

**ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE HUMANITARIAN/RESIDENT COORDINATOR
ON THE USE OF CERF GRANTS**

Country	Georgia
Humanitarian / Resident Coordinator	Robert Watkins
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I. Executive Summary

With the break up of the Soviet Union, aspirations for an independent South Ossetia led to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict that caused economic and social collapse plunging the population into unemployment and deep poverty. The population displacement caused by the conflict was considerable with some 50,000 Ossetians and 10,000 Georgians displaced. Of these, some 40,000 became refugees in North Ossetia and other parts of Russia and 20,000 remained Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) within the conflict zone and its surroundings. Today the conflict still remains unresolved and the populations affected remain displaced. While many IDPs are accommodated with families and friends, the most vulnerable of the IDPs have not been able to find other solution and have been living in Collective Centres (CCs) in continuously deteriorating conditions, as they have been unwilling or unable to return to their places of former residence mainly due to continued insecurity and instability.

There are four main CCs in Tskhinvali town and its outskirts inhabited by some 132 families and 327 individuals, of which 98 families and 282 individuals are IDPs with the rest being local vulnerable individuals. The population majority living in the CCs is constituted by elders, handicapped persons, and orphans. The CCs being converted hotels, dormitories and non-residential buildings have been in a visibly crumbling state below any acceptable minimum living standards. These buildings were not designed for long-term residence and have not been maintained properly since the beginning of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict; however IDPs have been living there in sub-standard conditions for more than 17 years now. One of the CCs has been decrepit to the point where it was non-repairable and the local authorities feared that it would fall apart and injure or kill inhabitants. A decision has been made by the South Ossetian *de facto administration* that prior to the start of the winter the CCs inhabitants would have to be moved to the other three CCs even though the condition of those centres were not acceptable either.

The conditions of the remaining three CCs - Turbaza, SPTU and BAM - also endangered lives as the buildings had deteriorated over the years without maintenance into an unsafe condition and improperly insulated with missing windows, doors and gaps on the floors. If the condition of the CCs would not have been improved urgently, the inhabitants, and in particular the most vulnerable such as elderly, infants and the sick, would have faced deteriorating health and even risked not surviving the winter. Emergency humanitarian action was required to insulate the CCs to better protect from the winter. Considering the economic hardship and inability of most of the vulnerable CC inhabitants to provide for themselves, assistance with firewood and wood-burning stoves was also of high priority as it would help them to heat up and maintain the warmth in their accommodations and thus better endure the winter. A CERF allocation of some \$160,000 helped UNHCR to ensure that urgent and critical upgrades were made to three IDP shelters, helping the displaced families make it through the harsh winter.

Total amount of humanitarian funding required and received (per reporting year)	Required: \$ <u>161,599</u> Received: \$ <u>161,599</u>			
Total amount of CERF funding received by funding window	Rapid Response: \$ <u>161,599</u> Underfunded: \$ <u>0</u> Grand Total: \$ <u>161,599</u>			
Total amount of CERF funding for direct UN agency/IOM implementation and total amount forwarded to implementing partners	Total UN agencies/IOM: \$ <u>161,599</u> Total implementing partners: \$ <u>0</u>			
Approximate total number of beneficiaries reached with CERF funding (disaggregated by sex/age if possible)	Total	under 5 years of age	Female (If available)	Male (If available)
	132 families/327 persons	N/A	N/A	N/A
Geographic areas of implementation	Tskhinvali, South Ossetia			

II. Coordination and Partnership-building

(a) Decision-making process:

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) together with its partners and counterparts carried out Participatory Assessments (PAs) among IDPs in 2007. IDPs identified lack of adequate housing and living conditions as their main problem. Particularly IDPs living in squalid conditions of CCs that are not suited for residential purposes and are in continuously deteriorating conditions stressed this priority. Lack of or non-functioning sanitation and potable water systems were also stressed. In addition, IDPs specified lack of food, land plots, livestock, income, and employment opportunities as second major deficiency. Most of the IDPs and, in particular, the elderly have health problems. The limited assistance provided over the years has aimed at life-saving and has not been adequate to raise the level of living conditions in a sustainable manner.

