

## Context

Azerbaijan's population of nearly eight million is mainly of Turkic origin. Despite a cease-fire agreed in 1994, the country has yet to resolve its conflict with neighbouring Armenia over the Nagorny Karabakh region. Azerbaijan is left with a legacy of some 750,000 refugees and internally displaced people. Hopes of widespread wealth from Azerbaijan's petrol resources have so far remained unfulfilled and much of the population outside the capital Baku continues to live in difficult conditions. Increased poverty is affecting education. Schools in rural areas are far worse off than those in Baku, and teachers have little or no access to reference materials and up-to-date information. The overall level of teaching has declined.

## Programme development

Between 1996 and 2001 the ICRC team, in co-operation with local experts, prepared two course

of the 6th-grade course book (3,000 copies plus 200 teachers' guides) was tested in 33 schools in Baku and Guba. In April 2002 the final version (190,000 copies plus 12,000 teachers' guides) of this course book was distributed to schools countrywide, including the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan.

## Teacher training

Between 1997 and 2002, one general and eight decentralized training seminars were held for some 240 methodology specialists on *We are all rays of the same sun* (grade 5 course book). For *Your world, my world* (grade 6 course book), 310 methodology specialists were trained in two general seminars and 17 decentralized seminars in the country's eight regions. The methodology experts in their turn held seminars for literature teachers from their respective regions. A special effort is required in terms of motivation and support so as to involve sufficient numbers of teachers to allow the programme to continue. The

ICRC school programme Azerbaijan			
Course books	Printed and distributed	No. books for pupils/ teachers	Reprint
grade 5 age 11 <i>We are all rays of the same sun</i>	Sept. 1997	150,000/ 6,000	2001 176,000/ 8,500
grade 6 age 12 <i>Your world, my world</i>	2002	190,000/ 12,000	due in 2007

books for pupils in grades 5-6. The course book for the 5th grade plus teachers' guides was distributed to 4,561 schools across Azerbaijan, a first edition in 1997, a second four years later. In 2001 the Latin alphabet officially replaced the cyrillic script. However, in reality both continue to exist one alongside the other. All new course books are printed using Latin script; the ICRC-sponsored ones therefore likewise. The fact that they are distributed free of charge is an added attraction, as above 4th grade, pupils have to buy their own schoolbooks. In 2001, the pilot version

teachers' guide for the 6th-grade course book is particularly detailed and contains the answers to all exercises and questions.

## Cooperation with the education authorities

School reform has been in progress since 2000 with financial support from the World Bank. Teaching of human rights as well as of IHL is part of the ongoing reform. The ICRC signed cooperation agreements with the Azerbaijan Ministry of Education in 1995, 1996 and 2002. The general

objective of the 2002 agreement is to ensure IHL teaching in schools. In addition, the Ministry of Education issues methodological recommendations regarding the use of the ICRC course books to teach key IHL concepts in literature lessons over a five-year period.

Regarding seminars and distribution of the books, the ICRC cooperates with: the Ministry of Education, the methodology centre of the Ministry's institute for educational problems; the Ministry's department for material and technical supply; the regional education departments; the Baku education department and the Ministry of Education of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic; the Azerbaijan teachers' institute and the Azerbaijan Tusi teacher training institute.



**Azeri schoolgirls discuss the latest edition of their IHL course book**



### **Promotional activities**

- A pantomime entitled "Mangurt", based on Dzhingis Aitmatov's novel *A day longer than a century* which deals with the rights of prisoners of war
- Articles published in a teachers' journal
- A 15-minute documentary "Your world - my world" shown on national TV.

### **Achievements, challenges and prospects**

- Azerbaijan's unresolved conflict with Armenia remains a source of tension. The need to educate young people, many of whom are potentially future bearers of weapons, about IHL remains very real.
- The ICRC school programme is completing its first phase. The Ministry of Education has shown strong support for the programme and the teachers particularly appreciate the ICRC course book, which has been made a compulsory part of additional classes allocated to literature and reading in grades 5 and 6. The course books for the 5th and 6th grades are

due to be reprinted in 2007. The Ministry of Education lacks the resources to take over the programme, of which reprinting the course books is the costliest part. Providing the course books will remain an essential part of the programme at least until IHL lessons can gain entry into civic education classes, which would be taken charge of by the Ministry of Education with other external support.

- The current nationwide school campaign aimed at updating school curricula and books, funded by the World Bank, adds to the ICRC course books' chances of becoming compulsory in core teaching programmes; in addition, educational reforms offer potential opportunities to anchor IHL in other compulsory subjects such as civic education.

Determined to ensure the programme's continuation, the ICRC is looking for a partner to take over the financing of the programme over the next five years.

### **The ICRC is planning:**

#### **in 2003**

- 13 four-day training courses in Baku and all the country's districts for literature teachers working with the ICRC course books
- evaluation by a local consultancy agency
- promotional activities (showing a documentary on the school programme on TV; "Mangurt" pantomime performances; regional competitions in Baku city and other regions of Azerbaijan)

#### **over the next five years**

- concentrate on teacher training and refresher courses with a view to improving the quality of teaching, letting the programme "sink in" and keeping teachers motivated
- closely follow the reform process with a view to seizing opportunities for IHL to be made part of civic education programmes.



**Armed forces are another important target group for ICRC's efforts to promote IHL**

## ICRC School Programme in Georgia

Excerpt from a focus group discussion with 10 schoolchildren who took part in the ICRC school programme (Tbilisi, autumn 2000):

**Question:** *Why is this course so important?*

**A boy:** *To avoid human suffering in wartime and render assistance to those who need it.*

**Question:** *Can you imagine finding yourself in a war situation?*

*Eight of the pupils think that they may well happen to find themselves in a war situation.*

**A girl:** *I've already been in such a situation.*

**A boy:** *I was in Gagra (Abkhazia) and saw people dying. I was deeply shocked.*

**Start:** 1995

### Course books

- *Know yourself* is a course book for the 6th grade and contains a selection of texts from Georgian literature (e.g. Ilya Chavchavadze, Nodar Dumbadze) illustrating humanitarian principles, such as compassion and respect for the dignity of others. *What hate destroys*, a 7th-grade course book, deals with basic rules of IHL and humanitarian principles. The books address pupils aged 11-13.

The compulsory literature lessons for grade 6 added to the teachers' workload, without extra payment. To lighten the teachers' burden and diversify content, for the 7th grade it was decided to divide the 18 course hours up among a variety of subjects, ranging from Georgian literature, history and geography (e.g. migration and refugees) to Russian and other foreign languages. Georgia is the only country where the school programme takes this multidisciplinary approach.

