

ICRC School Programme by Country

Russian Federation

Maria wept silently. The death of her husband and son, the enslavement of the village people and the destruction of the village itself, days and nights of martyrdom in the corn field - everything she had gone through in her distressing loneliness broke her down, and she wished to weep away her sorrow, to impart it to a human being, to the only one she happened to meet during those days. And despite the fact that this person was wearing the accursed grey uniform of the enemy, he was badly wounded and appeared to be just a kid, and - from all appearances - couldn't possibly be a killer. And Maria was horrified that only a few minutes ago she, with a sharp-ground pitchfork in her hands, was ready - in a blind impulse of cruelty and revenge - to kill him. It was only the sacred word "mother" and the entreaty the miserable boy had put into his faint choking cry that saved him.

From "The mother of man" by Vitali A. Zakrutkin

Start: 1995

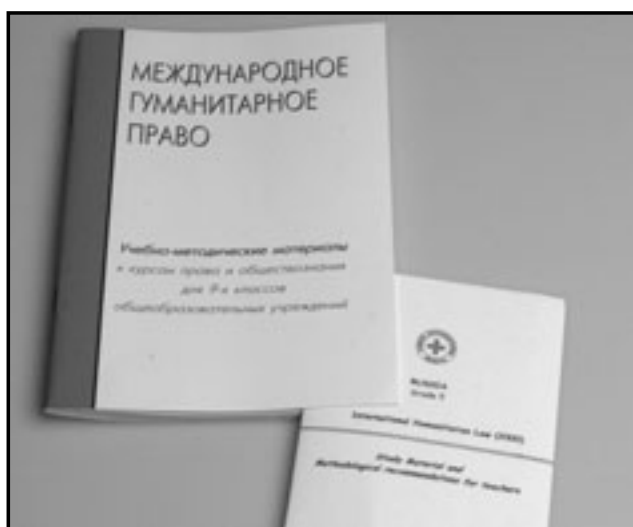
- **ICRC staff in 2003:**
1 expatriate regional coordinator
4 national staff



Course books and resource manuals

- ***A world around you*** is a series of four course books used in literature classes by pupils in grades 5-8. It contains a selection of texts from Russian and world literature (e.g. Anna Akhmatova, Mikhail Bulgakov, James Fenimore Cooper, Alexandre Dumas, Vassily Grossman, Rudyard Kipling, Andrei Platonov, Lev Tolstoi, Walter Scott, Mikhail Sholokhov, Oscar Wilde) progressively dealing with general humanitarian principles such as respect for human dignity, more concrete situations relating to the protection of prisoners of war and civilians in conflict situations, and the need for rules and accountability for one's acts.

Status: in the Russian system, a number of additional compulsory hours are set aside for the study of literature, in which the teachers are free to choose the topics they wish to study. The Ministry of Education has officially recommended *A world around you* for these hours (10 lessons out of 13- 24 literature lessons per year).



- **International humanitarian law** is a teachers' resource manual with background information and practical exercises on IHL, used in civic education courses and another course entitled

"The basics of living safely", which is taught in grades 9-11. The ICRC team developed the resource manual to allow IHL teaching to begin while the official "Basics of living safely" course textbooks, produced and provided by the Ministry of Education, were being written.

Status: civic education is a compulsory subject. The ICRC team keeps in touch with the authors of the official textbooks to ensure that they include IHL in their textbooks and to assist them in doing so. To date, IHL has been included in the draft federal standards. Once these have been definitely adopted, the ICRC team stands ready to offer its expertise to the authors of official textbooks with a view to ensuring that IHL has its place in them.

Estimated number of pupils reached between 1995 and the end of the 2002/03 school year through literature course books introducing principles of IHL:
over 16 million pupils in grades 5-8

Estimated number of teachers reached through the course books, teachers' guides and the teachers' resource manual:
300,000.

