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# Annual report Uruguay

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**MAAUY001**

**17 May 2012**

**This report covers the period  
01 January 2011 to 31 December  
2011.**

*Uruguayan Red Cross volunteers from different  
branches participated in an internal workshop in  
Montevideo in December 2011. Source:  
Uruguayan Red Cross*



## **In brief**

### **Programme outcome**

The purpose of the secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is to support the institutional capacity building of the Uruguayan Red Cross (URC) in line with the priorities identified by the National Society, *Strategy 2020* and the Inter-American Plan.

### **Programmes summary**

This report presents the actions of the Uruguayan Red Cross during 2011. Although last year the Republic of Uruguay was politically stable and experienced relative economic development, the humanitarian mission and effective actions of the National Society remained crucial. However, the ongoing institutional crisis within the URC made it extremely challenging to fully respond to this need.

New URC management was established in late June. Whilst it was not easy for the new authorities to take on all aspects of the plans, including the 2011 country support plan created before their coming into office, the regional representation for the Southern Cone and Brazil provided support and follow-up to the National Society. Additional and indispensable support was provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Japanese Red Cross Society and the Spanish Red Cross.

This report details the particular actions taken over the course of last year and identifies future plans and challenges.

### Financial situation

The total budget was revised down from 281,763 Swiss francs to 273,182 Swiss francs, of which 74,690 Swiss francs (27 per cent) was covered during 2011. Overall expenditure during the reporting period was of 34,644 Swiss francs (46% of income received).

**Click here to go directly to the financial report.**

<https://fednet.ifrc.org/docs/Appeals/annual11/MAAUY00111arf.pdf>

### No. of people we have reached

The URC's actions in 2011 focused primarily on institutional strengthening and organizational development. Thus, the direct beneficiaries during this period are all the National Society volunteers, staff and leadership.

### Our partners

The Uruguayan Red Cross has benefitted from loyal and stable partners in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement such as the ICRC, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Spanish Red Cross, and the International Federation. Due to institutional challenges, alliance building was not prioritized in 2011. The National Society, however, maintained contact with State institutions directly involved in the URC's areas of work.

### Context

The Republic of Uruguay has an estimated population of 3.5 million who live in its 19 departments and 89 municipalities. The country ranks amongst the top Latin American countries in relation to economic, political and social indicators. Despite the current global economic crisis, according to Economic Commission for Latin America- ECLA figures for 2011, Uruguay has the lowest poverty rate in Latin America with 8.6% of its population living in poverty and 1.4% surviving in extreme poverty. The UNDP Human Development Index for 2011 placed Uruguay 48 out of 187 countries. Its strong economy derives from the combination of the country's natural resources, highly literate population, diversified commercial activities, and strong State presence. Additionally, the country has a consolidated democratic system with the lowest rate of perceived corruption in the continent.

Whilst vulnerability in Uruguay might appear relatively low compared to neighbouring countries, its strengths have the potential of becoming its weaknesses. The global economic crisis could potentially work against Uruguay's traditional openness to other economies and natural resource exportation. Furthermore, its ageing population creates a socially vulnerable sector; life expectancy is 73 years for men and 79 years for women. Furthermore, the recurrent floods that occur in the La Plata river basin generate another type of vulnerability. According to UNDP, Uruguay has the challenge to reduce the adverse impacts caused by external events, climate change, and natural resource degradation.

Internally, the URC experienced serious challenges and transformations in 2011. The entire URC management resigned during the first half of the year, generating a serious governance problem. The new directorate assumed responsibilities in late June 2011. The regional representation and the ICRC have provided close accompaniment to the National Society during this process. Although the most salient issues of the crisis were resolved and focused energies were given to organizational development, the URC remains challenged to move away from the governance body's historic centralization, expand its work in branch development and volunteer management.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Disaster Management

The International Federation in diverse global and regional declarations and plans of action continually expresses its commitment to reducing the risk of disasters. With a three-pronged strategy, the International Federation through its National Societies strengthens communities' ability to prepare to respond to disasters when they occur, mitigate hazards to avoid their occurrence, and protect strategic projects and infrastructure useful in normal times and emergencies. In other words, the International Movement supports communities' actions to prepare, respond and recover from disasters.

