

Global Disaster Preparedness Center

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Research Team
Assessment Report



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



**American
Red Cross**

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1. Executive Summary

Global trends such as climate change, urbanization and environmental degradation are increasing the world's exposure and vulnerability to disasters. Similarly, expectations of the global Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC/RC) network, as a leader in disaster management and first responder to disasters in many countries, are also increasing. In order to support the global RC/RC network to meet this growing need, the American Red Cross, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Secretariat, began exploring the concept of a Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC). Hosted by the American Red Cross, a GDPC's primary aim would be to strengthen the disaster preparedness (DP) capacities of the global RC/RC network in order to help safeguard communities from future disasters.

The purpose of the assessment process was to determine the current gaps and priority needs within disaster preparedness and assess the potential value-added of establishing a GDPC.¹ As the disaster preparedness field is replete with actors, it would be critical that a GDPC carefully coordinate with other actors within and outside the global RC/RC network to ensure that its work complements existing efforts instead of duplicating or competing with them. There are multiple components of the global RC/RC network that have mandates to address various aspects of disaster preparedness, thus a GDPC would need to define a niche and role that differentiates it from other DP initiatives.

One way in which a GDPC could complement existing efforts would be to take on a service-oriented approach, instead of direct programming, with RC/RC national societies as its primary audience. Closely related to coordination, a GDPC would also need to adopt an approach that ensures that its stakeholders are substantively engaged and included in its work. This commitment to inclusivity should be demonstrated in both the governance and operations of a GDPC because active engagement would increase ownership. By fostering a broad sense of ownership amongst stakeholders a GDPC can ensure that it remains relevant to its users and sustainable.

A wide range of needs and potential services surfaced during the assessment process, however stakeholder feedback and research confirmed consensus around three areas of particular need: **knowledge management (KM), research and technical assistance (TA).** It was also evident that the need for **scalability and greater attention to quality** are of paramount importance with respect to investment in disaster preparedness. Given the proliferation of DP material, it has become increasingly challenging to hone in on and access quality resources, making increased efforts in knowledge management a critical need. The main mechanisms by which a GDPC would offer knowledge management services would be through a website and other forms of social media. The website would serve as a virtual platform for finding and sharing relevant resources, such as guidelines, tools, best practices and evaluations. It would also provide users with access to an online practitioners' network for sharing information, experience and advice. Additional social media mechanisms with a variety of

¹ Findings in this report are based on feedback garnered from a broad range of stakeholders through interviews, focus groups and surveys, and information collected through desk and internet research.

“push” functions would allow for more proactive communication around learning and sharing information.

Stakeholder feedback also indicated the need for more research in DP in order to build a stronger evidence base upon which humanitarian actors can build DP programs and advocate for increased support. Activities that a GDPC could undertake to address this need include establishing partnerships with interested universities that would support research projects in specific DP topics (such as cost-benefit analysis or DP in urban settings) and identifying and disseminating best practices.

Although various RC/RC actors offer DP-related technical assistance to national societies, many stakeholders agreed that demand for such services surpass the capacity to deliver. By providing technical assistance to national societies through tailored, in-person guidance, a GDPC could help fill this gap. While these areas constitute the current priorities, in future years a GDPC could expand its focus to also address issues such as training and resource mobilization support for national societies, which were also identified as critical needs among stakeholders.

This investment in a GDPC would offer an additional support structure to collective RC/RC network efforts in facilitating national societies’ work toward achieving excellence in disaster management. A GDPC would be one more way to foster NS recognition, growth and stability while offering opportunity to enhance strategies and learning agendas.

The list below summarizes the key findings and recommendations from the assessment report which are discussed in more detail in Sections 5 and 6 of the report.

Focus on Disaster Preparedness

Finding 1: Research and stakeholder feedback confirmed the feasibility and value of establishing a GDPC to provide increased support to national societies’ disaster preparedness efforts. However, recognizing the possibility of duplication and overlap with the work of other RC/RC partners, a resource center focused on disaster preparedness would need to have a clear niche and maintain continual close coordination with the IFRC Secretariat.

Finding 2: In terms of disaster risk reduction needs as they pertain to the RC/RC network, there are varied interpretations and priorities among stakeholders. By contrast, there is more clarity and consensus among stakeholders with respect to recognized disaster preparedness needs within the RC/RC network as a subset to overarching DRR needs.

Finding 3: There was general agreement among stakeholders that it would be prudent for a GDPC to focus on country-level disaster preparedness rather than the wider spectrum of activities affiliated with overarching disaster risk reduction.

Recommendation: *The American Red Cross should work in close coordination with the IFRC Secretariat to establish a GDPC in order to avoid*

duplication of services and support current investments for greater impact.

Recommendation: *The best way to have an impact on the capacity of national societies to effectively deliver emergency relief services is to concentrate efforts on tailored support to country-level disaster preparedness. Restricting the focus of a GDPC to specific aspects of disaster preparedness will allow for deeper investment where needs are significant, as well as an opportunity to promote high quality, streamlined approaches and tools to be applied at scale. A GDPC should revisit this focus on a regular basis to ensure it is in keeping with national society demands and adjust its aims accordingly.*

Service to National Societies

Finding 4: *A service-oriented approach is preferable to one that focuses on direct programming.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC should focus on rendering services to national societies to improve the quality and scalability of their disaster preparedness programming. This approach will allow a GDPC to function as a platform for learning and assistance to address rapidly growing/changing needs and prevent spreading itself too thin with program management responsibilities or inadvertently introducing competition within the RC/RC network.*

Recommendation: *National societies should be the primary audience for service provision. As it expands, there may be opportunity for a GDPC to extend services to international NGOs as the tertiary audience, however, it should first establish a sustainable model to meet demands for service delivery among national societies.*

Coordination as the Primary Backdrop to GDPC Initiatives

Finding 5: *The most challenging issue a GDPC can expect to encounter is how to effectively coordinate among a vast network of stakeholders in order to build on collective efforts in disaster preparedness and avoid duplication.*

Recommendation: *Coordination efforts should be integral to a GDPC's core mandate given the importance and relevance of disaster preparedness to the wider RC/RC network. In particular, a GDPC should assign networking and information sharing responsibilities to GDPC staff at the IFRC Secretariat and arrange*

for delegated coordination functions among GDPC staff at the field level given the IFRC's inherent role around coordination.

Recommendation: A GDPC should set up regular information-sharing mechanisms among existing RC/RC reference centers in order to learn from their experiences, support and promote each other's work, and minimize duplication.

Recommendation: A GDPC would benefit from steady outreach with centers and initiatives outside the RC/RC network. By doing so, it could have a unique opportunity to broaden the spectrum of learning and networking for the wider RC/RC network, filling in gaps where others have lacked time, staff and resources to do so.

The Bridge to Sustainability

Finding 6: The governance structure of a GDPC and degree to which stakeholders can formally participate have significant ramifications in determining a sense of ownership, use and sustainability for a GDPC. Each of the existing RC/RC reference centers has distinct elements to their governance structures and advisory committees that present strengths and weaknesses to their functionality.

Recommendation: A GDPC stands to reach its full potential by pursuing a modest Steering Committee structure to facilitate decision-making.

Recommendation: A GDPC should also establish a technical advisory committee with rotational participation to influence strategic planning and activities. A technical advisory committee should play a critical role in sharpening the quality of services delivered by a GDPC.

Finding 7: Long-term financial sustainability is a paramount cornerstone to the success of RC/RC centers; short-term planning and funding cycles due to resource constraints have largely hampered the impact and vision for many of the existing centers.

Recommendation: A GDPC should be supported by a long-term vision and financial commitment from the American Red Cross. Furthermore, financial stability rests in a broad donor base which should be considered and prioritized from the onset in the development of a GDPC's business plan.

Capacity Building and Organizational Development

Finding 8: As a global platform focused on knowledge management, research and technical support, a GDPC would provide national societies with a unique opportunity to build their disaster management capacities. This support could go beyond DP capacity

building to also include elements of general organizational development as they pertain to service delivery in DP.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should focus on rendering services aimed largely at building national society capacities to improve the quality of disaster preparedness programming. Where possible, core systems that also enhance organizational development should be supported.*

Knowledge Management

Finding 9: Knowledge management is a broadly assumed responsibility within the global RC/RC network; however there remains considerable demand that surpasses current capacities for knowledge management as it relates to DP.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should pursue knowledge management as an initial focus area for service, closely coordinating with the IFRC Secretariat and other RC/RC partners. This should include proactive outreach extending beyond the global RC/RC network to capitalize on learning and opportunities to elevate the caliber of service delivery in KM.*

Recommendation: *Heeding the experience of other resource centers, a GDPC should anticipate significant investment toward sophisticated IT which will impact a number of the knowledge management services offered. Simultaneously, a GDPC must consider the range of IT capacities and limitations at the field level in order to design appropriate means for access, namely for information sharing, active dialogue and networking.*

Technical Assistance

Finding 10: National societies have significant and diverse needs for tailored, country-level technical assistance. RC/RC partners are increasingly shifting their strategies to focus on addressing these needs.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should undertake technical assistance as one of its core services as there are growing and shifting needs within the RC/RC network that require engagement at the country level. To ensure consistency and prevent overlap, TA services should be closely coordinated with the IFRC, Partnering National Societies (PNS) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (e.g., integrating tracing in DP plans) field structures and*

programming, and should support current or planned national society programs.

Finding 10a: *National societies' auxiliary roles are critical components to their disaster preparedness capacity. There is increasing demand for legal guidance to national societies and governments to update national disaster response legislation.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC should support RC/RC network efforts to strengthen national societies' auxiliary role where it might complement disaster preparedness operational capacity building (see recommendations 10b – 10d).*

Finding 10b: *There is pervasive interest and need around capacity building for disaster response and contingency planning. In particular, simulations were widely viewed to be a specific endeavor that could benefit from added resources to help improve the quality of the activity.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC should invest in response and contingency planning as a priority area for technical assistance, promoting good practices, tools and sustainable methodologies to reinforce learning and practice. In doing so, there is opportunity for innovation that could enhance the caliber of services in this arena.*

Finding 10c: *Early warning systems (EWS) continue to pose challenges for national societies whereby strategies and tools currently used are inadequate to effectively reach and engage communities so they can take timely and appropriate action in the event of a disaster. They require tailored national and local level approaches that factor in the complex networks, responsibilities, policies and needs among a broad spectrum of stakeholders. As such, deeper investment is required in order to assist national societies in strengthening their early warning system capacities and, by extension, those of the communities they aim to serve.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC should prioritize complementary investments toward improving EWS tools, capturing good practices and sharing effective approaches that build upon and connect with national response systems. This can be done through providing TA, as well as by supporting research that expands learning around effective early warning systems and new and/or adaptable technology.*

Finding 10d: There is pervasive need for greater investment in public awareness and education services, whereby outreach is more consistent, delivery mechanisms simplified and guidance improved to more effectively inform and empower communities to anticipate, cope with and recover from disasters.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should contribute to wider efforts towards the dissemination of DM messaging and educational tools/materials to national societies. Investment in this area introduces an opportunity for a GDPC to make considerable progress in terms of adaptation of existing tools and practices and improvement through innovation in order to help national societies promote knowledge and skills that empower communities to be better prepared, proactive and effective in managing disasters.*

Research

Finding 11: There is significant demand for deepening the evidence base of good practice around disaster preparedness through partnerships with credible academic and research institutions.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should consider different partnerships with universities and research centers to pursue analytical learning. There are a host of existing partnerships among RC/RC partners that should serve as the starting point from which to build stronger networks among scientific and academic institutions to advance the caliber and impact of RC/RC services in DP.*

Training

Finding 12: Training in disaster preparedness is a recognized need among national societies and is currently being addressed at multiple levels by a wide range of stakeholders. The considerable volume of current trainings reflects inconsistencies around approaches, curriculum quality and context appropriateness of coursework.

Recommendation: *While there is demand for training in disaster preparedness, for the first few years a GDPC should explore modest support services to existing or planned training rather than undertake the responsibility for separate training programs.*

American Red Cross

Finding 13: The domestic and internationally focused departments of the American Red Cross house myriad tools, methodologies and good practices that would benefit the wider RC/RC network.

Recommendation: A GDPC should take stock of the depth of tools and practices used by the American Red Cross domestically and internationally and adapt and disseminate these resources to the RC/RC network as appropriate.

Recommendation: A GDPC should devise a mechanism by which American Red Cross staff and volunteers are able to deploy to meet clearly articulated and measurable national society needs. This should be done in tandem with a system that supports multi-national deployments from other national societies.

Finding 14: Being located in Washington, D.C. offers unique benefits due to the proximity to important decision and policy makers, and institutions that influence and fund DP-related work.

