

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

GUATEMALA

25 October 2001

This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.

Appeal No. 01.27/2001

Appeal Target: CHF 966,415

Programme Update No. 2 Period covered: 1 August - 22 October 2001

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 64.2%

Related Appeals: 01.25/2001 Pan-American Disaster Response Unit; 01.26/2001 Central America; 01.28/2001 Honduras; 01.29/2001 Nicaragua

Outstanding needs: CHF 346,233

Update: The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) has been active in disaster response, providing assistance to those affected by a landslide in Guatemala City, by drought and food insecurity in the department of Chiquimula and by the passage of hurricane Iris in northern Guatemala. The reporting period saw enhanced cooperation with the national authorities, the PNS working in the country and partner organisations. In the area of health, it has been decided to create a technical unit for water and sanitation within the GRC given the scale of needs in Guatemala.

Operational Developments:

In response to the government's decision to increase VAT taxation, there were scenes of unrest throughout the country in early August. However, although much tension remains protests are sporadic and disorganised.

The deterioration of the food security situation due to lack of rain since June, the collapse in the price of coffee and a lack of paid work for agricultural labourers has created a crisis in many of Guatemala's poorest communities. Although rainfall has normalised, the Ministry of Health reports food insecurity in 102 municipalities throughout Guatemala and the Ministry of Agriculture Ministry states that over 15,000 families are affected by crop losses.

On 19 September, the Federation launched an emergency appeal following the drought in Central America (Appeal 31/2001 - see the Federation web site) which includes assistance for up to 2,856

families in Guatemala and the National Society has drawn up a plan of action covering distribution of food, seeds and fertiliser as well as support in health and disaster preparedness.

Disaster Response

In late September, the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) distributed food, fertiliser and seeds to 896 families affected by the drought in the department of Chiquimula. This work was supported by the American Red Cross and the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as through public donations gathered by the GRC at its collection centre. A plan to assist a further 1,960 families in the affected areas of Jalapa and Baja Verapaz has been drawn up and distributions for these families will begin in late October.

The GRC also provided prompt assistance to victims of a landslide which occurred in Zone 18 on 24 September. The National Society worked with two teams of firemen in the rescue operation, provided vital equipment (ambulance, generator, radios) and distributed food to affected families; three people died and seven people were wounded in the incident and some 40 people needed assistance.

Torrential rains, due to the passage of hurricane Iris, affected the northern departments of Petén and Izabal on the night of 8 October. The Guatemalan Red Cross worked in collaboration with the national disaster coordination organisation (CONRED) to ensure preparedness measures and to evacuate the population at risk to shelters. On 9 October, the GRC undertook a damage and needs assessment to identify those most in need of assistance. The most affected communities were San Luis, on the border with Belize, and Sayaxché in Petén, where some 450 families' homes were either totally or partially destroyed. Since only minor damage was incurred in Izabal, those evacuated to shelters from low-lying land close to river beds in Puerto Barrios were able to return to their homes.

Three trucks, each accompanied by volunteers, left the GRC headquarters on Thursday, 11 October with relief goods provided by the American Red Cross and 700 blankets from the GRC stock for 450 families in San Luis and Sayaxché. Distributions were carried out on 12 October, and each family received 20 metres of plastic sheeting, 6 blankets, 3 plastic buckets and one hygiene kit containing tooth brushes, tooth paste and soap. The GRC worked in close collaboration with the American Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Federation.

Disaster Preparedness

Objective 1: "To strengthen the community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) programme at all levels and to increase the capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to both natural and man-made disasters".

Eight workshops in community education covering disaster prevention, mitigation and response took place in August. In all, 279 individuals from 16 communities in Guatemala City and Retalhuleu received training. In Retalhuleu, the local programme coordinator followed up the course with a broadcast on local radio promoting the relevant activities. The Federation also provided support (transport costs) for follow up visits to the communities after the courses had been completed. In Petén and Cobán, five workshops took place, training 134 individuals from 32 communities.

In mid-September the GRC hired a new national coordinator for the community education programme which will help the delegation to build a more focused counterpart relationship in this area.

Objective 2: "To strengthen the capacity of the Guatemalan Red Cross to respond quickly and effectively to local and national disasters".