Despite this constant commitment, the regional representation for the Southern Cone and Brazil, as well as that for the Andean Countries, did not have a regional delegate for most of 2011 to supervise this area and provide tailor-made assistance to the National Societies in the region. Whilst a contributing factor was the period of time that it took to identify and hire the appropriate staff person, financial constraints also contributed to the hiring delay. In mid-November, the disaster risk management delegate for South America re-started the activities in this area.

The regional representation plans to implement a series of diverse, yet interconnected, actions in disaster risk management in 2012. Some of these actions include the increase of secretariat support to the National Societies in urban risk strategies, support the creation of risk management strategic plans in every National Society, foster joint projects with municipalities, foment shared work on climate change with Partner National Societies and those in the region, provide training and collaboration to connect strategies on livelihoods with disaster risk management, amongst others.

### Health and Care

<b>Programme purpose</b>
<b>Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.</b>

One of the URC's achievements in 2011 was ensuring a permanent position to lead the implementation of health activities. This staff person conducted the annual business planning, started a search process for additional human resources, initiated the organization of health training and capacity building at the branch level and finalized the formulation of the National Society's pending health projects.

The URC, in collaboration with the Luxembourg Red Cross, completed the process of preparing the mobile polyclinics project "Preventing and Learning with Uruguayan Red Cross". This project is framed within a plan for health education, promotion and prevention to provide care for vulnerable communities in Montevideo. The mobile clinic, which started the implementation process in 2011, will improve community health, focusing on education, prevention and control of diabetes and hypertension, nutrition, immunization, and HIV/AIDS.

The National Society participated in the II Latin American Workshop for Facilitators in Community-based Health and First Aid that was held from the 21 to 26 November 2011 in Panama and now has two national facilitators. The community-based health approach will contribute to the communities' understanding about health issues and empower them to be their own health managers. The first national training workshop on the issue for volunteers will be held in April 2012. The Uruguayan Red Cross also participated in a monitoring and evaluation workshop held on 8 to 9 December in Lima-Peru.

**Programme component 1: HIV and AIDS**

**Outcome 1: The Uruguayan Red Cross has developed prevention, care, treatment and support to reduce HIV stigma and discrimination by strengthening its capacities through the Global Alliance on HIV or its future incorporation.**

The Federation supported capacity building in health and HIV during 2011, including the development of different branch-level initiatives with the Paysandú, Colonia, Montevideo, Flores, Salto and Tacuarembó branches.

The Paysandú branch began implementing a comprehensive project to attend to people living with HIV (PLHIV) and their families, reaching approximately 6,500 people. This project reaches out to adolescents and incarcerated people by promoting respect for diversity and human dignity, reducing intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion, and encouraging the setting up of self-help groups in addition to psycho-emotional and educational support to families and friends of people with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, or addictions. Three day-long events reaching about 60 volunteers in total were organized with the Paysandú Hospital staff to raise volunteers' awareness of the issues. URC staff from national headquarters facilitated the events. In November, the National Society organized a national workshop to update epidemiological knowledge about HIV and tuberculosis.

The health area expanded its prevention and promotion actions. In 2011, it focused on issues of sexual health, oral health, community-based first aid, road safety, smoking and creating smoke-free areas, human rights and equality, and HIV/AIDS. The URC organized a community activity against discrimination and in favour of social equality.

This area also contributed to the Uruguayan Red Cross youth's project for voluntary non-remunerated blood donation, which was co-organized with the State Health Services (ASSE) 100% Safe Blood. The National Society has identified the need to expand its youth activities in and outside Montevideo related to voluntary blood donation and preventative health. The National Society celebrated the World Day for Blood Donation (14 June) thanks to the participation of 100 URC volunteers and community members.

**Programme component 2: Public Health in the community**

**Component outcome 1: The Uruguayan Red Cross has strengthened its management capacities and scaled up actions related to Community-Based First Aid (CBHFA) within an integrated community health strategy.**

In 2011, the URC prioritized its commitment to public health at community level. The National Society hired a health coordinator during the first half of the year and the health area demonstrated programmatic leadership, selecting focal points at the branch level, evaluating and incorporating the branches' work experience and activities. The International Federation assisted the National Society to implement national and departmental level activities, strengthening their skills and contributing to their resources.

