

---

# *Final evaluation*

*IFRC Hurricane Irma Response Operation  
(Antigua & Barbuda and St Kitts & Nevis)*

---



**Gavin White – Independent consultant**  
**March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

## Acronyms

ABRCS	Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross Society
ARO	IFRC Americas Regional Office
CHF	Swiss Franc
USD	United States Dollar
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
FACT	Field Assessment and Coordination Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NDMD	Nevis Disaster Management Department (St Kitts & Nevis Government)
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency (St Kitts & Nevis Government)
NODS	National Office for Disaster Services (Antigua & Barbuda Government)
NS	National Society (or Societies)
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (United States Government)
PWD	Public Works Department (St Kitts & Nevis Government)
RIT	Regional Intervention Team(s)
SKNIS	Saint Kitts and Nevis Information Service (St Kitts & Nevis Government)
SKNRCS	Saint Kitt and Nevis Red Cross Society
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

## Contents

Acronyms .....	2
Executive summary .....	4
1. Operational background .....	8
1.1. Needs assessment.....	8
1.2. The Red Cross response .....	10
2. Methodology.....	13
2.1. Purpose of the evaluation.....	13
2.2. Evaluation roll-out and data collection.....	14
3. Evaluation findings – Antigua and Barbuda .....	16
3.1. Support to Barbudan households .....	16
3.1.1. Key informant interview results.....	16
3.1.2. Household survey results .....	18
3.2. Support to Barbudan fisherfolk .....	22
3.2.1. Key informant interview results.....	22
3.2.2. Fishermen survey .....	23
3.3. Health programming .....	23
3.3.1. Support to Hannah Hospital in Barbuda .....	24
3.3.2. Psychosocial program .....	24
3.3.3. Safe spaces.....	26
3.4. Disaster Risk Management and Early Warning Systems.....	27
3.5. Capacity building for the Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross Society.....	28
3.6. Validation of findings .....	30
4. Evaluation findings – St Kitts and Nevis.....	31
4.1. Support to St Kitts & Nevis households (relief) .....	32
4.2. Capacity building for St Kitts & Nevis Red Cross Society .....	33
4.2.1. Replenishment / Pre-positioning of stocks .....	33
4.2.2. Organizational review .....	36
4.2.3. Field assessments and beneficiary registration .....	36
4.2.4. Shelter toolkit.....	36
4.2.5. Psychosocial support workshop.....	37
4.2.6. Joint Lessons Learned workshop with NEMA .....	37
4.3. Validation of findings .....	38
5. Evaluation findings – operational management.....	39
5.1. Coordination with National Societies .....	39
5.2. Movement coordination and resource mobilization .....	40
5.3. IFRC internal coordination .....	41
5.4. Human resources .....	41
5.5. Data management .....	45
6. Conclusions .....	48
6.1. Relevance and appropriateness of the operation .....	48
6.2. Effectiveness and efficiency of the operation .....	49
6.3. Sustainability and long-term vision of the operation .....	50
7. List of appendices .....	52
8. Bibliography .....	53

## Executive summary

**Background:** The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was the costliest tropical cyclone season on record. Hurricane Irma had a directly hit on Barbuda in the early morning hours of 6 September 2017 while also affecting the islands of Antigua, St Kitts and Nevis. With the immediate threat of Hurricane José, the government of Antigua & Barbuda evacuated all Barbuda’s inhabitants to Antigua, where they were placed in government-run collective centers or hosted by relatives. The Red Cross’s assessment identified urgent needs for shelter; livelihoods and basic needs; health; water, sanitation and hygiene promotion; and disaster risk reduction.

**Design:** The methodology for the final evaluation adopted a cross-sectional study design, with both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Over a two-week period, site visits were conducted on all four islands (Antigua, Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis), 29 key decision makers were interviewed, door-to-door surveys were conducted with 109 households and 16 fishermen in Barbuda, a focus group discussion was conducted with representatives from 4 Barbudan organizations and a Lessons Learned workshop in Antigua convened 31 actors of the operation. This mixed method approach allowed for the triangulation and corroboration of information, which was then presented back to (and endorsed by) representatives of key organizations in both Antigua (27 participants) and St Kitts (25 participants).

### **Key achievements of the operation:**

#### **Antigua & Barbuda: A successful response to clear and pressing needs**

In Antigua & Barbuda, respondents agreed that the response effort would have been very different had the Red Cross not been present, with a response that was very well received:

- 100% of respondents in Barbuda considered the initial cash distributions to be “very important” (91%) or “important” (9%);
- 86% thought the in-kind assistance matched their needs well;
- 84% rated the overall Red Cross assistance as “good” or “very good”, with less than 1% of respondents considering it was “bad”;
- The local hospital benefited from “Red Cross assistance [that] came when it was the most needed”;
- The psychosocial support program received very little recognition from the beneficiaries, yet it was unanimously praised by the NS and partners alike as filling a critical gap for a highly stressed population.

This success was credited to the successful management of the operation by the IFRC, strong leadership skills within the NS, the close partnership between the NS and the IFRC, as well as an openness of the NS about its challenges as it underwent dramatic internal change processes.

#### **St Kitts & Nevis: Laying the foundations for enhanced response capacities**

In St Kitts & Nevis, the impact of the hurricane was relatively limited, damaging roofs and pulling off shingles. Yet the disaster management system was quickly stretched, with NEMA relying on the SKNRCS’s limited stocks. Via the IFRC’s broad Appeal:

- The SKNRCS benefited from generous support to tackle structural weaknesses in the country’s response capacity;
- Containers and stocks were repositioned across both St Kitts and Nevis;
- Both the Red Cross and the national response systems benefited from thorough reviews.

### **Recommendations moving forward:**

**Antigua & Barbuda:** This evaluation report documents specific action points for the Red Cross and its partners, falling under six general themes:

1. **Coordination / data management:** Partners agreed on the need for stronger communication protocols, investment in networking ahead of the emergency, joint databases across agencies and clear plans outlining each organization's contribution in the response.
2. **Targeting & Transparency:** Targeting was repeatedly mentioned as one of the weaker points of the operation, with only 68% of Barbudans considering that Red Cross support went to those who needed it most (but up from 26% in January 2018) and both Red Cross and partner staff identifying challenges. Despite the heavy investment of the IFRC in extensive surveys and rigorous selection criteria, multiple beneficiaries in Barbuda commented the project could have been better at flagging false claims and should have been provided more fairly, targeting the elderly and the young. Feedback also indicated the need for greater communication with the people affected and greater involvement of locals in the whole recovery process.
3. **Community communication:** Beneficiaries and local stakeholders also considered the information provided by the Red Cross could have been clearer, whether to know the support available or the status of individual applications.
4. **Community engagement and capacity building:** Beneficiaries and stakeholders emphasized the need for greater community involvement in the implementation of activities, specifically Barbudans returning to Barbuda, to allow them to contribute to rebuilding their island.
5. **Specialization on humanitarian services:** Two activities, namely the construction of a playground and of the Red Cross branch building in Barbuda, showed mixed results in the operation. The playground has fallen in a state of disrepair, given the insufficient level of quality for such high-use games, and the construction of the branch – which is designed to serve as a hurricane shelter for Barbuda – has still not started, three months before the 2019 hurricane season. In both cases, it seems the decision of the Red Cross to implement the activities directly led to trial and error and delays.
6. **Sustaining institutional building efforts:** The evaluation participants agreed that organizational development efforts must continue beyond the life of the project and provide a comprehensive look at the organization's systems (institutional, constitutional, disciplinary, etc.).

Addressing findings 1-4 in future operations may require that the Red Cross establish a unit dedicated to vulnerability mapping, independent monitoring of assistance and community feedback. Externally, humanitarian partners would benefit from more streamlined communication protocols to the affected population in an emergency. For finding 5, the Red Cross could contract out all to a private company all services that do not clearly fall under its core areas of expertise.

**St Kitts & Nevis:** The investment of the operation in mapping areas for improvement in the St Kitts & Nevis response system have not yet borne fruits. Future efforts in the future should focus on:






1. **Organizing a new Hurricane Irma Lessons Learned workshop:** A Hurricane Irma Lessons Learned workshop was organized as part of the Appeal in April 2018, but neither the Red Cross nor its partners were able to locate the conclusions or action points from that process. The first step will therefore be to organize a new Lessons Learned workshop, factoring in further recommendations from the present Final Evaluation.
2. **Reviewing best practices from Barbuda:** Participants agreed that St Kitts & Nevis would benefit from factoring in the experience from Barbuda in their own plans. Of specific mention were the need to consider (1) the establishment of a mechanism for transparency and accountability in humanitarian assistance and (2) the use of cash / debit cards in humanitarian response.

3. **Conducting joint data collection with Red Cross, relevant ministries and other institutions ahead of the next emergency:** This process should lead to a consultation process of community members, a mapping of vulnerable groups and better support mechanisms.
4. **Initiating the review of the St Kitts & Nevis (2013) National Disaster Plan:** Building on the first 3 points, the National Disaster Plan review should clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies, as well as include the private sector and other relevant institutions. The current sub-committees should be reengaged and should provide a status on progress and challenges since last meeting.
5. **Following through on Red Cross capacity-building efforts:** The Appeal allowed the SKNRCS and its partners to benefit from capacity assessments and train their teams in field assessments, shelter toolkit use and psychosocial programming. However, the process has not led to the implementation of the recommendations from the Warehouse capacity review, the Organizational capacity review (OCAC) or the updating of SKNRCS Plans.





**IFRC response mechanism:** While National Societies and partners alike were very laudatory towards the operation team, the discussions also indicated general areas of opportunity:

1. **The intense 2017 hurricane season should be further documented,** to share good practices from across the Movement, building on the findings from this and other studies.
2. **The IFRC should systematize the organization of collaboration and communication mechanisms ahead of each Hurricane Season** between Host and Partner National Societies (for instance in annual disaster planning meetings or by sharing media content on recent operations), as it has been shown to significantly facilitate Movement coordination in an emergency.
3. **The roles, responsibilities and decision-making levels of the different offices involved in an operation need to be clarified.** The Red Cross response system has multiple layers, from the field office and the cluster office to regional and global support. Lack of clarity on such roles caused bottlenecks in the operation, while competing priorities, slow email response times and multiple layers of decision-making were mentioned as reasons for missed deadlines.
4. **The Appeal beneficiary data management processes should be strengthened.** Data management has benefited from considerable investment over the last few years yet still requires further adjustments in Appeals: clarifying the purpose and audience for all data collected; standardizing forms to document beneficiary assistance; combining dual systems of electronic and manual registries; involving the NS in the data collection process; and regular auditing of data collection systems throughout the life of Appeals. While there is no evidence of misuse or misallocation of resources, beneficiary registration gaps are serious enough that they should be urgently addressed ahead of the next Appeal.
5. **Human resources procedures should be customized to the context of Appeals.** They should include standardized templates for HR structures, job descriptions and functions across different contracts. The IFRC should further strengthen regional response rosters and NS HR systems and staff wellbeing and living conditions should be continuously reassessed throughout the life of an Appeal.




### Relevance and appropriateness of the operation:

<p><b>Overall, the operation was <u>needed</u> (with serious humanitarian needs in Barbuda), <u>relevant</u> (assistance matched the needs), and <u>extremely successful</u> (participants overwhelmingly appreciated the support).</b></p>	<p> Scope:</p> <p>The estimated number of target population was reasonable giving the capacities and resources available.</p>	<p> Targeting:</p> <p>For most Red Cross and partner staff as well as program beneficiaries in Antigua &amp; Barbuda, the operation could have done a better job in considering both the vulnerabilities and the capacities of the Barbudan community.</p>
<p> Coordination:</p> <p>The operation successfully built on pre-existing Movement capacities and incorporated them into the response operation.</p>	<p> Flexibility:</p> <p>The response successfully adapted to changes in need, capacities and context.</p>	<p> Learning:</p> <p>Red Cross and partner organization respondents were very open about both successes and gaps and suggested recommendations for future improvements.</p>

### Effectiveness and efficiency of the operation:

<p><b>The response was <u>effective</u>, particularly as relates to the delivery of services in challenging environment, and <u>efficient</u>, in allocating very generous international assistance in the best possible way for a small population significantly affected by the hurricane.</b></p>	<p> Coordination:</p> <p>The Movement Coordination framework was highly effective and got the operation jump-started.</p>	<p> Scope:</p> <p>The program reached its target of 450 households with dire needs in Barbuda, both in the relief phase and as part of a recovery program to support return to Barbuda.</p>
	<p> Sector integration:</p> <p>The operation was well designed and always aimed to connect interventions across ongoing activities: relief, PSS, cash, livelihoods and DRR.</p>	<p> Humanitarian mandate:</p> <p>All 10 Principles for RCRC Humanitarian Action were respected in the operation, in spite of the operational challenges around targeting and involvement of local resources.</p>

### Sustainability and long-term vision of the operation:

<p><b>The Appeal rightly emphasized capacity building as a core objective of the operation in both countries but more remains to be done.</b></p>	<p> Building on local capacity:</p> <p>The operation not only built on the capacity of local organizations and structures but actually included training and capacity reviews as a core component of the Appeal. However, current efforts to enhance national response capacity will still require substantial support.</p>	<p> Humanitarian-development linkages:</p> <p>The program successfully transitioned between a relief phase and a recovery phase, though it will require continued support from the IFRC Caribbean Cluster Office beyond the life of the Appeal.</p>	<p> Exit:</p> <p>Though there are clear efforts built into the operation to ensure the NSSs have all relevant resources pertaining to the operation, the evaluation indicated that there were gaps in the NSS' ability to fully build on the Operation's resources and sustain current efforts.</p>
---	--	--	--

# 1. Operational background

With 17 named storms, 10 hurricanes and 6 major hurricanes, the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was a hyperactive and catastrophic hurricane season that, with a damage total of at least USD 282.27 billion, was the costliest tropical cyclone season on record. With over 3,300 estimated deaths, 2017 was the deadliest season since 2005 and also featured the highest number of major hurricanes since 2005. About 99.7% of the season's damage was due to three of the season's major hurricanes – Harvey, Irma, and Maria.<sup>1</sup> Most of the deaths from this season occurred from Maria and caused a humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico.



Routes of 2017 Named Storms (Source: [Wikipedia](#))

Prior to the formation of Hurricane Maria, **Hurricane Irma** hit the Caribbean islands of Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British and United States Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Martin/Sint Maarten. Irma was the most powerful hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic, with wind speeds of more than 185 miles per hour and torrential rainfall.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1. Needs assessment

### 1. Humanitarian needs in Antigua & Barbuda

The impact of Hurricane Irma was particularly severe on Barbuda as the eye of the hurricane passed directly over the island in the early morning hours of 6 September 2017. Since Hurricane Irma was quickly followed by Hurricane José, the government of Antigua and Barbuda evacuated all Barbuda's inhabitants to the neighboring island of Antigua, where most were placed in government-run collective centers or hosted by relatives. The hurricane severely impacted the affected the island's livelihoods, housing and infrastructure and basic services such as health, telecommunication, electricity, water, sewage and waste systems, agriculture and fisheries<sup>3</sup>:

- **Shelter and settlements:** The hurricane destroyed or damaged approximately 80% of all homes in Barbuda: 27% requiring minor structural damage and 44% needing complete rebuilding. In December 2017, the government of Antigua and Barbuda approved a program for the repairs of homes that are classified as level 1 and 2, but not the reconstruction of homes classified as damaged at level 3 or 4.
- **Health facilities:** Hurricane Irma seriously damaged Hanna Thomas Hospital in Barbuda, an eight-bed outpatient facility, as it destroyed all medical equipment and supplies in the facility.
- **Psychosocial support needs:** A rapid assessment among displaced Barbudans demonstrated that respondents showed signs of psychological and mental distress after losing their belongings and being evacuated to Antigua; respondents also reported increased feelings of stress, sleeping difficulties, anxiety and fear in relation to their return to Barbuda.

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017\\_Atlantic\\_hurricane\\_season](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Atlantic_hurricane_season)

<sup>2</sup> Idem.

<sup>3</sup> *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, 12-month update*, IFRC, 14 Dec 2018, Geneva.

- Water, sanitation and health: In Antigua, after the initial relief phase, most of the remaining displaced population were being hosted by relatives or friends. Primary WASH needs therefore focused on hygiene kits, clean water and LLITNs for people returning to Barbuda until the full restoration of utilities.
- Livelihoods: Hurricane Irma seriously impacted the affected population's livelihoods in Barbuda, leaving many families without the means to meet their basic needs. Most businesses and small markets/shops had not recovered – or even reopened in Barbuda – by late 2018, partly because of the serious damage caused by the hurricane to basic infrastructure, including electricity, fuel, port services, roads, and so forth. According to livelihoods assessments conducted by the Red Cross and other actors, the largest private sector on Barbuda was the local fishing industry prior to the hurricane.
- Education: Schools did not reopen until February 2018, and the return of the population was further complicated by irregular transportation between Antigua and Barbuda.



