

Annual report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Americas Zone

Appeal No. MAA42003

27/08/2009

This report covers the period 01/01/2008 to 31/12/2008



The Federation Americas Team attend the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico in August 2008. Source: International Federation.

In brief

Programme purpose: The Federation Secretariat in the Americas Zone seeks to provide all relevant support to the 35 Red Cross Societies of the Americas with the aim to increase their capacities, skills and tools; to assist them in reaching a greater number of people living in conditions of high vulnerability and risk; to enhance their work in strengthening community livelihoods and resilience, and to be present where and when needs are greatest and the Red Cross can make a difference.

The Americas Zone Office leads and coordinates this support through its Regional Representations, in line with the International Federation's New Operating Model, building the membership's capacity to deliver the Global Agenda and to build stronger National Societies in the areas described in the Framework for Action, in line with the objectives and strategies prioritized in the Inter American Plan 2007-2011. The Americas Zone Office also has a strong role in advocating for the work of the Red Cross in the Americas in international fora.

Programme summary: This report focuses on the work carried out in 2008 by the team in the Americas Zone Office to provide leadership and guidance to International Federation efforts to increase the impact of the humanitarian activities of the National Societies in the Americas. National Societies throughout the Americas have continued to respond to multiple disasters, as well as to scale up their efforts to implement programmes in line with the commitments in the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011 and the International Federation's Global Agenda.

Within Global Agenda Goal 1, the focus was on strengthening regional and national disaster response mechanisms and increasing knowledge about Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) tools and risk reduction activities. The Zone supported the organization of various events,

workshops and meetings, including the Global meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction, a workshop focused on livelihood interventions, and a forum on Climate Change. Much time was dedicated to the preparation for the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Within Global Agenda Goal 2, much time was dedicated to the preparation of the launch of the Global Alliance on HIV in the Americas, which took place in August. The Zone Office also provided support to the National Societies and their regular programmes. The focus on Health in Emergencies was reinforced by the presence of a health in emergencies delegate working partially for the International Federation and partially for the Norwegian Red Cross, funded by the Norwegian Red Cross. Finally, the Zone has facilitated a process whereby certain National Societies have received technical assistance and guidance on food security with an aim to impact mother and child health through adequate nutrition.

As for Global Agenda Goal 3, the first half of 2008 was dedicated to the consultation process with the National Societies, as part of an integral planning process and a validation of the commitments in the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011 and the recommendations of the study, The Future of the Red Cross in the Americas. As a result of this consultation, a process of developing Secretariat country support plans with and for each National Society has started in the Americas, a step forward from secretariat regional support plans.

Regarding Global Agenda 4, the Americas Zone supported initiatives related to the prevention of violence, together with the Spanish Red Cross and the ICRC. In addition, the focus on migration in the Americas was increased with an aim to understand current needs and capacities available, and important steps were taken to address the issue of Volunteer Management, an area with much room for improvement and high amongst the priorities of most National Societies.

2008 saw the publication of the the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011. Subsequently, consultation was carried out with each of the National Societies in the Americas regarding priorities in light of the Inter-American Plan, which facilitated formal baseline information for 33 National Societies. In addition, a pilot experience with some National Societies took place with a tool to facilitate monitoring of project plans at the outcome and indicator level, rather than at the level of planned activities. In view of the positive outcome of this experience, a more comprehensive monitoring tool was commissioned to a consultant and this is expected to be further rolled out in 2009.

Financial situation: The total 2008 budget is CHF **567,183** (USD 537,767 or EUR 378,981), of which **113** per cent covered. Expenditure overall was **83.4** per cent.

During 2008, the Zone Office faced several cases of integrity risk within National Societies in the Americas, hence requiring much attention to deal with such risks. The hurricane season and other emergencies also required much attention from the Zone Office over much of the second half of 2008. This resulted in re-prioritizing activities and processes that had been planned.

Variances shown in the financial report between budget, income and expenditure are explained as follows:

International Staff: The initial budget included a Zone Disaster Management Coordinator and a Health and Care coordinator, although recruitment for these positions did not take place in 2008. Consequently, the budget was revised mid-year on the basis these positions would be filled during the second half of 2008, however, this was not the case.

Office costs: The variance is mainly because unforeseen structural improvements were necessary for the buildings rented by the Zone Office for an amount of CHF 22,000. An audio visual platform was also purchased for CHF 12,000, which had not been budgeted initially. This platform has allowed and will continue to allow savings in travel to attend meetings.

Workshops and Trainings: Costs for travel, meetings and miscellaneous costs related to the integrity cases are booked here, hence the variance.

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

See also Appeals for Central America, Mexico and Panama (MAA43001), Andean Region (MAA46001), Southern Cone (MAA46002), Caribbean (MAA43001) and Latin Caribbean (MAA43002).

No. of people we help: The Americas Zone worked in support of the National Societies of the continent whose services are addressed to millions of vulnerable people, amongst which the following groups can be highlighted: communities living in hazard-prone areas in conditions of vulnerability; highly vulnerable people and families as a result of extreme poverty, inequality; grass-root community organizations; educational centres and the national systems of disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response.

Our partners: Within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, there is close cooperation with many Partner National Societies including the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the Finnish Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross – as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) supporting the National Societies throughout the Americas.

There are partnerships with many external organizations at all levels (community, national and regional), with community-based, national and international organizations, the United Nations and other developmental agencies, including the ProVention Consortium, the United Kingdom department for International Development (DfID) and DG ECHO.

Context

Social development and democratic governance in the Americas are constantly confronted with the prevalence of extreme inequity and by socio-economic dynamics that cause discrimination and exclusion by reason of ethnic origin, gender, place of residence and other similar factors. These realities constitute an impediment to social cohesion and generate fractured societies with increased vulnerability and risk factors that threaten the lives of millions of people.

These challenges will not disappear as long as the causes persist: poverty, significant levels of inequity, limited access to basic services, inadequate distribution of land and use of natural resources, lack of employment opportunities for adults leading to their insertion into the informal economy, inadequate social protection, and economic and social practices that are contrary to sustainable development.

The effects and vulnerability caused by climate change constitute the continent's biggest environmental threat. In relation to this, recurrent emergencies caused by natural hazards affected the Americas during 2008. Floods as a result of extreme rainfall were faced in many countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Suriname. Volcanic eruptions occurred in Chile and Colombia, while the 2008 hurricane season affected Belize, Costa Rica and Nicaragua and caused major damages in several countries in the Caribbean, namely Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and the Bahamas. Also, disease outbreaks were reported in Brazil and Paraguay: dengue and yellow fever. The National Societies of these countries responded to the emergencies with the support of the International Federation, through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), the corresponding Regional Representations and the Americas Zone Office.

Global food prices have risen continuously since 2000, and sharply since 2007. In all of 2008, increased costs especially of staples such as wheat, rice and maize, resulted in riots and civil unrest and had a negative impact on the poorest and most vulnerable, who spend a large portion of their income on food. While food prices are still below the peak reached in the mid 1970s in real terms, the potential for impact on vulnerable households is considerable, especially so for those in urban settings.

This global crisis has multiple causes, including rapidly increasing energy prices, international conflicts, lack of investment in national agriculture, rapidly rising demand for food, trade distorting subsidies, recurrent bad weather and environmental degradation, subsidized production of bio-fuels that alter food production, and the imposition of export restrictions.

In addition to a greater incidence and impact of disasters worsened by climate change, the rise of food prices is becoming part of a more complex humanitarian problem that includes the combined effects of a growing number of floods, droughts and spread of diseases.

