


www.ifrc.org
Saving lives,
changing minds.

Long Term Planning Framework Nicaraguan Red Cross 2012

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

*The Nicaraguan Red Cross
reviews its Annual
Operational Plan and
Strategy 2020, April 2011.
Source: Nicaraguan Red
Cross.*



1. Americas Zone Mission

The mission of the Americas Zone is to support Americas National Societies to increase humanitarian and development standards, helping them to remain relevant within their country and sustainable and accountable for their actions, guided by the implementation of *Strategy 2020*.

2. National Society Mission

Contribute to protecting and improving the quality of life, health, and human dignity of individuals and communities, and to reducing their vulnerability without distinction as to race, religious beliefs, nationality, gender, class, political opinions, or any other such consideration. In addition, the National Society strives for the pursuit and promotion of peace, and a strict respect for human rights, through promotion of the Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values of the Movement.

3. Introduction

Nicaraguan Red Cross Framework

The Americas Zone Plan covers the period 2012–2015 and forms the basis of the working strategy for the International Federation's secretariat in the Americas. This strategy seeks to improve National Society leadership and promote recognition of the Red Cross as an inspirational humanitarian organization in terms of its auxiliary role to the public authorities. It also aims to position the Red Cross network and prepare it to respond to: 1) the humanitarian implications of external trends, developments and challenges; 2) fundamental changes in the nature and structure of the humanitarian community; and 3) internal pressures and challenges. This plan is based on a country approach, in line with the Americas Zone Long Term Planning Framework and the Nicaraguan Red Cross Strategy 2007–2011.

The National Society is in the process of carrying out consultations for the development of its Strategic Plan 2012–2015. This plan is based on the preliminary results of prior consultations requesting input for this process, and in line with *Strategy 2020*.

Founded on 10 January 1934, the Nicaraguan Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, with a national network of volunteers providing relief assistance, and is constituted according to the Geneva Conventions, to which the Government of Nicaragua is a signatory.

The humanitarian activities of the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) are inspired by the principle of humanity that governs the Movement, with a view to promoting healthy and safe living, preventing and alleviating human suffering in all circumstances, and ensuring respect for human dignity. NRC's humanitarian work is carried out without distinction as to race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions, and is exclusively dedicated to providing assistance to those in greatest need.

The National Society is recognized by the government of Nicaragua as an autonomous volunteer-based relief organization, officially acknowledged and respected by the State. It acts as an auxiliary to the public authorities in its humanitarian actions, particularly in the field of health.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross was officially recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 13 September 1934, and became a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on 17 October of that same year.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross focuses its efforts on assisting the most vulnerable groups, within the framework of its business lines, in the following major areas of activity:

- Risk Management: including preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery and reconstruction activities.
- Community-based health: including activities for the promotion of maternal and child health, HIV prevention, psychosocial support, road safety, and emerging and re-emerging diseases.
- Principles and humanitarian values: promotion of the Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values, aimed at reducing intolerance and levels of violence.

Given its influential, relevant and pertinent role in the national context, in particular its impact on local, institutional and communal capacities and knowledge, and in accordance with the principal humanitarian guidelines incorporated in its various programmes, the Nicaraguan Red Cross aims at strengthening its capacities in the following areas:

1. Nicaraguan Red Cross governing bodies:

Integrate activities which promote the leadership and empowerment of governing bodies, aimed at developing administrative policies, standards and processes, and promoting and positioning the NRC's image, as well as ensuring greater institutional sustainability, improving volunteer management, and elaborating guidelines for the development of programmes and services.

2. Adhesion to Fundamental Principles and Values of the Movement:

Contribute to reducing intolerance and discrimination, through the promotion and dissemination of the Movement's Principles and Values and gender equality, aimed at changing behaviour; as well as

through education and training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the Humanitarian Charter and Code of Conduct, both within the National Society and externally.

3. Promotion and Prevention in community-based health:

Carry out promotion and prevention activities in community-based health, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups, and based on fostering behavioral change in hygiene and sanitary practices, nutrition and food security, HIV awareness, and water and sanitation – in line with the country's regulatory framework. Other activities to be considered include: psychosocial support, promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation, prevention of emerging and re-emerging diseases, and community-based first aid.

4. Disaster Risk Reduction Management:

Develop a process of capacity building for preparedness, response and recovery from adverse events at institutional and community levels. This will include the formulation of clear policies and standards, including organization and preparedness of volunteers and technical resources for relief operations. This will also take into account cross cutting issues (climate change, Principles and Values, first aid and gender).

