

## **Excellence Winner**

### ***10,000 sleeping bags for Pakistan***

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#### **Brief description:**

The Slovenian Red Cross (SRC) humanitarian initiative was aimed to collect the amount of 40 million Slovenian Tolars (approximately 220,000 USD) for acquisition of 10,000 sleeping bags for the earthquake victims in Pakistan. Our tasks were:

- to successfully support the SRC initiative through communication,
- to place the topic of the earthquake on media agendas as catastrophe threatened to become a forgotten catastrophe not only in Slovenia, but also in international community,
- to inform general public about conditions in the affected areas and
- to achieve positive media publicity of the action itself as SRC was still facing the stigma of a non-transparent humanitarian organization, left by the affair in 2002.

An initiative was led entirely as a donation project. We have invited one of the best Slovenian photographer Arne Hodalič and an independent journalist Meta Krese to join the action and to visit affected area in Pakistan. With photos and written word they documented the conditions in Pakistan and thus informed the Slovenian public about the catastrophe. Our expectations of the initiative were surpassed as we have raised the necessary funds in only four months, i.e., two months before the deadline. We did not only communicate successfully but also efficiently as the joint costs of the action were only 7,000 USD, i.e. 3 % of the amount collected. That is five to eight time less then SRC spent on average on its previous fundraising activities. Through our communication support we have succeeded in attracting the attention of the media (not even one report about the action was unfavorable), we drew attention of Slovenian citizens to the conditions in north Pakistan and most importantly — we have delivered the sleeping bags to the affected inhabitants.

**“Different habits. Different religion. Different music. Different writing. Different language. Same cold.”**

#### **Need/Opportunity**

In the beginning of 2002, SRC, the largest Slovenian humanitarian organization, was confronted with an affair that almost ruined its good reputation. The secretary general of that time lost the public trust by lending the money raised for humanitarian reasons to his business partners. Moreover, the sales of SRC real estate in that period were economically questionable. The affair echoed in the media a whole year after the incident. Since then SRC has refrained from an attempt to rebuild its reputation. A humanitarian action that emphasized the transparency of fundraising and the use of the funds (the contributions should be spent for the purpose they were raised for) was therefore an opportunity for SRC to gradually remove the stain from its name. Clearly, a single transparent action could not completely regain the public trust. However, it was an important step for SRC trying to regain its past reputation of a trustworthy humanitarian organization.

On 8 October 2005 a massive earthquake with a magnitude of 7,6 on the Richter scale hit the northern part of Pakistan. Its consequences were disastrous. Those who survived the devastating

strength of the nature were left homeless with severe winter approaching. Despite many appeals from the International federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) two months after the earthquake only one third of necessary help was collected. The remarkable speed with which the funds for the tsunami victims in South East Asia were collected a year earlier (in only two weeks 90 per cent of the needed help was collected) was not repeated in the case of the earthquake in Pakistan. Pakistani earthquake threatened to become a forgotten catastrophe. SRC responded to IFRC's initiative and decided to raise the means for 10,000 sleeping bags.

Since the initiative was a the donation project, we had no financial means available for the execution of an in-depth research. However, we made a short qualitative analysis of the media coverage concerning SRC (February 2002 - December 2005) and reviewed current humanitarian projects of other non-profit organizations as well as activities of the companies that frequently invest in donation projects.

### **Intended audience(s)**

To achieve the goals that were set we identified the following audiences:

#### **Primary audiences:**

- **General public:** As our main organizational or fundraising goal was to collect funds, we had to address the general public in a wider appeal in order to reach as many Slovenians as possible. For easier and more direct contact, we divided general public into:
  - o youngsters (age 15–30) with the following psychographic characteristics: they visit shopping centers, use internet and mobile phones, commonly commute by train.
  - o active, middle-aged population (age 30–55) with the following psychographic characteristics: they actively follow media reporting, visit shopping centers, are employed.
  - o the elderly, pensioners (age 55+) with the following psychographic characteristics: not time constrained, loans are paid off, a lot of time spent in health centers.