Not enough attention has been given to the situation of IDPs in South Ossetia nor are there many donors present in this region. The budget of the local authorities is insignificant and not even adequate to cover the basic needs of local vulnerable populations. The unresolved status of South Ossetia has prevented much needed assistance from development agencies and bi-lateral donors. There is currently no other donor targeting IDPs for improvement of their living conditions. UNHCR is the single agency that has been uninterruptedly present in the region since 1997, except for the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) which does not specifically address assistance needs of IDPs, refugees and returnees. The only other organization that has provided intermittent assistance to IDPs over the years is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). At the end of 2007, ICRC completed repairs of the roofs of the CCs to prevent leakage, but has no more funding foreseen to address remaining needs.

Through UNHCR core programme, IDPs are assisted to move out of the CCs to houses. However, due to limited funding and implementation constraints beyond control caused by the conflict, only eight households were assisted during 2007. Following the results of the assessment, a joint team including technical members, conducted a thorough assessment of the repair needs of the four CCs. The assessment revealed that three CCs required urgent repair works to allow the inhabitants to survive the winter, while one CC was recognized beyond repair.

(b) Coordination amongst the humanitarian country team:

UNHCR operates in South Ossetia in close cooperation with a) the Department on IDP and Refugee Issues of the Entity in South Ossetia Dealing with Refugees, IDP and Returnee Matters in the name of the South Ossetian JCC Co-chairman (Entity in South Ossetia Dealing with Refugees (ESORIR)), and b) the implementing partner, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Several meetings were held between UNHCR, ESORIR and NRC following the Participatory Assessment conducted jointly with the ESORIR's Department on IDP and Refugee Issues, NRCI and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) among IDPs which revealed the lack of adequate housing and living conditions as their main problem.

Assessment of living conditions of IDPs living in CCs has been conducted jointly by UNHCR, ESORIR's Department on IDP and Refugee Issues, and NRC and confirmed the results of the participatory assessment. A joint team consisting of representatives of all three agencies, and including construction engineers visited the four main CCs to identify and estimate the construction needs on the CCs.

There is no other international agency other than UNHCR addressing the problems faced by IDPs, with the exception of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who rehabilitated roofing and sanitation systems in the CCs. Two meetings were held between UNHCR and ICRC staff to share information on the implemented and/or planned activities of each agency on the rehabilitation works on the CCs in order to build on the assistance that has already been provided. Thus, the activities carried out by UNHCR under the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funded project were complementary to the repair of the roofs of the CCs undertaken by ICRC in end 2007.

UNHCR is the only United Nations (UN) agency with an office in South Ossetia and is the source of information for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) on the conditions and security in the region. UNHCR, based on its collection of information through presence on the ground; monitoring; and participatory assessments with the IDPs, the local authorities and implementing partner and other organizations active in South Ossetia presented the resulting needs of IDPs to the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The needs were further discussed at the UNCT meeting, where it was decided that an urgent intervention is needed to meet the identified priority needs. World Food Programme (WFP) attempted to complement UNHCR intervention with food-aid in-kind which failed due to unfeasibility in sourcing the additional food needed.

(c) Partnerships:

There is no other international agency addressing the problems faced by IDPs, with the exception of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who rehabilitated roofing and sanitation systems in the CCs. The activities carried out by UNHCR complemented the repair of the roofs of the CCs undertaken by ICRC in end 2007.

Assessment of needs of IDPs living in CCs has been conducted jointly by UNHCR and UNHCR implementing partner, the NRC and the local Department on IDPs and Refugee Issues which has an in-depth knowledge of the IDPs and their living conditions. The joint team including construction engineers visited the four main CCs to identify and estimate the construction needs on the CCs, one of which was recognized beyond repair.

