



RITA Project · Resilience in Las Américas


Project implemented with the support of the American Red Cross

Summary of Promising Practices

Global Community Resilience Forum

Cali, Colombia 4-7 November 2014

Together for resilience

 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

 Cruz Roja Colombiana

 NGRD



**La Guajira,
Colombia**



Promising practices summary: Dengue prevention campaign

The department of La Guajira is located at the northern side of the country in the Caribbean coast. The RITA project is being developed specifically in five communities of the Riohacha municipality.

Learning Summary

This experience is considered a promising practice because these activities allow a strengthening of knowledge and awareness among the communities in subjects of mayor interest for them – in this case, the risk of dengue that families are exposed to. The capacity to evaluate, manage and monitor risks in their environment is recognized as a key resilience component.

These communities are finally organized and have taken concrete measures to avoid risks caused by satellite waste deposits and water leaks. This strengthens their capacity to overcome other problems in the future. Through their actions against dengue, communities of La Guajira are acquiring knowledge about attitudes and practices that allow them to remain healthy.

Problem Identified

In Riohacha city, capital of the department of La Guajira, there are hardly any companies providing a solid waste recollection service. This is why some communities of the municipality use satellite waste deposits, a situation that produces vectors leading to diseases.

On the other hand, the poor water service forces families to store water in their households, in tanks, pots, buckets and reservoirs. Nonetheless, these containers do not count with an adequate maintenance process, as they do not have lids. The combination of waste deposits and poor quality water sources offers an unfavorable environment and create conditions for the mosquito that carries dengue to reproduce.

Activities Developed

The branch's work team successfully developed a dengue prevention campaign, involving communities in a prevention culture. The campaign has focused on these two sources of mosquito breeding, and in doing so it seeks to avoid the further development of dengue cases.





More Resources

The dance of the Colombian Red Cross shared with children in this campaign can be viewed through the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Js7xEBpB3pg> .

Through the activities carried out, the team established:

- An information site in a strategic location within the community
- Verification household visits
- Household detailed information sessions
- Recreational activities with boys and girls applying the Colombian Red Cross dance.

Achievements and Changes Produced

Through these activities, the communities had the opportunity to become responsible for the elimination of vectors breeding mosquitoes in their homes. The information collected contributed to a greater understanding of factors causing dengue, and hence the capacity to avoid major consequences.

A primary result of this project has been the community's compromise towards carrying out cleaning brigades to minimize the risk produced by mosquitoes. In the case of the Nuevo Milenio neighborhood, its residents repaired a series of water leaks from a tube that was generating a blockage of water in community public spaces.

Finally, the success of the intervention is due to the interest, compromise and participation of community members. During the entire dengue campaign, the residents were participative and engaged upon hearing the presentations and receiving household visits to verify the quality of water storing.





Promising practices summary: World Water Day celebration

The municipality of Rio Negro, department of Santander, Colombia is located at approximately 100 kilometers from the department's capital, Bucaramanga. In this municipality, RITA works in four communities.

PHAST Methodology

Participative transformation on hygiene and sanitation practices.

PHAST is a methodology that emerged thanks to the con-sponsorship of WHO (World Health Organization), WB (World Bank), and UNDP (United Nations Development Project). It was later adopted by the Red Cross as its official methodology for all community field work related to hygiene and sanitation. The methodology's success is owed to the fact that the subjects benefit from their own input and interaction with community members. They work together to identify, analyze and propose solutions to the community health issues caused by inadequate hygiene practices.

Problem Identified

During the community diagnosis, the water and sanitation issue was identified as a main concern in communities from the Rionegro municipality. The difficult access to potable water and the lack of an adequate sewage system, which translate to environment contamination and health issues, particularly stood out.

It was considered essential to implement a behavior changing methodology, and the PHAST methodology was selected (see box). Through the participative methodology, focused on water and aimed at identifying the current practices in terms of water and sanitation, we can create a collective conscience against undesirable habits. In the process, we expose the residents to risk reduction improvements and changes. This contributes to improving health conditions among

the community and allows them to establish community action plans regarding water and sanitation.

Activities Developed

The Colombian Red Cross gathered one million people, organizations, community-based groups, academic institutions and companies in the World Water Day Celebration. Under the frame of the RITA project, the Santander Branch joined the celebration on March 22nd with a recreational and interactive activity in the communities of los Chorros, Válvula y Papayal.



Learning Summary

This activity contributes to community resilience through a change in behavior regarding water and hygiene, leading to community health improvement. It is considered a promising practice because it builds resilience by generating knowledge and awareness.

Participation in an international event (World Water Day) also strengthens resilience through community mobilization and experience exchange, allowing young people and the elderly to discuss local solutions.

The activity is built based on the Colombian Red Cross experience on participative methodologies such as PHAST and on involving the community in worldwide awareness actions.

The celebration consisted of raising awareness through drawings related to optimized water usage, consumption and the care of water. Those participating in this initiative actively brainstormed ideas documented in “the water wall.” Easy and low-cost alternatives were proposed in order for the community to execute them in and work towards the conservation of hydric sources.

This celebration complemented the process carried out by the communities under the PHAST methodology. It emphasized the need of community teams to take these subjects to heart and raise awareness of water quality optimization opportunities in their homes and daily consumption. We succeeded in a change of mentalities and the improvement of water usage habits.

Achievements and Changes Produced

This event allowed us to highlight the importance of the vital liquid in our lives. The community got involved and proposed activities for their own benefit. They also used creativity as a tool to find solutions to daily issues.