Linked to the global food crisis is the financial and economic crisis that exploded in September of 2008, bringing about instability to economic and social development, and enhancing vulnerability of those already threatened. It is estimated that worldwide, some 100 million people will be plunged into poverty or remain poor, compared to the perspective prior to the crisis.

In the Americas this has meant that the region's economies - for the most part emerging, open and dependent upon foreign trade – experienced a harsh slow-down in the final quarter of 2008. Remittances from migrant relatives have been a pivotal source of income for many economies in the region, and the impact of the economic slow-down was bitterly felt in that regard in the final part of 2008, and it is expected that 2009 will see a greater decrease.

With few exceptions, it is expected that all economies in the Americas will shrink in the coming years. This contraction will have an impact on food security – especially as the investment in agriculture was already waning in most countries-, remittances coming from relatives abroad and access to personal and business credit.

The global financial and economic situation has also affected the funds available for humanitarian work. The economies of traditional donor countries are amongst the worst affected, thus leaving the governments having to make difficult decisions as to where to place what financial assistance is available. This has a direct and serious effect on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which largely depends on international cooperation.

Progress towards outcomes

Goal 1: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

Expected result 1

International Federation Policies, strategies and guidelines related to Disaster Management (including preparedness, relief, recovery, food security, protection and risk reduction) are well understood and implemented by National Societies in the Americas Zone and are properly disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders / partners.

Achievements

The creation of a **Disaster Management Reference Group** was facilitated by the Americas Zone, and is made up of Presidents, Secretaries General and technical staff from nine National Societies of the continent as well as staff from the Zone Office. This group has contributed to a global analysis of available tools, guidelines and methodologies and of the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction. There has been agreement upon a comprehensive disaster and risk management strategy for the Americas in line with the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction, and there is expressed willingness and commitment to reach a Disaster Management system that is more empowered by peer support and coordinated action between the National Societies, to which the Secretariat should contribute as a facilitator.

The issue of **early recovery** has also been an important part of the Americas Zone work. Recovery efforts are undertaken in coordination with the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) during the early phases of emergencies, until response operations are handed over to the respective Regional Representation. During the course of the year's emergency operations, the Emergency Assessment Guidelines, the Food Security Guidelines and the Cash and Voucher Guidelines facilitated a more comprehensive approach towards recovery. Adaptation of these tools to the local needs and reality during each emergency operation played an important role in the success of this approach.

Advocacy and actions in favour of early recovery on the part of the Secretariat in the Caribbean and in Latin America have contributed to increase awareness on the subject within the National Societies' structures. One accomplishment in this regard is that during 2008 all disaster response actions included a component on early recovery.

One of the highlights of the year was a pilot intervention in food security and livelihoods that took place in Central America after hurricane Felix, once the emergency response phase was over and the operation had been handed over to the Regional Representation. This pilot showed that integrated approaches, although complicated to implement, can be successful and produce concrete outcomes and verifiable data.

In spite of the significant progress made, there is still a need for establishing ways to perform better assessments. This needed improvement involves more complete assessments on the issue of early recovery, and an acknowledgement of the need to restore and protect livelihoods.

Five National Societies in the Americas became fully engaged in the **Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction** in 2008. The aim of the Alliance is to serve as a global strategy that can be adapted at the country level, which will in turn help guide areas of focus and the development of skills and capacities within each National Society, including greater focus on coordination with government authorities at the national and local levels.

Dialogue on these issues has been part of the process towards the launch of the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will take place in 2009. The role of the Secretariat has been to facilitate dialogue and information and knowledge-sharing, as well as to provide appropriate technical support. Once the Alliance is launched and is being implemented, the Secretariat and specifically the Zone Office will ensure that the experience of the initial group of National Societies is well documented and shared with sister National Societies with an aim to increase the number of participants in the Global Alliance in the near future. The implementation of this Alliance will serve as a laboratory for the alignment of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, which is expected to take place in the coming 3 to 5 years.

Also with the intention of contributing to the achievement of a common global approach to Disaster Risk Reduction, the Americas Zone office supported the ProVention Consortium in the organization of the Global Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction. This three-day event took place in early 2008 and hosted over 150 people from around the world. The meeting focused on different areas of disaster risk reduction. Other key events around risk reduction were a regional meeting on Climate Change, held in Port of Spain and a second regional event held in Guatemala, which focused mainly on indigenous communities and gender. The Zone Office provided important support for these initiatives with an aim to facilitate dialogue and information sharing on this key issue.

A relevant accomplishment during this period on the subject of the promotion and implementation of **International Disaster Response Law (IDRL)** was the development and dissemination of a Disaster Response Manual of the Panamanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Americas Zone provided key support and advice in ensuring that IDRL guidelines were used for the outlining of Disaster Response operations, for instance. This manual seeks to improve the quality of Disaster Response actions and to lay out the principles for international cooperation in case of major disaster in the country. Through

this process, the Secretariat in close coordination with the Red Cross Society of Panama, made sure that the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama during the disaster cycle is clearly stated in the Manual.

Similar assistance was provided to the Andean Committee for Disaster Response (Comité Andino para la Atención a Desastres - CAPRADE) to increase attention within their strategic direction to international disaster response laws, rules and principles. In addition, it is expected that 2009 will see a joint mission with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to Peru, where one of the main objectives is to analyze the operation using IDRL, with the final aim to develop a training package for the Peru earthquake.

The Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) is the focal point for the relationship with the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and for all the meetings with the Regional Group on Risk, Emergency and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC) in terms of **Disaster Preparedness for Response**.

The Americas Zone, with PADRU's leadership, organized several training courses for Regional Intervention Teams (RITs) in 2008, for which facilitators from the Secretariat structure in the Americas were available, as appropriate depending on the focus of the course. The content of RIT trainings has seen progress in recent years: response is no longer the main focus, there is now a more integral perspective of the disaster management system and other issues as well, such as information and communications, PMER, telecommunications, etc.

Restoring family links was advocated for by the Americas Zone Office, with PADRU's leadership, with National Societies during all operations with an aim to fulfil the need to reunite families during emergencies.

Much attention was given to the **Humanitarian Reform and Shelter Management** by the Americas Zone, with joint responsibilities at political and technical level for each government and the United Nations to increase Red Cross capacities for the Shelter Cluster, and for National Societies in shelter management skills specifically. In regards to the **Shelter Cluster**, the Federation participated in regional and national meetings, explaining the role of the Red Cross and its mechanism to implement the coordination of the cluster and increase understanding of United Nations agencies, governments and National Societies of the Secretariat's role. In regards to National Society preparedness in shelter readiness and management, the Secretariat has pre-positioned tools and kits for temporary shelter. Meanwhile, training, support and advice have been provided continuously to National Societies on the issue.

Standard Operational Procedures for the Secretariat structure in the Americas in times of disaster response were revised, tested and applied during the year **with an aim to increase the level of efficiency and effectiveness** in supporting National Societies and reaching communities affected by disasters. This ensured that for the initial phases of an operation human resources are available in a timely manner until specialized response teams arrive in the field. This revision also includes a procedure on the transition of operations from the response to the recovery phase, which is still under trial and subject to improvement. One of the key elements of these procedures is the need for joint assessments emphasizing immediate response and early recovery needs to be managed in a more systematic way with the aim of achieving integrated approaches. In 2009, it is expected that a final validated version of this document will be available.

The secretariat structure in the Americas supported **Disaster Response** during a very active 2008 Atlantic hurricane season, as well as during several emergencies of a different nature. Twenty eight operations were funded through the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) throughout the continent, of which 6 became emergency appeals following the request of the National Society. Over 900,000 people with urgent needs in the Americas were reached by their National Societies with the support of the International Federation during emergency operations in 2008, mobilizing over CHF 24 million.