Recommendation: Based at American Red Cross headquarters, a GDPC would be well positioned to capture and disseminate policies and participate in knowledge sharing among decision makers and practitioners. As such, a GDPC should conduct regular outreach among stakeholders, initiate events to elevate awareness and stay abreast of relevant and changing policies related to disaster preparedness. This could be done through hosting forum discussions, speaker series and other information sharing/public awareness events.

Recommendation: A GDPC should capitalize on the full breadth of American Red Cross existing partnerships with governmental, academic and scientific entities, and explore new partnerships with such institutions that could benefit the RC/RC network as a whole.

Recommendation: A GDPC could provide modest support to national society local level fundraising by offering tools, such as DP project management, baseline data, budget and M&E tools on its website to foster transparency and accountability. This would provide a modest degree of support, leaving more complex interventions (i.e., those that require a deep understanding of political, social and economic contexts to develop coherent resource mobilization strategies) to the national societies and the IFRC.

2. Introduction

As the world faces greater exposure and vulnerability to disasters, and the associated loss of life, assets, livelihoods and security they bring, there is an increasingly compelling need for greater intellectual and technical capacity for disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction.² With this in mind, and in order to support the global RC/RC network to meet this need, the American Red Cross, in collaboration with the IFRC Secretariat, initiated exploratory work on a resource center that would focus specifically on disaster preparedness. While recognizing the close relationship and overlap between disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, the magnitude of needs in disaster preparedness alone were sufficient to merit exploring development of a center with disaster preparedness as its sole focus. Section 5 provides further discussion on the singular focus on disaster preparedness.

To gain a clearer understanding of how a Global Disaster Preparedness Center could provide the greatest value to the global RC/RC network, the American Red Cross established a Research Team in June 2011 whose primary role was to solicit broad input among relevant stakeholders on the concept of a Global Disaster Preparedness Center. **The purpose of this study was to determine the current gaps and priority needs within disaster preparedness and assess the potential value-added of establishing a Global Disaster Preparedness Center hosted by the American Red Cross.**

This report presents the findings of the Research Team and is based on the input of a broad range of stakeholders with whom the Team consulted between June 2011 and February 2012. The report discusses findings related to current priority needs in disaster preparedness and what a GDPC could do to meet those needs, while ensuring a coordinated and sustainable approach.

² For the purpose of this report, the following definitions from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) are used: **Disaster preparedness** is the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions. **Disaster risk reduction** is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

3. Methodology

Methodology and Process

The overarching aim of this study was to solicit broad input from relevant stakeholders to determine priority needs within DP and potential value-added for the global RC/RC network in the development of a GDPC.³ The findings and recommendations presented here are derived from the opinions and ideas of the many stakeholders who participated in this consultative process and have been triangulated with desk research.

The methodology employed for the study consisted of the following:

- 1) **Desk and internet research:** The Team reviewed a wide range of information and documentation pertaining to—
 - Existing RC/RC reference centers and their tools and publications
 - Existing DP-related reference centers outside the RC/RC network
 - Universities with programs/initiatives related to disaster preparedness
 - DP evaluations and studies produced by actors within and beyond the RC/RC network⁴
- 2) **Semi-structured individual and group interviews:** The Team consulted a broad range of actors in order to ensure maximum participation and to encompass various perspectives.⁵
 - In-person and/or Skype interviews were conducted with more than 100 stakeholders.
 - Feedback sessions with groups in the United States, Latin America, Africa, Asia and Geneva were also conducted.

Stakeholders with explicit interest in international disaster preparedness were contacted for interviews and focus groups. To the extent possible, interviews were conducted with representatives from different regions to ensure geographic balance. Interviewees included representatives from—

- RC/RC national societies that fund and/or implement DP/DRR programming
- IFRC staff (in Geneva and Zone offices, Disaster Management Units and select regional offices with DP/DRR programmatic focus)
- Existing RC/RC reference centers
- Donors, based on funding emphasis and/or DP technical focus (individuals at headquarters and in the field)
- Universities with established centers/initiatives/research units related to disaster preparedness
- American Red Cross domestic and international services staff, particularly key functions with direct responsibility and/or influence over strategic planning, resource mobilization and disaster preparedness programming

³ See Annex 2 for full Terms of Reference for the study.

⁴ See Annex 3 for a complete bibliography.

⁵ See Annex 4 for a complete list of those interviewed.

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or learning networks/initiatives with either a disaster preparedness focus or a service structure similar to that envisioned for a GDPC (e.g., Risk Red and ALNAP)
- 3) **Surveys:** Two web-based surveys were conducted to complement information gathered through interviews—one survey targeted American Red Cross staff only and the other targeted colleagues throughout the global RC/RC network.⁶ A total of 102 responses were collected through both surveys. This included 62 responses from the American Red Cross and 40 responses from the RC/RC network. Of the RC/RC network respondents, 75 percent represented national societies and 25 percent represented IFRC or ICRC staff in Geneva and the Zone or field offices.

As the final output of the study, this report analyzes the major findings derived from research, stakeholder feedback and surveys, and outlines practical recommendations for establishing a GDPC.

Research Team

The Research Team consisted of three full-time staff—a Director and Program Assistant based in Washington D.C. and a Senior Researcher based in Geneva. The Team was also supported part-time by an Information Analyst also based in Washington D.C.

Limitations

Limited reach for consultations- The Research Team found it particularly challenging to reach the full spectrum of stakeholders given the scope and technical focus of the proposed center. While it would have been ideal to interview a larger pool of stakeholders, the breadth and depth of consultations were limited by staff and time constraints.

Survey limitations- Cognizant of limitations, the Research Team decided to conduct online surveys circulated via email as the quickest and most efficient way to reach colleagues throughout the American Red Cross and global RC/RC network. The Research Team encouraged recipients to forward the survey link to other interested colleagues in the hopes of increasing the number of people reached. The disadvantage of this approach was that it was not possible to calculate the total number of survey recipients which limits the inferences that can be made from the survey data.

In addition, the survey garnered a modest level of responses from IFRC and PNS relative to other respondents. However, these stakeholder groups had a higher degree of representation for in-person consultations, providing an overall balance to research findings.

Finally, time and staff constraints also limited the extent to which target audiences, particularly national societies, could be briefed on the survey intent. Travel was conducted to each region however the Research Team consulted with only a fraction of the 187 national societies in person. More outreach around the survey would likely have increased the total number of respondents.

⁶ See Annex 5 for survey questions and responses.

Despite these limitations, the survey data do serve three important purposes:

- 1) The data reflect feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and provide an added source of information through extended outreach that would not have been possible through surveys conducted with a pre-determined group.
- 2) The data collected provide an idea of trends and tendencies, which the Research Team felt is sufficient for this point in the process.
- 3) The survey serves as a key part of a participatory process that solicits feedback from a broad range of interested stakeholders.

4. PART I: CONTEXT & STAKEHOLDERS

The following section provides an overview of the context in which a GDPC would operate and the primary stakeholders within that context. The section intends to offer only a quick snapshot of significant global trends and initiatives that are shaping DP and DRR today and how various actors and initiatives are addressing the need for services which bolster and build the capacity of practitioners. This section is followed by key findings and recommendations on how a GDPC might operate within the current context, while building upon and contributing to the work of existing stakeholders.

4.1 Humanitarian context

In the past few decades the international humanitarian and development community has increasingly recognized that exposure and vulnerability to disasters is mounting and that the world's poorest populations are disproportionately affected.⁷ Every year, over 200 million people around the world are affected by droughts, floods, cyclones, earthquakes, wildfires and other hazards.⁸ Some studies predict that the number of people impacted by climate-related disasters is expected to increase by 50 percent over the next five years as the world population continues to grow.⁹ Additionally, the United Nations estimates that by 2050, over 70 percent of the world's population will live in urban areas,¹⁰ where the humanitarian community is only beginning to learn about effective ways to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters. Pervasive environmental degradation associated with the above events is exacerbating vulnerability, while conflict situations are causing manmade disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies that further complicate the diverse needs facing humanitarian organizations today.

Since 2005, the [Hyogo Framework for Action](#) (HFA) has served as the guideline by which local, national, regional and international actors have worked to reduce disaster risks. Not only does it call for a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction but it also promotes the “development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.”¹¹ Encouraging urgency, the HFA also states that, “in order to meet the challenges ahead accelerated efforts must be made to build the necessary capacities at the community and national levels to manage and reduce risk.”¹² This focus on reducing vulnerabilities while simultaneously strengthening communities' capacities to manage hazards is the core work of the global RC/RC network.

This disaster preparedness and risk reduction focus is reflected in the number of organizations and agencies that are engaging in disaster preparedness related work, in the priority placed on prevention

⁷ Anderson, M. (2000). *The Impacts of Natural Disasters on the Poor: A Background Note*. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

⁸ Guha-Sapir, D., Vos, F., Below, R., Ponserre, S. (2010). *Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2010*. Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED): Brussels.

⁹ Diamond, W. and Ganeshan, S. (2009). *Forecasting numbers of people affected annually by natural disasters up to 2015*. Oxfam GB.

¹⁰ UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2008). *World Urbanization Prospects*.

¹¹ UNISDR. (2007). *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*.

¹² *ibid*

and preparedness by the United Nations¹³ and by increasing levels of interest from donors. This is the overarching theme of the 2010 World Bank report *Natural Hazards Unnatural Disasters*, which includes a recommendation to donors to earmark funding for prevention-related activities instead of focusing solely on disaster responses after a tragic event has already occurred.¹⁴ The Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO) has also made disaster risk reduction a priority, aiming to commit 10 percent of its program budget toward DRR. Similarly, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also show trends toward increased investment and prioritization of DRR programming.¹⁵ Echoing this sentiment, the IFRC's 18th General Assembly of the RC/RC network approved a decision stating that, "every appeal for international disaster response should include, as far as possible, a provision of at least 10 percent for longer-term disaster preparedness and risk reduction work."¹⁶

4.2 Key Stakeholders

Donors and the public have become more aware and knowledgeable of disaster preparedness and risk reduction needs, which has sparked a growing demand for accountability and evidenced-based programming across all humanitarian programming.¹⁷ In response, the humanitarian sector has increasingly linked learning and accountability¹⁸ and a number of initiatives have been established that are contributing to the growing knowledge base and professionalism within the humanitarian sector.

The following chart provides a snapshot of some of the more prominent initiatives whose work includes disaster preparedness components. Although they are not included in the chart below, other initiatives such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP International) and the Sphere Project, which focus on improving accountability and standards in humanitarian work also have implications for DP work and a GDPC, thus, should be considered stakeholders as well.

¹³ Statement by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, "Prevention to be centre of UN work for next five years," January 26, 2012 (www.unisdr.org/archive/24847).

¹⁴ World Bank and United Nations. (2010). *Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: The Economics of Effective Prevention*. World Bank: Washington D.C.

¹⁵ www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Key-Issues/Humanitarian-disasters-and-emergencies/Resilience/, www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/publications/prep_mit/index.html.

¹⁶ IFRC, 18th Session of the General Assembly, Decision no. 11/45. November 2011 (fednet.ifrc.org/PageFiles/92017/Decisions.pdf).

¹⁷ Hilhorst, D. (2002). *Being Good at Doing Good? Quality and Accountability of Humanitarian NGOs*, Overseas Development Institute, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

¹⁸ Van Brabant, K. (1997). *Organisational and Institutional Learning in the Humanitarian Sector: Opening the Dialogue*, A Discussion Paper for the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance. London: ALNAP.

