

Programme Update 2007



Central America and Mexico

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This report covers the period of 01/06/07 to 31/10/07.

In a world of global challenges, continued poverty, inequity, and increasing vulnerability to disasters and disease, the International Federation with its global network, works to accomplish its Global Agenda, partnering with local community and civil society to prevent and alleviate human suffering from disasters, diseases and public health emergencies.



Child drawing about how to prevent disasters in schools, as part of the Regional DIPECHO project. Source: International Federation

In brief

Programme Summary:

The Panama Regional Representation has been strongly supporting the important work of National Societies which focuses on assisting people of the Central America region who are vulnerable due to a variety of social, economic and environmental challenges. Much consideration has been given to the individual and collective priorities of the National Societies of the region, particularly as they are outlined in National Development and Strategic Plans, and as expressed during regular Presidents and Technical Seminar Meetings. Given that the Inter American Plan 2007-2011 agreed upon in Guayaquil also sought to reflect such priorities, the Regional Representation's core programme areas have guided and supported National Societies and their programmes in the drafting of Strategic Plans and Plans of Action aiming to ensure the inclusion of the Guayaquil commitments.

The integrated development of the regional plan for 2008-2009 also took place during this period, within the framework of the new Inter-American Plan 2007-2011, the Global Agenda and in line with regional plans across the continent.

The Regional Health and Care Programme is seen as the regions' leader in the forwarding of new initiatives and the rolling out of methodologies. It coordinates and cooperates with the Caribbean and South America region with the objective of achieving harmonization of the programme on a continental level. The programme has also been following the Global Health and Care Strategy by focusing on intensifying and scaling up its contribution to the health and socio-economic development of communities through capacity building, social mobilization, partnerships, health in emergencies, advocacy and community empowerment. Additionally, the programme has adhered to the new components agreed upon at the Inter-American Conference which total a number of ten, including the new components: "Road Safety" and "Harm Reduction." The regional Health and Care programme has also begun work with National Societies in the region towards the Global Alliance on HIV and AIDS through the drafting and subsequent revision of Frameworks for Action.

The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Programme has continued to aim its work towards two vital areas: the improvement of National Society capacity and the ever better preparedness and recovery of communities from natural hazards. Work towards the achievement of these results has been carried out through the centres of reference, the regional focal point on SPHERE and the regional disaster network “REDCAMP Disasters.” The latter seek to establish links between individual projects thus creating process and seek to establish common approaches to risk reduction within each National Society and its branches which has ultimately resulted in the harmonization of methodologies, and use of materials.

Even though the Regional Organizational Development and the Regional Humanitarian Principles and Values Programmes have suffered the most from lack of financial resources which have limited their actions; both have been able to carry out efficient and effective initiatives. Such initiatives are the result of creative thinking and strategic alliances.

Natural disasters have continued to manifest itself in Central America, showing an increase in events since 2006 and at the same time an increase in National Society capacity to respond effectively, thanks in part to the timely support of the Federation through the Regional Representation and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). Almost all countries in the region have experienced bad weather during the reporting period with minor to severe damage. Hurricane Felix in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, floods in Mexico and floods in Costa Rica have been the highlights of the regions’ meteorological events.

The full consolidation of the zone technical team has not taken place as expected due to a decrease in financial resources. The new Head and Deputy Head of Zone, with the zone senior management team, have been in ongoing contact with membership and National Societies cooperating in the continent in order to define innovative approaches to face the challenge of putting the new operating model into action.

Due to the significant reduction of core funding for 2008 and the potential decrease in financial support from traditional donors due to changing priorities, new and improved working methods are already being explored by the regional team in Panamá through integrated programming, identification of new funding sources and strengthened partnerships and alliances in the region.

Needs: Total 2006-2007 budget CHF 6,545,117 (USD 5,854,309 or EUR 3,966,738) out of which 74% covered. Outstanding needs are CHF 1,726,015 (USD 1,543,842 or EUR 1,046,069). **[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)**

No. of people we help:

The Panama Regional delegation focuses on building the capacities of National Societies in the region. In consequence, direct beneficiaries of the regional delegation’s programmes are National Societies themselves including their staff at headquarters and branch level, governance bodies and volunteers. In effect, the regional delegation’s indirect beneficiaries belong to the civil society since it is through the strengthening of National Society’s capacities and the technical support offered, that methodologies, initiatives and activities as a whole can be carried out and implemented accordingly.

Our Partners:

The Panama Regional Delegation has a number of partners who offer technical and/or financial support to the different programme areas while other partners work hand in hand with the delegation through alliances and joint collaborations. Partner National Societies include the American, British, Canadian, Italian, Netherlands, Finnish, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies with funding received from the British, Swedish, Finnish Red Cross Societies, DFID, ECHO and ProVention. The regional delegation continues to build on its relationships with other organizations during the reporting period such as Plan International, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UNOCHA, PAHO/WHO, ISDR, World Food Programme (WFP), McCann Erickson and AudioVideo.

Progress towards objectives-by sector

The Regional Health and Care Programme:

Programme Objective: National Societies in the region have increasingly adhered to the commitments in health as set out in the Plan of Action of the XVIII Inter-American Conference, particularly with respect to the development of their health departments, and in the areas of HIV and AIDS, health in emergencies, community health, the promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation (VNRBD) and water and sanitation.

Achievements:

During the last five months, the Regional Health and Care Programme has seen the unveiling of several achievements as a result of continuous efforts in all of its key areas. For one, the Health and Care Plan of Action of the Inter-American Conference in Guayaquil, June 4 to June 8, has been a trigger for change within the Programme in the Americas Zone. The Plan has proposed new components for the next four years and has been able to highlight the importance of having harmonized methodologies throughout the Zone. Additionally, the regional Programme has been driving efforts towards the mobilization of financial resources and the creation of strategic alliances and partnerships that have been highly fruitful, to say the least.

