

#02
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Livelihoods

The quarterly newsletter of the IFRC Livelihoods Resource Centre hosted by the Spanish Red Cross

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Fishermen, members of a Fisheries Cooperative Society, sort a catch full of net and auction in Nintavur beach, Ampara. A grant by IFRC supports community projects of the Fisheries Society, such as provision of sewing machines and rice pounding machines to low income or vulnerable families.

Objective

The overall objective of the Livelihoods Resource Centre is to assist Federation Members to increase awareness and use of effective livelihoods programming strategies to enhance community capacity, and individuals' skills and practices, which will restore and maintain sustainable livelihoods and economically secure living conditions.

It is about YOU!

To keep briefed and updated on key activities in livelihoods, to be a part of technical exchanges with colleagues, or to register as one of our network of livelihoods specialists, please email us at livelihoods@cruzroja.es

Livelihoods Welcome

Where livelihoods are disrupted or threatened by natural disasters or man-made crises, vulnerable groups face greater risk to their lives, health, and often face reductions in an already impoverished standard of living. Livelihoods are a fundamental base to ensure that vulnerable households and the communities in which they reside have the means to achieve healthy and safe living. Thus, IFRC members and its Secretariat support work in relief, recovery and development in acute situations of need, and support the safety and resilience of communities which face chronic vulnerability.

Livelihood support links directly with the aims of Strategy 2020, particularly the first aim – “save lives, protect livelihoods ...” but encompasses them all – the second and third strategic aims resolve to do more to promote development by preventing and reducing the underlying causes of vulnerability. For us, as S-2020 states, development means that everyone is able to achieve their full potential, and lead productive and creative lives with dignity according to their needs and choices, whilst fulfilling their obligations and realizing their rights. In this matter, as in other areas, we shall continue to demonstrate our comparative advantage to undertake direct action at community level, while giving voice to the concerns and interests of vulnerable people in key decision-making forums.

Antoni Bruel

General Coordinator, Spanish Red Cross



Overview and current status

Overview and Current Status of the LRC

While 2010 was the year for the Livelihoods Centre to define & design the services that national societies need from it as hub for livelihood resources, 2011 is the year we start developing and offering some of these services.

The Livelihoods Resource Centre is excited about delivering the following services in the last quarter of 2011:

- By October we plan deliver our first two in-person trainings: 1) Introduction to Livelihoods and 2) Cash transfer programming, both to be hosted in Madrid;
- In November we plan to have our Livelihoods Centre website go live, which will offer access to knowledge sharing services, such as publications; case studies; relevant projects; news; events, etc.

The Livelihoods Resource Centre is also currently in the process of establishing a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), selected for individual expertise from National society and Federation staff. TAG members will provide technical guidance and support in the development and initial running of the Centre, particularly with respect to technical approaches and activity planning.

We expect the Centre to be fully operational by the end of this year thanks to everyone's joint efforts and support.

Partnerships

We are happy to share that via the IFRC partnership with CaLP and ECHO, a fourth global learning event by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) was hosted in Bangkok, February 16th and 17th. It was attended by Red Cross Movement representatives, INGOs, WFP, Government, donors and the private sector. Two days were spent learning about global and regional programme initiatives, hearing initial findings from the Good Practice Review, sectoral updates such as the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS), and the Pakistan Government and Visa WATAN initiative as well as global developments, policy and practices in cash and voucher programming. The event allowed participants to exchange experiences and practices with an intention of fostering a community of practice. A full overview, including powerpoint presentations, can be accessed through www.cashlearning.org where CaLP continues to build a library of resources and case studies on this.

The CaLP will continue to run inter-agency cash and voucher trainings throughout 2011. This will include both Level 1 basic introduction and Level 2 trainings for more advanced practitioners.

Five places per training course are reserved for National Society and IFRC participation. For the opportunity to attend, please contact Heidi Gilert, CTP Coordinator, for further information on participation at heidigilert@ifrc.org

Calendar

Through May 2011

- Planning and communication:
- National Society engagement through pledges process
- Quarterly newsletter
- Development of the Livelihood Resource Centre website
- LRC Trainings curriculum design
- CaLP upcoming cash trainings in April and May include: Kenya, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Pakistan
- First of three global IFRC cash and voucher trainings to be held in Kuala Lumpur, May 2-5

June 2011

- IFRC on-line cash training available on e-learning platform

August-September

- Two IFRC Cash and Voucher trainings held in Americas and Africa zones

October 2011

- Introduction to Livelihoods and Cash transfer programming trainings to be hosted in Madrid by October 2011

November 2011

Website Launch:

- E-library of key and relevant livelihood documents
- Interactive forum
- Knowledge exchange: technical assistance and networking
- Online training
- The latest news on updates and events within the sector

Official Resource Centre launch

Livelihoods in action



By the end of 2010, the Pakistan Red Crescent and the IFRC distributed winter vegetable seeds to 2,000 families in the Sindh Province.