Adults demonstrated a genuine care for the improvement of water conditions in their communities. During the drawing contest, the imagination, mixed with the kid’s innocence, lead to great ideas that surprised their parents.

Analyzing this activity, we can conclude that people have excellent, practical ideas about resilience, but do not count with an organization basis and enough compromise to improve their lifestyle.

The Colombian Red Cross’ support on different subjects helped highlight community and individual qualities that are not usually noticed by the community itself in day to day life.





**La Malaña,
Santander,
Colombia**



Promising practices summary: Crafts workshops

La Malaña is a community located at 10km from Bucaramanga, the department's capital. The Colombian Red Cross, Santander Branch, has been working in the community since January 2013.

Learning Summary

This initiative is considered a promising practice because it leads to the development of community resilience by strengthening community cohesion. Cohesion comprises a sense of community, trust and reciprocity among its members. It results in civic participation and mutual support among neighbors and community members, particularly in emergency cases. This initiative

- *by improving interaction in a fun and productive way (and generating knowledge with a financial potential)*
- *strengthens community relations and highlightings the challenges neighbors share.*

The activity is built on the Colombian Red Cross volunteer network. In this specific case, with Dama Gris, who dedicates her time and knowledge to help the community.

Problem Identified

The community of La Malaña has a weak level of cohesion and carries out few collective activities. The project identified low participation in activities. As a result, community work advanced slower than in other communities in the department. In response to this lack of mobilization, a strategy was carried out to work with women and mothers in the area to increase knowledge and carry out actions necessary for an emergency response.

Activities Developed

With the support of volunteer Dama Gris, who specialized in handicrafts, jewelry-crafting classes were offered to women from La Malaña to encourage them to work together within the community. Jewelry-crafting classes offer them a livelihood, offering these housewives economic benefits.

During each session, the group took some time to review risk management and first aid topics. They also learned how to do a primary examination and recognize sudden illnesses such as fever, convulsions and fainting. An environment of trust

was achieved, where women felt empowered and team work was promoted to improve the levels of participation and cordiality among neighbors.

Women took charge of these activities and started buying more material on their own to make more necklaces, bracelets and earrings. These actions are perceived as a manifestation of their willingness to improve their lifestyle.

Achievements and Changes Produced

In the beginning, when these activities were introduced to women from La Malaña, they were highly skeptic about the type of jewelry they were going to elaborate. Nonetheless, after being further encouraged, the value of these classes towards the community's progress was proved through the high response level. They expressed their gratitude for being given the opportunity to learn a subject beneficial to their future. It was very gratifying to see their disposition to learn more about art and jewelry-making, as well as the evident progress in these activities. In the same way and with the same energy, they





focused on learning during the first aid and risk management review activities.

This was how, gradually, the workshops proved to them the importance of extending their knowledge and actions regarding risk management response and first aid.

Community unity and work processes became evident elements in these activities. These are essential in case of an emergency, and resiliency was improved because, before this activity, many of them did not know each other despite being neighbors. The activity also offered the community the opportunity to enjoy themselves and work together.

Another indicator of success has been the incremented attendance rate of activities during the following week. The participants began to invite other women, thus expanding the group.



Promising practices summary: Reusing solid waste

The Santander department is located in the northeastern side of the country in the Andean region. The Red Cross is working in five communities of the municipalities of Rionegro and Bucaramanga.

Learning Summary

This initiative is considered a promising practice because it leads to the development of community resilience through knowledge and awareness. Recognizing that waste represents a health threat is the first step to building better health practices. The community's active measures to collect the waste, classify and use it as a resource begins to transform the relation between the community and its surroundings.

It also permits the strengthening of bonds among community members and, in this case, allowed the creation of a formal cleaning committee in order to follow through with the process.

The activity is built through the Red Cross volunteers and their knowledge about solid waste management techniques.

Problem Identified

Communities where the project is being developed have been affected by the inappropriate management of solid waste produced by households. These are thrown in the river or burned inside or near the houses. The situation is a result of lacking services such as a waste collection truck. This deficiency leads to environmental and public health issues in the community.

Activities Developed

After identifying this difficulty, the importance of carrying out cleaning brigades in Rionegro was made clear. Waste was classified in order to collect elements that could be reused, as is the case of plastic bottles.

Through these cleaning activities, a great percentage of plastic bottles were



recycled and reused in households and in the entire community.

- Plastic bottles were used to craft lamps decorating houses during Christmas season.
 - Baskets were made, and many households used them to keep clothes, toys, tools. They were also used as waste baskets in parks.
- With home economy in mind, community members
- were taught to create seedbeds with several vegetables and some ornamental plants for home use.

Through these activities, a great percentage of women, children and men gathered to clean the streets around the residential areas. This community organization lead to the creation of a cleaning team, currently at work, who have set out to build a cleaning culture within the community.

All these good actions led the community to continue making use of raw material, plastic bottles in this case, to elaborate ornamental elements that they will use, in many cases, for their economic benefit.



Achievements and Changes Produced

These actions contributed to the community's wellbeing and have been well received by its members. Community participants know they are the primary beneficiaries. By improving their environment, their health practices and carrying out activities with their neighbors, community bonds are strengthened.

Community members highlight the importance of carrying on these activities and generating a culture of cleaning and "waste" reusing, which in many cases will represent an income source for their households.

Thanks to this promising practice, a series of objectives were reached, such as creating a collective conscience to care for the environment, their houses and the river that surrounds them and provides them daily protein such as fish. In the same way, health conditions have improved because storing water in plastic bottles used to produce breeding conditions for the mosquito that carries dengue.