#### **Other audiences:**

- **Media:** SRC had no planned publicity at all. Media presented an important channel for reaching other audiences and also played an important role by securing us with free advertising space.
- **Syndicates and chambers:** We were aware that we do not have any funds for execution of the humanitarian action. That is why we decided to address syndicates and chambers. Through their own well organized network we could successfully address people while reducing costs to a minimum.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Main goal:

- To raise 40 million Slovenian Tolars in six months for the acquisition of 10,000 sleeping bags.

#### **Other goals:**

- **Expenses for the humanitarian action must not exceed 10 per cent of the funds raised:** according to IFRC's standards national committees are allowed to justify 10 per cent of the funds raised as fundraising costs.
- **Attract at least 20 out of 56 of SRC' regional associations** to support and join our action.
- **Achieving free media space in the amount of 15 million Slovenian Tolars gross:** with the initiative being a donation project, it was mandatory to set an agreement with the media for the

assurance of the free advertising space. We were fully aware this was only possible by gaining the media's trust.

- **Attainment of media's trust**, through which we could gain the support of the general public. We set ourselves a goal of 95 per cent of the media publicity being favorable of the humanitarian action, especially regarding the issues of collecting funds and their usage. The transparency of collecting the means was of crucial importance considering the already mentioned affair of SRC.
- **To regain the confidence of the general public in SRC** and to restore its reputation as a reliable and trustworthy humanitarian organization.
- **To stimulate publicity** and reach a positive trend between the intensity of communication activities and the value of collected donations.

### **Solution Overview**

Communication activities were: a) harmonized with the goals of the initiative, b) adjusted to crucial dates of the initiative – delivery of sleeping bags to Islamabad and the opening of Arne Hodalic' exhibition. End of November, start of December: preparation of the communication plan, defining the communication strategy; second week in December: sending the letters to the companies, chambers and syndicates with the request to support the humanitarian initiative; sending the letters to SRC' regional associations; 16.12. 2006 delivery of the first sleeping bags<sup>1</sup> and a press conference at the Ljubljana international airport where we presented the humanitarian initiative to the media. The next were advertising activities (TV ad, radio ad, print ad, print banners, web banners, billboards). 9.1.2006: delivery of the second consignment and sending the press release to key journalists; 23. 1. 2006: delivery of the third consignment and the opening of the exhibition on the same day (invitation, postcards and exhibition posters, postcards). When we collected the necessary funds we organized a press conference at the conclusion of humanitarian action.

### **Implementation and Challenges**

The two main challenges of the initiative were the time pressure and the lack of funds. SRC contacted us at the end of November 2005 with the first delivery of sleeping bags scheduled to be sent to Pakistan in only two-week time<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, we were very time constrained in planning of our communication strategy. Moreover, SRC decided to start this action in December, in a month that is already flooded with numerous humanitarian actions. Consequently, we were aware that our action had to visually and communicatively stand out in order to gain the attention of the public and especially of the media, which are becoming more and more selective of donation projects in general. For the implementation of our action we had no funds. All our activities were based on agreements for donations and if a priori our action would be considered untrustworthy, we could not be successful at all.

Geographical as well as societal remoteness of a (Muslim) Pakistan represented an additional obstacle. When help is sent abroad, public criticism is often the result: why Slovenian humanitarian organizations help others when there are plenty Slovenians who need help as well. That is why we

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<sup>1</sup> Sleeping bags were delivered to Pakistan even before SRC was able to raise the necessary funds. An agreement was reached between SRC and the company Odeja of Skofja Loka, for the composition of 10.000 sleeping bags on credit, so the aid could be sent as soon as possible.

<sup>2</sup> SRC made an agreement with Slovenian company Odeja, which sewed the sleeping bags, to deliver the sleeping bags on credit.

had to emphasize what is common to Slovenia and Pakistan<sup>3</sup> (*Different habits. Different religion. Different music. Different writing. Different language. Same cold*). We also kept a typically green color of Pakistani flag as a lead.

Since SRC had no public person of a high reputation we had to use a strategy of a third person and invite a well-known Slovene tandem journalist Krese and photographer Hodalič.

