



# PROGRAMMATIC PARTNERSHIP

## Compilation of case studies:

Success stories and technical documents based on the results of the Programmatic Partnership in Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama.

**SUCCESS STORIES**

1. **Effective Coordination:** Transformative collaborations in disaster and crisis contexts.
2. **Localization:** Global alliances, local impact.
3. **Legal Frameworks:** Innovation for Humanitarian Response.
4. **Protection, Gender and Inclusion:** Mainstreaming the PGI approach and the Dignity, Access, Participation and Security (DAPS) framework in Darién.
5. **Digital Transformation:** Innovation for Humanitarian Response.
6. **Triple nexus approach:** Beyond the emergency, intervening for the future.

**TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS**

7. **Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of People on the Move:** Evidence-based safe interventions.
8. **Disaster Risk Management:** Investing in preparedness to promote more efficient responses to disasters.
9. **Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Response:** The importance of community participation in humanitarian interventions.
10. **Humanitarian Assistance through Cash Transfers:** Rapid, diversified and dignified humanitarian assistance.



**SUCCESS STORIES**

## Effective Coordination

### Transformative collaborations in disaster and crisis contexts

Effective coordination between government entities, communities, academia and humanitarian players, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is fundamental to address the complex challenges faced by communities in times of disasters and crises. The Programmatic Partnership has proven to be a catalyst for improved inter-agency and operational coordination. Its collaborative approach has promoted knowledge sharing, optimizing resources, and avoiding duplication of efforts, strengthening community resilience and capacities to anticipate and recover from future crises and disasters. This funding has facilitated the implementation of integrated strategies, enhancing more effective and sustainable interventions that place communities at the center of solutions.

The Programmatic Partnership (PP) between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU) is an innovative three-year<sup>2</sup>, global initiative implemented in 24 countries. Under the name Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises, the PP<sup>3</sup> seeks to strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities and local actors

to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, respond to and recover from humanitarian and health crises through integrated strategies. It is based on a long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In

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addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

## Transforming from operational coordination

In humanitarian contexts, effective coordination among the various players involved in the response is a complex challenge. The multiplicity of organizations, agendas and priorities, together with the lack of clear and effective communication mechanisms, can lead to duplication of efforts, such as the repetition of similar activities or the distribution of resources without adequate planning. This not only generates inefficiency but also limits the impact of interventions by fragmenting responses to urgent needs and wasting scarce resources that could have been allocated to other priorities or complemented to achieve better results. The absence of adequate coordination between humanitarian organizations, government entities and the affected communities themselves makes it difficult to identify critical gaps in interventions and delays implementation. Isolated or uncoordinated interventions can result in responses that, although well-intentioned, fail to comprehensively address the multidimensional needs of the people affected.

Thanks to the PP, National Societies in the Americas have created and improved Humanitarian Service Points (HSP)<sup>5</sup> in key areas along the migratory route, allowing for a coordinated border intervention not only among the different components of the Red Cross but also with other humanitarian organizations, government entities, and other actors involved in the response. This facilitates the

daily exchange of information on migratory flows and urgent needs, ensuring continuity of care in destination countries. The regional harmonization of HSPs as a model for the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection services along the route, as well as the use of data management tools, have optimized the cross-border response, adapting assistance to the particularities of each route.

The Red Cross Society of Panama, in the face of the sustained increase in migration through the Darien jungle over the last five years, has prompted the search for a more coordinated humanitarian response with other humanitarian and governmental organizations in the area, as well as with the native communities along the irregular route.

The possibility of including funding for activities that promote coordination and cooperation within the PP framework has allowed the Red Cross Society of Panama to play a key role in the response to the humanitarian crisis in the Darien region, excelling not only in health, but also in critical areas such as the production of safe water for human consumption within the Lajas Blancas Temporary Migratory Reception Station (ETRM by its acronym in Spanish).



<sup>5</sup> Humanitarian Service Points (HSP) are IFRC's flagship model for providing assistance and protection to people on the move. They provide a safe and welcoming space for migrants and displaced persons, regardless of their status, to access essential services, including health services, food and water distribution, information socialization, and Restoring Family Links services.



The Red Cross Society of Panama actively participates in coordination mechanisms, such as working groups and thematic clusters, which has enhanced its recognition as an essential actor in the region. This collaborative approach has made it possible to implement more effective and complementary interventions, filling critical gaps identified in sectoral meetings and continuously adapting the services provided to emerging needs. Actions such as the provision of drinking water, primary health care, and logistical support in the management of supplies and resources, have consolidated the Red Cross Society of Panama as a reliable reference in humanitarian response, promoting comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the challenges of the migration crisis.

In the Darien region, the Red Cross Society of Panama plays a fundamental role in primary health care for the migrant population. With two modules located in the ETRM of San Vicente and Lajas Blancas, the National Society offers assistance through tents where health care is provided, which are mainly focused on the monitoring of chronic diseases such as hypertension or diabetes, or care for respiratory infections, gastrointestinal infections caused by the consumption of non-drinking water, wound healing and injuries caused by the jungle terrain and extensive trekking. In this context, the Red Cross Society of Panama has coordinated closely with UNICEF, which provides medicines or medical supplies and finances the hiring of technical staff for maternal and child protection and livelihood programs, thus allowing

a complementary and effective response to the needs of the population in transit. For more comprehensive assistance, the Red Cross Society of Panama coordinates referrals or transfers to hospitals in the area with the National Migration Service in Panama. As for specific assistance and information activities, such as directing people in the host communities, the Red Cross Society of Panama guides people to the necessary services that they cannot cover by their own means and that can be provided by other players present in the field, thus allowing the population to receive the appropriate assistance according to their immediate needs and ensuring optimal complementarity.

On the other hand, in the technical working groups, a safe referral route has been developed and is monitored especially in cases of survivors of violence. The Red Cross Society of Panama maintains constant communication with key players such as the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, Global Brigades, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Médecins du Monde (MdM) to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize resources. Cases identified as requiring specialized care, such as survivors of sexual violence, are referred to organizations in the field that offer this type of support. In the most serious cases, referrals are made to the Ministry of Health, which ensures care in specialized facilities outside the humanitarian intervention zone, such as those located in the Lajas Blancas ETRM or in the community of Bajo Chiquito. It should be noted that the above-mentioned referral route

was developed, along with others, thanks to the close inter-agency coordination of the different humanitarian partners present in Darien and with the relevant public entities, a process in which the Red Cross Society of Panama actively participated by providing recommendations and advice according to its experience and capacity in the field within the framework of the PP implementation.



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***“A catalog of procedures has been developed to guarantee safe referral routes. This initiative arose from the inter-agency protection subgroup, seeking to standardize the process and ensure adequate support for people in vulnerable situations”.***

Raymundo Ortega, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer, Red Cross Society of Panama

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## **Transforming through local coordination**

In Soloy, Chiriqui province, a community affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota, has experienced a remarkable evolution since 2020. Residents attribute their preparedness to the training provided by river cleanup, preparation of emergency backpacks, and construction of action plans. These actions have allowed them to form a community brigade for risk management, where they share experiences and knowledge through social media to train others and foster a culture of prevention and community resilience.

Being a medium to long term program, the PP has allowed the Soloy community to continue the work done in response to hurricanes, through the delivery of response equipment and the installation of early warning systems, seeking to minimize the impact of future emergencies. In addition, the community has begun to proactively manage prevention, establishing signs and organizing itself to act before emergencies and crises.

Community participation was key during this process, strengthening the social fabric and fostering local leadership. For example, a community leader was selected to participate in a

risk and disaster management forum in Panama, representing Soloy and sharing lessons learned with other communities. This type of initiative not only makes local progress visible but also promotes the continuity of collective learning.

This coordinated work between the community and the Red Cross Society of Panama greatly improved the relationship with other entities, such as the Ministry of the Environment, Municipalities, Community Boards, the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC by its acronym in Spanish), the Risk Management Cabinet and the National Emergency Operations Center (EOC), among others, which facilitated their integration into risk management strategies. These alliances facilitated the inclusion of communities in national risk management strategies, thus strengthening a more robust and sustainable response to future crises.

In Soloy, exchanges between communities were promoted, such as meetings with other areas of Chiriqui, where residents shared activities, carried out drills and reinforced their knowledge. These interactions fostered solidarity and collaboration, allowing communities to contribute resources and knowledge in their training with the Red Cross Society of Panama to support each other.

The impact of the PP in Soloy was also reflected in the inclusion of the native language in training materials, ensuring that actions were culturally relevant and accessible. This inclusive approach strengthened community confidence in the interventions, and promoted more active participation, ensuring the sustainability of the initiatives.



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***“This funding has allowed the community leader to be included in a national forum on risk and disaster management, which demonstrates the capacities built in the community and fosters its coordination with the government”.***

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This collaborative approach not only fosters a sustainable exit strategy after program completion but also ensures that communities are integrated and strengthened within local and national response systems. By establishing strong connections with key institutions and developing internal capacities, communities are better prepared to act at the earliest signs of

crisis or emergency, reducing their dependence on external assistance. Training local leaders, creating community support networks, and using platforms such as social media to share knowledge ensure that these initiatives continue to evolve and adapt to changing needs, consolidating a culture of resilience and long-term preparedness.

## Success is visible because

As a result of the PP's continuous support, the Red Cross Society of Panama has been able to:



Improve emergency response capacity through effective coordination between different players to optimize resources and processes, such as HSPs that guarantee rapid attention in key areas of the migratory route.



Activate early warning mechanisms thanks to inter-institutional coordination with government entities, implementing monitoring and communication systems to anticipate possible disasters and minimize their impact on vulnerable communities.



Strengthen collaboration with government entities through effective coordination that facilitates strategic alliances and ensures efficient use of available resources.



Provide access to specialized medical services through coordinated referral protocols that guarantee health care in critical areas during emergencies.



Ensure continuity in crisis preparedness and response through sustained coordination that ensures communities remain prepared for future challenges with sustainable action plans and adequate resources.





## Reflecting

The Programmatic Partnership empowered Red Cross National Societies to offer rapid, diversified and dignity-centered assistance, demonstrating that effective coordination between governments, communities and other key players positively impacts the quality of humanitarian response. By comprehensively addressing community challenges, we succeed in maximizing the results of interventions, generating real and sustainable change through:

- **Training and empowerment of communities**, providing tools and knowledge for communities to be first responders and agents of change in their own lives.
- **Rapid and effective emergency response**, ensuring that communities receive the necessary support at the right time.
- **Long-term sustainable strategies**, strengthening the capacity to respond to and anticipate future challenges, promoting community resilience.
- **Strengthening collaborative networks**, bringing together different players to create a comprehensive and cohesive approach to emergency, crisis and disaster response and sustainable development.

- **Inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives**, ensuring that all people in the community have representation in decision-making and in designing responses to their differentiated needs.
- **Strengthening localization**, encouraging the participation of community players and the use of indigenous resources and capacities to improve the sustainability and acceptability of interventions.
- **Exchange of knowledge and experiences**, which allows learning from the lessons and good practices of other players, promoting continuous improvement in the implementation of programs and projects.

## Looking to the future

The Programmatic Partnership model has proven to be a key driver for strengthening coordination at all levels. Having flexible and sustainable medium- and long-term funding is essential to guarantee that we can achieve:

- **Better coordination among players.** Funding that puts collaboration among players at its core is essential for a more agile response to emergencies, crises, and disasters, drive sustainable development, and foster a culture of peace in the communities. When communities, governments and organizations work together, lives are transformed, and resilience is strengthened.
- **Unconventional coordination as a response to complex problems.** Programs that promote coordination with players traditionally excluded from humanitarian work make it possible to develop other ways of intervening, professionalizing each intervention.
- **Innovation and meaningful interventions.** Programs that fund sustained participation in intersectoral collaboration spaces not only improve the speed of response to emergencies, crises and disasters, but also allow the design of innovative actions, making each intervention have a positive impact and transform people's lives.
- **Efficiency without duplication.** Programs that foster strategic collaboration among different players ensure efficient use of resources, avoiding duplication of efforts and maximizing the impact of interventions.

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## SUCCESS STORIES

# Localization

## Global alliances, local impact

Strengthening local capacities in emergency preparedness contributes to efficient responses in which humanitarian assistance arrives at the right time and has an immediate impact. The complementarity of funds, the implementation of decentralized management models and local ownership of capacity strengthening processes have been key strategies implemented by the Ecuadorian Red Cross within the framework of the Programmatic Partnership, which contribute to the localization of humanitarian aid.

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long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red

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Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

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Medium and long-term programs favor the development of capacities by implementing partners. In this sense, the PP allowed the Ecuadorian Red Cross to implement three strategies to strengthen the localization of humanitarian actions: complementarity of funds, decentralized management and local ownership of capacity building processes.



## Supplementing funds to transform outreach

Co-financing is a fundamental strategy to ensure localization in humanitarian actions. It is a resource that involves, in addition to the pooling of funds, the promotion of local management of budgets. In this way, complementarity at the financial level not only allows local organizations not to depend exclusively on international funds, but also to develop greater autonomy and sustainability.

In the province of Guayas, Ecuador, the complementarity of funds was central to ensuring

a significantly faster response to emergencies. The PP funding was reinforced with funds from other funders such as the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), which allowed the prepositioning of critical humanitarian supplies, such as non-perishable food, hygiene kits and temporary shelters, in warehouses located in strategic locations.

The prepositioning of supplies not only facilitates the early mobilization of resources but also makes it possible to prioritize local purchases instead of relying exclusively on international shipments, which contributes to local economies. The installation of these strategic warehouses throughout the country contributed to strengthening the Ecuadorian Red Cross, efficiently organizing spaces by demarcating zones, eliminating parallel warehouses and creating specific areas for emergencies. In addition, available spaces are optimized, warehouses are managed through the Provincial Boards and assets and mobile equipment are recovered, giving them utility before their depreciation. The diversification of funds, by allowing access to different sources of financing, favors the continuity and flexibility of the process, ensuring a more sustainable management over time.

## Decentralizing management to strengthen local autonomy

For the Ecuadorian Red Cross, the decentralized management model went beyond warehouse management. From the beginning of the PP, the 15 branches<sup>5</sup> assumed responsibility for managing the program's budget and leading the actions implemented, strengthening their capacity and autonomy. This challenge implied an additional level of work and accountability but also made it possible to adapt the response to local needs. In this process, the National Society's headquarters and the other partners involved in the implementation provided technical support, ensuring alignment with global guidelines and facilitating training and resources for the branches.

The decentralized model of fund management allowed the branches to better adapt to the particularities of their communities, promoting a more inclusive and participatory approach to planning. In addition, based on this model, the branches are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of actions, which

<sup>5</sup> Each branch is an operational unit of the mission development of the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

allows them to adjust strategies according to local realities and obtain direct feedback from the communities. For example, the Guayas branch updated its accountability mechanisms, adapting them to the program's requirements and to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), in addition to training the local PP team in monitoring and reporting. In this way, the technical capacity and skills of the branch have been strengthened for the transparent execution of programs and projects, as well as for autonomous accountability beyond the PP. This process not only ensures greater efficiency in management but also contributes to institutional sustainability by strengthening local autonomy and capacities for the continued implementation of long-term projects.