Country Context/Background of the National Society Priorities

Nicaragua is located in the middle of Central America, between latitudes 11° and 17° North, and has the largest territory on the isthmus. The country borders Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south, and lies between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to the east and west respectively.

It occupies an area of 130,373.40 km², including its continental land mass as well as the adjacent islands, cays, reefs and banks situated in Nicaraguan waters in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean.

The latest estimates, revised in 2007, show that Nicaragua has a population of 5.6 million, with a density of 46.5 inhabitants per km², the lowest in the region.

Politically and administratively, the country is divided into 15 departments and two autonomous regions (the Autonomous Regions of Atlantic North and Atlantic South), with a total of 153 municipalities. The country can be divided into three natural regions, the Pacific (with the Departments of Chinandega, León, Managua, Masaya, Carazo, Granada, and Rivas), the Central North (Chontales, Boaco, Matagalpa, Jinotega, Estelí, Madriz and Nueva Segovia) and the Atlantic (RAAN, RAAS and Río San Juan).

According to data from a survey of living standards in 2005, 14 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty and 46.1 per cent in poverty.

Nicaragua still shows a high rate of disparity, inequities and divisions between different population groups, especially amongst indigenous populations and those of African descent, women, children, and people with disabilities.

Amongst women, 52 per cent are of child-bearing age, 59 per cent are under 30 years of age, and 12 per cent have received no education, while 37 per cent have received secondary education and 14 per cent higher education. The overall birth rate is 2.7 children per woman – 2.2 in urban areas and 3.5 in rural areas. The highest birth rate is amongst women of 15 to 19 years of age,

representing 20 per cent of the overall. Forty two per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 40 use contraceptive methods, whereas this diminishes to 7 per cent amongst single women. Ninety four per cent of pregnant women receive pre-natal care, although this figure falls to 87 per cent in rural areas. Seventy four per cent gave birth in a healthcare unit and 26 per cent in their own homes.

Infant mortality is estimated at 29 per 1,000 live births, increasing to 34 per 1,000 in rural areas. Eighty five per cent of children and young people between the ages of 18 months to 29 years have received a full course of vaccination. The main illnesses are acute respiratory infections and diarrhea, with children under the age of five being the most vulnerable.

The Ministry of Health ensures the provision of micronutrients and anti-parasite medication for children under 5, of which 62 per cent have taken Vitamin A and 4 per cent iron supplements, and a third have received at least 1 'anti-parasite' dose. Twenty two per cent suffer from some degree of chronic malnutrition (measured by height for age), one per cent acute malnutrition (weight for height), and six per cent overall malnutrition (weight for age).

Of the women who know about HIV and AIDS, seventy six per cent have heard about the test, forty four percent know where to get it, and sixteen per cent have undergone testing. Condom use is ten per cent in urban areas and four per cent in rural areas, with a slight increase amongst women with higher education. Twenty one per cent of women have suffered physical abuse before reaching the age of 15.

Overall health indicators are lowest in rural areas, as a result of which national policy promotes community-based health interventions aimed at reinforcing primary health care.

Nicaragua suffers from multiple hazards. The study on natural hazards in Nicaragua carried out by the Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies (INETER) in 2001 sets out the various vulnerabilities across the country to natural disasters.

Despite its natural beauty, Nicaragua is a country exposed to a high risk of disasters such as: hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and landslides, amongst others.

The Americas Zone will apply a complementary approach to strengthening National Society headquarters and territorial branch networks, while fostering greater specialization within key programme areas. This strategy introduces thematic focus areas for integrated programming, as well as strategic support areas that will contribute towards modernization of National Societies in their way of operating. The Americas Zone has identified the following core external trends, although it is recognized that these may not be relevant for all National Societies (Annex 1):

- Urban Risk
- Migration
- Violence
- Climate change

Concurrently, in order to respond to external trends, National Societies need to update and modernize their way of operating by addressing **internal pressures** related to the areas of National Society **leadership, integrity, accountability, performance, volunteers** and **resource mobilization** (Annex 2).

4. How we will work-Business Lines

Business Line I: HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS

Areas of Concentration

Principles and Values, Policies, Disaster Law, Research studies, Humanitarian trends.

National Society Approach

The Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) is particularly intent on taking an inclusive approach in all of its actions through the elaboration and implementation of policies which guide its various structures. In developing these policies and the new Strategic Plan 2012–2015, the National Society anticipates having integrated new trends and strengthened its capacity to position itself as a leading agency vis-à-vis the public and the authorities (thereby fulfilling its role as auxiliary to the government).