15 facilitators at headquarters received training in disaster preparedness, health and Red Cross principles and values. Visits were made to the branches in Coatepeque and Cobán to assist with the revision of branch contingency plans.

A further nine radios were provided for the emergency operations centre. The centre continues to function on a 24-hour basis and has proved vital in the organisation of food, seed and fertiliser distributions for drought-affected families in Chiquimula and in the hurricane Iris operation.

53 volunteers and staff from all 23 branches of the GRC were trained as members of the national intervention teams (NITs); five of those trained assisted with the distributions in Chiquimula.

Objective 3: “To strengthen the inter and intra-institutional coordination, networks and strategic alliances for disaster response and preparedness”.

With the ongoing support of the regional delegation, the diploma in disaster information was launched on 3 September. Participants from different universities as well as journalists have begun training covering the Red Cross Movement, risk management, the disaster cycle, early warning, SPHERE, the Code of Conduct, globalisation, forgotten disasters, information in conflicts and health in disasters. The key message being delivered is that information saves lives through the prevention, mitigation and management of disasters.

The delegation has provided consistent and crucial support to the National Society in its elaboration of a plan of action to respond to food insecurity in Guatemala; this has been followed up with a number of joint meetings promoting and explaining the plan to different partners including the PNS present in country. This has resulted in an agreement between the GRC, the Federation, the American Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross which is pending signature.

Together with the GRC, the delegation attended regular meetings with CONRED, the WFP and FOGI, the forum of international organisations. Moreover, in the context of the drought and food security operation, an agreement was signed on 18 October with the WFP, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Foundation for Social Investment. This focuses on provision of food to 2,856 families in the departments of Baja Verapaz, Jalapa and Chiquimula.

Humanitarian Values

Training in principles and values will be included as part of the food insecurity operation. The GRC director of dissemination and training has been putting together key messages using pictures and indigenous languages, covering nutrition, hygiene and water that will be delivered during the operation. This work is being shared throughout the region as well as with the Ministry of Health.

Despite a lack of funding from other sources, ICRC support has enabled the training of 315 volunteers to date this year (including 40 from headquarters) on the Fundamental Principles, humanitarian values and the history of the Movement. In addition, 80 promoters / trainers have completed a more detailed course and 40 youth members of the GRC plus 25 “damas voluntarias” (female volunteers) have also attended workshops. A number of the workshops have also included the prevention of HIV/AIDS as a key theme.

Should more funding be made available, the intention is to expand training of volunteers and to develop educational materials that can be left in the branches and communities to ensure follow up and increased coverage. The GRC is keen to promote this area of work and to encourage interest from other donors.

Health and Care

With assistance from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) water and sanitation delegate, the Federation has coordinated meetings with the GRC and all participating National Societies (PNS) present in Guatemala to look at ways of raising the capacity of the National Society in this important sector.

Agreement has now been reached on shared approaches and a technical unit will be established in the GRC health department. The unit will coordinate water and sanitation projects as well as become a reference centre and focal point for education materials, coordination with other agencies, knowledge sharing and good practice.

In consultation with the National Society, and following recommendations of the government, it has been decided to incorporate the IMCI (integrated management of childhood illnesses) strategy in the human development programme supported by the Federation. Before the end of the year, an assistant to the director of the health department will be contracted to raise capacity and help to draw up plans. In all, four branches will be supported by the Federation in 2002 and 2003, in addition to those four which will be supported by the American Red Cross.

Organisational Development

During the reporting period, the GRC has pursued a number of planned activities with the support of the PNS that are present in country.

Objective 1: “To assist the GRC in elaborating its national development plan”.

Following a series of workshops involving the branches, the GRC has agreed to work closely with a group of consultants to help move forward the process of putting together a plan for 2002-2007. The consultancy is being supported financially by the American Red Cross and will be coordinated by the GRC’s head of planning and projects.

Objective 2: “To support the GRC in strengthening its governance and management bodies”.

A new computer system has not yet been purchased; however the GRC will provide the Federation and the PNS with relevant information regarding the required specifications to run the proposed software. Once these are obtained, a budget for training and equipment will be presented to donors.