***“Ecuador is a great success story in localization because from the beginning the implementation of the program has been in charge of the Provincial Boards (branches). Since year one the Provincial Boards manage the budget and lead actions and there are not many programs that allow this. This is a challenge because it implies a higher level of work. The Boards report to headquarters and from headquarters to the funder, but at the same time this has been improving the implementation capacity and strengthening the reporting mechanisms”.***

*PP Program Manager for El Salvador, Honduras and Ecuador, Italian Red Cross*

## **Promote mutual learning to achieve significant changes**

Local ownership of strengthening processes is one of the key strategies to promote a mutual and contextualized exchange of knowledge between local and international players, avoiding duplication of actions and joining efforts in the response. In this context, PP has been fundamental to strengthen the capacities of the Ecuadorian Red Cross in key aspects such as the visibility of its actions, the establishment of closer relationships with key institutions and the recognition by communities and other players in the sector.



Within the framework of the PP and in order to implement joint mitigation and preparedness actions in the event of an eruption of the Cotopaxi volcano, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, together with the Armed Forces and the Secretariat of Risk Management (SGR by its acronym in Spanish), led the “National drill on crisis management with State institutions and the Armed Forces in the event of a probable eruption of the Cotopaxi volcano”. The drill verified the effectiveness of decision making by the institutions of the Decentralized National Risk Management System (SNDGR by its acronym in Spanish) within the scope of their competencies. The Ecuadorian Red Cross led the Technical Committee on temporary shelter and humanitarian assistance as support to the Secretariat of Risk Management and Decentralized Autonomous Governments (GAD by its acronym in Spanish). The exercise brought together 210 people from 50 state institutions, 14 military units and other agencies that are part of the National Emergency Operations Committee (EOC). This is a key action, since, for the first time in the face of an alert, the actual joint response capabilities at the local level were evaluated and adjustments were made to the planned actions. This is a concrete case of bidirectional learning and promotion of mutual and contextualized knowledge sharing among local players.

This result, which went beyond the drill, shows how the PP has been a catalyst for the Ecuadorian Red Cross to carry out exchange and mutual

strengthening processes with other local players. Active participation in this type of exercise demonstrates how the PP has allowed building a technical and organizational capacity that extends beyond an isolated case, consolidating itself as a fundamental tool for joint risk management and emergency preparedness.






Localization involves recognizing the value of local knowledge and establishing horizontal relationships between international and local players, promoting mutual learning as peers. This approach has allowed the Ecuadorian Red Cross to consolidate itself as a key player in risk

management and emergency preparedness, with growing recognition by public entities and communities. The leadership assumed by the National Society in different initiatives and the articulation with other institutions demonstrates that local knowledge not only complements but also enriches and expands joint response capabilities. This recognition is essential to strengthen the autonomy and sustainability of actions, ensuring that the Ecuadorian Red Cross continues to be a local reference in risk management and a reliable player in collaboration with public and private institutions.



## Success is visible because

As a result of the sustained funding provided by the PP, the Ecuadorian Red Cross has been able to carry out a more localized humanitarian response and action by being able to:

-  Strengthen its technical and operational capacity through training and updating of accountability mechanisms.
-  Preposition strategic supplies in warehouses located in key places, improving local, efficient and contextualized response to emergencies.
-  Promote localization of humanitarian response through complementarity of funds and decentralized management.
-  Lead emergency preparedness, actively participating in national crisis management drills.
-  Optimize resource management through efficient organization of warehouses and autonomous management of funds.

## Reflecting

The Programmatic Partnership enabled Red Cross National Societies to offer agile, diversified and respectful humanitarian assistance, and that localization in assistance programs is the key to more adapted and sustainable responses, focused on the real needs and capacities of communities. By involving local players, the capacity to anticipate challenges is strengthened and a sense of ownership and empowerment is fostered, achieving inclusive and resilient assistance through:

- **Local training**, which provides communities and their players with the knowledge and tools necessary to become active protagonists of their own development.
- **Proximity and effective coordination**, which guarantee immediate support adapted to the needs of each community in emergency situations.
- **Exchange of experiences**, facilitating mutual learning that enriches interventions and optimizes approaches based on shared lessons.
- **Inclusion of diverse voices**, ensuring that all perspectives are heard and valued in the planning and execution of actions.
- **Development of local resources**, promoting sustainability by leveraging the community's own resources and talents, which in turn reinforces the acceptance and continuity of the projects.

## Looking to the future

The Programmatic Partnership model has proven to be key to strengthening localization, highlighting the importance of sustained medium- and long-term financing, enabling:

- **Transforming through it**. Investing in localized assistance programs strengthens capabilities. When funding supports collaboration between communities, governments and organizations, and strengthens local players, it creates solutions that transform lives and build resilience.

- **Expediting through local support**. Location-focused funding enables rapid response to emergencies, ensuring that resources reach those who need them most at the right time and with immediate impact.
- **Innovating from the community**. Funds aimed at strengthening local capacities enable the implementation of creative and effective solutions, adapted to the realities of each community.
- **Efficiency without duplication**. Strategic funding based at the local level optimizes resources, avoids duplication and maximizes the impact of each intervention, channeling support precisely.
- **Relevant and meaningful support**. The synergy between financing and local approach allows the design of assistance that is truly adapted to the needs and priorities of each community, generating a transformative impact.



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**SUCCESS STORIES**

## Legal Frameworks

### Innovation for Humanitarian Response

To strengthen their role as key players in risk management and emergency response, the Ecuadorian Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of Panama have promoted processes to update legal frameworks that support their intervention in critical moments. Through the sustainable and predictable funding provided by the Programmatic Partnership, both organizations have been able to influence the formulation of public policies and the creation of national laws that recognize their auxiliary role. This updated legal framework not only ensures formal recognition of National Societies but also strengthens their operational capacity and facilitates inter-agency collaboration, expanding their impact in the most vulnerable communities.

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## Implications of not having updated and contextualized legal frameworks

The absence of updated legal frameworks for humanitarian organizations can be a significant obstacle to the effectiveness of their intervention. Without a clear legal framework that responds to contemporary needs, National Societies face difficulties in operating efficiently, implementing policies and programs effectively, coordinating with other government entities and international organizations, and accessing essential resources.

The IFRC works continuously to support the development of solid legal frameworks at the national level. These frameworks are the basis on which National Societies play their auxiliary role<sup>5</sup>, which gives them a privileged position to act in emergency and disaster situations. This role recognizes them as key players within the humanitarian system, enabling them to work closely with governments and international organizations to provide rapid and effective assistance to the most vulnerable communities. Updating these frameworks strengthens the operational capacity of National Societies and enables them to adapt to the changing realities of the humanitarian context, including health crises, natural disasters and migration flows.

The PP is committed to updating and strengthening legal frameworks as a key strategy to improve humanitarian response at the global level. It focuses not only on increasing the effectiveness of interventions, but also on ensuring their long-term sustainability. A solid legal framework ensures that

National Societies have the resources, authority and capacity to coordinate efficiently with other interested parties.

## Strategic positioning and development of the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Law in Ecuador

In Ecuador, the Ecuadorian Red Cross stands out for having a solid and trained legal team that allowed the National Society to actively participate in the formulation of policies and legal frameworks and particularly in the development of the country's<sup>6</sup> Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Law. The Ecuadorian Red Cross played a key role in the updating of the aforementioned law, a process that was not immediate, but the result of years of work and previous relations with national authorities. Over time, the National Society demonstrated its technical and operational capacity in emergency situations, consolidating itself as a legitimate and reliable player in risk management.



Ecuador is characterized by having one of the most comprehensive laws on risk management in the region, and the Ecuadorian Red Cross played a crucial role by being involved from the initial stages of the process of updating the law. Early participation in these legislative debates is an example of how the National Society positions itself as a strategic player capable of influencing

<sup>5</sup> According to the Statutes of the Movement, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are considered "auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field". This auxiliary role can be described as a specific and distinctive partnership, entailing mutual responsibilities and benefits, based on international and national laws, in which the national public authorities and the National Society agree on the areas in which the National Society complements or replaces public humanitarian services.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, visit: [Organic law for integral risk and disaster management - Ecuador](#)



government agendas and the construction of legal frameworks.

Thanks to the sustained strategic relationship work of the Ecuadorian Red Cross, the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Law in Ecuador formally recognized it as a key player in risk management and humanitarian response in the country. The law gives the National Society a central position within the national disaster response system. Article 38 of the law specifically mentions the volunteerism of organizations recognized in international instruments, such as the Ecuadorian Red Cross, which allows its volunteers to operate within the established legal framework, following the coordination guidelines defined by the governing entity of integrated disaster risk management, which guarantees an efficient and orderly response during emergencies. This recognition not only validates its capacity to intervene in emergency situations but also establishes a clear framework for cooperation and coordination with other government entities and humanitarian organizations.

By being part of the law, the Ecuadorian Red Cross has access to key resources for its operation, such as training, equipment, supplies and security for its volunteers. Although the organization is responsible for managing these resources autonomously, the law provides that it may receive additional support from the lead entity for risk management or from the decentralized autonomous governments (GAD by its acronym in Spanish) in coordinated activities. This inter-institutional collaboration strengthens the capacity of the Ecuadorian Red Cross to carry

out its humanitarian work, expanding its scope and effectiveness in assisting populations affected by disasters.

## **Progress towards a solid law and recognition of the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama**

The Red Cross Society of Panama began to work on drafting a new Red Cross law in 2019, with input from IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This proposal was submitted to the executive branch and, although initially postponed due to the pandemic, in 2022 the process was resumed, taking advantage of the favorable political context. The relevance of the National Society in the response to humanitarian situations of great relevance such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of hurricanes Eta and Iota, and the attention to migratory flows, demonstrated the need to update the legislation to officially recognize the role of the Red Cross Society of Panama.

The funding provided through the PP played a crucial role in this process, allowing the Red Cross Society of Panama to carry out technical meetings, the official launch of the law - its promulgation and publication - and a series of humanitarian diplomacy events to sensitize authorities and society on the impact of the legislative update. This financial support also facilitated staff training on topics such as legal frameworks and the implications of the new law, as well as the creation of audiovisual

materials and informative brochures to raise awareness of the importance of the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama and the content of the new law. Humanitarian diplomacy played an essential role, as it allowed the National Society to interact directly with the authorities and achieve the necessary support to pass the law in the three debates of the legislative process. In February 2024, Law 422 of the National Red Cross of the Republic of Panama<sup>7</sup> was approved, marking a milestone in strengthening the role of the Red Cross Society of Panama.

The process was made possible thanks to the sustained work that the National Society has been carrying out in the country in areas such as risk management, health, migration, and other issues, and the relevance of this work in the national territory. Also, the funding made it possible to develop activities that strengthened the relationship of the Red Cross Society of Panama with the State, such as the execution of an Urban Search and Rescue Response (USAR) team training, with the participation of different institutions.



The PP also facilitated the active participation of the Red Cross Society of Panama in international forums, which made it possible to present Panama's law as a model to be followed by other National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This type of international visibility reinforces the impact and sustainability of the law, ensuring that the process of legal updating in Panama is recognized and emulated in other contexts.

The law recognizes several fundamental aspects

<sup>7</sup> For more information, visit: [Panamanian Red Cross Law](#)

<sup>8</sup> Each branch is an operational unit of the mission development of the Red Cross Society of Panama.

to strengthen the role of the Red Cross Society of Panama, highlighting its right of initiative, which allows it to act proactively, even in situations where the national system is slow to respond, guaranteeing a more agile intervention through its branches<sup>8</sup>. Likewise, its auxiliary role is recognized, clearly differentiating it from the State and positioning it as a relevant player in risk management and emergency response, granting it reinforced legitimacy and authority to collaborate with other players in the humanitarian field and actively participate in the planning and execution of response strategies.

The law also provides a protective framework for volunteers, establishing specific rights, such as the right to volunteer hours, which facilitates their participation without affecting their regular work. In addition, it promotes corporate collaboration by allowing companies to support the work of the National Society through corporate social responsibility programs, providing volunteer hours for their employees.

The cases of the Ecuadorian Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of Panama demonstrate how sustained funding is fundamental to strengthen the role of National Societies in their auxiliary role. The active participation of these organizations in formulating laws and their inter-institutional collaboration allows them to position themselves as key players within the humanitarian system, improving their operational capacity and ensuring more efficient and agile interventions in emergency situations.

Updating laws that recognize the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities, by establishing clear rights of initiative and participation, not only facilitates rapid and autonomous action by National Societies, but also improves coordination with other humanitarian actors, both governmental and international. A robust and updated legal framework establishes a solid basis for greater cooperation between the different entities in the sector, resulting in better planning and implementation of response actions, tailored to the needs of the affected communities. In this way, the law not only benefits National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, but also strengthens the entire humanitarian ecosystem, making emergency response more effective.



## Reflecting

The Programmatic Partnership enabled the Red Cross to offer rapid, diversified and dignified humanitarian assistance, supported by clear and updated legal frameworks that facilitate comprehensively addressing the challenges faced by communities in crisis and emergency contexts, maximizing the impact of interventions through:

- **Collaboration with key actors** to foster strategic alliances with government authorities, international organizations and local actors, ensuring the effective implementation of legal frameworks.
- **Institutional capacity building** to strengthen National Society staff and internal structures to adapt their operations to legal regulations and comply with established requirements.
- **Active participation in legislative processes**, getting involved from the early stages in the formulation of laws and public policies, ensuring that legal frameworks include the essential role of the Red Cross in risk management and emergency response.
- **Transparency and accountability**, ensuring that National Societies operate within legal frameworks that promote these principles and effectiveness in humanitarian response.
- **Access to resources and institutional support**, enabling National Societies to receive support in the form of resources, training and equipment, strengthening their operational capacity at critical moments.

## Looking towards the future

The Programmatic Partnership model has proven to be successful with sustained medium to long term funding, which facilitates the creation and updating of clear legal frameworks, enabling:

- **Guaranteeing the sustainability of humanitarian operations**, ensuring that National Societies can continue to function without interruption in crisis situations,

within a legal framework that facilitates their intervention.

- **Adapting to the emerging needs of communities**, enabling a rapid and appropriate response to changes and new challenges, within the framework of legal regulations that support Red Cross intervention.
- **Strengthening institutional capacities**, both in infrastructure and training, to ensure that National Societies are prepared to face future crises, complying with established legal frameworks.
- **Facilitating the implementation of innovative and strategic projects** that contribute to the continuous improvement of the organization's processes and services, always respecting the regulatory and legal frameworks in force.
- **Maintaining constant collaboration and alignment with key players**, strengthening alliances with governments, international and local organizations, to ensure that public policies and legal frameworks reflect the strategic role of the Red Cross.