Snapshot of External Disaster Preparedness Initiatives

CENTER	PURPOSE ACTIVITIES
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)	<p>Purpose: promote disaster awareness and the development of local capacities to foster institutionalized disaster management and mitigation policies in the Asia Pacific Region</p> <p>Activities: development of capacities and promotion of learning; knowledge management; technical assistance; implementation of pioneering regional programs; preparations and follow up of global and regional mechanisms; support for inter-agency coherence and coordination</p>
The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP)	<p>Purpose: provide leadership, expertise and evidence to support cash transfer programming in humanitarian situations</p> <p>Activities: provide training; mainstream tools and training; research; advocate providing emergency technical support and coordination to humanitarian actors implementing cash-based programming</p>
Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal (DPNet Nepal)	<p>Purpose: a virtual DM practitioner network</p> <p>Activities: resource sharing; events; information/knowledge sharing</p>
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery , World Bank (GFDRR)	<p>Purpose: mainstream DRR and CCA in country development strategies</p> <p>Activities: capacity building; resource sharing; knowledge sharing and generation</p>
Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)	<p>Purpose: formulate risk reduction policies appropriate to local context, needs and priorities; support implementation of risk reduction policies at the local level; resource mobilization</p> <p>Activities: strengthen public accountability and transparency; develop evidence-based policy advocacy; information sharing; support partnership approaches between state and civil society actors; collaboration and coordination</p>
InterAction DRR Working Group	<p>Purpose: build resilient communities and reduce vulnerability by raising the profile of DRR through increasing public awareness; shaping national and international public and private policies and practices; increasing quality DRR work at the field level; increasing resources dedicated to reducing risk; and improving our agencies' DRR practices</p> <p>Activities: knowledge and experience sharing; interagency coordination; raising the profile of DRR</p>
PreventionWeb (UNISDR)	<p>Purpose: platform for sharing information and good practices in DRR; facilitate coordination between diverse actors in DRR</p> <p>Activities: resource sharing; facilitate community and professional involvement; support progress reporting on the Hyogo Framework for Action at country level</p>
Risk Red	<p>Purpose: increase the effectiveness and impact of DRR education</p> <p>Activities: facilitate global information sharing among organizations active in DRR; coordinate and collaborate to develop materials on DRR; collaborate to determine, develop and promote good practices</p>
Regional Disaster Information Center Latin America and the Caribbean (CRID)	<p>Purpose: promote a culture of DRR in Latin America and the Caribbean by means of the analysis, systematization and diffusion of information on risk management, and the promotion and strengthening of information centers</p> <p>Activities: information management; technical assistance and project management in the realm of information management; development, design and research on information technologies</p>

Sources: www.adpc.net, www.cashlearning.org/english/home, www.dpnet.org.np/, www.qfdr.org/qfdr/, globalnetwork-dr.org, www.interaction.org/disaster-risk-reduction, preventionweb.net/english/, www.riskred.org, www.crid.or.cr/inq_index.shtml

The RC/RC network is also adapting to the changing context and growing humanitarian needs. Recognizing the need to provide additional technical resources to national societies, the global RC/RC

network has established a number of reference centers¹⁹ over the past two decades. These centers help to strengthen national society service delivery in specific thematic areas. RC/RC reference centers vary in their services, but most undertake activities such as technical assistance, knowledge management and facilitating cooperation amongst stakeholders. Some also conduct research, advocacy and awareness raising, resource mobilization and direct support to ongoing programs. Most reference centers are global in scope, although a few are regional. Although the details of what these centers do and how they conduct their activities differ, a constant theme across all RC/RC reference centers is that they contribute their expertise and resources to consolidating and disseminating knowledge contained within the RC/RC network for the benefit of all members. The chart on the next page provides an overview of existing RC/RC reference centers.

¹⁹ Red Cross centers can be organized into two groupings: the **first group** includes those that are considered “Federation” centers, referring to the fact that they carry out a delegated function of the IFRC and are established through a formal agreement between the IFRC and hosting national society. These centers are jointly governed by the IFRC and the hosting national society but day-to-day management generally rests with the center’s staff or the hosting national society. According to each center’s agreement with the IFRC, they may be obliged to follow Federation policies and rules, may have the authority to speak on behalf of the Federation on issues related to their area of focus, and may use the Federation logo. The Livelihoods Center and IFRC Reference Center for Psychosocial Support are examples of Federation reference centers.

The **second grouping** includes those that are considered bilateral (or regional) centers. These centers are based on arrangements that are somewhat ad hoc, and do not purport to act in the name of the IFRC nor do they carry out a delegated function. However most work in close coordination with relevant IFRC staff on issues of mutual interest and some include IFRC representatives in their governance structures. Day to day management of bilateral centers is carried out by hosting national societies. In general, bilateral centers may not speak on behalf of the IFRC. Bilateral centers are generally regional in scope, thus they are also referred to as regional centers, but may have some sort of global linkage. The hosting national society generally provides a significant portion of funding for bilateral centers, but many also receive support from bilateral donors and, in some cases, the IFRC. Examples of bilateral centers include the Reference Center for Volunteering, and the Expertise Center. (Source: Balpe, A., Mulupi, J., Steed, I. *A consultation on National Society centres and networks*. March 2007.)

Overview of Existing RC/RC Network Reference Centers

CENTER	PRIMARY SERVICES	YEAR EST.
Climate Center (Netherlands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication/awareness raising • Capacity building • Mobilization of resources • Advocacy – international Policy 	2002
Psychosocial Center (Denmark)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational assistance (emergency assistance and other operational assignments) • Capacity development (training, program support and quality assurance) • Competence development of staff and volunteers (psychosocial training modules and skills) • Advocacy and knowledge generation (awareness raising) • Policy and strategy development (influence on IFRC policies and on global efforts) 	1993
Livelihoods Center (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge creation and sharing • Development of policy for economic support and livelihoods programming • Capacity strengthening and organizational development • Advocacy and dissemination • Technical Assistance 	2010
Shelter Research Unit (Netherlands- Benelux Red Cross)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the IFRC in its role as global shelter cluster convener in times of natural disasters • Document sheltering resources and practices • Development of innovative shelter solutions • Knowledge sharing 	2011
European Center for First Aid Education (France)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the teaching of first aid across the continent • Facilitate the sharing of expertise between the 52 European RC/RC societies in order to help them increase the number and quality of their first aid programs 	1996
Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Resource Center (Barbados)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and implementation of the exchange of experiences and best practices • Establishment of a base of English language Caribbean facilitators for training and community DM consultancies • Development of interactive modules for members of the public • Development of a sub-regional mechanism for applying community experiences systematically • Permanent English language documentation center for educational material on vulnerability reduction, capacity building and disaster preparedness 	2010
Reference Center for Community Education (Costa Rica)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based education for disaster risk prevention and preparedness • Development of material, brochures, workshops for risk prevention and preparedness • Capacity building in the area of community based vulnerability reduction • Resource center for PNS in Central America and Caribbean for reduction of vulnerabilities • Disseminate information on vulnerability reduction, disaster risk prevention and preparedness through website 	2004
Reference Center for Disaster Preparedness (El Salvador)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information material, methodologies, tools and manuals for institutional disaster preparedness. • Development of tools for analyzing national and local capacities and resources for disaster risk preparedness. • Strengthen IFRC and PNS disaster response capacities. • Provide updated information on the national emergency and disaster preparedness plans in the region. • Website serves as platform for information and knowledge exchange. • Technical assistance to other PNS in the region in the area of disaster preparedness. 	2005
European Reference Center on Volunteering (Spanish/British Red Cross)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-newsletter reporting on events and developments in volunteering throughout the RC/RC network • Online library containing documents related to volunteer management • Blog spot for volunteers to post messages • Forum for volunteers and volunteer managers • Collection of volunteer stories to share experiences and inspire others • Information on the campaigns being run by PNS to share information and improve success of future recruitment drives • E-learning course aimed at standardizing volunteer management training across Europe 	2003
Expertise Center (Belgium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishes articles and reports based on the research and literature studies it has carried out • Conducts research in order to provide scientific evidence and support for Red Cross materials, particularly around first aid • Interprets scientific findings for application by practitioners • Aims to immerse Belgian Red Cross staff in the evidence-based methodology that is applied within the organization in an interactive way 	2009

Sources: www.climatecentre.org/, psp.drk.dk/sw2955.asp, www.livelihoodscentre.org, www.steeldaysconference.blogspot.com, www.firstaidinaction.net, www.rcvolunteering.org,

IFRC. Centro Regional de Referencia en Educación Comunitaria para la Prevención de Desastres. Terminos de Referencia.

(www.cruzroja.org/desastres/redcamp/docs/crrec/trefcrrec.pdf)

IFRC. Centro Regional de Referencia en Preparación para Desastres. Terminos de Referencia.

(www.cruzroja.org/desastres/redcamp/docs/crepd/trefcrepd.pdf), reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Docu_9.pdf, www.rodekruis.be/NL/TopNaviqatie/EnglishSummary/Expertise+Centre/

5. PART II: KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings in this section are derived from the Research Team’s desk research, interviews and survey findings and are organized as follows:

- Focus on Disaster Preparedness
- Services to National Societies
- Coordination as the Primary Backdrop to GDPC Initiatives
- The Bridge to Sustainability
- Capacity Building and Organizational Development
- Knowledge Management
- Technical Assistance
- Research
- Training

These findings address why current needs merit the establishment of a GDPC and how a GDPC would need to function to provide effective services within the current context. In particular, experiences and lessons learned from the previously established RC/RC centers have been taken into account. They also address a number of specific areas related to disaster preparedness where a GDPC could offer effective services. Recommendations on the development of a GDPC are provided throughout both sections.

Focus on Disaster Preparedness

Finding 1: Research and stakeholder feedback confirmed the feasibility and value of establishing a GDPC to provide increased support to national societies’ disaster preparedness efforts. However, recognizing the possibility of duplication and overlap with the work of other RC/RC partners, a resource center focused on disaster preparedness would need to have a clear niche and maintain continual close coordination with the IFRC Secretariat.

Finding 2: In terms of disaster risk reduction needs as they pertain to the RC/RC network, there are varied interpretations and priorities among stakeholders. By contrast, there is more clarity and consensus among stakeholders with respect to recognized disaster preparedness needs within the RC/RC network as a subset to overarching DRR needs.

Finding 3: There was general agreement among stakeholders that it would be prudent for a GDPC to focus on country-level disaster preparedness rather than the wider spectrum of activities affiliated with overarching disaster risk reduction.

Research and consultations conducted for this study confirmed that stakeholders viewed DP as core business to each national society and as a sector embedded within the overarching realm of DRR. Given the integral role DP plays in enabling national societies to fulfill their mandates and meet expectations around services, it is no surprise that as priorities were discussed, consistencies emerged around DP needs. The most pressing concerns were related to institutional readiness to respond to the growing and changing needs in a dynamic disaster landscape affected by climate change, growing populations,

migration and other global trends. In particular, national societies expressed a desire to improve the quality and sustainability of country-level disaster management and to place more emphasis on local contexts in informing strategic planning.

For DRR, there was far more ambiguity and considerable differences of opinion around needs and priorities. For example, more confusion exists around the definition of DRR compared to that of DP. Some stakeholders wanted to see more investment in diversified livelihoods, better infrastructure, or new housing practices in urban settings. In short, DRR encapsulates a highly diverse range of activities, some of which relate to service delivery, though many border on long-term development. The bulk of national societies consulted for this study expressed that they preferred to see more investment in disaster preparedness before broaching other needs. This finding was corroborated by research (see below). Interviewees and survey respondents from national societies identified myriad needs related to DP, frequently echoing the sentiment that “everything is a need,” including areas such as knowledge management, technical assistance, networking, advocacy and building partnerships. It was also evident that **scalability** and **greater attention to quality** were important concerns with respect to investment in disaster preparedness.

A 2008 Asia Disaster Preparedness Center report on community-based disaster risk reduction programs in high-risk communities encouraged more support for:

“sub-national level development of DRR/response teams, particularly at the community level—to undertake DRR activity (i.e., before the disaster strikes) and to act as the “first responders.” ***The role of the Red Cross Movement – with its strong mandate in DRR and in relief response—and an important auxiliary to the sub-national level government structures should be better recognized and supported*** to develop sub-national and local response teams.” (emphasis added)²⁰

Community-based disaster preparedness and risk reduction were repeatedly cited as important parts of national societies’ work, however many interviewees also felt that an overemphasis on community work had undermined support for institutional preparedness.

To this point, a recent review of RC/RC disaster response capacity in the IFRC’s Asia Pacific Zone stated:

“Institutional funding and related programming for ***disaster response preparedness*** are not well developed in many national societies, even though many of these same national societies are responding to increasing number of disasters... At the same time the amount of funding for DRR projects supported by PNS and the IFRC Secretariat has increased significantly in recent years, most of which is focused on community-based work in a few branches ***rather than***

²⁰ Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management. (2008). *Implementing national programs on community-based disaster risk reduction in high risk communities: Lessons learned, Challenges and Way Ahead*, Working Paper, Version 1. Colombo, Sri Lanka.

strengthening of national systems for response within the national societies.” (emphasis added)²¹

The importance of institutional preparedness was also stressed during a recent IFRC Disaster Management Coordinators meeting during which the theme “back to basics” was emphasized, highlighting the importance of ensuring core preparedness and response capacities of national societies. Clearly, national societies’ engagement in community programming has led to many well prepared communities, but complementary investment in institutional preparedness capacity is needed to ensure an adequate response when communities’ capacities are overwhelmed by disasters.