Context

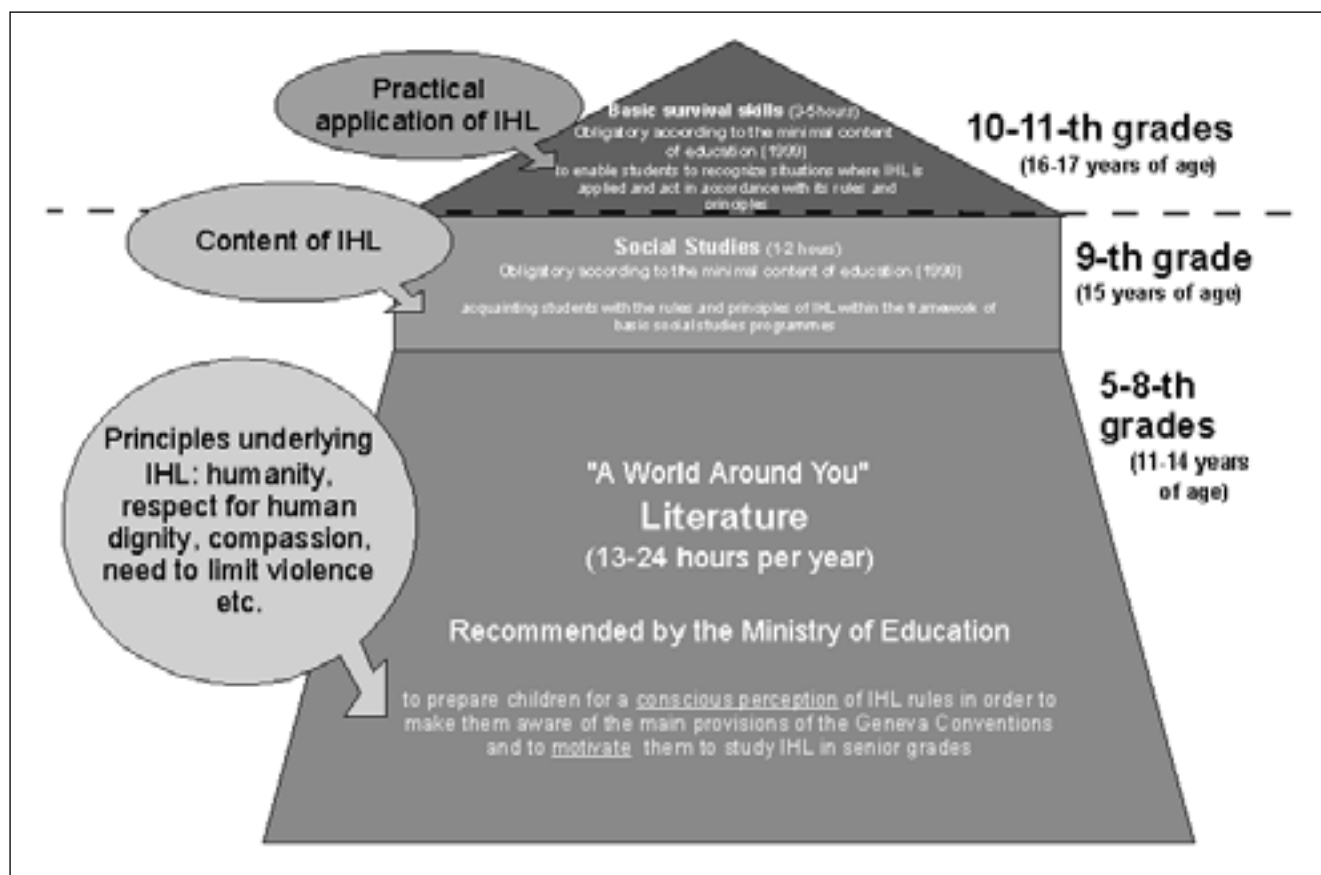
No less than the world's largest country, the Russian Federation has a surface area of some 17 million square km and an ethnically and culturally highly diverse population of about 145 million people. As one of the 15 independent republics emerging from the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, it continues to play a leading role in the region as well as in world affairs. The country is emerging from a period of profound institutional and economic reforms following the break-up of the Soviet Union. While the indicators of economic development are encouraging, the gap between rich and poor and cities and rural areas is widening. The Russian Federation has repeatedly experienced hostilities within its own borders, and there is armed confrontation ongoing in the Republic of Chechnya in southern Russia.

Achievements of the ICRC school programme

The rigidly structured Russian education system was the starting point of the ICRC programme to familiarize secondary-school pupils with the basic principles of IHL and humanitarian action, and central programme coordination remains with the ICRC delegation in Moscow.