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**SUCCESS STORIES**

## Protection, Gender and Inclusion

### Mainstreaming the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) approach and the Dignity, Access, Participation and Security (DAPS) framework in Darién

In the context of the sustained increase of migratory flows in the Darién region, the Red Cross Society of Panama, thanks to the Programmatic Partnership, has implemented a comprehensive intervention model aligned with the principles of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and the Dignity, Access, Participation and Security (DAPS) framework. This experience not only stands out for its achievements, but also for the lessons learned that allow replicating and adapting these actions in other migration and emergency contexts.

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long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red

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<sup>4</sup> Para For more information, visit: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

## Challenges at the heart of the migratory route

The IFRC defines Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) as a mainstream approach that seeks to ensure the safety, dignity and equitable access of all people to humanitarian assistance, considering their specific needs and capacities and promoting their participation in the design and adjustment of responses. This implies actively integrating a gender and diversity perspective into the analysis of the causes, risks and consequences of violence, discrimination and exclusion in the planning, implementation and management of humanitarian actions. The IFRC's approach to incorporating these criteria is based on addressing violence and keeping people safe from harm; addressing discrimination and understanding people's different needs, risks and capacities; and addressing exclusion by meaningfully involving and engaging excluded people in IFRC's work. All of this is intended to ensure that no one is left behind

by addressing protection risks and ensuring that interventions respond to the diverse realities of affected communities, while promoting respect for human rights.

The Darién region, characterized by its extreme conditions and constant flow of people in transit, presented significant challenges for the implementation of the PGI approach. From the daily arrival of up to 5,000 people, to limited resources and insufficient infrastructure, the structural challenges demanded evidence-based solutions tailored to the needs of migrants and host communities.

These difficulties represented an opportunity to strengthen response capacities, sensitize host communities and prioritize dignified and safe care for migrants, especially those exposed to situations of greater vulnerability, such as unaccompanied children, people with disabilities or survivors of violence, among others.

The PP played a crucial role in providing the necessary resources to improve infrastructure, strengthen the technical capacities of the response teams and ensure effective coordination among the organizations present in the field. Through continuous training, the understanding and application of PGI standards was improved, ensuring that each intervention prioritizes the dignity and safety of affected people.



## People-centered innovation: Strengthening humanitarian response

Community participation played a key role in implementing significant improvements within the program, especially to respond to the needs of people in transit. Thanks to the continuous dialogue with migrants and a constant feedback system, important adaptations were achieved that not only improved immediate conditions but also ensured a more inclusive and efficient response.

### 1. Infrastructure adaptations: More privacy and accessibility for everyone

The implementation of these measures responded to several protection risks identified, such as the lack of privacy at the points of care, which exposed people to situations of vulnerability, especially in medical consultations. In addition, the lack of accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities, mothers with small children and older adults hinders their access to services. The inadequate distribution of bathrooms and showers increased health risks, while exposure to the sun without coverage increased the risk of dehydration.

One of the first changes identified as a priority was the need for safer and more private spaces at the points of care. In response, dividers were installed in the medical consultation areas, allowing people to receive care in an environment that respected their dignity and privacy, especially in sensitive situations. In addition, to ensure that all people, regardless of their physical condition, could access services in a safe and equitable manner, ramps were installed, and inclusive signage was implemented. These measures not only benefited people with disabilities, but also mothers with small children and older adults in transit, who face difficulties in accessing care spaces.

This process of infrastructure improvement extended to other key aspects of the service space. Adequate lighting and the correct location of hydration points were fundamental to ensure people's well-being during their stay at the site. The layout and design of the restroom and shower areas were also restructured, in inter-agency coordination, to guarantee privacy and access to decent sanitary facilities.



To provide protection from inclement weather, roofs were installed to protect people from the sun, ensuring comfort and safety. In addition, screening processes were implemented to prioritize attention according to vulnerability profiles, ensuring that those most in need received timely and adequate care.

### 2. Review and adjustment of assistance kits: Response to real needs

The continuous revision of the assistance kits was a key process that arose from the comments received in the exchanges spaces with the affected people. Initially, some items included in the kits, such as certain feminine hygiene products or educational materials, were not considered a priority by people in transit. After analyzing this feedback, the contents were adjusted, replacing the less necessary items with basic necessities. For example, the amount of soap, considered essential for both personal care and disease prevention, was increased.

Hygiene kits were differentiated according to gender and age. The kits for women included menstrual hygiene products, while basic personal hygiene items were prioritized for men and children. This customization made it possible to

address the specific needs of each group more precisely, ensuring that everyone received the products most relevant to their situation.

The dignity kits, meanwhile, included tools that promote self-care and safety for people on the move, such as towels, hygiene products, underwear, and other essential items that would allow them to maintain their dignity and well-being during their transit. These kits not only provided material items, but also a sense of respect and care in a context of vulnerability. The implementation of these adjustments guaranteed that resources were used efficiently, maximizing the impact of the aid and responding more effectively to the needs of the affected population.

### **3. Strengthening the referral protocol: Effective coordination for critical cases**

Another significant achievement was the consensual development of safe referral routes, a key component for dealing with critical cases requiring specialized care. This process was carried out through close coordination with key actors such as the Ministry of Health and international organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and United Nations agencies such as UNHCR and UNICEF, among others, strengthening response capacities.

The protocols established not only covered health-related cases, such as pregnant women at risk, people with chronic diseases or survivors of violence, but also other vulnerable groups. Specific routes were designed for cases of unaccompanied children, survivors of sexual violence, people in need of international protection, people with HIV, and people with disabilities, among others. These protocols guarantee that each case is attended to in a timely and appropriate manner, providing specialized care and avoiding delays that could endanger the lives and well-being of individuals. The implementation of these safe referral routes ensures a comprehensive and effective response to various situations of vulnerability.

### **Transforming changes: Testimonies and community perception**

These advances would not have been possible without the participatory approach and constant

communication with communities and the affected population made possible by the PP. Listening directly to people in transit made it possible not only to identify specific needs, but also to design context-specific solutions that made a tangible difference in their lives.

Improved conditions of care and the implementation of more dignified, safe and organized spaces were highlighted by the people assisted. Many affected people shared positive information with those in transit, reinforcing confidence in the care provided by the Red Cross.



***“In a context as changing as the Darién, where between 1,000 and 5,000 people can arrive in a single day, we learned that limitations in resources or infrastructure are not insurmountable barriers, but opportunities to improve our response capacity. The implementation of the Protection, Gender and Inclusion approach allowed us to sensitize both staff and communities to the importance of providing safe and dignified care. Every adjustment, from modifying opening hours to installing ramps or partitions to ensure privacy, makes a real difference in the lives of the people we assist.”***

**Carlina Pérez, Protection, Gender, and Inclusion Focal Point – Red Cross Society of Panama**

The participatory and people-centered approach was key to achieving sustainable impact, highlighting several lessons learned. In the first place, the need for continuous investment in staff training and volunteerism in the field to ensure quality of care was identified, which is possible thanks to multi-year funding such as that of the PP. In addition, the importance of actively involving the communities was recognized, which guaranteed the relevance and continuity of actions. Finally, the adaptability of services to respond both to the needs of migrants and to the constant changes in the field was essential to provide an effective and adequate response to changing circumstances.

The experience in Darién demonstrates how the application of the protection, gender and inclusion approach, together with the principles of dignity, access, participation and safety, can transform the humanitarian response. It has not only allowed for more targeted and tailored attention to people in transit, but also a more robust response, involving both host communities and partner organizations.

With the support of the PP, the Red Cross Society of Panama has laid the groundwork for an intervention that is not only sustainable and replicable but also puts dignity and human rights

at the forefront in crisis situations. Through key actions, such as the involvement of people in transit and communities in decisions, the creation of safe and private spaces, and the development of safe referral routes, the Red Cross Society of Panama has achieved an adapted and effective intervention in the highly challenging and critical context of the Darién. In addition, with the continuous training of staff and volunteers, the capacity to respond to the changing needs of the migrant population and local communities has been strengthened, ensuring a comprehensive and protection-focused intervention.



## Success is visible because

As a result of the continued support of the Red Cross Society of Panama, people have been able to:



Access safer and more private spaces at points of care, respecting the dignity of the population in transit.



Benefit from inclusive infrastructure, such as ramps and accessible signage, improving equity in access to services.



Receive differentiated assistance kits tailored to real needs, maximizing the usefulness of available resources.



Receive safe and timely referral to a specialized response, thanks to having clear and efficient protocols for critical cases.



Strengthen their confidence in services through a participatory approach and solutions designed together with communities.



## Reflecting

The Programmatic Partnership has enabled the Red Cross to provide rapid, diversified and dignified humanitarian assistance, and the mainstreaming of the PGI approach has been key to transforming the challenges faced by both migrants and host communities. This has been possible thanks to the predictable, flexible, and medium- and long-term funding model implemented with the PP, which has also maximized the impact of interventions and ensured that no one is left behind, achieving results by:

- **Guaranteeing dignity and promoting protection** by integrating the PGI approach at all levels of intervention, ensuring that all people receive dignified, safe and respectful care.
- **Providing inclusive and accessible care** by ensuring that all people have equal access to services, without physical, social or cultural barriers.
- **Realizing responses tailored to real needs** by incorporating PGI into program planning and implementation, allowing for a more efficient and tailored response to the specific needs of the population.
- **Actively including communities** by involving them in decision-making on program implementation, ensuring that solutions are relevant, sustainable and adapted to their contexts and needs.

## Looking to the future

The Programmatic Partnership model has proven to be highly effective in integrating a mainstream PGI approach, underscoring the importance of sustained medium- and long-term funding that enables:

- **Funding for inclusion and dignity.** Investing in mainstreaming the PGI approach ensures that all people, especially those in the most vulnerable situations, receive dignified, equitable and safe care. Funding directed to this objective promotes more inclusive and respectful responses in all phases of intervention, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- **Supporting active participation.** Programs that include funding for PGI integration enable communities to actively participate in decision-making, ensuring that their needs are addressed, improving the effectiveness of crisis and disaster responses.
- **Equitable distribution of resources.** Funding that promotes mainstreaming of the PGI approach ensures that resources are distributed equitably and efficiently, avoiding exclusion and maximizing the impact of each intervention.
- **Investment for transformative change.** The integration of PGI should be a priority in humanitarian funding, with resources allocated strategically, to move towards a world that is more inclusive, just and respectful of human rights.

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## SUCCESS STORIES

# Digital Transformation

## Innovation for Humanitarian Response

In response to the global challenges faced by humanitarian organizations in the digital era, the Programmatic Partnership has enabled the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the Honduran Red Cross to undertake a fundamental digital transformation process to optimize both their internal operations and their emergency response capacity. The need to modernize and optimize institutional processes motivated the adoption of digital tools that improve the efficiency and transparency of the institution, directly impacting the quality of services provided to the most vulnerable communities.

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through integrated strategies. It is based on a long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the

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technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

## Digital transformation that fosters transparency and efficiency

The European Union seeks to foster humanitarian digitalization by creating an enabling environment that prioritizes reliance on digital tools, scaling innovation, and expanding knowledge about their benefits and risks. Digitalization is seen as a tool to improve efficiency in humanitarian response without diverting the main approach from meeting basic needs, working on key collaborative actions to align global initiatives and strengthen the sector's capacity to adopt digital technologies<sup>5</sup>.



For its part, IFRC's<sup>6</sup> Strategy 2030 defined digital transformation as a key priority for the future.

Recognizing this urgent need, key strategic pillars were defined to drive digital transformation within the IFRC<sup>7</sup> network. These pillars include a maturity and an organizational model. The maturity model seeks to bridge the existing digital divide, while the organizational model is designed to revitalize the network with the support of a stimulus group. This transformation will enable the implementation of diverse working modalities, not only improving effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of humanitarian services but also fostering cross-border exchanges between National Societies<sup>8</sup>.

One of the main difficulties for digital transformation in the humanitarian field is obtaining funding, especially for basic infrastructure and training in new technologies. Although it is relatively common to receive funding for projects with visible humanitarian impact, resources for improving operational efficiency, such as in the areas of finance and accounting, are scarcer. These aspects are not always perceived as a priority by most funders, although they are critical to ensure greater transparency and more efficient management of resources. Digital transformation has emerged as a bid to improve efficiency in humanitarian response, allowing organizations to adapt quickly to changing contexts. In this regard, both the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the Honduran Red Cross have taken advantage of the PP funding to adopt digital technologies that have improved not only their internal operations, but also the quality of care provided to the most vulnerable communities. The PP has been crucial in advancing less visible areas such as technological infrastructure, training in new technologies and standardization of processes. In addition, it has facilitated collaboration with private sector partners by promoting innovation in the humanitarian sector and mutual learning on crisis and emergency management.

In the case of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society, the digital transformation began with the renewal of its technological infrastructure, replacing obsolete servers and networks with modern systems capable of supporting its workload. Thanks to the support of the PP and strategic alliances with technology companies such as Google, Microsoft and AWS Amazon, the National Society was able to implement tools such as Google Workspace, with more than 300 donated accounts, Office 365 and

<sup>5</sup> For more information, visit: [DG ECHO's policy framework for humanitarian digitization](#)

<sup>6</sup> For more information: [Strategy 2030 - IFRC](#)

<sup>7</sup> The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) network is made up of 191 National Societies working to save lives, build community resilience, strengthen localization and promote dignity around the world.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, visit: [Digital transformation strategy - IFRC](#)



an ERP<sup>9</sup> system that allowed real-time updating of accounting and a ticketing system that organizes and prioritizes requests for assistance. This set of technological tools not only optimized internal processes but also strengthened the capacity of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society to offer a more agile and coordinated response, ensuring that resources were used efficiently and that the needs of affected people were met in a timely manner.

These solutions optimized operational efficiency, allowing better management, storage and access to information in real time, strengthening collaboration between teams in crisis contexts and improving the security of sensitive information, ensuring its protection and availability. By reducing operating costs and modernizing its technological capabilities, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society not only strengthened the continuity and agility of its work but also broadened its impact on the communities it serves, ensuring faster and more effective responses to emergencies and humanitarian challenges.



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***“The assistance provided by the PP has been fundamental for us in El Salvador, as it allowed us to overcome a stagnation in terms of technology. Thanks to this support, we are now much more advanced compared to the previous situation, which will allow us to assist more quickly and efficiently in case of emergencies.”***

Salomón Alfredo Turcios Paredes, IT Manager,  
Salvadorean Red Cross Society

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For its part, the Honduran Red Cross initially focused on creating the foundations for a sustainable digital transformation. This process included the creation of policies, standardization of processes during the first year of the PP and training of staff across the National Society during the second year. One of the most outstanding results was the implementation of an annual report made with the standardization of forms in Kobo for the collection of information, throughout the territorial network that, for the first time, disaggregates data on the people assisted, providing reliable information on disability, vulnerable groups, beneficiary profiles and specific contexts, such as flooding and anticipation and facilitating the visibility of the impacts of the interventions carried out. This achievement was possible thanks to the acquisition of the necessary tools and the training of personnel in the use of these technological platforms, ensuring a more accurate and efficient data collection.