The Plan of Action, as developed by the health thematic group, before and during the Inter- American Conference in Guayaquil was approved as well as the narrative of the Plan of Action which has been validated and will be printed. The Health Plan of Action for one, was agreed upon after a participatory revising process (six meetings) carried out in coordination with the regional health network REDCAMP-SALUD, which directly participated in the process. The Health Plan of Action will encompass ten key areas including two new areas which are “Road Safety” and “Harm Reduction” (against intra-venous drug use).

Additional vital agreements within the subject encompass the agreement on the acceptance of the Global Strategic Plan since all National Societies have agreed to use the Plan of Action in order to guide health programmes in the region as well as the continental agreement on the importance of common methodologies such as Club 25 throughout the zone and the Together We Can expansion to South America.

The regional Health and Care Programme, in search of pursuing its new commitments while at the same time strengthening and rolling-out current methodologies and commitments, has carried out resource mobilization initiatives. The programme held meetings with all current donors including the American, Finnish, Netherlands, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross in order to discuss ongoing activities and future programme needs. Through a number of meetings such as the Guayaquil Inter-American Conference and the Global HIV and AIDS Alliance the programme was able to address topics related to resource mobilization, monitoring and projecting. As a result from these meetings, continued support for a possible new three-year cycle was agreed upon with the Norwegian Red Cross.

A different and rather proactive stand has been taken by the regional programme within the area of resource mobilization in the form of marketing. The programme has distributed a total of 300 brochures in both English and Spanish to strategic allies and potential as well as current donors.

During this reporting period, the HIV and AIDS component of the programme has seen the unveiling of new opportunities to enter new National Societies in the region, new opportunities for further financial resources and new opportunities for the implementation of long term, high impact HIV and AIDS Plans of Action. The Mexican Red Cross has accepted the challenge of introducing the HIV and AIDS component of the Health Plan of Action in their Country Health Programme. The National Society has also agreed to actively participate in the International AIDS Conference to be held in Mexico in August 2008 for which the regional programme is also preparing. The latter agreement includes the participation of the Mexican Red Cross volunteers as co-operators both prior to and during the conference. Additionally, all event t-shirts will sport the Mexican Red Cross logo thus providing tremendous visibility for the Mexican Red Cross and the Federation and our commitment in the

work against HIV and AIDS. In order to aid the Mexican Red Cross in their participation at the Congress, the American, Spanish, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross have offered their support. This has been a direct result from resource mobilization actions the programme has undertaken the last months as previously stated.

Within the HIV and AIDS component, the programme has also been directing efforts towards the HIV and AIDS Global Alliance. The visit to the Region by the Special Representative of the Secretary General promoted the Alliance and facilitated meetings with partners such as UNICEF to discuss the region's situation and the fact that since it is highly affected by HIV and AIDS it must be taken into account as a priority region. Since then, a Global Alliance workshop was carried out with a total of 13 National Societies participating; this resulted in a Zone proposal for the Global Alliance. The regional programme has begun a follow up process at these National Societies, aiming to discuss the implementation of the programmes at country level.



Special Representative of the Secretary General meeting with staff of the Red Cross Society of Panama and the IFRC, who form part of the Global Alliance on HIV and AIDS. Source: International Federation.

The implementation of the Global Alliance outputs has already begun in the region since manuals for the prevention, treatment, care and support of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWAs) have been translated into Spanish.

Furthermore, a consultant was hired to finalize the monitoring and evaluation toolkit for the “Together We Can” (TWC) peer to peer youth methodology on work against HIV and AIDS. The consultant has been visiting most National Societies in the region in order to deliver a quantitative and qualitative report by December 2007. This report will provide a genuine idea on what National Societies are carrying out with regard to TWC activities. It will also provide a baseline for the mandatory use of the monitoring and evaluation tools by National Societies in order to measure the impact of the work carried out. Additionally, a TWC technical group was created which saw the participation of all three regions in the Americas in order to standardize the methodology. The technical group provides standardization and quality through monitoring and evaluation, while the methodology is being rolled out. Another important achievement within TWC has been the translation and subsequent revision of the manual into Portuguese.

A final point to refer to within the area of HIV and AIDS is the rolling out of the Faces Campaign to National Societies outside of the region, such as the Ukraine Red Cross which has already launched its campaign and the Italian Red Cross which has shown interest in adapting it to its country.

In the area of Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation (VNRBD), the regional Health and Care Programme has undergone tremendous progress with finding strategic allies, mobilizing new financial resources and marketing the initiative. The programme presented “Club 25, A Social Response to Blood Donations in the Americas” at the European Blood Congress in Madrid in June 2007. The presentation marketed the initiative and as a result the programme was able to make contact with the “International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations” as well as with the “America’s Blood Centres” to discuss strategic alliances. The regional programme also held a meeting with the “Global Advising Panel on Blood Quality” (GAP) in Panama with the participation of eight National Societies from the continent where a two-year strategic plan was developed and approved.

Aiming at building on the already existing partnership with McCann-Erickson, the programme held two meetings leading up the approval of continental mass media-marketing campaigns for Club 25 in the Americas. This is a rather imperative achievement for the implementation and the marketing of the programme's components in the region. During the reporting period, the Peace Corps intern finalized the four month internship in October having completed two additional tools for Club 25: "How to Initiate a Club 25" and "The Club 25 Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit." The regional programme keeps supporting NS in the implementation of Club 25 with the support of the Finnish Red Cross.

Seeing the progress achieved in the area of non-remunerated blood donation, the regional programme has been selected to present at the "11th International Colloquium of VNRBD" at El Cairo in January 2008.

In the area of Psychosocial Support, the programme has continued the process towards the validation of the Helping to Heal methodology (both during disasters and during times of peace) which includes its translation into Spanish; made possible through Australian Red Cross funding. The validation of the methodology was carried out through a consultancy in the Caribbean region in order to harmonize the methodology in both Central America and the Caribbean, it has therefore been translated.