Tied into its institutional strengthening in 2011, the URC held a national planning workshop to become familiarized with the branches' activities, conducted a diagnosis of the current situation, and the creation of a national volunteer registry. The health team resumed projects initiated by its predecessors, recruited trained volunteers, and improved communications and ties between branches. Lastly, the URC sponsored health promotion and prevention activities, promoting community participation and responsibility for their health issues.

The URC, with secretariat specialized guidance in methodologies, strategies and fundraising, took steps to make project objectives more attainable. Planning and the early implementation of the project for a mobile polyclinic, in conjunction with the Luxemburg Red Cross, continued in 2011. This mobile clinic is projected to focus on community-based first aid by strengthening health in these communities with a focus on education, prevention and control of diabetes, hypertension, nutrition, vaccination and HIV-AIDS.

In coordination with UNASEV/UDESEV, the URC implemented a national road safety project. Some departmental branches, like Salto, Flores and Carmelo are undertaking local-based initiatives. The National Society participated in the Fourth National Week of Road Safety, especially in the Road Expo 2011. The National Society has worked on the issue of road safety since 2007 and it is a prioritized topic for the URC and the International Federation. This activity was coordinated by the National Directorate for Health and Human Services, Youth, and Disaster Risk Management.



Health promotion activities– Montevideo.

Seven out of the ten URC branches have road safety activities. The URC has an educational plan for school-aged children on the prevention of traffic accidents. It has produced a small booklet on Road Safety that is based on the State driving test. The National Society is advocating before the government about installing obligatory first aid courses as part of receiving a driver's license. The URC, alongside other actors, participates in simulacra and organizes its own with the phrase "Bad practices, Good practices". The Uruguayan Red Cross participates actively in the road safety circuit for children and organized the transit police to teach children on bicycles to understand and respect road safety.

Lastly, the health area, with ICRC support, began strengthening first aid training at the national level. This included courses to update first aid instructors, training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation for infants, and providing first aid workshops for companies and organizations.

### Constraints or challenges

It is necessary to guarantee continuity in health actions, starting with the continuance of the staff member responsible for health in the URC.

The restructuring process should take into account the area's achievements and processes that contribute to improve the National Society's image internally and vis-à-vis partners. The Uruguayan Red Cross has created new inter-institutional relationships that need to be strengthened as well as promote the creation of joint work agendas.

## Organizational Development

### Programme purpose

**Global Agenda Goal 3: To increase local community, civil society and Red Cross/Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.**

**Programme component 1: Strengthening of the Organizational Development Capacities****Component outcome 1: Promote the strengthening of the national branch network in the Uruguayan Red Cross**

The National Society implemented its institutional development project "Improvement of URC Services and Programmes by Strengthening its Territorial Network", with secretariat SOS funds. This project has the objective of contributing to the strengthening of the internal structure of the Uruguayan Red Cross through capacity building of local branches (departmental committees) so it can fulfil its humanitarian mission. A branch strengthening workshop was organized in which 80% of the operating branches (from 15 of 19 departments) participated. Participants in the workshop shared information on the situation in the branches and national headquarters. An operational plan was created that especially emphasized organizational development, health, and disaster risk management and agreements were made regarding the national headquarters' support for branches.

Whilst this workshop contributed to the branches regaining their trust in the national headquarters, the National Society's critical situation did not allow it to fully implement or provide adequate follow-up to its operational plan.

In 2011, significant efforts were made to strengthen URC volunteering. A workshop on volunteer management was organized. The 32 participants (21 women and 11 men) worked on issues of efficiency and promotion of participation and exchange of experience. The workshop had the dual objective of analyzing the situation of volunteering in the URC and sharing experiences, tools and processes on volunteering in the region. Participants analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of volunteering and fostered peer sharing from the volunteering focal points from the sister National Societies of Argentina, Chile and Paraguay. The latter National Societies are in different phases of strengthening the management of volunteering. The ICRC cooperation delegate and two members of staff from the secretariat also participated in the workshop.

**Constraints or challenges**

The URC is challenged to transform the work done by its branches. This will be carried out through appropriate volunteer management, but also moving from seeing populations as passive recipients of aid to promoting actions and services that encourage their participation and empower them as individuals and as communities. The National Society will work towards creating a culture of planning and establishing national programmes that provide efficient and effective responses to the most vulnerable populations.