Initiatives throughout the world

Pakistan: Restoring agricultural livelihoods

Last summer devastating Monsoon flash floods affected more than 20 million people in Pakistan. Around 80% of the population depends on agriculture as their main or sole source of food and income. The Pakistan Red Crescent (PRCS) and the IFRC have been supporting the affected families by providing emergency response initially and starting early recovery interventions as soon as possible. These included not only health, water & sanitation, and shelter but crucially, opportunities for the families to recover their livelihoods and income generation activities.

Winter vegetable seeds were distributed to 2,000 families in the Sindh province before the end of 2010. During the monitoring survey conducted in January, most declared satisfaction with this intervention, which allowed their families to improve their food security by providing more variety in their daily diet. It also provided them extra income or food by selling or bartering any agricultural surplus.

Up to January there were many organizations, including RCRC Movement partners, distributing much needed food aid among the displaced and affected population. However, as this was coming to an end it was crucial that those families returning back to their villages were able to plant the main crops in time for the “Kharif” (spring) season. The PRCS/IFRC recovery plan includes the distribution of inputs for the main crops in the selected areas: mainly rice and maize. More than 31,000 families are due to receive the spring package which includes seeds and two types of fertilizers. This intervention is extremely significant as it is the first recovery initiative that will provide sustainable results and help re-establish much needed economic and food security at the household and community level.

Other livelihoods interventions planned are; cash grants at the household level to support non agricultural livelihoods activities, and community cash grants that support common livelihoods or improve access to markets or trading. Whenever possible these activities will be linked with disaster risk reduction initiatives.

Other RC/RC Movement partners (PNSs and ICRC) are also working with the PRCS supporting livelihoods interventions in the affected areas.

Niger: The Livelihoods Programme in Zinder Region

The Zinder Region in Niger is recognised as one of the most fragile and vulnerable environments in the world. This status results from a complex mix of factors including poor soils, erratic rainfall, on-going deforestation and desertification as well as population pressure.

In 2008, the Red Cross Society of Niger (RCSN) and the Irish Red Cross Society (IRC), with the support of the British Red Cross, began an assessment of livelihoods targeted at communities in the Tanout Department of Zinder region, Niger, to develop a long term livelihoods and capacity building approach.



Cash for work activities in the Zinder Region, Niger.

Livelihoods in action

A programme drawing on the Africa Food Security Strategy of the IFRC¹ was designed to guide large and small scale activities in the country. The objective of the programme is to support and strengthen the capacity of the RCSN, to identify and assess the needs of vulnerable people and to implement effective programmes and partnerships to meet those needs. The holistic approach links food security, livelihoods, health and care in communities, a community-based early warning system and disaster management and is strengthened by capacity building of the RCSN. The programme encourages activities that are targeted at the community level, with a strong emphasis on resilience and coping mechanisms, using the extensive and well-developed network of the RCSN.

In recent years, The RCSN, with support from a number of national societies, as well as the International Federation, has implemented activities in accordance with the disaster response plan of action in three of the eight regions in Niger. These programmes have incorporated activities such as the recuperation of eroded lands through a cash for work programme; the reinforcement of farming activities through the distribution of improved seeds and the establishment of cereal banks (community food stores); coordination of nutrition activities; and food distribution in partnership with WFP.



Young children in a village supported by the Irish Red Cross in Zinder Region, Niger.

Guatemala: Early Recovery Workshop

The Guatemala Red Cross (GRC) with the support of IFRC organized an Early Recovery Workshop in March. More than 20 key staff and volunteers participated in this 5 day event to become more familiar with early recovery concepts, strategies and potential initiatives that can be taken as part of emergency response, looking at it as an opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills.

The sessions included not only theory and practical exercises but also a real life assessment and elaboration of an early recovery plan of action for one of the communities where GRC intervened last year as part of the Agatha Tropical storm response. The community was very supportive and aware that this was an exercise to improve the capacity of the GRC. Thanks to the financial support of IFRC some of the proposed interventions developed in the plan of action will become a reality.

This was the first time that an early recovery workshop was requested at the national level, as most of the trainings to date have been international or regional. The workshop allowed everyone to learn from each other and to look at early recovery as an opportunity to build the capacity of the communities and of the National Society. It focused on an integrated approach and on the involvement and participation of the communities at all levels from assessment to evaluation. The participants were quite active and interested with one of the most popular sessions being sustainable livelihoods. A new training has been requested specifically on this topic as well as the dissemination of more information on sustainable livelihoods. Spanish language resources were particularly in demand, the most relevant of which the Livelihoods Resource Centre hopes to make available when it launches its website in late 2011. Once the Livelihoods Centre website is up and running, people from all over the world will be able to use it as a reference for materials, documentation and to share experiences.



