Good governance, safe blood
Contents

Message from the President 1
Novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) 3
2019 Highlights 4
Governance 5
Self-assessment 9
VNRBD program 11
Modular training 15
Local implementation programs 21
Disaster recovery 29
Finance 35

Our Vision
All Red Cross / Red Crescent blood programs will be safe, well governed and self-sustainable, based on the principle of voluntary non remunerated blood donation for the benefit of patients and to safeguard blood donors.

Our Mission
GAP will support Red Cross / Red Crescent blood services in risk management and corporate governance of blood programs and promote good practices and knowledge exchange.
A message from our President

“While 2018 saw GAP move into a more structural involvement in post-disaster aid, 2019 has focused on building our capacity to deliver high quality vein-to-vein education for blood programs.”

Dear Reader

With the rapid speed of change in our current world, aid delivery must be able to evolve in to ensure programs maintain transparency, optimise coordination efforts and constantly re-evaluate design for better outcomes. Recently it has become more apparent that blood program delivery must not only continuously adapt to global changes, but also maintain a balance against the individual needs of the recipient.

GAP is proud that our way of working ensures we continue to deliver support for National Society blood programs globally. We now benefit from the expertise of 15 dedicated member countries. This expansion ensures we continue to provide relevant and up-to-date governance and technical advice across all regions.

I travelled to India earlier this year to work with the Indian Red Cross Society in their technical advancement program and it demonstrated just how varying the needs of individual blood services are.

It has also become apparent that for various reasons the traditional mission-based mechanism for delivering programs is less accessible for many countries.

GAP has commenced exploring options for remote delivery to address this. We recognise the uniqueness of each National Society Blood Service and adapt our programs to suit, whilst maintaining the strong risk management and corporate governance foundations by which our association was built. Our Modular Training program is designed to enable a tailored ‘pick and mix’ approach specific to a country or region’s requests or areas of need.

This is all very timely with the emergence of the novel coronavirus which threatens health security and has widespread implications for blood programs as they continue to strive to maintain the safety and sufficiency of blood supplies globally.

The impact of this outbreak on health systems is a strong reminder that we must always question whether conventional methods of program delivery remain feasible and valid. More importantly, it affirms the need for organisations to remain agile in order to be sustainable. We are confident this report highlights GAP’s recent activities in building transparent, agile and well-coordinated systems for blood program support.

Sincerely

Professor Philippe Vandekerckhove, MD, PhD. GAP President
As 2019 drew to a close, the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 resulted in major global disruption across all sectors and placed heavy demand on health agencies, including blood services. Blood services had to adapt quickly in a rapidly changing environment to ensure maintenance of blood stocks throughout the evolving crisis. This required an agile response to implement strategies and protocols designed to protect blood donors, staff and the blood supply, as well as ensuring sufficient blood stocks continued to be available. In many countries, these challenges were compounded by public movement restrictions which severely impacted blood donor numbers.

Through its global network, GAP has provided relevant reference material and guidance for blood programs to assist them in navigating and addressing the complex and rapidly changing COVID-related challenges.

GAP’s members have supported these efforts; often while concurrently managing their own country response to SARS-CoV-2. GAP Regional Coordinators have provided a more locally relevant point of contact for NS to access for advice.

In particular GAP acknowledges the input of Dr Wolfgang Mayr who provided timely and valuable oversight with regards to resources, updates and webinars, including linking in with the IFRC. Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee provided critical country-specific experience in managing donors, safety and sufficiency in a pandemic through his valuable contribution to two webinars, with additional input on managing donor numbers in times of strict lockdown provided by Dr Elizabeth Vinelli and Prof Eilat Shinar. In her role as Americas Regional Coordinator, Dr Vinelli has also been providing support to the Salvadoran Red Cross Blood Service in the development of a protocol for the collection of convalescent plasma.

While 2020 will continue to be a year of significant change for blood programs, it has been inspiring to see the global coordination efforts in assisting NS to manage their own local challenges during this pandemic to continue to provide essential life-saving blood and blood products. It once again highlights the value of the GAP network in providing rapid knowledge exchange and risk management advice in times such as these.

**Novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2)**

Left: GAP Asia Pacific Regional Coordinator, Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee, provided several webinars outlining effective strategies by the Hong Kong Blood Service in responding quickly following lessons learned from the SARS epidemic in 2003. He has also provided a regional point of contact for blood services to seek advice.

