

Year in Review 2015



Prepare.
Innovate.
Learn.
Together.

Message from Director

This past year we have seen great strides made across the world towards increasing resilience at the individual, community and global levels, and here at the Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC), we continue to make our contribution. At the local level, the GDPC draws on the global reach of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to mobilize communities and explore creative solutions for longstanding and new problems through research and innovative programming that can be easily customized and replicated at scale to make communities safer. Our First Aid app, for example, has been tailored to context and is now active in 73 countries, aiming to put life-saving information into the hands of millions people. At the global level, policy makers are shifting priorities to include the resilience agenda, as seen by dialogue at the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan and the adoption of the new sustainable development agenda, which includes a goal to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The GDPC has been actively engaged in contributing to these initiatives, as they underpin the work we are doing and help us further our overarching common goals. As our world's disaster landscape continues to shift due to climate change, urbanization and other major trends, these initiatives signal a growing global consensus about the fundamental importance of the GDPC mission to build resilience.

In the year ahead, the GDPC plans to continue helping communities prepare for disasters and expand our network, bringing together actors from different spheres to share ideas and learning. Strong partnerships form the foundation of all of the work we do at the GDPC; they are instrumental to our ability to respond to disaster management

needs quickly, efficiently and at scale. Read on to learn more about the work underway at our Center, including an exciting new initiative known as the “One Billion Coalition” – a global effort we are supporting through the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), which promotes public and private sector partnerships, grass-roots solutions for safeguarding communities, and use of new technologies that vastly increase reach in order to build a safer world by 2025. You will also learn in this report about our complementary Business Continuity Initiative that aims to foster a stronger rapport between Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and local businesses, predicated on evidence that there is no faster or better way to help communities recover from a disaster than by getting people back to work with a steady income and sense of purpose. It has been a terrific year.

I would like to thank each and every one of you who have supported our endeavors. We look forward to the year ahead, enhancing our current partnerships and forging new ones as we continue to make communities safer in our own neighborhoods and across the globe.



Rebecca Scheurer, Director



About the Global Disaster Preparedness Center

Aim

The primary aim of the Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC) is to strengthen disaster preparedness capacities of the global Red Cross and Red Crescent network in order to help safeguard communities from future disasters.

Our History

Following a year-long research assessment in 2011, the GDPC was established in 2012 by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the American Red Cross. The GDPC supports learning, knowledge sharing, innovation, technical assistance, research and networking amongst disaster preparedness practitioners worldwide.

Key Service Areas

Knowledge management

Identify, collect, store and disseminate disaster preparedness material and resources to practitioners around the world.



Technical assistance

Provide programmatic guidance to and share targeted good practices with Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.



Global Disaster Preparedness Center



Research

Strengthen the disaster preparedness and resilience evidence base through applied research.



Coordination

Promote effective cross-learning amongst disaster preparedness professionals inside and outside of the Red Cross Red Crescent network.

Our Reach at a Glance

As of December 2015, the Universal App Program has released more than 70 First Aid apps and 17 Hazard apps, which are available in more than 30 languages.

A world map with a blue circular callout highlighting implementation in six countries. The callout contains the text: "The Pillowcase Project has been implemented in 6 countries since its inception (Australia, Hong Kong, Mexico, Peru, UK, and Vietnam)." The map shows the outlines of continents and countries, with the highlighted countries being Australia, Hong Kong, Mexico, Peru, UK, and Vietnam.

The Pillowcase Project has been implemented in 6 countries since its inception (Australia, Hong Kong, Mexico, Peru, UK, and Vietnam).

To date, the GDPC has sponsored over 100 Red Cross/Red Crescent practitioners to attend IFRC events, growing the practitioner network.

A world map with a blue circle overlay on the right side. The map shows the outlines of continents and countries. The blue circle contains text about the website's resources and membership.

[Preparecenter.org](https://preparecenter.org) now has over 1,400 resources in 18 languages, 369 active members, and 35,500 unique visitors worldwide.

Small Grants Research Projects have been conducted in 8 countries (Argentina, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Somalia, and Sri Lanka).