Recommendation: *The American Red Cross should work in close coordination with the IFRC Secretariat to establish a GDPC in order to avoid duplication of services and support current investments for greater impact.*

Recommendation: *The best way to have an impact on the capacity of national societies to effectively deliver emergency relief services is to concentrate efforts on tailored support to country-level disaster preparedness. Restricting the focus of a GDPC to specific aspects of disaster preparedness will allow for deeper investment where needs are significant, as well as an opportunity to promote high quality, streamlined approaches and tools to be applied at scale. A GDPC should revisit this focus on a regular basis to ensure it is in keeping with national society demands and adjust its aims accordingly.*

Services to National Societies

Finding 4: *[A service-oriented approach is preferable to one that focuses on direct programming.](#)*

Findings from the surveys and interviews conducted for this study support an emphasis on service provision to national societies rather than funding and/or undertaking direct programming. Numerous stakeholders emphasized that a GDPC must avoid being seen as another PNS in competition for programmatic funding. Under this model, a GDPC would provide national societies with tailored support based on their ongoing programmatic needs (e.g., provide access to materials or technical support for developing a simulation as part of a larger DP/DRR project) and would seek to build national societies’ capacities in supported areas, working to coordinate these efforts with RC/RC partners that are implementing programs.

²¹ Global Emergency Group. (2011). *Asia Pacific Zone: Review of Red Cross Red Crescent Disaster Response Capacity*. IFRC.

Similarly, consultations with the existing RC/RC reference centers confirmed that most provide support to build national societies' technical capacities and generally avoid directly funding and managing country-level projects. When programmatic funding is available, it is generally channeled through the centers' hosting national societies or the IFRC Secretariat. An exception to this may be small pilot projects, designed to demonstrate a new innovation or test new ways of working.

There are multiple components of the RC/RC network that have mandates to address various aspects of disaster preparedness—national societies carry out institutional and community disaster preparedness projects, PNS support this work through funding specific programs, while the IFRC Secretariat provides support for coordination and also funds specific projects. Given this environment, the greatest challenge a GDPC would face is potential for duplication and the need to coordinate with a large, and growing, number of stakeholders. A service-oriented approach would enable a GDPC to concentrate on providing technical support for specific needs of national societies as well as PNS and IFRC counterparts. Directly funding programs would risk overstressing a GDPC's capacities by pressing staff into program management, but could also introduce duplication of services and even competition, instead of collaboration and synergy.

Given the scope of needs within DP, a GDPC would need to set clear parameters that define the types of services it would offer in order to manage user expectations and ensure that it does not overextend itself. For example, in offering technical assistance services, a GDPC would need to clarify that these services would be offered in support of a national society's current (or planned) programming; it would not become its own "stand alone" program. In this respect too, a GDPC would need to have clear limitations and criteria for its work to prevent efforts from being diluted.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should focus on rendering services to national societies to improve the quality and scalability of their disaster preparedness programming. This approach will allow a GDPC to function as a platform for learning and assistance to address rapidly growing/changing needs and prevent spreading itself too thin with program management responsibilities or inadvertently introducing competition within the RC/RC network.*

Recommendation: *National societies should be the primary audience for service provision. As it expands, there may be opportunity for a GDPC to extend services to international NGOs as the tertiary audience, however, it should first establish a sustainable model to meet demands for service delivery among national societies*

Coordination as the Primary Backdrop to GDPC Initiatives

Finding 5: *The most challenging issue a GDPC can expect to encounter is how to effectively coordinate among a vast network of stakeholders in order to build on collective efforts in disaster preparedness and avoid duplication.*

There are immediate and hypothetical concerns for a GDPC about duplication with other organizations, agencies or initiatives that render similar services. Particularly, there is a potential for duplication of services with the IFRC Secretariat, which can be minimized through close coordination. Intertwined with this need for coordination is the need to determine and clearly define a niche and role for a GDPC that differentiates it from other DP initiatives.

Other RC/RC reference centers respond to specific, focused needs, whereas DP is embedded throughout the RC/RC network. Therefore, it is imperative that a GDPC find a niche whereby it can establish real value-added activities to the wider efforts already underway. This niche needs to be clearly articulated with specific functions delineated in a transparent, formal agreement with the IFRC. The agreement would provide a framework for coordinating activities and ensure that a GDPC does not duplicate services or efforts already being undertaken by the IFRC.

There is also an opportunity to connect with and build off efforts of established RC/RC reference centers. In particular, the regional centers in Latin America and the Caribbean have gained significant experience over the last decade and can provide an established entry point for delivering services to national societies in the Americas.²² By working through and supporting these centers, a GDPC could leverage existing expertise to more efficiently reach national societies. Similarly, consultations with the staff of other RC/RC reference centers for this study have yielded valuable insight on topics such as website development, strategies for information and knowledge management, governance and leadership structures and staffing.²³ Exploring these issues further would help a GDPC replicate good practices of the existing RC/RC reference centers and be conscious of potential pitfalls.

Engaging centers and networks external to the RC/RC network would also be necessary. To the extent possible, a GDPC would need to be actively engaged with existing centers, networks and working groups, which would help it stay abreast of developments in the field. A GDPC could partner with external centers to publish joint reports, case studies or guides on relevant areas of interest, paying attention to proper attribution of collective efforts. It could also offer to publish such pieces on behalf of smaller networks or initiatives that have limited resources. Events such as forums and speaker series were raised by interviewees as ideas to also highlight good practices and include a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Where possible, participation in Advisory or Steering Committees of these external initiatives would also help a GDPC to stay apprised of the work of other actors in the field. One interviewee external to the RC/RC network highlighted the need for a coordination platform for the broader DP community.²⁴

²² IFRC DRR delegate (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011; RC/RC Disaster Risk Management Resource Center staff, personal communication, October 2011.

²³ RC/RC Climate Center staff, personal communication, September 2011 and November 2011; RC/RC Psychosocial Center staff, personal communication, September 2011; IFRC DRR delegate (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011; Livelihoods Center staff, personal communication, September 2011; RC/RC European Reference Center for First Aid Education staff, personal communication, December 2011.

²⁴ Center for Humanitarian Cooperation staff, personal communication, October 2011.

- Recommendation:** *Coordination efforts should be integral to a GDPC's core mandate given the importance and relevance of disaster preparedness to the wider RC/RC network. In particular, a GDPC should assign networking and information sharing responsibilities to GDPC staff at the IFRC Secretariat and arrange for delegated coordination functions among GDPC staff at the field level given the IFRC's inherent role around coordination.*
- Recommendation:** *A GDPC should set up regular information-sharing mechanisms among existing RC/RC reference centers in order to learn from their experiences, support and promote each other's work, and minimize duplication.*
- Recommendation:** *A GDPC would benefit from steady outreach with centers and initiatives outside the RC/RC network. By doing so, it could have a unique opportunity to broaden the spectrum of learning and networking for the wider RC/RC network, filling in gaps where others have lacked time, staff and resources to do so.*

The Bridge to Sustainability

Finding 6: *The governance structure of a GDPC and degree to which stakeholders can formally participate have significant ramifications in determining a sense of ownership, use and sustainability for a GDPC. Each of the existing RC/RC reference centers has distinct elements to their governance structures and advisory committees that present strengths and weaknesses to their functionality.*

While it would be imperative for a GDPC to coordinate widely with other DP actors, it would also need to assume an inclusive approach that promotes substantive engagement of stakeholders. This would engender ownership of a GDPC by allowing stakeholders to participate meaningfully in GDPC activities and ensure the services provided remain relevant to needs as perceived by practitioners in the field. For these reasons, many interviewees recommended that a GDPC pursue a path that allows for widespread representation, not only at the operational level, but also at decision-making and strategic planning levels of the initiative. In keeping with this theme, a GDPC would also need to be neutral, serving the RC/RC global network in an unbiased way, in order to reach its full potential. Beginning with its design, a GDPC would need to consider mechanisms and processes which would allow ample opportunities for engagement by IFRC, the ICRC and national societies. However, interviewees cautioned against a

structure that would unintentionally cause an imbalance whereby only larger or more organized national societies are able to access or engage with a GDPC.²⁵

Transparent, genuine efforts to capitalize on the vast investments in DP by other stakeholders to date would also be important to building inclusivity. The existing RC/RC centers present an excellent opportunity for engagement, whereby a GDPC's efforts could reinforce their accomplishments and help fill gaps. A sense of shared vision or collective effort could be cultivated that would encourage collaboration. To this point, one IFRC colleague noted that a GDPC would only be able to achieve widespread ownership through inclusion from the "bottom-up," highlighting the success achieved by the Latin American and Caribbean RC/RC reference centers because they were not "perceived as a PNS initiative."²⁶ Furthermore, more than 40 survey respondents offered ideas as to how their national societies, or they themselves, could contribute to a GDPC.

In terms of governance, participation and the ensuing sense of ownership would be the cornerstone to a GDPC's sustainability. Its structure would shape the degree by which stakeholders could participate and influence a GDPC. This component would lay the groundwork for its functions, processes, authorities and above all its accountability through governance transparency. There are many models that could be considered, both within the RC/RC network and outside it. A GDPC could draw a great deal from initiatives outside the RC/RC network such as ALNAP, whose Steering Committee reflects the composition of its membership—two representatives each are selected from the donor, UN and NGO membership groupings and one each from the RC/RC network and academic/independent groups.²⁷ One of ALNAP's Steering Committee's eight members serves as a Chair, who does not vote but takes on the role of building consensus within the Committee.²⁸

Another opportune mechanism to foster inclusion would be through the creation of a technical advisory committee. This appears to be a common construct for a wide range of institutions and initiatives, whereby widespread professional input is welcomed to influence learning and decision-making.²⁹ These technical wings to the governance structure add a degree of "street credibility," often giving decisions more weight and recognition. In addition to promoting high-caliber services, quality control, broad perspective and real-time learning, technical advisory committees can spark collaboration and creation. A technical advisory committee would play a key role in a GDPC's operations by shaping service delivery mechanisms and ensuring the quality of service provided. For example, the technical advisory committee could help set up a process by which resources would be vetted before being shared or disseminated. It might also be involved in reviewing the quality of technical assistance provided or serve as a panel that reviews research produced or funded by a GDPC. These roles are further discussed in

²⁵ IFRC DRR delegate (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011; IFRC Secretariat colleague (Geneva), personal communication, September 2011; RC/RC Livelihoods Center staff, personal communication, September 2011.

²⁶ IFRC colleague (Americas Zone), personal communication, October 2011.

²⁷ Source: www.alnap.org/about/steeringcommittee.aspx.

²⁸ ALNAP staff, personal communication, October 2011.

²⁹ Examples of institutions and initiatives with technical advisory committees include ADPC (www.adpc.net/2011/gateway.asp?frame=Aha&DocID=181), the World Bank's GFDRR (www.gfdr.org/gfdr/), NSET (www.nset.org.np/nset/php/people.php), and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (www.rimes.int/governance.php).

Section 5.2 below on potential areas of service delivery. Where appropriate, a GDPC could also convene working groups from among its users to provide a similar function. For example, working groups could focus on specific outputs such as decisions on which resources to post on the website or what materials to push to users. The working groups could use regional and/or rotating participation among national societies, PNS and IFRC representatives to encourage equity in access among stakeholders and to promote a good balance in terms of added perspective and influence over services.

The Research Team reviewed the governance models of several organizations, centers and initiatives both within and outside the RC/RC network that possess similar qualities to the proposed GDPC. Most governance models included, at a minimum, the following:

- 1) Board or Steering Committee: Usually entails participation of key donor(s), limited leadership representation from heads of host organization(s). Responsible for decision making around such aspects as overarching strategic planning and resource mobilization.
- 2) Technical Advisory Committees: Typically spans wide range of stakeholders to encourage participation and ownership that may influence/enhance decision-making bodies. These committees tend to be grounded in principles that encourage inclusiveness and may be general or technical bodies.

In closing, it is worth noting that interviewees recommended steering clear of overly complex models that would become too cumbersome and/or overly politicized to function effectively. In other words, “too many cooks in the kitchen” could lead to delayed or stagnant decision-making. A GDPC would need to carefully consider how to maximize stakeholder engagement, while avoiding becoming an overly bureaucratic or political entity.

Recommendation: *A GDPC stands to reach its full potential by pursuing a modest Steering Committee structure to facilitate decision-making.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC should also establish a technical advisory committee with rotational participation to influence strategic planning and activities. A technical advisory committee should play a critical role in sharpening the quality of services delivered by a GDPC.*

Finding 7: *Long-term financial sustainability is a paramount cornerstone to the success of RC/RC centers; short-term planning and funding cycles due to resource constraints have largely hampered the impact and vision for many of the existing centers.*

Sustainability also requires a healthy, diversified financial base. For many RC/RC centers, there seems to have been, or is currently, a gap in long-term resource mobilization for center activities. As is quite common in the humanitarian world, resources are often allocated on an ad hoc basis and in short-term funding cycles, leaving little room for longer-term planning or visualization around growth potential. Some centers continue to struggle with growing demand for services with few staff to manage the

current workloads. Among them, the challenges are compounded by having to accommodate donor driven demands that deter the accomplishment of actual service delivery.³⁰ Other initiatives have faltered under similar circumstances; the ProVention initiative, for example, experienced laudable successes yet soon was grappling with waning funds as interests shifted to new projects and initiatives. This is not an unusual story and emphasizes the importance of foresight and commitment to avoid similar challenges for a GDPC.