The standardization of forms was key to optimizing the response in terms of time and relevance of the assistance provided. Firstly, because the information is received in real time, which speeds up the process of preparing the inputs to be delivered. Secondly, because these inputs are tailored to the real needs of each affected person or family, information that emerges thanks to the disaggregation of data within these forms.

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<sup>9</sup> The ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software is a corporate resources planning system.



***“Funding through the PP made it possible to include digital transformation in a project for the first time, a topic that had not been addressed in previous projects more focused on programmatic areas. It is key that donors recognize the need to support National Societies in this area, as not all can fund their digital development independently. Digital transformation is essential for efficiency and timely response, and is an obligation for National Societies, not just an optional necessity.”***

Alicia Flores, Information and Technology Manager, Honduran Red Cross

Both the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the Honduran Red Cross have demonstrated that digital transformation is not an end goal, but a

means to improve humanitarian assistance by offering faster, more efficient and transparent responses during emergencies. Key lessons include the importance of strategic alliances, which have been fundamental to strengthening the digital infrastructure and ensuring the sustainability of innovations. Ongoing staff training has been essential to ensure that new technologies are used effectively and sustainably. In addition, the ability to adapt to technological changes and the integration of emerging processes is crucial to the success of these initiatives.

The impact of these improvements was noticeable in the capacity of both National Societies to respond more quickly to emergencies and optimize humanitarian logistics. For example, the standardization of formats when conducting field surveys after a crisis or surveying families for future interventions, and the adoption of tools such as Kobo Toolbox<sup>10</sup> made it possible to considerably reduce work times and obtain information in real time, which would not have been possible without a funding model such as the one provided by the PP.

<sup>10</sup> For more information, visit: [Kobo IFRC](#)

## Success is visible because

As a result of this funding, the Honduran Red Cross and the Salvadorean Red Cross Society have achieved:



Renewal of technological infrastructure, improving security and operational efficiency.



Training in new technologies for personnel and volunteers.



Standardization of processes to improve data collection and analysis.



Strengthening computer security and protection of sensitive data.



Implementation of management tools such as ERP and Kobo Toolkit.



Promotion of strategic alliances with technology companies and universities.



Improved transparency and productivity with clear management standards.

## Reflecting

We know that flexible, medium and long-term financing such as the Programmatic Partnership, by promoting the inclusion of digital transformation in humanitarian assistance programs, allows faster, more efficient and adapted responses to the needs of communities, by integrating digital technologies, improves the ability to anticipate and manage challenges, optimizing resources and logistics, achieving this through:

- **Alliances with the private sector, academia and other organizations**, to ensure the sustainability of digital transformation initiatives and to share knowledge and innovative technologies.
- **Development and strengthening of internal procedures and policies**, which enable institutional authorities to be held accountable, ensure transparency and lay solid foundations for work at the national level.





- **Ongoing staff training**, to ensure that digital tools are used effectively and for the benefit of the communities, ensuring that all employees are prepared to face emerging challenges.
- **Implementation of technological platforms and tools**, which facilitate data collection, improve real-time decision making and enable more agile responses in emergency situations.
- **Fostering innovation**, creating spaces to test new technological solutions that can be scaled and adapted to different contexts and needs.
- **Innovating through technology**. Funds earmarked for digitalization make it possible to implement technological solutions tailored to the specific needs of each context, optimizing processes and improving operational efficiency.
- **Efficiency through automation**. Strategic funding for digital transformation improves resource management, automates processes and avoids duplication, maximizing the impact of each humanitarian intervention.
- **Relevant and meaningful support with technology**. The integration of digital tools in humanitarian assistance makes it possible to design interventions that are more precise and adapted to the needs of communities, generating a lasting change in their quality of life.
- **Real impact through coordinated digitalization**. Programs that promote co-financing in digital initiatives optimize investments, generating more agile responses and long-term sustainable solutions, strengthening resilience in the face of emergencies.

## Looking to the future

The Programmatic Partnership model has proven to be successful in strengthening digital transformation, and it is essential to have flexible, medium- or long-term financing, enabling:

- **Streamlining the response with digital tools**. Funding focused on digitalization allows organizations to respond more quickly and accurately, ensuring that resources and information reach those who need it most in real time, with immediate impact.

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**SUCCESS STORIES**

## Triple nexus approach

### Beyond the emergency, intervening for the future

The Programmatic Partnership as a medium-term program has made it possible to plan and implement actions beyond the response to the immediate needs of the communities. The possibility of complementing emergency response funds with funds destined to development and peace building interventions promoted the transversal incorporation of the triple nexus approach in the actions implemented within the framework of the program.

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and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

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The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

## **From immediacy to resilience: The strategic value of the triple nexus approach to humanitarian work**

The triple nexus approach is commonly defined as a process that integrates humanitarian assistance, development and peacebuilding, strengthening coordination and collaboration between these areas. This approach seeks to maximize the impact of interventions by fostering synergies between short, medium and long-term actions, ensuring that strategies, resources and decisions respond comprehensively to the needs of communities, promoting their resilience and sustainability in contexts of crisis and recovery.

As a medium-term program, the PP has made it possible to plan and implement actions beyond the response to the immediate needs of the communities, as well as to coordinate interventions more effectively among humanitarian players, achieving a comprehensive and coherent response with a view to the sustainable future of the communities. Furthermore, the adaptability of funds allowed National Societies to adjust interventions, aligning the humanitarian response with development and peacebuilding objectives and adapting it to complex and dynamic contexts using cross-cutting protection, gender and inclusion approaches and including community accountability in the process.

## **Responding to the urgent with a view to a sustainable future**

Petén, located in northern Guatemala, is a department characterized by its biodiversity and vast areas of tropical forest, making it an ecosystem of great ecological importance. However, the 2024 fire season differed from others due to the recurrence and behavior of the fire. Between December 2023

and May 2024, Guatemala recorded 2,627 forest fires, which devastated more than 46,500 hectares of land. During this period, the department of Petén stood out as the most affected region, with 143 fires recorded, of which 114 were forest fires and 29 non-forest fires<sup>5</sup>.

In this context, the Guatemalan Red Cross, in recognition of its auxiliary role of the public authorities<sup>6</sup> and expertise as first responders, was convened by the National Coordinator for the Reduction of Disasters of Natural or Provoked Origin (CONRED by its acronym in Spanish) and the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP by its acronym in Spanish) to coordinate comprehensive health care actions in the camps set up in Laguna del Tigre, Petén to respond to the fires.

In this role, the health teams of the Guatemalan Red Cross provided medical care to brigade members and residents affected by the forest fires, implemented measures to ensure access to drinking water and adequate sanitation conditions in the camps and, from the voluntary sector, carried out fumigation and vector control campaigns to prevent outbreaks of insect-borne diseases, ensuring a safer environment not only for the affected people but also for all the stakeholders working in the area.



<sup>5</sup> [Informative Bulletin - CONRED](#)

<sup>6</sup> Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are neither governmental institutions nor fully independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Their relationship with the authorities of their country is defined by their 'auxiliary' role and by the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. For more information on the auxiliary role to the public authorities characteristic of National Societies, consult: [Auxiliary role - IFRC](#)

However, the intervention of the Guatemalan Red Cross was not limited only to emergency response. Based on PP funds and thanks to the flexibility of the budget, it was possible to design actions aimed at strengthening community capacities to respond to future crises and emergencies. Likewise, the availability of funds from other sources made it possible to complement these actions with interventions aimed at community development.

From the intervention of the Guatemalan Red Cross in departmental roundtables with civil society and key community actors, it was identified that 90% of the families that had been affected by the fires were exposed to long days of agricultural work in extremely precarious conditions. In this context, the livelihood protection work, based on cash transfers, the distribution of improved seeds and training to improve farming techniques implemented within the framework of the National Society's response, contributed to a comprehensive intervention with lasting impacts beyond the emergency.



***“As a National Society, we prioritized assistance in communities with day laborers, ensuring that they did not lose their livelihoods. The surplus from their work was converted into time to provide care for people on the move”.***

Fredy Reynosa Contreras, PP Program Coordinator, Guatemalan Red Cross

Coordination among players not only enabled response and development work but also recognized the need to work towards safer and more secure communities.

In order to promote peace and violence situations against migrants, the Guatemalan Red Cross designed a comprehensive accompaniment plan that included the strengthening of humanitarian protection services and the implementation of awareness-raising actions in strategic rural communities, such as Puerto Barrio, Entre Ríos and Petén, located along migratory routes. These actions not only sought to address the urgent needs of people on the move, but also to encourage the participation of host communities in the creation



of safe environments, fostering a context of peace, free from violence.

To this end, community sessions were held to reduce xenophobia and disseminate key messages against stigma and discrimination among host communities, especially in educational centers, strengthening the role of communities as allies in the humanitarian response. At the same time, capacity building programs were implemented for local families, such as first aid workshops, provision of basic equipment and actions aimed at protecting livelihoods, which allowed greater access to resources and the integration of communities in a more sustainable approach, leaving room for peace-building actions.

Coordination mechanisms were promoted with local entities, such as the departmental roundtables, and associations of health promoters were formed to act as bridges to identify the most urgent needs of the populations. This facilitated the planning and execution of specific actions, such as the mobilization of resources to prevent diseases, the delivery of food kits, and the development of sustainable productive initiatives, such as the gallery forests in Izabal, which reduce the impact of climatic disasters and strengthen community resilience.

These initiatives have been instrumental in building respectful links between migrants and host communities, achieving more inclusive and violence-free environments, while ensuring a humanitarian response that integrates the pillars of the triple nexus: humanitarian assistance, development and peacebuilding.

## Success is visible because

As a result of this funding, the Guatemalan Red Cross has been able to:



Provide comprehensive medical care and implement sanitation measures in camps for people affected by forest fires.



Ensure access to safe drinking water and fumigation campaigns to prevent vector-borne diseases.



Protect livelihoods through cash transfer, improved seed distribution and training in sustainable farming techniques.



Promoting inclusion and respect for migrants through campaigns against stigma and discrimination.



Foster links between migrants and host communities, building safe and violence-free environments.

## Reflecting

The Programmatic Partnership has promoted the planning and implementation of actions beyond the response to immediate community needs, favoring the adoption of the triple nexus approach. Thus, the challenges faced by the communities are comprehensively addressed, maximizing the impact of the interventions through:

- **Immediate humanitarian assistance**, which responds to the urgent needs of communities, ensuring that they receive the necessary support at critical times, such as medical care, access to drinking water and sanitation measures to prevent disease outbreaks.
- **Strengthening local capacities**, ensuring that communities can face future emergencies with greater resilience. This includes livelihood protection, such as improved seed distribution and training in sustainable agricultural techniques, which fosters the long-term comprehensive well-being of the population.
- **Building violence-free communities**, promoting peace and inclusion. Through awareness-raising interventions and anti-stigma and anti-discrimination messages, respectful





links between host communities and migrants are strengthened, creating safer and more secure environments for all.

- **Long-term capacity development,** implementing strategies that not only respond to crises, but also empower communities in key areas such as risk management and sustainability, enabling individuals and communities to manage their own recovery and development processes.
- **Strengthened coordination and collaboration,** optimizing the efforts of all actors involved in crisis response. This inter-institutional collaboration and collaboration with civil society ensures that interventions are coherent and aligned with the real needs of the communities, improving the effectiveness of the actions implemented.

## Looking to the future

The Programmatic Partnership model has proven to be successful in the implementation of the triple

nexus approach, underscoring the importance of sustained medium- and long-term funding, enabling:

- **Other intervention modalities to be possible.** Flexible programs make it possible to address urgent needs while remaining forward-looking and promoting the development and building of safe and cohesive communities.
- **A continuous commitment.** Long-term programs make it possible to overcome the immediacy of humanitarian response and implement long-term actions that ensure community development, contributing to sustainability and promoting collaboration between partners and communities.
- **Uniting resources and multiplying results.** Strategic planning makes it possible to consider continuity between funds from different programs. Combining resources for response with those oriented to community development and strengthening allows for comprehensive interventions of greater scope.

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# Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of People on the Move

## Evidence-based safe interventions

**TECHNICAL DOCUMENT**



The Programmatic Partnership (PP) between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU) is an innovative three-year<sup>2</sup>, global initiative implemented in 24 countries. Under the name Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises, the PP<sup>3</sup> seeks to strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities and local actors to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, respond to and recover from humanitarian and health crises through integrated strategies. It is based on a

long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Throughout this document reference will be made to the European Union (EU) for ease of reading and understanding.

<sup>2</sup> Starting in March 2022 and with an estimated completion date of June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this document, the term PP will be used to refer to the Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises program, taking into account the funding modality that characterizes its actions.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, visit: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

**Pillar 3 of the PP, Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of People on the Move, adopts a route-based approach** to provide comprehensive and coordinated assistance to respond to the needs of people on the move. Key elements of the approach incorporate the identification of migratory routes, including the mapping of hotspots where migrants face the greatest risks and vulnerabilities; and the provision of comprehensive services tailored to the specific needs of the people on the move themselves and the host communities. The PP model stands out for its capacity to implement a route-based approach, not only because of the opportunity to train personnel, but mainly because of its geographic coverage and stability, which allow the development of cross-border intervention models. In addition, its operational and financial flexibility ensures effective adaptation to the constant changes and volatility of migratory flows, responding to the real needs of the population on the move and the vulnerabilities derived from their situation.



Migration is the most relevant humanitarian crisis in the Americas. Factors such as economic

hardship, extreme poverty, drug and gang-related violence, political instability, and disasters have driven millions of people to move in and out of their countries of origin. This scenario represents a growing challenge, surpassing the response capacity of States and demanding the intervention of humanitarian organizations.

In the last three years, migration figures in the region have shown alarming increases. According to the World Migration Report 2024, as of March 2023, more than 7 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela had left their country, of which more than 6 million remain in countries of the Americas, such as Colombia, Peru and Ecuador (IOM, 2024). In comparison, in 2021 there were about 5.6 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide (IOM, 2021), which shows a sustained increase of more than 25% in two years (IOM, 2021).

The Darién Jungle, which connects Colombia with Panama, has reached record numbers of crossings. In the first quarter of 2024, 110,008 crossings were recorded along this route, representing a 126% increase compared to the 48,760 crossings in the same period in 2022 (Mixed Migration Centre, 2024; National Migration Service of Panama, 2022). This increase reflects not only the growing migratory flow, but also the persistence of precarious and dangerous conditions.

