

# FOCUS ON GUATEMALA 2003

## 1. Introduction

Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in the Americas region with only Haiti ranking lower on the Human Development Index (HDI). The country is made up of 25 linguistic groups including 22 Mayan languages, however, Spanish is the only official language. Unofficial estimates suggest that up to 60% of the population is indigenous with most of this population concentrated in the western and northern regions of the country. It is in the departments where most of the indigenous population live that the highest levels of poverty are to be found.

After 36 years of conflict, peace was restored to the country with the signing of peace agreements in 1996. Sadly, many of the objectives of the peace accords have not been met and a climate of violence and social disruption persists. The government appears poorly equipped to meet many of the demands of its people and accusations of state corruption and malpractice abound.

Vulnerability is further exacerbated by Guatemala's susceptibility to natural disaster. 30 active volcanoes, frequent earthquakes and heavy rainfall cause serious erosion and environmental degradation while fires devastate large areas of prime forest every year. In 1998, hurricane Mitch caused severe country-wide destruction and in 2001 and 2002 many of the poorest communities have been affected by severe drought or localized flooding, further compounding food and economic insecurity.

The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) is well placed to address many of the needs of the most affected populations, however it remains at an early and difficult stage of its post-conflict redevelopment. Further improvements in governance, management and service provision will have to be made if the National Society is to have the impact it desires. At the same time, increased accessibility for marginalized populations will need to be a key part of the GRC strategy if it is to comply with its own mission statement "to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity" (GRC Strategic Plan 2002-2006).

## 2. National Context

In order to develop capacity and demonstrate impact, the National Society will have to be vigorous in defense of its own Strategic Plan / National Development Plan (NDP) both with external donors and with its own branches.

The statistics given below speak for themselves, there is no debate around whether needs exist in Guatemala, but which needs and which populations the Guatemalan Red Cross should target. Based on available country information, the most valuable contribution the GRC could and should be making would be directed at rural and indigenous populations focusing in particular on women. Programme and beneficiary focus will therefore be the central challenge for the National Society over the coming years.

### UNDP - Human Development Indicators 2002

Country Ranking - HDI	(108 in 2001) 120
Total Population (millions)	11.4
% of the population living below \$1/day	10
% of the population living below \$2/day	33.8

GDP per capita (US \$)	3,821
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	44
Under 5 mortality per 1,000 live births	59
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	190
% of births attended by skilled health staff	41
% of total population undernourished	22
% of population using improved water sources	92
% of population using adequate sanitation facilities	85
% of people living with HIV/AIDS	1
Annual population growth rate %	2.4
% population under 15 yrs of age	43.6
% population aged 65 and above	3.5
Net primary school enrolment ratio %	83
Adult illiteracy rate % MALE age 15 yrs +	23.9
Adult illiteracy rate % FEMALE age 15 yrs +	38.8

From the above table we can see that Guatemala's country ranking has moved from 108 in 2001 to 120 in 2002. Whilst the HDI gives some idea of the situation in country, many of the indicators would be even more worrying if only given for rural and indigenous populations. Wealth and services tend to be concentrated in the metropolitan and non-indigenous areas leading to large disparities between different sectors of the population.

According to the 1998-99 National Survey of Family Income and Expenditures (ENIGFAM)

- The average illiteracy rate among indigenous women varies between 50% and 90% and only 43% of them are able to finish primary school, 5.8% middle education and 1% higher education.
- The highest rates of illiteracy are found in the departments with an indigenous majority: for example, Quiché 53.5%, Alta Verapaz 51.3 % (compared with a national average of around 31%).
- Over 60% of the population lives in poverty, 80.1% of the population living in poverty are in living in rural areas, 63% of those defined as living in poverty are indigenous.

Other statistics taken from the UN Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) 2001 report

- The country has approximately one physician and one hospital bed for every thousand inhabitants, but 80% of the physicians and 50% of the nurses serve in the metropolitan area.
- According to 1999 data of the Ministry of Health, 46% of the population has no access to health services. There are a number of factors which limit access by the majority of indigenous peoples to health services, These include cultural barriers, especially those of language, as well as the dispersion of the population, rurality and the inability to pay for the transport in order to reach a health service.