Expected Result 2

National Societies have a better understanding of the impact of urban settlement growth in disaster risk and have analyzed the possibilities of Red Cross action in urban settlement risk reduction.

Achievements

The National Societies' understanding of the impact of urban settlement growth is increasing, and the Americas Zone facilitated that understanding in 2008 by supporting and organizing several fora for discussion on the subject – the Global Disaster Risk Reduction meeting with ProVention, a *charette* with vulnerable communities in peri-urban settings, and a livelihoods forum in November of 2008 that touched upon the subject.

An informal agreement between the Americas Zone and the United Nations' University for Peace in Costa Rica was made to have one of their masters programme students work with the Federation Secretariat for three months on urban risk analysis and its implications for Red Cross Societies. This internship will start in June 2009, and the Terms of Reference and supporting data are in development. The aim is that the Terms of Reference will cover a wider scope, beyond disasters, to include migration, violence, health emergencies, and social mobilization as related to the growth of urban settlements.

Expected Result 3

National Societies have scaled up the integration of climate change in disaster risk reduction and the advocacy on climate change in coordination with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Change Centre.

Achievements

Together with the ProVention Consortium, the Americas Zone organized a forum on Climate Change, which was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Zone was represented at this forum and advocated for the integration of climate change activities into the plans of the National Societies.

Regional initiatives in the Caribbean, Central America and South America – many with the leadership of the Netherlands Red Cross and in coordination with the Federation's Climate Change Centre in The Hague - have also contributed to the work of the Red Cross in the area of adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction. This has included capturing learning in video, case studies and implementation of joint initiatives, such as a collaborative project between the Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC), the Climate Centre and the International Federation.

The role of the Secretariat in the Americas through the Zone structure is to support monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives and to ensure knowledge-sharing between Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Expected Result 4

National Societies have integrated early warning systems in risk reduction actions and increase community early warning project capacities.

Achievements

In 2008, the International Federation through the Americas Zone, the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and CATHALAC initiated a collaborative project. The purpose of this partnership is to ensure that the Red Cross disaster mitigation and response efforts in Central America and Mexico benefit from the most recent advances in climate science and early-warning technologies.

As a result of this collaborative project – which includes internships by two IRI students - several recommendations were made to each institution. In the case of the Americas Zone, the need for the

Red Cross to take advantage of available scientific early warning data in real time, and use it to improve decision-making was highlighted. In addition, an analysis was carried out to show how scientific early warning information can be used for community based initiatives. The outcomes of this study and recommendations are available on request, and are being shared with the Regional Representations for subsequent sharing with National Societies.

Coordination with the World Meteorological Organization led to several meetings and the development of three initiatives for Central America, where scientific information for early warning and the work being done by National Societies at the community level are connected. It is expected that this process will yield incorporation of meteorological information into community level actions for preparedness, mitigation and readiness.

Expected Result 5

National Societies are participating actively in the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction following a common platform for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Achievements

To increase the knowledge and understanding of the National Societies about the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Americas Zone through its Disaster Management Reference Group revised the Alliance paper, made recommendations and consequently shared the main information and outcomes of this initiative. Twelve National Societies participated in this process. In April, a Forum of Knowledge on the Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction took place. Also, in the first part of 2008, an extensive consultation process with the National Societies was undertaken where all National Societies mapped their capacities and needs in order to identify priorities for the next two years. Disaster Risk Reduction ranked high in average in priority amongst the Societies, which provides an indication of an area where the Secretariat should offer strong support.

The National Societies were regularly informed on the development of this Global Alliance. The support of the Americas Zone to this initiative focused mainly on the aforementioned meeting and providing feedback to the secretariat headquarters, based on the progress achieved. As the focus of the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011 is the same as the focus of the Global Alliance (*Safer and more resilient communities*), the Inter-American Plan and commitments signed by all National Societies, were promoted at headquarters level. This could be used as an entry point to confirm the interest of the continent towards disaster risk reduction.

A meeting on the Global Alliance took place in Oslo in the second half of 2008. The foundations for this Global Alliance were set here as well as a first selection of countries that will start the process.

Constraints

The biggest constraint encountered in delivering Goal 1 relates to limited funds and consequent lack of a Zone Disaster Management Coordinator. In spite of this, processes were set in motion and activities were undertaken. Resources have been secured for a Zone Coordinator to be in place in early 2009, which will make it possible to deliver improved services to the member National Societies, as well as the development of improved interaction between the Caribbean, Central America and South America. During 2008, the lack of both human and financial resources made it difficult to harmonize actions and strategies, leaving limited opportunities for new initiatives to be developed.

Goal 2: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

Although the 2008 plan does not contemplate a result specifically for **Health in Emergencies**, much work was done in this regard with the support of a Norwegian Red Cross-funded delegate who worked part time with the Zone Office and another portion of his time with the Norwegian Red Cross. A

central objective for the cooperation between the International Federation's Americas Zone and the Norwegian Red Cross is to scale up professionalism and quality in delivery of health response in disasters in the Americas. The partnership aims to work towards better utilization and coordination of the capacities of a Partner National Society in close cooperation with the Secretariat. This delegate will be under full contract with the secretariat in 2009.

In regards to Humanitarian Pandemic Preparedness (H2P), four countries from the Americas were chosen to participate in this initiative, which is a three year USAID-funded programme ¹. An important process of consultation, proposal preparation and dialogue with the National Societies, Ministries of Health and NGOs from the different countries took place during October-December with the facilitation of the Zone Office and the Avian and Human Influenza Unit, under the lead of the health in emergencies delegate.

A proposal was presented to DG ECHO for funding of epidemic control training for volunteers (dengue, yellow fever, malaria and leptospirosis) in three South American countries and one from the Caribbean. This process was led by the health in emergencies delegate. The trainings have started in Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Paraguay. As a part of this project, the Secretariat Toolkit and Manual for Epidemic Control for Volunteers has been validated in the region, and it has been translated and rolled out in the Americas.

A global initiative for a field School in Belize for two weeks involving staff members and volunteers from four National Societies in the Americas was managed and coordinated by the health in emergencies delegate from the Americas Zone Office. The concept for this initiative arose from the acknowledgement within the Movement that although there are many highly qualified health professionals in disciplines such as emergencies and public health, there is a shortfall of "field" experienced health professionals able to undertake the work of the International Federation in increasingly complex emergencies.

During the hurricane season and all other response operations of 2008, efforts were made to include a public health approach in all cases. In large operations such as the response to hurricanes in Haiti, support was provided in the field by the health in emergencies delegate to the technical staff arriving with an aim to ensure that they would have the necessary information. Support was also provided - through appeal writing and direct involvement in the FACT team in the field - to the response operations after several storms struck Haiti during 2008.

During 2008, a module on public health in emergencies was added to the training portfolio for National Intervention Teams (NIT). The health in emergencies delegate from the Zone Office provided technical support to the authoring of the manual and its piloting in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. The module has been piloted twice so far and will be rolled-out in other National Societies of the Americas during 2009.

The Zone health in emergencies delegate also provided technical support to the regional roll-out of national initiatives for psychosocial support in emergencies. A Central American training of trainers for psychosocial support was hosted by Guatemalan Red Cross in December.