Deliverables and Outputs

1. NRC Statutes are up-dated, in a participatory manner.
2. Advice and support are provided in appropriately fulfilling the National Society's auxiliary role in the promotion and development of IDRL in national legislation, and other measures which encourage Nicaraguan executive and legislative bodies to comply with their own policies and meet the commitments of the Movement's 31st International Conference.
3. A single volunteer policy is established (Rescue Workers and Volunteers, Youth and Women Volunteers).
4. Development of a plan for the implementation of an NRC strategy for dealing with climate change.
5. Development of an NRC Operational Volunteer Management Plan.
6. Statutory regulations are defined and disseminated.
7. Institutional policy for disaster risk reduction and management is determined and disseminated.
8. Volunteer Policy is defined and disseminated.
9. Gender policy is defined and disseminated.
10. Principles, norms and quality standards are promoted and applied: Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter, Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief.

Business Line II: DISASTER AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Areas of Concentration

Disaster and crisis preparedness: logistics, disaster response and recovery; relief: health in emergencies, psychosocial support, water and sanitation, food security, livelihoods, volunteers in emergencies, coordination with external partners.

National Society Approach

New humanitarian trends are of great interest to the National Society, especially programmes for risk reduction management and community-based health, as always taking into account national strategies.

In order to address these humanitarian trends appropriately, the Nicaraguan Red Cross considers it prudent to begin with information management, followed by implementation activities (for example: cash transfer, emerging and re-emerging diseases, inter-institutional collaboration and coordination, housing or shelter provision, food security, and the application of Sphere standards), with local and institutional capacity building remaining a key underlying element.

Deliverables and Outputs

1. Strengthen Nicaraguan Red Cross structures in disaster preparedness, response and recovery, at branch and headquarters levels, through established, prepared and informed teams, in line with the results of the Well-Prepared National Society analysis.
2. Incorporate and strengthen integrated institutional disaster and crisis response mechanisms, based on internationally adopted standards and guidelines.
3. Prepare and implement a national training and awareness-raising plan on climate change for national headquarters and NRC branches.
4. Preparation, dissemination, validation and up-dating of Response and Contingency Plans, and preparation and/or up-dating of Standard Operating Procedures, in accordance with Federation standards.
5. Implementation of a community-based risk management programme.
6. Implementation of methodologies and innovative tools for disaster response and livelihoods recovery of affected families (e.g. cash transfer), and training in their use.
7. Capacity building in the use and application of food security and emergency assessment guidelines.

Business Line III: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Areas of Concentration

Development of National Societies and resilient communities: health, disaster risk management, volunteering, youth, housing and shelter, food security, water and sanitation, road safety, drug addiction, marginalized groups (e.g. elderly, disabled, etc.).

National Society Approach

The National Society is strengthened by training its staff to work with communities, seeking to contribute to community-level organization in disaster risk reduction and the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace, by providing people with the necessary tools to enable greater resilience and preparedness to respond to any situation which may threaten their lives and livelihoods. In addition, it will implement relevant mitigation activities and promote the practice of a culture of safety and resilience, with particular emphasis on the impact of climate change, the risks associated with urban areas, the food security situation and other threats to populations at high risk.

Deliverables and Outputs

1. Up-date and decentralize the volunteer data base.
2. National Society work in the areas of urban risk reduction, adaptation to climate change, migration and the prevention of violence is promoted and understood internally.
3. Training of facilitators in the promotion of a culture of peace and prevention of violence through an academic partnership with a university.

4. Strengthen the NRC's psychosocial support network, through the community-based first aid methodology.
5. Create a network of volunteers in road safety, in coordination with the country's governing body.

Business Line IV: HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

Areas of Concentration

Communications (Positioning and Red Cross networking), Resource mobilization, Humanitarian affairs and partnerships, IDRL, Humanitarian access).

National Society Approach

The Nicaraguan Red Cross develops dissemination and information activities regarding Nicaragua's Disaster Law (Law 337), which sets out the various roles of governmental institutions, as well as those of local, municipal, departmental and national structures. The National Society is present in five of the nine sectoral commissions organized under the National System. It is important to note that Law 337 defines an active community role in disaster preparedness and response – an approach that is actively taken-up and promoted in National Society initiatives throughout the country.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross has excelled in community and institutional work regarding the impact of climate change, promoting adaptation actions which involve local institutions and authorities in a coordinated and integrated approach.