Impact of Hurricane Irma on Barbuda (Source: [Wikipedia](#))

## 2. Humanitarian needs in St Kitts & Nevis

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, life returned to normal for most of the population quickly after the passage of the hurricane. The damage in St Kitts and Nevis proved to be less severe than initially expected:

- Emergency shelter needs: the Saint Kitt and Nevis Red Cross Society (SKNRCS) provided tarpaulins to cover temporarily damaged roofs, and it also supplied blankets and kitchen sets to affected households.
- Shelter: It was initially feared that Irma had caused serious damage to homes; however, subsequent assessments showed that the impact was minor, with only two homes severely damaged or destroyed. Nonetheless, many homes lost the corrugated iron or asphalt shingles on their roofs and needed to be replaced.
- Livelihoods: a Red Cross assessment showed that tourism and manufacturing had not been sustainably affected and that salaries had recovered sufficiently to cover basic needs (food and essential services).<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Other needs

The Red Cross assessment also highlighted additional needs in both countries:

- Preparedness needs: The level of exposure to hurricanes in both countries was significant and both countries' response capacity showed significant limitations. The hurricane underlined the need for a stronger emphasis on DRR, prevention and response; as well as an integrated early warning system (EWS) platform, linked to disaster awareness in communities.
- Capacity building: Both the ABRCS and the SKNRCS also suffered severe institutional pressure in the operation, leading the IFRC to identify the need for National Society Development activities. These focused on strengthening National Societies' structures and systems for effective service delivery capacity.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

- Humanitarian logistics needs: Given the limited humanitarian aid available in both countries following the passage of the hurricane, an air charter and two subsequent marine shipments were dispatched with relief items for replenishment. These shipments highlighted the need for greater storage capacity in both National Societies, along with the technical skills to manage the logistical chain.

## 1.2. The Red Cross response

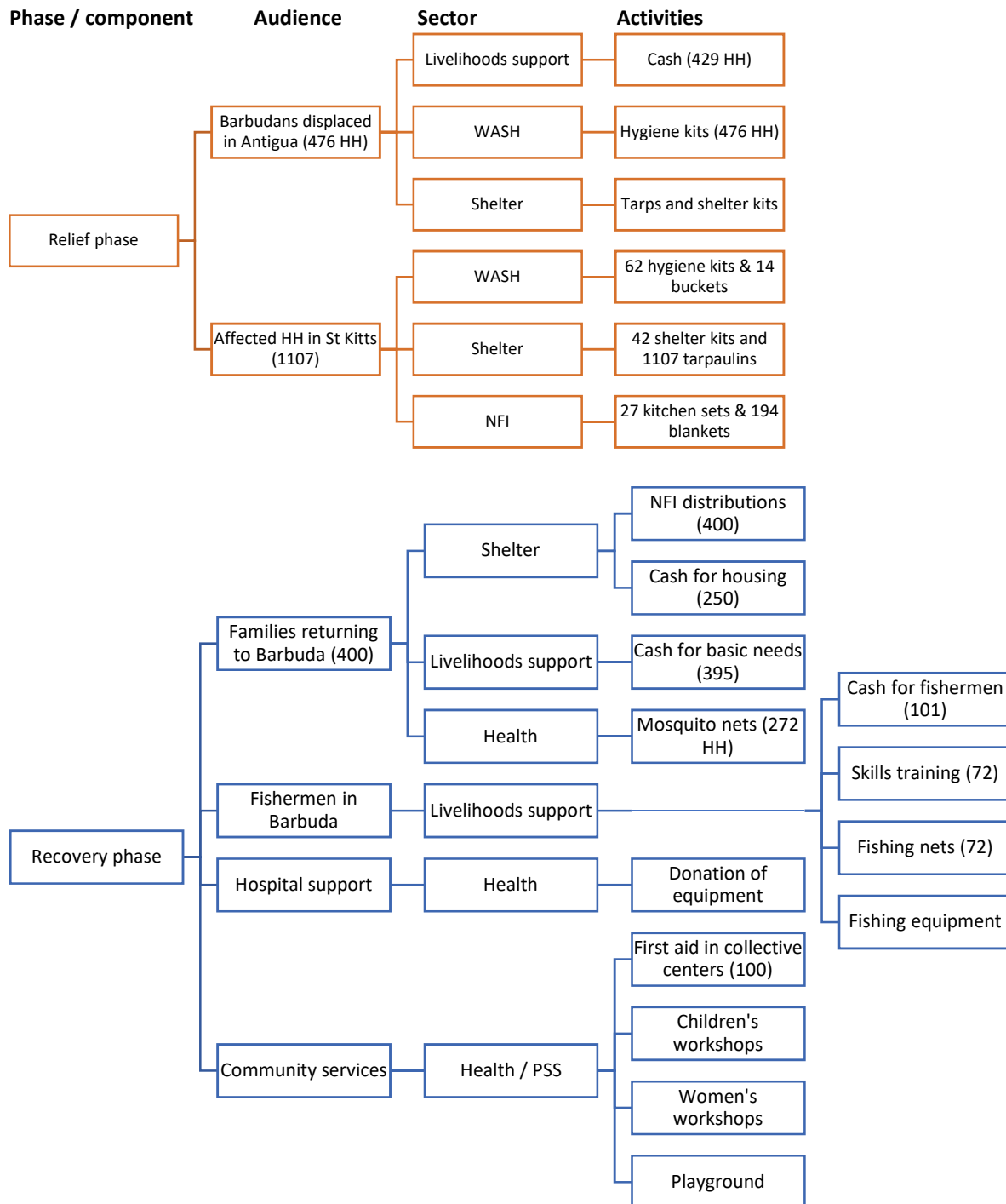
The operation aimed to assist 2,300 people in 650 families affected by the hurricane: 450 families [1,800 people] in Antigua and Barbuda and 200 families [500 people] in Saint Kitts and Nevis). Based on the initial needs assessment (see section 1.1 above), the Red Cross response efforts focused on shelter; livelihoods and basic needs; health; water, sanitation and hygiene promotion; and DRR.

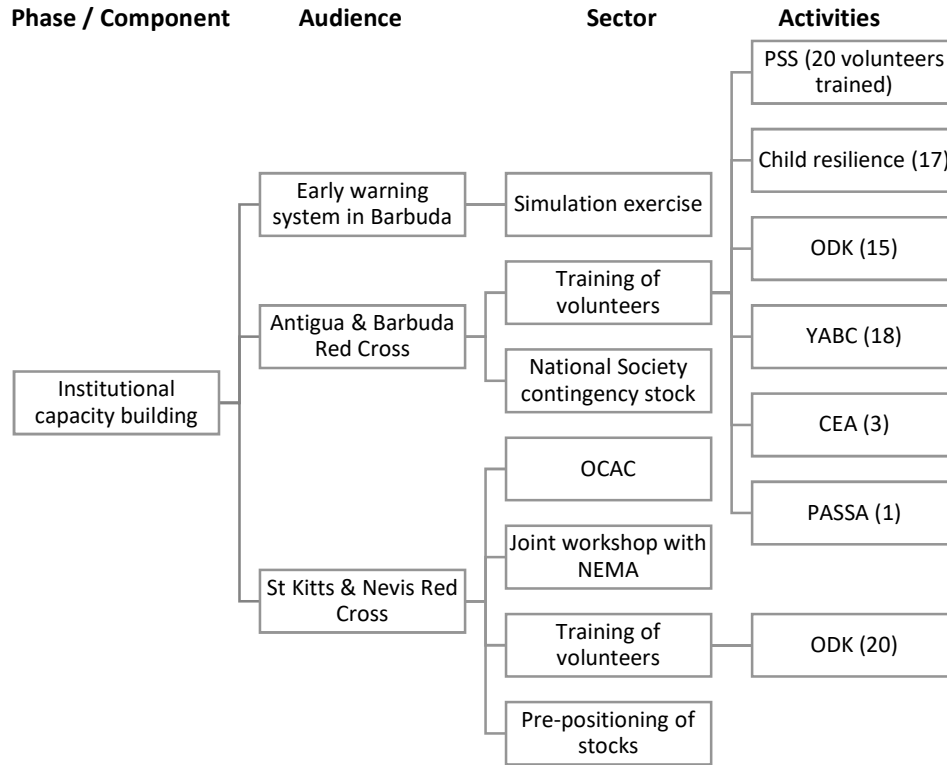
However, not all sectors have equal weight in the operation. As indicated in the IFRC’s 12-month update<sup>5</sup>: *“More than 50 per cent of this operation is dedicated to carrying out CTP for the affected population to contribute to the restoration of the local economy and the re-establishment of the affected households’ structures. Considering that Hurricane Irma severely affected the local markets, the ABRCS and the SKNRCS distributed relief items in the operation’s first phase and CTP to beneficiaries for two months at relief phase and four months at recovery phase.”*



<sup>5</sup> IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, 12-month update*, 14 Dec 2018, Geneva.

The Irma Operation has three main components: the relief phase (Sept. 2017 – Dec. 2017); the Recovery phase (Jan. 2018 – March 2019); and an institutional capacity building component (throughout). The activities for each component can be summarized as follows:





## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

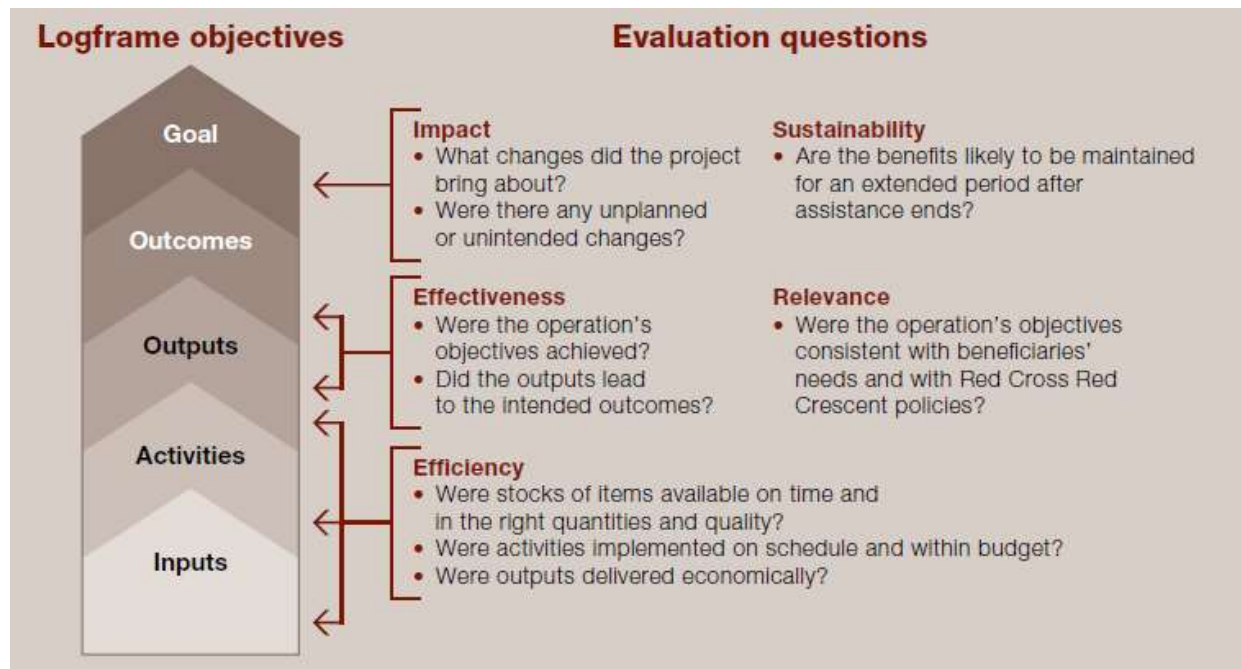
The final evaluation of Hurricane Irma Operation (from September 2017 to February 2019) aims to:

- Describe and assess results (intended and unintended), positive and negative;
- Gather and synthesize recommendations from a variety of key stakeholders;
- Draw lessons to inform future programming.

The following areas were evaluated:

- The relevance and appropriateness of delivery of humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries based on needs and context: *To what extent has the response achieved the expected results and been relevant and appropriate to the needs of the target groups?*
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the IFRC response, including coordination with key partners and external actors aimed at optimizing the response: *To what extent has the response achieved its intended immediate results in an effective and efficient manner?*
- The sustainability of the intervention: *To what extent is the intervention taking into consideration long term needs?*

This evaluation covers both countries included in the MDR 49009 Appeal and includes all activities included in the operation. In line with IFRC good practice<sup>6</sup>, it is external (the evaluator is not Red Cross staff nor was involved in any component of the operation) and includes both program beneficiaries (households affected by Hurricane Irma) and partner organizations, emphasizing the empowerment of beneficiaries and the capacity-building and learning of key actors involved.



Evaluation questions and the Logframe (source: Project / program monitoring and evaluation guide, IFRC, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Project / program monitoring and evaluation guide, IFRC, 2011: pp. 15-16.

## 2.2. Evaluation roll-out and data collection

The evaluation was composed of secondary information review; beneficiary surveys; key informant interviews; a focus group discussion; a lessons learned workshop; and validation workshops. The evaluation took place between January 8<sup>th</sup> to February 22<sup>nd</sup>, with two field visits: the visit to Antigua and Barbuda took place between January 28<sup>th</sup> and February 4<sup>th</sup>; and the visit to St Kitts and Nevis took place between February 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

➤ See Appendix 1 for a detailed presentation of the methodology.

### 1. Secondary information Review:

The secondary information review covered the IFRC Appeal and subsequent amendments and operational updates; Red Cross program documents and presentations; monitoring reports; studies; and plans.

➤ See Section 8 (“Bibliography”) for detail.

### 2. Beneficiary surveys:

All beneficiary surveys were conducted in Barbuda. 4 Red Cross volunteers from Barbuda assisted the consultant to conduct household surveys among affected population.

- The “Household survey”, randomly conducted in the affected communities, reached 109 community members, all of whom had been affected by the hurricane.
- The “Barbuda Fisherfolk” survey reached 16 fishermen, either while they were returning to port or while they were at home. 13 of the 16 fishermen received assistance for fishing from Red Cross. All fishermen were also interviewed using the household survey.

No household surveys were included in St Kitts, given the time that had elapsed since the relief efforts took place in late 2017.

➤ Survey forms are included in Appendix 1 (“Methodology”).



### 3. Key informant interviews:

One-on-one interviews were conducted with 29 key stakeholders from the IFRC; ABRCS; National Disaster Management Office of Antigua & Barbuda; SKNRCS; the National Emergency Management Agency in St Kitts; and the Hannah Hospital in Barbuda.

➤ See Appendix 2.1. (“Persons interviewed”) for detail.

### 4. Direct observation

In two specific cases, the evaluation of program outcomes was conducted via direct observation of the actual changes on the ground. This was the case for:

- The evaluation of the community services provided in Barbuda (construction of a playground; demonstration roofing on a damaged building);
- The review of the pre-positioned capacity in St Kitts and in Nevis (6 containers positioned across the country)

In addition, direct observation was used to triangulate the information provided in household surveys and in key informant interviews.

## 5. Focus group discussions

A single Focus Group Discussion was held with 4 representatives from different Barbudan organizations. The discussion was held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Red Cross field office (tent) in Barbuda, on the location where the future Barbuda Branch offices will be built.

Given the limited community outreach in Antigua and in St Kitts & Nevis conducted in Operation Irma, no FGDs were held in the other three islands.

- See Appendix 2.3. for participants.
- Methodology used for the FDG is detailed in Appendix 1 (“Methodology”).



## 6. Lessons learned workshop

In Antigua and Barbuda, a Lessons learnt workshop was organized on January 30<sup>th</sup> with the following key stakeholders from the operation: Red Cross headquarters staff, Red Cross volunteers from Barbuda, National Office for Disaster Services (NODS), Barbuda Council, UNDP and UNICEF. It was adapted from the IFRC Lessons Learned methodology, so that it could be conducted in half a day.

Timeline exercise conducted in the FDG in Barbuda

- See Appendix 2.2. for participants.
- Methodology used for the Lessons Learned workshop is detailed in Appendix 1 (“Methodology”).

A Lessons Learned workshop had previously been held in St Kitts and Nevis in April 2018, so no additional workshop was included in the evaluation.