**2019 Highlights**

- Reviewed protocol between Haitian Red Cross and Ministry of Health on provision of the blood program in Haiti
- Supported the IFRC through provision of technical advice and materials
- Supported improvements to NS Blood Programs in the Americas, Europe & Central Asia region via the Self-assessment program
- Successful regional meeting in the Americas
- Development of the GAP Modular Training materials and remote delivery options
- Progressed support program in Nepal
- Developed proposal for program of support in Sulawesi, Indonesia
- VNRBD materials testing and support delivered via programs in Bangladesh and Tanzania
- Blood Service technical advancement for India, Bangladesh and Laos via delivery of multiple workshops
GAP Executive Board

GAP is governed by a board of four executive members who provide governance and decision making for the organisation’s strategic direction and activities.

The Executive Board is responsible for ensuring the effective governance, operation and leadership of GAP while acting in accordance with GAP’s vision and mission.

Board members are generally appointed for a three year term, and members can be re-elected twice.

An IFRC permanent observer holds a position on the board to ensure the flow of information and coordination between GAP and the IFRC.

In 2019, the GAP Executive Board held two formal meetings to review GAP work programs and objectives. Major topics of discussion included the modular training program, which has been identified as an area of growth for GAP as it provides a pathway to assist blood services to work towards accreditation. In addition, the review of the Self-assessment questionnaire, triggered by the GAP visit to India, and the role GAP plays in post disaster support were areas of focus for the board.

Regional Coordinators

GAP's programs are additionally supported with input by our Regional Coordinators. They provide a key network link to GAP, while searching for local opportunities to collaborate on activities in the area of corporate governance and risk management for National Societies involved in blood programs in their region.

Regional coordinators provide localised expertise and guidance on GAP support program activities. They also coordinate GAP regional meetings which are held following completion of the Self-assessment questionnaire by National Society blood services.

2019 GAP Regional Coordinators:

Americas
Dr Elizabeth Vinelli (Honduras)

Asia Pacific
Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee (Hong Kong)

Europe and Central Asia
Dr Wolfgang Mayr (Austria)
The GAP Association consists of GAP member National Societies and their representatives, the GAP Executive Board, Regional Coordinators, a Secretariat and a permanent observer who represents the International Federation of Red Cross / Red Crescent (IFRC).

GAP members provide advice on corporate governance and risk management of blood services and contribute their expertise and knowledge to support a range of GAP programs designed to assist National Society blood services.

2019 GAP member National Societies and representatives

**America** - Mr Chris Hrouda, American Red Cross Biomedical Services
**Australia** - Ms Shelly Park, Australian Red Cross Lifeblood
**Austria** - Prof Wolfgang Mayr, Austrian Red Cross Blood Service
**Belgium** - Prof Philippe Vandekerckhove, Belgian Red Cross Blood Service
**Finland** - Dr Satu Pastila, Finnish Red Cross Blood Service
**Germany** - Prof Erhard Seifried, German Red Cross Blood Transfusion Centre

**Honduras** - Dr Elizabeth Vinelli, Honduran Red Cross National Blood Centre
**Hong Kong** - Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee, Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service
**India** - Dr Vanshree Singh, Indian Red Cross Society Blood Bank National HQ
**Israel** - Prof. Elat Shinar, Magen David Adom
**Japan** - Dr Masahiro Satake, Japanese Red Cross Society Blood Service
**Republic of Korea** - Dr Myung-Han Kim, Korean Red Cross Blood Services
**Switzerland** - Dr Rudolf Schwabe, Transfusion Swiss Red Cross
**Thailand** - Dr Ubonwon Charoonruangrit, Thai Red Cross Society National Blood Centre
**Turkey** - Dr Mustafa Ulukanligil, Turkish Red Crescent Blood Services
GAP Self-assessment

The GAP Self-assessment questionnaire was developed to assist National Societies in assessing whether they have appropriate risk management measures in place for their blood programs. It is also an important tool for GAP to identify support countries that may require targeted advice and assistance, and to assess and identify Major Material Risk. The Self-assessment questionnaire is distributed to all Category A (full blood service) National Societies globally and will be expanded into Category B (blood donor recruitment support) in 2020.

Technical assessment

The GAP Self-assessment enables National Society Blood Services to evaluate their corporate governance and risk management strengths and challenges.

As part of the Indian Red Cross Blood Bank Technical Advancement Program, a new assessment questionnaire has been developed which provides the opportunity to also review risk management strategies relating to the more technical aspect of blood program operations.

This questionnaire will be used to measure progress in the national program as the individual blood banks develop a pathway towards accreditation.