Together with a team of Russian experts and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the ICRC managed to set up the programme over a ten-year period, with the following results:

- Covering 88 of Russia's 89 regions (Chechnya being the only region not covered), the school programme is the only educational programme run by a foreign organization country-wide and **now reaches over 4.5 million pupils per school year**. It familiarizes 5th-graders, and their teachers, with humanitarian principles, and subsequently helps them deepen their knowledge and understanding of IHL rules in grades 6-11. Unlike most educational programmes of other organizations, the ICRC programme makes as many school manuals available as there are students, and extends over several grades so as to ensure that young people are made aware of IHL at crucial stages throughout secondary education, reinforcing the message at every step. This is illustrated by the "pyramid" graph overleaf. Pupils who began their secondary education in 2000/2001 will be the first age group to have benefited from the complete course from grades 5-11.
- Monitoring carried out with the help of the local branches of the Russian Red Cross shows that **between 55% to 60% of all teachers and pupils in grades 5-7 use the ICRC manual**. An external evaluation in 2001 confirmed that it is widely appreciated by pupils, teachers, parents, as well as the education authorities, and that pupils who have taken part in the programme know significantly more about humanitarian principles and issues than those who have not. In 3 of the country's regions, the education authorities have made the programme compulsory.



Structure of the ICRC school programme in Russia

- By September 2002, lessons or paragraphs on IHL had been included in 7 official civic education textbooks for grade 9 (age 14). This represents a marked increase since 2000, when only one book featured IHL. For the "The basics of living safely" course in grade 11 (age 16), 4 textbooks have so far included IHL. At this stage, one batch each of 9th and 11th grade students have had IHL lessons as part of these courses.
- In 2001 the ICRC began to approach **schools offering specialized military training*** with a view to promoting the IHL educational programme. The response was encouraging: in 2001 and 2002, the ICRC was invited to 3 national military skills competitions between military schools in Volgograd, Novorossisk and St Petersburg. At each of these events, the ICRC organized the mandatory part dedicated to IHL.

Programme development

At the outset, the school programme in Russia was inspired by two major impulses, coming from the **military** and the **education authorities**:

- When the ICRC first set up an office in the Russian Federation in 1992, its dissemination efforts focused on promoting IHL among the armed forces. Humanitarian concepts and IHL, especially the notion of limits in war, were until recently not part of general, or military, educational policy. When introduced to IHL, Russian military experts themselves expressed the view that in order to have an impact, the teaching of these principles should start at a much earlier stage in the education process.
- The Ministry of Education showed interest in developing cooperation with the ICRC. In view of Russia's rich literary tradition, **literature classes** were chosen as the most suitable vehicle to convey the humanitarian message.

* some 60 schools across Russia offer this kind of training. These schools are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In addition, there are military schools (e.g. the prestigious Suvorov cadet schools) run by the Ministry of Defence.

ICRC school programme in the Russian Federation			
Course books	printed and distributed	No. books for pupils/ teachers	Reprint
grades 5-8 (ages 11-14) <i>A world around you</i>	1995 - end 2002	9.24 million/ 457,000	1 million course books (grade 6) due in 2004
grades 9 and 11 (ages 15-17) IHL lessons in <i>The basics of living safely</i>	2000/1	70,000 copies for teachers	no immediate plans as the course books are used in fewer lessons and are therefore expected to last longer

This is how the programme's twofold approach evolved:

1. ***A world around you*** (course book for grades 5-8): Starting in 1995, ICRC delegates together with local experts of literature, culture and history developed a series of four literature course books entitled *A world around you* for distribution to pupils in grades 5-8 in Russia's 66,000 schools. In terms of production and distribution, this represents, for each grade, an average of 1.84 million course books for pupils and 100,000 teachers' guides. By 2001, the course books for grades 5-7 had been distributed. With the printing and distribution of the 8th-grade course book for the 2002-2003 school year, the first phase of the programme was complete. Between 1996 and 2002, hundreds of training seminars were organized for some 43,000 teacher trainers and teachers.

2. ***International humanitarian law*** (teacher's resource manual for grades 9-11): In addition to

the literature programme, the ICRC received the approval of the Ministry of Education for IHL topics to be included in civic education classes and the "Basics of living safely" course for grades 9 and 11 starting in 2000. While the Ministry of Education was producing the official course textbooks, the ICRC team developed a teachers' support manual with background information and practical exercises on IHL. This meant that teaching could begin immediately. Some 70,000 copies of the support manual were distributed in 2000. At the same time, the ICRC team kept in touch with the authors of the official textbooks to ensure that they included IHL in their textbooks and to assist them in doing so.

