

Issue 1  
January 2011

# Livelihoods

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

## Purpose statement

This newsletter is intended to share information regarding knowledge and resources available through the Livelihoods Resource Centre. Initially it will aim to keep you briefed and updated on key activities in the development of the Livelihoods Resource Centre, as well as to highlight opportunities to engage in technical exchange with colleagues across the Federation membership. We would like to welcome you to contribute to the Centre by becoming part of a network of livelihoods specialists and practitioners. To register, contact us at: [livelihoods@cruzroja.es](mailto:livelihoods@cruzroja.es).

***The Livelihoods Resource Centre is being established to disseminate best practices and learning tools to all Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, develop practitioner networks and to assist in channelling technical assistance to support programming effectiveness. This newsletter is a first step on this road that we will travel together.***

**Matthias Schmale**  
Under-Secretary General,  
Programme Services,  
International Federation of Red  
Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Welcome to the first issue  
of **Livelihoods**.

This newsletter will be a  
quarterly publication.

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## It is official!

A memorandum of understanding to establish the Livelihoods Resource Centre was signed by IFRC Secretary General Bekele Geleta and Spanish Red Cross President Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero in Madrid on November 25, 2010.

## Objective

The overall objective of the Livelihoods Resource Centre is to assist IFRC members in increasing 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.

## Calendar

**What are the key activities of the IFRC Livelihoods Resource Centre in the next 12 months?**

### Early 2011

- Establish Terms of Reference and identify participants for:
- Steering Committee
  - Technical Working Group
  - Experts Network (ongoing)

### Planning and Communication:

- Quarterly Newsletter
- National Society engagement through pledge process
- Work planning for 2011

### Mid 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

### Late 2011

Official Resource Centre launch

### 2011–2012

Capacity Strengthening: 2011 to 2012

- Training and annual technical meetings – planning stage
- Project design tool (Job Aid)

## Thank you!

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies would like to thank Accenture for its generous financial and technical support, without which none of this would be possible.

## Welcome message

Strategy 2020 guides our humanitarian work, including livelihoods protection and recovery, as well as our work in promoting development, by preventing and reducing the underlying causes of vulnerability.

We realize that vulnerability to disasters, food insecurity and poverty is reduced where livelihoods are resilient and where people are able to earn sufficient income to meet their needs. This also contributes to personal dignity and supports communities to be safe and resilient. Support to livelihoods is a vital aspect of both humanitarian and developmental work, which can help to reduce the dependency of vulnerable communities and individuals on outside aid.



Livelihoods protection and recovery are critical aspects of Red Cross Red Crescent emergency relief and recovery work. In these contexts, household economies may require access to cash and other support, but longer-term resiliency requires attention to livelihoods strengthening and particular attention to income-earning needs in rural as well as urban areas. Economic self-sufficiency implies that each household has the means to ensure adequate revenue and increasing stability. Fully resilient communities may require that all members, including vulnerable groups, have a secure set of livelihoods strategies, which include the means to earn sufficient cash to meet their needs, independent of special assistance.

The Spanish Red Cross has expressed particular interest and expertise in economic development activities over the last several years. Working with an extensive number of National Societies on these issues, the Spanish Red Cross is now formalizing this mentorship and collaboration role by housing the Livelihoods Resource Centre of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The increased scope and scale of international action in this sectorial area during recent years makes it advantageous to strengthen IFRC knowledge management in this area, and share programme reference frameworks, planning and management tools, intervention and project documentation, and other better-practice materials across our programmes and projects.

We would like to thank all National Societies that have already contributed to the development of this Resource Centre. We are in no doubt that this important collaborative effort will serve to help us all, in the words of Strategy 2020: “to do more, and do it better,” on behalf of the most vulnerable.

**Juan Manuel Suárez del Toro Rivero**  
President  
Spanish Red Cross

**Bekele Geleta**  
Secretary General  
IFRC



## Origin of the Livelihoods Centre initiative

Through the 2007 Governing Board, IFRC welcomed the Spanish Red Cross's initiative to work together to develop a comprehensive approach to livelihoods programmes and supported the commencement of an inclusive process aimed to develop the widespread diffusion of the best practices in this sector.

During 2008, two workshops were held on Economic Development and Improvement of Livelihoods for vulnerable communities (April 2008, Madrid, Spain, and October 2008, Colombo, Sri Lanka) in a first step to exchange existing programme practice and experience. The meetings were attended by over 50 participants from 20 different National Societies. Through the meetings, the positive affirmation was given to establish the Centre which would benefit the IFRC membership through its mandate to support further research, house knowledge and support the development of policies, guidelines and tools.

