

# GDPC Overview 2015-2017



Global Disaster  
Preparedness  
Center



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On the cover: Nigerian Red Cross volunteers are conducting an interview as part of the on-going monitoring survey taking place in Cross River State.

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## Purpose of the GDPC Overview 2015-2017

This document is meant to serve as a guide to the strategic direction and current priorities of the GDPC as well as its operational modality.

The document is a reference point in the continued evolution of the reference center and will be updated in the future when determined appropriate by the GDPC steering committee and leadership.

# Introduction

The Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC) Overview 2015-2017 provides a concise description of the goals of the center and a conceptual framework for the implementation of the GDPC's projects. The GDPC Overview 2015-2017 will help to ensure that the GDPC's activities are relevant and in alignment with the strategic direction of the center and its long-term vision.

## Mission statement

As one of 12 reference centers in the international Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) network, the GDPC aims to enhance disaster management—namely preparedness—capacities of Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies through a service-oriented and demand-driven approach to building community resilience.

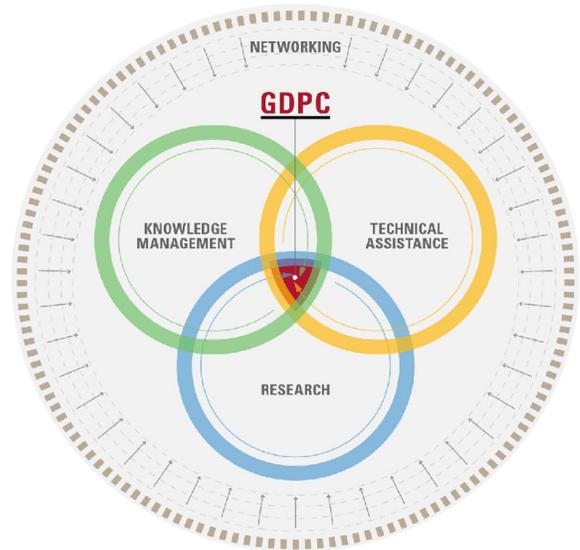
## Goal

To expand and enhance disaster management (and in particular preparedness) capacities of Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, and where possible the wider humanitarian and development communities, through a service-oriented and demand-driven global reference center focused on reducing the effects of disasters on vulnerable populations.

# Methodology

## Key services areas

The GDPC has identified the following overarching goal and key service area objectives to guide its operations. This goal and the four service areas are designed to overlap based on the requirements of the service providers.



Key Service Area Objectives			
<b>1. Knowledge management</b>	<b>2. Research</b>	<b>3. Technical assistance</b>	<b>4. Networking &amp; collaboration</b>
Relevant knowledge is identified, stored and disseminated by the GDPC to guide the disaster preparedness work of national societies and the communities they serve.	The effectiveness and impact of disaster preparedness work is better measured and documented, and serves to identify best practices and influence practitioners.	The impact of national societies' disaster preparedness efforts is increased through the provision of timely and tailored technical support from the GDPC.	Effective cross-learning in disaster preparedness between national societies, IFRC, American Red Cross and other partners is promoted.



PRC engineer Darrel Rompe is explaining beneficiaries on how to repair their houses back safely during a PASSA session (Casit-an, Libacao, Aklan) to help his own community to build back better. © Tatu Blomqvist, Finnish Red Cross

## 1. Knowledge management

Relevant knowledge is identified, stored and disseminated by the GDPC to guide national societies' disaster preparedness work. Knowledge management activities play an essential role for catalyzing increased network capacity and greater consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

The GDPC website, **PrepareCenter.org**, serves as an interactive repository and exchange for tools, evidence and advice on disaster preparedness for practitioners, governments, individuals and families, non-governmental organizations and private-sector businesses. Collaboration on the site takes place through multiple languages and engages a large number of participants in contributing, adapting and improving tools and other disaster preparedness resources. As the virtual network grows, the GDPC will further develop the site with new tools and features, based on user feedback and technology innovations.