In Central America, internal and external displacement continues to increase due to violence, poverty and the climate crisis. In 2023, Honduras reported nearly 247,000 internal displacements related to disasters and violence (IDMC, 2023), an increase of 14% over 2021, when 216,000 displacements were recorded (IDMC, 2021). Similarly, Guatemala and El Salvador have experienced an increase in forced displacement, especially among communities affected by climate change and the effects of recurrent hurricanes in recent years (IDMC, 2021).

In Ecuador, violence and the impact of criminal groups have generated a significant increase in displacement to neighboring countries. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of Ecuadorians requesting refuge in Colombia increased by 42%, from 11,350 requests in 2022 to 16,100 in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023; UNHCR, 2022). The climate crisis has also exacerbated internal displacement. In 2023, Ecuador reported more than 14,000

displacements associated with disasters such as floods and landslides, an increase of 25% over 2021 (IDMC, 2023; IDMC, 2021).

The sustained increase in migration and displacement figures in the Americas is evidence of a critical scenario that requires coordinated state and humanitarian action.

**Why assistance and protection of people on route?**<sup>5</sup> Assistance and protection of people on route is essential because of the significant risks they face during their movement. Migratory routes, both land and sea, present dangers that threaten the lives, dignity and rights of people on the move. Many of them are exposed to extreme situations, such as abuse, disappearances, or the lack of basic needs such as food, water, shelter, medical care and psychosocial support. Under these circumstances, IFRC's Global Route-Based Migration Programme<sup>6</sup> in which the PP is framed, seeks to save lives and ensure the safety and dignity of migrants and displaced persons.

**What types of assistance are provided?** The assistance offered includes essential humanitarian aid such as food, water, hygiene kits and access to safe shelters. Protection services are also provided through psychosocial support and referral to specialized service networks, as well as medical care at critical points along the route. These initiatives are complemented by efforts to facilitate the integration of people on the move into host communities, contributing to a sustainable improvement in their living conditions.

**How do we implement assistance and protection for people on route?** The IFRC network<sup>7</sup> addresses the humanitarian needs of people on the move (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons) through emergency operations, long-term programs and evidence-based humanitarian diplomacy. One essential way to achieve this is through the establishment and operation of Humanitarian Service Points (HSP)<sup>8</sup>, safe and neutral spaces, managed by National Societies, which facilitate access to essential services, including health services, food and water distribution, information

sharing and Restoring Family Links (RFL) services to migrants, regardless of their status. The HSP model is key to providing relevant humanitarian assistance along the route as its adaptability and flexibility allow services to be adjusted according to changes in migratory flows and emerging needs. Collaboration is also sought with government authorities, taking advantage of the auxiliary role of National Societies, and with other humanitarian organizations to ensure a coordinated and effective response.



**How do we improve our interventions?** Interventions are enhanced by strengthening the local capacities of National Societies, as local actors, which ensures an agile and effective response to the needs of migrants along the route. It also advocates for the defense of the rights and dignity of people on the move through humanitarian diplomacy actions that promote inclusive policies and more accessible practices. The constant collaboration and exchange of experiences and information within and across borders fosters continuous learning, enabling responses to be adapted and optimized. This holistic approach ensures a positive and sustainable impact on the lives of people served<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, visit [IFRC's Migration Policy](#).

<sup>6</sup> The Global Route-Based Migration Programme aims to save the lives and improve the safety and dignity of migrants, refugees and other displaced persons along dangerous and deadly migration routes.

<sup>7</sup> The IFRC network comprises the 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Secretariat working together to save lives, build community resilience, and promote dignity around the world.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, visit our [website](#).

<sup>9</sup> For more information on Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of People on the Move of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement visit our [website](#).

## Protection and dignity on the move

The PP helped to raise standards in the area of safeguarding, to maintain the safety of migrants and host communities at all levels. Actions were strengthened both for the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse and for the protection of children and adolescents, based on the development of institutional policies; theoretical and practical training for field teams; the construction of mechanisms for reporting and response; and the dissemination of relevant information to host communities and migrants.



With regard to capacity building of the teams, sustained training was provided in the activation of referral routes in situations of gender-based violence (GBV), especially sexual violence and human trafficking. Also, staff and technical volunteers were trained in survivor-centered approaches, considering safe referral routes and the complete referral cycle, consistent with the content of the IFRC's data protection policy.

On the other hand, in the case of Panama, adaptations were carried out in the HSPs, host communities and Temporary Migration Reception Stations (ETRM by its acronym in Spanish)<sup>10</sup> to increase the safety, access and dignity of all people, especially those exposed to protection risks or situations of greater vulnerability, in the services offered by the National Societies. This was done based on the application of the minimum standards of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI)<sup>11</sup> in emergencies to ensure the incorporation of the protection approach in all actions carried out, in accordance with the recent resolution on protection<sup>12</sup> of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement<sup>13</sup>.

Related to the construction and adaptation of strategies, PP funding made it possible to lay the foundations for integration and cross-border work among National Societies, based on effective communication mechanisms for strategic and operational coordination, which had a significant impact on the continuity and quality of services provided to migrants.

## Information, analysis and response

The PP allowed the strengthening of National Society capacities in data production and analysis, included in the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) processes<sup>14</sup>. This was essential to develop studies that would enable evidence-based humanitarian decision-making. In Darién, Panama, the implementation of feedback mechanisms (through surveys, interviews and focus groups), and the rigorous analysis of the data collected, allowed us to adapt the kits distributed to migrants according to their needs. Considerations such as the size and weight of the kits were incorporated into the design of the distribution strategies, based on the recovery of migrants' voices.

<sup>10</sup> The ETRMs in Panama are facilities designed to assist migrants transiting through the country, especially in the province of Darién. Currently, Panama has four ETRMs: three in Darién (Bajo Chiquito, Lajas Blancas and San Vicente) and one in Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriquí, near the border with Costa Rica.

<sup>11</sup> Emergencies exacerbate existing gender inequalities, and the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against children and human trafficking often increases during and after emergencies. These standards should be used by all Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers, and as a key reference for partners and other stakeholders in the IFRC's approach to PGI issues.

<sup>12</sup> The complete Policy is available at the following link: [CoD24\\_R1-Res-Protection-ES.pdf](#)

<sup>13</sup> The International Red Cross Movement is a global humanitarian network comprising National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

<sup>14</sup> CEA is a cross-cutting approach that seeks to ensure effective two-way communication with the internal community (staff and volunteers) and the external community (people we support). It aims to listen, understand and respond in a timely, humane and timely manner, thus allowing us to adjust our response strategies and actions to maximize their impact and relevance.



***“The more capacity National Societies have in Community Engagement and Accountability, the better they will be able to understand the needs of people on the move and design activities and services appropriate to the dynamic and changing moment people are going through on the road. Ask well and the service will go well”.***

Andres Caro, Social Sciences Specialist, IFRC

Feedback mechanisms are a set of tools and processes that allow communities affected by humanitarian crises to express their opinions, concerns and suggestions about the aid they receive. The PP enabled the mapping of the Feedback Mechanisms available along the migratory route by the different National Societies. The aim is to provide relevant services to migrants, without duplicating actions, responding to the changing needs generated along the route, and avoiding their revictimization.

It is important to mention that this listening and response is not only provided to migrants, but also to the host communities. For example, in Ecuador, studies were developed to analyze the challenges and opportunities for promoting social cohesion between the two populations. Recommendations are based on the voices of these communities collected through a participatory framework.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, within the framework of the PP, self-assessments and adjustments were made to HSPs and ETRMs to improve access, dignity and safety for migrants.

For example, the Red Cross Society of Panama installed more lighting in the areas surrounding the HSPs as a result of consultation with the communities about their perception of safety. Likewise, concrete changes were implemented in the layout of showers and bathrooms in the ETRMs to increase the safety of migrant women. Along the same lines, for the Guatemalan Red Cross, the operational and financial flexibility of the PP meant the possibility of designing and implementing strategies such as assistance posts for migrants to

choose the supplies they will receive based on their own choices and needs, promoting dignity along the route. At the same time, self-assessments conducted by the Honduran Red Cross identified a significant gap in care for migrants in the city of Tegucigalpa related to health services and referrals. The flexibility for the implementation of funds in the PP allowed not only to make this need visible, but also to activate a new HSP as a strategic response to close this gap. In addition, mechanisms have been designed to guarantee the sustainability of the service beyond the three-year duration of the PP, strengthening the care network in the country and harmonizing the National Migration Plan of the National Society to obtain future funds.



***“In Central America, where HSPs are activated and deactivated intermittently, the possibility of three-year planning improved quality and standardized services, facilitating planning and articulation according to local needs”.***

José Félix Rodríguez, Social Inclusion and Nonviolence Coordinator, IFRC

In El Salvador, PP funds enabled the incorporation of trained personnel and the training of teams to recognize the specific needs of those whose migration is forced by the violence of criminal groups. With these resources, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society established a psychosocial care unit for survivors of violence, especially sexual violence. This unit provides three main services: (1) psychosocial care, including psychological first aid, crisis care and psychosocial intervention; (2) humanitarian support and assistance, such as emergency medical services, ambulance transportation and distribution of various kits (hygiene, recreational, etc.); and (3) safe referrals to other institutions for access to services such as legal advice, shelter, specialized health care and migration orientation

The identification of people with specific needs resulting from violence by criminal groups is carried out through three main mechanisms: on-site assistance at the National Society's facilities for migrants in-route, returnees, internally displaced

<sup>15</sup> The Ecuadorian Red Cross together with IFRC developed a comprehensive Social Cohesion Report as well as an Executive Report within the countries.



persons and other cases of violence; referrals made by government institutions, such as the Salvadorean Institute for the Integral Development of Women (ISDEMU by its acronym in Spanish), the Chancellery, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health; and referrals from civil society organizations or international agencies that work in a network with the Salvadorean Red Cross Society. These referrals are made through a secure referral form. In addition to the kits provided, the cases are followed up by professionals specialized in mental health and clinical psychology. In cases of sexual violence occurring within the first 72 hours, a specific protocol is activated with the Ministry of Health, which includes transfer to emergency clinics and subsequently to specialized third-level centers for comprehensive care. In cases where the critical time has passed, an adapted clinical protocol is implemented, with continuous follow-up until the recovery of the affected person.

The personnel responsible for providing these services have been trained through various strategies. Volunteers from branches<sup>16</sup> throughout the country, especially in border areas and areas with a high incidence of violence, have received training in human rights, migration, psychological first aid, psychosocial support and care and referral

protocols through this funding. There are currently three main psychosocial care units located in Santa Ana, San Salvador and San Miguel.

As auxiliaries to the public authorities, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society has also strengthened the capacities of the Ministry of Health and other governmental entities through specific training processes. Collaboration with organizations such as Save the Children, Plan International and SOS Children's Villages has made it possible to update protocols, improve communication and consolidate efforts. In addition, strategic agreements have been established, such as the one signed with ISDEMU for the management of victims of violence, and there are plans to formalize an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on the sustainable social reintegration of the diaspora.

The added value of these interventions lies in strengthening the capacities of duty bearers, enabling them to resume their core functions despite budget cuts. The PP-funded collaboration has been crucial in mobilizing resources for vulnerable communities. The Salvadorean Red Cross Society has strengthened its position as a solid humanitarian institution at the national level, working in close collaboration with civil society

<sup>16</sup> Each branch is an operational unit of the mission development of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society.

and international organizations. Similarly, the exchange of experiences with other National Societies has made it possible to improve processes, share knowledge and adapt effective approaches without having to start from scratch.

The funding provided by the PP represents a turning point in the response capacity of National Societies, allowing them to address humanitarian challenges with a strategic, flexible and long-term vision. This model has strengthened both operational structures and the capacity to adapt to dynamic contexts, ensuring more efficient and sustainable responses to the changing needs of migrants and host communities. By investing in training, infrastructure and coordination mechanisms, standards of quality and dignity in care have been raised, promoting people-centered interventions and the protection of rights. The flexibility and durability of this funding has not only facilitated immediate and tailored solutions, but has laid the groundwork for long-term impact, aligned with the Movement's strategic objectives and commitment to respond to humanitarian needs in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Other actions carried out by the National Societies were:

**Experience translated into numbers**

**236,115**  
**people reached** through humanitarian assistance and protection along the migratory route in the region.

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**26,001**  
**people reached** with activities designed to promote inclusion and strengthen social cohesion in host communities.

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**27**  
**HSPs providing assistance** and/or protection services to displaced persons, migrants and host communities along the migration route in the region.



**Assistance and protection to displaced persons in camps and non-camps.**

Essential services such as food, non-food items (NFI), water, sanitation, shelter, health and psychosocial support. Application of the Dignity, Access, Participation, and Safety (DAPS) framework for the creation of safe spaces, case management and restoration of family links. The need for these services was validated through CEA processes.



**Assistance and protection to migrants through HSP.**

Essential services and protection tailored to migrants. Anticipatory approaches and digital support (online referrals and SMS/voice assistance).



**Social cohesion and inclusion of migrants and host communities.**

Social inclusion services, stigma and xenophobia reduction, and education and employment support for marginalized migrants. All together with information from the same community through CEA processes.



**Strengthening internal coordination on displacement and migration.**

Dialogue and analysis among Movement actors. Strengthening the participation of National Societies in relevant forums.



**Strengthening of National Society response capacity.**

Training in needs and rights assessment, development of capacity and contingency plans focused on migrants and displaced persons. Strengthening of legal frameworks and response policies.

**Reflecting**

Quality funding, such as that provided under the Programmatic Partnership, is key to ensuring an effective humanitarian response. By being predictable, flexible and spread over the medium and long term, this funding has enabled strategic planning that strengthens the protection of people on the move and ensures a continuum of quality care, maximizing the impact on their lives, enabling:

**Doing more.** La The PP made it possible to strengthen the HSP response model based on humanitarian assistance along the route. In addition, a sustained investment was made in training and capacity building for field teams to ensure the quality of the services provided.



**Doing it better.** Having teams trained in CEA and data analysis made it possible to define action plans based on evidence and implement actions in line with the needs and potential of migrants and host communities.

**Doing it in community.** Involving host communities is as important as promoting the participation of migrants in the design and evaluation of services. The PP made it possible to implement actions to promote ties between the two groups and thus advance in the construction of a culture of peace through social cohesion actions.

### Looking to the future

Funding such as the Programmatic Partnership, characterized by predictability, flexibility and medium- to long-term reach, is essential to ensure

a resilient humanitarian response, adapted to changing needs and able to provide sustainable support to people on the move, and can:

**Produce data to promote transformation.** The production of data with a participatory approach enables the development of innovative technical tools that promote community transformation and enable behavioral changes in people.

**Strengthen technical capacities.** The availability of funds for training and technical updating of staff and volunteers is essential for interventions to adapt to the changing needs of the population on the move.