From that point, both the IFRC and Spanish Red Cross have further defined the function, structure, management and resourcing of the Centre through a joint agreement. The Centre will be governed and managed through the establishment of a steering committee (comprised of members of IFRC and Spanish Red Cross) and guided by a technical working group (to be formed). Spanish Red Cross has appointed a project manager and made available additional staff resources, and has secured private funding through Accenture to primarily support the development of the Centre's website design.

Over the next 12 months, the Centre will undertake additional consultations with the membership and technical working group on how best to support technical programme needs with the objective of having the Centre functioning by the end of 2011.

## Consultative workshop

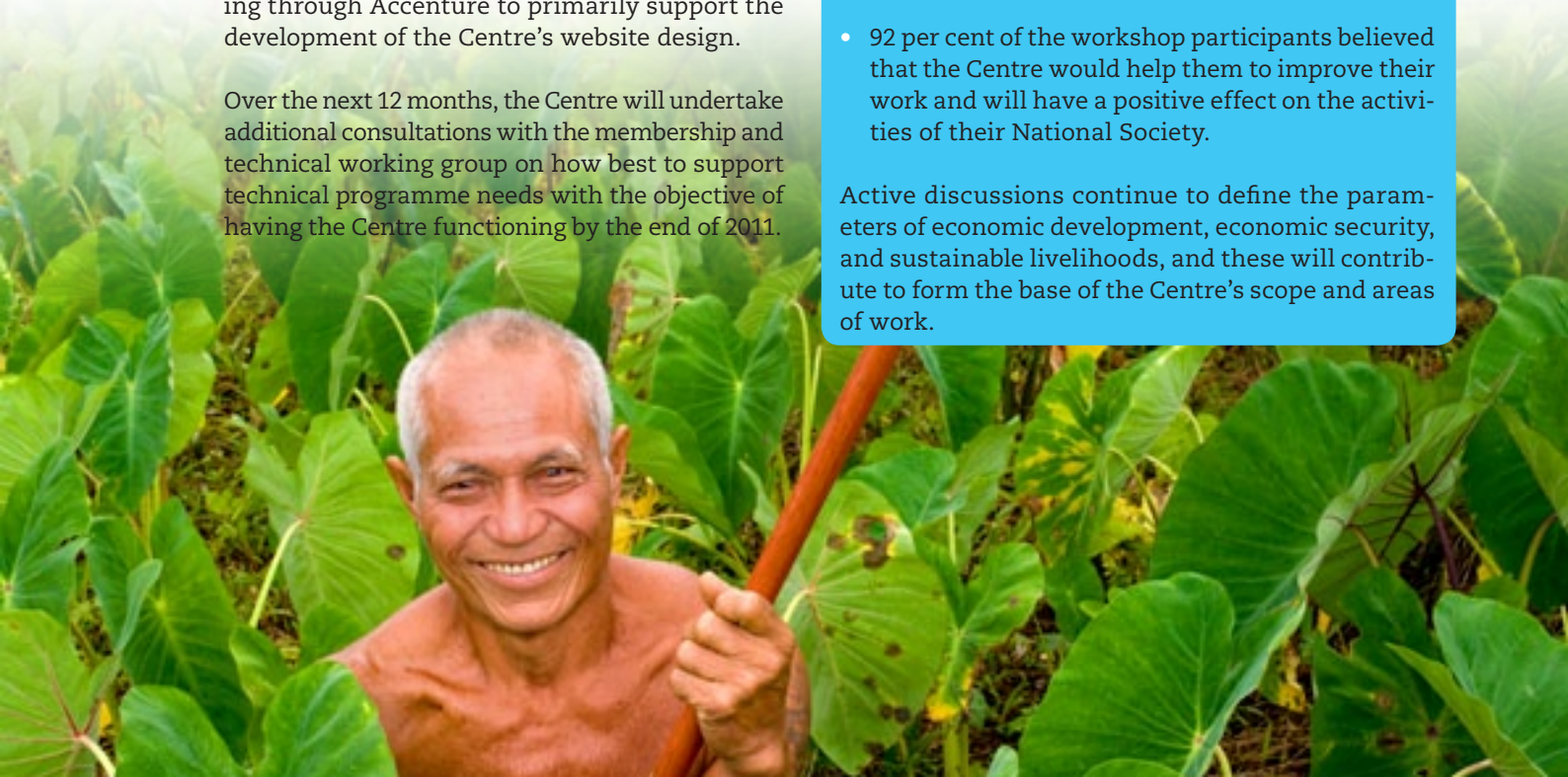
A workshop on Economic Development/Security and Sustainable Livelihoods was hosted in the Spanish Red Cross headquarters in Madrid with the participation of 17 National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and IFRC from 15 to 17 June 2010.