UNHCR planned to carry out the CERF project through its implementing partner, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Due to limited timeframe and zero overhead costs available that would allow NRC to implement the project, NRC had to turn down the UNHCR proposal. Hence, the project was carried out through direct implementation. However, NRC participated in the needs assessment conducted among the IDPs living in CCs.

(d) Prioritization process:

In spite of the grave and immense needs in various sectors experienced by the IDPs, only the sector "Insulation/Winterization" was identified as priority that qualifies for emergency support by CERF.

III. Implementation and Results

With the support of CERF, UNHCR managed to act promptly to respond to life-saving needs of the vulnerable population living in CCs, despite the limited timeframe and the cold winter conditions. Three CCs inhabited by IDPs and other vulnerable individuals were rehabilitated and provided with proper insulation against weather conditions. As a result of the activities, the objective of the project was achieved and all households living in the CCs have improved living conditions in their accommodation with regards to heating. The project helped insulate three decrepit CCs inhabited by 132 households (327 persons) of vulnerable IDPs and locals.

Specifically, the following works have been conducted to insulate the three CCs:

- Installation of entrance doors in all three CCs;
- Installation or partial repair of doors (247.8 m²) in the rooms, corridors, and stairwells;
- Installation or partial repair of windows (474.66 m²) in the rooms, corridors, and stairwells;
- Plastering/repair of walls;
- Painting of doors and windows;
- Glazing of doors and windows;
- Flooring including laying insulated linoleum and covering holes with concrete where necessary (1,129.12 m²);
- Repair of the main staircase of Turbaza CC.

Firewood and wood-burning stoves were distributed to provide the IDPs with means to heat up their CC accommodations. Each of the 132 families received three m³ of firewood and a wood-burning stove.

Due to limited time and no overhead costs it was impossible to involve implementing partners, hence UNHCR carried out the project through direct implementation. UNHCR was responsible for project documentation, implementation, monitoring and reporting. UNHCR hired the engineer and monitors responsible for the shelter and winterization aspects of the project, contracted the suppliers of construction materials and firewood and wood-burning stoves, and jointly with local authorities monitored the repair works as well as distribution of the winterization assistance (firewood and stoves) to ensure that all households are reached in an equitable manner.

An engineer was hired to coordinate the construction component of the project, liaise with suppliers to verify the delivery schedule, monitor the insulation works, and perform quality check of the conducted works. In addition, within limited timeframe the engineer made a thorough assessment of the insulation needs of the three CCs. Based on the detailed technical assessment for each CC, construction brigades were identified and contracted to procure construction materials and carry out the rehabilitation works. Rehabilitation started with external works including installation and/or repair of doors and windows in the corridors and stairwells, which were later followed by internal works plastering, painting, and flooring.

Two hired monitors were responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the winterization kit distribution component of the project. They checked the quantity and quality of the firewood and wood-burning stoves provided by the supplier, monitored the loading/unloading and distribution of firewood and wood-burning stoves by suppliers to CC households.

Overall, the objective of the project has been met: IDPs and local vulnerable population living in CCs enjoyed their right to adequate living conditions through the improved accommodation.

The emergency repairs helped to more efficiently preserve the warmth of the accommodation. The repairs also contributed towards maintaining the IDPs in better health as well as not to succumb to the cold of the winter or due to the insecure state of the CC structures. During the evaluation of the project by UNHCR staff, the inhabitants of all three CCs expressed their deep gratitude for the provided winterization assistance that helped them heat up and keep the warmth in their accommodations and thus survive the cold winter. The repair of the main staircase in Turbaza CC was particularly essential as the majority of CC residents are elderly and it is extremely difficult to use the heavily damaged staircase to enter the CC.