### 3. National Society Priorities

The National Society Strategic Plan 2002-2006 follows Strategy 2010 with a focus on the three strategic directions and four core areas. The central policy of the National Society cutting across all issues is to "recover the sustainability of the institution" through providing excellent services, working with the most vulnerable sections of the population, promoting the principles and values of the Movement and through improved financial planning. The Guatemalan Red Cross also emphasises efficient administration, unity and decentralization, promotion of volunteering and volunteer well being and the pursuit of strategic alliances with other organizations. The plan reflects a desire, or a recognition, of the need to move away from a concentration on traditional activities (eg ambulances,

clinics) towards more integrated activities that are community oriented. It remains a challenge to turn this into a reality on the ground given the experience and perception of many GRC personnel, however the basis for change now exists.

In the four core areas the National Society emphasizes the following:

**Disaster Response and Disaster Preparedness:**

- Strengthening of branch and community capacity to respond to disasters including community education and the drawing up of local, regional and national contingency plans.
- Equipping of branches, improvement of the radio system and training of volunteers in disaster management.
- Creation of regional warehouses, branch operations centres and the formation emergency committees in strategic areas.
- Establishment of strategic alliances to help promote a culture of prevention.

**Health and Care:**

- Retain the focus on primary / basic health care.
- Carry out prevention, promotion and education activities, focusing on illnesses which are a major cause of mother and child mortality.
- Work in the areas of malnutrition, immunization, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.
- Focus on water and sanitation, support of national immunization days, community education in preventive health and hygiene including the integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) approach.

**Promotion of the Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values:**

- Carry out dissemination through local media including the use of indigenous languages using improved materials and campaigns.
- Improve workshops for volunteers.
- Work together with other organizations to promote a culture of peace and redesign activities around the theme “Adiós Violencia”.

	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>
Statutes	2002	Revised and approved by the General Assembly in April. Should be registered and in force by end 2002 / early 2003.
NDP	2002	Plan finished and approved. Full dissemination still to take place.
Regulations	2002	Ongoing as part of the follow up of the revision of the Statutes. Likely to be completed in 2003.
CAS	2000	First generation, second under way for 2003.
Self Assessment	2003	May be a more relevant exercise after next elections of the governing board (end 2002). Price Waterhouse recommendations are still valid.
Elections	2002	Scheduled end 2002 / early 2003.
Yearly audit	2002	External financial audit has not been done for years, but 1999 - June 2002 should be audited by the end of 2002.
Annual Report	2001	Incomplete annual report issued for 2001.

**Main strengths**

- Well trained volunteers.
- Good press coverage and new web site.

- Strong support from the Federation and bilateral PNSs (American, Netherlands and Spanish Red Cross Societies).
- Potential of headquarters and branch buildings owned by the National Societies.
- National Development Plan and new Statutes approved.

### Main challenges

- Weak governance.
- Lack of unity - No sense of National Society identity - isolated branches.
- Only 2 of the 24 branches are self-sustaining.
- High degree of dependence on foreign assistance.
- Decreasing numbers of active volunteers.
- Absence of any formal fundraising / income generation / cost saving plan.
- Absence of national programmes delivering quality services to vulnerable people.
- Need for a better defined auxiliary relationship with the state.
- Poor internal regulation.

## 4. Red Cross and Red Crescent Priorities

The Red Cross has provided huge levels of support to Guatemala and the Guatemalan Red Cross since hurricane Mitch hit, and before, with a Federation presence since 1997. At community level, this has had some commendable impact, however the challenge remains to improve the coordination of this support, promote standardization and develop activities with wider national coverage that are truly owned and managed by the National Society. This will require strengthened leadership and a commitment to support the National Development Plan from within the National Society and from *all* partners.