## 7. Validation workshops.

A validation workshop was conducted in both Antigua & Barbuda (on February 4<sup>th</sup>) and in St Kitts and Nevis (on February 11<sup>th</sup>). The validation workshop in Antigua included roughly the same participants as the Lessons Learned workshop held the previous week.



Participants in the SKN Validation workshop testing the use of ODK

In St Kitts, the Validation workshop, also held on the last day of the visit, included the following key stakeholders: SKNRCS, NEMA, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Community Development, Ministry of the Environment, SKN Defense Force, SKNIS and NDMD (Nevis).

The intent of the workshops was to validate initial findings from the evaluation, as well to take into considerations key elements for incorporation into future standard operating procedures, such as early recovery programming and beneficiary involvement.

- See Appendix 2.4 and 2.5 for participants.
- Methodology used for the Validation workshop is detailed in Appendix 1 (“Methodology”).

### 3. Evaluation findings – Antigua and Barbuda

Hurricane Irma hit Barbuda on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Despite earlier investment in community disaster response teams in Barbuda, the teams were not able to deploy as hoped in the operation. However, the VHF radio system from previous programs did allow Barbudans to communicate among themselves during the storm.

- On Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>, the Red Cross chartered two helicopters from Antigua to conduct a first early assessment. Among the 20-person joint evaluation team, the Red Cross included relevant Ministry representatives. A Rapid Assessment Team was established, with 4 representatives from ABRCS, to get an initial sense of the response.
- On Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, with the looming risk presented by Hurricane José, the Government of Antigua & Barbuda ordered a mandatory evacuation of the population of Barbuda, with the logistical support of the military of Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. The Red Cross was not consulted ahead of this decision.<sup>7</sup>

#### 3.1. Support to Barbudan households

Once in Antigua, the Barbudans started to receive relief assistance from the Red Cross, which progressively shifted to Barbuda to encourage progressive returns. In parallel, the Red Cross conducted market assessments to determine the best mechanism for assistance, ultimately combining cash<sup>8</sup> and in-kind support, both in Antigua and Barbuda.

##### 3.1.1. Key informant interview results

The support to Barbudan households, whether in Antigua or upon their return in Barbuda, was a challenging endeavour, as repeatedly explained by staff involved in the operation. However, the commitment to the goals of the operation means that no major mishaps were encountered. Regarding the more successful aspects of the operation highlighted in the evaluation's consultation process:

- **Presence on the ground in Barbuda** was essential for the good implementation of the relief and recovery phases, also as a means to encourage returns. The physical presence of the Operation team in Barbuda also meant it was easier to address requests for information and updates, especially given the communication challenges (with phone lines cutting off, etc.).
- **The personalized services of the operation** were a unique characteristic of the operation, made possible by the fact that there were only a few hundred beneficiary households. It required an adjustment of processes and may not be applicable in many other contexts, particularly as it does not allow for economies of scale.
- **National Society volunteers came out and provide massive support** to the operation, though primarily in the early weeks. Both volunteers and local staff from Barbuda played an important role from the start in the planning and distribution process upon the launch of the operation in Barbuda.

---

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with ABRCS staff.

<sup>8</sup> The cash transfer support was issued to the families in the form of a debit card, depending on household's vulnerability level, its composition and its combined income. The amount ranged between XCD 600 and XCD 1,000 (around USD 227 - USD 370). Upon return to Barbuda, each of the 400 beneficiary household received a one-time cash payment of XCD 500 (USD\$185).

- **Flat amounts for the household cash disbursement** simplified the process, though this was possible since cash support was a complement to other, more targeted, assistance.
- **The shelter recovery program** was highly commended, despite some challenges given the distance with the suppliers in Antigua. The operation provided 250 Barbudan households with XCD 3,000 (USD\$1,110) in financial assistance and technical guidance on the purchase of materials, windows, doors, etc. Following an assessment by the Shelter consultant, the IFRC focused on construction materials to complement the reconstruction activities in Barbuda (rather than repair roofs directly), which helped ensure greater impact by addressing gaps in the process.
- **Coordination with the sole bank** in Barbuda was critical for the feasibility of the cash transfer program, using debit cards, since there is a single ATM in Barbuda. Given the size of the operation, ensuring the ATM always had necessary funds was also critical to the smooth implementation of the operation.
- **The familiarity of beneficiaries with debit card modality proved critical** (most had already used debit cards).

Project staff were also very forthcoming on the challenges faced in implementing the operation:

- **The logistical difficulties of having to work across two islands** was mentioned in several discussions on the support to households in Barbuda. The physical separation between the headquarters in Antigua and the operations in Barbuda affected: the timeline for the delivery of goods; the budget (costs for shipping); the participation of volunteers (many volunteers in Antigua not being able to spend several days away from their job to go to Barbuda); the decision-making process on two location; the sharing of information; etc. This was further compounded – especially in the early months – by decision-making also taking place either in the sub-regional office (Trinidad & Tobago) or in the regional office (Panama) with related delays.
- **The initial coordination with the NGO Shelter Box was complicated**, due to some confusion on how the Appeal process works. While Shelter Box contributed to the Appeal via in-kind donations of their shelter kits, their team then showed up in person in Antigua and in St Kitts with the expectation that they would be distributing their kits. Eventually, realizing the operational challenges for both storage and distribution, the Shelter Box team worked hand-in-hand with the Red Cross from late November 2017 to March 2018.
- **The registration process did not initially include detailed information about household members**, only on the head of household (which could be identified as the eldest male, even though actual household decisions are often taken by women). The Red Cross had to conduct a second registration process as part of the return process – this time requesting name and information of HHs members in order to avoid any potential duplication and make the verification process smoother.
- **Beneficiary communication materials** were multiple and not always aligned. For instance, at the initial stage, the Red Cross had 3 brochures with information about CTP, the program itself, etc., with some confusing on the mechanism for providing assistance. Particular groups required more support, which was not initially available (e.g. briefing the elderly on using debit cards). Though communication progressively improved, different stakeholders interviewed in the evaluation referenced it as a challenge.
- **Relying on hand-written signatures** for beneficiary records, and then transferring to a digital records system, made documenting distributions and assistance challenging.
- **Addressing technological issues in disaster contexts** still requires some thought. For instance, the activation of cards relied on digital signatures when internet and electricity were unreliable. The operation eventually established a mechanism to collect both digital and handwritten signatures

in parallel in all distributions. In future operations, there need to be redundant systems for debit card disbursement that account for unreliable internet and electricity.

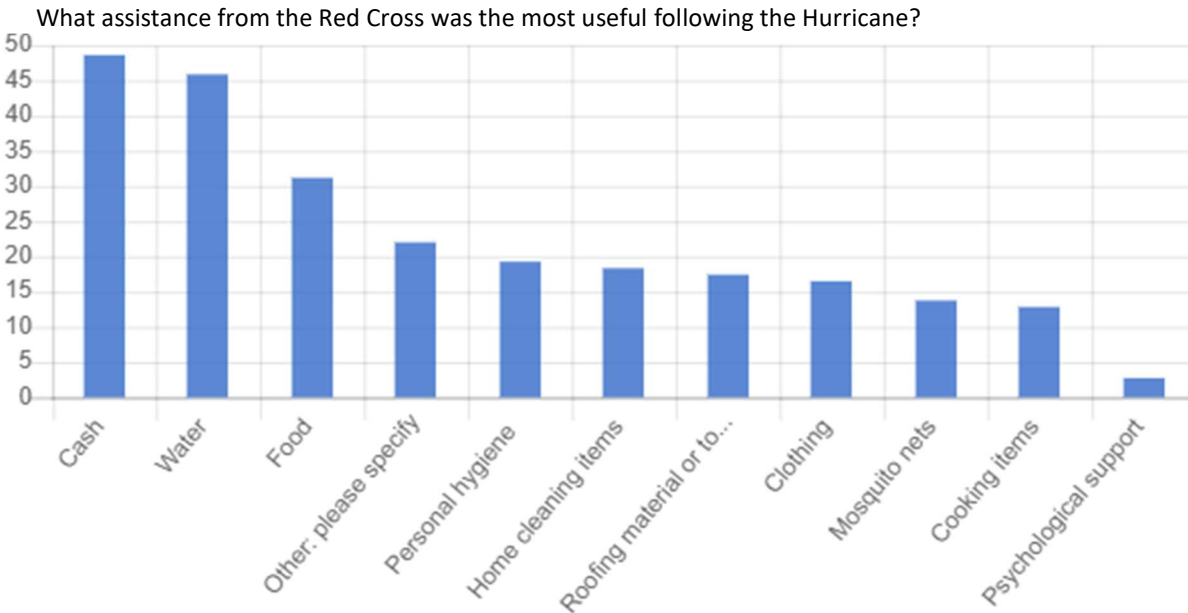
- **The centralized nature of the IFRC’s relationship with SWIFT** led to some bottlenecks, since that function remained in the Regional Office and not on the ground (to address technical issues such as activation of cards based on hand-written signatures, identifying problems in use of cards, the status of the use of the cards, etc.)

### 3.1.2. Household survey results

Barbudan households were the primary beneficiaries of the Hurricane Irma Response operation, first during their initial evacuation to Antigua on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, then as part of a deliberate strategy to encourage their return to Barbuda via targeted assistance at their original places of residence. This section outlines the responses from 109 respondents in the door-to-door survey.

#### 1. Needs after the hurricane

Three main items dominated the list of needs in the survey: water, food and cash (two thirds of respondents listed each of these three responses). Roughly one in three respondents also mentioned (in order of frequency): home cleaning items; personal hygiene; clothing; roofing materials; cooking utensils; and mosquito nets.



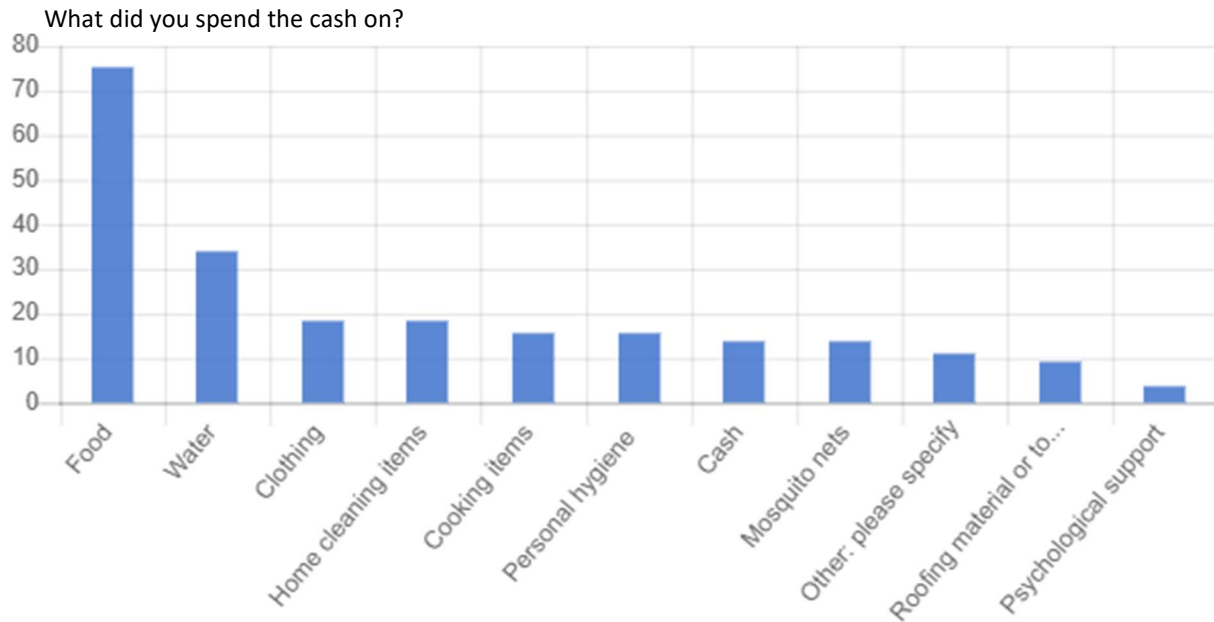
- A positive conclusion from the survey is that the assistance provided by the Red Cross listed as most appreciated closely matches the list of greatest needs, with cash assistance (debit cards) and/or water mentioned by most respondents.
- The items still in need today are roughly the same, though the number of families mentioning them is roughly half of what it was – the response was relevant and effective, but it did not eradicate the needs for those items.
- Other needs have since gained more relevance, such as fencing (to keep donkeys out); electricity (still not reaching all households); or banking services (only the ATM functions in the sole agency on island).

## 2. Cash distribution (debit cards)

85% of respondents mentioned having received debit cards from the Red Cross (in some cases, they mentioned that they thought someone else, usually a parent, may have received one):

- 96% mentioned that they received the right amount of money (the money they expected to receive);
- 90% thought the amount paid (XCD 500, roughly USD 185) was “fair and adequate”;
- 91% considered the amount paid was “very important” for them at the time; the remaining 9% thought it was “important”.

Overall, the money was primarily spent on food (75% of respondents), which is consistent with the needs of Barbudans: both cash and water was provided by the Red Cross, so the cash went primarily to cover the third most important need (food).



The category “other” highlights the strength of cash-based assistance to customize assistance to individual needs, since the responses included items as varied as: household repairs (windows, doors); gasoline for generators donated by NGOs; daily necessities while evacuated in Antigua; hygiene products; taxi services; household items; rent; bills; diapers; etc.

The survey did identify one area of serious concern: to the question “Was there any corrupt abuse by agency staff, local elites or authorities involved in targeting or distribution?”, 22 of the 86 respondents (20%) answered “yes”. The format of a closed question survey did not allow to identify why – this would require both further research and improved mechanisms for reporting abuse *during* the implementation of the operation.

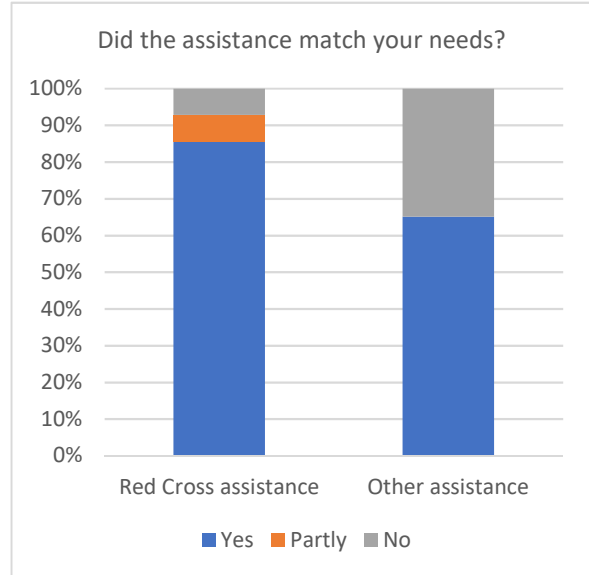
### 3. Non-cash assistance (non-food item distribution)

89% of respondents received non-cash assistance, with water and food coming far ahead of other household items. Among the 11% (11 respondents) who did not receive, only 1 person mentioned the assistance didn't go to people who needed it more, with 5 saying it did go to those who needed it most and 5 answered it went to a mix of needier and less needy beneficiaries.

Among those who did receive non-cash assistance, 86% thought this assistance matched their needs, while 7% answered "partly" and 7% answered "no" (6 negative answers).

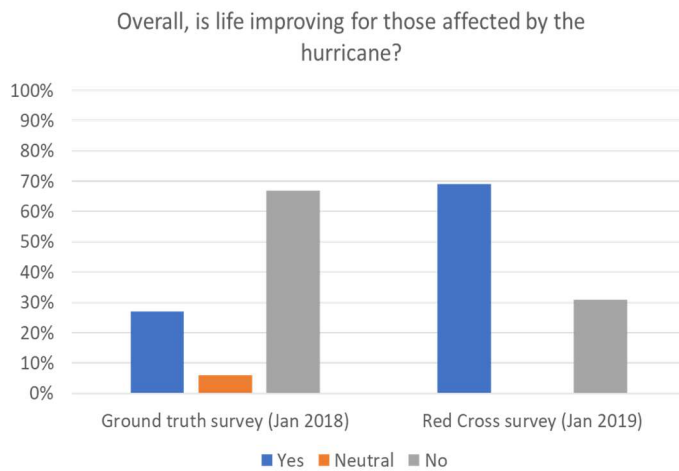
### 4. Assistance from other organizations

Respondents were also asked whether they had received assistance from other organizations, for comparative purposes. 63 respondents (58%) said they had, while 46 said they had not (42%). The most common assistance mentioned was construction materials (20 of 60), food (11), cash (5) and generators (4). However, only two thirds of the respondents considered that this assistance matched their needs (41 of 63 respondents).