Deliverables and Outputs

1. Maintain and put into effect the benefits and privileges arising from the Status Agreement signed between the Nicaraguan government and the Federation, to achieve greater efficiency in preparedness, care and recovery of persons and communities affected by disasters and crises, as well as for programmes and services for vulnerable communities during normal times implemented in coordination with the National Society.
2. A resource mobilization strategy is defined and approved.
3. The National Society joins and participates in national forums in risk reduction management and climate change.
4. The Red Cross promotes advocacy actions regarding road safety.
5. Strategic partnerships are established with organizations and Movement components on issues of common interest, and for resource mobilization.

Business Line V: EFFECTIVE JOINT WORKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Areas of Concentration

Administrative support, development of financial systems, development of human resources, development of IT department/area, development of planning and evaluation department/area, innovation, legal support, risk management and auditing, logistics development, Movement cooperation.

National Society Approach

The National Society currently uses administrative and financial control systems in carrying out its operations; however, these need to be revised and adjusted.

At present, the National Society is in the process of organizing, standardizing and up-dating its human resources database – an important investment for ensuring greater cohesion in its work and improving accountability. The management and volunteers are coordinating their efforts to achieve this.

In terms of transparency, the National Society has fostered greater visibility during emergencies, using various communication media, ensuring that information reaches everyone, including people in disaster-affected areas. Transparency is considered to be very important, as it contributes significantly to accountability not only towards those who fund assistance, but also towards those who receive it.

Deliverables and Outputs

1. The capacities of the National Society's human resources are strengthened through the Federation's on-line Learning Platform.
2. Management of a modern and detailed volunteer database providing essential information on volunteers and their levels of training is available following the up-dating and decentralization of the existing technology platform.
3. The Federation advocates for and promotes with the National Society the benefits of legal counsel so as to ensure compliance with laws and regulations governing its relationship with the government, and in terms of its internal legal basis (Movement, Statutes and regulations), at headquarters and branch levels.
4. The National Society is in compliance with the Statutes governing its administration and undertakes an external audit to be submitted to and adopted by its General Assembly.

5. Potential risks, challenges and assumptions

The principal risk in implementing the present plan is that associated with a lack of revenues to meet current budgetary requirements. In addition, due to its geographic location, Nicaragua is affected by climate change, with the rainy season and potential natural disasters posing a latent risk, resulting in a constant need to remain aware of emergencies at all working levels within the National Society.

6. Work with partners

As an auxiliary to the public authorities, the Nicaraguan Red Cross is a member of the National System of Prevention and Mitigation of Emergencies and Disasters (SINAPRED), and other coordinating bodies linked to its mission to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable. The National Society also develops prevention and promotion activities in line with the country's priorities, coordinating with the Ministries of Health, Education, and the Environment, and local authorities amongst others; with a variety of local and international bodies including PAHO/WHO Nicaragua, UNICEF, SDC, GTZ, ACDI, AECID, the European Union, SINAPRED and its component structures, and the Association of Municipalities; as well as with Movement partners, including participating National Societies (Canadian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross), the secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Programme Area	Sector	Partners
Health and Care	HIV and AIDS	IFRC, PAHO
	Water and Sanitation	American Red Cross / IFRC, Canadian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross
Governance, capacity building and volunteerism	Institutional capacity building	IFRC, Canadian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross
	Governance and volunteer management	IFRC, Canadian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross,
Humanitarian Principles and Values	Prevention of violence	Spanish Red Cross.
	Support in development of Humanitarian Principles and Values programme.	ICRC
Risk reduction management	Risk reduction/Preparedness	IFRC, Italian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross
	Climate change	Netherlands Red Cross, IFRC.

7. Promoting Diversity

The area of Principles and Values is considered to be a cross-cutting issue by the NRC, constituting the basis for the efficient and relevant development of all programme activities.

Principles and Values are disseminated through different channels, and through programme-related training and training for the various volunteer groups, as well as for governance.

It is necessary to highlight the importance of working for the respect of humanitarian values internally, as part of the National Society's overall performance in carrying-out its activities at community level.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross intends to strengthen its position as an organization which focuses on working with vulnerable and priority populations in the country, showing leadership vis-à-vis government and various organizations and agencies, and achieving a high level of credibility with the general population.

Ongoing communications with local and national authorities will be crucial in disseminating the institutional mission and vision, as well as the Fundamental Principles, with an emphasis on Neutrality, Impartiality and, above all, on the Independence of the National Society.