### 2002 Priorities

Partner	Health	Relief	Disaster Preparedness	Humanitarian Values	Organizational Development	Other
ICRC			Tracing	Support to GRC dissemination department. Promotion of training.	Support for revision of Statutes / GRC change process / governance and management training.	CAS, NS bulletin.
Federation *	MCH / IMCI, HIV/AIDS, First Aid, Watsan, National Health Plan.	Drought Response	CBDP, NS response capacity, strategic alliances. Regional warehouses, regional response centres.	Support to GRC dissemination department. Promotion of training.	Support for revision of Statutes / GRC change process / governance and management training, national development plan (NDP). Development of volunteering. Fundraising. Regionalization. National and	CAS, diploma in disasters, Press and website.

					regional training centres. Project management training.	
ARC	IMCI, Watsan, HIV/AIDS, First aid, Mental health in disasters, support to clinics, national health plan.	Drought response	CAMI (similar focus to the Federation).		NDP, support to branches. Project management training.	Branch infrastructure
NCR	Watsan / community projects		Community microprojects / family emergency plans	Radio programme	Support to northern branches in Flores, Sayaxche and Cobán. Finance system at headquarters.	
Spanish Red Cross	Various projects in watsan, HIV, prosthesis project	Drought response	Community education		Support to branches (mainly in the east). Training in Quetzaltenango and the Izabal branches.	Construction and agricultural projects

IMCI - Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses

MCH - Mother & Child Health

CAS - Cooperation Agreement Strategy

CAMI - Central America Mitigation Initiative

ARC - American Red Cross

NRC - Netherlands Red Cross

\* The Federation Secretariat in Guatemala is supported primarily by the Norwegian Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross and the British Red Cross. The main bilateral supporters are the Spanish Red Cross and the American Red Cross.

## 5. Priority Programmes for Secretariat Assistance

**Health and Care** - the health and care programme aims to support the GRC to improve the health conditions of the most vulnerable through:

- Reducing morbi-mortality from preventable diseases.
- Promoting safe water use and hygiene and supporting increased water and sanitation capacity in disasters.
- Reducing the vulnerability of the population to HIV/AIDS.

**Disaster Management** - The disaster management programme aims to support the GRC to strengthen the response and preparedness capacity of the GRC through:

- Finalizing response and preparedness plans at national and regional levels.
- Establishing four regional response centres.
- Supporting community education in disaster preparedness and promoting related micro-projects.
- Helping the GRC to coordinate its actions and maintain networks and strategic alliances.

**Humanitarian Values** - the humanitarian values programme aims to support the GRC to promote the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and promote humanitarian values through:

- Establishing a national dissemination programme.

**Organizational Development** - the organizational development programme aims to support the GRC to improve its capacity to carry out its humanitarian mission through:

- Strengthening the fundamental pillars of National Society development: the Statutes, the national development plan and the internal regulations.
- Improving management and retention of volunteers.
- Supporting resource mobilization.

**Federation Coordination** - this programme aims to improve coordination efforts thereby maximizing the use of resources in line with the National Society's strategic interests through:

- Leading the CAS process.

**International Representation** - this programme aims to support the GRC to strengthen its position as a key humanitarian agency in Guatemala through:

- Participating in advocacy and information campaigns such as those marking Red Cross Red Crescent day and the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- Helping to develop the GRC press and communication department.

All Federation programmes support priorities that the GRC has identified in its 5 year national development plan. Whilst ambitious, the programmes are mutually supporting and hence require advances in all objectives if the GRC is to make meaningful progress towards becoming a well functioning national society capable of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. The "expected results" that are detailed in the programmes represent fundamental steps in the strengthening of the GRC and could equally be described as "vital" or "critical" results, such is their importance. The risk involved in committing to such a range of targets is that the ongoing difficulties within the Guatemalan Red Cross will oblige the Federation Secretariat to take on more of the responsibility and workload than it or any other stakeholder would ideally wish. The Federation Secretariat will try to avoid this through constant dialogue, incorporating bilateral PNSs and promoting a phased approach. However, it is worth recognizing that expectations often exceed the capacity of the National Society, and as a result, are transferred to the delegation.

Moving forward in these areas will require the full commitment of the GRC, the integration of bilateral PNSs behind shared objectives and continued Federation and ICRC support. The Federation delegation will expand slightly to 8 people in 2003 taking on extra (local) capacity in OD and finance, recognizing the OD focus of programming and the administrative gaps that will be created as the regional delegation moves to Panama. In 2004, it is hoped that the delegation will downsize and consist of several local staff, however, the size and nature of support will depend on progress against objectives and the degree to which the National Society is truly engaged in its own development.