### 5. General sense of improvement

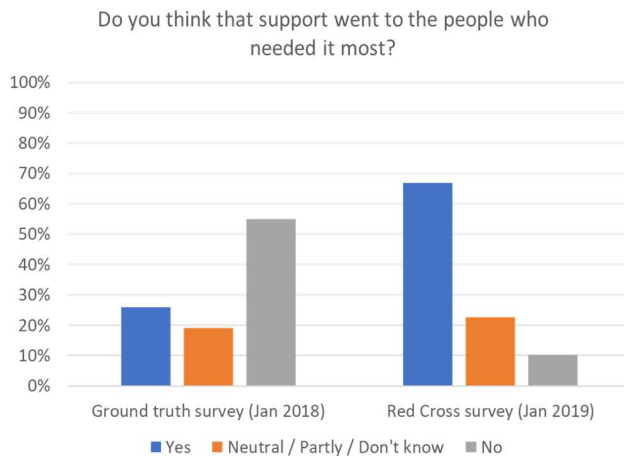
A detailed satisfaction survey was conducted in January 2018, which the evaluation was able to build upon to get a sense of general trends:



The first result from the survey is that the situation is improving – roughly 1 in 4 Barbudans were optimistic in Jan. 2018; it has now reached more than 2 out of 3. However, while the improvement is substantial, almost 1 in 3 Barbudans continue to consider that daily life is a struggle.

This is confirmed by the fact that half of respondents mentioned they still had not been able to recover their income source or livelihood to levels prior to the hurricane (down from 62% in January 2018).

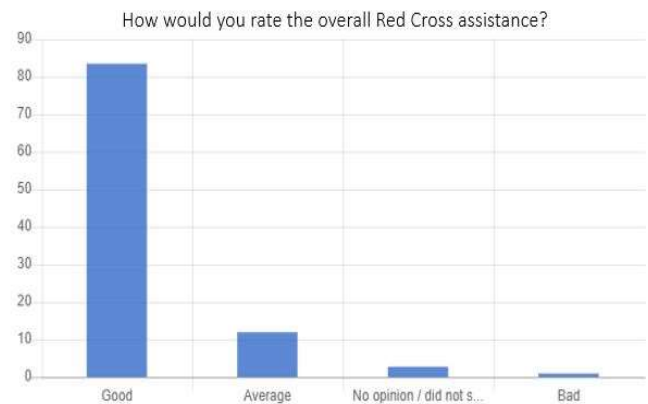
## 6. Targeting of the assistance



The majority of respondents (68%) consider that Red Cross support went to those who needed it most – up from 26% a year before. While the increase is remarkable and shows significant improvements in the way the Red Cross targeted assistance, it also highlights that 1 in 10 were not satisfied with the selection of beneficiaries.

## 7. Recommendations for the Red Cross

Despite concerns regarding the potential misuse of some of the resources and more limited concerns on the targeting of beneficiaries, respondents were overwhelmingly positive of the assistance received by the Red Cross: 84% thought the assistance was “good” or “very good”, while 12% thought it was average. 1 person rated the assistance as “bad”.



When asked if they had any advice as to how the Red Cross can improve the distribution of its limited resources in future disasters, 28% said there was nothing to improve upon.

However, 50 respondents did have suggestions to improve Red Cross’s assistance in the future, grouped under 4 themes:

1. **More fairness:** 10 respondents mentioned the need to support the less fortunate, the elderly and children more, which would require reviewing the criteria for assistance;
2. **Better controls:** 9 respondents indicated the need to have better systems to identify false claims, flag greedy persons getting more than their lot and cracking down on favoritism and personal preferences. Three suggestions were to rely on vouchers rather than cash, as it is easier to track.
  - a. This point was also underlined when respondents were asked if the Red Cross should continue to distribute cash in the future: 9 respondents (9%) answered “no”, considering vouchers would lead to less abuse.
3. **Better communication:** 12 respondents commented on the need for the Red Cross to work more closely with the people affected and involve them in the whole recovery process; making sure they were informed regularly as to the process; and generally building the programs on the local community.
4. **Continue assistance:** 20 respondents highlighted the extent of remaining needs and the need for the Red Cross to continue its assistance. For 9 respondents, this would require that the Red Cross establish a permanent presence in Barbuda, with local staff.

## 3.2. Support to Barbudan fisherfolk

The livelihoods assessment conducted at the initial stage of the emergency revealed that approximately 85 to 95 per cent of households on Barbuda receive a salary from the public sector, representing a different scenario from the typical post-disaster situations.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the study also distinguished several socioeconomic groups within the public sector, in which those receiving lower salaries complemented their public activities with other livelihoods, particularly fishing.

Damage assessments indicated that Hurricane Irma destroyed 69 per cent of Barbuda's active fishing vessels and fishing equipment. Furthermore, for a small percentage of the approximately 120 active fishermen in Barbuda, fishing is their exclusive source of income. Therefore, the Red Cross developed a specific program for fishermen, based on (1) cash distributions for repairing or replacing boats and engines; (2) replacing fishing equipment; and (3) providing new skills and knowledge through training workshops.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.2.1. Key informant interview results

Particularly positive points from this program include:

- Conducting a market assessment early on to help plan the recovery efforts was critical to the success, as it helped understand the high rate of civil servants and private sector dynamics. Fishing was the main non-government employment, with good data on fishing program. Though it was a small-scale program – reaching 72 households – it had a large impact on the ability of that sector to return to normal.
- Providing cash to the fishermen allowed them to recover their livelihood in a dignifying manner and to cover and/or complement ongoing efforts.
- The strong level of coordination with the fishing sector and partners involved in their recovery, as well as a strong commitment by the fishermen themselves, ensured a good process throughout.
- The presence of Red Cross in Barbuda alongside the fishermen helped demonstrate the commitment of the organization and made them accessible for questions or areas of concern.

The main challenge regarding the implementation of the program relates to the changing situation on the ground, requiring adaptations to the livelihood initiatives. With the size of the team decreasing over the course of the program and given the limited technical capacity of the National Society, additional assistance had to be provided from outside, primarily through the IFRC Livelihoods Center.

---

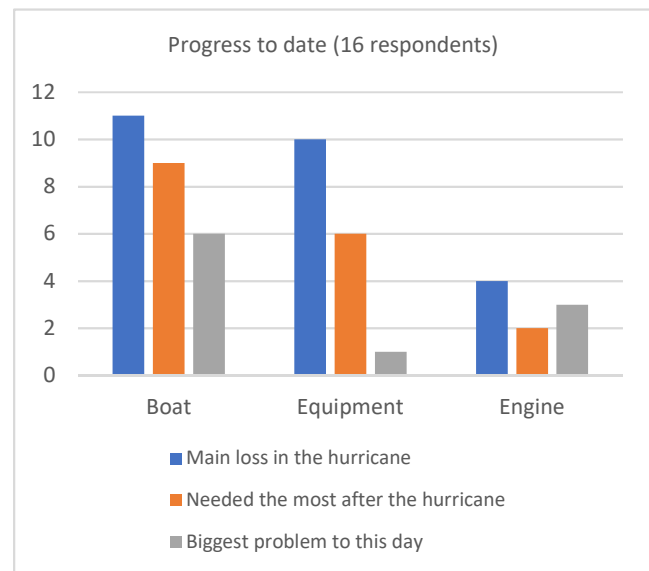
<sup>9</sup> IFRC, *Livelihoods needs assessment report*, Antigua and Barbuda, Nov. 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Idem.

### 3.2.2. Fishermen survey

The support to fisherfolk in Barbuda was composed of conditional cash distributions (for 31 fishermen), skills training (72 fishermen) and the distribution of fishing equipment. 16 fishermen were surveyed as part of this evaluation, either at the port upon return from fishing or at their homes. 13 received assistance from the Red Cross for fishing, while 3 did not.

Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that the main damage was to their boats, their engines and their equipment, with more than half indicating that repairs to their boat (or complete replacement) was their greatest need. Of concern is the response that for 6 of the 16 respondents, their boat is *still* their greatest concern, 18 months after the hurricane.



Not surprisingly then, 9 respondents answered that the Red Cross assistance answered their needs, with 2 answering “partly” and 2 answering “no” (3 did not receive fishing assistance). However, all 13 respondents still thought the Red Cross support was “good” – with the only neutral or negative answers coming from the 3 fishermen who did not receive assistance.



Fishing boats under repair in Barbuda.

When asked if they had any advice for the Red Cross, two of the comments related to the targeting, asking why not all fishermen were included in the assistance, especially since the value of the assistance was quite high. Another comment related to the fact that those who needed less, for instance a mask and tuba for dive fishing, got nothing, while others got full kits. Finally, a respondent commented the instance of a fisherman claiming a full diving kit though he only needed a specific item, then selling off the rest of the equipment (at a high price). It is worth noting that the Red Cross initially relied on local authorities and other partners, yet also conducted its own assessment to validate the information provided.

### 3.3. Health programming

The health component of the Hurricane Irma operation in Barbuda aimed to provide the target population with rapid medical management of injuries and diseases, via first aid services and assistance to the local hospital in Barbuda; community-based disease prevention and health promotion; psychosocial support provided to Barbudans both in shelters in Antigua and upon their return to Barbuda; and creating safe spaces for children via educational activities and the construction of a playground. The methodology for this segment of the assessment was built on direct observation (of the hospital and playground) and key informant interviews with the Red Cross personnel tasked with the provision of health services and at the Hannah Hospital.

### 3.3.1. Support to Hannah Hospital in Barbuda

Hannah Hospital lost its main ward in the hurricane and only maintained its emergency room, the observation ward and its pharmacy. As of February 2019, the main ward was undergoing considerable work to rebuild the roof on the southern half of the building.



Hannah Hospital in Barbuda, with the main ward (central structure on picture) still being rebuilt.

In discussions with the hospital matron present at the time of the hurricane, the support provided was considered excellent, because “Red Cross assistance came when it was the most needed – some of the equipment is still being used today”. According to the recollection of the matron, that assistance consisted of an electrocardiogram (EKG), a cardiac monitor, an adult scale, a defibrillator, water bottles and daily disposable medical supplies. Despite some technical issues (the defibrillator only came with one handle), these resources are still in use. Interestingly, the assistance considered most useful is not the most expensive, but rather the daily disposable medical supplies which are hard to come by in Barbuda, and the bottled water. The main challenges moving forward are human resources in the hospital to address local needs, as well as further daily medical supplies, such as IV fluids.

### 3.3.2. Psychosocial program

The context in Barbuda following the passage of Hurricane Irma was consistently described as highly stressful, due to the damage of the storm, the relocation to Antigua, the difficulties in being able to come back to Barbuda, the delays in getting paid, the rationing of water, food and gasoline, the limited access to banking services and telecommunications, etc. To address the level of stress and trauma, the Red Cross carried out a “Child Resilience Program” for psychosocial support to Barbudan children, both during their stay in collective centers in Antigua and upon their return in Barbuda. Focusing on the protection and wellbeing of children, it reached 50 children between the ages of 5 to 16 years during Friday or Saturday sessions for four months in Antigua.

The course was based on an existing methodology from the IFRC’s Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support, but the content had to be customized. While the original course covered a variety of disasters (child abuse, human trafficking, earthquakes, floods, etc.), the focus on Antigua was on Hurricane Irma. The activities also had to be toned down: while the original content included many games, the children in shelters were already hyperactive, so while games were maintained, the content was adjusted to include drawing, packing for emergencies, visioning exercises, etc. Children were quick in suggesting the need for a playground (which became an activity of the program), a larger hospital, etc.

Women, seeing the purpose and benefit of the activities for their children in the shelters, requested additional sessions for them. Activities were added early 2018, covering skill development activities such as job placement training; first aid training; food handlers training (valid for 2 years); and resumé and cover letter writing. It also included a partnership with Planned Parenthood for free screening.

One mother commented to a volunteer that the program helped her children become more extrovert and better able to play with others in the shelters, rather than stay passive. The same volunteer mentioned the joy expressed by children as a benefit in itself.

Respondents indicated as a challenge, other than the customization of the content, the initial difficulty to sell the program. This was related to the expectations people have of the Red Cross and coming to expect distributions. It took a while for participants to see the value of the program.

The volunteer-based focus of the program was critical to its success, since participants gave more value to the program when they realized that volunteers were donating their time to conduct the activities with them. The proper training and induction of volunteers proved critical, not only to overcome their initial fears about conducting such activities, but also in helping them relate and connect with the people living in shelters and overcoming the prejudices and stereotypes regarding Barbudans. It was commented that further efforts should be put in addressing specific attitudes, for instance volunteers taking selfies without proper consent from beneficiaries.

When measuring the perception of the value of the program, a paradox appears:

- The PSS program itself received *very limited praise* in the household survey, coming in last when Barbudans were asked which support from the Red Cross they most appreciated;
- Across the board, all program implementers and partners (Red Cross staff; volunteers; Government representatives in Antigua and in Barbuda; UN agencies) listed PSS as *a sorely needed service* that could have benefited from further activities. All stakeholders indicated the high levels of trauma and stress caused by the hurricane and the subsequent relocation, as well as the related tension among Barbudans.

This contradiction can probably be explained by the relative newness of the program and the lack of understanding as to the purpose of the activities. Rather than fewer activities, institutional respondents all indicated that more PSS was required, from earlier on, and reaching more people (an additional challenge is that the activities only reached people present in the shelters, with the difficulty to track Barbudans staying with friends or relatives).

For future iterations, some of the findings from the evaluation were that:

- PSS programs should be designed for longer timeframes: patience is key, since this module requires a longer-term commitment on behalf of beneficiaries and a willingness to leave one's comfort zone.
- More responsibilities should be given to children and teenagers – to become helpers in the program – as this modality proved very successful.
- National Societies should establish specific rosters of volunteers that are trained and experienced in providing support. Peer support can then help to expand the PSS services in emergencies.
- While the collaboration with UNICEF and complementarity of activities was commended, it was suggested that working with more Government services could have helped reach more people.
- Providing psychosocial support to Red Cross staff and volunteers was probably the biggest gap brought up. Burn-out levels were very high, due to the difficulty for one person to take on all the tasks that the operation required. This PSS should be combined with staff appreciation and workplace benefits (e.g. yoga in workplace, office wellness).

### 3.3.3. Safe spaces

One of the items identified in the sessions with the children was the need for play areas. Funded by the Australian High Commission, the ABRCS inaugurated a new playground in July 2018 in front of the Holy Trinity School (“a playground with a slide, a climbing apparatus, a 9-person swing set, a rocking horse and bouncer, an enclosed trampoline, picnic benches with umbrellas and volleyball, badminton and mini soccer set”). The play area was then officially handed over to the Barbuda Council. This investment was complemented by a forum for informal learning opportunities as well as training on child protection initiatives and what constitutes physical and emotional abuse, discrimination and neglect. Additional activities with UNICEF focused on the use of robotics, photography and filmmaking.



Pictures of the playground in Barbuda.



The evaluator visited the playground early February 2018, i.e. six months after its inauguration. Unfortunately, none of the games were functional, due to inappropriate usage by local youth and the insufficient quality of the installations for such public use. While none of the pieces from the different games were missing (many were found in the small shelter built in a corner of the play area), some of the pieces were broken (swings, tables), other had been taken apart (trampolines) and others still seem to never have been set up (gate to the play area).



Pictures inside and outside of the shed installed on the playground in Barbuda.

When asked about the state of the playground, the Barbuda Council (Commission for Tourism and Youth) commented that it was “such a great initiative that was so well receive by the young people. Damage is not from vandalism but from the intensive use made by the youth of the facilities.”

**Recommendations** for the future that emanated from the evaluation are:

- The construction of the playground represented a loss of time for the Red Cross, to identify the right games, the right supplier, organize shipment (from outside of Antigua & Barbuda), set up the fencing and the storage room and build the games. Furthermore, none of these activities enter in areas of expertise of the Red Cross. Such a process would be best contracted out to private playground contractors, who would be able to advise on the right quality and take responsibility for setting up the games according to relevant standards.
- The process of handover would also require further thought, to ensure the local counterpart (in this case the Barbuda Council) has the appropriate resources and systems in place.

