

GUATEMALA: Rehabilitation Programme

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An external global audit began in the last quarter, an important step forward in promoting the institutional development of the Guatemalan Red Cross. The National Society is now following up on the findings and pointers for action and the process will continue. The Human Development Programme generated enthusiasm at Branch level which was translated in practice into health services in 121 communities.

The context

Guatemala ranks number 117 in the 1999 United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), making it the third poorest country in the Americas. According to UNDP reports, Guatemala has dropped 41 places in the Index since 1990. An estimated 77% of Guatemalans live below the poverty line, with almost 60% classified as living in extreme poverty. Mayan researchers estimate that up to 91% of the indigenous population in the northern departments live in poverty.

Land ownership is critical in a country where over 70% of the population live in rural areas. The most recent government statistics indicate that 65% of the agricultural land is held by 2.5% of the population. Other sources estimate that currently 80% of the Mayan population holds only 20% of productive land, while 2% of the *Ladino* (non-indigenous) population holds 80%. The growing gap between rich and poor represents a serious threat to social stability.

The challenge of the Peace Accords was to bring the armed conflict to a close, while simultaneously addressing the gross social, political and economic disparities that were the root causes of the conflict. So far, efforts to implement the Accords have failed to develop a feeling of ownership of the process in Guatemalan society, and this is a major cause of the present crisis in the country.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

All Federation activities are now better co-ordinated in Guatemala, whether they are supported multilaterally through the Federation Secretariat or bilaterally. Close, functional co-ordination with the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) to strengthen its capacity building is still difficult but, with increasing management capacity in the GRC, it is improving.

In the last quarter of 1999, an external global audit was implemented in the GRC, as part of the institutional development programme. PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) was contracted for the whole process of reorganizing the NS, ending with a financial audit.

The process began with an ACT (Ability to Change and Transform) introduction, followed by an organisational diagnosis, and later the Evaluation of the Administrative and Financial Process. The results show clearly the strengths and weaknesses in the GRC, with concrete and constructive recommendations. Follow up meetings are held every two weeks with representatives of the Federation, the PNSs financing the process, and the ICRC.

The Global Audit is making an important contribution to capacity building in the GRC, and reinforces Programme Co-ordination efforts to strengthen the NS over the past two to three years.

The focus on the branches fell short of goals in 1999 and needs to be stronger in 2000. Mostly the branches with Human Development (HD) projects were strengthened, while other branches received support in training and follow-up visits from members in the Governing Board and the Management Team. Some eight branches with PNS funds have also received training and some infrastructure support. In the beginning of 2000, six branches will build or add to their offices with Spanish Red Cross support.

A "Governance and Management" workshop was held 11-12 November. In a second workshop on Strategies, 18 -19 November, facilitated by PWC, the Society's Mission and essential areas were defined and discussed in relation to Strategy 2010, the Seville Agreement and the Santo Domingo Declaration. A whole series of such workshops, in 1998 and 1999, have supported the definition of the roles and functions of Governance and Management, and promoted an open discussion about Visions, Mission, Strategies and essential areas.

The Management Team has followed up the process in its weekly meetings, presenting the results to the Governing Board (GB), which then approved the Organigram, the Essential Areas, and the establishment of a new National Planning Committee (NPC). The latter consists of the Management Team, 2-3 members from the GB, 2-3 members from branches and representatives from the Federation/PNSs. Generally speaking the Management Team has improved its planning efficiency. The GB also accepted that the Planning and Projects Department would be reinforced with an additional person, paid by the Spanish RC.

The Management Team has worked extensively on the Contingency Plan, to make it more concrete and realistic. Improvements could be noted during the most recent disasters, especially in the needs assessments. This work will continue.

The next step will be to make adjustments to the National Rehabilitation Plan, adapting it to the new policies, to link it to the results of the above mentioned workshops. The Rehabilitation plan has made it easier for the GRC to co-ordinate various new projects, using it as a frame. In particular, the American Red Cross has started several projects, in close coordination with the GRC and the Federation. Follow up meetings are held every week with the GRC, the Federation and the PNSs.

In spite of improvements, the Management Team still needs to be reinforced with more personnel. The GRC must also define a policy for personnel and salaries, hopefully as a result of the Global Audit, and find ways to provide support to the heads of departments. The GRC is trying to recruit an officer for Resource Development, to work on Fundraising.

Human Development

A National co-ordinator has been appointed for the Human Development (HD) projects. His evaluation of all the HD projects in the seven branches will be presented in early 2000. This will help the GRC to

standardise the procedures and contents of the projects. The GRC has also contracted a new National co-ordinator for Planning and Projects who will tackle the need for better planning, follow up and evaluation of the projects. With better co-ordination of the HD projects, the same criteria could be used for all preventive health projects in Guatemala, whether supported by the Federation, the Spanish RC or the American RC.

Meanwhile, the branches continued to work directly with communities. Their project teams are eager to continue and to extend activities to more communities. They now have more solid HD-teams and over one year of experience, during which they have improved the planning and reporting, the training of health promoters and midwives and the co-ordination of the project in all their respective communities. They are now looking to strengthening the teams with Mobile Health Teams, in accordance with the HD plans. These mobile teams will improve follow up in the communities and assure quality control of the preventive health work.

By the end of 1999, the HD projects were functioning in 121 communities, and reaching 71,000 persons. They have trained 180 midwives and 512 health promoters. In early 2000, all the HD co-ordinators and their respective branch presidents will meet to participate in an evaluation, and then to plan the HD projects for 2000.

The HD branches have also worked on the Disaster Preparedness Programme, with DIPECHO financial support. This has become a well integrated part of the Rehabilitation Programme. With a newly contracted National Co-ordinator, the Programme will be extended to the other branches, with either PNS or Federation support.

Outstanding needs

The Institutional Development project is fully funded, through the Tripartite project, to June 2000. The Cobán project (one of seven branches in the HD) is fully funded by the Netherlands Red Cross; an evaluation in the beginning of the year will determine future support. For the whole programme in 2000, only soft pledges have been received so far (the 2000 Appeal target is CHF 2,600,000).

At the end of the year the Federation Delegation consisted of 2.5 delegates: a Programme Co-ordinator, a Development Delegate and a 50% Finance Delegate. In the beginning of 2000, Programme Co-ordination will be strengthened with another Development Delegate to follow up the specific projects supported by Netherlands Red Cross and a part time Disaster Preparedness Delegate. In 1999 the Programme Co-ordination made major headway in creating functional links among the PNSs, the GRC and the Federation representation. It is vital that these efforts continue.

External relations

Co-ordination with CONRED (the National Co-ordination for Disaster Response) has been improved since CONRED was reorganised and should be further systematised by the GRC and the Federation.

Now that the GRC has a Health co-ordinator, OPS/PAHO information sharing with the GRC and the Federation will be further developed.

The GRC has established a link with the INSIVUMEH (El Instituto de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología y Hidrología), to improve the flow of early warning information sent to the Society.

The GRC/Federation has participated in several UNDP co-ordination meetings, to evaluate the Hurricane Mitch response, and to define future DPP programmes and HIV/AIDS programmes.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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