The key objectives of the workshop were to: 1) communicate to National Societies the activities and developments of the Livelihoods Resource Centre to date; 2) exchange experiences between National Societies, ICRC and the IFRC; 3) identify and prioritize the technical needs, programme guidance and knowledge management as well as their possible contributions to the Resource Centre; and 4) to create and gather input about specific initiatives carried out by the Spanish Red Cross and other National Societies that could be incorporated into the work of the Centre.

Feedback from the working groups of the participants included:

- A recommendation to focus on the creation of a network of professionals;
- Acknowledgement that the Centre's relevance will be linked to the utility of and demand for the services that it is to provide;
- Emphasis on the importance of clear definitions for the Centre that are framed within the scope of action of Red Cross Red Crescent membership;
- Recognition that cooperation and partnership with internal and external agents will be a key factor for success; and
- 92 per cent of the workshop participants believed that the Centre would help them to improve their work and will have a positive effect on the activities of their National Society.

Active discussions continue to define the parameters of economic development, economic security, and sustainable livelihoods, and these will contribute to form the base of the Centre's scope and areas of work.



## Sustainable livelihoods

“A livelihood refers to the capabilities, assets and strategies that people use to make a living. That is, to achieve food and economic security through a variety of productive economic activities.”

*Guidelines for cash transfer programming*, IFRC and ICRC, Geneva, 2007.

## Useful publications



This handbook sets out the lessons learnt by the ICRC regarding micro-economic initiatives. It also describes best practices and proposes different ways to solve difficult situations. Since 2001, the ICRC has carried out micro-economic initiatives in over 12 countries worldwide, from the Balkans to Afghanistan or the Democratic Republic of Congo.

ICRC, Geneva, 2009.

## Contact

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Web Page: launch in 2011

## Programme Action

### Cash Learning Partnership

From 1 July 2010, the IFRC has been engaged in the ‘Cash Learning Partnership’ (CaLP), leading a cash and voucher project funded by ECHO for a period of 14 months. CaLP is a consortium of agencies<sup>1</sup> which is increasingly seen as a lead actor in the area of appropriate cash and voucher programming. The partnership is aimed at strengthening the appropriate use of cash and vouchers when delivering humanitarian assistance. It seeks also to mainstream the use of cash and vouchers in disaster-prone areas through capacity building of key humanitarian stakeholders. In addition, it is a service provider to the humanitarian sector.



The IFRC and CaLP have been working together since 2008 to develop and deliver training in cash transfer programming in emergencies for humanitarian practitioners. This training has deliberately pursued an inter-agency approach – bringing Red Cross Red Crescent members, government representatives, United Nations (UN) and NGOs together to share experiences and good practice in the use of cash and vouchers – and to forge partnerships and build networks to facilitate the appropriate use of cash.

Through CaLP, there will be joint advocacy efforts targeting key humanitarian stakeholders including institutional donors, UN agencies, governments, private sector actors and NGOs to promote the consideration of cash transfers as a viable mechanism for humanitarian assistance. Research gaps will be addressed, thus building an evidence base to support advocacy and improving the quality of programme delivery. Further capacity-building products will be developed and piloted, such as a higher level of cash training, to continue building skills and knowledge in specific areas, such as market assessments, and analysis and good practice in managing cash mechanisms to meet sectoral (e.g. livelihoods, shelter) and multi-sectoral programming objectives.

National Societies and IFRC will benefit from the partnership via invitations to participate in inter-agency cash trainings, access to country networks on cash in the five focal countries, as well as access to the most up-to-date research on cash and vouchers, and good practice tools and guidance. CaLP country focal points will be recruited in the Philippines, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Niger and Pakistan. The IFRC will facilitate three Red Cross cash trainings for internal awareness raising during 2011.

A Global Learning Conference will take place in early 2011 which will be centred around the findings from an ODI ‘Good Practice Review’ publication on cash and vouchers. This is expected to centralize the strongest and most pertinent guidance from existing cash transfer guidelines.

For further information, please contact [heidi.gilert@ifrc.org](mailto:heidi.gilert@ifrc.org).

<sup>1</sup> Hosted by Oxfam Great Britain and includes British Red Cross, Save the Children UK, Action contre la Faim US and Norwegian Refugee Council.