### 3.4. Disaster Risk Management and Early Warning Systems

Due to hiring delays for the DRM officer (who only came on board in June 2018), the Disaster Risk Management Activities and the Early Warning System were some of the last to be implemented in Antigua and Barbuda.<sup>11</sup> By September 2018, after a year of programming, almost all of the remaining activities had to do with preparedness: repositioning of stocks; the review and update (or drafting) of response SOPs and plans; and the organization of simulation exercises:

- The IFRC conducted a study of the ABRCS warehousing capacity, leading the NS to change the flooring in two containers. But the upgrading of the current containers will need to be rolled over into future programs (including the relocation of the current containers in less flood-prone part of the headquarters lot).<sup>12</sup>
- The repositioning of stocks in the ABRCS headquarters took place as scheduled. The stocks have been reorganized, but further rationalization of existing storage space is still needed.
- The setting up of an early warning system is being supported by UNDP as part of a regional CDEMA effort. The early warning app (“CAP CAP” App) which provides information of disaster risks, is up and running, but it was not possible to document whether it is functional or not, since no alerts were sent out during the consultancy.
- On community preparedness, the Red Cross and NODS are still pending to conduct a VCA in a community on the island of Antigua, but the activity will take place beyond the life of the Irma operation.
- The construction of the branch office in Barbuda (which will also serve as a shelter) suffered multiple delays and, while the plans, blueprints and quotes are ready, construction on site has not started. This means the construction will not be completed in time for the next hurricane season (June 2019).



Repositioned stocks at ABRCS HQ.



ABRCS proposed Branch offices in Barbuda

<sup>11</sup> See section 4.2.1. below for the preparedness activities conducted in St Kitts.

<sup>12</sup> IFRC, Warehouse Capacity Building for National Societies: Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross, April 2018, Panama.



The evaluation was not able to document the review of the response SOPs, the simulation exercises or the household activities.



ABRC storage capacity at its Headquarters (above) and operations tent in Barbuda (below), part of the ABRC's institutional response capacity.

Among the recommendations pertaining to enhanced risk management capacity, it is worth noting:

- The need for the IFRC to support the implementation of recommendations from technical studies it carries out, such as the warehousing capacity study, as small NSs rarely have the capacity to carry forth or fund such recommendations.
- The need to determine whether the Red Cross provides added value in construction projects. As with the construction of the playground, the IFRC provided support for the design and quotations for the construction of the Barbuda branch, in addition to its ongoing activities, when a local contractor could have handled the process from start to finish. When external contractors offer specialized services in areas that fall outside of the IFRC's core mandate, contracting out can help human resources focus on more critical tasks.

### 3.5. Capacity building for the Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross Society

The Hurricane Irma response operation took a serious toll on the National Society because it did not have sufficiently strong systems in place. In the words of a member of the NS: "We came very close to breaking as an NS. It tore the NS apart. Some people felt that the Appeal team should report to NS staff, because of the structure. (..) The biggest challenge was managing the rift that the Appeal caused in the NS."

The lesson from this experience can be summarized in this quote from the NS's president: "The National Society needs to decide if you want to the National Society to be happy or if you want the beneficiaries to be happy." Ultimately, the leadership's decision to support the efforts of the Irma Operation Team to sustain the delivery of services to the beneficiaries, rather than focus on its internal challenges, led to an open crisis. Half way through the operation, by mid-2018, the situation reached a point of no-return and the contract of the Director General was terminated, splitting the NS into opposing factions. The NS's leadership eventually brought in a mediator and collectively the National Society membership agreed on a solution.<sup>13</sup>

The Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross Society was very open in discussing the challenges and limitations it faced (and continues to face), as such a small National Society. It recognizes gaps in its legal, ethical and financial foundations, in its systems and structures, even in its capacities to plan and perform the tasks that the operation required. ***This openness to recognize its limitations was indicated multiple times as one of the keys to the success of the National Society in adapting to such a large operation, while having to undergo significant change processes.***

<sup>13</sup> A "Leadership Advisory Mission" was conducted in December 2018 in Antigua & Barbuda by an experienced Red Cross leader. The sense is that this mission helped lay the foundation for more peaceful interactions in the NS.

Many lessons were learnt internally from the NS in these challenging times, for instance:

- The need to sustain the organizational development efforts and ensure systems are not dependent on people. It requires a continuous and comprehensive look at the organization's systems in the context of an international appeal and beyond: institutional, constitutional, disciplinary, etc.
- The need to explain up front what an Appeal implies and how it will affect daily work in the NS. The pace of work changes, as does the way of working. The ABRCs recognized that it took a while before understanding that it needed to communicate more and better to its membership, letting them know what is happening. Efforts were placed in informing beneficiaries as much as possible, as well as the general public, but the NS membership demanded, and deserved, specific information on the ways in which the operation was being conducted.
- The need to clarify the linkages between the Appeal work and regular (pre-emergency) work. The Appeal continues whether staff and volunteers want to be part of it or not, but if they are given a space, they can contribute their energy and ideas. The ABRCs tried to bring all its members on board the Appeal, even if not in a formal role, to understand what is going on.
- The need to accept that not all staff prior to the operation would have a key role in the operation. Certain job descriptions would change and new skill sets would be needed to deliver new services.

As part of the capacity building activities undertaken under the umbrella of the Hurricane Irma response, the NS is now in a much better situation in many humanitarian tasks:

- Training in ODK and MEGA 5 means that the NS has a strong roster to lead the implementation of household surveys in emergencies;
- 3 persons were trained in Cash Transfer techniques and 10 were included in a Livelihoods training<sup>14</sup>. However, the NS itself recognizes that conducting a full market assessment or setting up a Cash Transfer mechanism would be challenging without external support (which could come from the Livelihoods Reference Center);
- Training and application of PSS programming is a good start but, to address staff turnover and attrition, the NS has been working (since March 2018) on a Framework to have appropriate systems in place.

Interview respondents also indicated the concern that more trained personnel does not equate more people available in times of need, as many have other commitments and volunteer turnover rates remain high.

The operation considerably enhanced the standing of the National Society, as mentioned by the Minister of Social Transformation herself. A bill is now under review to update the country's disaster legislation, factoring the role the NS played in the response and formalizing its auxiliary role.

---

<sup>14</sup> See Livelihoods workshop report: *Livelihoods Programming Course*, Livelihoods Center / IFRC, May 2018.

## 3.6. Validation of findings

The validation workshop held on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Antigua served as a mechanism to present the findings from the evaluation process. It built on the findings from the Lessons Learned workshop held the previous week and added findings from the consultations in Barbuda. Following the structure of the Lessons Learned workshop, 10 themes were identified<sup>15</sup>. The four main conclusions not mentioned above are briefly presented here:

### 1. Coordination / data management

Perhaps not surprisingly, all recommendations pertaining to institutional coordination and data management emanated from the Lessons Learned workshop, composed of Red Cross and partner organizations. Participants reiterated the need for adequate human resources on the ground, but also stronger communication protocols and joint databases across agencies and clear plans outlining each organization's role in the response. Networking was identified as a critical piece of the response, to be initiated ahead of any emergency, to ensure key players know each other and can reach out when needed.

### 2. Targeting & Transparency

Targeting is a recurring theme that came up with households, fishermen, the focus group discussion in Barbuda and the lessons learned workshop. It remains one of the most contentious points of the operation, as outlined in section 3.1.2. above. The criteria for selection, registration and data management needs to be carefully reviewed by different stakeholders in every operation, hopefully leading to a clear set of conditions that can be easily communicated to the public, along with a single form for registration. The validation workshop also suggested formal beneficiary selection committees, involving government counterparts, international organizations and stakeholder representatives. This process should include communal consultation mechanisms to identify vulnerability. Internally, the Red Cross should establish a separate team responsible for the review of levels of vulnerability, the independent monitoring of the process and feeding back to the community. Such a unit would also be tasked with addressing concerns and cross-checking the information to identify false claims.

### 3. Community communication

As with targeting, recommendations related to community communications came from households, fishermen, the focus group discussion and the lessons learned workshop. The concerns related to the lack of clarity in the information provided by the Red Cross, whether to know the status of applications for assistance or the deadlines. Internally, the main recommendations are to establish a constant start-to-finish relationship with individual beneficiaries to simplify the communication. Externally, partners suggested monthly meetings among humanitarian partners to streamline communication to the population affected in an emergency.

### 4. Community engagement / coaching / capacity building

Again, the comments on community engagement cut across all audiences, emphasizing the need for greater community involvement in the implementation of activities, specifically Barbudans returning to Barbuda (despite the services being provided by the small IFRC team and local Barbudan volunteers). Barbudans mentioned that trainings should focus on local (Barbudan) participation and capacity building, rather than primarily on representatives from (Antiguan) headquarters, and trained Barbudans should then be offered the opportunity to contribute to rebuilding their island.

---

<sup>15</sup> See Appendices 5 and 6 (Workshop minutes and presentation of findings, Antigua & Barbuda Validation Workshop) for detail.

## 4. Evaluation findings – St Kitts and Nevis

The initial reports from St Kitts & Nevis following the passage of Hurricane Irma on September 6<sup>th</sup> indicated substantial damage to the island, so the IFRC quickly included the country in its initial appeal on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Both the Red Cross and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) were actively distributing assistance to affected households, mainly via the distribution of blankets and tarpaulins to cover damages to the roofs and missing shingles. In addition to providing humanitarian items, the IFRC deployed surge capacity to support with coordination efforts, damage and needs assessments and response activities.

Hurricane Irma was followed by Hurricanes José and Maria, leading the country to focus on immediate preparedness actions: on Monday 18 September, the National Society pre-positioned stock in the North and South of mainland St. Kitts, as well as on Nevis island. Only after both alerts were lowered could the Shelter assessment be completed.

Over the following days, subsequent assessments showed that the impact of the hurricane was minor, with only two homes severely damaged or destroyed. Within a couple weeks the two-island Federation was back to normal, as illustrated by this article:

*“St. Kitts is open for tourism. The tourism authority said shortly after Irma that St. Kitts was essentially unharmed. Its Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport, as well as hotels and tourism providers are open (the Park Hyatt will open in November as planned). And cruise ships are on their way. In Nevis, the Vance W. Amory International Airport is also open. Hotels, including the Four Seasons Resort Nevis, The Hermitage and the Great House and cottages at Nisbet Plantation Beach Club, which is open, are in good shape.”*

New York Times, 22 September 2017<sup>16</sup>

However, the hurricane demonstrated how quickly the national capacity of St Kitts and Nevis could be stretched, with the constant flow of requests for assistance from affected households quickly depleting local stocks (the Red Cross continued to help families with damage to their roof, while the government launched a comprehensive roof repair program to replace shingles). Given this combination of limited needs and limited capacity, the focus of the IFRC shifted to NS capacity building efforts around readiness to respond. This also included efforts to strengthen relationships between the NS and the St. Kitts NEMA and Nevis DM Department (NDMD).



<sup>16</sup> “After Maria and Irma: Caribbean Tourism, Island by Island”, 22 September 2017, available [here](#).

## 4.1. Support to St Kitts & Nevis households (relief)

Given the limited humanitarian aid available to the Red Cross in-country to respond to Hurricane Irma, the primary focus for the IFRC was shipping assistance as soon as possible:

- An air charter was immediately dispatched from Panama to cover basic shelter and health needs for 200 families in Saint Kitts and Nevis;
- Two shipments were sent to St. Kitts and Nevis on 11 September 2018 and 9 October 2018 with relief items for replenishment such as buckets, shelter toolkits, hygiene kits, tarpaulins, jerrycans, kitchen sets, and long-lasting insecticide mosquito nets (LLITNs).

These shipments highlighted the need for greater storage capacity in both National Societies, along with the technical skills to manage the logistical chain.

Using Red Cross pre-positioned stocks before tapping into the assistance provided by the IFRC through the Appeal, the SKNRCS and NEMA<sup>17</sup> were able to assist 1,020 households during the Relief phase:

	Households	Tarpaulins	Shelter toolkits	Hygiene kits	Kitchen sets	Blankets	Buckets	Jerry cans	Mosquito nets	L bottled water
<b>Distributions of NFI by SKNRCS in Saint Kitts</b>										
Saint Kitts	571	596	42	54	26	96	13	0	0	0
<b>Distributions of NFI by SKNRCS in Nevis</b>										
Nevis	86	109	0	8	1	98	1	0	0	0
<b>Distributions of SKNRCS NFI stock by NEMA in Saint Kitts</b>										
SK NEMA	363	402	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SK&amp;N Subtotal</b>	<b>1020</b>	<b>1107</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Stock distributed as part of the hurricane operation by the SKNRCS through IFRC support, IFRC 6-month Emergency Appeal Operational Update.

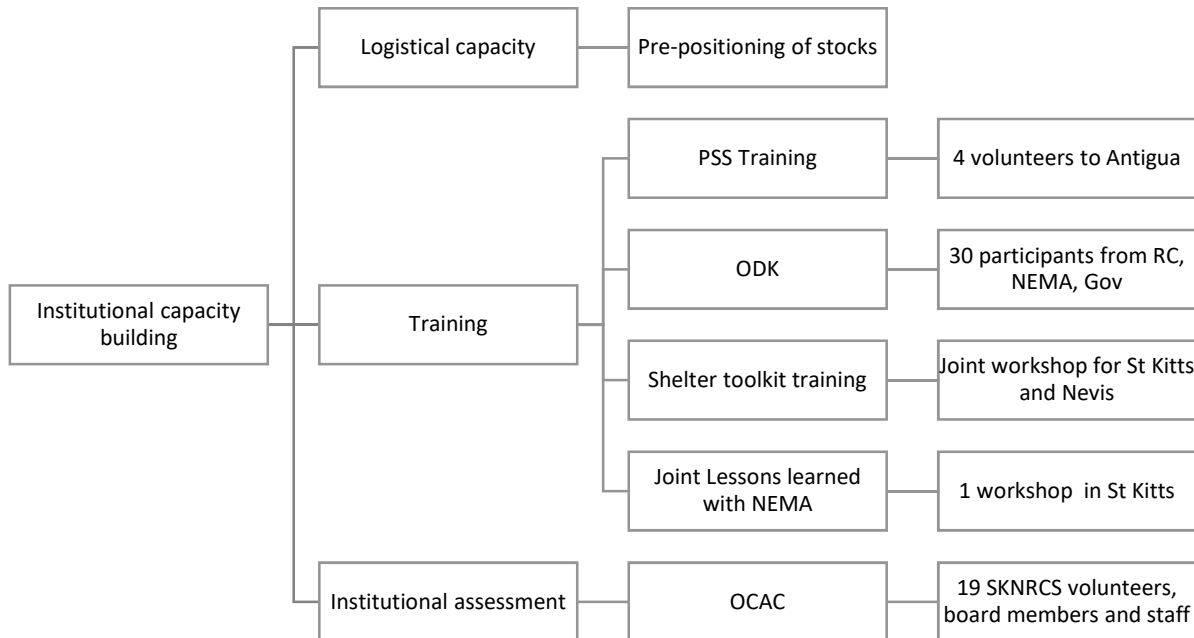
Following interviews with staff and volunteers from the SKNRCS, as well as with key informants from the national disaster management mechanism in both St Kitts and Nevis, the following recommendations were suggested for future relief efforts in the country:

- The entire communication mechanism needs to be upgraded. VHF radios did not work well during the hurricane response, unable to withstand a long emergency.
- Detailed assessments of risks and vulnerability are needed ahead of an emergency, which would make the process to respond to needs much faster.
- The humanitarian partners in St Kitts and Nevis need to define an exit strategy when supplies run out and persons keep on coming (as happened after a couple months following the passage of the hurricane). Such a strategy should be coordinated with the Ministry of Health and Social Services.
- Relief and recovery efforts should connect early on, which in this operation meant linking emergency assistance to roof repair efforts (e.g. joint needs assessments and data management).
- The NS identified the need to conduct a volunteer drive to be able to rely on more support during the critical relief phase. While it did rely on volunteers in the early days of the operation, numbers quickly dwindled to the core group of half a dozen individuals in each island.

<sup>17</sup> NEMA distributed 402 tarpaulins, which were supplied from SKNRC's stock, to 363 people in Saint Kitts.

## 4.2. Capacity building for St Kitts & Nevis Red Cross Society

The purpose of the capacity building component of the operation was to “strengthen the SKNRCS’s structures and systems for effective and improved service delivery capacity” to vulnerable populations in future emergencies. The activities included in the Appeal were:



### 4.2.1. Replenishment / Pre-positioning of stocks

The shipment of stocks to St Kitts & Nevis in the Appeal served two purposes: ensuring that the NS had the resources to respond to immediate needs; and have humanitarian assistance available in the event of another emergency.