The notion of a Global Disaster Preparedness Center implies widespread and sustained service delivery; however the experience of other RC/RC reference centers indicates that this level of reach and impact must be built up through persistent effort over many years. Climate Center staff shared that it took an estimated decade for the Climate Center to achieve sustainability and widespread recognition as a prominent actor in the field.³¹ Interviews with representatives from other RC/RC reference centers cited inadequate resources necessitating fundraising, which took time away from focusing on service provision. Others shared challenges affiliated with time spent on meeting donor demands rather than letting needs drive center priorities. These were cited as two of the greatest impediments to success.

Based on the experience of these colleagues, it is clear that a GDPC would not be able to reach its full potential without a long-term commitment from the American Red Cross. A long-term commitment would be essential for inspiring confidence in American Red Cross ability to host a GDPC and for drawing in partners that show their own commitment through financial contributions. Based on the model used by other centers, a cost recovery mechanism could be developed to cover services provided to individual national societies. That said, a GDPC would need to be careful to not allow the cost recovery mechanism to undermine its capacity to serve all national societies, including those that are not able to pay for services.

To the point of donor support, a healthy business model appears to be one that has a diversified funding base. This would provide more stability to a GDPC in the long run and help it to remain concentrated on demand-driven services rather than altering course based on fluctuating preferences of any one donor. In the long-run, this approach would ensure a GDPC remains relevant and useful.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should be supported by a long-term vision and financial commitment from the American Red Cross. Furthermore, financial stability rests in a broad donor base which should be considered and prioritized from the onset in the development of a GDPC's business plan.*

Capacity Building and Organizational Development

³⁰ de Geoffroy, V., Grunewald, F. (2008). *Policy Paper on Principle 6 of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative*. Groupe u.r.d., July 2008.

Development Initiatives/Global Humanitarian Assistance. (2007). *Earmarking and Visibility in Humanitarian Assistance*, July 2007.

³¹ RC/RC Climate Center staff, personal communication, September 2011.

Finding 8: As a global platform focused on *knowledge management, research and technical support*, a GDPC would provide national societies with a unique opportunity to build their disaster management capacities. This support could go beyond DP capacity building to also include elements of general organizational development as they pertain to service delivery in DP.

The global RC/RC network writ large has made concentrated efforts to find ways to bolster national society capacities. In fact, “building strong national societies” is one of the key components of the IFRC’s current 10-year strategy.³² This is an enormous and ongoing endeavor—one that must account for dynamic contexts and related needs. As disasters and vulnerability to disasters increase, expectations of RC/RC national societies as first responders will also increase, but without adequate support many national societies may find themselves ill-equipped to handle more responsibility. A 2009 report by the UNSIDR Scientific and Technical Committee observed that many regions of the world still suffered from a critical lack of capacity,

“in terms of human, institutional and material resources for a range of disaster reduction needs, including identifying hazards, exposure levels and vulnerabilities and thereby characterizing risk, as well as integrating this information into national and regional development goals, informing the public and developing risk reduction programmes.”³³

By focusing on building the disaster management capacities of national societies—a key disaster response institution in many countries—a GDPC could better target its services and make a substantive contribution toward the achievement of the IFRC’s stated strategic aims in [Strategy 2020](#).³⁴

Meeting current and future disaster-related needs is a tall order for national societies and will require not only strengthening their organizational effectiveness (i.e., effectiveness in meeting the challenges of their current work), but the building of their *organizational development capacity*³⁵ for adapting and learning in order to meet future challenges.³⁶ The review of RC/RC disaster response capacity in the Asia Pacific Zone cited earlier in this report had a similar finding on organizational development, stating that, “significant gaps still exist in core response systems and capacities (including broader organizational development elements such as human resources, volunteer management, organizational management

³² The IFRC’s Strategy 2020 builds on the progress achieved through Strategy 2010 and includes three strategic aims and three enabling actions that will support the achievement of those aims. (Strategic aim 1: Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises; Strategic aim 2: Enable healthy and safe living; Strategic aim 3: Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace; **Enabling action 1: Build strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**; Enabling action 2: Pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world; Enabling action 3: Function effectively as the IFRC.)

³³ United Nations International Strategy on Disaster Reduction. (2009). Reducing Disaster Risks through Science: Issues and Actions, The full report of the ISDR Scientific and Technical Committee.

³⁴ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. (2010). *Strategy 2020*. IFRC: Geneva.

³⁵ For the purposes of this report, organizational development (OD) is defined as, “A change process that helps organizations to manage complexity effectively, achieve mission efficiently, and remain relevant sustainably.”

³⁶ Levinger, B., Bloom, E. (2011). *Fulfilling the Promise: How National Societies Achieve Sustainable Organizational Development, A Multi-Country Study*. American Red Cross, IFRC, Root Change.

and finance).”³⁷ These gaps indicate a critical area of need linked to national societies’ ability to effectively manage disasters.

While a GDPC would be primarily interested in increasing the disaster management capacities of national societies, there would also be significant opportunity to engage and support systems that cut across sectors, such as volunteer management. Volunteers play a crucial role in disaster management, thus the IFRC has contributed to the strengthening of RC/RC volunteer management systems by conducting evaluations of different programs, making available inexpensive global insurance for volunteers and developing volunteering toolkits for emergencies. A GDPC could bolster these efforts by promoting the IFRC’s volunteer management guidelines or partnering with the European Volunteering Center to make its resources available to a wider global audience and offer technical support in helping national societies adapt these resources for use in their own countries. Also, the American Red Cross has a well developed volunteer system for mobilizing volunteers domestically during emergencies which could be adapted for use in other contexts.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should focus on rendering services aimed largely at building national society capacities to improve quality of disaster preparedness programming. Where possible, core systems that also enhance organizational development should be supported.*

Knowledge Management

Finding 9: *Knowledge management is a broadly assumed responsibility within the global RC/RC network; however there remains considerable demand that surpasses current capacities for knowledge management as it relates to DP.*

Interviews and surveys conducted for this study reveal widespread support for a GDPC that would contribute to management of knowledge specifically related to disaster preparedness within the RC/RC network. In fact, 73 percent of RC/RC network survey respondents identified knowledge management (KM) as one of the main challenges for disaster preparedness in the international context. Research conducted on current efforts in this area points to an identifiable gap that could be filled effectively by a GDPC.

Knowledge management³⁸ for the global RC/RC network is a core function of the IFRC Secretariat and is carried out at the global, Zonal and country level using different strategies and tools. In addition to numerous formal and informal information networks, the IFRC Secretariat is responsible for a number of

³⁷ Global Emergency Group. (2011).

³⁸ For the purposes of this report, **knowledge management** “comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences” (Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_management).

websites that provide online platforms for knowledge and information management.³⁹ The websites vary in terms of their target audience and information provided, with some offering access to the general public and others restricted to RC/RC employees and volunteers.

Overview of IFRC/ICRC Online Platforms with Services Related to Knowledge Management

IFRC/ICRC websites and online platforms	Services Related to Knowledge Management	Accessibility
IFRC external website	Online database of project/operations evaluations and reports	RC/RC network and general public
IFRC Disaster Management Information System (DMIS)	Access to real time information on disaster trends, online internal and external resources, tools and databases	Internal, access only for RC/RC network
FedNet	Communities of practice that serve a number of sectors, including DP/DRR	Internal, access only for RC/RC network
IFRC learning platform	Free online trainings, facilitates communities of practice and hosts wikis and forums.	RC/RC network and general public
ICRC external website	Online library (books, articles and publications)	RC/RC network and general public
Desaprender	Online platform for knowledge and information exchange for Latin America	RC/RC network and general public (mainly Spanish content, limited utility for non-Spanish speakers)

Although each of these online platforms includes some disaster preparedness and risk reduction content, availability and accessibility of DP-related information on each is limited, with the exception of Desaprender. However, as Desaprender is targeted toward Spanish-speakers and has limited content in English, none of these platforms is optimal for the global management of DP-related knowledge and information. In addition, although several external initiatives also undertake KM activities, such as UNISDR and the Asia Disaster Preparedness Center, few directly focus on DP or DRR, and none of them provides the tailored DP support needed by RC/RC national societies and practitioners.

Although websites and online libraries do not constitute the entire range of potential KM services, these examples of digital modes of KM highlight one of the major challenges for the global RC/RC network: cross-regional knowledge management is extraordinarily difficult and cannot be carried out by one single body. No one RC/RC body or mechanism could feasibly collect, process, vet and disseminate knowledge effectively for all of the thematic areas that concern the RC/RC network. Globally, DP information is stored and accessed in a haphazard way by the RC/RC network, with various disconnected pockets of information. Each region develops their own tools and methodologies and identifies its own lessons learned; however there is limited dissemination and lack of knowledge sharing between

³⁹ Examples include www.ifrc.org, FedNet and DMIS (internal RC/RC sites), regional sites such as www.cruzroja.org and www.desaprender.org, and the websites of other RC/RC reference centers such as www.climatecentre.org and www.livelihoodscentre.org.

different regions.⁴⁰ The result, as identified by DP practitioners themselves, is significant duplication of effort. Although frustrating, this challenge with knowledge management is not unique to the RC/RC network, but has been documented as a challenge for UNISDR and NGOs as well.⁴¹

RC/RC colleagues described the current challenge not as a lack of data or information available, but the lack of mechanisms to help practitioners determine what data or information is most relevant to their work and how to quickly and easily access it. Many comments from interviewees noted the complicated nature of KM versus the relative ease of creating an online repository of information where users can upload any resource that they see as relevant. One Red Cross disaster preparedness expert stated, “Knowledge management needs are immense, but we are *drowning* in information. [We] need to be more thoughtful about what is put out there and why, helping national societies sort for relevant documents and tools.”⁴²

Stakeholders identified a number of different types of information within DP that they felt needed to be better managed, such as tools and methodologies (e.g., disaster response and contingency plans, training manuals, simulation, etc.), proposals, evaluations, case studies, examples of best practices, strategies and action plans, and country-level information such as Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments, legal agreements between national societies and governments, etc. A number of stakeholders expressed frustration at the lack of consistency and standardization among tools.⁴³ Similarly, practitioners expressed frustration at not being aware of new materials becoming available. Compounding this, with the exception of DMIS, new information is not pushed to users. Instead it is the user’s responsibility to search for it, usually by going to a website and looking for new content. Many interviewees felt that this was a missed opportunity and a more proactive system of sharing information could increase its utilization.

Insufficient mechanisms for feedback on the application and impact measurement of these tools were another challenge raised. A relevant example provided by a Canadian Red Cross colleague cited a study conducted on health tools which found that one health assessment tool used 20 years ago had 95 percent of the same content as those being used today, despite numerous revisions that have taken

⁴⁰ IFRC DRR delegate (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011; ECHO Technical Representative (Caribbean), personal communication, November 2011; IFRC DM staff (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011; Risk Red staff, personal communication, September 2011.

⁴¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2011). *Evaluations Synthesis Report 2010*, OCHA Occasional Policy Briefing Series, Brief No. 5

Cunliffe, S. (2009) *UNISDR Secretariat Asia Pacific Office Evaluation*, 6 March 2009

Commission of the Africa Union, UNISDR, World Bank. (2008). *Report on the Status of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region*.

Global Network of CSOs for Disaster Reduction. (2011). *If We Do Not Join Hands: Views from the Frontline, Local reports of progress on implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action, with strategic recommendations for more effective implementation*.

⁴² DRR Technical Advisor (PNS, Europe), personal communication, September 2011.

⁴³ DRR Technical Advisor (IFRC, South Asia), personal communication, September 2011; IFRC Secretariat colleague (Geneva), personal communication, September 2011; ECHO Technical Representative (Caribbean), personal communication, November 2011; IFRC DRR delegate (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011.

place in the time that had elapsed. In this case, mechanisms for users to offer feedback on the usefulness of the tools could have been helpful and allowed for better investment of resources.⁴⁴

Based on the feedback from consultations, the Research Team believes that there is need for additional support for knowledge management in DP. A GDPC would be well-placed to meet many of these needs. It would also draw upon the experiences of organizations/initiatives external to the RC/RC network that offer similar KM services. Although several external initiatives also undertake KM activities, with a few directly focused on DP or DRR, none of them provides the tailor-made DP support needed by RC/RC national societies and practitioners. A GDPC could establish and coordinate processes by which resources and materials are vetted, and best practices are showcased, translated and disseminated.