¹ This initiative aims to build a chain of health and disaster management tools and practices as an indispensable prerequisite to generating a fully prepared and deployable capacity of community first-responders during an influenza pandemic. These essential front-liners will provide the most rapid, coordinated and effective response possible, designed to limit morbidity and mortality, safeguard livelihoods and maintain societal cohesion and integrity. This will be accomplished by underpinning – and, as necessary, driving – community-level planning/mechanisms for organising, coordinating and delivering an effective humanitarian response in countries deemed to be most vulnerable to a pandemic influenza outbreak. For further information on the H2P initiative, please go to <http://www.pandemicpreparedness.org/>

Expected Result 1

International Federation Policies, strategies and guidelines related to Health and Care are well understood and implemented by National Societies in the Americas Zone and are properly disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders / partners.

Achievements

There has been no activity in regard to this area, due to the limitations of not having a Health and Care coordinator in the Zone.

Expected Result 2

National Societies are participating actively in the Global Alliance on HIV following a common platform for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization.

Achievements

The preparation of a comprehensive continental proposal for the **Global Alliance on HIV** required significant attention. These efforts included substantial support towards the ten National Societies participating in this initial stage in the preparation of their countries' programme documents, and in ensuring that each expected result of the Global Alliance is well adapted to each country's context. This represented extraordinary work and coordination for the National Societies, the technical staff in the Regional Representations, the Americas Zone Office and the technical staff in Geneva. The end result was a public document that shows consistency and coherence between the National Societies, the Americas Zone's initiatives and the spirit of the Global Alliance. Nonetheless, the question remains as to how global indicators can operate at a national level to fully take advantage of opportunities with non-traditional donors such as the private sector. There should be a high level of harmonization amongst the National Societies and the secretariat, and a common understanding to digest the "Seven Ones" principles² amongst actors inside and outside the Movement

The ten National Societies received financial support from donors through the Americas Zone for the launch of the Global Alliance at the national level, as well as for their first year of implementation. Due to the lack of a Federation secretariat Zone Health Coordinator in 2008, this process was more difficult than expected and required an extraordinary effort by staff in the Americas Zone and Geneva, as well as the engagement of Partner National Societies to support the Global Alliance initiative within their bilateral programmes.

A communications strategy for the Global Alliance on HIV was agreed with the National Societies, and a professional agency has been hired to produce a continental and country strategy, which will be available by mid 2009.

The Mexican Red Cross played a relevant role in providing basic health care and emergency health care during the World AIDS Conference held in Mexico City in August of 2008. This event brought together the ten National Societies from the Americas participating in the Alliance and served as the venue for the continental launch of the Americas Global Alliance on HIV. Major support from the Americas Communications team was required in order to ensure that the role of the Red Cross in HIV was captured and disseminated correctly by the media during the event.

While the preparations for the Global Alliance were ongoing, the support to National Societies for their regular HIV initiatives did not stop. The Regional Representations and the Americas Zone Office continued to provide support to the National Societies on awareness-raising, preventative messages and peer education in programmes supporting actions in HIV.

² The "seven ones" principles promote one set of needs analysis through a common assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities, one set of objectives and strategies, one global thematic strategic plan and one country programme support plan with expectation of long term commitment to ensure sustainability, one shared understanding of the division of labour among entities of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, one results-based funding framework in which multi and bilateral financing channels can co-exist, one performance tracking system, one accountability and reporting mechanism.

Expected Result 3

National Societies have shared their experiences and support the process for harmonized tools and methodologies for water and sanitation and hygiene promotion (WS and HP).

Achievements

The most relevant progress in Water and Sanitation is related to the Water Facility in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Guyana. The secretariat facilitates a process where the Spanish Red Cross in the Dominican Republic and Haiti and the French Red Cross in Guyana are the implementers. This initiative seeks to ensure that all actions in Water and Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion in the aforementioned countries are carried out in line with the Global Water and Sanitation Initiative, which provides a global framework for a participative, integrated approach for Water and Sanitation solutions.

Due to delays caused by several large scale disasters in 2007 and 2008, the Federation was required to increase support in Haiti, facilitating a technical advisor—who also worked in close coordination with the Spanish Red Cross—for the implementation of the Water Facility in that country. Monitoring and evaluation of actions in the Water Facility initiative were implemented with the support of the technical department at the headquarters.

In order to increase attention to Water and Sanitation initiatives, in coordination with the Norwegian Red Cross, a learning approach was taken with an aim to include Water and Sanitation in National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) training. This served as an opportunity to develop a specialized component that has been integrated into NDRT curricula. This learning has been captured and validated by the Centre of Reference for Disaster Preparedness based in El Salvador. This component is expected to be incorporated into other NDRT curricula in the Americas in 2009. This will be a major accomplishment in terms of ensuring coherence in the way the continent's NDRTs approach Water and Sanitation.

The American Red Cross has deployed a Water and Sanitation delegate to work within the health programme in the Americas Zone Office, with an aim to increase the region's expertise on this important subject. This delegate is expected to arrive in early 2009.

Expected Result 4

National Societies have shared and harmonized tools and methodologies for mother and child health actions with special emphasis on nutrition.

Achievements

The pilot initiative post hurricane Felix in Central America focused on food security and livelihoods. The idea of bringing together Health, Disaster Management, Organizational Development and Principles and Values specialists from the involved National Societies, contributed to addressing nutrition and food security elements in post-recovery. This initiative, which took place in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras, yielded a practical tool based on the learning experience. This tool, which is gender sensitive and focuses on nutrition, will be shared with all regional offices in the Americas in order to mainstream its use. More detailed information on this can be found in the final report for Central America and Mexico.

Constraints

The absence of a Zone Health Coordinator in 2008 made it challenging to comply with commitments reached with National Societies and other stakeholders, such as in the case of the Global Alliance on HIV. In other cases, activities were completely put on standby. This situation will be solved by early 2009, when a Health Coordinator will take up office.

Goal 3: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability

Expected result 1

International Federation Policies, strategies and guidelines related to capacity building are well understood and implemented by National Societies in the Americas Zone and are properly disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders / partners.

Achievements

The Americas Zone's efforts regarding this result concentrated mainly on leading a **consultation process** with the National Societies as part of an integral planning process, and to receive and analyze the information. This consultation process sought to determine what would be the most efficient way for the Americas Zone to support National Societies in complying with the commitments made by them in the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011, as with the changes suggested by the study *The Future of the Red Cross in the Americas*³.

Closely linked to this process, the Americas Zone Office, the Regional Representations and a selection of National Societies embarked in the development of **Secretariat country support plans** for 2009. The intention is that for the coming planning period 2010-2011, at least sixteen National Societies will have Secretariat country support plans that are aligned with the Inter-American Plan and respond to the needs and priorities of each National Society. In the near future, the aim is that all National Societies have country support plans, as appropriate.

This process has also included a review of the Study of the Americas and its recommendations for each Red Cross Society. Therefore, country support plans will also serve as a mechanism to ensure a process where the National Societies acknowledge the validity of the recommendations, take ownership and make the commitment to change.

During a course on Accountability, organized jointly with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo -AECID) and carried out in Cartagena, Colombia, the Secretariat presented the policy review process that started in December 2007, after a decision taken by the Governing Board. This process seeks to review all existing policies in the Federation. The participating National Societies were able to present their views on this process and the way they were going to contribute. Policies are not well known by National Societies, so this was an opportunity to share the knowledge and for the National Societies to see how they can develop their own policies with this base. This was based not only on the revision process, but also on the other experiences gathered through the course. The Spanish Red Cross presented their quality reengineering process, while other external actors from the Americas civil society, presented their developments in their quest to be more accountable towards their stakeholders.

Efforts were made to raise awareness on the existence of certain global documents that can contribute to a structured approach in strengthening National Societies. In the areas of Volunteer Management, Branch Development, Resource Mobilization and Development, Statute Revision, Integrity Risk issues, and Accountability, relevant documents have been made available to the National Societies through various means for their consideration and analysis.