**Put people at the center.** Actions based on the needs of people on the move, under the CEA approach, promote action without harm and also safeguard humanitarian personnel.

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# Disaster Risk Management

Investing in preparedness to promote more efficient responses to disasters

TECHNICAL DOCUMENT



The Programmatic Partnership (PP) between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU) is an innovative three-year<sup>2</sup> global initiative implemented in 24 countries. Under the name Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises, the PP<sup>3</sup> seeks to strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities and local players to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, respond to and recover from humanitarian and health crises

through integrated strategies. It is based on a long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters.

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Throughout this document reference will be made to the European Union (EU) for ease of reading and understanding.

<sup>2</sup> Starting in March 2022 and with an estimated completion date of June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this document, the term PP will be used to refer to the Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises program, taking into account the funding modality that characterizes its actions.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, visit: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

**Pillar 1 of the PP, Disaster Risk Management, focuses on investment in preparedness, risk reduction and anticipatory action**, thereby strengthening the capacity of communities to cope with future emergencies and minimizing the impact of crises. Thanks to the PP, National Societies in Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama have improved their preparedness to save lives and protect the livelihoods of people affected by disasters through multi-year, flexible funding that supports local response teams. This approach encourages community participation in addressing humanitarian needs, promoting more localized responses.

**In the Americas, the growing exposure to adverse events highlights the urgency of preparing for a more uncertain future.** Disasters have become more frequent and severe, consolidating the region as the second most affected by these events worldwide, after Asia and the Pacific. More than 190 million people have been impacted by disasters in the last two decades, a situation exacerbated by factors such as economic crises, increasing inequality and social exclusion, growing poverty, uncontrolled urbanization, and environmental degradation<sup>5</sup>. These trends, far from being reversed, exacerbate the human and economic losses associated with disasters. To address these challenges, the National Societies of the Americas that are part of the PP are working to strengthen their disaster preparedness and optimize their response capacity. Their efforts include collaborating with authorities and partners to identify risks, train and equip their volunteers, and adopt innovative technologies to improve the effectiveness of their interventions.

**Why is it important to invest in disaster preparedness?**<sup>6</sup> Investing in disaster preparedness is crucial to reduce the vulnerability of communities and ensure a more efficient humanitarian response when emergencies occur. Preparedness identifies risks and strengthens local capacities to respond quickly. It also reduces human, economic and social losses, which facilitates a faster and more sustainable recovery. In addition, preparedness empowers local communities, promoting their resilience and self-reliance, enabling them to face future disasters with greater capacity and autonomy.



**What do we consider an efficient response?** An efficient response involves a coordinated and strategic set of actions to protect lives and ensure the well-being of affected people. This includes speed of assistance, accurate needs assessments, and effective collaboration among all actors involved. It is essential to maximize available resources, ensure the quality of assistance and adapt to changing conditions on the ground. Inclusion and protection of the most vulnerable groups, sustainability of actions, early recovery, constant monitoring and evaluation, and active participation of communities at all stages of the process are also prioritized.

**Where and when do we work?** National Societies are active throughout the continent, from rural and urban communities to those located in remote or hard-to-reach areas, as well as in highly vulnerable contexts. Their permanent presence allows them to act before, during and after an emergency, providing immediate assistance, support during recovery

<sup>5</sup> For more information, visit: [Panorama de los Desastres en América Latina y el Caribe](#)

<sup>6</sup> For more information, visit: [Disaster risk reduction](#)

and strengthening community resilience for future crises. In addition, their coordination capacity, supported through the IFRC<sup>7</sup> network, facilitates local and cross-border responses in situations requiring international collaboration.

**What mechanisms were in place?** To ensure an effective and timely response to emergencies, the IFRC has a Global Response System to support National Societies, such as Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF), which allow immediate action during the first critical hours of a disaster, and emergency appeals<sup>8</sup>, used to mobilize additional resources when the magnitude of the crisis exceeds local response capacities. In addition, the Surge system<sup>9</sup> consists of trained teams that are rapidly deployed to support key areas such as disaster management, logistics, health, water and sanitation, communication and operational coordination. These mechanisms are complemented by a regional coordination network, specialized tools and teams, continuous training and localized intervention models that place affected people and communities at the center of preparedness and response, prioritizing inclusion and adapting to the specific needs of each context. All these mechanisms are complemented and enhanced through the work carried out within the PP framework, achieving greater reach and strengthening the efficiency of the response.

**How do we improve our interventions?** Continuous improvement of interventions is achieved by strengthening local capacities, learning from previous experiences, and integrating technological innovations that optimize operations. We also work on building strategic alliances, developing monitoring and evaluation tools, and promoting community participation to ensure that responses are effective, sustainable and people-centered.

## **An efficient humanitarian response**

The PP has optimized the humanitarian response of the IFRC network in the Americas by strengthening the response capacity of participating National Societies and facilitating access to flexible and

adaptable funding to meet the changing needs of each operation's context<sup>10</sup>. This allowed for more efficient disaster relief and improved local preparedness to anticipate emergencies, reduce risks and protect the lives and well-being of communities in the long term.

The Ecuadorian Red Cross is an excellent example of this, as it carried out activities focused on awareness raising, community preparedness and institutional capacity building. Its approach sought to implement a comprehensive strategy taking advantage of the three-year duration of the program to maximize results through sustained actions.



As part of the preparedness actions at the community level and under the slogan “Know to Alert and Alert to Protect”, talks and workshops were held for the preparation of contingency plans in more than five provinces of the country. This included the updating of relevant risk analyses, especially related to events such as floods or landslides, in collaboration with governments, local players, and different humanitarian organizations. Likewise, more than 5,000 people were trained in risk management tools, establishing community brigades to provide first aid and attend to people in their respective communities affected by an emergency. This resulted in a more efficient response, as communities and their members

<sup>7</sup> The IFRC network comprises the 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Secretariat working together to save lives, build community resilience, and promote dignity around the world.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, visit: [Emergency appeals - IFRC](#)

<sup>9</sup> For more information, visit: [Surge - IFRC](#)

<sup>10</sup> The PP, as stipulated by its funding model, has an annual budget per country, which has a margin of flexibility that allows National Societies to adjust budget lines without the need for lengthy administrative processes, as long as they do not significantly alter the approved strategy. In addition, it has a flexibility budget or crisis modifier that allows it to respond to sudden crises or increased humanitarian needs that exceed the capacity to respond through the approved annual budget. This mechanism prioritizes the reallocation of funds prior to activation, ensuring transparency and aligning with the PP's thematic pillars to maximize impact in complex crises.

developed and strengthened key disaster risk management skills that they were able to use in the early stages of a crisis, thereby reducing the level of impact to a minimum.

On the other hand, the Ecuadorian Red Cross established a network of warehouses strategically located in four areas of the country<sup>11</sup> for the prepositioning of humanitarian aid, standardizing logistical processes for the procurement of goods and services, as well as the management of spaces and the transportation of humanitarian cargo. Additionally, a logistical analysis was carried out to identify from which points in each province the different zones can be reached within two to four hours, ensuring coverage of several points from each location and guaranteeing multiple exit routes in case of emergencies that hinder the arrival of assistance. This analysis also considered the capabilities of the branches<sup>12</sup> to manage strategic warehouses, taking into account the personnel hired, available infrastructure, site security, and close relationships with other public or private organizations. Based on these minimum criteria, the supplies to be prepositioned were defined according to the typical emergencies in each area. Among the items included are hygiene and cleaning kits, tools, blankets, jerrycans, kitchen kits, stretchers and personal equipment such as uniforms, helmets and bibs. Currently, the warehouses have the capacity to cover the needs of between 125 and 350 families, depending on their size and location.

**“Ecuador is a good example of how local response can be strengthened through continuous communication with communities and effective management of available resources”.**

Eduardo Costa, PP Program Manager for El Salvador, Honduras, and Ecuador, Italian Red Cross

With a solid work base in emergency preparedness and response prior to the implementation of the PP, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, in coordination with other local players and thanks to operational

flexibility, was able to respond efficiently to the floods that occurred in the province of Pastaza in April 2024, which resulted in overflowing rivers and damaged homes. On that occasion, the National Risk Management Service (SNGR by its acronym in Spanish) and the Armed Forces (FFAA by its acronym in Spanish) initiated an assessment of the situation, which led to the activation of the provincial Emergency Operations Committee (EOC) and the Technical Work Table #4 (MTT4 by its acronym in Spanish)<sup>13</sup>. This facilitated access to communities and overflights to assess the magnitude of the disaster. However, a plane crash interrupted the response actions and, together with the overflowing of rivers, left the communities isolated, accessible only by a 3 to 4-day river journey by boat. Despite this, the affected communities took the initiative to conduct an initial damage assessment and register the affected families. This information was validated by the Ecuadorian Red Cross branches in the area, which collaborated with the community governments to establish an Action Plan.

**“We must be aware that each province and community is different, and this coordination has allowed us to strengthen our resilience. This process has been key to enabling communities to respond more effectively and efficiently to future emergencies”.**

Esilda Palacios, President of the Pastaza Branch, Ecuadorian Red Cross

The intervention of rapid response teams from nearby branches provided psychosocial support to affected families and local volunteers. Coordination between local, provincial and national levels, together with the rapid activation of the provincial EOC and the needs assessment carried out by the communities, facilitated a more efficient response, respecting their cultural characteristics.

On the other hand, the PP's own operational and financial flexibility was also a factor that

<sup>11</sup> The warehouses are located in the northern border, the coastal region, the central highlands and the southern Amazon. In each of these areas, one person is assigned to lead and represent the National Society.

<sup>12</sup> Each subsidiary is an operational unit of the mission development of the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

<sup>13</sup> The Technical Working Tables (MTT) are part of an organizational scheme based on the optimization of resources for the attention and operational response according to the humanitarian and service demands presented by people and communities affected by hazardous events. For more information on the work of each MTT visit: <https://manualcoe.gestionderiesgos.gob.ec/portfolio-item/componente-implementacion-tecnica-mesas-tecnicas-de-trabajo-p/>

allowed optimizing the response, facilitating the preparation of resources and ensuring an agile reaction to the needs of 326 families assisted by the Ecuadorian Red Cross, which, in coordination with the government, was the only organization to provide humanitarian assistance in the area after the event. The strategic warehouse of the Ecuadorian Red Cross (in zone 3) located two hours from Pastaza, was key to respond to the emergency because it had prepositioned kits for humanitarian assistance in case of floods. Having this warehouse made it possible to avoid the usual purchase process times, which usually take several days, thus significantly shortening response times and guaranteeing more timely attention to the affected communities.

“***This was the first time we received this type of accompaniment from the communities. We are available to provide any logistical support or activities in future interventions.***”

Javier Toqueton, Local Coordinator of Pastaza

Similarly, the close relationship between the Ecuadorian Red Cross and the communities, together with the technical strengthening of the response teams, allowed for greater sustainability of the intervention, as it fostered trust and mutual collaboration. This made it possible for the communities to become actively involved in identifying their needs and implementing solutions, ensuring a more efficient response adapted to their realities. In addition, by training local teams, human capital was created that is capable of responding autonomously to future emergencies, contributing to the community's long-term resilience.

Although the Ecuadorian Red Cross used PP resources, both from its regular annual budget and from the activation of the flexibility budget, to cover operational expenses and distribute the kits stored in the warehouses, the communities also contributed their own resources to complement the response. For example, they assumed the costs of renting canoes and provided personnel for loading and unloading trucks, demonstrating a valuable joint effort in emergency management.



***“The Red Cross was there at the right time. Other institutions take much longer to arrive.”***

Claudia López, Pastaza Resident

The event in Pastaza represented an important milestone for the Ecuadorian Red Cross, as many of the emergencies in the Amazon region of Ecuador are often invisible. Whenever these areas are flooded, indigenous communities are severely affected, but due to communications limitations, the assistance they receive is significantly reduced.

The PP model has been key to ensuring a more efficient response to emergencies. As was seen in the case of Ecuador, the response time was reduced from 3 weeks to 5 days thanks to a pre-positioning strategy using warehouses located in key locations. This strategy not only facilitated rapid access to humanitarian aid but also allowed the Ecuadorian Red Cross to respond in a timely manner to the needs of the affected communities, ensuring a more effective and coordinated intervention in critical situations. The experience in Ecuador highlights the importance of investing in medium- and long-term models for preparedness and response that optimize resources and improve results in emergency situations.



## The experience translated into numbers

**56,388**  
people reached

through disaster risk management in the Americas region.

**30,501**  
people reached

by a functioning early warning system.

**26,223**  
people participated

in interventions that improve their ability to cope with disasters and crises.

**9,164**  
people covered

by early warning protocols.

**819**  
people

whose livelihoods were protected in the face of crises and disasters.

Other actions carried out by the National Societies participating in the PP in the Americas were as follows:



### **Strengthening of community brigades.**

Training in first aid and crisis care, promoting a rapid and efficient local response to emergencies.



### **Development of tailored contingency plans.**

Participatory plans based on local risk assessments and hazard forecasts, tailored to the specific needs of each community.



### **Prepositioning of humanitarian aid.**

Strategies to ensure the availability of essential resources and supplies, improving the capacity for immediate response to disasters.



### **Improvement in local and community coordination.**

Strengthened risk management and response capacities, facilitating effective collaboration between national and community players



### **Inclusive humanitarian support.**

Humanitarian response tailored to the specific needs of affected families, with an inclusive approach for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women and children.



### **Fostering community resilience.**

Fostering the adoption of resilient measures, promoting the capacity of communities to cope with future extreme events through sustainable practices and resilient livelihood projects.



### **Capacity building for future emergencies.**

Strengthening preparedness through risk monitoring, early warning systems, and training in informed decision making.



### **Coordination with local authorities.**

Early action and contingency plans coordinated with local authorities to anticipate impacts and strengthen response capacity.



### **Green practices to improve the sustainability of operations.**

National Societies adopted green practices to improve sustainability and environmental impact in emergency operations, such as the use of clean energy and the development of corporate policies that reflect a commitment to carbon footprint reduction..



## Reflecting

Predictable, flexible and committed to the medium and long term, funding such as the Programmatic Partnership is essential to guarantee a lasting and effective impact on emergency preparedness, response and recovery, allowing for a more agile intervention adapted to the real needs of the communities and promoting:

**Doing it fast.** Flexibility in implementation and availability of funds is key to a timely response, achieved through early activation of resources and rapid deployment.

**Doing it evidence-based.** The availability of funds for rapid needs assessments facilitates the identification of priorities and the appropriate allocation of resources, ensuring an appropriate response to the needs of affected people.

**Doing it coordinated.** Effective coordination among players, including governments and humanitarian organizations, is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure a comprehensive emergency response.

**Doing it in an optimal manner.** Matching funding to needs is crucial to maximize the use of available resources, ensuring an efficient response and directing resources to where they are most needed.