More than 20 key staff and volunteers participated in a 5 day workshop on "Early Recovery". This was the first time an early recovery workshop was requested at national level.

¹ The Africa Food Security Strategy of the IFRC aims to build community resilience to multi-shocks, through longer-term investment in order to reduce chronic vulnerabilities and risks. Countries faced with ongoing conflicts and internal disturbances and those at high risk of natural disasters are the primary focus for strategy.

Livelihoods in depth

Resilience

Literally means elasticity of material, flexibility or the ability to recover. In humanitarian work, it refers to the capacity of people and communities to resist, cope with, and recover from, a disaster or conflict. More safety and resilience means less vulnerability.

References: *IFRC guidelines for livelihoods programming*. Adapted from: *What is VCA? An introduction to vulnerability and capacity assessment*, IFRC (2008)

The Spanish Red Cross – improving livelihoods abroad and in their own backyard

The Red Cross/Red Crescent, in its commitment to assisting the most vulnerable, takes special care to reach out to those who are faced with multiple and often compounding vulnerabilities. This was highlighted in the recent message to the United Nations commission on the status of women (28 February 2011). The IFRC delegation stated that “women and girls who face intersectional discrimination –whether poor, elderly, adolescent or disabled– are often at greatest risk because they have fewer personal, family, economic and educational resources from which to draw protection, assistance and support,” in a clear reference to the UN SG’s recent report “*Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work*”.

A recently-concluded programme in Vietnam, carried out in partnership between the Spanish and Vietnam Red Cross Societies, is just one example. Through this integrated programme, the national societies provided vocational training, micro-credit -as well as medical aid- to disabled youth and their families in order to support income generating activities and socio-economic integration. Women and ethnic minority populations were prioritised; and gender was mainstreamed in the project from start-to-finish. In the programme’s 4 years, 1,000 people with disabilities were reached, 50% of whom were women with disabilities, and 10% of whom were ethnic minorities. A similar programme, in partnership with the Spanish Red Cross, has been carried out by the Albanian



Livelihoods in depth



Mid-term review meeting of the Vietnam Red Cross Employment programme -supported by the Spanish Red Cross-, which provided vocational training and access to micro-credit to disabled youth and their families in order to support income generating activities and socio-economic integration.

Red Cross, and another one is to start in the coming months in cooperation with the Chinese Red Cross Society. All projects are based on the analysis of the specific socio-economic reality and the active participation of the communities involved.

The Spanish Red Cross (SpRC) transfers and shares its experience and knowledge drawing on its own domestic activities. After many years of giving assistance in Spain to people in risk of social exclusion, enough evidence was provided that access to employment is a critical strategy to fight against poverty and to ensure social integration and

community participation. As a humanitarian organisation committed to the most vulnerable, the SpRC believes it is necessary to carry out specific employment programmes in order to improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups, as well as achieving a more just and equal society. Since 2000, there has been a SpRC Employment Programme to address employment in Spain.



As every single person's needs are different, the SpRC Employment Programme has been arranged according to guidelines based on personalized itineraries that are aimed at getting a vulnerable person into paid work. This employment programme is therefore arranged accordingly under 6 framework programmes and 32 different projects with over 424 staff and 1,244 volunteers that offer different solutions on the basis of each person's individual needs. For example, some jobseekers might just need information and learn job-hunting skills; for others, vocational training. Other elements of the program helped job-seekers to affirm their self-esteem and trust their capacities to know in which sector they want to work and what they require to achieve it. Specific assistance is also given to those who need one-on-one counselling with their job search, training and direct mediation with companies. In addition, those who have entrepreneurial spirit and skills are offered advice and guidance in the setting up of a company, as well assistance in seeking micro-credits from the banking agencies.

These employment programmes have proven to be effective actions, both in emerging economies as well as developed economies in crisis, to promote social inclusion through reducing the underlying causes of vulnerability and building resilience among groups at risk, according to their different needs, and with their input and equal participation at all levels.

Useful Publications



This [introductory guide to VCA](#) draws on ten years of experience within the Movement, to show how the process can be

effectively used by National Societies to reinforce disaster preparedness within their communities, whilst linking this with other programmes and activities into a mutually reinforcing whole. It is accompanied by three other practical guides: How to do VCA, VCA toolbox and VCA training.

“All” by Manuel Bermejo Iturgaiz, First prize of the Mostrarte-Navarra competition, organised by the Spanish Red Cross within the programme “Promotion of Inclusive Markets – Employment Plan”



**For further information,
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www.ifrc.org
Saving lives, changing minds.