The Federation, the ICRC and the PNS have written a joint letter to the GRC emphasising the importance of following up the recommendations made by PriceWaterhouseCoopers and of revising the Statutes of the National Society. Furthermore, the Federation and the ICRC have agreed to provide further support in the form of a governance / management workshop.

Objective 3: “To assist the GRC in developing its fund-raising capacity”.

The GRC quickly established a collection centre as part of the drought response for Chiquimula and initiated a vigorous and successful campaign in Guatemala City.

Newspaper advertisements and television slots promoting the GRC exist in draft format and the GRC is negotiating contracts to place these in key press publications and on television.

Two external courses which trained 90 people from Bancafe and World Gym companies in first aid were held, raising approximately Q5,000 (CHF 1,000).

In addition, a first aid course and a course on pulmonary resuscitation were given to staff of the Castillo Foundation, an organisation that works with street children, and a first aid course was given to staff of a health centre in Guatemala City and to 16 teachers and 40 pupils of a local school.

Objective 4: “To support the GRC in the strengthening of selected branches”.

In coordination with the American Red Cross, support was provided to Jalapa branch for the elaboration of a branch plan of action. A draft plan now exists and is being finalised.

Objective 5: “To assist the GRC in strengthening the capacity of its volunteers”.

In August, eleven volunteers from Cobán completed a basic first aid course. In September, the same course began with volunteers from Mazatenango.

Women volunteers from the branches of Chiquimula, Mazatenango and Quiché also received training in basic first aid.

Coordination and Management

Objective 1: “To establish and apply criteria for efficient (cost benefit) and effective (objectives-results) use of resources made available through the Federation for programmes, in order to allow a rational use of available resources and to establish common criteria and standards for each of the programme components, in line with the priorities of “Strategy 2010” and applying Federation procedures and guidelines”.

The delegation, together with the National Society, have produced a final draft of the appeal for 2002 and 2003. In addition, the delegation provided valuable support to the GRC in the elaboration of a plan of action for food insecurity which forms part of a regional appeal.

Objective 2: “To support the Guatemalan Red Cross in promoting coordination between the Participating National Societies, the Federation Secretariat and the ICRC, as well as with external partners”.

Meetings of representatives of the Movement continue on a regular basis in addition to regular meetings with technical staff, managers and governance of the GRC. The focus of these meetings is to encourage shared rather than diverse action and to promote GRC leadership on key issues. An agreement has been drawn up between the GRC, the Federation, the American Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross to ensure a common approach to the appeal for drought and food insecurity, and is pending signature.

The delegation coordinated the visit of the Norwegian Red Cross and the PADRU water and sanitation delegate. The representative of the Norwegian Red Cross visited three branches as well as headquarters and provided the opportunity to present Red Cross priorities at the Norwegian Embassy. The delegation also supported the participation of the GRC in the regional Presidents’ meeting held in Honduras from 19 to 22 October. Regular meetings have been held with WFP, UNDAC and CONRED, with both Federation and GRC representatives present.

Outstanding needs

The position of head of delegation in Guatemala has been filled since August.

Funding needs exist in all areas. Given the increase in needs in disaster preparedness, the DP delegate will remain in post until the end of the year and funds are needed to ensure that support in disaster response and preparedness may continue.

Funds are also urgently required in order to implement the operation in support of those affected by drought and food insecurity.

For further details please contact Olaug Bergseth, Phone : 41 22 730.45.35; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: bergseth@ifrc.org.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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Guatemala						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.27/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED			25.10.2001	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				966'415		TOTAL COVERAGE 64.2%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				3'193		
REALLOCATED FUNDS				200'000		
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		629'245	NOK	118'486	30.03.2001	NATIONAL COORDINATION, HUMAN DEV.
SWEDISH - GOVT		200'000	SEK	34'740	20.03.01	ID DELEGATE COSTS
SWEDISH - GOVT		810'000	SEK	136'485	17.05.2001	HEALTH AND CARE
SWEDISH - RC/GOVT		400'000	SEK	67'400	17.05.2001	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SWEDISH - RC/GOVT		90'000	SEK	15'165	17.05.2001	COORDINATION & MANAGEMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				575'469	CHF	59.5%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Spain	Delegate(s)			19'712		
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			25'000		OB re JGB
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				44'712	CHF	4.6%