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Annual report Costa Rica

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MAACR001
07 June 2012

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

*The Costa Rican Red Cross provided key
health messages to teachers in 2011.
Source: Costa Rican Red Cross*



In brief

Programme outcome

This report presents the achievements on the implementation of the 2011 Country Support Plan for the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC). The Costa Rican Red Cross work during the year was guided by the Guayaquil Inter-American Plan 2007–2011 and *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 non-violence and peace.*

Programmes summary

In 2011, the IFRC's regional representation for Central America and Mexico worked with the Costa Rican Red Cross to strengthen its organizational development and its efforts in health and care and disaster management.

The **organizational development** sector under the 2011 Country Support Plan for the CRRC, unfortunately, did not receive all of the expected contributions to enable for the full implementation of its initially planned activities. The National Society in coordination with the regional representation explored and in some cases were able to establish partnerships to address shared topics with regional and nationally pertinent corporations.

The CRRC is committed to implement the initiatives of the Federation-Wide Reporting and Databank System, the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process and the Digital Divide. During 2011, the regional representation provided all the support and technical assistance required to reach this goal.

In relation to **disaster risk management**, the National Society also participated in the case study on urban risks, conducted by the IFRC through the DIPECHO VII Action Plan in Central America.

Health and care programme – During the reporting period, the CRRC joined the Federation's Global Alliance on HIV. Although the National Society does not have a health department in place, health interventions were implemented by the Youth and Relief departments. Furthermore, the CRRC has been working on preventative health services with regards to HIV and AIDS, including inter-institutional coordination with other actors involved in the area, and in full accordance with the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Health (MoH).

Financial situation

The total 2011 budget was 47,419 Swiss francs, of which 54,905 Swiss francs (115.79 per cent) was covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). Overall expenditure during the reporting period was 50,096 Swiss francs (105.65 per cent) of the budget.

Click here to go directly to the financial report.

<http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual11/MAACR00111arf.pdf>

See also: [Floods DREF Operation \(MDRCR007\)](#) and [Floods DREF Operation \(MDRCR008\)](#)

No. of people we have reached

The National Society's actions in 2011 focused on organizational development and health, which directly reached all of the volunteers, staff, and leadership of the Costa Rican Red Cross. In the area of health and care, a total 16,373 people have been reached under the implementation of the Global Alliance on HIV at the national level. Indirectly, 64,020 people have also reached through awareness raising activities of HIV and AIDS prevention and anti-stigma of people living with HIV (PLHIV).

Additionally, the National Society's actions indirectly impacted the general population of this country of 4.3 million people.

Our partners

Main partners who have supported the CRRC under this appeal include ECHO, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Norwegian government and the Swedish Red Cross.

Furthermore, in the border area with Panama, activities were implemented jointly with the Municipal Mayor's Office and coordination took place with the media and local organizations for the activities related to the DIPECHO VII project.

Context

Even though the national-level economic indicators in Costa Rica showed an improvement in 2011, the current issues in the second smallest country in Central America continued to challenge the humanitarian sector. News outlets regularly report on these challenges, particularly for the population living in regions most vulnerable to disasters and social problems. During 2011, the general population reported increased concern about citizen safety and violence. This past year, the social security and public health sectors declared themselves officially in crisis, jeopardizing the continuation of the high and successful quality standards that inhabitants of Costa Rica have experienced for the last 50 years. The current context has had the most negative impact on the most vulnerable social sectors, which include the people on both ends of the age scale (children and the elderly).

The Costa Rican Red Cross continued to work arduously to address and respond to these trends daily. The National System of Emergency Response Service registers each incident for which its services take actions. The programmes of pre-hospital care, youth, principles and values, and relief collaborate daily to provide emergency response and implement community-based risk prevention actions.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Risk Management

Programme purpose: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impacts of disasters.

Programme component 1: Organizational Preparedness

Outcome 1: The secretariat supports the Costa Rican Red Cross in developing skilled human resources, and improving its financial and material capacity for effective disaster management, supported by the REDCAMP-DESASTRES network

The Costa Rican Red Cross has strengthened its response system to initiate the creation of its National Plan for Disaster Preparedness. This plan aims to organize the response preparation systems in the CRRC. It is projected to be introduced and socialized within the National Society by mid-2012. It is noteworthy that this plan is aligned with the Central American Integrated Risk Management Policy (PCGIR).

With support and technical advice from the IFRC started the process of conducting an updated Well-Prepared National Societies diagnosis of needs at the local, regional and national levels and evaluate their current situation.

The tendency of the CRRC is to establish contact with other National Societies to exchange experiences and good practices that contribute to institutional development. For the National Society is important to have clear and well defined guidelines, which is the reason the National Society started to conduct activities to have a new management model to strengthen their capacities to respond to the demands of the population during disasters or crises. The CRRC has initiated a comprehensive planning process that leads to more accurate decision-making.