The technical assessment in India is being considered a pilot for global implementation globally, in conjunction with the current Self-assessment. It will provide GAP with increased assurance of technical competence for National Society blood services.

Nine National Society blood services from the Europe & Central Asia Region completed the Self-assessment questionnaire in 2019.

Americas Regional Meeting

A Self-assessment regional meeting was held in May 2019 in conjunction with the IFRC XXI Red Cross Inter-American conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The meeting provided an opportunity for the participants from seven National Society blood services to discuss their risk management strengths and challenges, strategies for management and future opportunities for networking within the region.

El Salvador visit

As follow up to the Self-assessment process conducted in the Americas region, GAP Regional Coordinator Dr. Elizabeth Vinelli visited El Salvador in September 2019 to provide further assistance to the Salvadoran Red Cross Blood Service in implementing recommendations regarding risk management.

Progress was noted with the recent establishment of a separate Monitoring Committee for the National Blood Centre, providing planning and decision-making expertise, and enabling improved consultation with government.
GAP’s program of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation (VNRBD) support aims to address the challenges associated with improving VNRBD at a global, regional and country-specific level, with the following key objectives:

1. Address the challenges to increasing VNRBD
2. Address the safety risks of blood from family and replacement donors
3. Retain altruistic family and replacement donors as regular VNRBD donors

The VNRBD program encompasses the following activities:
1. Advice, advocacy and resources
2. Workshops and webinars
3. Pilot country program in Tanzania and Bangladesh

Workshops
- Asia Pacific and Middle East and Northern Africa, Bangkok
- 15 of 47 participants (32%) were self-funded

“Worth the funds provided for this activity. I wish I could attend more of your trainings”
Webinars (global reach)

The series of education VNRBD webinars was continued in 2019, aimed at delivering topics of interest and providing updates on tools and resources that support National Society blood donation programs.

“I would like to appreciate the organizers for the informative session and recommend similar sessions in future to support NS in VNRBD” - Participant, webinar session

Newsletters (global reach)

Communications were distributed to more than 240 contacts from National Societies and IFRC globally, and more widely distributed to the RC/RC network via the IFRC Health and Care Bulletin.

“This information provides great documentation for us and we look forward to contributing to such important blood services in our country” - Newsletter recipient

Key achievements

- Delivered successful multi-regional VNRBD workshops: improved the capabilities of NS to run successful programs
- Further developed customisable resources including training modules, leveraged GAP website (access-point for resources)
- Regional networks expanded, provision of advice and advocacy, delivery of educational webinar series
- Targeted support provided to two pilot National Societies (Bangladesh and Tanzania) - implementation of tools and training
- Confirmed continuation of the VNRBD program to 2022

Below: Participants from Asia and Middle East and Northern Africa regions developing networks and sharing materials and strategies for VNRBD.
The GAP Modular Training program was developed to provide a comprehensive, efficient and cost-effective vein-to-vein training program to specifically assist National Society blood services (NSBS) to achieve accreditation.

The program can be delivered either in-country or remotely, utilising the significant expertise throughout the GAP membership.
Regional workshop

Asia Pacific

In February 2019, a highly successful two week GAP regional training workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand, hosted and co-facilitated by the National Blood Centre, Thai Red Cross Society.

Participants came from Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal and India. The workshop focused on Quality Management Systems and establishing Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for blood services. It was designed to teach and provide tangible implementation strategies through problem based learning, and used relevant case studies aimed at Category A blood program activities.

Sessions over the two weeks included a mix of theory, group activities, laboratory demonstrations and action planning for implementation.

The workshop culminated in the establishment of key steps towards implementation in participants’ respective blood services to ensure routine practice of the fundamental principles of Red Cross / Red Crescent Blood Program Management, Risk Management, Quality Management Systems (QMS) and GMP.
“I think many country in the world should receive a training and make effective blood system to save patient life. Excellent training and thank you”

“Thank you GAP, German Red Cross and Thai Red Cross for giving such wonderful training and knowledge”

“Perfect training with all contents and relevant case studies and group work. Relevant topics as well. Thanks to GAP and TRCS”
GAP provides targeted assistance to countries identified via the Self-assessment and other GAP activities. Support countries have been assessed by GAP as requiring specific assistance in corporate governance and risk management of blood programs.

Bangladesh

Supported by GAP and through a bilateral program with Australian Red Cross, in 2019 the program delivered three training workshops delivered in Bangkok, Thailand in February, May and December.