If a GDPC is to undertake KM, one of the first considerations to address would be building a strong website and incorporating social media mechanisms in its work. In order to do so, a GDPC should be ready to make a front-end investment in a well-designed and well-managed website backed by state-of-the-art software. Interviews with staff from existing RC/RC resource centers and other KM initiatives have yielded good lessons learned that a GDPC could apply regarding the requirements, both in manpower and funding, for setting up and maintaining such a website.⁴⁵ A GDPC would need to ensure widespread global access to its website, (i.e., compatible with both high and low bandwidths) and would also need to give careful thought to incorporating current modes of communicating and information sharing (e.g., social media platforms, smartphone apps, etc.). In particular, mechanisms with “push” functions would be an important component of KM services, allowing a GDPC to proactively engage users by delivering new and relevant information directly to them instead of placing the burden on users to frequently visit the website to look for new content. Devoting adequate attention and resources to these aspects would help elevate engagement and demand for services.⁴⁶

Although these technological components would play a large part in the process of creating, identifying, culling and disseminating relevant knowledge, they are not the only pieces of the puzzle. A process for discerning and distilling the knowledge that is most relevant and useful to practitioners would also be critical. This could be accomplished by establishing a vetting process that is led by a GDPC technical advisory committee or even working groups convened around particular outputs.

Finally, a GDPC could also utilize non-digital means to facilitate knowledge management. For example, it could host workshops, meetings or events that would serve as additional platforms for learning through dialogue and collaboration.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should pursue knowledge management as an initial focus area for service, closely coordinating with the IFRC Secretariat and*

⁴⁴ PNS colleague (PNS, Americas), personal communication, February 2012.

⁴⁵ RC/RC Livelihoods Center staff, personal communication, September 2011; ADB staff, personal communication, December 2011; IFRC staff (Haiti), personal communication, February 2012.

⁴⁶ The ProVention Consortium was able to reach an impressive number of users through its website—200,000 hits in 2002 grew to more than 1 million hits in 2005. (Source: World Bank IEG, *Global Progress Review of The ProVention Consortium*, June 28, 2006.)

other RC/RC partners. This should include proactive outreach extending beyond the global RC/RC network to capitalize on learning and opportunities to elevate the caliber of service delivery in KM.

Recommendation: *Heeding the experience of other resource centers, a GDPC should anticipate significant investment toward sophisticated IT which will impact a number of the knowledge management services offered. Simultaneously, a GDPC must consider the range of IT capacities and limitations at the field level in order to design appropriate means for access, namely for information sharing, active dialogue and networking.*

Technical Assistance

Finding 10: National societies have significant and diverse needs for tailored, country-level technical assistance. RC/RC partners are increasingly shifting their strategies to focus on addressing these needs.

Technical assistance (TA) as an area of service can cover numerous different sub-areas or topics within DP, from disaster response and contingency planning to early warning systems and public education. Many of the areas for TA reviewed for this report are regularly included as part of national societies' disaster preparedness and risk reduction projects, which should provide steady demand for a GDPC's technical assistance services and myriad opportunities to directly link GDPC support to country-level impact.

The IFRC Secretariat offers DP technical assistance at all levels by country, regional, Zonal and Geneva-based teams.⁴⁷ Funding for this assistance is generally provided by specific projects, whether IFRC Secretariat or PNS managed. When gaps in technical support arise, it is often due to a lack of financial resources and/or the inability to identify and mobilize someone with the proper profile to provide support in a timely manner.

As outlined in a recent review of IFRC Disaster Response Capacity in Asia and Pacific, one of the key factors of success cited by the authors in building capacity was the provision of support using "a facilitation and coaching style, including exposing national societies to examples from other societies (including zones) and establishing opportunities for national societies to learn from one another."⁴⁸ Similarly, a review of the response to civil unrest in the Middle East in 2011, led to the establishment of a team that could carry out "coaching visits" to support national societies with their own contingency

⁴⁷ Generally, IFRC support is provided by the technical unit with the appropriate level of capacity that is closest to the ground. Support from IFRC staff that are further removed from the ground increases as additional capacity is needed.

⁴⁸ Global Emergency Group. (2011).

planning development.⁴⁹ In both cases, the approach to be replicated focused on mentoring and tailored support, rather than facilitated group trainings.

Based on consultations with stakeholders, national societies and IFRC Secretariat staff would welcome additional technical resources, either as a direct contribution to national societies' efforts, or through a cost recovery mechanism, financial resources permitting (e.g., covering flights and accommodations for support person). Technical assistance services would be offered in support of current or planned programming being carried out by national societies, PNS and the IFRC, not as stand-alone programs.

Technical assistance offered by a GDPC could be structured in various ways, such as:

- Deploying technical experts from a roster on a short-term TA mission to act as a consultant for national society requesting service.
- Providing financial support for national societies to support national society exchanges or internships.
- Provide financial support for the secondment and/or hosting of field staff within the RC/RC network to act as technical resources and provide support to national societies.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should undertake technical assistance as one of its core services as there are growing and shifting needs within the RC/RC network that require engagement at the country level. To ensure consistency and prevent overlap, TA services should be closely coordinated with the IFRC, PNS and the ICRC (e.g., integrating tracing in DP plans) field structures and programming and should support current or planned national society programs.*

Findings 10a through 10d below, discuss specific areas in which TA services could be offered. The chart below presents an overview of these findings.

Potential Areas of Technical Assistance Service Delivery

AREA OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	CURRENT GAPS/NEEDS
National Society Auxiliary Role <i>(Finding 10a)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal guidance to national societies and governments to update national disaster response legislation
Disaster Response and Contingency Planning & Simulations <i>(Finding 10b)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and updating of plans through simulations • Participation of all relevant stakeholders in development of response and contingency plans • Development of comprehensive plans including diverse threats and contingencies • Realistic exercises and practical simulations • Assistance for developing response systems for national societies
Early Warning Systems (EWS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and capacities for establishing effective EWS

⁴⁹ *Management Response to the Real Time Evaluation (RTE) of the IFRC 2011 MENA Civil Unrest Operation, IFRC, December 2011.*

(Finding 10c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of new technologies and innovative ideas to improve EWS
Public Awareness and Education Services (Finding 10d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent strategy and coordinated messaging to disseminate information to the public

Finding 10a: National societies' auxiliary roles are critical components to their disaster preparedness capacity. There is increasing demand for legal guidance to national societies and governments to update national disaster response legislation.

National disaster response legislation and the corresponding auxiliary role of national societies is an area of increasing importance to national society DP efforts. The recently concluded 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,⁵⁰ recognized this growing importance through adoption of a resolution calling on national societies and governments to review and strengthen national societies' mandates, which would in turn increase opportunities for accessing government support. A 2005 speech by an IFRC representative highlighted that,

*"[...] Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are able, as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, to engage with local and national authorities to plan prevention and risk reduction initiatives. This works best when it is initiated through national disaster management bodies, for it leads to initiatives planned across the whole geography of regions likely to be affected by disasters. It brings national resources into disaster preparedness work coherently, and ensures that national legislation and executive action supports the needs of the local communities."*⁵¹

As governments update the laws that govern how they respond to disasters, questions have surfaced about which models for National Response Systems are the most efficient in terms of structure, mandate and agency/ministry responsibilities, etc. National societies, as well as governments, are looking for this type of specialized advice. The aforementioned IFRC Asia Pacific Zone Disaster Management review noted that, "Governments expressed interest in advice from the IFRC on how to best establish, improve and better manage their DM systems. They also hope IFRC can help to link them with other governments and access knowledge about best practices for national DM systems."⁵²

Recognition by governments of national societies' auxiliary role has implications for how societies are perceived by different actors and affects the level of deferred responsibility and financial support granted by a government. These deliberations have significant implications on the functioning and effectiveness of national societies during disaster events. It is clearly in the interest of the RC/RC

⁵⁰ 31st International Conference 2011: Resolution 4 - Furthering the auxiliary role: Partnership for stronger National Societies and volunteering development, January 11, 2011 (Source: www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/resolution/31-international-conference-resolution-4-2011.htm).

⁵¹ Speech on sustainable development: disaster preparedness, water and sanitation, April 2005 (Source: www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/opinions-and-positions/speeches/2005/sustainable-development-disaster-preparedness-water-and-sanitation/).

⁵² Global Emergency Group. (2011).

network to increase governments' understanding of the options they have in updating their National Response Systems and how to best position RC/RC national societies for maximum effectiveness during disasters.⁵³

Recommendation: *A GDPC should support RC/RC network efforts to strengthen national societies' auxiliary role where it might complement disaster preparedness operational capacity building (see recommendations 10b - 10d).*

Finding 10b: *There is pervasive interest and need around capacity building for disaster response and contingency planning. In particular, simulations were widely viewed to be a specific endeavor that could benefit from added resources to help improve the quality of the activity.*

Stakeholders repeatedly raised disaster response and contingency plans and planning processes as important areas where additional focus and technical support is needed.⁵⁴ This was a reoccurring theme throughout consultations and research which highlighted that although many national societies have both response and contingency plans in place, many need additional support in this area. To this point, an OCHA report from 2010 observed that a, "varying level of preparedness of humanitarian actors and the absence of integrated and updated contingency plans have affected the capacity to respond."⁵⁵

Even where national societies do have plans in place, many experience challenges in their application during disasters. Oftentimes, the plans have not been recently tested and updated through a simulation process. IFRC colleagues noted that although contingency plans may exist they sometimes "sit on the shelf" without simulations or follow up.⁵⁶ The same colleagues identified a lack of funding as the primary reason for this work not being sustained. In other cases, few individuals beyond the Disaster Management Director are involved in the development of the plans and, as a result, are not aware of the content, or response plans lack complementing contingencies for specific, often reoccurring threats.

A review of the RC/RC response to the 2010 Pakistan Floods noted,

"the significant lack of consensus that emerged within the operations... [and] recommended that the IFRC and the PRCS develop a comprehensive contingency plan for future emergencies which includes a hazard

⁵³ "The IFRC has access through its network to knowledge and experience regarding lessons and options from various national systems and can significantly help national societies to position themselves by actively advising governments on their options while advocating for a significant role for the national society based on its history, capacities and ambitions." Global Emergency Group. (2011).

⁵⁴ Disaster Response Coordinator (PNS, Europe), personal communication, September 2011; IFRC Operations Coordinator (Asia Pacific Zone), personal communication, September 2011; IFRC Technical Advisor (South Asia), personal communication, September 2011; RC/RC Psychosocial Center staff, personal communication, September 2011; Shelter Cluster staff, personal communication, September 2011; IFRC Operations Coordinators (Geneva), personal communication, November 2011; IFRC Disaster Response Officer (Geneva), personal communication, September 2011.

⁵⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2011). *Evaluations Synthesis Report 2010*, OCHA Occasional Policy Briefing Series, Brief No. 5.

⁵⁶ IFRC Operations Coordinators (Geneva), personal communication, November 2011.

profile, possible responses in different types of emergencies, clear guidelines for levels and types of international deployments needed for different emergency responses and other key components of the response.”⁵⁷

Similarly, the evaluation of the IFRC’s response to civil unrest in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011 recommended that the IFRC Middle East North Africa Zone work with national societies, “to develop specific scenario-based contingency plans ensuring that the Zone has a complementary one that reflects the resources of the wider Federation including the Global tools.”⁵⁸

There is significant work being done within the RC/RC network to address these gaps. For example, recently, the IFRC Secretariat developed a global Contingency Planning guide, which outlines a step-by-step planning process designed to address many of these challenges. Similarly, the IFRC’s Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Resource Center is building on and adapting this guide to fit the local Caribbean context. Notably, the ICRC has had a longstanding online contingency planning process it uses to prepare for different threats. In most cases, the challenge is not necessarily having the tool but utilization and correct application in the field.

Lastly, disaster response and contingency planning is an area in which the American Red Cross has significant experience. As stated earlier, a GDPC could help create linkages between the American Red Cross and other national societies, allowing for cross-learning and the sharing of models and tools between individual societies and regions. (See Section 6 for more detail.)

Closely linked to the above, simulations are another important part of national societies’ disaster preparedness efforts because they provide the opportunity to test plans before an event occurs. The aforementioned IFRC Asia Pacific Zone Disaster Management Review encourages an emphasis on “learning and practicing (practical simulations, exercises) for key staff with actual or likely roles in a national society Disaster Management system, rather than ad hoc training” as one of the key factors of success in national society response capacity.⁵⁹ The same review also noted the ongoing need for technical support to, “test the system” and “support practical simulations and exercises, advise national societies and governments on mandate and national response system development and positioning and development of key national society response processes and systems.”⁶⁰

The IFRC has supported the implementation of simulations in various ways, including the development of a simulation guide developed by the Reference Center for Disaster Preparedness in El Salvador. The IFRC Disaster Services Department in Geneva plans to use this as the basis for a global simulation guide, thus, once the guide is complete, there will likely be a need for additional support in rolling out the guide and ensuring its application in various national society contexts.