The replenishment of the depleted NS stocks served to pre-position stocks in 7 strategic locations around both islands, to ensure no part of the country would be cut off without the possibility to access immediate assistance. These locations are:



Location of containers in SKN

#### 1. National Headquarters

The central location of this stock, close to the highest density population area in the country, builds on prior warehousing capacity but requires upgrading. The IFRC conducted an



assessment of the warehousing capacity<sup>18</sup> and recommended the following steps:

- Disposal process to be carried out with all non-usable items currently kept,
- Organize and split storage facilities by category: room in school to be used as storage of medical items not regularly used and light weight; two white and Japanese 20 ft containers to be used only with NFI; rehabilitate garage (repair roof, wall and doors) for non-usable items.

This study was conducted in April 2018, but as of February 2019 no changes had been made.

## 2. Conaree:

This warehouse is still empty but is prepositioned to cover the other side of Basseterre. It is raised, helping to protect from flooding.



## 3. Molineux:

The positioning of a new container came out as part of the IFRC recommendations, replacing an older termite-ridden container. It is on the compound of a local hospital and is currently the only container (outside of headquarters) with well-stocked supplies. The supplies will be disseminated throughout the island.



## 4. Dieppe:

This container is also raised and is located on the land of the local police station. It is empty but in good shape.



## 5. Sandy Point:

This container replaces an older container in poor condition. However, the same location has been kept, next to a public access road, which could raise risks of theft.



<sup>18</sup> Warehouse Capacity Building for National Societies: Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross, IFRC, April 2018, Panama.

**More concerning is the state of what should be a new container: after only a few months, the roof shows signs of leakage, the wooden flooring is rotting because of the leaks and the back of the container shows signs of advanced rust.**



6. Nevis – St James
7. Nevis – NDMD

The container in St James was not visited, but the container on the NDMD compound in Nevis is in good shape.



**Recommendations** from the site visits and the interviews with Red Cross staff and volunteers can be summarized as follows:

- The recommendations from the IFRC warehouse analysis from April 2018 should be implemented, especially now that the NS has prepositioned containers throughout the island. The pre-positioning of items should be completed throughout both islands and the leaks to existing containers should be addressed urgently.
- The Red Cross needs to identify additional donations to complement the IFRC stocks that will be insufficient in the event of a hurricane. These donations should be both international (ECHO; USAID; etc.) and local (local businesses; Rotary club; etc.).
- The field relationship between Red Cross and NEMA should be formalized. Local teams (CERT and CDRT) should be able to manage relief items directly, so that they are not dependent on HQ. This is already the case where there were previous containers (Sandy Point and Molineux).
- The use of the IFRC vehicles purchased through the Appeal should be rationalized. Both vehicles (1 in St Kitts and 1 in Nevis) spend 99% of their time parked in safe locations, to be used in the event of an emergency. Given the rate of depreciation of such valuable assets, this is not a good use for those vehicles.
- The Nevis branch still has 2 old containers from the 2000's in poor condition but does not have the resources to get rid of them. A strategy needs to be identified to determine what to do with them

#### 4.2.2. Organizational review

In April 2018, the NS conducted an Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) training workshop, with the participation of 19 SKNRCS volunteers, board members and staff. The Red Cross also has a role to play in the national legislative and policy review, which the Government will conduct in late March / early April (with support from USAID / OFDA). The review of the corresponding Act defining roles and responsibilities in disasters is also pending, along with the Standard Operation Procedures for the Emergency Operations Center.

**Recommendations** emanating from the evaluation are:

- The SKNRCS and the IFRC must follow up on the OCAC findings. There was no mention in any of the discussions as to any ongoing activities; the process seems to have stalled and further support is needed. All of the SKN Red Cross Plans are out of date and need to be modified to factor in the lessons from Hurricane Irma:
  - o National Development Plan covers 2001-2007;
  - o National Response plan dates from 2015;
  - o Strategic plan should be updated.
- The volunteer base is weak and unreliable. While volunteers did support the operation, regular programs are supported by a very small core group.

#### 4.2.3. Field assessments and beneficiary registration

In December 2017, 20 staff and volunteers were trained in beneficiary registration, data collection and distribution using ODK and Mega V. In June 2018, 30 participants across 6 organizations took part in a second workshop on ODK use.

**Recommendations** emanating from the evaluation are:

- Joint training for SKNRCS staff and volunteers and government personnel in emergency assessment was appreciated by all partners and helped facilitate coordination. However, the participants did not leave the workshop able to implement the tools. In particular, the organizations participating (SKNRCS, NEMA, NDMD) mentioned they did not know how to create forms in ODK, though they did know how to use the forms once uploaded on their phones

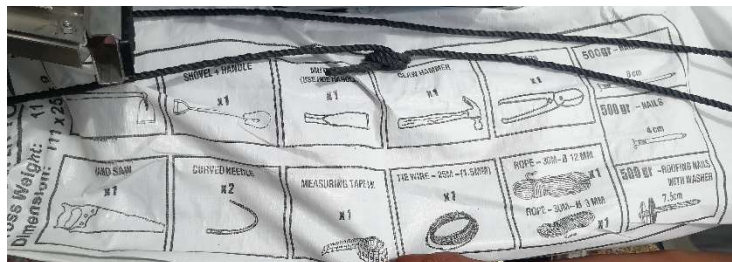
*Note: To address the second point, the consultant entered the NEMA (paper-based) survey in the ODK platform (using KoboToolbox) and helped all participants in the Validation Workshop to upload this initial NEMA survey in their phones. Support will most likely still be needed in the event of an emergency.*

#### 4.2.4. Shelter toolkit

Two shelter toolkit workshops took place in Nevis (19-20 June) and St Kitts (21-22 June). The workshops were facilitated by the IFRC, but jointly trained Red Cross and NEMA staff and volunteers.

**Recommendations** emanating from the evaluation are:

- To train other persons in the Shelter toolkit methodology, mainly to ensure it is passed on to field teams;
- To sustain the skills acquired through follow-up training.



#### 4.2.5. Psychosocial support workshop

A first 4-day psychosocial support workshop took place in May 2018, followed by a second one in October 2018. It offered an opportunity to incorporate PSS in the early response to emergencies, combining the work of mental health professionals with that of Red Cross volunteers. Using volunteers to conduct some initial triage would help identify people most urgently in need of professional assistance, while providing additional support to the broader community. PSS is also seen as a promising avenue for a stronger partnership between the Red Cross, NEMA and the Ministry of Health.

**Recommendations** were similar to those on the Shelter toolkit workshop, emphasizing that:

- More people should be trained, in a cascading approach, to reach more people and to expand the scope of psychosocial support provided.
- The Red Cross should build stronger links to existing programs that could benefit from PSS. The PSS activities have already been incorporated in the Zika and Fire response programs, but hospitals could offer further avenues for volunteer engagement.

#### 4.2.6. Joint Lessons Learned workshop with NEMA

In April 2018, the Red Cross organized a Lessons Learned workshop in Saint Kitts & Nevis, inviting its partners in the response effort.<sup>19</sup> The Nevis Disaster Management Department (NDMD) developed detailed priorities prior to the workshop and a small delegation took part in the workshop. The event only lasted half a day (from 11 am to 3 pm) and did not include key decision-makers from many of the critical institutions (NEMA Head, Chief of fire, police, Ministry of Housing and Land, etc.) so the final outputs from the workshop were not endorsed at the appropriate levels. Equally concerning, the consultant was unable to get the notes from the workshop, as it seems a NEMA server crash led to the loss of the minutes.

Given the challenges in documenting the conclusions and action points from this workshop, the main **recommendation** is to organize a new Hurricane Irma Lessons Learned workshop, building on the lessons from the workshop in April, i.e.:

- Key informants underlined the importance of getting the Prime Minister's buy-in and endorsement for the workshop, which in turn would ensure the participation of key decision-makers from critical ministries. The workshop should be chaired by the appropriate authority, who will also be tasked with ensuring the recommendations from the workshop are committed to. As in the first workshop, an external facilitator should be hired to keep the sessions on course.
- The workshop itself should be broken down into two phases:
  - o Preparatory sessions should take place for each of the key sectors: first response; housing and lands; health related preparedness; etc. These sessions should involve key operational personnel and should focus on concrete actions. They should also build on the conclusions identified as part of the present Hurricane Irma Evaluation.<sup>20</sup>
  - o The actual workshop itself would then bring all stakeholders together to identify synergies and collaboration across sectors.
- The workshop should develop a workplan with clear deliverables and persons responsible, identifying the basic functions that each Ministry is responsible for and, where necessary, assign specific tasks to relevant committees.

---

<sup>19</sup> No such workshop had been organized in Antigua & Barbuda, due to the volume of activities in April 2018. This is why a Lessons Learned workshop was included in the evaluation in Antigua & Barbuda, but not in St Kitts & Nevis.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendices 7 and 8 (Presentation of findings and Minutes, St Kitts & Nevis Validation Workshop) for the recommendations from key stakeholders.

### 4.3. Validation of findings

As in Antigua & Barbuda, the evaluation in St Kitts & Nevis closed with a validation workshop, held on February 11<sup>th</sup> in St Kitts with representatives from key organizations involved in disaster response and recovery<sup>21</sup>. Since no minutes were available from the Lessons Learned workshop, the validation process built on the conclusions from the interviews with the different stakeholders involved in the response, as well as the review of documents and field visits by the consultant.<sup>22</sup> The consultant grouped the recommendations under 7 themes, which were briefly presented above (see sections 4.1. and 4.2.).

Following a discussion on the proposed recommendations, in which participants provided additions and clarifications, the Validation Workshop served as a platform for participants to identify and agree on next steps to enhance preparedness in St Kitts & Nevis. The 5 **conclusions** from this discussion are:

1. Initiate the review of the 2013 National Disaster Plan review: This process should start with a process clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies, as well as include the private sector and other relevant institutions. The current sub-committees should be involved in this review and should provide a status on progress and challenges since the last meeting took place.
2. Review best practices from Barbuda and look at relevance for St Kitts & Nevis: After seeing the findings and recommendations from the evaluation in Barbuda, participants agreed that St Kitts & Nevis would benefit from factoring in those recommendations in their own plans. Of specific mention were the need to consider (1) the establishment of a mechanism for transparency and accountability in humanitarian assistance and (2) the use of cash / debit cards in humanitarian response.
3. Conduct joint data collection with Red Cross, relevant ministries and other institutions ahead of the next emergency. This process should lead to a consultation process of community members, which should lead to an updated list of vulnerable groups and the identification of the best ways to reach vulnerable groups in disasters.
4. Review public communication strategy, i.e. identify how to reach more people with correct information (WhatsApp; Social media; telecoms providers) and better align messages with Red Cross.
5. Improve data collection in isolated areas, which could be achieved with the use of drones and other technological solutions.

Saint Kitts and Nevis National Disaster Plan 2013

**Record of Review and Updates**

The St. Kitts-Nevis National Disaster Plan needs to be updated at least yearly. It needs to be reviewed after every response to a real event and after every simulation exercises designed to test the plan.

The St. Kitts-Nevis National Disaster Plan has been revised/amended on the following dates:

Serial	Date	Amendment/Update	Signature

<sup>21</sup> SKNRCS, NEMA, NDMD, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Community Development, Ministry of the Environment, Public Works Department, SKN Defence Force and SKNIS.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 8 (“St Kitts & Nevis Validation Workshop – Minutes”) for a summary of the discussion.

## 5. Evaluation findings – operational management

Section 3 above summarized the main findings from the discussions in Antigua & Barbuda and the data collected from households and fishermen in Barbuda, while Section 4 outlined the conclusions from the interviews, discussions and field visits in St Kitts and in Nevis. The following section offers an overview of the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation that are cross-cutting across both countries, related to the management of the operation. They look at coordination with National Societies and within the Red Cross Movement, the mobilization of human and financial resources for the operation, the connections between the Appeal and continued support for NS organizational development and the overall management of data in the operation.

### 5.1. Coordination with National Societies

In Antigua & Barbuda, given the scale of Hurricane Irma’s impact in Barbuda, the strong collaboration between the ABRCS and the IFRC proved crucial to get the operation off the ground. It was also critical in the early weeks of the operation given the large number of international humanitarian organizations coming in to provide support, making the Government’s coordination role particularly challenging. Given the preexisting relationship between the NS and the Government, the Red Cross Movement was able to provide support and lead assessments on behalf of the Government to guide emergency planning – within 72 hours for its first evaluation and within 2 weeks for the detailed evaluation.

**Take-away 1:** According to the interviewees included in the evaluation, this good practice was a consequence of:

- strong leadership skills within the National Society, clear on their mandate and on the specific roles of governance and management;
- a good understanding by the NS of the role and support functions of the Federation;
- existing relationships prior to the emergency; and
- a willingness by the NS to be open about its challenges.

In St Kitts & Nevis, the hurricane demonstrated how quickly the limited resources of the National Societies could be stretched. Their regular programming is limited and the reliance on volunteers at all levels of the organization makes it very vulnerable to turnover. As the IFRC opened a joint appeal for both countries, the SKNRCS was able to benefit from greater human and financial support and for a much longer timeframe than would have been otherwise available if the hurricane had only affected St Kitts & Nevis. Had the IFRC only been able to tap into DREF funding, the immediate relief would have been limited to 6 months and CHF 300,000, most likely leaving the NS in a weaker position after the operation than it was prior to impact. Instead, the program offered a unique opportunity to invest in building the operational capacity and conduct an institutional diagnostic (OCAC).

**Take-away 2:** The IFRC should examine how to formalize its St Kitts & Nevis “model”, whereby a country is affected by a limited emergency (which would not warrant important international assistance) but struggles with even more limited capacity (which could further weaken its future response capacity). The inclusion of St Kitts & Nevis in the Appeal allowed for critical capacity building activities in the operation, which, though still fledging, allow to address some of the structural weaknesses of the country’s response capacity. The IFRC should establish a checklist to determine whether to launch an Appeal or a DREF in relatively small emergencies that overwhelm local capacity, as was the case in St Kitts & Nevis.

## 5.2. Movement coordination and resource mobilization

The Hurricane Irma was somewhat unusual for the Red Cross Movement. It affected three Caribbean countries (Antigua & Barbuda, St Kitts & Nevis and Cuba) as well as overseas territories of European countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Martin, Sint Maarten, Saint Barthelemy, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands) and of the United States (U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Florida). This led to exceptional media coverage and Red Cross mobilization, but also shifted the initial focus of those Partner National Societies' field staff towards their territories. The result was a very well-funded operation, in which the IFRC increased the scale of the operation both to reflect the more ambitious recovery services on the ground but also to keep up with the requests for contributions from donors.

Several persons interviewed in the evaluation considered the operation was actually over-funded given the size of the emergency and the number of affected families (Barbuda only had roughly 500 households prior to the hurricane). While spending the money on needed actions (including capacity building and stocks prepositioning) was not an issue, it was difficult at times for the operations team to stay within the original donor intent – i.e. ensuring the aid was appropriately distributed among such a small number of households with different needs in Antigua and upon their return in Barbuda, within the Appeal timeframe, while keeping overhead costs low (particularly international staffing costs).

Given the media focus and the damage across so many territories, the support from PNSs was equally exceptional, with the deployment of delegates for Cash Transfer (from the Spanish Red Cross), PMER (Iceland Red Cross), Shelter (Swiss Red Cross), etc. One contributing factor highlighted in the consultations was the rapid publication of the initial Appeal, helpful for the planning of both partners and donors, though the actual Plan of Action took longer.

**Recommendations** stemming from that experience are:

- To keep in mind that preliminary needs assessment data can be misleading, as was the case with the first estimates from the Government of St Kitts & Nevis. It took a while to clarify the situation, revealing the lower damage than expected.
- To remember that Appeals can be fully funded, especially when there is high media coverage. This is important to keep in mind when estimating needs early on with limited data, as the natural tendency is to inflate numbers to anticipate unforeseen needs as well as low fundraising rates.
- To constantly reevaluate the changing needs on the ground and keep the donors informed. When needed, close the Appeal and suggest other uses for international funds when the amount of resources the Red Cross can manage efficiently has been met. [The Hurricane Irma Appeal was able to reallocate funds from Antigua & Barbuda to the Dominica and Cuba appeals; however, such reallocation of funds is not always possible.]
- To continue the close collaboration and communication with Partner National Societies ahead of the Hurricane Season (for instance in annual disaster planning meetings) to ensure lines of communication are already established ahead of an emergency. One modality would be to share experiences of recent operations across the Movement.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> See for instance the very good video developed for the first year of the Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria operations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9HEyzOQtWw>

### 5.3. IFRC internal coordination

Supporting 2 national societies under one emergency appeal presented some management and communication challenges, particularly with limited staff all based in one country (Antigua & Barbuda), dealing with different levels of capacities in two NSs and different levels of impact from the hurricane.