In addition, specialist IT technical support and advice was provided at a focal workshop in Bangkok in December on the Blood Bank Information Management System software specifically developed for the Bangladesh blood service.

“I learn many things regarding this training course. It would be helpful for me for doing something for our blood program in Bangladesh”

“GAP training always helpful for us, we try our best to learn all of things which is related to the good quality product”
Laos

A GAP in-country visit was conducted in October 2019 and key outcomes of this visit included:

• update of gap analysis between AABB Fundamental standards and current Lao standards that identified progress and highlighted the areas requiring further assistance.

• improved the clinical capacity for safe transfusion via a thalassaemia workshop attended by hospitals, universities, Lao Red Cross (LRC) Blood Service, and Ministry of Health. This workshop was generously supported by the German Red Cross.

• capacity building with regards to safe transfusion and haemovigilance, massive transfusion, and indications for transfusion in obstetrics and dengue via a second workshop.

In addition, staff from the LRC Blood Service attended the third training workshop alongside staff from the Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Service in Bangkok in December 2019 which provided training in QMS and VNRBD.

Left: GAP volunteer Dr Pierre Zachee with LRC Blood Service Director Dr Chanthala discussing safe transfusion at the workshop.

Above: GAP representative observing improvements in the blood group labeling process implemented as a result of the February regional training workshop.

Above: Participants at the Thalassaemia Workshop which brought together hospitals, LRC blood centre, MoH and GAP.
India

In July GAP President Prof Philippe Vandekerckhove visited India to meet with the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Secretary General. The visit was very successful in establishing a new GAP-supported Technical Advancement Program for the 87 Indian Red Cross blood centres.

The program aims to:
• support blood centres to achieve NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals) accreditation
• ensure a consistently high standard is met for all 87 IRCS blood centres through the provision of technical support and training
• provide standardisation and integration of blood centre operations through the development of an IRCS Blood Standard Operating Procedure.

The first training workshop of the Technical Advancement Program was held in November in Gujarat, India, with participants travelling from across India to attend.

The workshop provided training in Quality Management Systems and the opportunity for participants to develop action plans to work towards accreditation in their own blood centres.

A combination of theory, group activities and case studies were used to ensure the concepts were relevant and applicable for all participants.

The workshop also provided a platform for collaboration with the aim of increasing future networking opportunities and peer support amongst the participating Indian Red Cross blood banks.
VNRBD country programs

Tanzania

GAP visited Tanzania in January and August. The visits enabled increased GAP visibility over Category B activities, including risk exposure, successful strategy development based on the local environment, and greater insight into the way National Societies interface with government, share information and sustain their programs.

Key outcomes of the two visits included:
- improved the capacity for Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS) staff and volunteers to recruit regular VNRBDs via delivery of training
- supported the TRCS in working with the national blood service toward shared goals and planning.

The Tanzania country program has been successful in confirming that, when paired with engaged management and motivated staff, the strategies and tools developed by GAP work and KPIs can be met. The Tanzania country will continue until June 2020, and closeout will be conducted remotely.

Bangladesh

GAP delegates met with staff from the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) in February/March following the Joint-regional VNRBD workshop in Bangkok. GAP worked with the BDRCS blood service to scope their existing program and develop priority VNRBD activities and communication materials.

In September, remote support was provided to assist the BDRCS blood service in Dhaka with the local delivery of training for Red Crescent Youth Volunteers.

In December, a two day workshop was delivered in Bangkok to assist the BDRCS blood service in identified areas of challenge in VNRBD. The aim of the workshop was to:
- improve data collection and reporting mechanisms
- increase retention of family replacement donors as regular voluntary donors
- improve sustainability of the program within the context of their current challenges.

The Bangladesh pilot country program will continue until May 2020, and closeout will be conducted remotely.
Nepal

Throughout 2019, the provision of GAP support for the Nepal post-earthquake recovery program included:

- coordination of a successful partner’s meeting with key stakeholders to review progress, align activities and share challenges. It also served to outline GAP’s progression from a recovery to a developmental support capacity.
- stakeholder clarification of the project plan for reconstruction of the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) Central Blood Transfusion Service (CBTS) supported by Thai Red Cross Society.
- on-site technical assistance for the NRCS Gorkha District Chapter blood centre in the installation, validation and calibration of critical blood bank equipment, including handover of the completed facility funded by Belgian Red Cross - Flanders.
- finalisation of the critical equipment items purchased for Bhaktapur District Chapter blood bank, supported by Japanese Red Cross Society.
- technical support for the implementation of haemovigilance education and awareness by NRCS, supported by Japanese Red Cross Society.