**Doing it flexibly.** The adaptability of funds to adjust to changing conditions on the ground allows intervention plans to be modified based on changing needs on the ground.

**Doing it with a focus on protection and inclusion.** Safe and accessible responses require mainstreaming a protection, gender and inclusion approach to all actions implemented.

**Doing it with a focus on sustainability and early recovery.** Planning for early recovery and strengthening community resilience is crucial for an effective response that addresses both immediate and long-term needs.

**Doing it through continuous assessment.** Including funds for the development or optimization of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms allows for real-time adjustments, thereby improving the



effectiveness of the response.

**Doing it in community.** Involving affected communities in response planning, monitoring and evaluation ensures that interventions are appropriate, sustainable and aligned with their local needs.

## Looking to the future

Quality financing is key to building resilience in communities, strengthening emergency response systems and ensuring sustainability to meet global challenges with effectiveness and commitment, considering:

**Investing in dignity and effective response.** Flexible funding is essential to ensure rapid and dignified humanitarian responses, contextualized to the needs of communities. Additionally, it allows timely interventions in emergencies, strengthening the autonomous and sustainable capacity of National Societies.

**Strengthening local capacities.** Investing in training National Societies based on the specific needs of each branch is key to improving their response to emergencies, ensuring that solutions are sustainable and aligned with local needs.

**Collaborating for greater impact.** Support through projects that foster cooperation between humanitarian actors, governments, the private sector and academia is vital to improve the effectiveness of interventions and maximize their impact on vulnerable communities.

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# Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Response

## The importance of community participation in humanitarian interventions

TECHNICAL DOCUMENT



The Programmatic Partnership (PP) between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU) is an innovative three-year<sup>2</sup>, global initiative implemented in 24 countries. Under the name Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises, the PP<sup>3</sup> busca fortalecer la capacidad de las comunidades seeks to strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities and local players to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, respond to

and recover from humanitarian and health crises through integrated strategies. It is based on a long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Throughout this document reference will be made to the European Union (EU) for ease of reading and understanding.

<sup>2</sup> Starting in March 2022 and with an estimated completion date of June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this document, the term PP will be used to refer to the Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises program, taking into account the funding modality that characterizes its actions.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, visit: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

**Pillar 2 of the PP, Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Response**, focuses on strengthening the capacities of communities to anticipate, respond to, and recover from large-scale health crises through a comprehensive approach. This includes training of local and community staff in early detection and rapid response, implementation of early warning systems based on Community Based Surveillance (CBS)<sup>5</sup> and the use of technologies for effective monitoring. In addition, it prioritizes communication strategies that promote awareness and community involvement in outbreak prevention, complemented by local logistical capacities to guarantee an agile response, ensuring the availability of key resources. As a large-scale program, the PP allowed the simultaneous implementation of training and community awareness, monitoring and early warning actions, allowing communities to be prepared even as they respond and train in real scenarios.



There are multiple factors in the Americas that increase the risk of outbreaks of communicable diseases with high epidemic and pandemic potential. Rising average temperatures and changes in precipitation favor the proliferation of vectors such as mosquitoes, which increases the risk of diseases such as dengue, chikungunya, zika and malaria. Urbanization without adequate planning, as well as large population displacements, result in the creation of informal and densely populated settlements with poor sanitation, which facilitates the transmission of diseases.

Zika, chikungunya and malaria are endemic diseases in many areas of the region, and outbreaks of dengue fever have increased in frequency and intensity in the last decade in all countries of the Americas. In tropical and subtropical areas, yellow fever outbreaks are frequent and periodic. Linked to limited access to safe water and sanitation, cholera is a constant risk, especially in countries with inadequate infrastructure. In addition, declining vaccination coverage rates, largely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased the risk of outbreaks of immune preventable diseases. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to strengthen surveillance and response to emerging or re-emerging pathogens.

Faced with this complex scenario, health systems in several countries of the Americas lack sufficient resources and personnel, which limits their capacity to respond to outbreaks of communicable diseases with high epidemic and pandemic potential. There is therefore an urgent need for humanitarian assistance to complement the efforts of local health systems and ensure effective access to quality health services for those most at risk.

**Why do we work on epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response?**<sup>6</sup> Preparedness and response to epidemics and pandemics are essential as these health emergencies represent one of the main threats to global health security. They not only affect people's health and well-being but also have a significant impact on the livelihoods of vulnerable groups. The aim is to mitigate risks, strengthen the capacity of communities to detect disease outbreaks early, implement preventive measures and react quickly, minimizing their impact.

<sup>5</sup> Community-based surveillance (CBS) is the systematic detection and reporting of events of public health significance within a community by its community members. By allowing community volunteers to report health situations, it ensures the right help, in the right place, at the right time. For more information, see: <https://cbs.ifrc.org/es>

<sup>6</sup> For more information, visit: [Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness - IFRCs](#)

**What types of measures do we use?** The measures employed include the establishment of CBS systems, which allow for early detection of possible health outbreaks. Training programs are carried out for local health committees to strengthen their response and coordination capacity. In those communities where there is no efficient community articulation for an optimal approach to CBS, community sensitization and mobilization techniques are used to form community health committees or commissions. In addition to the formation and training of community groups, accompaniment and support are provided for the design, implementation and sustainability of CBS systems, as well as for their adaptability to new risks and changing environments. Human, material and financial resources are also mobilized in an agile manner, in close collaboration with local authorities and key players in the health sector, to ensure the effective implementation of preventive and reactive measures in the face of epidemics and pandemics.

**When and how do we implement it?** Preparedness and response measures are implemented in various phases of health emergencies. In the preparedness phase, local capacities are strengthened, and monitoring systems are established to detect signs of outbreaks early. During detection, CBS systems are activated to quickly identify unusual events and ensure a timely response. In the response phase, actions focus on containing the spread of disease through targeted and coordinated health measures. Finally, in the recovery phase, work is done to restore health services, while strengthening communities' capacities to cope with future crises in a more resilient manner.

**How do we improve interventions?** The continuous improvement of interventions is achieved through periodic evaluations that allow us to analyze the commitment of leadership, the efficiency of processes, the availability of resources and the effectiveness of communication strategies with communities. These reviews allow us to identify gaps and areas for improvement in order to adjust our actions and optimize our response to health emergencies. Feedback from communities is prioritized to adapt strategies and ensure that interventions are culturally appropriate, effective and sustainable in the long term.

## **A sustainable, community-based approach to epidemic prevention**

The PP made it possible, through the training of health teams and the recruitment of highly qualified personnel, to consider epidemic risk for the first time in the National Societies' Anticipatory Action Plans<sup>7</sup>. This is crucial, as epidemics can significantly aggravate the impact of other disasters or become crises in their own right. In addition, emergency conditions can facilitate the spread of disease due to factors such as overcrowding, displacement of people and limited access to health services.



The PP, thanks to its long-term financing model, allowed for sustainable capacity building, establishing trust with communities and adapting health promotion interventions to local realities, including communities and government personnel in the planning and development of their own activities and in the training processes, who will give continuity to this type of process by passing on the information and new skills acquired to other members of the community. This made possible the effective implementation of CBS systems leading to life-saving interventions.

In El Salvador, for example, the Community Health Committees, in coordination with the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and using a CBS system, played a key role in the prioritization by the Ministry of Health of the early detection of cases of dengue and other diseases. Since the beginning of PP implementation, 20 community health committees have been formed in the municipalities of San Luis La Herradura, Tecoluca, Concepción Batres,

<sup>7</sup> For more information, visit: <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction/early-warning-early>

El Tránsito and San Miguel. The committees completed a community action plan recognized by the Ministry of Health, after receiving training in CBS by the Salvadorean Red Cross Society for health promotion and primary health care.



***“The Community Health Committees in El Salvador were strengthened with the knowledge and action of the National Society. The articulation that has been made with primary health care and health promoters is a clear success of the intervention and something that can be capitalized and replicated in other countries”***

**Dr. Pedro Porrino, Emergency Health Delegate, IFRC**

Strategic collaboration with the Ministry of Health has been essential to ensure that data collected by the committees, such as cases with early symptomatology, are prioritized at the institutional level. Through meetings and agreements with the Ministry, epidemiologists from the Ministry were integrated into the training of the committees, ensuring a coordinated and efficient response. This approach has allowed the committees to become involved not only in surveillance, but also in health promotion and the management of outbreaks of communicable diseases with high epidemic and pandemic potential, becoming a vital resource for the communities

Early identification and local management of cases have generated significant savings for both patients and the state health system. This is because people do not need to travel to receive medical care or incur high drug costs, as early detection of the disease prevents further aggravation of their condition.

The empowerment of community leaders and their ability to manage cases at the local level has transformed responses to health emergencies into more sustainable and effective processes. These leaders, by familiarizing themselves with the functioning of the local emergency system and establishing links with all the players involved, have facilitated the coordination of new activities and the implementation of other lines of intervention.

Similarly, PP has provided financial resources to facilitate articulation between communities and the Ministry of Health, which has allowed the integration of CBS into the national public health strategy. This has strengthened the response to outbreaks and created a system that can be replicated in other sectors, broadening the scope of interventions and contributing to the long-term sustainability of preventive measures. In the first two years of the PP, CBS strategies were implemented in 9 communities, achieving the notification of 5 disease alerts, 4 of which were responded to by health personnel.

Preparedness for epidemics and pandemics requires the development and strengthening of technical capacities at the local level, with tools to standardize and optimize response actions. In this context, the PP has been key to implement several initiatives focused on improving preparedness and early response. These include training on Preparedness, Anticipation and Early Response to Epidemics (PARTE), as well as the creation of checklists and minimum standards for health services at Humanitarian Service Points<sup>8</sup>, in which more than 80 epidemiologists from the Ministry of Health have participated.

Long-term and predictable funding such as the PP allows for the sustained implementation of community-based approaches such as CBS. This not only ensures the collection of critical data in real time, but also enables rapid and effective disease control interventions, ensuring continued strengthening of community response capacity and resilience in the face of health emergencies.

<sup>8</sup> Humanitarian Service Points (HSPs) are IFRC's flagship model for providing assistance and protection to people on the move. They provide a safe and welcoming space for migrants and displaced persons, regardless of their status, to access essential services, including health services, food and water distribution, information socialization and Restoring Family Links services.

## Experience translated into numbers

**314,594**  
people reached

through epidemic preparedness and health information activities at the community level.

**305,549**  
people reached

through epidemic preparedness and health information activities at the community level.

**42,207**  
people served

by National Societies with appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services.

**10**  
health spaces

have conducted an infection prevention and control (IPC) assessment.

Other actions carried out by the National Societies were:



**Training of health teams and specialized personnel.** Training of volunteers and community health workers. Training in safe handling of bodies and epidemic control measures.



**Community confidence building for health interventions.** Health promotion through home visits and group sessions, adapted to diverse populations such as children, women, and people with disabilities, among others. Community awareness through information campaigns in local media and cultural activities (cinema, mobile theater, etc.).



**Coordination with local stakeholders and health authorities.** Collaboration with women's groups, youth and organizations of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness and response. Training traditional healers and religious leaders in safe health practices and emergency management.



**Implementation of CBS actions.** Development of community action plans adapted to local needs and integration of CBS systems with national human and animal health systems.



**Support for the adoption of digital technologies for data management.** Implementation of digital systems for community health data collection and analysis. Training in data management and protection, with a focus on transparency and accountability in information management.



**Support to authorities to strengthen national health and preparedness plans.** Advising on the creation and strengthening of national plans against epidemics and disasters. Promotion of the integration of international best practices in national public health plans.





## Reflecting

The Programmatic Partnership enabled the National Societies participating in the program to offer rapid, diversified and dignified humanitarian assistance, providing the possibility to strengthen local response capacity, serve vulnerable communities more efficiently and ensure that aid reaches those who need it most with the respect and dignity they deserve, enabling:

**Doing more.** National Societies began work for the first time on implementing CBS systems, strengthening capacity for early detection and response to health risks.

**Doing it better.** Training National Society volunteers and staff has a direct and lasting impact on the well-being and health of communities. Investing in the training of qualified staff not only strengthens the immediate response but also ensures more sustainable long-term results by leaving capacities in place.

**Doing it in community.** Community Health Committees are a key player in building a region where the impact of epidemics and pandemics is reduced through anticipatory action. More than 60 communities received training within the framework of the PP.

## Looking to the future

Quality funding is essential to ensure an efficient and sustainable response to epidemic and pandemic prevention and response. The resources provided by the Programmatic Partnership have enabled National Societies to strengthen their local capacities, implement large-scale prevention measures, and ensure that communities are prepared to face future health crises quickly and effectively, considering:

**Investing today for tomorrow's health.** Programs that ensure sustained financial support make it possible to implement CBS systems that can prevent epidemics and save thousands of lives.

**Investing wisely.** Flexible programs that promote cooperation make it possible to articulate with key players and redirect one's own resources to complement the actions of other partners and strengthen the response.

**Sustainable health interventions require community participation.** Health programs that incorporate communities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phase increase the effectiveness of preventive and response strategies. The development of models that foster local autonomy and sustainability in public health requires long-term programs.

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# Humanitarian Assistance through Cash Transfers

Rapid, diversified and dignified humanitarian assistance

**TECHNICAL DOCUMENT**



The Programmatic Partnership (PP) between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU) is an innovative three-year<sup>2</sup> global initiative implemented in 24 countries. Under the name Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises, the PP<sup>3</sup> seeks to strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities and local players to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, respond to and recover from humanitarian and health crises through integrated strategies. It is based on a

long-term funding mechanism, greater operational flexibility and simplified reporting processes, allowing for more effective and adaptable interventions to be planned and implemented, in line with the Grand Bargain 2.0<sup>4</sup> commitments. In addition, the PP relies on the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which work on a sustained basis with vulnerable communities before, during and after disasters. It also has the technical support of the National Societies of the European Union (Spanish Red Cross, Italian Red

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Throughout this document reference will be made to the European Union (EU) for ease of reading and understanding.

<sup>2</sup> Starting in March 2022 and with an estimated completion date of June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this document, the term PP will be used to refer to the Accelerating Local Action in Humanitarian and Health Crises program, taking into account the funding modality that characterizes its actions.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, visit: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and German Red Cross), which closely follow the implementation in each country.

The PP framework is structured into five pillars of action: disaster risk management; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; humanitarian assistance and protection of people on the move; cash and voucher assistance; and community engagement and accountability.

**Pillar 4 of the PP focuses on the provision of humanitarian aid through Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)<sup>5</sup>**, promoting the dignity, autonomy and decision-making capacity of people affected by crises and conflicts. This modality allows people to cover their needs such as housing, food, education and health in a flexible manner and adapted to their reality. In addition, it facilitates scalable and multisectoral responses, strengthening local action for a more efficient and effective intervention, aligned with the particularities of each context. Similarly, the PP promotes the use of digital methods for secure data management and accountability, taking advantage of the extensive experience of the IFRC<sup>6</sup> in this field.