### **Measurement/Evaluation**

*The amount of raised funds was our basic measure of our efficiency.*

#### **Goal: to raise 40 million Slovenian Tolars in six months for the acquisition of 10,000 sleeping bags**

**Outcome:** we have surpassed this goal, as we have reached the goal two months earlier than planned and additionally raised funds (final amount was 41,651,000 of Slovenian Tolars) (source: SRC bank report). The average donation of a natural person amounted to 9.600 Slovenian Tolars or 53 USD (almost two and a half sleeping bags). The average donation amounted to slightly less than 2,800 Slovenian Tolars (15 USD), which is approximately 20 per cent more than an average donation SRC achieved in the last ten years. We must admonish that the SRC' internal data doesn't separate the share of the donations by the type of donation as amount of donations via SMS messages (one SMS message is 230 Slovenian Tolars or 1,3 USD) was extremely high in our initiative. This form of donation was chosen by **95 per cent** of all donators, which demonstrates an outstanding response of general public to our initiative.

#### **Goal: expenses for the initiative must not exceed 10 per cent of raised funds.**

**Outcome:** the cost of the initiative amounted to 1.218.000 Slovenian Tolars (6674 US dollars) or 3 per cent of the funds raised (source: SRC internal data). The expenses for the SRC initiatives have previously ranged from 14 per cent (1998) to 26 per cent (2001) of the funds raised (source: SRC internal data). The organization has been operating negatively in the years of 2002 and 2003. The outcome of our initiative does not only prove we communicated efficiently but also that we communicated efficiently with minimum costs<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Goal: to attract at least 20 out of 56 regional associations of SRC to support our action.**

**Outcome:** our initiative was supported by more regional associations than we expected (36), that have collectively raised 1.979.921 Slovenian Tolars or 10.849 USD (source: SRC internal data)

#### **Goal: achieving free media space in the amount of 15 million Slovenian Tolars gross:**

**Outcome:** the response of the media to our incentive was extraordinary. For the initiative a media space worth 42,9 million Slovenian Tolars (235.068 USD) was donated and in this way media demonstrated an exceptional inclination to the initiative (source: SRC internal data).

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<sup>3</sup> Slovenia has typically Alpine climate.

<sup>4</sup> As we wanted to communicate with lowest costs possible, we did not decide for direct mailing on all Slovenian households - a costly medium often used by SRC.

**Goal: 95 per cent of media publications regarding the humanitarian initiative will be positively labeled and there will be no insinuations regarding the non-transparency of fund collecting and their unsupervised consumption:**

**Outcome:** the goal was reached since there was not a single negative response published in the media regarding the initiative. (source: media analysis Refleks, Kliping d.o.o. Company).

**Goal: in accordance with the increase in communication activities spending, the value of the donations rose**

**Outcome:** internal analysis showed that the amount of the funds raised synchronously rose with our communication activities that we adjusted according to three key dates of the initiative – consignments of sleeping bags to Islamabad.

Regarding the fact that we managed to raise the donations worth more than 40 million Slovenian Tolars in such a short period and with minimum costs, we have been more than successful with the execution of the humanitarian initiative. The decision to invite Meta Krese and Arne Hodalič turned out to be the correct. Through Arne and Meta we managed to address the media and the general public, achieved recognition of SRC initiative and informed general public about the condition in Pakistan. Meta Krese won the *Consortium Veritatis* 2005 prize for outstanding journalistic achievements, awarded by Slovene Association of Journalists. Arne Hodalič exhibited his photos on IFRC web site and his photo was published in Strategy for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (update 2005). The humanitarian action also had impacts on society. Although we did not address elementary and high schools, they have collected 2 % of the amount on their own initiative. Syndicates and chambers surprisingly raised 12 per cent of the amount and 7 per cent was raised by SMS donations (in December when we started with humanitarian action we raised 165,000 Slovenian Tolars, but in January donations by SMS messages amounted 1,9 million Slovenian Tolars).

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We communicated with the lowest costs possible, using innovative communication tools that reflected transparency of the fundraising. Special were the objects for which we collected money – sleeping bags equipped with a tag *Warm regards from Slovenia*. Finally, the confirmation of our success is the satisfaction of our client, who invited us to support its next humanitarian action.