Preparecenter.org is a virtual community of practice where disaster practitioners can share knowledge, resources and experiences on disaster preparedness and related issues.

The GDPC **Social Media Plan** involves the strategic use of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and blogs in conjunction with PrepareCenter.org to promote and garner interest from a wider set of partners. By having a greater presence on social media, the GDPC can communicate with the general public and get people interested, engaged and prepared.

The **Urban Community Resilience Initiative (UCRI)** presents opportunities for scaling up community and civic action on resilience and outlines a model for every community to become a safer, better prepared and more resilient community. The concept is anchored by the RCRC network as part of a multi-stakeholder coalition of partners and builds on already-existing approaches in the humanitarian and development fields. In the coming years, the GDPC, with the IFRC, will collaborate to create a process that is designed for scaling, for supporting local solutions and for enabling easy, plug-in options to existing campaigns and initiatives. This approach will also entail considerable peer-to-peer technical support and learning.

## 2. Research

The effectiveness and impact of disaster preparedness work is better measured and documented by the GDPC through targeted research projects. The GDPC is working to strengthen good practices for preparedness activities and to catalyze strong partnerships among various stakeholders in order to support continuous learning and help the RCRC network achieve a greater level of community resilience.

Through a partnership with the Response 2 Resilience Institute, an affiliate of Tulane University, the GDPC is providing **small grants** to university and academic researchers around the world to support innovation and learning on disaster preparedness and resilience topics.

The GDPC's **targeted research projects** support a set of focused research activities to address specific gaps that have been identified by the GDPC and its partners. Partner institutions are selected based on interest and experience in the proposed topic. Some GDPC-supported research projects include the aggregation and analysis of RCRC Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments, the effectiveness and impact of social media for preparedness messaging, and studies around cost-benefit analyses for community preparedness and resilience activities.

## 3. Technical assistance

The impact of national societies' disaster preparedness efforts is increased through the provision of timely and tailored technical support from the GDPC. To expand and improve the capacity of the RCRC network, the GDPC provides technical assistance through virtual support directly to national societies and through complementary and unique pilot programs that are easily adaptable and scalable in multiple contexts. It is envisioned that the GDPC will catalyze mechanisms for coordinating peer-to-peer technical assistance through the RCRC network to support greater solidarity and learning among disaster preparedness practitioners.

The **Universal App Program** consists of two mobile apps, the First Aid app and the Hazard app. The program gives national societies the opportunity to translate and customize existing Red Cross apps for release in their own country. With a simple web-based tool for app adaption and technical support from the GDPC team, national societies have an efficient and cost-effective way to provide millions of citizens with life-saving information. In the coming years, the GDPC may look to host a 'suite' of apps that benefit the RCRC network and the communities it serves. Apps would continue to be developed using a demand-driven model in a way that allows for scalability and adaptation.





Students from Vietnam Red Cross participate in Pillowcase Project  
© Niki Clark, American Red Cross

**The Pillowcase Project** international pilot, sponsored by Disney, is an example of an easily adaptable, youth preparedness program that could be easily taken to scale around the world. The pilot program is being implemented in 6 countries and utilizes innovative approaches to adapt the program to local contexts and unique national society needs.

#### 4. Networking and collaboration

Effective cross-learning in disaster preparedness among national societies, the IFRC Secretariat and Zones, the American Red Cross and other partners is promoted. To ground the knowledge management, research and technical assistance initiatives of the GDPC, processes are in place to support coordination and collaboration both with the RCRC network and with the broader range of academic, humanitarian and development partners.