**La Loma,
La Guajira,
Colombia**



Promising practices summary: Early Warning System

The department of La Guajira is located at the northern side of the country in the Caribbean coast. The community of La Loma is located in the urban area of the municipality of Riohacha, the department's capital.

Learning Summary

This initiative is considered a promising practice because it leads to the development of community resilience through knowledge and awareness. These elements increase the communities collective capacity to take action. The capacity to evaluate, manage and monitor risks in their environment is recognized as a key resilience component, and the Early Warning System has proved to be an efficient mechanism for monitoring and responding to major risks.

Additionally, this initiative strengthens existing bonds between the community emergency response teams, the Guajira Red Cross branch, and the local authorities (Corpoguajira y el Consejo Municipal).

Problem Identified

There is a small lake in the community that receives water from the neighboring areas; that lake represents a threat for the community of La Loma because it constantly overflows, flooding the adjacent houses.

The community of La Loma identified floods as one of the major risks. The lack of an adequate rainwater system and the existence of a lake in the community were identified as the main causes of the problem.

Activities Developed

La Guajira branch seeks to strengthen the community of La Loma in disaster preparation and prevention, with the intention of developing a safer community. Under the frame of the project, the community formed an emergency response team that has been trained on first aid and risk management. The installation of an Early Warning System (EWS) complements this process and will contribute in reinforcing resilience in the community. The EWS will seek

to mitigate the impact of the flood menace faced by the community.

La Guajira branch has established an EWS office. Since then, floods, strong winds, and earthquake risks, among other phenomenon, are monitored.

The EWS installed in La Loma is being monitored from the office and is integrated to the current system.

This warning system consists of installing speakers close to the areas identified as risky, and delivering VHF radios to emit an alert within the community of La Loma.

The headquarters of the Colombian Red Cross, Guajira branch, makes reports and informs the community about natural events that represent a threat to the community.

Based on this information, the Guajira branch sends messages via radio in real time. Additionally, the system permits to remotely activate the sirens in the communities, which are under



the responsibility of the Guajira branch. Finally, the community has access to portable radio equipment that allows leaders to announce or send messages to the community.

This system counts with the support of the Departmental Autonomous Corporation, Corpoguajira. The siren activation is previously coordinated through the Disaster Management Municipal Council (local government).

Achievements and Changes Produced

The EWS is an element with the potential to reduce the number of injuries and material damages in case of an emergency or a disaster.

Installing the EWS widens the scope of La Guajira branch's monitoring system. The community is now stronger; they expressed that they feel they are taken into account not only by the Red Cross but also by the public and private entities involved in this initiative.

The community itself took it into its own hands to find a solution to the floods and is witnessing the results of their actions.



EWS Components

- The Monitoring and Surveillance System is an analysis of the temporal behavior of precipitation throughout the four automatic meteorological stations and ten analogue stations, supported by six mediators at the municipal level. Monitoring is held from the Guajira branch's EWS office.
- The communication system functions via 2 VHF radios – one will remain in the community and the other one in the branch headquarters.
- The alarm system consists of 2 speakers that can be remotely and directly activated.
- The community counts with an evacuation plan and a community emergency plan.



Promising practices summary: Simulation

Learning Summary

This is considered a promising practice because it builds community resilience through community cohesion. Its members developed commitment and a collective organization beneficial to future emergency response cases. They also progressed in the ability to involve external actors.

Community Response Teams are based on volunteering and civic participation of community members, which is a key factor for community cohesion. The simulation permits communities to identify adequate measures and respond to any type of emergency, acting quickly and efficiently.

The Risk Management National System's participation also guarantees the community to count with external actors that can provide support, products and necessary services.

The activity is based on the Colombian Red Cross' experience preparing for disasters, by training Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRT).

The Department of La Guajira is located at the northern side of the country in the Caribbean coast. The RITA project is being developed specifically in five communities of the Riohacha municipality.

Problem Identified

The communities where the Project is being developed have been affected by floods, droughts, strong winds and coastal erosions. This made evident the need of having a Community Disaster Response Team to improve their response capacity as first respondents in emergency situations.

Activities Developed

Before the Project started, the Guajira branch of the Colombian Red Cross drove an initiative to participate in the Yapúlala Hurricane National Simulation, on August 29th and 30th 2013. The activity was developed in the Caribbean coastal region and in the five communities participating in the project.



The scenario contemplated for carrying out the simulation was a first category hurricane generating strong rain, winds, and an electric storms in a great number of areas located in the Caribbean coast.

The simulation offered the community the opportunity to evaluate the levels of response within its residents, the community teams and institutions. It trained them to respond to a big scale emergency situation with a massive number of injured and victims, both at the place

where the event occurred and where they were being aided. A featured factor was the importance of the alarm sound in case of a hurricane, as well as the need to carefully identify the evacuation routes and areas.

The community emergency teams, with the collaboration of relief entities, managed to evacuate more than one thousand people from different communities and attended patients affected with fractures and shock.

Achievements and Changes Produced

Communities thanked the Red Cross for getting them involved in a high level national activity. Based on the great level of interest communities showed towards this exercise, the branch invested its own funds to carry the activity out during the RITA project's implementation in the five communities.

Among the most important achievements we highlight:

- Strengthening the Community Response Teams that played a key role during the simulation
- The renewed visibility of the CRC Guajira branch and transmission knowledge within in the communities
- An improved coordination level with other response entities, especially with the Risk Management National System
- Community cohesion: as the simulation was carried out before the project's activities kicked off, community recommendations and remarks were taken into account by the time project's activities were being designed.