Within the same area, the Regional Representation has taken in a new challenge in coordination with the University of Panama and a local foundation called FUNDAIH and has created a 60-hour diploma level course on psychosocial support. The regional Representation is supporting the development of the course and is providing four fully funded scholarships to the Panamanian Red Cross.

The overall health department development was further enabled through the following:

- The Costa Rica Red Cross Society has approached the regional programme in order to see how they can develop a health programme seeing as it is lacking one at the moment. The approach studied possibilities in terms of resources and the Health Strategic Plan.
- The regional Health and Care programme has continued cooperation with the Caribbean in HIV and AIDS initiatives and in the "Club 25" methodology.
- The regional health programme presented a document jointly with PADRU in regards to future emergencies (health in emergencies component) as part of the 2008-2009 planning process. The Norwegian Red Cross is the thematic holder for health in emergencies with an earmarked holder, delegate and leadership in close coordination with existing structures.
- The programme was involved in the drafting of the health section for the appeals of the health Plan of Action in response to Hurricane Dean and Felix.

Challenges and Constraints:

The fact that the Mexican Red Cross does not have a Health Programme and a HIV and AIDS sub programme, is considered to be a challenge in the regional harmonization of HIV and AIDS initiatives and methodologies. However, first steps have been taken in the integration of HIV and AIDS at the National Society and the agreements as well as the integration of the National Society in the regional HIV and AIDS structure.

The constant need for greater capacity in National Societies in order to carry out the entire programme also poses a challenge. At a regional level however, the programme has been able to cover gaps with volunteers, internships and consultancies. Nevertheless, there has been a delay in the selection of key continental positions, in particular the continental health delegate which poses a constraint to the further rolling out and harmonization processes that must take place at a continental level. Though a poorly resourced health programme and resignation of health delegate in the Lima Regional Representation has put pressure.

Furthermore, expectations on the HIV and AIDS Global Alliance to scale up to reach 10 percent of the target population involve a substantial increase in funding. The challenge lies in the fact that there is great competition with other regions and additionally the Americas is seen as a wealthy region rather than a needy region.

Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Programme

Programme Objective: Strengthened National Societies are working at the community, national and regional levels to reduce risk, making communities safer and more resilient to disasters.

Achievements:

The regional Disaster Risk Reduction Programme (RDRRP) has been working to strengthen National Societies and their branches prior to disasters through the use of common methodologies and tools in institutional and community preparedness. The regional programme has been supporting the reference centres in the creation of key tools that aid in the harmonization of risk reduction programmes in the region. In addition, the programme has focused on the importance of having processes and programmes as opposed to distant and individual projects.

The regional Disaster Risk Reduction Programme successfully coordinates with other agencies that do not belong to the Movement, such as REDLAC (UN, IFRC, PLAN, and Oxfam) and follows up on joint activities such as the “Risk Reduction Begins at School” campaign. Having created successful alliances will consequently have a larger impact in both regional and community levels. From an internal point of view, the RDRRP has been working jointly with PNS such as the Italian, the Netherlands and the Spanish Red Cross, for the implementation of the national and regional risk reduction programmes financially supported by ECHO. Through the financial support received from the Finnish RC, British RC, DFID, ProVention and ECHO, the RDRRP has also been able to attain the necessary funding to cover the whole region including Mexico and Dominican Republic which is seen as a vital achievement by the programme.

Additionally, cooperation with other organizations and agencies such as PLAN International, ISDR, UNICEF, and OAE as well as others has been possible through joint ventures such as “Disaster Risk Reduction Day.” Preparedness tools and methodologies have become reference material and are being put to use by other institutions throughout the region (the Town Hall of Tegucigalpa and the National Disaster Systems in Guatemala and Costa Rica which are in progress) as well as by organizations (such as Plan and CARE). Moreover, both Reference Centres have acquired such internal and external recognition that they now have a high demand for service and receive many requests from National Societies in the region as well as those belonging to other regions.

The program has also been able to reach a level of coordination and collaboration with the PNS that support DIPECHO projects in Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua through meetings that take place every three months. These meetings also provide follow up on the projects, thereby monitoring their progress and process. Such meetings are strongly supported by both reference centres.

Other major achievements during the period at hand have been the increase of community based projects and activities; in line with the Guayaquil Inter-American Conference’s objective which was to build stronger and healthier communities. Also in line with the Inter-American Conference and based on the Guayaquil Strategic Plan, the regional Risk Reduction Programme’s Plan of Action 2008-2009 was drafted. Taking into account new issues discussed at the Conference that affect the region and are an increasing risk to communities, the regional disaster risk reduction programme is working jointly with the Climate Centre at The Hague for an increase of initiatives on the subject of Climate Change, aiming at providing National Societies in the region with knowledge. However, these initiatives are still to be thoroughly developed and implemented.

Moreover, the Regional Risk Reduction Programme has been working on the strengthening of National Societies’ capacities for the implementation of national response mechanisms. The regional programme is working on the implementation of the institutional diagnostics tool “Well Prepared National Societies” as a baseline to determine the level of institutional preparedness and assist National Societies with drafting their Plans of Action. The programme is also working in collaboration with national disaster management systems such as SEPREDENAC and OFDA, in preparation of materials and in capacity building initiatives. SEPREDENAC coordinates with the programme as a whole since it works with all National Disaster Management systems in the region and OFDA cooperates at the institutional level.

As said before, the regional programme works jointly with both Reference Centres for the strengthening of institutional capacities as well as for the common use of community based risk reduction tools and methodologies. Both Reference Centres work through internships carried out by experts. Such internships reflect the level of cooperation between Reference Centres and National Societies in the process of elaboration, creation, revision and implementation of tools and methodologies. The centres also take on the role of capacity builders by constantly building the capacity of volunteers, experts and overall staff and up-dating their capacities.