Through continued lobbying, the ICRC is seeking to convince the education authorities of the need to include the basic principles of IHL in federal education standards for grades 9-11. At the end of 2002, a decision is still outstanding.

Teacher training

Teacher training plays an essential part as, for the time being, it is up to the teachers to decide whether to use the ICRC course books for grades 5-8 or not. Beyond familiarizing teachers with the content of the course books, training aims to stimulate their interest and motivate them for the programme.

At the request of the regional ministries of education, the ICRC team conducts seminars for teachers of literature, civic education, and history. In addition, the ICRC has taken a systematic approach towards the vast majority of **regional institutes for in-service teacher training**, which every teacher is required to attend for one month at least every five years. Through these institutes, the ICRC has set up a network of **regional school programme coordinators**. These experienced educators interface with the ICRC and the teachers using the manual. It is their responsibility to train and motivate teachers in specialized seminars lasting several days. A special effort is therefore required to prepare these intermediaries and support them in this key role.

Cooperation with the education authorities and the National Society

The ICRC school programme is based on two types of cooperation agreements:

- A framework agreement between the ICRC, the federal Ministry of Education and the Russian Red Cross, which defines the general terms of cooperation. The content of the school manuals is defined at the federal level. The ICRC is in regular contact with the department concerned to promote the inclusion of IHL in the final official version of the federal standards of education.
- Cooperation agreements between the ICRC, the regional ministries of education and local branches of the Russian Red Cross which define the details of programme development on a yearly basis. The hands-on work is carried out in the regions, which makes it necessary for the ICRC to foster a solid network of contacts in each one of them. The ICRC team visits up to 30 regions per year. In future, the ICRC intends to focus on strengthening the



A young student participating in an IHL class at his Moscow school

programmes in key regions such as Moscow and the northern Caucasus and others which have shown particularly strong commitment.

The Russian Red Cross is the ICRC's partner in the school programme:

- At the **federal** level, ICRC school programme staff includes a Russian Red Cross representative who ensures close cooperation between the ICRC and the Russian Red Cross Society. At the **regional** level, the regional branches of the Russian Red Cross Society supervise the distribution of the manuals, organize evaluations, arrange seminars and liaise with the media. National Society involvement varies greatly from region to region, depending on the level of professionalism and dedication.

Promotional activities

- Production of a 16-minute video illustrating the programme (2001).

Challenges and prospects

- The Russian Federation has vast numbers of armed forces personnel, recruited from all parts of the country. As stated above, humanitarian concepts and IHL, especially the notion of limits in war, were until recently not part of general, or military, educational policy.
- The Ministry of Education has held out the prospect of IHL topics being written into the new federal education standards and the respective curricula. A definitive decision is still outstanding. If it were to be the case, every youngster in secondary education would be introduced to basic humanitarian concepts and provisions of IHL. This is particularly important as military draft, which is compulsory, begins straight after school at age 18.

Determined to ensure the programme's continuation and quality, the ICRC is looking for a partner to take over the financing for it for the next 5 years. Its own role will consist in facilitating and overseeing implementation and providing expertise through its national teams.

The ICRC is planning:

in 2003

- 40 travel assignments in the Russian Federation and the region
- training seminars for regional programme coordinators and for education specialists for grades 9 and 11
- promotional activities (new activities: set up a website; organize a competition on IHL for pupils in grades 5-8 at general secondary schools, and take part in a competition for pupils at specialized military schools; participate in the Pan-Siberian Fair)
- production of teacher training support materials.

over the next 5 years

- to ensure deeper and broader implementation at the regional level, to **focus on** strengthening the programme in some of the **70 key regions** where the Ministries of Education have either made IHL topics compulsory in literature classes for grades 5-8, or have expressed an interest in doing so, and where promoting the programme is a priority for the ICRC, for example in Moscow and the northern Caucasus
- maintain **contact with coordinators** in the other regions
- concentrate on **teacher training and motivation**, so as to involve an increasing number of teachers in the programme
- conduct an **evaluation over 4-5 years**, taking a sample of pupils and following the development of their knowledge and attitudes through the course of their studying the four literature manuals (the group that started grade 5 in September 2001 will be the first group to have had the opportunity to study 4 manuals by grade 8).