On the positive side, the internal restructuring during the early phases of the operation – to streamline who participated in which meetings – helped to ensure the information was shared consistently and appropriately.

**Recommendations** from these discussions include:

- Formalize the experiences from the intense 2017 hurricane season, in which effective communication channels were established throughout the relief phase, with the right level of engagement from the different teams.
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and decision-making levels of the different offices involved in an operation (field office, cluster office, regional office). This issue was brought up multiple times as one of the main bottlenecks in decision-making in the early weeks of the operation.
- Clarify the priorities for support services in relief operations, already stretched with normal deliverables outside of emergencies. Several respondents mentioned the slow response times for emails pertaining to the operation, which in the worse cases even affected the deadlines for final project delivery.<sup>24</sup>

### 5.4. Human resources

The Human Resources department was particularly solicited during the 2017 hurricane season. The operation successfully built on the existing regional resources, both via the RIT mechanism and by tapping into the expertise of Panama-based staff. Perhaps because of the diversity of staffing models used, the management of human resources was the most-commented topic during key informant interviews in the evaluation. Comments related to the human resource structure in the operation, the use of regional resources, the hiring process, staff turnover, living conditions, burn-out and exit strategies.

#### 1. Designing the human resource set-up for the operation

The first concern about the operation related to the multiple levels of decision-making (Team Leaders in-country, Head of Cluster, Head of Operations at regional level). Respondents expressed confusion as to who was in charge of defining the operation's HR structure in the first few months of the operation. The mechanism for emergency deployments appears to be well understood, with personnel being deployed immediately from the regional office without having any guarantee as to the initial source of funding. However, once positions needed to be outlined and advertised, the approval processes were perceived to be long and complex. Even when candidates were identified, the process to get them interviewed by different decision-makers – and finding interview times in their respective schedules – proved to be challenging, much delaying the process. This situation was made more difficult still by the fact that the Human Resources team suffered from low staffing during the very busy months of late 2017.

---

<sup>24</sup> Although the evaluation did not examine this issue in depth, it seems such bureaucratic delays are partly responsible for the stalemate in the construction of the Barbuda Branch building.

## 2. Relief phase deployments

In the Hurricane Irma Operation, the IFRC piloted some of the Global Surge Review recommendations<sup>25</sup> and attempted new models for getting experts on the ground as soon as possible. For instance, while the IFRC has traditionally published RIT positions first, then advertised global positions, it advertised simultaneously for a Team Leader regionally and globally for this Appeal. The advertising of positions was quick, as was the hiring of the initial batch of responders: the first Team Leader position was advertised on the same day as the Appeal (Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>) and it was filled within 4 days (with a staff member from Panama). On average, the initial hiring for Shelter, PSS and PMER positions were filled within 3 days. This success was credited to the simultaneous advertising regionally and globally, as well as the staffing support of the PNSs, the use of RITs and the IFRC's Regional Office staff.

The Hurricane Irma Operation relied heavily on Regional Office staff in the early weeks of the operation. Panama-based staff with non-emergency responsibilities were deployed to Antigua to support the relief phase of the operation. Such deployments offer Regional Office staff unique opportunities for professional growth, but also create stressful situations when they continue to handle the day-to-day management of their regular responsibilities, stretching their capacities while delaying ongoing programs. One interviewee also commented that it became difficult at times to identify who was still working on what in the Regional Office given the numerous deployments around the region.

There were also concerns raised about the different categories of staffing. The levels of remuneration are different between international delegates, regional RITs, national staff from the Panama office, national staff from the ABRCs and SKNRCs and NS volunteers, at times carrying out similar tasks. Regional RITs and Regional Office staff may not always understand why delegates are granted more generous contracts for similar levels of responsibilities, with the same risk between national NS staff regarding regional or international staff.

On the bright side, several interviewees highlighted that two RITs were offered an opportunity to stay on in the Recovery phase under longer-term delegate contracts. This was perceived as a good practice that should be formalized and replicated.

Overall, the use of RITs was perceived very positively and relying on persons from the region proved to buy goodwill from both the host NS and the affected communities. Building the RIT system was referred to as “a resource for the region”, where neighboring NSs support each other in times of need.<sup>26</sup>

## 3. Recovery phase deployments

Once the first rotation of responders started to leave, the operational situation was complicated by the high staff turnover at all levels (starting with 5 Team Leaders in 2 months). The team members were under a lot of pressure to develop funding plans within tight deadlines, each defending their sector, with little guidance from the incoming or outgoing Head while knowing they would not be responsible for implementation.

---

<sup>25</sup> *Emergency Surge Personnel Deployments: Deployment Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures*. While a first preliminary draft was developed in July 2017, it was piloted throughout the second half of 2017 (including in the Hurricane Irma Operation) and 2018, with a final draft issued in February 2019. [Interview with Surge Team in Geneva]

<sup>26</sup> There was a sense that “When people come from larger NSs with stricter rules and developed systems, delegates get frustrated because things don't work as planned”, though the evaluation could not prove or disprove this point.

This turnover was exacerbated by the insufficient time built into the contracts for proper handover from one person to the next. When the 5<sup>th</sup> Team Leader came on board in November 2017, all 4 delegates still in-country left within a week. This was particularly challenging for sensitive activities, such as the handover of debit card distribution tasks in October 2017, where mistakes or bundled handovers could have had potentially disastrous effects on the operation.

The situation settled by late 2017, as the Team Leader settled in and operation-specific staff came on board. However, even then, the operation suffered from two vacancies in the staffing structure:

- The Finance Delegate position stayed vacant for 6 weeks at the end of 2017;
- The DRM Delegate position, requested in January, was not operational in-country until June, which impeded the IFRC from supporting preparations for the (thankfully peaceful) 2018 hurricane season.

#### **4. Living conditions on the ground**

The operation was initially based out of Antigua, where Barbudans had been evacuated to. From January to April 2018, the IFRC team started operating most of the time out of Barbuda, in very summary conditions. As of April 2018, the full team relocated to Barbuda, living for months without secure power, water or basic services.

This two-island model proved complicated for the IFRC HR framework. As explained in the final report of the Team Leader<sup>27</sup>: *“Antigua & Barbuda is inaccurately categorized as a limited family post. This presents 2 issues for IFRC staff that has unfairly punished members of the Operations Team: 1) Because it is a “limited family post,” dependents of staff are not eligible for health insurance; and 2) Because it is not a hardship post, staff are not eligible hardship allowance or R&R. The reality is that the island of Antigua should be a family post, while the conditions on Barbuda [call] for a hardship post.”*

The HR team in Panama recognize that insufficient information was available for a proper assessment of the situation in Antigua and in Barbuda. Ultimately the Operations Manager, the Head of Security and the Head of the Caribbean Cluster are tasked with the final security assessment, but there was no consensus among these decision-makers on the ultimate categorization of the operation for HR purposes.

#### **5. Staff burn-out**

The topic of staff burn-out was brought up by several interviewees at all levels of the operation. While recognizing the high levels of energy over the first 4 weeks of the operation, the motivation of staff and volunteers fell as the operation shifted from the initial relief phase (around NFIs and Cash Transfer) to the longer recovery phase, with important budgets to spend and tight deadlines. While PSS was provided to Barbudan households, it is widely accepted now that it should have been expanded to staff and volunteers. Rest and Recuperation (R&R) periods should also have been built in, with a Welcome Desk to help staff with day-to-day issues and accessing a stress counsellor when needed.<sup>28</sup>

#### **6. HR exit strategy**

Exit strategies should also be built into HR systems. In the case of the Hurricane Irma Operation, the ABRCS has very limited staff while the SKNRCS is entirely run by volunteers. Since the IFRC does not have legal status in either country, it had to run its contracts through the NS. Whatever HR system was set up by the IFRC during the operation should be sustained after the close of all activities.

---

<sup>27</sup> Brennan Banks, *End of Mission Report*, Sept 2018.

<sup>28</sup> All of these services were offered by the IFRC in its Haiti Earthquake Operation in 2010.

In summary, the main **recommendations** pertaining to human resources are to:

- Review IFRC HR protocols to address the specific hiring needs of Appeals:
  - o Ensure the Human Resources team has a dedicated person assigned specifically to the hiring and support for ongoing Appeals;
  - o Clarify who are the key decision-makers involved in each hiring process in Appeals, ensuring that they are limited to the strict minimum, especially if their availability for interviews is limited;
  - o Reflect the outcomes of the Toluca high level group and other Surge review mechanisms in IFRC HR protocols, to ensure regional options (such as RITs) and global deployments complement each other.
- Factor in good HR practices in the design of HR structures and job descriptions:
  - o Assign key reporting staff (such as PMER and Finance) to each Appeal, rather than splitting such positions across Appeals;
  - o Ensure redundancy in the HR structure. If the sole person entrusted with, say, approval of debit cards is sick or on leave, the entire system may be frozen. Building this redundancy in the HR system may require assigning corresponding tasks to back-up personnel in job descriptions.
  - o Cash expertise and Livelihoods expertise were both very valuable in this operation. However, while Cash Programming can usually be managed by a Livelihoods advisor, the reverse is not always true (many Cash advisors do not have a Livelihoods / Market analysis expertise). Furthermore, Livelihoods delegates serve another purpose: to ensure that the design of the recovery phase is factoring in the longer-term economic sustainability of the affected population.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff with different HR contracts:
  - o Harmonize the HR levels, requirements and salary levels among different staff categories (i.e. requirements and corresponding tasks for a delegate, for a Regional Office staff deployment, for a RIT, for a NS field staff, etc.).
  - o Ensure Regional Office staff are freed from the management of their day-to-day tasks for whenever they are deployed in an operation. Determine ahead of time who will take over pending tasks in Panama, to ensure deployed staff are not managing two positions at once.
  - o Balance in-house IFRC staff and external staff in operation staffing, to ensure a diversity of perspectives and provide new energy. This was also mentioned as a guarantee of independence, ensuring not all operations staff members have prior relationships with the NS.
- Ensure the IFRC can anticipate emergency needs across the region:
  - o Establish a roster of Team Leaders with the right leadership and management skills for these complex operations. Leadership was listed as the single most important factor of success in the Hurricane Irma operation, particularly after the rough first months, yet there does not seem to be a mechanism to ensure there is a pool of experienced staff available to lead emergency operations.
  - o Enhance the level of expertise of Caribbean RITs to include profiles in high demand, such as Livelihoods advisors or PSS advisors. The Livelihoods Center has courses that target NITs and could be utilized to train appropriate Caribbean RITs, who in turn could be included in deployment rosters.

- Ensure staff wellbeing is considered throughout:
  - o Update the security assessment in countries where Appeals are ongoing on a regular basis (quarterly?) and adjust HR contractual conditions accordingly. This may require dedicated HR team visits.
  - o Factor psychosocial services for both staff and volunteers into the Appeal's design, depending on the context of the operation. The 2010 Haiti Earthquake Operation set-up offers a high standard that smaller operations can strive to replicate.
- Consider NS HR capacity building throughout the operation:
  - o For technical skills that require international support (such as Cash Transfer Programming), a good practice is to identify a corresponding national focal point to work alongside the IFRC technical resource person. Ideally, that person should be on payroll (i.e. not fully volunteer) to help ensure the sustainability of the support, with a corresponding IFRC go-to advisor to support the Focal Point remotely. Although recommended by the Appeal team, this process did not happen.
  - o Build in an exit strategy that can sustain the IFRC HR system in the NS beyond the life of the project.

## 5.5. Data management

The IFRC has been modernizing its data management systems over the last few years with cross-sectorial collaboration, combining teams from Information Management, Innovation and Resource Mobilization. Technology has been a critical piece in this process, with the use of new data collection tools (such as Mega V and ODK), new data protection policies (for general good humanitarian practice and more recently to ensure compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR), protected servers and the progressive introduction of electronic signatures. The IFRC has been leading an ambitious process to roll out these changes to all NSs in the region, and the process had already begun before the Appeal was launched.

During the Hurricane Irma Operation, the NSs successfully conducted assessments using ODK, though it quickly became apparent that they did not have the capacity to analyze the data. The IFRC provided that technical support throughout. In early 2018, changes were made to the beneficiary registration protocol and the documentation of beneficiary lists. Given the sensitive nature of beneficiary registration for the different cash transfer activities for households, this process of rigorous data management was critical. Initially working with paper forms, the Operation Team started collecting electronic signatures with actual signing of names by beneficiaries on handheld devices and the addition of control mechanisms such as key questions for ensuring the right person is receiving the assistance and the use of pictures for each beneficiary profile.

While this constant effort to improve the quality of the data is commendable, the final product has not lived up to the expectations. One of the main reasons (if not the main one) of beneficiary registration is to ensure accountability to donors and transparency in the services provided. Yet the final product proved particularly problematic on several counts:

## 1. Beneficiary listings are incomplete:

The document evidence provided to the consultant was composed of a cloud-based file with all documents pertaining to the operation. In the ABRCS offices, 11 folders constituted the main handover from the IFRC to the NS in Dec. 2018 (see picture).



Files shared with the consultant by the NS

While conducting a review of the beneficiary listings for the purpose of the evaluation, the consultant identified 26 lists that would ensure the proper documenting of the process:

- 4 main items were distributed during the Relief phase: only 2 partial lists (tents and bottled water) could be located; no evidence could be found of the other 2 (hygiene kits and mosquito net distributions).
- Immediate cash assistance was provided to 429 households. No listing of beneficiaries could be located in the NS or in the consultancy files.<sup>29</sup>
- Records from May and June 2018 show that 44 households received cash for basic needs.<sup>30</sup>
- No records could be found for Cash for Housing Repairs,
- Partial listings were found for mosquito nets, kitchen sets, family kits, hygiene kits, jerry cans, water filters, shelter kits or tarpaulins.
- Records from April 2019 show that fishermen received skills training and diving kits.
- A non-dated list indicates that fishermen signed upon receipt of a “standard kit”.
- No records could be found for assistance for fishermen for conditional cash.
- A registry shows participation in a PSS training of trainers in May 2018.
- No records of attendance could be found for workshops in Barbuda (it was not clear from the Appeal reports which workshops were conducted where).

It would seem current IFRC data management protocols require that all original forms are relocated to the IFRC Cluster office – meaning the consultant was not able to access the records for the purpose of the evaluation. It also raises questions as to the content of the documents left in the NS.

## 2. National Societies are not aware of the documentation collected in their name:

Following up with the National Society, the list of missing documents referenced above was shared with the Director General. Her team was not able to locate any additional documentation of beneficiaries. Although the Appeals team left behind a detailed listing of the documents being provided, the challenges in locating specific resources showed that the NS only has a partial understanding of the IFRC’s data management system.

---

<sup>29</sup> Following further discussions with the last IFRC Team Leader (who was also the CTP delegate), a complete record (Excel) was shared with roughly 500 names (“CTP Basic Needs First Round Relief Phase”).

<sup>30</sup> Again, the IFRC Team Leader was able to share additional files – both scans of actual signatures and Excel listings – with roughly 470 beneficiaries. This listing includes what seems to be hyper-links to electronic signatures, which the consultant was not able to access. (“CTP Basic Needs Second Round - Recovery phase”)

### 3. Paper-based registries were non-standard:

Of the limited lists that are available, either electronically or in paper form in the NS, many only provide partial information. The operation did not use standardized IFRC forms and most listings appear to be print-outs of Excel tables. Some of the documents include the name of beneficiaries and signatures but are not clear as to *when* the distribution took place or *what* was distributed.

Again, it should not be assumed that all Appeal beneficiary forms were similar to the ones shared

with the consultant (since it seems there are more comprehensive beneficiary archives in some location), but rather that the forms that the NS has in its archives does not comply with humanitarian good practice.