The Centre of Reference for Disaster Preparedness at Institutional Level has been hosting a number of internships by National Societies and other organizations during the reporting period. The guides for “Contingency and Response Plans,” “Centres for Emergency Operations,” “Drills and Simulations” and “Emergency Evaluations” were created through internships and are currently being implemented in all National Societies throughout the region. The use of common methodologies has consequently led the region to a good level of institutional harmonization. Today, the Reference Centre has taken on the role of guides National Societies on the use of the materials and supporting them in up-dating their Plans.



Volunteers of the Honduran Red Cross are providing relief to a family trapped in a car during the search and rescue operation that was taking place due to Hurricane Felix. Source: International Federation

Progress made at community level disaster preparedness has been possible through the constant support of the Reference Centre for Community Education in Costa Rica. The Centre has undergone the production and printing of the “Better Be Ready” series of community modules and monitors its implementation and its use at the beginning of the process. A total of 13 modules are in use by National Societies in accordance to their previously assessed needs through Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA). The later include technical consultation, capacity building and production of materials and are currently used as a common methodology; thus harmonizing processes of projects throughout the region. The Reference Centre for Community Level Disaster Preparedness and the regional Disaster Risk reduction programme have carried out joint capacity building workshops on the use of the “Better Be Ready” series and on “VCA” by using the “Learning By Doing Methodology.”

Additionally, a regional risk reduction focal points meeting was held to revise, harmonize and prepare the materials for “Better Be Ready” facilitators, in order to learn about the experiences of National Societies in the implementation of all of their projects in risk reduction.

A final point within the area of Reference Centres that is worth mentioning is the analysis of the future of the centres. A consultant was hired by the regional programme to analyze current services provided by the Reference Centres and reflect on future sustainability possibilities. The consultancy included consultation with different organizations and National Societies and was a process of opportunity analysis.

The SPHERE Regional Focal Point has been working with the National Societies of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras in awareness raising and capacity building workshops on policies in disasters. It provides support and guidance for National Societies which carry out SHPERE activities in the countries. The regional programme and the SPHERE focal point have initiated the process of up-dating personnel that had been previously trained.

A number of achievements related to National Intervention Teams (NIT) training can be mentioned.

- Most National Societies in the region now use the same curricula and the basic curricula have been evaluated and validated during all workshops.
- The Field Manual for NIT that was drafted through a process of several internships is being printed and will soon be disseminated.
- The Specialized Curricula on WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) is being drafted through internships at the Reference Centre for Institutional Disaster Preparedness at El Salvador.
- During this period, the number of people trained by the NIT basic training curricula workshops has increased to a total of 300 people.
- A Trainer of Trainers workshop took place for NIT basic training, and new trainers are already supporting other NIT workshops.
- The National Societies of Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Panama were trained with support of the Reference Centre for Institutional Preparedness. In future emergencies, NITs will therefore be able to apply this knowledge and contribute to a quick response.

The regional disaster preparedness communications strategy is another component of the regional Disaster Risk Reduction Programme that has seen major advances. Two awareness raising campaigns were created and implemented; one for the hurricane and rainy season and a second one for community disaster preparedness. The Disaster Reduction begins at School Campaign was carried out in coordination with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), UNICEF and Plan. A total of 2000 paintings were turned in for the painting contest that was part of the campaign; this activity was created and set up in the Central America region but later expanded to South America and the Caribbean. The regional programme has prepared other visibility and communications materials with help from the Regional Communications Department.



The winners of the painting contest of the “Disaster Risk Reduction begins at School” campaign, coordinated together with ISDR, Plan and UNICEF. Source: International Federation

An important element for visibility of the regional programme’s work as well as for visibility of all disaster preparedness projects in the region is the regional webpage. The process for feeding the regional web page was based on an exchange of information amongst National Societies that have contributed with news on activities and materials pertaining to the different projects.

Finally, the framework for the regional communications strategy is currently undergoing a consultative process in which the regional communicators’ network, REDICOM and the regional disaster network, REDCAMP Disasters are participating.

Constraints or Challenges:

The only constraint the regional disaster risk reduction programme saw was the fact that projects did not start on the scheduled date, which led to delays in the processes. This was due to a number of factors including the delay of some financial contributions’ confirmations and the problems encountered by National Societies at the initial stages of implementation.

The Regional Organizational Development Programme

Programme Objective: The National Societies in the region are increasingly adhering to the criteria of a “Well Functioning National Society,” and are improving their capacity to work with vulnerable communities.

Achievements:

The Regional Organizational Development Programme plays a key role in developing the capacity of National Societies through the strengthening of their institutional structures. With limited resources, the programme is still able to provide guidance and capacity building to National Societies in terms of guidance in strategic planning and guidance to governance bodies. The programme has also followed up on the regional volunteering strategy and has supported the youth network. During this reporting period, the Organizational Development Programme has seen the strengthening of institutional capacities of NS through the development of Strategic Plans, the improvement of statutes and by undergoing electoral processes. Such have been the cases of the Panamanian and Guatemalan Red Cross Societies.

The Panama Red Cross Society held elections at branch, volunteer and governing board level which gave way to new governing board members, new branch directors as well as new volunteer directors. The elections were carried out as outlined in the Panamanian National Society’s statutory norms. These were thus of a participatory nature since the process was democratic and was carried out throughout the country.

The Guatemala Red Cross Society held its elections on November 2006, which resulted in a new governing board that wanted a more thorough preparation in order to carry out their responsibilities as leaders. Therefore, the Organizational Development Programme, jointly with the Guatemalan National Society aided in the building of the new governance’s capacities through the workshop “Responsibilities of the National Council,” held in October 2007. The workshop had two objectives; one which focused on self-evaluating the level of compliance of responsibilities, on behalf of the governing board and the second focused on the drafting of an official statement which would propose new commitments or the enforcement of already existing ones in order to cover weaknesses identified with the self-evaluation.

The Honduran Red Cross Society has undergone an Institutional diagnostic which has resulted in a Strategic Plan for each of the core Programme areas; disaster management, dissemination of the humanitarian principles and values and health. Each of the Strategic Plans took into account and included the commitments made at the Guayaquil Inter-American Conference, stated in the Framework for Action. Additionally, the National Society took into account the country’s context in order to draft indicators accordingly. The process was participatory since it included branches and staff and was carried out jointly with the Federation, the ICRC and partner National Societies.