Programme Component 2: Safer and better prepared communities

Outcome 1: Communities and branches are better prepared, more organized to respond/recover from the effects of disasters, recognizing potential risk reduction measures and actions to be taken to mobilize resources and existing capacities.

The Costa Rican Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of Panama have a permanent presence in the basin of the Sixaola River, and specifically in the cities of Bribri and Changuinola.

In addition to the achievements reached up to the mid-year reporting stage, one of the great achievements of the CRRC is the successful experience in the preparation of both the community and the volunteers of the National Society within the DIPECHO VII project, in the border areas with Panama. Through the project it was possible to develop and validate checklists for the correct application of risk reduction projects in urban settings.

At the end of the DIPECHO VII project, the National Societies of Costa Rica and Panama have validated and applied a conceptual and methodological approach to reduce disaster risk in cross-border small cities, contributing to the Regional Disaster Risk Management Framework and the PGCIR.

Programme Component 3: Coordination

Outcome 1: The Costa Rican Red Cross has strategic alliances with NGOs and other organizations in order ensure the sustainability of risk reduction activities.

The CRC continued to develop strategic alliances with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (CNE) and the Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC) for the urban risk assessment in the central canton of San José. Coordination also took place for the response to the various emergencies that occurred during the year.

The successful cross-border work has inspired other National Societies and strategic partners to work in other countries on this issue, taking into account aspects of gender equality, migration, livelihoods and disaster preparedness.

In coordination with government agencies, the CRRC prepared and trained its volunteers in improving their response skills while strengthening relationships with authorities including the municipalities of San José, Costa Rica, the Ministry of Health, the National Civil Protection System and local authorities in Talamanca

The CRC held a direct dialogue with CEPREDENAC in order to receive advice with relation to the development of its National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan.

Health and Care

Programme Purpose: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from the diseases and public health in emergencies

Programme Component 1: HIV and AIDS

Outcome 1: The Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC), supported by the Secretariat, reduces vulnerability to HIV and its impact through preventing further infection, expanding care, treatment and support, and reducing stigma and discrimination

After the visit of the Americas zone health coordinator, reported in the mid-term report, the CRRC joined the Federation's Global Alliance on HIV and implemented the project in the second half of the year. The National Society will finalize their four year proposal 2012–2015 in 2012. By joining this alliance the Costa Rican Red Cross, in their efforts to reduce vulnerability to HIV and prevent further infections in different population groups, has focused on prevention activities and increasing awareness on stigma and discrimination against PLHIV. The National Society worked with different populations and groups deemed at-risk in recent nationally specific studies. During 2011 these groups were: prisoners (161), taxi drivers and taxi passengers (64,020), and at risk youth (299).

During the reporting period, the CRRC reached a total of 20,889 people with prevention and anti-stigma and discrimination messaging through communication campaigns and trainings. The CRRC also undertook various activities focusing on three at-risk populations. With a focus on youth, a total of 299 young people and their families were trained during 17 HIV community workshops (165 males and 134 females). In order to reach taxi drivers the National Society developed partnerships with 6 taxi companies, from which 63 drivers were trained to increase awareness and to pass on prevention messages to passengers. In total 64,020 passengers received information about HIV prevention and related issues during the reporting period. The CRRC also carried out five HIV workshops to promote HIV prevention and anti-stigma and discrimination in three prisons. As a result, 161 prisoners were trained (91 males and 70 females).

2011 saw the CRRC strengthen their capacities for working on HIV with vulnerable communities. 155 (59 male and 54 female) volunteers were trained for and subsequently engaged in HIV programmes during the year. In addition, important efforts were made at an institutional level to ensure the application of biosecurity measures necessary in pre-hospital care in coordination with the Relief Department.

Programme Component 2: Public Health in Emergencies

Outcome 1: The Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC), supported by the Secretariat, improves its capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from epidemics/pandemics and disasters, and ensures access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services to vulnerable populations

During the reporting period, the Costa Rican Red Cross updated, reviewed and defined standard operating procedures (SOPs) for emergencies and disasters in accordance with Movement strategies and policies (*Strategy 2020*) and the disaster context specific to Costa Rica. The National Society continues to improve coordination and inter-institutional communication with regard to public health, to ensure better access and services for the most vulnerable communities, as set out in *Strategy 2020*.