The efficiency of the collaborative work was evident and the activity was perceived as productive. People highlighted the importance of developing these type of activities in order to measure the response capacity they have as individuals, as families and as a community.





Promising practices summary: Reproductive and sexual health talks

The community of San Jose de los Chorros is located in the municipality of Rionegro, department of Santander, four hours and a half from Bucaramanga's urban area.

Learning Summary

It is considered a promising practice because it builds community resilience by transmitting knowledge, awareness, and reinforcing collective commitment.

Through reproductive and sexual health workshops, men received key messages about the contraceptive methods and the importance of family planning.

An indirect yet important impact has been the inclusion of men in community activities. A resilient community is a cohesive community and counts with the participation of all members in decision-making processes and in community practices.

The activity is based on the Colombian Red Cross' volunteer experience in sharing reproductive and sexual health.

Problem Identified

Locals of San José de los Chorros do not have access to health services in their community. In addition, there is no presence of health promoters in town, which implies medical attention to be a significant investment, both in terms of time and money. These cannot be assumed by some of the community members.

Communities located alongside the river have always been stigmatized for their high birth rate. The community itself perceives this situation as a difficulty because it means more people to feed and educate.

Activities Developed

Due the birth rate increase in this region, the need to deliver sexual education sessions was made evident. These informative sessions imply the transmission of knowledge regarding all matters involving the physical, anatomic and psychological conditions inherent to each human being.

Parting from the fact that reproductive and sexual health is the responsibility of all, men were identified as target group.

Thus, it was necessary to design a strategy to increase and promote their participation in this type of activities.

The existence of an organized group of fishermen in the community eased the process, and they joined an activity programmed to work on reproductive and sexual health.

During the orientation, talks were provided on the proper use of condoms as a barrier method to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancies. This presentation was complemented with family planning methods and by practicing the use of a condom. Additionally, the significance of recognizing the reproductive organs as an important part of each person's sexual system was explained.

The main objective of the talk was to transform mentalities. This community is characterized by a negative perception of planning methods because men see them as a weakness. It was possible to generate a space where men participated actively, carried out the practices and shared experiences.





Achievements and Changes Produced

The activity managed to gather fishermen from the San José de los Chorros region and integrate them towards reproductive and sexual health activities.

This practice allowed a greater participation of men in community activities and showed them that sexuality is more than a physical act. The importance of preserving participants' interest was highlighted, as continuity is an essential factor to reach community development.



Promising practices summary: Creation of the Water and Sanitation Committee

The community of Nuestra Señora de la Salud is located in the department of Loreto, Punchana province, Maynas district, Iquitos.

The Punchana province has an approximate population of 4375 families, is part of the Peruvian Amazonia, and is located 20 minutes from the Quisto Cocha National Reserve. The community's population generally lives off fishing, the hotel and tourism industry, and agriculture, having as their main crops and fruit varieties mango, papaya, camú camú, yucca, potato and sugar cane.

PHAST Methodology

Participative transformation on hygiene and sanitation practices.

PHAST is a methodology that emerged thanks to the con-sponsorship of WHO (World Health Organization), WB (World Bank), and UNDP (United Nations Development Project). It was later adopted by the Red Cross as its official methodology for all community field work related to hygiene and sanitation. The methodology's success is owed to the fact that the subjects benefit from their own input and interaction with community members. They work together to identify, analyze and propose solutions to the community health issues caused by inadequate hygiene practices.

Problem Identified

The community of Nuestra Señora de la Salud is one of the areas with higher indicators of malnutrition and poor health conditions among children. This is a consequence of various factors such as: the lack of priority it has been given by local authorities, the lack of potable water and drainage service, and the floods that occur every 5 to 6

They are also affected by dengue, a constant health issue resulting from overcrowded living conditions or due to the inadequate use of water storage systems, along with a deficiency of resources and unlearned skills in this community.

Activities Developed

The community interaction started with the creation of the Water and Sanitation Community Committee based on the PHAST methodology. Then, in a joint effort with the newly formed committee, talks about hands washing were given through household visits, cleaning and waste management campaigns, and fumigation campaigns. These were all held with the support of the Punchana Health Center.

The focus remained on hand washing campaigns and its importance to disease prevention. Our activities reached children, young people, adults and the elderly through games, contests and the song "Pim pom es un muñeco de trapo y de cartón, se lava las manitos con agua y con jabón...", which turned to be the most recurrent phrase told by children and young people.



Learning Summary

The creation of a Water Sanitation Committee is considered a promising practice because the creation of a water committee leads to community resilience through community organization and cohesion. The ability to identify problems, establish priorities and take action is a key component of resilience, enabling the community to respond in case of an emergency.

In this case, the Water and Sanitation Committee has taken concrete and effective measures to reduce risks related to diseases and linked to water management (gastroenteritis, dengue, and the like).

The activity is based on the Peruvian Red Cross experience on participative methodologies such as PHAST, and on its volunteer network.

Achievements and Changes Produced

The Water and Sanitation Committee is now trained and prepared to cope with health risk situations and are also capable of managing resources to benefit the community. For example, fumigation and cleaning campaigns are held every two months. These are based on community initiative and supported by the municipality.

To date, this committee's achievements include:

- 5 cleaning campaigns carried out by the Water and Sanitation Committee;
- 3 fumigation campaigns to prevent dengue;
- 3 hand washing fairs to promote disease prevention;
- More than 370 children benefited from hand washing fairs;
- 284 household visits offering talks about hand washing, water filtering and disease prevention;
- Recognition of the newly formed Water and Sanitation Committee by the municipality.