The Costa Rica Red Cross Society has finalized its Plan of Action which has already been edited and is in the process of being printed.

Even though the regional Organizational Development Programme has suffered from financial limitations within the area of volunteers, the programme has kept the focus on the implementation of the Regional Volunteering Strategy specially focusing on the new model of management since it makes up a vital part of National Societies’ institutional structures. In effect, the programme has made significant advances on the implementation of the regional volunteering strategy and on the approval of the Volunteer Policies. The Panamanian Red Cross Society approved the Volunteering policy, which sets a reference framework for volunteers’ responsibilities and duties in order to ensure the development of the group. The programme has also been able to start the drafting of the Volunteering Manual in coordination with the regional Disaster Risk Reduction programme.

Moreover, the Mexican and the Salvadorian Red Cross Societies are currently in the process of updating their volunteer data base expecting results.

Previously, the Organizational Development Programme had launched an initiative to aid youth volunteer

capacity building. This initiative focuses on youth volunteers and consists of online education courses and distance learning and is offered to volunteers in the form of scholarships. The high level course on youth public policies offered online by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales – FLACSO), in coordination with the Lima Regional Representation Office's Youth Programme, has two out of five initial volunteers currently fulfilling all requirements and commitments. The other distance learning pilot course on volunteer management, implemented by the NS of Honduras and Mexico that was offered by the Spanish Red Cross ended during the reporting period.

The regional Organizational Development programme financially and technically supported the youth meeting at the Inter-American Conference in Guayaquil, where all six National Societies' youth leaders assisted. These youth leaders met their colleagues from the Caribbean and South America and put forward priorities and commitments for the strengthening of the youth component in the Inter-American Plan of Action.

As a direct consequence of the Inter-American Conference and interest shown by the Finnish Red Cross in supporting the regional volunteers' network, the latter has presented a proposal, supported by the Regional Office, for the strengthening of the network's capacities in the implementation of their objectives. The objectives are supporting micro projects, strengthening leadership building, choosing a permanent focal point and following up regional and National Society planning. The proposal is currently being studied and evaluated by the Finnish RC.

Other advances during the Inter-American Conference of Guayaquil include the support provided by the regional programme and its active participation in the organization and preparation of the first Youth Inter-American meeting that had as an aim the drafting of the monitoring and evaluation guide, which included the participation of two members of the regional organizational development network (Costa Rica and El Salvador).

The Salvadorian Red Cross Society (SRCS) was selected and is currently on the "short list" to participate at the intensified capacity building aiming at developing the capacities of both branches and volunteering body at national level. It is drafting a proposal to be submitted on 15 December. The process of the proposal has been supported by the regional Organizational Development programme. The programme also provided technical advice to the Panamanian Red Cross' proposal for CBF leadership training for staff and volunteers.

The Regional Representation Office has hosted two internships, one from the Honduran and one from the Costa Rican Red Cross. Their terms of references established that the focus will be on two capacity building workshops about planning for the Red Cross Society of Panama, the Regional Representation and the Zone Office staff. Both interns contributed to the creation of the proposal for leadership capacity building. The proposal has been drafted based on online interviews previously held with National Societies, their volunteers and directors.

Besides, the two interns have supported in the follow up of the Organizational Development network's activities. And the two internships have further resulted in additional knowledge of their National Societies, since the interns learned about the structure and function of the Regional Representation Office and the regional programmes of Health, Risk Reduction, Humanitarian Principles and Values and Organizational Development. They also acquired technical knowledge on financing, communications and reporting. The internships have ultimately aided in following up on Organizational Development commitments, taking into account that the Regional Representation Office has limited capacities.

Challenges and Constraints:

The Regional Organizational Development programme has not been able to assess, monitor and evaluate the Regional Volunteering Strategy due to lack of resources. However, the lack of overall resources has impaired the fulfilment of the regional Organizational Development programme's commitments.

Finally, following up on the crisis in the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the Federation and the High Commission insisted on the need of proposing new leaders that will be part of the governing board, to the Nicaraguan Red Cross' National Council. The proposal seems to be the only alternative for the National Society to overcome the integrity, management and governance crisis that it is currently facing. Nonetheless, the crisis continues, as neither of the involved parties have responded to this.

Regional Humanitarian Principles and Values Programme:

Programme Objective: Humanitarian principles and values are integrated in each of the core program areas within the National Societies in the region, in accordance with Strategy 2010.

Achievements:

The regional Humanitarian Principles and Values (HPV) programme's greatest achievement during the last five months has been the defining of the four-year HPV strategy, taking as a baseline the Inter-American Conference. The regional communicators' network has agreed to disseminate the HPV Plan of Action in order to support the drafting process of National Societies' strategic plans as well as to help National Societies get orientated on the new components that resulted from Guayaquil. This agreement is a direct result from a meeting the regional HPV program held with the network as well as with the ICRC. Furthermore, this commitment on behalf of the network is an important step towards the integration of the program and its new components in all National Societies' Strategic Plans.

The Honduran National Society has already included a section on the promotion of Humanitarian Principles and Values in its Strategic Plan, in accordance with the Guayaquil Plan of Action. In addition, the Costa Rican Red Cross has demonstrated interest and has consulted the regional HPV program on how to improve the HPV component in their Strategic Plan.

The Guatemala Red Cross Society has outlined four HPV program priorities for the next two years, which are to develop an awareness raising campaign and capacity building program at branch level; to improve volunteer's knowledge of the code of conduct; to search for mechanisms aiming at promoting respect at an internal level; and to incorporate the HPV component in community projects. Additionally, the Governing Board is committed to learning more about the HPV program area through capacity building.