**Component outcome 2: Provide technical support to the Uruguayan Red Cross for the creation and implementation of a National Resources Mobilization and Development Plan.**

An attempt was made in 2011 to develop an effective, innovative and professional manner to mobilize resources and diversify the URC's financial base. The staff training on the issue, which began in late 2010, continued through early 2011 with online support by a hired consultant. Following the URC's institutional crisis, this process was discontinued. Following the mid-year change in the National Society's governance body, the current country support plan again reincorporated this objective.

### Constraints or challenges

The National Society has the major challenge of positioning itself in Uruguayan society. Yet, before successfully being able to do so, the URC will have to become more active in the country, modernize its communication system and update its financial system to be able to approach potential new donors as well as ensure accountability. The National Society needs to establish a resource mobilization department with professional staff to head up these actions.

<b>Component outcome 3: Promote legal bases and structures and update management tools that guarantee the base for the well functioning National Society.</b>
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The Regional Representation accompanied the process of the revision of Statutes that began in 2011. The Statutes were sent to the Joint ICRC/International Federation Commission for National Society Statutes for feedback. As the year came to a close, the National Society received the Joint Commission's recommendations and planned a period for their review. It is expected that the proposed revised Statutes be presented to the Assembly for approval in 2012, which will be followed by the Ministry of Education and Culture's formal approval and acceptance.

During 2011, it was not possible to carry out the evaluation process of the strategic plan that came to a close in 2010. The creation of new strategic plan is contingent on this evaluation. To ensure that the National Society continues to make progress with its branches, 15 out of the 19 branches created operational guidelines in early 2011.

### Constraints or challenges

The National Society has the important challenge of finalizing the process of revision of its Statutes, to be able to legitimize its governing body and modernize its institution.

Additionally, the central headquarters' and branches' political willingness to create a strategic plan that establishes lines of work to guide the URC's actions is extremely necessary.

<b>Component outcome 4: Stimulation of dynamic communication processes adapted to new technology in the National Society of Uruguay.</b>
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There was no positive progress towards achieving this outcome in 2011; the institutional crisis severely curtailed this work as well as the lack of a focal point to take this forward. As the year came to a close, a communications focal point still had not been hired, nor had someone from national headquarters' staff been assigned to cover this area.

### Constraints or challenges

The URC faces the challenge of ensuring the centrality of communications, a necessary component of any National Society. In 2012, efforts will be made to gain the governing body's political willingness to re-establish this area.

<b>Component outcome 5: Technical support for Human Resources strengthening to improve National Society response to new humanitarian challenges.</b>
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Following the June 2011 elections of new authorities, the issue of professionalizing the URC's human resources was addressed. A new organizational chart with defined functions was established as the first step in again taking up the Spanish Red Cross-supported project to professionalize and modernize the Uruguayan Red Cross.

The National Society's planning and development director participated in several Americas zone-sponsored training events in 2011. The regional representation also provided support for this staff member's work. The staff coordinating health and risk reduction also received zone support for their work. The regional representation not only promoted the participation of the technical staff in zone-organized and other trainings, but also encouraged the use of the International Federation's learning platform and materials from other institutions. The secretariat additionally promoted peer cooperation. The Uruguayan Red Cross received support on volunteering management from the sister National Societies of Argentina and Paraguay over the year.

### Constraints or challenges

The National Society, as well as the secretariat, understands the priority of training and educating the URC's human resources. It has the future challenge of identifying continual coordination mechanisms and fomenting peer cooperation in the International Movement and with external institutions.

## Principles and Values

The Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values of the International Movement are the backbone of all its strategies, actions and future plans. Due to the ongoing budget challenges, these issues are no longer addressed as an independent work area at the regional level. Two years have passed since the regional representation for the Southern Cone and Brazil, as well as the regional representation for the Andean countries, had its budget reduced, thus causing the elimination of this independent area.

Yet, this serious challenge has not implied abandoning the commitment to ensuring that the International Movement's principles and values remain central in its regional work. The secretariat's diverse team provides accompaniment to the region's National Societies so they can understand and incorporate principles and values in their actions and guarantee that they are recognized as cross-cutting issues. This has been most successful in their actions with youth, women, PLHIV, indigenous people and others groups living in situations of vulnerability. However, the achievement of specific outcomes in this area will continue to be minimal until appropriate material and human resources are obtained and assigned.

The Uruguayan Red Cross made efforts in 2011 to include a perspective that boosts equality and respect for diversity as a cross-cutting component in its diverse programmes and activities.