(a) Monitoring and evaluation

UNHCR jointly with South Ossetian Department on Refugee and IDP issues and hired engineers conducted monitoring and evaluation of the project activities. Monitoring of repair works on all the three CC was conducted on a weekly basis by a joint team. In addition to hired monitors, representatives of UNHCR and South Ossetian Department on Refugee and IDP issues conducted monitoring of the winterization kits distribution on a regular basis to ensure that all households are reached in an equitable manner. Upon the completion of the project UNHCR staff together with the local authorities accompanied by engineers evaluated the project - in addition to the site visits and quality check, they got feedback from beneficiaries of the project.

(b) Initiatives complemented CERF-funded projects

During 2007 and prior to the CERF -funded 'Winterization Assistance to vulnerable individuals living in CCs in South Ossetia' project, the UNHCR started construction of quadruplex block houses for eight IDP households currently living in the CCs. The UNHCR is also expected to receive in-kind donations of food packages that would have been distributed to the IDPs and vulnerable populations living in CCs.

IV. Lessons learned

Through the current project, the following lessons were learned:

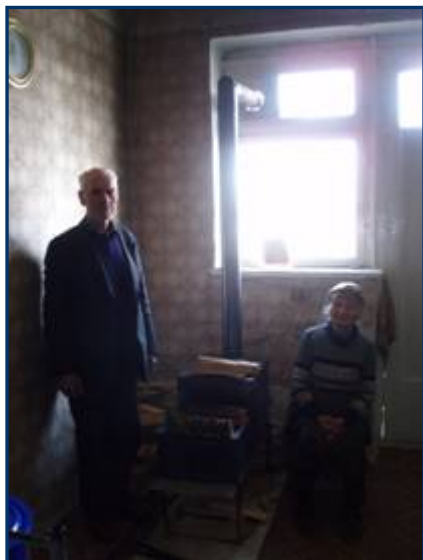
- 1) Winterization assistance projects such should be implemented well before the winter season, as the cold weather hinders repair works.
- 2) Prevailing situation in the conflict zone shall be taken into account while implementing rapid response project. For example, normal tendering processes that on average take at least a month, shall be replaced by simplified bidding processes. This is especially relevant considering that the current political situation in the conflict zone with transportation of construction and other materials into South Ossetia is restricted and the required scope of materials is not readily available in South Ossetia and the number of suppliers is quite scarce. Moreover, it would be beneficial to have information on received funding at least a couple of weeks in advance, so that there is enough time to order the required quantity of materials as the materials are not readily available and suppliers need time to deliver them to the project sites. From this perspective, three months of implementation period should only commence from the moment material is available.
- 3) There are additional needs that were not addressed through the 'Winterization assistance to vulnerable individuals living in CCs in South Ossetia' project, however require urgent attention, such as:
 - the electrical wiring in all three CCs is in extremely poor state;
 - the lavatories and sewage and water supply systems in "BAM" CC are in emergency condition leading to the basement of the CC being full with faeces which is not only creating a terrible odour undignified to live in, but also a serious health-risk on the long run;
 - entrance doors to the rooms in "Turbaza" and "SPTU" CCs need to be replaced;
 - Plastering works in the rooms, corridors and stairwells as well as façade elevation works in all three CCs are necessary.

V. Results

Sector/ Cluster	CERF projects per sector	Amount disbursed (\$)	Number of Beneficiaries (by sex/age)	Implementing Partners	Expected Results/Outcomes	Actual results and improvements for the target beneficiaries
Insulation/ Winterization	07-HCR-030 "Winterization Assistance to vulnerable individuals living in Collective Centers in South Ossetia"	161,599	327 persons	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three CCs inhabited by IDPs and other vulnerable individuals are properly insulated. ■ All households living in the three CCs received firewood (three m3 / family) and wood-burning stoves (one pcs. /family) to heat up their accommodations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The project helped to insulate the decrepit CCs in order to assist the vulnerable IDPs and local population living in CCs to maintain their health and survive the coming winter. ■ Distributed firewood and wood-burning stoves providing the IDPs with means to heat up their CC accommodations. The emergency repairs helped to more efficiently preserve the warmth of the accommodation. The repairs also contributed towards maintaining the IDPs in better health as well as not to succumb to the cold of the winter or due to the insecure state of the CC structures. ■ IDPs and local vulnerable population living in CCs enjoyed their right to adequate living conditions through the improved accommodation.