Moreover, the regional HPV program jointly with the regional Health and Care program, presented the Guayaquil Plan of Action, which focuses on discrimination, and the Health and Care programme components to the Mexican Red Cross' governing board. This resulted in a commitment on behalf of the Mexican Red Cross to disseminate information, at a National Society level, on the Inter-American Plan commitments on discrimination. As previously stated under the achievements of the regional Health and Care programme, the Mexican Red Cross also agreed to provide support to the XVII AIDS Conference to be held in Mexico in 2008. (For more information on the AIDS Conference please refer to the regional Health and Care Programme achievements)

What is more, the program was able to establish a relationship with the International Committee for the XVII International AIDS Conference to be held in Mexico in April 2008. In consequence, actions are being coordinated between the committee and the program in terms of preparation and planning work such as a training workshop for Mexican Red Cross volunteers who will participate at the Conference.

Furthermore, the three National Societies in the region which have drafted their plans for the HIV and AIDS Global Alliance have included a strong component on work against discrimination and stigma related to people living with HIV and AIDS. The latter component will serve as a platform for resource mobilization efforts within the programme.

The Strategic Alliance with the Honduran radio network AudioVideo has seen the unveiling of several achievements and advances. The signing of the MoU for the strategic alliance took place in September. As a result from the MoU between AudioVideo and the Federation, the regional HPV programme has been able to launch three different campaigns in the areas of risk reduction and HIV and AIDS as well as one campaign in celebration of the Honduran Red Cross' 70th anniversary. The risk reduction campaign focused on community education, specifically for communities that border with the Tegucigalpa River. The HIV and AIDS campaign sends a message on solidarity with people living with HIV and AIDS focusing on respect, prevention and orienting youth. Additionally, the alliance supports the marketing of the Federation's web page since a link has been created at AudioVideo's web page.

Another important achievement for the programme has been the launch of the Information Toolkit which contains two CDs and one DVD, reference documents, capacity building and training manuals and material for HPV-promoting campaigns. These toolkits will be handed out to all National Societies in the region, to be used by technicians in their respective program areas.

Finally, the program has coordinated actions with the ICRC Violence Coordinator for the region such as the revision of violence related proposals for the National Societies of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. The Guatemalan and the Nicaraguan Red Cross are already implementing their budgets.

Constraints or Challenges:

The regional Humanitarian Principles and Values programme is currently facing a number of challenges:

- Getting National Societies to commit to the work against stigma and discrimination through a four-year concrete commitment.
- The inclusion of HPV components within the strategic planning processes of National Societies in the region.
- Volunteers have committed themselves to the dissemination of humanitarian principles and values however governance bodies must appropriate the programme.
- The regional programme has to improve the mobilization of resources at a regional level.

Regional Communications Department

Objective: The Regional Programmes jointly with National Societies' communication departments and programmes are working together towards creating "a more effective communications culture" through the strengthening of regional communications plans, promotion of regional alliances and key partnerships and developing capacity-building tools and activities to scale up the visibility of Red Cross actions, both internally within the organization and externally with external audiences.

Achievements:

The RR Communications Officer was hired on August 2007 (through a one-year contract) funded through the DIPECHO V Project implemented by the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programme. The main responsibility of the Communications Officer is to implement, in coordination with the Regional Risk Reduction Delegate, the Communication Strategy and Visibility component of the regional DIPECHO V projects in seven countries in the region. However, the regional Communications department also cooperates with the other core programme areas of the Regional Representation Office.

The newly adapted TV and Radio Awareness-Raising Campaign is a key component of the DIPECHO V regional project "We are here to Help...You to Prevent" and was produced in original media formats and sent, prior to "The Disaster Reduction International Day" (10 October), to all National Societies in the region for dissemination on partner local TV channels and radio stations.

Promotional and visibility materials from the DIPECHO V project (polo-shirts, caps, training jackets, key chains, accessory travel mini bag) have been designed and were handed out to National Societies that participated in the Regional Trainer of Trainers Workshop Meeting to strengthen field trainers in the use of the Vulnerability and Capacities Assessment (VCA) methodology held in Panama.

The regional communications department supported the regional Disaster Risk Reduction programme with the official Prize Winning Ceremony to finalize the "Regional Painting Contest" as part of the Global Campaign "Disaster Reduction begins at School 2006-2007". This activity was held together with UNICEF, ISDR, and PLAN INTERNATIONAL with support from FUNDACRID and ECHO. The media, partner organizations, government representatives, teachers and children participated in the act. Ambassadors from the winning countries were invited to attend and handed the prizes to the prize-winning children. The prizes will benefit the

children as well as the schools to carry out disaster risk reduction mitigation works to improve the safety conditions of the schools

Additionally, the department supported and will continue to support the Regional HPV Programme in its strategic alliance with AudioVideo by selecting material for dissemination and distribution and following up on the cooperation agreement.

The communications department also assisted in the initial stages of the ALAS Foundation – Federation Alliance. The department was able to consolidate the strategic alliance as well as develop media products such as key messages and press releases and monitor media impact.

A vital achievement of the communications department in this reporting period was the creation of the first issue of the Information Bulletin with news and activities from National Societies in the region from the period of August to September 2007. It was prepared and sent to all Red Cross networks (REDCAMP SALUD, REDCAMP DISASTERS, RED-OD YOUTH, etc.) and shared with the other regional representation offices. It was accepted well by those who received it; they manifested that it was very useful information tool.

Working in partnership

The Regional Representation strengthens and improves cooperation, coordination and support mechanisms that facilitate collaboration amongst Movement partners as well as with strategic partners. These partnerships have contributed and contribute to the development of the Red Cross Movement's image through the promotion of innovative joint ventures.

Day to day cooperation amongst National Societies in the region has progressed during the reporting period, in part through the increased contact through networks together with new and updated internet-based communication tools.

The Regional Representation continues to build new and vital alliances with other NGOs, UN agencies and the private sector through all programme areas. The regional disaster risk reduction programme has been strengthening and broadening its new communication tool the "Risk Reduction Communication Strategy", through which regional activities, methodologies and initiatives are carried out in a harmonized way by the Regional Representation and its partners within the strategy: PLAN, UNICEF and CEPREDENAC. Through this communication strategy several activities have taken place such as a painting contest for children, which is part of the "Disaster risk reduction begins at school" campaign and its subsequent Paint Contest.