⁵⁷ Murtaza, N. (2010). *Pakistan Floods 2010: Evaluation of the Relief Phase of the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies/Pakistan Red Crescent Society Monsoon Flash Floods Operation*, IFRC, November 2011.

⁵⁸ Khogali, H. Kane, S., Bang, T. (2011). *Real Time Evaluation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ response to the MENA Civil Unrest*, IFRC, August 2011.

⁵⁹ Global Emergency Group. (2011).

⁶⁰ *ibid*

If a GDPC were to offer technical assistance in these areas, it would need to consider how other sectors can be integrated into processes. For example, consultations with the ICRC highlighted the importance of improving the integration of Restoring Family Links (RFL) into national societies' response and contingency plans and simulations.⁶¹ Similarly, efforts to build national societies' capacities and understanding around shelter and the IFRC's shelter commitment could also benefit from inclusion as part of an enhanced planning process. These same planning processes could also support preparedness for health emergencies such as the recent AH1N1 pandemic. In summary, support for response and contingency planning has the opportunity to spill over and contribute to preparedness efforts in many sectors.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should invest in response and contingency planning as a priority area for technical assistance, promoting good practices, tools and sustainable methodologies to reinforce learning and practice. In doing so, there is opportunity for innovation that could enhance the caliber of services in this arena.*

Finding 10c: *Early warning systems continue to pose challenges for national societies whereby strategies and tools currently used are inadequate to effectively reach and engage communities so they can take timely and appropriate action in the event of a disaster. They require tailored national and local level approaches that factor in the complex networks, responsibilities, policies and needs among a broad spectrum of stakeholders. As such, deeper investment is required in order to assist national societies in strengthening their early warning system capacities and, by extension, those of the communities they aim to serve.*

Investments in stronger national society and community-level early warning systems (EWS) are increasing throughout the RC/RC network given the widespread recognition from experience that effective EWS save lives, property and livelihoods. Steady strides in this direction have resulted in significant advances in basic organization of roles and responsibilities of DM actors and have led to advances in using new technologies that enhance communication flow among first responders, community members, policy makers, media, etc. during a response operation. Still, there is demand for more timely and widespread access to accurate information that will allow for rapid and informed decision-making in the aftermath of a disaster. In the words of one stakeholder, "There is a need to transform scientific information, which is often complex and in the form of maps or percentages, into simple and accessible messages that would allow people at risk to make sensible decisions on how to respond to an impending threat."⁶²

⁶¹ ICRC Focus Group, personal communication, January 2012.

⁶² Van Aalst, M. (2009). In a Changing Climate, the Red Cross Hopes a New Focus on Training and Preparation will Save Lives. *Americas Quarterly*.

The Climate Center in particular, alongside the IFRC, has made concerted efforts to deepen awareness of and services toward establishing more effective EWS. These two stakeholders were heavily involved in the creation of the IFRC's 2009 World Disaster Report, which focused on Early Warning, Early Action.⁶³ There is widespread acknowledgement that EWS must not only educate communities about risk and incorporate far reaching alert systems, but must also foster community capacity to take rapid, coordinated action prior to and during disasters. UNISDR's 2011 Global Assessment Report also acknowledges this gap, stating, "Perhaps the key challenge for all countries is translating warning into concrete local action... In many countries, even accurate, timely early warnings were often not acted upon effectively."⁶⁴ Current efforts by the IFRC are underway to improve upon the 2008 IFRC EWS guidelines, which are a positive step toward addressing the aforementioned needs.

EWS guidance or piloting innovative ideas should be supported by new technologies and partnerships.⁶⁵ Other initiatives outside the RC/RC network in this arena are well underway and merit attention if the RC/RC network is to capitalize on broader learning within the humanitarian sector. For example, the use of text message surveys has been found to be a cost-effective tool for gathering community input;⁶⁶ this not only uses technology in a new way but allows for greater and more equal participation among communities.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should prioritize complementary investments toward improving EWS tools, capturing good practices and sharing effective approaches that build upon and connect with national response systems. This can be done through providing TA, as well as by supporting research that expands learning around effective early warning systems and new and/or adaptable technology.*

Finding 10d: *There is pervasive need for greater investment in public awareness and education services, whereby outreach is more consistent, delivery mechanisms simplified and guidance improved to more effectively inform and empower communities to anticipate, cope with and recover from disasters.*

Public information dissemination and education has long been an area where the RC/RC network has been active, however a more coherent outreach strategy and coordinated messaging would serve the network well. The IFRC's Public Awareness and Public Education for Disaster Risk Reduction Guide is an important step toward addressing this gap. While there are many public awareness efforts underway and a large number of national societies have conducted structured public awareness and education

⁶³ International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies (2009). *World Disaster Report 2009: Focus on Early Warning, Early Action*. IFRC, Geneva.

⁶⁴ United Nations International Strategy on Disaster Reduction. (2011). *Revealing Risk, Redefining Development, Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011*.

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (2009). *Clouds but Little Rain: Views from the Frontline, A local perspective of progress towards implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action*.

activities on disaster reduction, the IFRC Guide highlights that there is, “no source for an overview of all these different types of work, no synthesis of good practices, and no means for sharing this wealth of experience.”⁶⁷ Due to the vast need and diversity among global populations, it is particularly challenging to generate consistency around what DRR tools and approaches are worth promoting to the general public. Research results show highly varied approaches and messages, largely due to the number of actors involved and contextual considerations. Given that public information dissemination and education are integral to many elements of local, regional and national contingency planning, such as with early warning systems, it would benefit the humanitarian community at large to adopt common themes, best practices and approaches. This is challenging given the many cultural and social contexts that the RC/RC network works in, but not impossible with simple messaging.

For example, on annual Earthquake Safety Day in Nepal communities participate in earthquake simulations to learn and apply new skills, leaving with heightened awareness of local hazards and knowledge as to what to do in the event of a disaster. This is also accomplished through more formal education, such as short trainings in DP, or curriculum development for formal education in primary and secondary schools. These are good efforts, but could benefit from better streamlining to promote high caliber, accurate and consistent activities and messaging.

The IFRC has been a strong advocate of public awareness and education in DP with a history of campaigns that draw from a deep reservoir of material to educate the public and schools. More recently, the IFRC has worked with partners to develop public awareness and education guidelines and is promoting standard messaging around major hazards, both of which are available for use by national societies. Furthermore, each of the existing RC/RC reference centers assumes public outreach and education as core responsibilities. The Climate Center, for example, has made steady efforts to instigate awareness raising and educational messages regarding potential humanitarian impacts of climate change in order to spur communities to assume an action-oriented mentality around preparedness.

Another example is the Latin American and Caribbean region’s adaptation of the American Red Cross *Be Red Cross Ready* toolkit. By creating this adapted toolkit, *Es Mejor Prevenir*, the region was able to produce a comprehensive package of resources for public outreach and education fitted to the Americas context. This material has been used beyond the RC/RC network, such as by the Asia Disaster Preparedness Center and the National Society for Earthquake Technology in Nepal, where both organizations have extracted and adapted elements to suit their own public awareness raising and education needs. Through these types of efforts, the RC/RC network is making progress but there currently remains a need for a comprehensive plan or strategy that would tie these efforts together.

External to the RC/RC network, a broad and growing range of actors are also committed to awareness raising around DP. One example is Risk Red, which aims to support “broad and inclusive in-reach and outreach, to share, develop, localize, disseminate and evaluate the effectiveness of public education and

⁶⁷ IFRC. (2011). *Public Awareness and Public Education for Disaster Risk Reduction: A Guide*. IFRC : Geneva.

outreach materials for disaster risk reduction.” The RC/RC network could benefit from a similar approach to evaluating the effectiveness of existing materials.

In summary, a GDPC would be well-suited to bolster efforts toward public awareness raising and education in the area of DRR, reinforcing and expanding upon those of the RC/RC in particular. It could facilitate the promotion of streamlined messaging, creative dissemination techniques and strengthened partnerships among those committed to similar goals.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should contribute to wider efforts towards the dissemination of DM messaging and educational tools/materials. Investment in this area introduces an opportunity for a GDPC to make considerable progress in terms of adaptation of existing tools and practices and improvement through innovation in order to help them promote knowledge and skills that empower communities to be better prepared, proactive and effective in managing disasters.*

Research

Finding 11: *There is significant demand for deepening the evidence base of good practice around disaster preparedness through partnerships with credible academic and research institutions.*

As the humanitarian community faces greater demands for accountability and demonstrated effectiveness and impact of interventions, supporting activities with rigorous research is becoming increasingly important. One case study from 2011 offered a fairly critical assessment of the state of disaster-related research, claiming, “much of the existing operational research related to emergencies and disasters lacks consistency, is of poor reliability and validity, and is of limited use for establishing baselines, defining standards, making comparisons, or tracking trends.”⁶⁸ In recognition of this situation, the IFRC Secretariat recently developed global guidance on how to conduct cost-benefit analyses and proceeded to pilot studies in a number of different countries. There remains however a need to build upon these efforts.⁶⁹ This is one area where a GDPC could expand upon the work of the IFRC and PNS. Another example of research upon which the GDPC could build is the 2010 IFRC study reviewing community disaster risk reduction projects after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The study identified

⁶⁸ Murray, V. (2011). *Evidence for Disaster Risk Management –Information and knowledge needs for policy makers and field practitioners*.

⁶⁹ United Nations International Strategy on Disaster Reduction. (2010-2011). Hyogo Framework for Action Mid-Term Review. Torrente, E., Zhang, J., Le-Huu, T. (2008). *CBDRM and Poverty Reduction*, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Mechler, R. and The Risk to Resilience Study Team. (2008). *The Cost-Benefit Analysis Methodology, From Risk to Resilience*, Working Paper No. 1. ISET, ISET-Nepal and ProVention.

Wood, Claudia, Daniel Leighton. (2010). *Measuring Social Value: The Gap between Policy And Practice*. Demos.

characteristics of resilient communities and key determinants for successful community risk reduction programming, which stand to benefit national societies at a global level through continued analysis.

Several stakeholders interviewed for this study agreed that there is a need for more evidence on the impact of DP efforts and that partnering with universities on research initiatives could help meet this need.⁷⁰ Partnering with universities, would bring additional intellectual capacity to the field and give faculty and students “real-world” applications for their research. Recognizing similar benefits of partnerships between the RC/RC network and academic institutions, the IFRC recently hired a Senior Researcher to explore emerging humanitarian trends and building partnerships with universities.⁷¹

The Team’s research yielded a list of more than 90 universities around the world offering programs or degrees in disaster management and related areas of humanitarian assistance, such as conflict and peace operations. Several of these programs have specific areas of focus that could be of particular interest to a GDPC, including emergency/disaster/risk management, refugee and population issues, public health in emergencies, disaster mitigation and reconstruction, and hazards and vulnerability. In addition, many of these universities have established centers of learning or initiatives on disaster-related topics, such as Harvard’s Humanitarian Initiative, Tufts’ Feinstein Center, Johns Hopkins’ Center for Refugee and Disaster Response, the University of the Free State’s Disaster Management Training and Education Center in South Africa and Salford University’s Center for Disaster Resilience in the United Kingdom.

Many of these universities and university-based centers have already established partnerships with NGOs, RC/RC national societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. These partnerships largely focus on research and education, with students supporting the research needs of NGOs and practitioners participating in university panels or lecture series that are relevant to their work. Annex 6 contains a list of universities and their partnerships with humanitarian actors. These partnerships take on a variety of formats—from formalized agreements or internship/fellowship programs to more ad hoc arrangements with individual students or faculty. Some examples of partnership arrangements with universities include:

- Research Grants/Scholarships: Grants awarded to universities in order to complete research on a given topic. For example, ProVention collaborated with partners to provide more than 100 modest scholarships to spur research/innovation among young professionals and university students from dozens of countries.⁷² A former ProVention member described this program as highly successful in yielding a significant amount of research that was widely disseminated.⁷³
- Fellowship/Internship Program: Similar to a research grant, students apply to be interns for a pre-determined period of time during which research is conducted. For example, the Climate Center has provided funding for interns to work with national societies to conduct national climate change

⁷⁰ IFRC DRR delegate (Africa), personal communication, October 2011; HNS Disaster Management Director (Africa), personal communication, November 2011; IFRC DRR Technical Advisor (South Asia), personal communication, September 2011; PNS Focus Group, November 2011; PNS and ICRC Focus Group, November 2011; NSET staff, personal communication, December 2011.

⁷¹ IFRC Secretariat colleague (Geneva), personal communication, February 2012.

⁷² World Bank IEG, *Global Progress Review of The ProVention Consortium*, June 28, 2006.