Volunteer development and the need to adopt a particular focus in the Americas has been identified as a need by National Societies themselves, and stressed by the Study of the Americas. With the support of the Swedish Red Cross, the Americas Volunteering Review started in 2008 (it is expected

³ Study conducted by the Complutense University of Spain.

to be completed in January 2009). This study aims to provide recommendations for the Secretariat on the way to better support each National Society in developing its volunteer body.

The Americas Zone has taken the initiative to promote the different financing modalities offered by the **Capacity Building Fund**. Efforts have been made not only to elicit solid and comprehensive proposals from the National Societies, but also to ensure that the Americas Zone Office has a role in selecting which proposals will receive financing. This approach seeks to fill a gap between the National Societies and the headquarters, allowing relevant information and support to flow more easily.

Based on the experience of the Asia Pacific Zone, the **Branch Development Game** was adapted to the Americas context in 2008. The main idea is to try to reach the Red Cross units that have the most relevant contact with community issues, and try to build a development process that is relevant to the communities to which they belong.

Expected Result 2

National Societies have a better understanding of livelihoods practices in the Americas, both at rural and urban levels, and have developed capacities to mainstream livelihoods in assessment and programming.

Achievements

The Americas Zone Office **supported** the Disaster Policy and Planning (DPP) Department in Geneva, for the **revision** of the 'Learning by Doing' guidelines. The Zone also provided technical support to the revision of the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA) virtual reporting template for the Americas and the standard template for VCAs.

During **workshops on Recovery** (one for Caribbean and one for Latin American countries), knowledge and understanding was increased around the concept of livelihoods. This also helped to capture good practices from the National Societies and to evaluate livelihoods activities carried out by the Red Cross in the Americas. With the presence of other institutions such as OXFAM, WSPA, ISDR, National Societies had the opportunity to learn from them and compare the work carried out by the Federation. An important piloting experience on livelihoods took place during the recovery phase of the hurricane Felix operation, as is further explained in the Goal 2 section of this document. In the case of the Caribbean the incorporation of cash and vouchers in the response phase of operations during the 2008 hurricane season was recorded in video and served as a case study for a wider discussion with all National Societies in the Caribbean.

A **livelihoods** forum took place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia in November 2008 with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. The Americas Zone's work focused on establishing appropriate terms of reference for this event, in light of the diversity of all the actors involved. Besides including livelihoods experts as key facilitators, as well as NGOs and governments as participants, it became essential to ensure that the approach of the Red Cross was integrated into the framework of the meeting, enabling participation of all the Secretariat programme areas from the onset in order to learn and generate a joint approach to the future support that National Societies will require on the issue. During the ProVention forum, and also during the *charette* undertaken in Panama, livelihoods in urban settings were discussed.

Expected Result 3

Volunteer Management practices are strengthened at local levels increasing National Societies' human resources capacities.

Achievements

During the different programmatic events of 2008, it became clear that Volunteer Management is a main concern for the National Societies of the Americas. With an aim to review the support currently provided to the Red Cross Societies and to identify ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness of

that support, the Americas Zone Office with the support of the Swedish Red Cross, implemented an Americas Volunteering Review in 2008. Six National Societies of the Caribbean, Central and South America were visited by the Review team, and in addition, 12 other were contacted on the subject during the *Volunteering in Emergencies* meeting organized in Lima in October. The results of this process, expected to be ready in early 2009, will allow the Zone to support the National Societies on a common approach to Volunteer Development, while in accordance with the needs and capacities of each Society.

Volunteering in Emergencies was also a focus in 2008. For the first time, 14 National Societies gathered in Lima with relevant partners—ICRC, the Federation secretariat and the Swedish Red Cross—, and were able to discuss their approaches and constraints in terms of how volunteering is managed and approached before, during, and after emergencies. It is expected that National Societies will prioritize this important aspect with support of the Secretariat, and that volunteering matters will be dealt with accordingly when emergencies affect a country in the Americas.

Constraints

The main challenge has been reaching consensus on the interpretation of the implementation of Goal 3. Different points of view—all relevant and valid—have been expressed by the National Societies, Regional Representations, Zone Office, and different departments in the Geneva secretariat. Although it is a limitation to current implementation, this ongoing discussion is absolutely necessary, as it provides insight not only on the way forward in delivering Goal 3, but also helps to clarify the supporting role that the secretariat has with the membership. These rich discussions took place during the Continental Planning Meeting in June and as part of the different planning processes in the Representations and the Zone Office.

Goal 4: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion

Expected result 1

International Federation policies, strategies and guidelines related to Principles and Humanitarian Values, non violence, non discrimination and respect for diversity are well understood and implemented by National Societies in the Americas and are properly disseminated to relevant regional stakeholders / partners.

Achievements

The Americas Zone is supporting and promoting initiatives related to the **prevention of violence**, as part of the regional programme that the Spanish Red Cross carries forward in Central America. The Spanish Red Cross has acted as a representative for the International Federation in several regional and continental fora and meetings regarding this matter. In such instances and also within the Red Cross, the promotion and awareness-raising of policies and standards have been a common action towards awareness-raising on the issues.

In order to increase knowledge in South America, the Americas Zone Office promoted a learning meeting in Lima for internal purposes, which included staff from the Federation and the ICRC aiming to increase the understanding of the prevention of violence approach and the context and likelihood of developing in South America an initiative similar to that in Central America.

Previous to the meeting held in Lima, the ICRC, the Spanish Red Cross and the Federation held a meeting in Panama **to discuss and identify the links between prevention of violence initiatives in the Americas Zone and the ICRC's violence mitigation plans**. During this meeting, the need to increase knowledge sharing and better understanding on Safer Access was acknowledged in order to

have a common approach in the future (level of acceptance by National Societies and how National Societies identify themselves).

The outcomes of the Well Prepared National Society diagnosis⁴ of five National Societies were shared with the ICRC for joint analysis of the element of Safer Access. It is expected that this initiative will contribute to a **harmonized approach of the ICRC and the Federation as of 2009**.

A draft framework for the prevention of violence was developed by the Spanish Red Cross with input from the above-mentioned meetings. This draft document was shared with the ICRC and the Federation secretariat as a practical approach to be considered by the Movement in the Americas. However, it is important to mention that follow-up by the secretariat on this initiative needs to be improved as it has been hindered due to the lack of human resource capacities.

Expected result 2

National Societies have a better understanding of migration trends and the vulnerabilities of migrating populations and have analysed the position of Red Cross action in addressing such vulnerabilities.

Achievements

In line with the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011 and with technical support from the secretariat, the Spanish Red Cross and two Principles and Values officers (from the Central America and South America Regional Representations), in addition to the Regional Representative in Brazil, held a **migration forum in March 2008**. This forum fostered an increased understanding of what other organizations are doing on the issue, what government initiatives are ongoing and how the Red Cross Movement can improve its role in the field to fulfil the commitments in the Inter-American Plan.

The Zone also maintained regular contact with the American Red Cross focal point on migration, who represented the Federation secretariat at the Organization of American States (OAS) meeting about migration, where key information about the plans of the National Societies regarding migration was shared and a Red Cross paper on migration was presented.

The **Dominican Red Cross and the Haitian National Red Cross Society, with support of the secretariat, have been working together on the issue of migration with increased focus**. The general idea is to strengthen branches of both National Societies located near the border and ensure coordination with government institutions in case of mass migration, as well as with the regular flow of migrants between these two countries. It is expected that by 2009 a meeting will take place between government authorities of the two countries, the ICRC and the secretariat with an aim to develop a road map that defines the real capacities of the two National Societies to engage on migration issues.