**Pisco Playa,
Peru**

Learning Summary

The creation of community emergency response teams is considered an important contribution to community resilience because it builds commitment and collective organization. This sort of community cohesion is beneficial to emergency response, as is the involvement of external actors.

Community response teams are comprised of volunteers and rely on civic participation of community members, which is a key factor for local community cohesion. The simulation allows communities to identify adequate measures and respond to any type of emergency, acting quickly and efficiently.

The participation of the municipality also ensures that the community can count with external actors that can provide support, products and necessary services.

The activity is based on the Peruvian Red Cross' experience in disaster preparedness and training by Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRT).



Promising practices summary: Creation of community emergency response teams

The community of Pueblo Joven Miguel Grau in Pisco Playa is located on the Ica department, province of Pisco. This community was affected by the 2007 earthquake leaving 8 dead, 3 of them children. It counts with a population of 120 families and is located 100 meters from the sea.

Problem Identified

The community of Pueblo Joven Almirante Miguel Grau is located on a vulnerable area due its closeness to the sea and to the type of soil where the houses have been constructed. This, added to the lack of organizations to provide first aid support in emergency situations and the lack of resources create major risks.

Activities Developed

The first activity was the creation of a community disaster response team that was chosen in a community meeting.

The public recognition of this team by the Pisco municipality has facilitated their progress and helped the team to take independent actions for the community's benefit. For this reason, they were given first aid training, taught the usage of extinguishers, and were capacitated

for search and rescue. First aid equipment for emergency situations and disasters was also provided.

A very important part of this training was their participation in the Earthquake and Tsunami National Simulation in commemoration of 110 years of the Peruvian Armed Forces. 11 countries participated in the event, which lasted 4 days.

Achievements and Changes Produced

The community disaster response team has been working in the RITA project and has been trained on disaster management with the provincial municipality through the Civil Defense Technical Secretariat. They now recognize the importance of counting with small community teams capable of responding with their own resources and capacities before external support arrives.



Cruz Roja Peruana



Pisco Earthquake, 2007



The community disaster response team supporting the evacuation of children, young people and adults, during a simulation

To date, the following actions have been successfully achieved:

- The provincial municipality's recognition of the community disaster response teams;
- 1 set of first aid equipment delivered to the community disaster response team;
- 4 simulations carried out with the support of the community disaster response team;
- 1 risk reduction fair held at the district square;
- 193 family emergency plans elaborated with the support of the community team during the domiciliary visits;
- 12 evacuation signs and security areas placed with the support of the community team.



Ica,
Peru



Promising practices summary: Preventing disease through hand washing

The community of Miramar, center area, is located in the Ica department, Chincha province, Tambo de Mora district. It is the most vulnerable district when it comes to tsunamis and earthquakes, and was affected by the 2007 earthquake with its epicenter in Pisco city. It holds a population over 4,335.

PHAST Methodology

Participative transformation on hygiene and sanitation practices.

PHAST is a methodology that emerged thanks to the con-sponsorship of WHO (World Health Organization), WB (World Bank), and UNDP (United Nations Development Project). It was later adopted by the Red Cross as its official methodology for all community field work related to hygiene and sanitation. The methodology's success is owed to the fact that the subjects benefit from their own input and interaction with community members. They work together to identify, analyze and propose solutions to the community health issues caused by inadequate hygiene practices.

Problem Identified

The population of the community of Miramar is mainly comprised of fishermen, handcrafters, and workers at the fish plant where fish is processed into different by-products.

This population presented issues in regards to hygiene, water and sanitation; these diverse factors brought acute diarrheic diseases, infections and intoxications.

Activities Developed

The diverse factors affecting the community's health caused the RITA project to prioritize hand washing. By implementing the PHAST methodology, and through hand washing campaigns, improvements were made.

This process included household visits, carried out jointly with the Health Center from Tambo de Mora and Chincha Baja, with the community teams created, the support of the Tambo de Mora's parish and its youth groups. Talks were also offered to 151 children from the Miguel Grau School.

Achievements and Changes Produced

The Water and Sanitation Community Committee is now trained and prepared to cope with health risk situations and is capable of managing resources for its community. Besides, families have been followed up to be trained on the importance of hand washing and disease prevention.



Learning Summary

This activity contributes to community resilience through behavioral change regarding water and hygiene, leading to community health improvement. It is considered a promising practice because it builds resilience by generating knowledge and awareness.

The practice has also developed community cohesion and created long-term effects. The Water and Sanitation Committee guarantees the intervention's sustainability.

This Committee also contributes to the community's resilience level through organization, as it improves the capacity to identify issues related to water management, establish priorities and to take action to solve a problem.

To date, the Water and Sanitation Committee's achievements include:

- 3 hand washing fairs where children, young people and adults participated;
- 1 informative community health fair with the support of the District Municipality of Tambo de Mora's Health Center;
- 151 children from the Miguel Grau School trained on hand washing;
- 1 Water and Sanitation Committee created in the community;
- Co-education by the Water and Sanitation Community Team;
- 221 household visits including hand washing talks;
- Participation of the health center during household visits;
- District Municipality's support in the hand washing campaigns





Loreto,
Peru

Learning Summary

Household visits with key messages on health issues helps build resilience by generating knowledge and awareness. It also helped the community reformulate their priorities. To be resilient, a community must be actively engaged in its relations with external actors who can provide them a wide range of support, products and services when their own capacity is overtaken. In this case, the HIV/AIDS prevention campaign was mobilized by the Peruvian Red Cross, the health center, COPROMUSA and the regional government.