650					
651	John	Shane	7326171		
653	John	Beautymay	7323722	<i>APR 14</i>	<i>20/10/17</i>
654	Yearwood	Ardis	7329993		
655	Cephas	Shoab	7884848		
657	Frederick	Auklyn	2687851585	<i>21/10/17</i>	<i>8/11/17</i>
658	Jeffrey	Odell	7363370		
659	Jeffrey	Evelyn	7859743		
660	Francis	Mabel	2687254966		
661	Walker	Brandon	2687212535		
662	Jeffrey	Leon	2687227125		
663	Kerene	Granti	7258876		
664	Nibbs	Aarol	2684649308		
665	Walbrook	Mohammad	2687172634	<i>11/11/17</i>	<i>20/10/2017</i>
666	Walbrook	James	2687644448		<i>No house just flat</i>
669	John	Valarie	7222129	<i>09/11/17</i>	<i>2x lights 2x MN 2x Jerry can V.S</i>
	<i>NO NUMBER</i>	<i>NEDD COATROY</i>	<i>7213167</i>	<i>6/11/17</i>	<i>1x TAS 1x STK</i>
	<i>NO NUMBER</i>	<i>THOMAS MILLER</i>	<i>no phone</i>	<i>6/11/17</i>	<i>2x SOLAR LIGHT 2x JERRY CAN 1x WATER FILTER</i>
	<i>NO NUMBER</i>	<i>James Leontine</i>	<i>2 lights 2 jerry cans 2 mess set</i>	<i>6/11/17</i>	<i>2x JERRY CAN 2x SOLAR LIGHT 1x MN 1x WATER FILTER</i>
	<i>No number</i>	<i>SMITH FLORENTINE</i>	<i>2 x solar lights 2 x MN 2x jerry can, 1x water filter</i>	<i>6/11/17</i>	<i>119</i>

### 4. Electronic registries were not found:

Except for the Cash Transfer Program listings, no electronic registries were found, and the Cash records were located because the person responsible for the Cash activities still has them on her personal files. It is particularly concerning that a consultant committed to locating files related to the operation was unable to do so, even after going through all project records shared by the IFRC.

While there is no evidence of misuse or misallocation of resources, **the weak data management system is a serious concern that should be addressed in the near future.**

Despite significant investments in improving the foundations for proper document management, **recommendations** from the evaluation are for the IFRC to:

- Ensure all operations use standardized forms to document beneficiary assistance. These forms should include, as a minimum, the IFRC logo, the name of the operation, the country / location, items or services being provided, the date of issue, the full name and contact information of the beneficiary, signature and date of reception.
- Ensure that dual systems are in place until NSs are familiar with electronic registries, i.e. include both manual signatures and electronic identification (whether electronic signature, fingerprint, voice recognition, etc.).
- Ensure that the NS is actively involved in the data collection process and can track specific distributions beyond the life of the project.
- Clarify the purpose and audience of the data management system. Determine where the electronic information will be stored, how it can be accessed and who can access it. This Appeals Data Management policy should then be made available to NS staff (as part of final handover) and to external consultants (as part of the initial consultancy package).
- Conduct regular (quarterly) audits of the data management system during Appeal operations to ensure the required documentation is being collected as the operation progresses.

## 6. Conclusions

This final section aims to answer the evaluation’s guiding questions, while referencing back to relevant sections of the report for further detail.

### 6.1. Relevance and appropriateness of the operation

***Were the estimated numbers of target population reasonable giving the capacities and resources available?***



The satisfaction surveys demonstrate the good use of resources in the program and the high value that beneficiaries place on Red Cross assistance: 100% of respondents in Barbuda considered the initial cash distributions were “very important” (91%) or “important” (9%) at the time; 86% thought the in-kind assistance matched their needs well; and 84% rated the overall Red Cross assistance as “good” or “very good”, with less than 1% of respondents considering it was “bad”. (See sections 3.1. and 3.2. for full beneficiary survey findings.)

***Did we target the right group of beneficiaries during this emergency response? Did the needs assessment consider the vulnerabilities and capacities of groups in the communities?***



Targeting was one of the weaker points of the operation, with 68% of respondents considering that Red Cross support went to those who needed it most (but up from 26% in January 2018). With such great needs in such a small island, there seems to have been an expectation that the assistance would be customized to each household. Beneficiaries recommended that the assistance focus more on children and on the elderly, relying more on local volunteers for the identification of those most in need. Although the Appeal team did its best to adapt to the context of a high-impact, low-population emergency, future efforts should consider an autonomous targeting and monitoring unit. (See sections 3.1.2. and 3.6. for detail.)

The household survey also identified one area of serious concern: to the question “Was there any corrupt abuse by agency staff, local elites or authorities involved in targeting or distribution?”, 22 of the 86 respondents (20%) answered “yes”. This would require both further research and improved mechanisms for reporting abuse *during* the implementation of the operation. (See section 3.1.2 for detail.)

***To what extent has the operation taken in to account the pre-existing Movement capacities and incorporated in to the response operation?***



The operation successfully built on the existing regional resources, both via the RIT mechanism and by tapping into the expertise of Panama-based staff. While there were many suggestions to harmonize the deployment conditions among staff carrying out similar tasks, the reliance on these Movement capacities allowed for the operation to get off the ground very quickly. The further integration of the new Global Surge recommendations – piloted during the operation – should help strengthen this regional mechanism and address current concerns (see section 5.1. for recommendations on Movement coordination and section 5.4. for recommendations on strengthening the Human Resources protocols).

***Did the response adapt to changes in need, capacities and context?***



This was a particularly strong point of the operation, constantly adapting to the changing circumstances of the operation. In Antigua & Barbuda, the National Society first focused on assessing immediate needs in Barbuda, then supported the Barbudans evacuated to Antigua

with PSS, cash and kind assistance in public shelters, then assisted in the progressive return and resettlement in Barbuda.

In St Kitts & Nevis, the operation also proved particularly nimble, quickly moving away from support to the relief effort to focus on capacity building, by prepositioning stocks across both islands and by strengthening national and NS response systems (via training and workshops).

***What successes and gaps can be identified in the response and are there ways these gaps could have been addressed or could be addressed in future?***



The present evaluation report presents a wealth of recommendations on how the Red Cross can address gaps that arose in the operation. However, the openness of the discussions and the willingness of all stakeholders – both within the Movement and outside – to examine critically their work and reflect on ways forward is the most positive aspect of this evaluation. This is true as much of the internal crisis and change process that the ABRCs has been going through as of the documented recommendations from the two Validations Workshops that formalized the findings. (See sections 3.6 and 4.3. for conclusions in both countries and section 5 for suggestions from IFRC staff.)

***Conclusion: To what extent has the response achieved the expected results and been relevant and appropriate to the needs of the target groups?***

Overall, the operation was needed (with serious humanitarian needs in Barbuda), relevant (assistance matched the needs), and extremely successful (participants overwhelmingly appreciated the support).

## 6.2. Effectiveness and efficiency of the operation

***How successful has the Movement Coordination framework been and what lessons learned are? How effective were the contributions of regional assets (RIT, etc.) and how efficient was the cooperation and coordination with NS, movement partners and external partners? Did beneficiaries receive assistance in a coordinated manner?***



These three questions around operational coordination can be addressed together. As detailed in section 5.1., coordination among Movement Partners was particularly effective, with several PNSs providing financial and human resources from early on. The adaptations to the Surge mechanism allowed for effective use of Movement response tools, particularly with the RIT and FACT deployments.

***Have immediate results been achieved according to the intervention design, based on the indicators?***



The program reached its target of 450 households with dire needs in Barbuda, both in the relief phase and as part of a recovery program to help them return to Barbuda. These numbers are very impressive given the challenges in reaching this mobile population of roughly 500 Barbudan households, first following its forced relocation to Antigua in September 2017 and the progressive return to Barbuda in 2018. The objectives of the Appeal were successfully achieved and the outputs and desired impact of the response operation were in-line. Perhaps more revealing, there was a sense across the respondents that the response effort would have been very different had the Red Cross not been present.

***Was there adequate time and effort invested for the integration of interventions across the different operation sectors and how could this be further strengthened?***



The operation was well designed and always aimed to connect interventions across ongoing activities: relief, PSS, cash, livelihoods and DRR. The transitioning of staff members from one

area to another also helped ensure that no one sector was isolated, with adequate external support from the Regional Office and the IFRC's Reference Centers.

***To what extent were the Principles and Rules for RCRC Humanitarian Assistance adhered to and were these Principles and Rules effective as a coordination tool to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance?***



All 10 Principles were respected in the operation, despite the operational challenges already mentioned around targeting and involvement of local resources. Advocacy efforts to the Government and the ability to take advantage of the network of partners and donors were crucial for the success of the operation.

Regarding the Rules, both the ABRCS and SKNRCS praised the IFRC for its support throughout the operation and clearly stated that their response would not have been the same without it. The roles of the different partners were clear, the transition from Relief to Recovery was built into the Appeal and accountability to donors and beneficiaries was a constant concern, as attested by the scope and findings of this final evaluation. The two Validation Workshops also demonstrated the good relationships with the key partners in both countries and their recognition of the unique mandate of the Red Cross in such operations.

***Conclusion: To what extent has the response achieved its intended immediate results in an effective and efficient manner?***

The response was effective, particularly as relates to the delivery of services in challenging environment, and efficient, in allocating very generous international assistance in the best possible way for a small population significantly affected by the hurricane. The effectiveness could however have been compromised given the human resource challenges that faced the operation, and that would justify conducting a review of the IFRC's HR protocols in the context of Emergency Appeals. Thankfully for the operation, the small Appeal team showed creativity in addressing the staffing issues and resilience in overcoming the living conditions. The greatest risk to the overall efficiency came from an overly-well subscribed Appeal, which, had the funds not been reallocated to other humanitarian efforts, could have presented serious risks for the organization.

### 6.3. Sustainability and long-term vision of the operation

***How is the response building, in an inclusive way, on the capacity of local organizations and structures including the NRCS? How has the response resulted in enhanced institutional capacity of national societies? How is the intervention building on and preserving the structures and systems in place prior to the hurricanes?***



National structures and systems (and local mechanisms in Barbuda) were not able to withstand the impact of the hurricane, requiring external assistance within days. Both National Societies showed incredible resilience in overcoming the impact of the hurricane and organizing – within hours – detailed field assessments. Once the Appeal was launched and the IFRC team got on the ground, the operation proved particularly nimble, adapting to the changing contexts in both Barbuda (with the sudden evacuation and progressive returns) and St Kitts & Nevis (quickly moving away from support to the relief effort to focus on capacity building). The operation not only built on the capacity of local organizations and structures (from the NS volunteers to the Government partners and the UN system) but actually included training and capacity reviews as a core component of the Appeal.

However, both stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation and the consultant’s findings indicate that the current efforts to enhance national response capacity will still require substantial support. In particular, St Kitts & Nevis still has considerable work to do to ensure its national platform would be able to manage a Category 3 hurricane. A clear request from both NSs is for the IFRC to continue supporting the inclusion of lessons from the response into the review of plans and strategic frameworks, and the enhancement of their internal systems. *(See Section 5.1. above for detail.)*

***How has the “links between relief, rehabilitation and development” (LRRD) concept been taken in account?***



The program successfully transitioned between a relief phase (Sept. 2017 – March 2018) and a recovery phase (January 2018 onwards) as Barbudans started returning to their homes. In both Antigua & Barbuda and in St Kitts & Nevis, the capacity building component looked at the longer-term needs. In how the Hurricane Irma Operation was designed, the Appeal proved to be a very successful tool towards the LRRD continuum, though it will require continued support from the IFRC Caribbean Cluster Office beyond the life of the Appeal.

***How is the exit strategy planned?***



Though there are clear efforts built into the operation to ensure the NSs have all relevant resources pertaining to the operation, the evaluation indicated that there were gaps in the NSs’ ability to fully build on the Operation’s resources and sustain the current efforts:

1. The operation invested heavily in organizational development in both NSs, given the weaknesses that the initial relief efforts highlighted. While these efforts are critical – both for the two NSs and for the national emergency management mechanism – they have only started to lay the foundation for ongoing discussions. Unless the IFRC is able to sustain that effort, accompany the NSs and advocate with key Government counterparts, the current investments risk fading away.
2. Handover documents were well drafted and organized, yet the NSs were not fully aware of where to find Appeal documentation. This was even more obvious for electronic resources. *(See Section 5.5. for detail.)*
3. HR systems remain tied into IFRC systems. In the case of the Hurricane Irma Operation, the ABRCS has very limited staff while the SKNRCS is entirely run by volunteers. It is therefore important to ensure that whatever HR system was set up by the IFRC during the operation can be sustained after the close of all activities.

***Conclusion: To what extent is the intervention taking into consideration long-term needs?***

The Appeal rightly emphasized capacity building as a core objective of the operation in both countries. In Antigua & Barbuda, the sheer scale of the operation has led to a strong recognition that the country must take preparedness seriously, as illustrated by the depth and scale of both the Lessons Learned workshop and the Validation workshop. The political will is there, the NS and its partners have fresh memories of the response and they outlined a clear way forward. Whether they achieve it will depend on the ability of local champions to get the necessary support from within and from the region.

In St Kitts & Nevis, the operation was entirely designed around long-term needs. Yet, the evaluation indicates some critical weaknesses, both technical (such as the inability to locate minutes from previous workshops) and political (as demonstrated in the insufficient participation of key decision-makers). The success of any future investment in St Kitts & Nevis must therefore start with advocacy at the highest levels of Government, followed by the sustained technical support – both of which may require a standalone project.

## 7. List of appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

Appendix 2: List of persons consulted

Appendix 3: Antigua & Barbuda lessons learned workshop – Summary of recommendations

Appendix 4: Barbuda Focus Group Discussion – Timeline exercise

Appendix 5: Antigua & Barbuda Validation workshop – Minutes

Appendix 6: Antigua & Barbuda Validation workshop – Presentation of findings (PowerPoint)

Appendix 7: St Kitts & Nevis Lessons Learnt and Required Actions – Nevis Disaster Management Department

Appendix 8: St Kitts & Nevis Validation workshop – Minutes

Appendix 9: St Kitts & Nevis Validation workshop – Presentation of findings (PowerPoint)

Appendix 10: Summary list of recommendations

## 8. Bibliography

### Appeal documents:

- IFRC, *Emergency Appeal: Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma*, 8 Sept. 2017, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, Donor Response*, 11 Sept. 2017, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, Operations Update #1*, 22 Sept. 2017, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Emergency Appeal Revision 1: Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma*, 6 Oct. 2017, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, Operations Update #2*, 8 Oct. 2017, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, Operations Update #3*, 13 Dec. 2017, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Emergency Appeal Revision 2: Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma*, 4 May 2018, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, 6-month update*, 21 May 2018, Geneva.
- IFRC, *Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis: Hurricane Irma, 12-month update*, 14 Dec 2018, Geneva.

### Studies:

- IFRC, *Shelter Strategy, Emergency Appeal Hurricane Irma*, Antigua and Barbuda, Nov. 2017.
- IFRC, *Warehouse Capacity Building for National Societies: St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross*, April 2018, Panama.
- IFRC, *Warehouse Capacity Building for National Societies: Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross*, April 2018, Panama.
- IFRC, *Livelihoods needs assessment report*, Antigua and Barbuda, Nov. 2017.
- IFRC, *Cash feasibility analysis, Hurricane Irma*, Antigua & Barbuda, Sept. 2017.
- Ground Truth, *Survey of people affected by hurricane Irma, Antigua and Barbuda Round 2*, 22 January 2018.
- Williams, C., *Passage of Hurricane Maria, St Kitts-Nevis, September 05-06, 2017: Preliminary Damage Assessment Report*, Damage Assessment and Recovery Committee of NEMA (NEMA/DARC), 9 Sept. 2017
- Williams, C., *Passage of Hurricane Maria, St Kitts-Nevis, September 18-19, 2017: Preliminary Damage Assessment Report*, Damage Assessment and Recovery Committee of NEMA (NEMA/DARC), 23 Sept. 2017

### Plans & Reports:

- St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society, *Draft of the National Development Plan 2018 – 2023*, not dated.
- St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society, *National Response Plan 2018 – 2023*, Feb. 16, 2015.
- Nevis Disaster Management Department (NDMD), *Lessons Learnt and Required Actions*, May 20, 2018
- St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society, *Organisational Capacity Assessment & Certification (OCAC) Findings Report*, April 2018.
- Brennan Banks, *End of Mission Report*, Sept 2018.
- IFRC, *Cash Transfer Program Basic Needs - Final Report*, May 2018.
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), *The St. Kitts-Nevis National Disaster Plan*, Version 3.0 September 27th, 2013, St. Kitts – Nevis.
- IFRC, *Mobile Data Collection Training: Workshop Report*, Saint Kitts and Nevis, June 24-27, 2018.
- IFRC, *Project / program monitoring and evaluation guide*, Geneva, 2011.
- IFRC, *Livelihoods Programming Course*, Livelihoods Center, May 2018.

### Presentations:

- IFRC, *Unconditional Cash Transfer Program*, PowerPoint Presentation, not dated.
- IFRC, *Hurricane Irma Response Household Registration*, PowerPoint Presentation, not dated.
- IFRC, *Livelihood Program*, PowerPoint Presentation, not dated.
- IFRC, *Shelter Recovery Program / CTP*, PowerPoint Presentation, not dated.
- IFRC, *Livelihood proposal summary*, Antigua & Barbuda – Hurricane Irma, not dated.