The GDPC has hosted over a dozen disaster preparedness practitioners through the **Fellowship Program**. Fellows from the American Red Cross chapters and other RCRC national societies share their knowledge and expertise in disaster management, preparedness and resilience programming and provide significant contributions toward current and future GDPC activities. The GDPC will continue to expand this program to facilitate additional opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

The GDPC continues to support **global and regional networking events and meetings**, including the RCRC Community Resilience Forum, the Annual RCRC Centres Meeting, the UNISDR World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and other events throughout the year. The active encouragement of these activities allows for widespread ownership and engagement from RCRC network partners and other stakeholders and is the foundation for research, tools and new methodologies to increase the efficacy and efficiency of disaster preparedness efforts.

### Strategic approaches

The work of the GDPC is based on the following principles that constitute the operational and organizational philosophy of the center.

**Disaster preparedness focus:** The GDPC is a resource center focused on catalyzing learning and innovation in disaster preparedness, under a wider conceptual umbrella of resilience. This allows the GDPC to maintain a clear niche of service in the RCRC network that is built upon relationships with an understanding of national societies.



**Needs-driven services:** To remain relevant, the needs of national societies and other RCRC partners are the main drivers behind the services the GDPC offers. The GDPC will carry out frequent consultations with other stakeholders as previously described to capture and adapt to changing needs and interests.



**Broad engagement and diligent outreach:** To sustain interest in and demand for services, and to ensure the GDPC remains well-resourced, it will strive for broad engagement in the RCRC network. The GDPC will offer services that complement the work of other stakeholders and will aim to reduce duplication of efforts through its engagement and outreach efforts; this approach will simultaneously expand the capacity of the GDPC to provide support through peer-to-peer technical assistance and learning.



**Scaling:** To achieve expansive global reach, the GDPC is concentrated on promulgating good practices, fresh thinking and new approaches that have global relevance. This 'scaling' orientation serves as a prioritization measure, as reflected by the GDPC investment in building its virtual service capacities via the GDPC website platform and social media outlets. This approach also allows for highly diversified stakeholder engagement and cost-effective knowledge sharing.



**Sustainability:** To ensure maximum impact and ownership among stakeholders, the GDPC is cultivating broad, active participation from RCRC national societies to achieve greater human resource capacity and sustainability. Additionally the GDPC is focused on building partnerships that can yield financial contributions to the GDPC from a diversified donor base and/or strategic influence in line with GDPC goals. In particular, the GDPC is concentrated on bridging the gap between the private sector and humanitarian organizations.



**Transparency:** The GDPC will strive for transparency in its decision-making and prioritization processes by clearly articulating its criteria for selecting national society and university partners, advisory group participants, candidates for corporate engagement, resources for website and other activities, where necessary.



## Audience

As a global reference center in the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) network, the GDPC sees its primary target audience as the 189 RCRC national societies and the International Federation. By extension of the RCRC network, the GDPC is working with the wider humanitarian and international development community to reach individuals and communities around the world that are interested in preparing for and responding to disasters and other crises.

Since collaboration is crucial to the GDPC's success and sustainability, strategic partnerships and continued engagement with disaster management and preparedness practitioners outside of the RCRC network are core components of the GDPC's strategy. The GDPC is looking to reach a wide spectrum of stakeholders in local government, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and universities, the private sector, and foundations through virtual networks and, where possible, in-person outreach, including internships and participation in training exercises.

## Core elements

### Planning assumptions and value-add

The GDPC Research Assessment Report, released in early 2012, articulates the need for and channels through which a globally focused resource center could help build the disaster preparedness capacities of the RCRC network. The recommendations from that year-long assessment have provided the foundation for the GDPC's strategic direction and vision, which have also been informed by the American Red Cross International Services Strategic Direction (May 2012), the IFRC Strategy 2020 (2010) and the experiences of the other RCRC resource centers. As the GDPC continues to grow and expand, the following outcomes are expected:

- Continued support of learning, knowledge sharing, innovation, technical assistance, research and collaboration amongst disaster preparedness practitioners worldwide.
- Accelerated service delivery to national societies and other disaster preparedness practitioners. This includes programming such as the Universal App Program where the GDPC utilizes a simple, cost-effective approach that has the potential to reach all 189 national societies.
- Steady growth of GDPC capacity while maintaining relevance to local needs and prioritizing engagement and collaboration with others both inside and outside the RCRC network.