The regional Health and Care programme has increased the amount of alliances and partnerships during this reporting period. The Global Alliance is vital for the rolling out of HIV and AIDS strategies and methodologies since all National Societies are part of a unified, regional project. The Global Alliance will also be a trigger for new and current donors to insert resources in the region which will allow for Humanitarian Principles and Values components to be carried out such as anti stigma and discrimination work.

Another important partnership on which the regional Health and Care and the regional Humanitarian Principles and Values programmes are working, is the developing partnership with the International AIDS Society towards the XVII International AIDS Conference.

Additionally, the regional Health and Care programme has started to work in partnership with the Ministries of Health in the region's countries for the implementation of "Club 25." Work with ministries of health will be necessary to coordinate blood banks and monitor the initiative. The programme has also continued to build on its relationship with McCann Erickson through the development of the "Club 25" campaign for the promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation and the subsequent coordination of the regional "Club 25" press conference to be held in Panama.

Finally, the regional Organizational Development programme and the regional Humanitarian Principles and Values programme have undergone tremendous efforts in order to carry out their programmes' commitments with limited funding. It is precisely the lack of financial resources that has triggered a need for finding other types of resources with which to carry out initiatives. Therefore, both regional programmes have created strategic alliances and vital partnerships that are seen as different types of resources since they have contributed enormously to the overall implementation of the programmes.

For one, the regional Organizational Development programme has been able continue capacity building initiatives throughout the region, in part due to alliances with FLASCO and with a new alliance with Duke University. In coordination with the Zone, Duke University and the regional Organizational Development programme are searching for internship options, mutual support and knowledge sharing initiatives.

The regional Humanitarian Principles and Values programme has been able to carry out advocacy and awareness raising work through the strategic alliance with AudioVideo. Even though this alliance is not on a regional level, it is a forerunner of alliances with big media corporations. The Alliance has already proved to be resourceful since the dissemination of the key anti-discrimination and risk reduction messages could not have been possible otherwise.

The strategic position of the Panama Regional Representation facilitates improved collaboration with other organizations as Panama, and particularly the "Ciudad del Saber" has become the regional hub for the UN, NGOs and other humanitarian and development agencies. Even though the representation has missed opportunities to invest in the development of other alliances and partnerships in the past because of insufficient time resources, 2007 has seen an increased focus on addressing these lost opportunities.

Contributing to longer-term impact

Throughout the reporting period, the Regional Representation has worked on improving the region's capacity to prepare for disasters through the implementation of the communication strategy and the scaling up of information dissemination. It has also significantly promoted respect for human dignity through tolerance, anti stigma and non-discrimination messages in terms of HIV and AIDS advocacy. It has collaborated with regional National Societies and strengthened their institutional capacities through the development, monitoring and evaluation of their Strategic Plans. Hence, the Regional Delegation has contributed and contributes to the International Federation's Global Agenda.

Furthermore, the region is starting to see a significant scale up in the work against HIV and AIDS with the implementation of the Global Alliance Plans of Action which will consequently contribute to the Millennium Development Goals.

Additionally, the systematization of the "Well Prepared National Societies" will improve the quality of programmes at country level which goes hand in hand with the Federation's Global Agenda.

The increased commitment to promote the harmonization of plans at the national, regional and continental level will contribute towards working towards common goals aligned with the Federation's Global Agenda. The new Inter-American Plan defines the strategic areas of work for the next four years as approved by the 35 National Societies of the Americas at the Guayaquil Conference. The guide for National Societies to monitor progress made, in line with the Federation-wide Performance and Accountability Framework, in the coming years will help monitor advances made and measure the contribution towards longer term impact.

Looking Ahead

2007 is a key year for the Central America region, in terms of representing the final year of implementing the commitments made at the XVII Inter-American Conference held in Santiago de Chile and implementing the new commitments made at the XVIII Inter-American Conference in Guayaquil. Intense work has followed after the Conference since the commitments are being translated from the event into actions and plans for the following

four years. The community focus of the Conference and the Inter American Plan is stronger and will further strengthen the strategic and operational planning of National Societies in their work with communities.

Great expectations are also part of the regional Health and Care programme since the “Club 25” initiative will be implemented jointly with the dissemination of the campaign. Additionally, the Global Alliance on HIV and AIDS promises to scale up action against HIV and AIDS as well as roll out methodologies such as Together We Can, which is being revised and will have a new monitoring and evaluation guide in 2008.

Furthermore, in August the Regional Representation developed the regional plan for the next two-year 2008-2009 appeal. This new plan, in alignment with those prepared by two other regions in the Americas, focuses on programme work within the framework of the Global Agenda and responds to the strategic priorities laid out in the new Inter-American Plan. The approach adopted during this planning process shows the increased integration of programme areas, complementing and strengthening work in support of National Societies.

Finally, the regional office in Panama will continue within the new Americas Zone structure and will further assist and support the consolidation of the Zone Office.