Additionally, the practice creates a more informed community on the risks related to HIV/AIDS and leads to changes in behavior among community members.

The activity is based on the Peruvian Red Cross' experience on the HIV/AIDS campaign implemented through attractive methods at schools.



Promising practices summary: Raising awareness and preventing HIV/AIDS through games, household visits and informative fairs

The community of Junta Vecinal Nuevo San Juan is located in the Loreto department, Nauta province, Nauta district, two hours and a half from the Iquitos province. The Nauta province counts with an approximate population of 1,533 families, it makes part of the Peruvian Amazonia and is closed to the Payacas Samiria National Reserve. Its population generally lives off fishing, agriculture and sales, having as its main crops yucca and sugar cane.

Problem Identified

The community of Junta Vecinal Nuevo San Juan is located in an area with the highest HIV/AIDS transmission rates. This is the result of various factors, such as the presence of oil companies and the arrival of many workers, which has increased the levels of prostitution. Other factors include: the lack of attention local authorities provide in response to the HIV/AIDS issue,

the families' education level, poor communication between parents and children, and the limited access to means of information about how to prevent this disease.

All these elements led the community diagnosis to identify the pressing need to focus on the HIV/AIDS issue.

Activities Developed

The activities began with domiciliary visits, accompanied by health representatives of COPROMUSA (Municipal Health Protection Commission). This was done with the intention of hearing out the population's thoughts and opinions on the subject. Awareness workshops were held providing information about the proper

way to avoid disease. These talks were implemented with the support of water and sanitation community teams. The intervention was made through attractive strategies in schools and communities. Some of our activities included the *condómetro*, the roulette, theatre, informative campaigns and awareness night fairs.



Achievements and Changes Produced

The Junta Vecinal Nuevo San Juan's population is grateful with this initiative because it has sparked the interest of local authorities. Not only did they get involved and work during the project's first phase, but they continue carrying out household visits and developing prevention campaigns at school and community levels. The activity was successful in involving children and young people, who were the population's most vulnerable because they had not participated in previous activities. The use of colored balloons and attractive strategies has contributed to their involvement in activities.

To date, the group of partners has developed:

- 360 HIV rapid tests applied in the community;
- Contact with health establishments now providing 19 people with their monthly control;
- Teamwork with the health center and the regional government of Loreto through COPROMUSA.
- Coeducation with the support of community teams created;
- 3 pasacalles made with the presence of the health center, schools, the municipality, the regional government, community teams and the population;
- At least 633 people benefited from HIV prevention activities, held by the Peruvian Red Cross with the RITA Project.





**Cantón
Huaquillas,
Ecuador**

Learning Summary

Cleaning campaigns, when identified and led by the community, are a good way to build resilience by strengthening community cohesion. Cohesion comprises a sense of community, trust and reciprocity among its members. It results in civic participation and mutual support among neighbors and community members, particularly in emergency cases.

In addition, these communities have organized themselves to taking concrete actions – another key component of resilience when facing external shocks. Through their actions against garbage and other factors of disease development, the Huaquilla communities are acquiring knowledge, attitudes and practices that help them stay healthy.



Promising practices summary: Cleaning campaigns

The activities described in this document were developed in 5 communities from the Huaquillas Canton. The Ecuador community has approximately 360 families and the 12 de Octubre community has approximately 475 families. The Brisas del Sur community has an approximate population of 86 families.

The San Gregorio community has about 200 families and is located near the international canal. The Amazonas community has at least 130 families, and in 1996 its inhabitants suffered the impact of El Niño phenomenon, which led to flooding and the immediate evacuation of its population.

These 5 communities are in low areas and are highly prone to flooding. In 1997 and 2008 the floods caused wide damages.

Problem Identified

These communities are provided with some of the basic needs such as: electricity, water and landphone. Nonetheless, these communities are prone to heavy flooding, a consequence of sewage and garbage accumulation in curbs and sidewalks. These also generated

the proliferation of vectors and the presence of diseases like dengue and malaria. The latter is also a result of the scarce community knowledge on subjects dealing with healthy life practices and the lack of adequate medical attention that leads to the rise of diseases in the communities.

Activities Developed

To solve pressing issues like the lack of sewage system, and to limit the garbage accumulation in sidewalks, the five communities decided to carry out cleaning campaigns. The campaigns showed the community's commitment

with the cleaning and appearance of their surroundings. These activities are put in place so that people dispose of the solid waste and large materials in disuse, reducing the environmental impact, consequently leading to a decrease in vectors and diseases.





The cleaning campaigns also contribute to cleaning the community homes by motivating and providing its members with spaces where they can dispose of their trash, which the recollection truck often does not pick up and that in many occasions is thrown out on the streets, creating dirty corners where the animals scatter waste affecting the surroundings.

This activity allowed the participation of boys, girls, teens, adults and elders, who committed and acquired knowledge for proper waste management at home, as well as the adequate care of their surroundings. Finally, strategies were implemented so that waste could be disposed in the pertinent sites to avoid the propagation of vectors and diseases.

Achievements and Changes Produced

It was possible to eliminate almost all the containers with stagnant water and the flooded septic tanks. After the cleaning process the community members promised to dispose waste in the designated sites. They also agreed to deliver the waste to the garbage truck areas in the predisposed sites created for this end.

The distribution of tasks in the activity revealed the possibility and benefits of community organization and external collaboration.

It is necessary to underline that the boys, girls and teens participated actively in the community's activities, and they encouraged their parents to become part of the process. The community members participated in the activities, strengthening the commitment acquired by the families to keep the streets and gardens clean. Following these actions, considerable decrease of garbage was observed around the community.