VI. CERF IN ACTION: Success stories

The family of Parmen Dryaev, ethnic Ossetian used to live in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi for more than 55 years. With the start of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and in fear of persecution they had to sell their house at a below-market value price and flee to Tskhinvali, South Ossetia.



Parmen Dryaev is 81 years old and was born in Tskhinvali. In his teen age years he moved to Tbilisi to work in the field of food supply for more than 60 years and was distinguished for his outstanding work with a special certificate. Parmen Dryaev's wife, Nadezhda Kelekhsashvili (82 years old) also an ethnic Ossetian was born in Khashuri district of Georgia. After finishing school she moved to Tbilisi to work in a cloth factory. Nadezhda Kelekhsashvili was recently awarded with the Veteran of Labour medal for 60 years of outstanding work. Three years ago she was stricken by paralysis and became an invalid.

Today, the family of Parmen Dryaev lives in the Collective Center (CC) in Tskhinvali. The CC is mainly inhabited by IDPs who are unwilling or unable to return to their places of former residence due to continued insecurity and instability.

The CC is a converted dormitory of a vocational skills college. It was not designed for long-term residence, but IDPs have been living there in sub-standard conditions for more than 17 years now. The CC has not been maintained properly since the beginning of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict in early 1990s. Hence it has been in a visibly crumbling state below any acceptable minimum living standards, inadequately insulated to protect the inhabitants against the cold winter the CC has endangered lives of inhabitants as the building has not been in a safe condition with missing windows, doors and gaps in the floors.

Dryaev's family composed of two elderly, with one of them being an invalid is an example of most of the vulnerable CC inhabitants who are too vulnerable to move elsewhere and who face the economic hardship and inability to provide for themselves. After 60 years of labouring they are remaining without any capital or any means of their own to leave of. The minimal pension provided by the state is utterly inadequate to even provide for the basic. External assistance and priority humanitarian actions have been required to insulate the CC to better protect its inhabitants.

Parmen Dryaev's family is among those who benefited from the CERF-funded "Winterization Assistance to vulnerable individuals living in CCs in South Ossetia" project, implemented by UNHCR. In addition to repair works conducted in the corridors and stairwells of their CC, their own accommodation was insulated through repair of doors and windows, glazing and flooring. Similar to all other inhabitants of the CC, Dryaev's family received three m³ of firewood and a stove with two pipes and one joint, which enabled them not only to heat their accommodation but also to preserve its warmth, maintain their health and survive the harsh winter.



"I feel very grateful to UNHCR because it really made a difference in our lives. We were able to heat up our rooms and keep warmth in our rooms throughout the exceptionally cold winter.

In addition, we have not been taken ill with influenza and similar diseases, which was the usual case every winter” said the head of the family.

The family together with other inhabitants of the three CCs repeatedly asked UNHCR to pass their gratitude to the benefactors who provided the funding to facilitate the improvement of their living.

The UNHCR joins the inhabitants of the CCs in thanking the CERF management for having supported this request as it so obviously has made a great impact and difference for people who were in need of support.

List of Acronyms

ADRA -Adventist Development and Relief Agency

CCs -Collective Centres

CERF- Central Emergency Response Fund

ESORIR - Entity in South Ossetia Dealing with Refugees

ICRC- International Committee of the Red Cross

IDPs- Internally Displaced Persons

NRC- Norwegian Refugee Council

OSCE- Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

UNCT- United Nations Country Team

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WFP- World Food Programme