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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MAA43001 - Central America

Interim Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2006/1-2007/10
Budget Timeframe	2006/1-2007/12
Appeal	MAA43001
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
A. Budget	2,113,859	2,365,012	268,317	1,326,505	471,425	6,545,117
B. Opening Balance	168,865	123,973	31	159,678	51,027	503,574
Income						
Cash contributions (received)						
American Red Cross	22,250					22,250
Australian Red Cross	13,260					13,260
British Red Cross	252,302	391,860	0	0	0	644,162
Canadian Red Cross	18,895					18,895
Capacity Building Fund		46,720		0		46,720
DFID Partnership	72,998	378,776	17,462	102,342	37,810	609,388
ECHO		392,840				392,840
Finnish Red Cross	126,220	159,020				285,240
Irish Red Cross		8,784				8,784
Norwegian Red Cross	891,082			138,631	38,310	1,068,024
Other					3,119	3,119
Panama Private donors				1,567		1,567
Swedish Red Cross	309,871		86,744	84,838		481,452
C1. Cash contributions	1,706,878	1,378,000	104,206	327,377	79,239	3,595,700
Outstanding pledges (Revalued)						
British Red Cross		0				0
DFID Partnership		291,302				291,302
ECHO		102,053				102,053
Finnish Red Cross	1,480					1,480
Norwegian Red Cross	-0					-0
Swedish Red Cross	-15,744					-15,744
C2. Outstanding pledges (Revalued)	-14,264	393,355				379,091
Reallocations (within appeal or from/to another appeal)						
American Red Cross	0	4		0		4
Australian Red Cross				6,015	-6,015	0
British Red Cross		0			0	-0
Capacity Building Fund				-0		-0
DFID - British Government	-14,624			-0		-14,624
DFID Partnership					40,000	40,000
ECHO		0				0
Irish Red Cross	0					0
Italian Govt Bilateral Emergency Fund		2,641				2,641
Netherlands Red Cross		40,000		20,000	15,594	75,594
Norwegian Red Cross				0	0	-0
ProVention		150,323				150,323
Swedish Red Cross	0			0		0
C3. Reallocations (within appeal or	-14,624	192,968		26,015	49,579	253,937
Inkind Personnel						
Other					86,800	86,800
C5. Inkind Personnel					86,800	86,800
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C6)	1,677,990	1,964,323	104,206	353,392	215,618	4,315,528
D. Total Funding = B + C	1,846,855	2,088,296	104,237	513,070	266,644	4,819,102

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II. Balance of Funds

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance	168,865	123,973	31	159,678	51,027	503,574
C. Income	1,677,990	1,964,323	104,206	353,392	215,618	4,315,528
E. Expenditure	-1,420,149	-1,676,200	-93,715	-530,651	-362,007	-4,082,723
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	426,706	412,096	10,521	-17,581	-95,363	736,380

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III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
A		B					A - B	
BUDGET (C)		2,113,859	2,365,012	268,317	1,326,505	471,425	6,545,117	
Supplies								
Shelter - Relief	54,447							54,447
Construction Materials	14,000	12,120	983		83		13,186	814
Clothing & textiles	7,000	1,003	1,736		1,059		3,797	3,203
Food		265			143		408	-408
Water & Sanitation		238			1,964		2,202	-2,202
Medical & First Aid		6,248	693				6,941	-6,941
Teaching Materials	100,618	12,840	21,380		1,862		36,082	64,536
Utensils & Tools	62,000		579		1,690		2,269	59,731
Other Supplies & Services	20,320				2,389		2,389	17,931
Total Supplies	258,385	32,714	25,371		9,190		67,275	191,110
Land, vehicles & equipment								
Computers & Telecom	30,661		19,326		2,320		21,646	9,015
Office/Household Furniture & Equipm.		1,945	2,128				4,073	-4,073
Others Machinery & Equipment			7,860				7,860	-7,860
Total Land, vehicles & equipment	30,661	1,945	29,314		2,320		33,579	-2,918
Transport & Storage								
Storage	1,000	724	76				800	200
Distribution & Monitoring	310	313	535		97		944	-634
Transport & Vehicle Costs	25,786	13,165	5,769	373	3,858	82	23,247	2,539
Total Transport & Storage	27,096	14,202	6,380	373	3,955	82	24,991	2,104
Personnel								
International Staff Payroll Benefits	948,345	290,517	163,348		168,160	277,700	899,726	48,619
Delegate Benefits	213,904							213,904
Regionally Deployed Staff	189,322	72	17,628	14,944	181	144	32,968	156,353
National Staff	499,031	108,989	83,295	15,117	6,441	7,854	221,697	277,335
National Society Staff	204,513	90,998	160,062	13,964	26,310		291,334	-86,821
Consultants	396,996	53,229	38,769		19,497	40,782	152,276	244,720
Total Personnel	2,452,111	543,805	463,102	44,025	220,589	326,481	1,598,001	854,110
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	2,250,577	311,567	295,452	6,920	152,866	7,217	774,022	1,476,555
Total Workshops & Training	2,250,577	311,567	295,452	6,920	152,866	7,217	774,022	1,476,555
General Expenditure								
Travel	418,802	104,728	73,811	3,008	48,377	12,128	242,052	176,750
Information & Public Relation	476,794	88,674	104,191	4,877	24,297	1,674	223,712	253,082
Office Costs	95,165	29,265	34,092	948	7,020	2,040	73,365	21,801
Communications	38,869	30,931	32,085	3,443	14,796	5,180	86,436	-47,567
Professional Fees	4,000	11,285	5,587		1,475		18,347	-14,347
Financial Charges		22,090	18,704	851	5,072	-10,755	35,962	-35,962
Other General Expenses	2,275	4,528	1,168		1,110	421	7,226	-4,951
Total General Expenditure	1,035,906	291,501	269,637	13,126	102,148	10,688	687,100	348,806
Contributions & Transfers								
Cash Transfers Others	64,950							64,950
Total Contributions & Transfers	64,950							64,950
Programme Support								
Program Support	425,433	92,310	108,953	6,091	34,492	23,164	265,010	160,422
Total Programme Support	425,433	92,310	108,953	6,091	34,492	23,164	265,010	160,422
Operational Provisions								
Operational Provisions		132,106	477,992	23,180	5,092	-5,624	632,746	-632,746
Total Operational Provisions		132,106	477,992	23,180	5,092	-5,624	632,746	-632,746

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Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
	A					B	A - B	
BUDGET (C)		2,113,859	2,365,012	268,317	1,326,505	471,425	6,545,117	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	6,545,117	1,420,149	1,676,200	93,715	530,651	362,007	4,082,723	2,462,394
VARIANCE (C - D)		693,710	688,812	174,601	795,854	109,417	2,462,394	