Prepare Lifesaving information in your pocket

Disasters can strike anytime, and all too often without warning. Access to timely, accurate information is critical to empower people to take protective action and save lives in their communities. Since 2013, the GDPC Universal App Program has supported Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies to design and release mobile phone apps to help their public prepare for everything from common first aid emergencies to large natural disasters. Working closely with local Red Cross and Red

Crescent societies, the GDPC provides templates for the apps and helps ensure that the final content is relevant to the local community. As of December 2015, the Universal App Program has released more than 70 First Aid apps and 17 Hazard apps, which are available in more than 30 languages. These apps are dynamic and continue to be improved through an iterative process. For example, in the last year the GDPC introduced a new feature that allows push notifications to be sent to geographically specific parts of a country, allowing for more targeted and specific communication with app users before during and after an event.

Myanmar Red Cross, First Aid App



“Þetta bjargaði lífinu mínu.”
Translation: “This app saved my life.”
Rene, Iceland

Bringing Technology to Low-End Phones

Despite the massive growth of smartphone technology in recent years, more than 1 billion people around the world still connect with each other using older technology such as feature phones. The GDPC is currently exploring ways to

better reach these communities, a particular priority since many of the most vulnerable people lack access to smartphone technology. This past year, the GDPC has worked with various partners in the humanitarian and technology sectors to explore options for this expansion, ultimately

working with Social Impact Lab to host a workshop in Washington, DC bringing together technologists and humanitarian practitioners to discuss how to bring preparedness messaging to low-end phones.

Prepare

School-based disaster preparedness across the world

As natural disasters continues to claim thousands of lives each year, it is more critical than ever that youth and their families are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to prepare for and stay safe during emergencies. Thanks to generous support from Disney, GDPC is taking action, working in partnership with Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies to teach valuable preparedness skills to youth across the globe. Building off a domestic American Red Cross program created in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the GDPC has worked with Red Cross national societies in Australia, Hong Kong, Mexico, Peru, the United Kingdom and Vietnam to adapt the youth preparedness curriculum to their local contexts. While each national society is responsible for managing project activities in their

home countries, the GDPC has provided technical support to the national societies to adapt the program materials and support classroom presentations, taking into account various cultural, social and economic contexts. Additionally, the GDPC has worked with local Disney offices and collaborated to identify suitable procurement solutions that meet Disney's trademark and licensing requirements. As of July 2015, the Pillowcase Project has taught life-saving preparedness information to more than 16,000 students through more than 130 classroom presentations.



Students decorate their pillowcase emergency supply kits after a presentation of La Funda de Mi Almohada in Pisco, Peru.

Country Case Studies

Australia

In Australia, the Red Cross chose to focus its outreach on non-hazard-specific information, such as preparing psychologically for emergencies, because disaster-specific education is generally delivered by the various hazard management agencies. With this in mind, the Australian Red Cross adapted the American Red Cross Pillowcase project materials to fit the non-hazard-specific focus of their preparedness REDiPlan project. The 60-minute presentation included an introduction to the Australian Red Cross and its services, a discussion of emergencies and the four steps to prepare:

1. **Be Informed**
2. **Make a plan**
3. **Get an emergency kit**
4. **Know your neighbors**

These four steps were further explored using activities from the Get Ready! Activity book, a pre-existing tool that is provided to students as part of the program. Other project activities include a coping skills exer-

cise, a short quiz to inform monitoring and evaluation of the project, and the decoration of pillowcases, which serve as individual emergency kits for the students. To date, the Australian Red Cross has trained more than 30 staff and volunteers to give pillowcase presentations, reaching more than 2,900 students across six Australian states with preparedness messages. Early feedback on the program has been overwhelmingly positive, with 90 percent of children reporting that they then spoke about disaster preparedness at home and nearly 80 percent of parents and guardians reporting that they were more likely to prepare for an emergency as a result of their child participating in the program.