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

www.ifrc.org

Saving lives, changing minds.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Find out more on www.ifrc.org

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:

- **In the Nicaraguan Red Cross**
 - Ing. Clemente Baldioceda, President; presidencia@humanidad.org.ni; phone: + 505 265 0380.
- **In the Regional Representation for Central America and Mexico**
 - Fabricio López, Regional Representative for Central America and Mexico; email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org; phone: + 506 2528 0211; and fax: + 506 2226 6634
- **In the Americas Zone**
 - Xavier Castellanos, Head of Zone; email: xavier.castellanos@ifrc.org ; phone: + 507 317 3050; and fax: + 507 317 1304.
 - Resource Mobilization Team; email: zonerm.americas@ifrc.org; telephone: + 507 317 3050; and fax: + 507 317 1304.

Annex 1

Core External Trends

EXTERNAL TRENDS

URBAN RISK: By 2020 the region comprising Latin America and the Caribbean will be 82 per cent urban. Unregulated low-income districts dominate the landscape of most Latin American cities. Poverty, inequality, political instability and lack of access to land are all contributing factors to this shift. Consequently, this shift is creating new trends in vulnerabilities such as urban violence, traffic accidents, and a diversity of environmental hazards, including poor sanitation, pollution of rivers and streams, and deforestation.¹

VIOLENCE: The Pan American Health Organization called violence in Latin America "the social pandemic of the 21st century." Social inequality and social exclusion are considered major causes of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. Residents in socially excluded communities cannot depend on those institutions designed to protect them, and violence becomes one of the only available options to seek out justice, security and economic gain.⁴

MIGRATION: The Americas are home to 27 per cent of the World's migrants². According to the International Organisation for Migration, issues such as natural disasters and climate change contribute to increased population movement with one in five migrants being a child or adolescent.³ Migrants who are forced to settle elsewhere are frequently subject to discrimination and lack of access to social services. It is also vital to take into account the impact that migrants have on their communities of origin as well as host communities.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Trends in climate change will continue to heavily impact Latin America and the Caribbean magnifying issues such as environmental degradation, migration pressures, food security, livelihoods and conflicts over scarce natural resources, particularly water, in addition to increased frequency and intensity of disasters and crisis.

Annex 2

Internal Pressures

INTERNAL PRESSURES

Leadership is recognized by government authorities, civil society, the corporate sector and the Red Cross constituency as a result of evidence-based information, identifying the National Societies as relevant actors in addressing vulnerabilities and needs. The leadership guides, influences and ensures better understanding of issues affecting those most in need, enabling relevant strategic decision-making, thus bringing attention to rights, needs and vulnerabilities of communities and associated underlying factors. Furthermore, leaders must guarantee that the National Society assumes its auxiliary role to the government and differentiates between the functions of governance and management.

Integrity Some National Societies require support on their internal systems to ensure that activities are being carried out in accordance with the Federation's standards and procedures as well as in a transparent and accountable manner. This also requires the capacity to develop early actions to anticipate external factors that might put at risk the image and identity of the Red Cross.

Accountability Entails active compliance with the IFRC's policies and procedures, as well as working in line with the Fundamental Principles and Values and setting and following standards so

¹ Environmental Implications of Peri-urban Sprawl and the Urbanization of Secondary Cities in Latin America. Haroldo da Gama Torres; Inter-American Development Bank; Technical Notes No. IDB-TN-237.

² UN DESA, Population Division (2009). *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008); IOM, *World Migration Report 2010*

³ UN ECLAC with UNICEF, *Children and International Migration in LAC*, 2010

⁴ Inter-American Development Bank) Research Department Working Paper #613: Social Exclusion and Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean Heather Berkman October 2007

as to become a role model. It also relates to meaningful beneficiary participation, effective and efficient use of resources and transparent reporting, monitoring and evaluation practices.

Performance Capacity building of National Societies in the areas of Administration, Finance, Planning, Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting, Human Resources, Information Systems, Resource Mobilization and Logistics (especially procurement) takes into account that National Societies in the region are at different phases of development requiring different levels of support and enabling the Federation to foster peer-to-peer support and horizontal cooperation.

Volunteering Strong commitment is needed to support National Societies to scale-up and prioritize their volunteering development efforts. By increasing the participation of volunteers in the National Societies' decision-making and institutional life, volunteers will become more engaged.

Resource mobilization Most National Societies are working in middle-income countries and, as such, benefit less from international cooperation which tends to focus on countries which are classified as low-income. Nevertheless, they work in increasingly complex and challenging contexts that require attention and reflection to find new ways of mobilizing resources. National Societies must reduce financial dependency on external donors and develop core funding that guarantees that they will always be active in their own country and will act independently from donor pressures and interests.