The CRRC's psychosocial support (PSP) focal point participated in a National Red Cross Societies working group which focused on the development of a psychosocial support in emergencies and disasters module for use by National Intervention Teams (NIT). This module specializes in health and has been developed in collaboration with the Americas zone health programme, and the Centre of Reference in Disaster Preparedness (CREPD), in the context of the Chile earthquake operation. During 2011, the CRRC also

participated in a PSP workshop in Colombia during September. The workshop was primarily to facilitate the dissemination of the new PSP in emergencies module and the global PSP manual, and to share experiences among National Societies and lessons learned from the IFRC's psychosocial support programme developed in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake. The Canadian and Spanish Red Cross Societies, the Copenhagen-based IFRC Psychosocial Support Reference Centre and Americas zone health staff participated in the workshop, hosted by the Colombian Red Cross Society.

Programme Component 3: Community Health

Outcome 1: Develop at least two community projects in the area of physical and mental health, in line with the Guayaquil commitments and the IFRC's Strategy 2020.

In the first half of the year the Americas Zone Health Coordinator met with the governance, management and senior staff of the Costa Rican Red Cross, and the secretariat's regional representation for Central America. This meeting was held to facilitate discussion on the establishment of a community health sector. The CRRC's management is optimistic that the new department can become operational during 2012 and a National Sector or Unit Coordinator appointed.

During April 2011, the CRRC participated in discussions with the Geneva-based coordinator of the Global Road Safety Partnership. These discussions took place during the launch of the Decade of Road Safety in Mexico, and again during bilateral meetings in Costa Rica.

Two volunteers from the CRRC participated in the second Training of Facilitators as part of the Federation's revitalized community health methodology Community Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) *in Action* in Panama during November 2011. Community assessments and CBHFA pilot projects will be developed once the community health sector is established within the National Society.

Constraints or Challenges

- Funding was limited to the Global Alliance HIV project during 2011. However, the secretariat is keen to continue to support the CRRC through technical support, dissemination of tools and methodologies, and peer-support processes.
- Coordination on health programming is expected to improve once the Community Health sector is established within the CRRC and a focal point appointed.

Organizational Development / Capacity Building

Programme purpose: Increase the skills of local communities, civil society, and Red Cross to face the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

Programme component 1: National Society leadership and management development

Outcome 1: Support National Society governance and management to strengthen the ability to effectively lead the organization and its service delivery: leadership abilities increased through development of governance, establishment of sustainable organization, innovation and through effective coordination and collaboration within the IFRC and with other partners.

During this reporting period, the Costa Rican Red Cross implemented the first phase of the information management system, Exactus, in its procurement, human resources, and accounting departments. Faced with budget limitations to implement Exactus, a CRRC volunteer and the secretariat's regional representation identified and visited various companies to explore possible partnerships for joint actions. As a result, two companies, Wal-Mart and Dos Pinos, expressed interest. These parties are involved in the development and analysis of establishing mutual cooperation agreements in disasters.

Following up on the Budapest, Hungary agreement, the CRRC is interested in being part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment Certification (OCAC) process during its pilot phase. It might be possible for the National Society to implement the first phase of the self-assessment in 2012.

Programme component 2: Strong and sustainable organization provides effective services to the vulnerable nationwide.

Outcome 1: Provide technical support to National Society in their organizational development processes through effective coordination within the IFRC, access to resources to better manage, strategic planning and change management, and update legal base towards enhancing the integrity through transparent legal and accounting mechanisms.

Through the secretariat's coordination and support, the National Society has disseminated *Strategy 2020* through 3 local and 1 regional workshops. The cycle closed with an evaluation activity of the CRRC's Operational Plan and the start of a process to align its Strategic Plan to *Strategy 2020*. Although the CRRC's current Strategic Plan is programmed to end in 2012, these activities contribute to prepare the National Society for the planning and formulation process, scheduled to begin in 2012, of the new Strategic Plan. These activities have reached all of the governance body members in the central headquarters and regional branches, and the management and programme teams.

Programme component 3: Mobilizing and maintaining volunteer networks.

Outcome 1: Support National Societies in their volunteering development and management efforts through effective coordination within the Federation and, in promoting an enabling environment for voluntarism in their national contexts.

With secretariat support and participation, the National Society, and the volunteering commission organized an activity to promote volunteer management, which resulted in a proposal to implement the management cycle in CRRC's internal processes. The regional representation for Central America supported the training of 25 CRRC representatives on volunteer management and provided facilitation on the topics of the IFRC's Volunteer Policy and the basic components of the regional-level Federation management manual.

The CRRC, with secretariat support, held multiple volunteer appreciation events in 2011 and drafted a proposal of activities for the International Year of Volunteers. The National Society presented a proposal, received funds, and reached all of the 123 CRRC branches in the country. The main activity was a celebration on 29 June with the participation of representatives from all the branches and in which outstanding volunteers were publicly acknowledged. The CRRC produced five videos that showcase scenes from the National Society's daily work to give recognition to the work of the 5,000 volunteers who are the purpose of this campaign.