Peru

Peru is highly disaster prone, at risk of floods, earthquakes and severe storms – all disasters covered in the curriculum of the Pillowcase Project. It is also a very geographically diverse nation, with many people living in rural, mountain, and jungle communities where they are particularly

vulnerable to disaster effects. Taking this into account, the Peruvian Red Cross identified five geographically distinct cities to pilot the Pillowcase Project, modifying the materials to be contextually relevant for each location. This localization has proven to be crucial to Peru's adaptation, as the information is now hyper relevant to families in each region, focusing on the skills that are most critical for survival. Since the launch of the program in 2014, the Peruvian Red Cross has reached more than 5,800 youth in more than 200 classrooms with lifesaving preparedness information. Anecdotes from parents, students and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive, and the Ministry of Education has expressed interest in expanding the program nationwide. The Peruvian implementation of the program can also be seen in this 25-minute video case study, created by the GDPC with support from Disney: <https://youtu.be/PjM3RJblyw>

Innovate Coalition Building for Resilience

While early warnings and preparedness have helped to reduce the loss of life from disaster events over the last 20 years, disasters and other threats to safety continue to cause damage and losses around the world. Climate change, urbanization, and continuing settlement in hazard-prone areas contribute to increased exposure to risk for vulnerable populations. These trends make a compelling case for greater investment in building community resilience. In preparation for the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the GDPC has been working with the IFRC Secretariat and other Red Cross and Red Crescent partners to create a series of initiatives designed to simplify local partnering on resilience goals, provide a clearer set of entry points for basic resilience-building actions, and bring a stronger focus on individual and community resilience into the SDGs and the global agenda. The Red Cross hopes to create an easy-to-use platform for finding and sharing resilience solutions, providing easy on-ramps for individuals, business, and community organizations to connect with the Red Cross, local government and other stakeholders to design and implement local resilience measures. Two key components have emerged from this work over the last two years.

One Billion Coalition for Resilience

The One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC) is a shared multi-organization challenge to inspire and engage one billion people by 2025 to take more active steps toward resilience. 1BC was launched at the International Conference for the Red Cross

and Red Crescent in December 2015. The initiative will complement existing campaigns by building an exchange for local resilience solutions and encouraging the engagement of individuals and local organizations to work together through local coalitions for resilience that can plug into existing initiatives to strengthen individual and community roles in resilience. This project builds off of work supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.



Business Continuity Initiative Strengthening Local Businesses

The GDPC is working with a wide range of stakeholders – including the IFRC, Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, academia, the private sector, government actors and NGOs – to establish various tools and services that can be offered by the Red Cross/Red Crescent network to strengthen community resilience. A key component of this is the GDPC Business Continuity

Initiative, focused on supporting small- and medium-sized businesses to become more resilient and increase their ability to support their communities after a disaster. For this work, the GDPC is adapting existing models, such as the American Red Cross Ready Rating program, to create a self-guided tool for assessing business readiness to respond to a disaster. The models will be customized to ensure that the tools and approaches are relevant in different contexts. Applying lessons learned from

the Universal App Program, the GDPC is working to make these tools and services demand driven, scalable and highly localized to ensure that they will be attractive to the national societies in developed and developing countries. By convening virtual working groups to discuss the various aspects of this project, the GDPC and its stakeholders have created a rich forum for sharing knowledge and expertise while building a sense of programmatic ownership amongst the participants.

Members of an Indonesian Red Cross community-based action team meet to discuss community-level disaster preparedness and response. These teams are made up of villagers who are trained in participatory rural assessments and risk mapping, and take part in disaster simulations and drills to hone their skills. [Vina Agustina/International Federation](#)

Learn

Research to strengthen evidence-base

To increase the impact of humanitarian work and facilitate greater levels of resilience in communities worldwide, the Red Cross and Red Crescent network is committed to strengthening institutional learning and building linkages between research and humanitarian practice. Aligned with efforts to increase accountability and expand the knowledge and evidence base in the humanitarian sector, the GDPC is supporting action-oriented research in collaboration with university partners, research institutions, the IFRC and the wider practitioner community. Guided by its research agenda outlining key areas of interest in disaster preparedness and resilience programming, the GDPC supports a diverse research portfolio implemented in partnership with researchers around the globe. Recognizing the value of engaging diverse partners in longer-term partnerships, the GDPC expanded its small grants program to include six new countries in Latin America and Africa as well as follow-up grants to three previous awardees. In addition, the GDPC

conducted a set of targeted research projects, including the enhancement of a widely-used community risk assessment methodology, development of simplified guidance to strengthen decision support tools for program planning, and research into leveraging social media technologies for better preparedness programming. Contributing to GDPC's mandate to foster collaboration and shared learning, the GDPC also co-organized the first 'Red Cross Red Crescent Workshop on Research and Evidence Base', bringing together academics and practitioners from different sectors to identify common challenges and discuss opportunities for bridging the gap between academia and the humanitarian sector. To facilitate widespread learning from this research work, the GDPC directly involves practitioners in the planning and implementation of projects, as well as leverages diverse communication channels including preparecenter.org, social media platforms and workshops.