### Constraints or challenges

The effectiveness of the National Society's actions to promote the International Movement's principles and values remain dependent on the resources available for this central goal. Whilst cross-cutting actions continue to be undertaken, it is vital to earmark a part of the National Society budget, as well as that of the regional representation, for this area which underpins all of the International Movement's humanitarian actions.

### Working in partnership

The Uruguayan Red Cross institutional crisis in the first half of 2011 diminished the focus on partnership and alliance building. The URC lost ground in local-level coordination with public and private actors in the country, as well as those in the international arena. Rebuilding these relationships, and their strategic effectiveness, will take time and a concerted effort. The regional representation will continue to encourage connections with relevant institutions within the International Movement and in other spheres.

Moreover, the URC's lack of partnerships has been one of its weak points in the past. The new governance body is responsible for ensuring that its strategic plans and actions prioritize partnerships with public and private institutions in Uruguay and abroad.

The tripartite agreement between the URC, the ICRC and the International Federation remained in effect throughout 2011, including during the governance crisis in early 2011. This agreement was extremely valuable in maintaining a channel for cooperation with the National Society. Furthermore, the changes in the governing body did not imply a substantial change of the agreement. The National Society had an additional support mechanism as it started to take steps to recover and rebuild following its institutional crisis. This mechanism will continue to be useful until the Statutes are revised, approved by the Assembly and finally approved and authorized by the appropriate State ministry.

The Japanese Red Cross Society and the Spanish Red Cross cooperated with the URC throughout 2011. These two partner National Societies consistently demonstrated support for resolving, overcoming and moving beyond the institutional crisis. The Italian Red Cross was identified as a potential partner. The URC intends to continue to explore this possibility and others with sister National Societies in the future.

The institutional crisis weakened partnerships with the State. All levels of the URC are interested in developing these relationships at the local and national levels. Beyond the important URC mandate that makes it an auxiliary on humanitarian issues to the State, the URC branches and national headquarters understand the potential for developing well-planned alliances with State officials and institutions.

The Uruguayan Red Cross works with local non-governmental organizations and grassroots groups, particularly around issues of sexual health. Some of the URC's partners in 2011 include ASEPO (an NGO that works people who are HIV positive), the Uruguayan Association of Sexual Minorities, with whom the National Society recently conducted workshops on sexuality, diversity and gender, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/ AIDS, as well as alliances with the National Unit for Road Safety and the Department Unit for Road Safety.

Despite the current absence of an outreach strategy that covers the private sector and other non-traditional donors, the regional representation is committed to sharing knowledge on how to do so, identifying the potential advantages, and supporting the National Society in training a focal point for partnership and alliance building with this type of actor.

### **Contributing to longer-term impact**

The Uruguayan Red Cross had a challenging year in 2011. Projecting longer-term impact had to be balanced with a mixture of short-term problem solving and medium to long-term planning through a strategic plan. The governing body now has more than half a year of experience and the ongoing compliance with the current strategic plan and agreed upon commitments generate immediate impact that facilitates renewed trust in the institution and is the basis for long-term lines of action in the future.

### **Looking ahead**

The Uruguayan Red Cross successfully resolved its institutional crisis in mid-2011. The recovery process, a dedicated effort of all leadership, staff and volunteers of the National Society, entails willingness, decisiveness, transparency, resources and time. In addition to the URC's dedicated work towards this end, the International Federation and other International Movement actors will continue to support this critical process.

Whilst the challenging context in 2011 made it difficult to fully implement the established country support plan, commendable steps were taken to install a new governance body and continue the

Statutes revision process. However, some of the problems generated by the crisis remain latent. The URC's institutional fragility could therefore place future plans at risk. The regional representation considers that the solution of the institutional crisis provided a unique opportunity to dedicate renewed and creative efforts to strengthen the National Society. The final success of this endeavour primarily depends on the National Society's willingness and efforts.

Complying with the established plan, strategies, and activities will ensure the positive impact of future actions. At the same time this compliance will generate renewed internal and external trust in the Uruguayan Red Cross. Without this confidence, the National Society will be challenged to move forward, break the vicious cycle of institutional instability and create the foundation for its institutional development which allows it to become a well-functioning National Society and thus a key actor in responding to the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations in Uruguay.

## 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.

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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.

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