It is worth mentioning that the Federation in the Americas is now laying the foundations for the future work of the Red Cross in the area of migration. Initiatives are still in the initial phases while important discussions in different fora are taken forward to strengthen that base.

Constraints

The Principles and Values programme is a cross-cutting programme that affects all programme areas and that deals with many of the challenges that National Societies face daily in their humanitarian work. Dedicated support is needed for those National Societies interested in engaging more in the initiatives. In view of this reality, the current support of the Americas Zone is minimum and basic, based on existing resources available in the Americas.

The presence of the Spanish Red Cross leading the Violence Agenda was very much welcome and shows the value of having joint initiatives under the umbrella of the Federation, by enabling a National Society to fulfil a necessary role. In the future, it will be necessary to move this agenda forward as a

⁴ This diagnosis includes elements of Safer Access, as part of an agreement between ICRC and the Federation Secretariat in Geneva in 2005.

possible mechanism to enhance National Societies' capacities in sensitive fields that require medium to long term support.

Framework for Action

Setting a shared vision and direction for the future (Actions 1, 2, 3)

Expected Result 1

Key Federation Principles and Values are promoted influencing internal/external practices through advocacy activities and means of communication.

Achievements

The **Inter-American Plan** constitutes a common language for National Societies in the Americas, and it provides a platform for the support that the Secretariat and the Partner National Societies are asked to provide to National Societies. The publishing of this document in Spanish and English in 2008 has allowed to increase attention towards and dissemination of this document. The French version is expected to be ready by the first quarter of 2009.

There is **ongoing dialogue with the governance of the National Societies of the Americas around the Inter-American Plan** and its implementation period with an aim to ensure linkages with the strategy of each National Society. The consultation process mentioned above is part of this ongoing dialogue.

Expected Result 2

National Societies of the Americas have developed a common communications strategy guided by the 2007-2011 Inter American Plan and implement it as the main instrument for advocacy, information, promotion and dissemination.

Achievements

The Inter-American Plan 2007—2011 was being translated and edited during most of 2008. Publication in Spanish and English took place in December 2008. Tools and a work kit for dissemination of the Plan will be developed by the Communications department in the Zone Office in 2009 with the aim to better support National Societies in sharing the document and its contents with relevant stakeholders. The idea is that each National Society will then develop, with ongoing technical support from the Americas Zone, a communications strategy appropriate for its own context. The main constraints for this were the lack of a Communications Manager - who arrived in the Zone Office in September-, and that printing took quite a long time.

In collaboration with other partners, support was provided in the development of materials for a campaign on Humanitarian Donations. The campaign was edited in late 2008, and will be disseminated in 2009. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness and provide information to several different audiences on the best way to donate.

Much work has been done jointly with the Disaster Risk Reduction programme, where opportunities have been seized and tools have been developed to promote safer communities and to disseminate prevention messages.

A partnership was established with the Albatros Media Foundation – one of the main television production institutions in the Americas with links to more than 40 relevant news networks in the Americas, including CNN - with the aim to disseminate information on the work of the Red Cross, basically in Health, Risk Reduction and Disaster Response. The aim of this partnership is that the Americas Zone will have a platform whereby the Global Agenda can be disseminated. For instance,

Red Cross response in times of disaster should gain higher exposure and hence increase awareness on the needs.

Improving planning, performance and accountability (Actions 4,5)

Expected Result 1

National Societies and other relevant actors have regular access to the outcomes from research and studies made to understand the context and trends that increase vulnerability within the Americas and are utilized by National Societies for the revision of their national plans.

Achievements

The Zone has provided feedback on the study entitled **The Future of the Red Cross in the Americas** to the research group that carried out this study. As a consequence, a food security component was added. Feedback was also provided on the evaluation of the Inter-American Plan 2003-2007.

In order to identify and develop strategic alliances with academic institutions, the Zone has carried out a mapping of universities and other scientific institutions that promote internships of their students in humanitarian organizations. As an example of what can be achieved through such partnerships, a Climate Change Conference was held at the West Indies University during the first half of 2008. In addition, different universities were involved in the ProVention Forum in April 2008, and the University for Peace in Costa Rica has also agreed to an internship in 2009 related to urban settlement risk. The experience with IRI/CATHALAC is also an example of this.

Expected Result 2

National Societies have enhanced their capacities to apply a results based management system with improved accountability in accordance with the Global Agenda Goals and the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011.

Achievements

33 National Societies of the Americas agreed to prioritize by the first quarter of 2008 the key areas of the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011 to be incorporated into their strategic plans. In line with this common commitment, and in order to facilitate and enrich the process, the Zone Office developed a consultation tool applied through a process that resulted in a **formal baseline of how 33 National Societies prioritized the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011**.

It is expected that the outcomes of this consultation will guide the elaboration of the **National Societies' strategic plans as well as the plans of the Secretariat in the Americas to support** the Societies. Consolidation of the data yielded by this consultation was led by the PMER unit in the Americas Zone Office. The analysis was systematized by region and was disseminated in both English and Spanish to Movement partners. In addition, the information was included in a communications package and served as an advocacy paper for each National Society for use within the National Society leadership as well as with CORI for the implementation of the Inter-American Plan, following the decisions made in the Presidents' meeting held in Madrid in November 2007. It was agreed that further discussions in terms of implementation of the Inter-American Plan would take place in February 2009.

With the aim to facilitate results-based management for the National Societies and the Secretariat alike, the Americas Zone Office developed a **simple Excel-based tool to monitor plans** (whether for projects or for programmes). This tool was validated during a workshop in February attended by staff from disaster risk reduction and Secretaries General of 7 National Societies that implement DfID funds in the Americas. The tool was used by these 7 National Societies as a pilot throughout 2008 to monitor their DfID plans. The result was positive, as National Societies with the support of the

Secretariat technical counterparts and PMER, were able to monitor not only the activities as they were implemented, but also what progress they were making towards the achievement of the results and indicators expressed in their country plans, which were in line with the DfID IS III. Consequently, better decision-making and improved accountability were possible in 2008.

As a result of this positive experience, the Americas Zone Office engaged the services of an external consultant to create a more comprehensive tool based on the initial spread sheet that would allow monitoring the implementation of plans and link all levels involved (National Societies, Regional Representations, Zone Office). The aim of this initiative was to provide a full view of how community-based projects interlink with plans at the national, regional and zone level, including the links with the Goals of the Global Agenda. The process and tool have been shared with PMER at the Secretariat headquarters as well as with staff from the Regional Representations and certain National Societies. The tool is well advanced, but is still undergoing revisions and adaptations based on feedback received. It is expected that 2009 will see a phased roll-out of the tool in pilot mode, starting with key users.

Delivering effective programmes and services (Actions 6, 7, 8)

Expected Result 1

Operational and strategic Alliances developed in the Americas to better address priority humanitarian challenges.

Achievements

An Operational Alliance in Health was set to become a reality in **Haiti**; discussions between the Haitian National Red Cross Society, Partner National Societies working in Haiti and the Federation Secretariat took place in this regard. However, in February 2008 consensus was that the conditions for an Operational Alliance are not yet favourable in the country and that there is a need for building trust and good relationships between all stakeholders before it is possible to implement an alliance that clearly requires the full commitment of every actor. A second round of discussions to analyze how much progress was made regarding coordination, information-sharing and actual programme implementation would have taken place in October, but due to the impact of the 2008 Atlantic Hurricane Season in Haiti this was not possible. However, the work already carried out allowed for increased efficiency and coordination during the emergency operations.