Above: Representatives from GAP, Nepal Red Cross Society and other Partner National Societies at the Partner’s meeting in March.

Below: Representatives from Thai Red Cross Society, Nepal Red Cross Society and GAP inspect the construction of the new permanent Central Blood Transfusion Service building in Kathmandu.
**Key outcomes**

- Completion of the Gorkha District Chapter blood bank with critical equipment supported by **Belgian Red Cross - Flanders**

- **Finnish Red Cross Blood Service** completed their second year of support including capacity building and blood donor collection safety

- Successful transition of the **NRCS Central Blood Transfusion Service** from the Emergency Blood Bank in Lalitpur to a temporary facility at NRCS headquarters, to mitigate a number of access, safety and operations-related risks

- Completion of the NRCS Bhaktapur District Chapter blood bank re-fit supported by **British Red Cross**, which will provide a safe and secure blood banking facility to the local community. Bhaktapur is the second largest city in the Kathmandu Valley and provides essential contingency support to the NRCS CBTS

*Above: Finnish Red Cross Blood Service representative Ms Hanna Jacob providing training for NRCS staff.*

**Before**

*Above: Gorkha blood collection area following the earthquake in 2015.*

**Below: Newly refitted Gorkha blood collection centre in 2019.*

**After**
Indonesia

Following two disaster events in late 2018, a GAP post disaster support program for Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI), Sulawesi, funded by Belgian Red Cross, has been prepared in conjunction with PMI. The one year program includes disaster preparedness training and assistance as well as support for blood transport equipment to assist PMI’s capacity to manage stock movement in future events.

This post disaster response for PMI provides an opportunity for GAP to deliver a country specific disaster recovery outcome, and also strengthen and pilot the tools that we develop and deploy for disaster preparedness as part of the GAP Modular Training program.

Key deliverables

- Scoping and planning
  - understand context and challenges
  - determine risk management plan requirements

- Training workshops
  - disaster response / business continuity
  - immunohaematology / clinical

- Support for critical equipment
  - emergency blood storage units
  - transport containers
  - computer hardware

Above: Sulawesi after the earthquake and tsunami. Image - IFRC
## Income and Expenditure Report (All figures in CHF)

### Opening balance

| GAP accounts | 681,144 | 681,144 |
| Australian account | 681,144 | 681,144 |
| Swiss account | 89,767 | 89,767 |
| Combined opening balance at 1 January 2019 | 770,911 | 770,911 |

### Income

- **2019 Member contributions** | 273,000 | 273,000 |
- **2019 Interest income** | 140,127 | 638,914 |
- **Other income** | 17,000 | 16,666 |
- **Total Income** | 430,127 | 928,580 |

### Expenditure

- **Secretariat**
  - (133,223) (132,381)
- **Specialist Advice**
  - (22,000) (2,889)
- **Stakeholder Meetings**
  - (11,000) (1,093)
- **Regional Meetings**
  - (50,000) (28,590)
- **Annual General Meeting**
  - (14,600) (6,892)
- **Executive Board Meeting(s)**
  - (4,000) 0
- **Teleconferences**
  - (1,000) 0
- **Priority Country Support**
  - Secretariat coordination, logistics and support
    - (168,295) (100,771)
  - Nepal
    - (50,000) (10,383)
  - Bangladesh
    - (20,000) (21,965)
  - Honduras
    - (11,000) (58)
  - India
    - (20,000) (12,933)
  - Laos
    - (20,000) (7,188)
  - MMR follow-up (salary and travel)
    - (35,858) (25,858)
  - Self-assessment follow-up (El Salvador)
    - (5,000) (2,576)
  - Stepwise accreditation (implementation report, travel, accommodation)
    - (30,000) (20,000)
  - Website hosting, technical maintenance and software
    - (3,000) (402)
  - Insurance
    - (1,000) (750)
  - Bank fees
    - (900) (1,056)
  - Investment fee and exchange rate gains/losses
    - 843
  - Contingency funds
    - (20,000) 0
- **Partner Funded Programs**
  - VNRBD (Swiss Red Cross)
    - (208,226) (198,767)
  - Nepal post disaster response
    - (319,944) (319,944)
  - Asia Pacific Regional training workshop
    - (44,715) (44,715)
- **Total expenditure**
  - (828,702) (938,236)
- **Closing balance**
  - (372,336) 761,254

### Note:
The GAP Income and Expenditure is aligned with the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood financial statements. The ARCL accounts are audited annually by external auditors.
Contact GAP

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