⁷³ ADB staff, personal communication, December 2011.

assessments and plans for action adapting national society services to better meet changing needs. The RC/RC reference centers in Latin America highlighted their use of interns who are already working in the DP/DRR sector to develop practical tools, focused on current needs of field practitioners.⁷⁴ Fellowship programs similar to those offered by thinktanks like the Brookings Institution offer professionals the opportunity to allow their professional experience to inform important research efforts.

- **Ad Hoc Research Support:** Students (teams or individuals) provide support to research projects on an as-needed basis. For example, the Geneva Center for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH) assigns teams of students to conduct year-long research projects for humanitarian organizations located in Geneva.

The research services discussed above could also have linkages to advocacy. By building the evidence-base for DP work, a GDPC could indirectly support advocacy efforts through research that strengthens evidence in support of specific IFRC and national society positions on DP-related issues.⁷⁵ Where there is opportunity to influence or advance advocacy efforts through the research undertaken, a GDPC could provide the IFRC Secretariat with the evidence base to inform outreach efforts and policy development. This would enable a GDPC to focus on service delivery and the IFRC to ensure consistency in advocacy efforts.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should consider different partnerships with universities and research centers to pursue analytical learning. There are a host of existing partnerships among RC/RC partners that should serve as the starting point from which to build stronger networks among scientific and academic institutions to advance the caliber and impact of RC/RC services in DP.*

Training

Finding 12: *Training in disaster preparedness is a recognized need among national societies and is currently being addressed at multiple levels by a wide range of stakeholders. The considerable volume of current trainings reflects inconsistencies around approaches, curriculum quality and context appropriateness of coursework.*

A significant percentage of RC/RC network survey respondents—77 percent—identified training as a priority need in disaster preparedness. This indicates considerable demand within the RC/RC network for this service; however, consultations with stakeholders also indicated that a GDPC may not be best placed to undertake trainings itself due to the vast number of ongoing efforts around training and the fact that the demand (and need for funding) often appears to be endless.

⁷⁴ IFRC DRR delegate (Americas Zone), personal communication, September 2011.

⁷⁵ Advocacy is very much the role of the IFRC Secretariat, both in the sense of helping national societies advocate to their governments, and advocating on behalf of the global RC/RC network through international fora. The IFRC Secretariat carries out its advocacy work through its Humanitarian Diplomacy Department in Geneva and its Zonal and regional offices.

Training is an area in which the IFRC is already quite active. In 2007 an American Red Cross colleague conducted a study for the IFRC, reviewing IFRC Disaster Management training. The study reports that, “while significant effort and resources are focused on it, the prolific nature of our disaster management training efforts remain inconsistent, not clearly linked or sequenced, not predictable and the entire enterprise is in need of a clearly understood structure and strategy.”⁷⁶ The same study indicates that the training challenges identified are symptomatic of more complex issues, such as “human resource recruiting challenges, and years without a comprehensive training anchor at the [IFRC] Secretariat.”⁷⁷

In an effort to address some of the inherent challenges with training, the IFRC recently established a Learning Platform that provides a number of short online trainings on specific technical areas (e.g., logistics, shelter and settlement, pandemic preparedness). These are standardized and they can be replicated quite inexpensively after the initial development costs. In addition, a number of online certificate courses and Masters and PhD level programs in disaster management are being developed in partnership with universities and will provide university certification.

The number of actors that need to be considered and the resources required to establish a well-coordinated, effective training program would likely overstretch the capacity of a GDPC. However, modest forms of support to existing or planned training programs by the IFRC or other entities could be undertaken. Examples include providing technical assistance for facilitating training workshops, or posting widely used and/or broadly endorsed curriculum options on a GDPC website.

Recommendation: *While there is demand for training in disaster preparedness, for the first few years a GDPC should explore modest support services to existing or planned training rather than undertake the responsibility for separate training programs.*

⁷⁶ Reines, T. (2007). *Recommendations for Competency-Based Disaster Management Framework*. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

⁷⁷ *ibid*

6. American Red Cross

The American Red Cross, as host for a GDPC, would look to capitalize on 125 years of its disaster management experience within and outside the United States to enhance its work. Through consultations, the Research Team identified several ways through which a GDPC could augment learning and information exchange, and contribute expertise in support of RC/RC disaster preparedness efforts. In addition to these contributions, as host of a GDPC, the American Red Cross could help convene stakeholders, advocate for DP among influential policy makers and donors, and garner added resources to support the work at hand.

Finding 13: The domestic and internationally focused *departments of the American Red Cross* house myriad tools, methodologies and good practices that would benefit the wider RC/RC network.

The American Red Cross International Services Department (ISD) is active in more than 30 countries with programs and partnerships that support DP as a cornerstone to its global Disaster Management strategy. ISD is currently in the process of scaling up these programs, seeking to expand support in particular areas of need, such as investing more in disaster preparedness for urban settings. In support of national societies, ISD aims to 1) bolster the global RC/RC network's "readiness to respond" to disasters by working with partners to develop and improve Emergency Response Units and response training for delegates; 2) support **dialogue, advocacy and networking** around national disaster risk management with national-level stakeholders (e.g., government and other national-level agencies); 3) invest in ways to increase national society technical and **program management capacities**; 4) support efforts to strengthen **volunteer capacity** in disaster management and disaster risk reduction methodologies and practices and; 5) facilitate in-country resource mobilization through **sustainable revenue-generating activities**.⁷⁸ Each ISD regional team has an array of DP investments underway which have yielded good practices and tools that could be of benefit to the wider RC/RC network. A GDPC would provide an additional channel for the wider dissemination of these practices and tools. It could also complement ISD's DP scale-up by helping pilot program models, methodologies or specific tools.

In addition, ISD's International Response Operations Center (IROC) has invested heavily in bolstering first responder capacities at the institutional levels within the American Red Cross, IFRC and national societies. For example, much work has been done on improving the effectiveness of American Red Cross Emergency Response Units, cash and voucher use in emergencies, roster management, training for deployments and monitoring and evaluation techniques. Many of these investments have also resulted in practices that could serve the wider RC/RC network.

The American Red Cross also has significant domestic experience and resources that could contribute to a GDPC. One of the more widely referenced initiatives is the American Red Cross "Be Red Cross Ready"

⁷⁸ American Red Cross International Services Department, Disaster Management Conceptual Framework and Programming Guidelines, DRAFT, March 24, 2012.

community and household level preparedness tools. This guidance packet has been widely adopted at a global level, both within the RC/RC network and beyond. Most of this material is available online and is offered in conjunction with step-by-step videos as well as ample opportunities for social networking. The American Red Cross Safe and Well website, which helps reconnect families during disasters, is another resource that could be used internationally. The American Red Cross has also developed good practices and tools in areas such as—

- hurricane preparedness (e.g., Hurricane Shelter Standards)
- corporate preparedness (e.g., business preparedness Ready Rating self-assessment tool)
- national preparedness exercises which entail holistic drills linking communities, professional first responders, businesses, hospitals, local and national authorities and other actors
- public awareness campaigns and education tools (e.g., Master of Disaster curriculum)
- staff and volunteer management for deployments (e.g., the Disaster Services Human Resource System or DSHR)
- information management (e.g., the Disaster Relief Operations Information System—DROMIS—for the Emergency Operations Center during active responses)

In addition to tools and practices, the American Red Cross could contribute a deep pool of technical professionals to a GDPC. Each year the American Red Cross manages roughly 70,000 small to large scale disasters domestically through its headquarters and more than 500 chapters. The professionals who contribute to these disaster responses are comprised of American Red Cross employees, roster members and volunteers whose skills and experience could be of great assistance to other national societies. A GDPC could serve as a filter for processing RC/RC network requests for short and long-term assignments to meet specific DP technical needs, such as improving a national society's communication plan, upgrading its technical equipment or facilitating a disaster simulation.

Although there would be strong benefits in deploying American Red Cross professionals on short or long-term assignments to offer technical assistance, a GDPC may encounter some challenges around this as well. Whether deployed professionals come from American Red Cross pools of experts, or from other national societies, a GDPC would need to give careful consideration to a number of concerns in order to be able to offer this type of technical assistance. For example, it would need to consider—

- developing comprehensive and transparent selection criteria to vet national society requests for assistance
- identifying qualified candidates for deployment from the range of national society actors
- determining how to best match requests to appropriate levels of technical assistance
- building a support structure to manage this process, and importantly, one that builds off existing systems and procedures
- coordinating among field and headquarters RC/RC network staff
- developing training to ensure standardized minimum skills and expectations for field work

Recommendation: *A GDPC should take stock of the depth of tools and practices used by the American Red Cross domestically and internationally and*

adapt and disseminate these resources to the RC/RC network as appropriate.

Recommendation: *A GDPC should devise a mechanism by which American Red Cross staff and volunteers are able to deploy to meet clearly articulated and measurable national society needs. This should be done in tandem with a system that supports multi-national deployments from other national societies.*

Finding 14: *Being located in Washington, D.C. offers unique benefits due to the proximity to important decision and policy makers, and institutions that influence and fund DP-related work.*

During consultations, many stakeholders cited that hosting a GDPC at American Red Cross headquarters in Washington D.C. would be of benefit to the RC/RC network due to its geopolitical position. This proximity to policy makers and multilateral donors would enable a GDPC to serve as a platform for outreach, highlighting national society needs and experiences, galvanizing interest and raising awareness. USAID, including its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, as well as the U.S. State Department are based in Washington D.C. These government bodies carry considerable weight in terms of defining U.S. policies on international disasters. Also based in D.C., the World Bank is arguably the most influential institution regarding global investments in the developing world. Although its focus is mainly development work, the World Bank's support also extends into humanitarian affairs, such as with the past ProVention initiative. Washington D.C. is also replete with hundreds of non-profit organizations, corporations, scientific, academic and government bodies with vested international interests and mandates.

In addition to opportunities to influence decision and policy makers, the geographic location would present significant funding opportunities as well. This, in turn, could create opportunity for added DP support to the RC/RC network. Currently there are ample resource mobilization tools and techniques that could guide a GDPC in leveraging resources. However, providing resource mobilization as a *service* to national societies would be a more complex undertaking whereby local and national politics and stakeholders must be considered. It does not appear that a GDPC would be in the best position to take on such major and convoluted endeavors however it could offer useful guidance on a smaller scale. For example, it could post sample proposal or logframe templates on its website for national societies to adapt as needed.

This need resonated among many RC/RC stakeholders during consultations and was represented as a need in the aforementioned IFRC Asia Pacific Zone Disaster Management review, which notes, "support to national societies is needed for the development of innovative public and corporate disaster fundraising, standing disaster response funds and procedures for their management."⁷⁹ Support in this

⁷⁹ Global Emergency Group. (2011).

area would help address national society interests in building capacities to secure funds in an increasingly competitive funding environment.

Recommendation: *Based at American Red Cross headquarters, a GDPC would be well positioned to capture and disseminate policies and participate in knowledge sharing among decision makers and practitioners. As such, a GDPC should conduct regular outreach among stakeholders, initiate events to elevate awareness and stay abreast of relevant and changing policies related to disaster preparedness. This could be done through hosting forum discussions, speaker series and other information sharing/public awareness events.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC should capitalize on the full breadth of American Red Cross existing partnerships with governmental, academic and scientific entities, and explore new partnerships with such institutions that could benefit the RC/RC network as a whole.*

Recommendation: *A GDPC could provide modest support to national society local level fundraising by offering tools, such as DP project management, baseline data, budget and M&E tools on its website to foster transparency and accountability. This would provide a modest degree of support, leaving more complex interventions (i.e., those that require a deep understanding of political, social and economic contexts to develop coherent resource mobilization strategies) to the national societies and the IFRC.*

7. Conclusion

A Global Disaster Preparedness Center could be a pivotal resource for disaster preparedness work within the global RC/RC network. By supporting and augmenting disaster preparedness efforts, it could play a key role in helping the RC/RC network fulfill its responsibility to help communities around the world prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Based on information gathered for this study the Research Team believes that the three areas of service identified here—knowledge management, technical assistance and research—present the areas of national society needs most appropriate for support from a GDPC. These areas introduce myriad opportunities to bolster current and planned investments. Furthermore, the inherent linkages among these three areas of services means that investments would reinforce one another, thereby increasing the opportunity for scalable impact.

The success of a GDPC, however, would not be determined solely by the quality of services it offers. Success would also be contingent upon ensuring strong coordination with national societies, the IFRC Secretariat, field staff, existing RC/RC reference centers and other key stakeholders. An approach that clearly demonstrates a GDPC's commitment to inclusivity should also be a key driver in cultivating a broad sense of ownership and active engagement by stakeholders. This level of stakeholder engagement would ensure sustainability of a GDPC and lead to it reaching its full potential as a support structure to the RC/RC network. More importantly, the success of this initiative will translate into more lives and assets being protected and saved through the bolstering of national society first responder capacities.