

# **GUATEMALA: REHABILITATION**

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*Human development programmes are moving ahead and Branches' interest in extending them is growing. The National Society management, strengthened by the experience of Hurricane Mitch operations, has improved its planning capacity and must now focus on preparedness and fundraising.*

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## ***The context***

Elections scheduled to be held in November are having a negative effect on political commitments to social and health programmes, as energy and economic resources are put into campaigns instead of concrete activities for the rural and indigenous population.

The result of the referendum on 16 May for constitutional reforms, which included extended rights for the Mayan population and support for a multi-cultural society, was a massive rejection of the changes. This brought the peace process to a halt and now new strategies have to be found to continue the long-term development included in the ten parts of the peace accords.

The rehabilitation programmes, both governmental and NGO, presented in the Stockholm conference in May, are well under way and are furthering some infrastructure, preparedness projects, agricultural programmes, health, etc. Many international donors remain positive to the rehabilitation and development phase in Guatemala.

In the Red Cross context in Guatemala, there are three Participating National Societies (PNS) present (Netherlands, Spanish and American RC), together with the Programme co-ordination of the Federation. That represents both an opportunity for the Guatemalan RC (GRC) and a challenge, requiring very good, close co-ordination. Institutional Development or Capacity Building, combined with prevention and preparedness programmes, are more important than ever.

## ***Latest events***

The mid-term evaluation of the Institutional Development (Tripartite) project has been completed and indicates a number of positive results, despite the obstacles identified. The most important constraint is the lack of fundraising results in the GRC, although sustainable development is one of the main pillars in capacity building. The GRC is convinced of its necessity, but the few efforts gave little or no positive result.

An external audit has been planned to take place in late July. The preparations started at the end of June. The PNSs are ready to co-finance the audit, together with the Federation.

In the Mitch rehabilitation programmes, the Supplementary Food Assistance (7,700 families), phase 2, financed by the Spanish RC, and the Agricultural Assistance Program (5,150 families), financed by the British RC, were finalised during the period. According to evaluations of the programmes, the results were satisfactory, in spite of some constraints in the co-ordination with the GRC, due to the many responsibilities of the Management team and the volunteers. In total the GRC assisted around 70,000 with food, medicines, clothes, shelters, seeds or tools.

The next step in the Mitch rehabilitation in Guatemala is a focus on prevention and preparedness, together with the strengthening of the management of the GRC at both Headquarters and branch level. The PNSs are improving co-ordination of the common efforts, and the growth of the GRC is making this easier.

In May the series of workshops to define the roles and functions of Governance and Management resumed, after being suspended because of urgent Mitch operations. The whole Executive Council and Management team were present, as well as representatives from all PNSs. The facilitator was again a representative from the GTZ, accompanied by a working group from the Federation and the GRC. The GRC mission was defined in detail and a FODA was done.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### **Human Development •**

The seven Human Development projects in the branches have been going well, thanks to good co-ordinators, committed presidents, branch committees and groups of volunteers. The project teams in the branches are eager to continue and to extend the activities to more communities in the course of this year, while other branches want to start such project. Local co-ordination with other organisations is good. However, there were problems in GRC co-ordination at the Headquarters. Better planning, follow up and evaluation of the projects are urgently needed, to standardise the methods and procedures and not lose the good results obtained in the first phase.

The GRC has decided to evaluate the Human Development projects in July, to be able to readjust them and strengthen national co-ordination.

### **Main achievements •**

By necessity, the management team had to be strengthened during the Mitch operations. Now, in the post Mitch era, but also due to the tripartite projects, the GRC has a team of eight heads of departments, under the supervision of a new Director General, who are gradually being welded into a team. Besides improving performance, they are able to emphasise the difference between their roles and mandates and that of governance.

With the strengthening of the Management team, strategic planning has been improved. The long-term rehabilitation plan has been worked out and is in fact a National Development Plan, with rehabilitation components. Most of the specific technical area plans were defined beforehand. By the end of the period

the revised Tripartite plan and budget for the rest of 1999 and the contingency plan were practically ready.

The rehabilitation plan has made it easier for the GRC to co-ordinate the different new projects, with PNS funding. In particular, the American Red Cross has started several projects, in close co-ordination with the GRC and the Federation. There is excellent co-ordination between the Federation, ICRC and the PNSs in Guatemala.

The newest member of the Management team is the head of administration, which has helped the Director General to concentrate on his specific tasks, even if the division of mandates is still not entirely clear.

The GRC held its General Assembly on 19 June. Half of the Executive Council was renewed in elections. The meeting showed that the Statutes are unclear about democratic procedures, and that it is a matter of urgency to start working on new Statutes as soon as possible.

## ***Outstanding needs***

Financing the Human Development projects has been a constant concern, since hard pledges to the Emergency Appeal 99 were received very slowly. The Cobán project (one of seven branches in the HD) is fully supported by the Netherlands RC. Since the HD projects are considered part of preparedness for disasters, especially at community level, Mitch funds have been used to finance them until June 1999.

HD is also included in the Mitch rehabilitation project, for the rest of 1999, which is part of the regional programme presented in Stockholm in May. The outstanding needs are CHF 450,000.

The Institutional Development project is fully funded through the Tripartite project.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

Co-ordination with CONRED (the national co-ordination body for Disaster Response) has been improved since CONRED was reorganised. Now the GRC, together with the Federation, has to systematise the relationship, in order to be better prepared for future disasters.

OPS/PAHO has been sharing material and information with the GRC and the Federation. This can be further developed now that the GRC has a health co-ordinator. There were also discussions with the WFP.

The National Co-ordination service has participated in several co-ordination meetings with UNDP, with the aim of evaluating the Mitch response, but also to define future DPP programmes.

Meetings and co-ordination have taken place with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture as part of the preparation of Mitch Assistance projects in the affected areas.

## *Contributions*

See Annex 1 for details.

## *Conclusion*

Despite a very late start, the GRC contingency plan was almost ready by the end of June. The GRC, as well as the Federation, have an important responsibility to be prepared before the next disaster. (There have already been floods on the Pacific coast).

The planning capacity has achieved a breakthrough, thanks to the Director General and his management team, although further development of planning skills for some members is still needed. The main concern now is the absence of any planned fundraising. Only sporadic efforts have been made, with poor results. The Executive Council has assigned the new vice president to tackle the problem.

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