In the case of the Operational Alliance planned for **Brazil**, it was agreed that the conditions of institutional vulnerability of the Brazilian Red Cross are not currently conducive to a successful Operational Alliance focused on priority humanitarian challenges. It was determined that the main need at this time is to focus on a strategic alliance for the institutional recovery of this National Society. With support from the Spanish Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross, the Secretariat was occupied with moving forward in this direction.

Although there are not yet any formalized Operational Alliances in the Americas, it is worth mentioning that *de facto* alliances in the areas of Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Response, HIV and AIDS and prevention of violence have been developed as mechanisms to increase efficiency in programme delivery. These mechanisms will need to be systematized and documented within the Federation's approach towards Operational Alliances.

Expected Result 2

National Societies have improved knowledge management with active role of formal and informal networks to knowledge-sharing.

Achievements

Much attention was placed on the creation of the **Disaster Management Reference Group as an informal network** of the National Societies of the Americas to support the strategic directions of the Federation in the continent. This network met for the first time in November 2008 and developed a plan of action to be presented to the Inter-American Regional Committee (Comité Regional Interamericano – CORI) in the 1st quarter of 2009 in order to capture their support and attention, and served as a technical advisor for decision-making on Red Cross governance in the Americas.

On the other hand, discussions to **expand the scope of support of the two Centres of Reference**⁵ took place with the National Societies involved and the Federation Secretariat. The objective of these discussions was to find ways to increase support of these Centres to National Societies in South America and the Caribbean. The aim is to have the Centres achieve recognition by all National Societies as repositories where expertise, knowledge and experiences have been accumulated and transformed, together with the network of National Societies, into training material that has improved Red Cross activities in the continent.

Expected Result 3

The Americas has developed a comprehensive cooperation framework to support effective global, operational and strategic alliances, and consolidate Federation and Movement coordination processes.

Achievements

In January 2008, a **cooperation meeting** with Partner National Societies with interest in the Americas, a group of National Societies from the Americas and the ICRC served as a forum for coordination and cooperation in the Americas and as the opportunity to express concerns and interests around future strategic support.

The Americas Zone shared its vision under the New Operating Model and its commitment towards increased engagement of National Societies in a Federation-wide concept of working together more efficiently, the importance of peer support and south-south cooperation and the need to pay more attention to the modernization of National Societies in the Americas and increase their capacities to address issues related to integrity risk in a timely manner.

Regular **communication with ICRC** has helped improve strategic relationships between Movement partners in Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil and Haiti. In these instances, common approaches are agreed prior to strategic discussions such as: tripartite agreements in Colombia, Brazil and Panama, integrity cases and mutual cooperation.

Increased attention was given to the issue of **Resource Mobilization** in 2008. With the aim to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst National Societies of the Americas, a meeting was held in Panama in December with the participation of 8 National Societies, staff from the Regional Representations and the Zone Office. The meeting stressed the need to identify successful experiences which can be replicated in other National Societies; the need to comply with the Inter-American Plan 2007-2011 and the commitment “to develop more effective, innovative and professional resource mobilization, and diversify our funding base to scale up our programmes and ensure our sustainability and independence”; the need to improve accountability and to adopt improved strategies to work with businesses.

While participants acknowledge that there are significant challenges ahead in this area for the Federation as a whole, much enthusiasm was generated around the development of new partnerships and alliances to guarantee the future sustainability of the Red Cross in the Americas.

⁵ Centre of Reference for Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction based in Costa Rica and Centre of Reference for Disaster Preparedness based in El Salvador. More information available on the 2008 Annual Report of the Regional Representation for Mexico, Central America and Panama.

Each National Society participating defined their strengths and gaps in resource mobilization, and as follow-up, the Americas Zone Office will work with the Resource Mobilization Department in Geneva to promote global guidance and translate this into an overall framework and working practice for the Red Cross in the Americas. Integration will be ensured with the area of Organizational Development to work towards assisting National Societies in institutional strengthening and accountability mechanisms to provide a solid basis for resource mobilization initiatives.

Mobilizing resources to support our work (Actions 9,10)

Other Areas of Work

Coordination

Increased attention was given to the **relationship with United Nations (UN)** agencies as well as to matters related to the cluster approach, specifically to the role of the Federation Secretariat as a cluster convenor. Several meetings at the country and continental level took place in 2008 to improve coordination between UN agencies and the Red Cross.

The Federation has had a relevant presence in the **Regional Group on Risk, Emergency and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC)**, where UN and non-UN stakeholders convene. This has significantly improved the day-to-day relationships during times of disaster, as well as during non-disaster periods. This presence has also helped to disseminate the Red Cross Fundamental Principles and Values and the position of the Red Cross on humanitarian issues, and it has also facilitated Red Cross influence on the humanitarian agenda of this network. This involvement has also included the revision of manuals, the development of case studies, the implementation of joint evaluations and coordinated response in times of disaster.

In the field of Disaster Risk Reduction, the Federation Secretariat has **been in coordination with International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) initiatives**, which has been conducive to the inclusion of Red Cross Societies in national platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as in regional platforms and global initiatives such as the World Campaign for Disaster Risk Reduction 2008-2009: Safe Hospitals during Disasters.

In preparation for the **Summit of the Americas**, to be held in Port of Spain in April 2009, a **joint effort between the secretariat headquarters and a secretariat focal point in Washington for the relationship with the Organization of American States (OAS)** has fostered discussions for the development of proposals around IDRL and migration, with an aim to influence the incorporation of a related article into the Declaration of the coming Summit. This has required dialogue with OAS to guide the secretariat on the best way forward to achieve this goal.

Coordination with the American, Finnish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies towards increasing coordination and cooperation has delivered the confirmation that the three National Societies will sign an **integration agreement**, which is expected to be in full implementation by January 2009.

The Regional Representations in Lima, Panama and Port of Spain have dedicated time and efforts during 2008 to **increase coordination and relationships with the three main intergovernmental organizations dealing with Disaster Management: CDERA (Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency), CEPREDENAC (Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America) and CAPRADE (Andean Committee for the Prevention and Attention to Disasters)**. This has produced increased capacity of the Red Cross to have an influence on key humanitarian issues and to see its view included in the strategic directions of the three organizations, as well as heading working groups in support of those strategic directions in each region.

Constraints

One of the most relevant matters that affected the performance of the Americas Zone Office was the lack of Zonal Coordinators for Health, Principles and Values and Disaster Risk Management due to funding limitations to cover staff costs. This constraint has caused an overload in the agenda of other staff, and has also reduced the Zone's coordination capacity within the Movement and with other stakeholders.

2008 showed an increase in cases of integrity risk in some National Societies, which required the support and concentration of the secretariat structure in order to support the leadership of the National Societies. This spike in cases was unusual, and absorbed many resources (human, financial, time).

As mentioned earlier, the active hurricane season and the many minor emergencies experienced in 2008 also required much attention from the Zone Office, more so in light of the lack of a Zone Disaster Management Coordinator.

The global financial crisis, although announced in the last quarter of 2008, was felt much earlier in terms of funding support, which also constituted a constraint for in light of specific unmet funding needs.

Working in partnership

The Americas Zone Office worked with the following partners in 2008: the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the Finnish Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross, the ICRC, DfID, Ericsson Response, EU DG ECHO, ISDR, Albatros Media, Llorente y Cuenca, Inglefield/Ogelvy, CATHALAC/IRI, CAPRADE, CEPREDENAC, CDERA, ProVention, OAS, UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

The CAS process has been encouraged in Colombia throughout 2008, with participation of the different stakeholders involved.