Table of 2015 GDPC Research Activities

Project	Partners	Outcome
Building out Participatory Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)	Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET)	Step-by-step guide for planning and conducting a participatory CBA, as well as supporting tools like multi-criteria analysis to support sound program planning.
Small Grants Program, Phase II	Response 2 Resilience Institute	Expansion of the program to include five new countries in Latin America and Africa, and funding for three follow-on projects from Phase I. A total of 12 research grants were awarded.
Global Enhancements of Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA)	IFRC	Action Guide to address key issues related to the implementation of the VCA toolkit, including information gathering and reporting, facilitator training, and quality assurance.
Comparative Review of Social Media Analysis Tools for Preparedness	Trilateral Research and Consulting	Guidance on how to use social media analysis tools for preparedness and risk reduction work. Developed a catalogue of 31 analysis tools that fulfill humanitarian requirements.
State of Social Media Technologies for Disaster Preparedness in Asia Pacific Region	Nanyang Technological University	An in-depth study on the use of social media and analysis tools in Asia.
Use of Mobile Technologies for Disaster Preparedness in South East Asia	Nanyang Technological University	Recommendations on using mobile technologies for public awareness and early warning in four countries in SE Asia: Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam.
Strengthening Research Collaboration through the Red Cross and Red Crescent network	IFRC	Co-hosted a workshop on research and evidence-based approaches and created a Red Cross and Red Crescent Research Working Group.

Together Creating a Practitioner Network

The GDPC practitioner network continues to expand to deepen shared learning, dialogue and collaboration among national societies, academic and research institutions, NGOs and other humanitarian actors on emergent preparedness needs, solutions and good practices. By utilizing its website, Preparecenter.org, its social media platforms, global platforms for dialogue, and its Fellowship Program, the GDPC continues to broaden its network and outreach.

Fellowship Program

Realizing that innovation happens every day at the community level, the GDPC has created a fellowship program to capture learning and experience from national societies around the world, including American Red Cross chapters across the US. This fellowship provides an opportunity to share learning and experience, as well as exposes participants to the global perspective on disaster preparedness. At the end of each two- to four-week fellowship, the participants return home with new ideas and contacts they can apply to help their own work. In 2015, the GDPC broadened the fellowship program to include fellows from other Red Cross and Red Crescent Reference Centers. By engaging this group of technical experts and community organizers, the GDPC has broadened its network while reinforcing interest and participation in the work of the center.



Join our
Community

Feature of Preparecenter.org

Hazards

This section displays the 15 most prominent hazards. It helps the user to know how to prepare their home, business, community and governments.

Topics

Cross-cutting topics are presented primarily for users who have little-to-some knowledge on the topic. For advanced practitioners, the site offers resources and 'Lessons and Examples'.

Resources

The resource library contains a searchable inventory of documents related to hazards and disaster preparedness in communities around the globe.

Countries

Every country has a profile that features stats, government policies, in-country partners, examples, and lessons and resources.

Stories

Stories are a way for online users to share their best practices, lessons and challenges learned from the field.

Credit front page picture: Mirva Helenius / IFRC
Montserrado, Liberia October 2015
School children practicing proper hand washing before classes start in Montserrado, Liberia in October 2015. The Liberian National Red Cross Society, supported by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, has been distributing hand washing kits, soap, chlorine and no-touch thermometers to over 500 schools across the country.

Credit back page picture: JRCS / Dr. Kevin Hung from the Hong Kong Red Cross talks with community members in Daanbantayan, Philippines to identify local health needs. This community-based health program is run in conjunction with a mobile clinic.

Thank you for your support.

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