The work done in Pillar 4 is aligned with the Grand Bargain commitments and reflects the EU's commitment to use cash assistance in humanitarian contexts, as well as the IFRC's commitment to deliver 50% of its humanitarian assistance through CVA by 2026<sup>7</sup>. Within this framework, the IFRC works closely with other humanitarian players and the private sector to ensure the quality of CVA, strengthening the systems, procedures and capacities of National Societies so that they can reach more people, more quickly and help communities recover with dignity.

The Americas region faces a unique combination of multiple and complex crises, characterized by disasters, violence and forced displacement. Increasing exposure to adverse events highlights the urgency of investing in preparedness and strengthening the response capacities of local

players, as disasters have become more frequent and severe, consolidating the region as the second most affected globally, after Asia and the Pacific<sup>8</sup>. Over the past two decades, more than 190 million people have been impacted by these events, a situation exacerbated by economic crises, increasing inequality and social exclusion, growing poverty, urban sprawl and environmental degradation

This scenario raises the need to adapt humanitarian strategies to respond quickly and effectively. In this sense, CVA is consolidated as a mechanism of humanitarian assistance of high value, since they allow providing dignified support to the affected people. In addition to providing greater autonomy and decision-making capacity, CVA facilitates recovery and strengthen resilience by enabling people to purchase goods and services in local markets, boosting the economy and strengthening community networks. Similarly, working together with the private sector is key to CVA implementation because it facilitates financial infrastructure for safe, scalable and efficient transfers, providing technological innovation, access to banking and digital networks, and promoting financial inclusion.

**Why do we use CVA?<sup>9</sup>** CVA is used to address the needs of communities and individuals requiring humanitarian assistance, covering sectors as varied as shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion, human mobility and protection, among others. This modality is relevant because, by providing cash and vouchers, people can access a variety of goods and services of their choice directly from local markets.

**What types of CVA do we use?** CVA can take various forms depending on needs and contexts. It is usually unconditional and consist of one-time or repeated payments, targeted to specific groups, according to carefully defined selection criteria. When there are security risks, unstable markets, government restrictions or specific programmatic needs, the CVA design is adjusted to that context, which may result in combining modalities, use

<sup>5</sup> Refers to all programs in which cash transfers or vouchers for goods or services are provided directly to participating persons. In the context of humanitarian assistance, participants may be individuals, households or communities, never a government or other state players. This excludes remittances and microfinance in humanitarian interventions. However, microfinance institutions and money transfers can be used for cash delivery). In everyday language, the English term "cash" is also used on a regular basis, meaning cash assistance rather than vouchers or vouchers. Using CVA, the modalities are taken into account in general, which include cash assistance and vouchers. Definition obtained from: [Glosario - The CALP Network](#)

<sup>6</sup> The IFRC network comprises the 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Secretariat working together to save lives, build community resilience, and promote dignity around the world.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, visit: [Cash and voucher assistance | IFRC](#)

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see: OCHA and UNDRR (2023) Panorama of Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean 2000 - 2022.

<sup>9</sup> For more information, visit: [Cash Transfer Programming Guide - IFRC](#)

of vouchers, preference for digital delivery mechanisms, among others.

**When do we use CVA?** CVA can be applied at different stages of disaster risk management, from preparedness, anticipatory or early action, emergency and conflict response, recovery, and/or promotion of resilience and community development, which makes this modality of assistance a flexible and widely adaptable option to different intervention contexts.

**How do we implement CVA?** CVA implementation follows a series of key steps. First, feasibility studies and market analysis are conducted to assess the relevance of the program in the specific context. Then, each household is registered and assigned a unique registration number, and people are selected to receive assistance, using criteria of vulnerability, level of affectation or family composition. Finally, post-distribution monitoring is carried out to ensure that the cash and/or vouchers have correctly reached the people, assessing their relevance, the distribution process, and the results obtained. In addition, this monitoring allows the generation of recommendations and adjustments for future distributions and/or programs based on the experience of the beneficiaries.

**How do we improve our interventions?** CVA<sup>10</sup> preparedness is a key component as it enables the enhancement of National Society capacities to implement CVA in a scalable, better quality, and timely manner, thus ensuring that affected populations meet their needs in a dignified, appropriate, and effective way. Preparedness contributes to a National Society's overall organizational development, as it has the dual objective of improving technical skills related to CVA while strengthening operational capacity and systems. Preparedness identifies key gaps in five essential areas within National Societies: 1) leadership commitment, 2) systems, processes and tools, 3) financial and human resources and capacities, 4) community engagement and accountability (CEA), and 5) the capacity to test, learn and improve. The possibility of conducting preparedness exercises prior to CVA implementation has demonstrated significant improvement in response times, risk mitigation, and continuous improvement in the quality of assistance provided through the optimization of internal procedures, the strengthening of strategic

alliances with key stakeholders, the training of staff and volunteers, and the integration of innovative technologies for the efficient management of transfers.<sup>11</sup>

## **CVA in the Americas: Towards a Transformative Impact**

Through the PP, the National Societies of Ecuador and Honduras made significant progress in the implementation of CVA. The PP implementation period, with a three-year horizon, favored the continuous development of National Society capacities, which facilitated the creation and standardization of tools. In this context, the Ecuadorian Red Cross used the [IFRC Cash in Emergencies Toolbox](#) to develop a guide adapted to the local context. This guide, reviewed by volunteers and representatives of the National Secretariat of Risk Management (SNGR by its acronym in Spanish), prioritizes selection criteria based on vulnerability and household size. In addition, it incorporates market, and feasibility studies and has data collection forms that significantly optimize the time required to implement CVA in the event of an emergency. The tool was shared with Ecuador's Cash Working Group and other key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, who have expressed their intention to use it as a reference for future interventions.

The integration of innovative strategies aimed at digital transformation was crucial, as it allowed the Ecuadorian Red Cross to carry out complementary studies for each intervention and maintain constant monitoring. This has facilitated the generation of a [dashboard](#) that shows the results of the CVA in the PP framework, which is updated every two months. This dashboard, created in conjunction with the Cash technical roundtable and used by all its members as a frame of reference, includes a market analysis to observe prices and variations in hygiene and food products. This tool facilitates data-driven decision making, optimizes resource allocation and ensures that interventions are timely and aligned with real needs. It also relies on a network of key informants in the markets, who provide information on product availability and prices, as well as how they are affected by disasters. This makes it possible to anticipate suppliers' stock capacity in the event of a possible increase in demand.

<sup>10</sup> For more information about [Preparation of National Societies and Cash and Coupon Assistance](#) visit the link.

<sup>11</sup> For more information about CVA in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement visit our [Cash Hub page](#).

In addition, alliances have been established with a financial provider to implement a mechanism that allows withdrawals at ATMs without the need for a card, providing a safer alternative for individuals. This reduces the risk associated with lost or stolen cards and speeds up the implementation of the program by eliminating the need to issue and distribute physical cards. Based on this initiative, the Ecuadorian Red Cross designed security protocols for distributions, checklists for staff and satisfaction surveys on the distribution process.



***“This type of sustained work, which integrates the participation of academia, experts and state institutions, has proven to be the key to diverse and effective interventions”.***

**Mara Morán, National PP Coordinator in Ecuador, Ecuadorian Red Cross**

On the other hand, the experience of the Honduran Red Cross stands out, which, thanks to sustained PP funding, developed a new intervention strategy focused on the implementation of CVA for migrants in transit. Although other organizations are present in the area, their main focus is on working with returnees and/or displaced persons. The Honduran Red Cross is the only entity that has implemented an assistance mechanism based on coupons redeemable in supermarkets, designed specifically for people on the migratory route. To achieve this, an agreement was established with a local supermarket due to its presence in strategic points of the country and a selection of families was made according to vulnerability indicators, adjusted to the number of members.

The success of the program was based on the identification of specific needs and the search for a flexible mechanism, replacing the delivery of food kits with vouchers, which allowed the Honduran Red Cross to position itself as a key player in humanitarian assistance for migrants in transit, promoting the integration of CVA in future humanitarian responses in the region and serving as a reference for other humanitarian players and National Societies interested in replicating the model in similar contexts.

It is important to note that the PP model has demonstrated a comparative advantage in consolidating partnerships with the private sector for the development of financial products adapted to humanitarian contexts. The negotiation, formalization and piloting of these mechanisms usually require a long period of time. However, with a three-year implementation period and sustained funding, the PP created the necessary conditions to explore innovative and alternative forms of collaboration with the private sector in the implementation of CVA.

In addition, partnerships with supermarkets made it possible to take advantage of the physical presence, infrastructure and operational capacity of these players to benefit the response strategy, facilitating more efficient distribution tailored to the needs of people in vulnerable situations. These collaborations not only expedited the delivery of assistance in a dignified and flexible manner but also promoted the integration of local markets into the humanitarian response, strengthening the resilience of communities.

Good practices include coordination with key players such as UNHCR, Action Against Hunger and IOM, as well as financial providers and supermarkets. In addition, the Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family (SENAF by its acronym in Spanish) played a key role in identifying people who could receive assistance, especially migrant families with minors.

Another highlight in the implementation of CVA within the PP was the use of electronic codes (QR/SMS) for money transfers. This electronic mechanism proved to be more advantageous in the specific context of the CVA implemented, compared to traditional bank transfers. While the cards presented geographical limitations for their use, the electronic codes sent by SMS allowed people to withdraw cash at various points, such as supermarkets and other commercial establishments in local markets. This system reduced travel time and costs for individuals, causing other organizations to adopt it. The operational flexibility to implement different delivery mechanisms, according to the needs of each context, is a key factor in guaranteeing the quality and relevance of the CVA, resulting in more efficient humanitarian assistance adapted to the realities of the people served.



On the other hand, the active participation of the Honduran Red Cross in the Cash technical roundtable was a key element, enhanced by the work carried out within the framework of the PP. Through monthly meetings, humanitarian organizations providing assistance in CVA shared information on areas of work and activities carried out, which reduced duplication of efforts and promoted a more coordinated intervention in the field. This space also facilitated the formalization of agreements and strengthened the National Society's technical positioning in the humanitarian field.

For these CVA, feedback mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups and community meetings were implemented, allowing the interventions to be effectively adapted to local needs and strategic adjustments to achieve greater acceptance and efficiency. For example, the people assisted valued the possibility of choosing products according to their specific needs, which strengthened their autonomy and increased the relevance of the assistance provided. Incorporating the opinions

of the affected population in the design and improvement of the CVA not only made it possible to optimize the distribution of assistance but also strengthened confidence in the process and the active participation of the communities in decision-making.

The PP has demonstrated the added value of having predictable, flexible, medium- and long-term financing to provide humanitarian assistance adapted to the circumstances and centered on the individual. Through the PP, traditional gaps related to dependence on standardized aid and lack of flexibility in the provision of goods and services have been reduced by investing in tools for the efficient management of CVA as a modality of assistance, as well as coordination with different players, which gives people the ability to decide how to use resources. This not only facilitates a more dignified and autonomous recovery but also allows for the collection of key data to understand the needs and preferences of each community, favoring a more efficient and culturally appropriate response.



Other actions carried out by National Societies were:



**Cash and voucher assistance to people affected by crises and disasters.**

Affected populations received adequate and timely financial assistance, complemented by additional needs-based services such as health care and livelihood support.



**Medium- and long-term cash assistance as part of recovery efforts.**

Cash assistance supports affected populations in meeting basic needs and protecting their livelihoods.



**External coordination of cash assistance and vouchers through Working Groups.**

National Societies play a key role in coordinating cash assistance at the national level, working with government players and other humanitarian organizations to tailor assistance to the most vulnerable people, such as women, minors and people with disabilities.



**CVA preparedness of National Societies.**

Information management systems in CVA are strengthened, supported by digital transformation, and assessment and preparedness processes are implemented to ensure high quality interventions with adequate risk management.

**Experience translated into numbers**

**37,617**

people reached through CVA in the region.

**+4.7 million**

euros<sup>11</sup>

delivered through CVA in Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

**27**

CVA

National Society's CVA in the Americas providing "cash-plus" to affected populations.

**Reflecting**

The Programmatic Partnership enabled the National Societies participating in the program to offer agile, diversified and respectful of people's dignity humanitarian assistance, integrating the CVA to respond more efficiently and flexibly to the urgent needs of affected individuals and communities, ensuring informed decision-making on the use of resources according to their priorities, enabling:

**Doing more.** Operational flexibility is key to diversifying comprehensive support mechanisms in critical areas, developing innovative CVA procedures.

<sup>12</sup> Based on figures reported as of 31 December 2024. This figure is expected to increase once the program ends.

<sup>13</sup> Cash plus refers to in-kind or other services that have been provided to accompany cash, such as shelter/shelter training support that is considered to accompany cash but is not necessarily cash or vouchers.

**Doing it better.** The possibility of investing in preparedness before implementing a CVA demonstrates a significant improvement in emergency response times, thanks to the standardization of indicators and the implementation of post-assessment recommendations.

**Doing it in community.** Operational flexibility allows interventions to be tailored to the specific needs of communities, facilitating assistance to different population groups in varied contexts.

**Doing it with others.** Multi-sectoral collaboration with humanitarian, private, governmental and academic players is key to ensure that assistance is innovative and efficient, avoiding duplication and optimizing resources.

**Doing it with agility.** Assistance through CVA allows for a rapid and flexible response, reducing distribution times and better adapting to the needs and priorities of affected people.

## Looking towards the future

Quality funding such as the Programmatic Partnership, predictable, flexible and sustained over the medium term, is essential to ensure a more effective humanitarian response, adapted to the changing needs of communities and to strengthen the resilience of local systems in the face of future crises, allowing:

**Investing in dignity and effective response.** Investment in CVA is essential to ensure rapid, dignified humanitarian responses tailored to the needs of communities. Operational flexibility facilitates timely interventions in emergencies, covering sectoral areas such as anticipatory action, response, recovery and development, which strengthens the autonomy of the people served.

**Strengthening local capacities.** The training and strengthening of volunteers are essential, since it is through volunteers that greater proximity to communities and a response adapted to each context can be achieved. Volunteers represent a unique installed capacity that allows for a more agile and efficient intervention based on in-depth knowledge of the local environment.

**Fostering innovation.** Promoting innovative CVA mechanisms allows for the development of more efficient solutions adapted to the diverse contexts of humanitarian crises. The adoption of digital tools, such as mobile payment platforms and real-time data management systems, improves transparency, traceability and speed in the delivery of assistance.

**Collaborate for greater impact.** Support through projects and programs that foster cooperation between humanitarian players, governments, the private sector and academia is vital to improve the effectiveness of CVA and the results obtained from interventions.

**Ensuring people-centered assistance.** CVA funding empowers people affected by crises, promoting autonomy and enabling them to choose how to meet their needs and take back control of their lives, which also fosters local economic development.



## Contacto

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