There is increasing coordination with Partner National Societies, with outstanding progress in the Disaster Risk Management programme in which coordination towards objectives has improved, as well as towards donors like DG ECHO. Nevertheless, there is still work that needs to be done to further enhance coordination amongst the different programmes with an aim to improve programming and service delivery to the National Societies.

Collaboration with communications agencies has been explored and will be further developed in 2009, as is the case with Inglefield/Ogelvy and Llorente y Cuenca. The aim of the work being carried out with these two agencies is to enhance the image of Red Cross services and programmes, developing a volunteering campaign in the Caribbean and upgrading and innovating the Caribbean Red Cross National Societies' web page and starting communications actions on HIV and AIDS work in Latin American countries that are part of the Global Alliance on HIV.

Constraints:

Partnerships with the private sector should and could be further promoted amongst National Societies of the Americas.

Contributing to longer-term impact

One key concern of the Americas Zone is to ensure that knowledge and information stemming from programme implementation at all levels is systematically gathered, analyzed and shared with an aim to influence better planning, monitoring and decision-making. While there is still a long way to go before an ideal system is achieved, important steps were taken towards this goal through initiatives such as the pilot experience with the monitoring of DfID-funded programmes in the Americas, the consultation process and the baseline information generated and systematized.

The development of a more comprehensive monitoring tool that can clearly link the local with the global is a direct consequence of these pilot experiences and shows the commitment to this goal. Time and effort will continue to be placed towards the attainment of a solution that works for all stakeholders. It is important to mention that the Americas Zone is aware of the efforts that are being carried out in the Geneva secretariat towards the same goal, and that all actions undertaken in the Americas are shared with the headquarters in order to avoid disconnection and duplication.

In initiatives such as the livelihoods intervention in Central America after hurricane Felix, the process raised awareness and advocated for gender equity while respecting sensitive issues. It was also ensured that diversity of the community was represented and that the tool when applied resulted in empowerment of the community.

Looking ahead

In order to improve the efficiency of the secretariat in a comprehensive Disaster Management approach, the **integration of PADRU in the Americas Zone Office** in 2009 will help capitalize on the joint use of resources for the service of National Societies and the people we serve in times of disaster response operations. A phased process is being contemplated in order to achieve full and efficient integration.

Also to improve the quality and effectiveness of core membership services, the second half of 2008 saw the **creation of the Regional Representation Office for Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti as well as the Regional Representation for the Southern Cone**, covering Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. This re-arrangement leaves the secretariat structure in the Americas with 5 Regional Representations in 2009 to cover the entire continent. The aim is to avoid resources being spread too thin, as it had been at times in the past.

The orientation towards **country support plans** in the Americas will bring in 2009 a different modality of planning and implementing activities for the periods to come. It is expected that country support plans will address priority needs highlighted by the Red Cross Societies in the Americas. This should increase relevance of the Secretariat support to its membership and should better capture the impact of Red Cross actions at community level. This approach will also help with the alignment of programmes and services and reduce the dispersion of activities, as well as to better communicate to donors and government authorities the type of support the Red Cross provided to the communities. In addition, it is hoped that there will be increased understanding of the challenges, gaps and needs that need to be addressed in order to accomplish efficient interventions. This approach will also contribute to improve Movement coordination and cooperation on agreed priority areas and also enable the Zone to gauge the level of commitment that the Federation Secretariat will be able to assume with each National Society.

It is worth mentioning that core membership services will continue to be provided to all National Societies in the Americas.

How we work

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MAA42003 - Americas Zone

Annual report 2008

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/1-2008/12
Budget Timeframe	2008/1-2008/12
Appeal	MAA42003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
A. Budget	95,187	107,555	129,419	30,000	205,021	567,183
B. Opening Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Income						
<u>Cash contributions</u>						
DFID Partnership grant	48,968		46,865		30,442	126,275
Norwegian Red Cross		9,397	1,000	30,000	4,567	44,964
Norwegian Red Cross (from Norwegian Government)		84,569	9,000		41,105	134,674
Spanish Red Cross	73,211		29,780			102,991
Swedish Red Cross (from Swedish Government)			54,588			54,588
C1. Cash contributions	122,178	93,966	141,234	30,000	76,114	463,492
<u>Outstanding pledges (Revalued)</u>						
DFID Partnership grant			46,763		28,153	74,916
ECHO		0				0
C2. Outstanding pledges (Revalued)		0	46,763		28,153	74,916
<u>Inkind Personnel</u>						
Spanish Red Cross			25,007		74,400	99,407
C4. Inkind Personnel			25,007		74,400	99,407
<u>Other Income</u>						
Services					3,647	3,647
C5. Other Income					3,647	3,647
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)	122,178	93,966	213,004	30,000	182,314	641,462
D. Total Funding = B + C	122,178	93,966	213,004	30,000	182,314	641,462
Appeal Coverage	128%	87%	165%	100%	89%	113%

II. Balance of Funds

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0
C. Income	122,178	93,966	213,004	30,000	182,314	641,462
E. Expenditure	-48,968	-90,919	-182,944	-28,778	-183,150	-534,759
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	73,211	3,046	30,060	1,222	-836	106,703

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/1-2008/12
Budget Timeframe	2008/1-2008/12
Appeal	MAA42003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure						TOTAL	Variance
		Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination			
A		B						A - B	
BUDGET (C)		95,187	107,555	129,419	30,000	205,021	567,183		
Land, vehicles & equipment									
Computers & Telecom		9,329					9,329	-9,329	
Total Land, vehicles & equipment		9,329					9,329	-9,329	
Transport & Storage									
Storage		52				276	328	-328	
Distribution & Monitoring		2,659					2,659	-2,659	
Transport & Vehicle Costs						497	497	-497	
Total Transport & Storage		2,711				774	3,484	-3,484	
Personnel									
International Staff	181,657	2,290	935	25,007		74,400	102,632	79,025	
Regionally Deployed Staff	12,600				2,180		2,180	10,420	
National Staff	32,000			601		8,750	9,352	22,648	
National Society Staff						1,007	1,007	-1,007	
Consultants	80,314		42,737	7,079		24,167	73,983	6,331	
Total Personnel	306,571	2,290	43,672	32,687	2,180	108,324	189,153	117,418	
Workshops & Training									
Workshops & Training	152,830	4,741	24,695	77,291	24,090	43,407	174,225	-21,395	
Total Workshops & Training	152,830	4,741	24,695	77,291	24,090	43,407	174,225	-21,395	
General Expenditure									
Travel	50,915	17,590	2,685	34,124	88	15,038	69,525	-18,610	
Information & Public Relation	15,000		5,315	19,297	94	394	25,099	-10,099	
Office Costs	5,000	6,097	424	7,402		20,266	34,189	-29,189	
Communications			1,056	305	133	2,870	4,364	-4,364	
Professional Fees				772			772	-772	
Financial Charges		3,027	618	217	36	-16,040	-12,142	12,142	
Other General Expenses						633	633	-633	
Total General Expenditure	70,915	26,714	10,098	62,117	350	23,161	122,441	-51,526	
Programme Support									
Program Support	36,867	3,183	6,626	10,849	2,158	7,484	30,300	6,567	
Total Programme Support	36,867	3,183	6,626	10,849	2,158	7,484	30,300	6,567	
Operational Provisions									
Operational Provisions			5,828				5,828	-5,828	
Total Operational Provisions			5,828				5,828	-5,828	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	567,183	48,968	90,919	182,944	28,778	183,150	534,759	32,424	
VARIANCE (C - D)		46,219	16,636	-53,525	1,222	21,872	32,424		