, Chechen State University Teachers, Community leaders...) were offered to regular participants on a bi monthly basis.

Training sessions for targeted groups such as pregnant women were offered regularly. Doctors and Community Outreach Workers facilitated specialized training sessions. Women were taught skills for identifying and managing health problems, natal care and relaxation techniques. A local Chechen NGO, Denal, provided special kits for expecting mothers. 21 training sessions were delivered to 320 women.

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<sup>2</sup> "Safe environment" would be characterized by confidentiality, non-judgment and free expression.



The short training sessions provided discussed topics such as drug use, HIV/AIDS prevention, first aid, TB, landmine awareness, relaxation, effects of and responsible use of alcohol, starting a business, drugs prevention, Conflict resolution & tolerance, Gender based Violence, dealing with disabilities.

The information for many of these sessions came from other local and international organizations.

Mothers and disabled children attending a training session in Grozny Center

***Objective h: To recreate social and cultural activities to foster tolerance and stability.***

Recreational activities were offered on a daily basis to participants. Participants initiated and conducted activities. Additionally, a great synergy was observed between different groups of participants who mixed in many occasions. Regular youth supported children with disabilities and frequently organized some special events (concerts, games...).

A minimum of 80 participants attended every day to the recreational activities:

Chess, poetry, video club, sport, music club, games, competitions.

The center also provides free access for computer, library and sport, video-club.



Special events were also organized regularly such as the ‘**Anti-drugs**’ or ‘**life without Violence**’ festivals which were conducted in November and May as well as special celebrations (Women’s day, Victory day) regularly organized, gathered 1000 participants.

These activities amplify what has become a Center known for bringing diverse and marginalized groups together. This action has had a significant impact in reducing the barriers, which have inevitably been erected through the course of a decade of conflict.

***Objective i: To provide crisis intervention to local population to foster self-care and assist the residents in problem solving and managing daily difficulties. The above component should address the most vulnerable and isolated community members.***

The Board of Governors identified around 150 old men in Grozny who need urgent support. Home-visits to veterans that were conducted by outreach workers revealed that a lot of them, especially Russians, live in extreme poverty and present specific difficulties as their situation has been aggravated by two decades of conflict, continuous instability and lack of security.

- During the implementation of the project, 150 old people have received material help (bed linen, small food parcels) as well as personal support through home visits done by the outreach workers on a monthly basis while 210 received material help on special occasions.
- Additionally, 10 old persons have benefited from some restful days in a sanatorium. Veterans have been integrated to the activities of the centre on a bi monthly basis in order to encourage socialization and provide them with some psychosocial and physical stimulation.
- Disabled, mute and deaf youth have been organized in a self- help group.
- A bilingual teacher/translator was hired in order to facilitate the training of the invalid youth (mute and deaf) and provide them support whenever required.

## **6. Constraints and Conclusion**

One of the factors contributing to the success of this project was its flexibility and the ability to respond to a broad range of participant needs. In a very short period of time, the Scarlet Sail has become a well-known centre providing free services to all categories of vulnerable population and making tangible positive differences in people's lives devastated by the protracted conflict.

This project has covered a continuum of services from psychosocial activities, to alternative education, community development cultural integration, and strengthening, to small income generation support. As there are very few opportunities for structured positive youth interactions and recreational activities in Chechnya, the CARE/USAID centre has been frequently visited by all participants (widows, veterans, disabled, women, and youth) who consistently reiterated their satisfaction and support while local governmental bodies clearly express their interest.

It is important to conclude this phase with a strong recommendation that such projects should continue to be funded. We are confident the momentum and positive results of this project will be sustained and that further efforts would be of great use to the communities served.