**Cantón
Huaquillas,
Ecuador**

Learning Summary

These training sessions strengthen the knowledge of the communities in topics crucial to their survival – in this case, efficient responses in the case of an accident or emergency. The capacity to evaluate and manage risks in their environment increases resilience levels and is evidenced through their newly earned awareness of emergency signals.

At last, these communities became organized and took concrete measures by creating a First Response Community Committee. They were trained in First Aid and provided first response equipment (stretcher, first aid kit, fracture equipment, loudspeaker and extinguisher). They have reached a new level of resilience through their learned capacity to face future problems.



Promising practices summary: First aid and emergency committees

The activities presented here took place in 3 communities from the Huaquillas Canton. The community 9 de Octubre located at the southeast and has approximately 578 families, out of which 75% work in massive trade local businesses and fishing.

The community 8 de Septiembre is located in the Canton northeaster sector and has 420 families that work in trading and brickwork. Since it is located in one of Huaquillas' highest areas, the shelter can receive at least 300 people.

Los Vergeles is a community housing 140 families in Huaquillas, and counts with a community center. Not long ago a children's playground was built at one side of this community center.

Problem Identified

In the participatory assessment of these three communities, concerns related to emergency response appeared. Since these three communities are located far the health centers, its residents expressed their desire to learn first aid. They wanted to learn how to respond when house accidents occurred. The most common cases were that kids scalded with hot water ,

burned with cooking oil, cut with rusted tools or were involved in car accidents. In the past, they did not know what to do, and their lack of knowledge often resulted in worsening the injured person's health.

In the 9 de Octubre community, the assessment identified that there is scarce knowledge on how to provide first aid when facing an emergency.

Activities Developed

The three communities requested support and a first aid course to improve their response capacities when facing an emergency.

Knowledge in first aid would help the community to provide an immediate and efficient response during a disaster. It also capacitates the community





to identify situations that can turn into irreversible disabilities, such as cerebrovascular accidents, respiratory arrests and high blood pressure, among others.

The families were trained in first aid practices and first aid manuals were distributed to the families so that they could share this knowledge with others.

The workshops received a massive participation of boys and girls. A great percentage of local families assisted to these workshops, as well as families from neighboring communities.

Achievements and Changes Produced

The First Response Community Committee was created and strengthened. In addition, it received basic tools like a stretcher, a first aid kit, fracture equipment, a loudspeaker, and an extinguisher, among various others.

It is a promising practice to learn first aid measures because nobody is exempt from daily risks. The families feel safer when they apply what they have learnt; many of them commented on their positive experiences while looking after their children after the training.

With the first aid workshops, people felt safe and prepared in case of disaster or emergency. The theory and practice on this subject contributed to a strong commitment from the members of the First Response Community Committee

In a community, all members can learn about first aid and be prepared to have the necessary skills and confidence to help someone.





**Cantón
Huaquillas,
Ecuador**

Learning Summary

Recycling initiatives lead to the development of community resilience through knowledge and awareness. Recognizing that waste represents a threat to health is the first step to building better health practices. The community's active measures to collect the waste, classify and use it as a resource begins to transform the relation between the community and its surroundings. In addition, it allows the strengthening of bonds among community members.

The activity is based on the Ecuadorian Red Cross experience on school campaigns and the diffusion of knowledge on waste management techniques.



Promising practices summary: “My community cleaner and safer”

Two communities in the Huaquillas Canton implemented initiatives related to recycling. The Abdón Calderón, founded on 1987, has approximately 185 families and its income lies on local fishing and the trade of basic products. The Miraflores community has close to 292 families.

Problem Identified

In the participatory assessment developed in these two communities, concerns related to waste management appeared. In particular, the inadequate way in which the solid urban waste was disposed. The problem developed

because residents did not leave the garbage in the sites previously agreed for its recollection. As a result, a micro-project was designed that could give the community elements to reduce the impact of these issues.

Activities Developed

A recycling campaign was launched. It aimed to implement the 4Rs: “Reducing” the consumption; “Reusing”, the two sides of a sheet of paper, using plastic for crafts; “Recycling”, classifying waste with signaled bins; and lastly “Recovery” of the raw material in some objects (such as, plastic, glass, metal, paper, among others).

The promotion of the 4Rs was also implemented in the Miraflores educational community. The entire school community was involved in these actions, so that

they would learn the adequate ways to manage waste. This newly acquired knowledge creates actions leading to a positive environmental impact. In addition, the community learned about organization and disposal, thus improving health conditions in the surroundings.

After the process was made, strong changes were observed in the community, specially in the waste management sector. Implementing signaled bins for recycling in the schools proved to be a promising activity because it promotes environmental sustainable practices in the community.





Achievements and Changes Produced

In the Abdón Calderón community, the change of bins for waste classification has motivated the community to take on an environmental commitment. The old and rusty bins were also eliminated because these increased the vectors and diseases to which the children of the community were continually exposed.

In the Miraflores schools, boys, girls, teachers, and parents learned the recycling techniques through the themed bins in the school. The children replicated these practices at home, along with other healthy practices to benefit their lifestyle.

The activities that have taken place assure a permanent benefit through the active participation of the community in the activities and the development of communitary cohesion. The Red Cross will continue to support and visit the communities to measure the progress of this change in attitude regarding waste management.

In addition to recycling, these two communities have benefited in that they now feel a stronger commitment with the work done. Even though there are more needs and problems to be solved, these steps have begun to improve population's life quality.