The CRRC's Director General participated in the capacity building framework meeting in Budapest, Hungary. The information received has contributed to a better understanding of the issue and how to implement a capacity building framework in the Costa Rican Red Cross.

With regards to resource mobilization, the CRRC has identified companies committed to corporate social responsibility and held initial meetings with Wal-Mart to solicit support for marketing programmes and services in normal times and during disasters. The establishment of a strategic partnership agreement between the CRRC and Wal-Mart remains pending.

The CRRC Youth section —with support from the regional representation— created, presented and applied for the Bridging the Digital Divide- Connecting People through Technology contest sponsored by the International Federation. The CRRC won the prize with its radio programme "*The Adventure to be Young*". A youth representative received travel and accommodation support to attend the award ceremony in Geneva and participate in the IFRC's General Assembly. The participation of the human resource manager in the training on this topic in Geneva contributed to reinforce the management capacities of the National Society's volunteers and staff.

Principles and Values

Programme purpose: Promote respect for diversity and preservation of human dignity, reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

The progress of the CRRC's principle and values programme in 2011 was affected by budgetary issues. However, during this reporting period, the planned actions were appropriately implemented. Costa Rica faces challenges in its border relations with Nicaragua in the north, which have led to the CRRC's immediate response and active work with the branches located in the northern region to ensure the proper dissemination and implementation of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent

Movement.

Programme component 1: Promotion of humanitarian principles and values

Outcome 1: The Costa Rican Red Cross will have enhanced internal understanding of the Fundamental Principles, by carrying out a systematic programme to promote HPV and integrate this into National Society operational programmes (disaster management and health and care), with support from the IFRC.

In this reporting period, the National Society, through the support and monitoring of the regional representation, created a job description for a Principles and Values Director adapted to the trends and guidelines of *Strategy 2020*, particularly the Strategic Aim 3. The recruitment process for the new director was held in April 2011.

Furthermore, the CRRC began revising the National Directorate's academic resources, contents, and curriculum with the objective of updating the information about the CRRC's own capacities and thus, better respond to current needs in the national context employing the Movement's Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values.

The National Society has conducted exhaustive work with the branches located in the borders with Panama and Nicaragua to refresh their understanding of International Humanitarian Law.

This programme's staff at national headquarters and the branches participated in all of the workshops for training and aligning the National Society's work to its Strategic Plan.

Furthermore, the CRRC participated in the first quarter of 2011 in a project/programme planning workshop and later in May in a follow up training which focused on integrating gender in planning processes.

Working in partnership

- In 2011, the Regional Representation, jointly with the CRRC, maintained close communication with other Movement partners to exchange knowledge regarding the national context and expected contributions to the National Society. The secretariat actively participated in the dissemination of the International Federation volunteering policy, conducting a presentation on this issue in the CRRC's volunteer management workshop held with American Red Cross support.
- The Costa Rican Red Cross developed work to identify potential alliances with different national actors. Aligned with this objective, at the start of the Hurricane Season, the CRRC held a joint press conference with the Costa Rican Meteorological Institute to inform the Costa Rican population about the forecasts and provisions for the 2011 season and the CRRC's capacity to efficiently respond to the expected challenges common during the hurricane season.

Contributing to longer-term impact

- The Costa Rican Red Cross is committed to the constant evaluation and monitoring of its planning and integration systems. Both processes enabled increased precision in defining the strategies for its future Strategic Plan for the 2013–2017 period and the related operational plans to ensure these strategies are implemented and the planned objectives are achieved.
- In response to the CRRC's expressed interest in implementing plans and processes based on gender equity, the Federation supported and promoted the participation of selected leaders in pertinent workshops. It is expected that upcoming planning processes reflect the results of this new knowledge.
- The Costa Rican Red Cross remains interested in developing strategic partnerships. If the agreement pending with Wal-Mart and other identified companies come to fruition, the National Society will have new sources to contribute to the long-term sustainability of its programmes and services.

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](#) (NGOs) 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.

Find out more on www.ifrc.org

Contact information

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

- **In the Costa Rican Red Cross**
 - Miguel Carmona, President of the Costa Rican Red Cross; email: presidencia@cruzroja.or.cr
- **In the regional representation for Central America and Mexico, in San Jose**
 - Fabricio Lopez, regional representative for Central America and Mexico; email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org
- **In the Americas zone office, in Panama; phone: + 507.317.3050**
 - Xavier Castellanos, director of zone; email: xavier.castellanos@ifrc.org
 - Jan Gelfand, head of operations; email: jan.gelfand@ifrc.org
 - Zuleyka Maynard, resource mobilization senior officer; email: zuleyka.maynard@ifrc.org