Amongst a multitude of actors in the humanitarian field, the niche of the GDPC is built upon its relationships with and understanding of the needs of national societies and others in its focus on catalyzing learning and innovation in disaster preparedness and the relationship to effective response and recovery. The primary value that the GDPC will continue to add is the establishment of a global platform for providing knowledge management and technical support to national societies and the wider humanitarian community in order to improve their disaster management capacities.

## Organizational structure and roles

As a joint initiative between the American Red Cross and the IFRC, the GDPC is located at the American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The Memorandum of Understanding (2012) between the American Red Cross and the IFRC serves as the legal basis for the GDPC and outlines the shared understanding between the two organizations on the establishment, functions, structure, funding and management of the GDPC. The GDPC is governed by a four-person Steering Committee with two representatives from the American Red Cross and two from the IFRC.

The GDPC staffing structure consists of seven full-time staff, two part-time staff, and fellows and interns on either a full or part-time basis. The GDPC Director provides oversight and planning for the overall direction of the center and is the subject matter expertise for resource mobilization activities. The Director reports to the GDPC Steering Committee and facilitates an ongoing dialogue among the GDPC, the American Red Cross and the IFRC Secretariat and Zones to encourage informed decision-making, strong coordination and clear communication. One full-time staff member is based in Geneva at the IFRC Secretariat and serves as a focal point for national society outreach and stakeholder coordination with the IFRC.

All other team members are based out of the American Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D.C. In the future, additional human resources may be required to support the work of the GDPC, foster cross-learning and shared experiences through the GDPC platform.

Additionally, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), composed of experts from inside and outside the RCRC network, has been established to assist in strategic planning and enhancing the quality of services delivered by the GDPC. With several virtual meetings throughout the year and an annual in-person meeting, the TAG contributes to the knowledge base of the GDPC and participates in strategic discussions around new partnerships and pilot initiatives.

In an effort to forge closer ties and maintain relevance with the national societies of the RCRC network, the GDPC has established a National Society Advisory Committee (NSAC). The purpose of the NSAC is to help the GDPC to identify needs and opportunities, prioritize its investments, and expand the GDPC's capacity through NSAC peer-to-peer collaboration among the full range of NS. Whereas the TAG is comprised of technical experts, the NSAC play a pivotal role in serving as a body for better understanding the needs and interests of the national societies as the GDPC's primary audience.



Myanmar Red Cross volunteer and her team distributes food and relief items after Nagris cyclone. © International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Meet the wider network of Red Cross and Red Crescent reference centers

The Global Disaster Preparedness Center is part of the Red Cross Red Crescent Reference Centres ('Centres'). The Centres are delegated functions of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and hosted by Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies around the world. Each Centre focuses on a specific subject or thematic area and serves to strategically harness and facilitate the exchange of knowledge that will inform future Red Cross Red Crescent operations. The Centres are uniquely placed to support National Societies through training, technical assistance, advocacy, knowledge management, research and ensuring that the resources are of the highest quality, readily accessible and adapted to local needs. The Centres are built on the IFRC founding principles and the practice and thinking of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, including the host National Society.

**Global Advisory Panel on Corporate Governance and Risk Management**, Australia

**Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre**, Barbados

**Centre for Evidence-Based Practice** Belgium

**Climate Centre**, The Netherlands

**Global Disaster Preparedness Center**, United States of America

**Global First Aid Reference Centre**, France

**Livelihoods Resource Centre**, Spain

**Reference Centre for Community Resilience**, Costa Rica

**Reference Centre for Institutional Disaster Preparedness**, El Salvador

**Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support**, Denmark

**Shelter Research Unit Belgium**, Netherlands, Luxembourg

**Reference Centre on Volunteering**, Great Britain

*You are invited to study, research, learn from and reflect on the work of the Centres.*



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