**Consejo Village,
Belize**

Promising practices summary: Developing neutral spaces within divided communities

Problem Identified

In Consejo, about one-fourth of its 117 households are divided along political, religious, and old family feud lines. This affects community decision-making, participation, and the use of resources.

For example, the Red Party holds political power and controls the use of the community center; it also influences community participation since only supporters of their party feel welcome. Similarly, if the venue for a community meeting is set at a restaurant belonging to a member of the Blue Party, it will affect participation.

Activities Developed

To ensure a completely impartial community meeting, the 7 fundamental principles of the Red Cross were applied (emphasizing impartiality and neutrality). A neutral sharing space was created, in public grounds and without ties to political or religious affiliations. This approach facilitated discussion between families that had not spoken in over 20 years.

Community members were then organized into a Community Support Group (CSG). The CSG was formed as an all-inclusive, non-political group that serves as advocate and represents community interests and concerns, aiming to ensure more effective community-driven development initiatives. Several training sessions were provided on subjects pertaining to advocacy, first aid, water and sanitation and disaster response.

Achievements and Changes Produced

A change of traditional perceptions, processes and outcomes was achieved as community members experienced a shift in their understanding of the village council elections of 2013. An independent, unified group emerged, representing a broader portion of the population and garnering 80% of the vote. District representatives from both political parties pledged to work closely with the elected village council and to assist in any way possible.

Today, inclusive community meetings can be called at any venue, and community members from all backgrounds—religious, political, ethnic, economic, or social—will participate, offering community development ideas and actions.

Learning Summary

Establishing neutral meeting grounds and spaces within the community is considered a promising practice because it allows opposing groups, families, and parties to communicate. When community members develop the capacity to exchange ideas and experiences, they become more resilient through community cohesion.

Most obstacles and community divisions can be overcome when its members engage to reach a common goal and are given the opportunity to communicate. It is crucial, however, to create a neutral space.

This practice has worked to increase community cohesion in all other 48 communities where the Belize Red Cross has previously worked. In addition, the organization of Community Support Groups has demonstrated how groups with socio-political differences can self-mobilize around common issues. Community members observe increased cooperation among themselves and among their leaders.

This practice is being systematically applied within other villages facing similar challenges, for example, San Victor.



Developing Safer Health Practices in Indigenous Communities



The indigenous community of Dogg Point is located in the ... of Bartica, one of the outlying regions in Guyana. The Guyana Red Cross is currently working with ... communities here as part of its implementation of the Resilience in the Americas (RITA) programme.



Problem Identified

Elders and other members of the community had developed the practice of administering a combination of burnt kerosene, lemon and ... to children as a cure for colds. The practice of giving this remedy had evolved over many decades, and eventually came to be accepted as a traditional Amerindian medication. Unfortunately, the children began to suffer from diarrhoea and ... , and it was believed by the GRC that a significant cause was the homemade cold remedy.

The community also did not receive visits by health officials from the clinic, so that no information was disseminated to them, nor was there any practical demonstration or training in correct medications.

The danger to small children was increased due to the fact that pregnant women and mothers of small children did not go the clinic for check-ups or to have the children immunised. The clinic is located approximately 2.5 miles away from the community, and their only means to access it is by walking, which could easily take up to an hour especially if accompanied by small children.



Learning Summary

This is considered a good practice because it builds community resilience through knowledge, information and stakeholder collaboration. The willingness of pregnant women and mothers of small children to accept and incorporate modern health care techniques into their indigenous practices, has helped to influence other community members who might have been more resistant to change.

This practice is sustainable because the women are willing to continue with the techniques introduced by the GRC and PAHO because the children are getting better and because there is more support for their community from local health care representatives.

Additionally, both the community and the government health workers are now more trustful of the Guyana Red Cross and are therefore more open to working together to reap continued benefits for the residents of Dogg Point.



The Experience



The approach by the Guyana Red Cross (GRC) was at three levels. They partnered with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and officials from the local Ministry of Health to develop and administer an Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) programme in the community. This programme is designed to help mothers with children up to five years old to avoid diseases. It imparts specific coping skills to mothers in the pre-natal and post-natal stages, and highlights strategies to achieve basic and safe hygiene and nutritional practices.

To address the critical information gaps within the community, the GRC asked the clinicians attached to PAHO to assist them in developing a manual, training agenda and implementation schedule.

The nurses attached to the health care clinic needed to have a better understanding of, and appreciation for indigenous beliefs and practices in order to be able to deliver a higher quality of care to these communities. GRC and PAHO worked with the nurses, and two trainings in two of the communities were conducted.



Influence of Context



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Achievements and Changes Generated

Initially, there was resistance to the intervention, as it was felt that it was not respectful to traditional indigenous practices. There was however a positive change in the community when they were introduced to a more holistic approach to health and well-being. In addition to being exposed to safe medical care practices, members of the community were shown how to incorporate the fruits and vegetables that they have around them into their diets in a more structured and targeted manner. This in turn provided them with practical skills to manage their lifestyle challenges of obesity and malnutrition.

Institutionally, there was a change in perception amongst the staff of the health care clinic. They are now more aware of the indigenous way of life and are therefore better able to relate to the patients from this community. Pregnant women and mothers of small children are more open to incorporating modern health care solutions into their traditional practices and some agreed to immunisation even while the health care officials and the GRC were conducting the intervention in the community.

The GRC also noted an increase in the willingness of health care officials to work with the Red Cross, opening the way for continued collaboration in communities such as Dogg Point and sustainability of this initiative.

