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Purpose

GAP assists Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs to ensure they are safe, well-governed and resilient; for the benefit of blood donors and patients globally.

Since 2001, Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs globally have accessed our support, expert advice and training, assisting them to meet their responsibilities under the IFRC Blood Policy.

We provide specialised risk management and corporate governance support to National Societies and the IFRC.

Our commitment to blood safety is achieved through our country training programs, disaster relief projects and regular exchange of advice and information with our growing network. This is further enhanced through our partnering and network capabilities.
Message from our President

"Expansion, sense-making, and developing GAP’s strategic vision and direction."

Dear Reader

If 2020 was about adapting as an organisation, 2021 has been about providing reliability and expansion. Reliability of support to blood programs in a dynamic global landscape, and expansion of our collaborations to provide better outcomes for beneficiaries. Especially in times of crisis, GAP strives to make a difference to the lives of individuals and countries with Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs to ensure access to safe blood products to all – and 2021 was no exception.

This year in particular GAP held an important role analysing pandemic-related industry guidance and making sense of this as it pertains to National Society blood programs. Under an IFRC-funded COVID-19 support program, GAP provided review of the large amount of information released on donor recruitment, retention, supply chain, vaccination, public health, staff and planning arrangements - sharing the most important findings and recommendations through our network. Overall, this enabled better decision-making for National Society blood programs and the IFRC by “making the complex simple”.

As a trusted and well proven technical partner, GAP has also been able to deliver increased support benefit to blood programs through new network collaborations, partnering arrangements and joint initiatives.

From blood donor recruitment training in Africa, to post-disaster planning support in Indonesia, to a multiagency approach to equipment procurement in Bangladesh: GAP harnesses the unique skills, capabilities and resources of both GAP and partners in most of what we now do. We greatly value these relationships and what, together, we can achieve for improved blood safety and availability.

2021 has also been a big year because we were able to use this state of consolidation and expansion to reflect on GAP as an organisation in developing our strategic vision and direction for 2022 and beyond. We are confident this time has allowed us to cement a clear and exciting direction for GAP in terms of continuing to provide a centre of excellence in Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs, further forging and aligning partnerships, leveraging capabilities between partners and programs, and optimising support for National Societies through evidence-based practice.

I am very proud of the collective efforts of all GAP members who have, over this period, helped to support and enable safe and sustainable blood programs. We look forward to delivering our strategy 2022–2025 where “Good governance, safe blood” will always be top of mind.

Sincerely,
Prof. Philippe Vandekerckhove, GAP President
## Our year in review

Dedicated global program of **COVID-19 support** provided to global Red Cross / Red Crescent network

- **Welcomed new GAP member Laos**
- **> 450 participants** attended GAP’s 5 global webinars
- **> 1,000** RC and RC staff and volunteers reached with 8 technical update briefs
- **Self-assessment** Improved GAP’s primary risk management tool
- **32 requests** for specific advice and support responded to

Disaster preparedness development program delivered to **Indonesia**

Targeted training in **donor recruitment and retention** for Nepal, Bangladesh, Tanzania and Rwanda, and the Africa region

5 training courses launched on the IFRC Learning Platform

**Highlights 2021**
**Governance**

**Executive Board**

**President**
Prof Philippe Vandekerckhove  
Belgian Red Cross Blood Service Flanders

**Vice President**
Prof Wolfgang Mayr  
Austrian Red Cross Blood Service

**Permanent board member**
Ms Anita Tschaggelar  
Transfusion Swiss Red Cross

**Board member**
Ms Shelly Park  
Australian Red Cross Lifeblood

**IFRC representative**
Mr Panu Saaristo  
IFRC Health and Care Department

**Regional Coordinators**

**Americas**
Dr Elizabeth Vinelli  
Honduras Red Cross National Blood Centre

**Asia Pacific**
Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee  
Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service

**Europe and Central Asia**
Prof Wolfgang Mayr  
Austrian Red Cross Blood Service

**2021 Election results**
Prof Philippe Vandekerckhove - GAP President  
Dr Elizabeth Vinelli - Regional Coordinator (Americas)

**2021 New GAP member**
Laos Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service
Our membership and support capacity spans the globe.

GAP member Red Cross / Red Crescent blood services share their expertise to support delivery of our programs in risk management and corporate governance of National Society blood programs.
Since the development of GAP's previous strategic plan, the global and operational environment has changed significantly. A period of accelerated change, driven by the rapid pace of technological innovation and pandemic-related challenges, has altered working mechanisms and caused shifts in customer and stakeholder expectations.

Global travel restrictions, sustained uncertainty and variable rates of economic recovery were recognised as important factors in the development of GAP's new strategic plan (2022-2025). These factors require an increased focus on agility and flexibility to ensure GAP's programs and resources remain accessible, adaptive and customised to reflect the current local context.

GAP's large body of work is underpinned by the designated roles and responsibilities according to the IFRC Blood Policy and GAP's Statutes and Terms of Reference. GAP's vision, mission and new strategic priorities are aligned with these foundations. Our four foundational activities will continue as part of GAP's core work during 2022-25, and are intrinsic to the delivery of our new strategic priorities.
Through effective coordination, we harness the unique skills, capabilities and resources of both GAP and our partners to achieve the best outcomes for blood safety and program sustainability.

GAP's collaborative approach supports blood services to be resilient and adapt to uncertainty and change, by sharing best practice examples and supporting the management of known and emerging risks. We’re helping blood services to pursue continuous improvement and quality assurance.

In 2021, we delivered increased benefit to National Society blood programs through the following networks, partnership arrangements and joint initiatives:

- **National Society bilateral programs** - Swiss Red Cross (VNRBD), German Red Cross (Laos), Belgian Red Cross (Indonesia and Africa training), multiple partners (Nepal post-earthquake recovery program).
- **GAP member knowledge exchange** - providing information to support local decision making and policy setting, through recognition of how others approach similar decisions and conduct activities.
- **Global Reference Centre for blood, and links with IFRC** at a global and regional level - targeted COVID-19 support program, sharing communication strategies, liaison for country programs, expertise provided to IFRC on all matters relating to blood program risk management.
Value of our partnerships
Connecting blood services to support each other

“In the wake of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, when blood banks across the world are struggling due to a decline in supply, the donation of these 50 T-RACs will be of immense use”.

“These are beautiful, strong, easy to use and control. Our donors are also happy to see it!”

Dr Zahidur Rahman

GAP’s capabilities in connecting and coordinating network partners was highlighted with the generous donation of 50 blood monitors to the Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Service (BDRCS).

The BDRCS had identified a need for this vital equipment to improve their operations. When these specific items became available for donation while still in good working order, GAP saw the opportunity and provided coordination and liaison support between BDRCS and donor Australian Red Cross Lifeblood to meet this need.

Support also included identifying and securing partner funding to cover the transport and shipment costs, from Australian Red Cross.

The monitors are improving blood collection quality and safety at the main central collection site in Dhaka as well as in the seven regional centres.
One of GAP’s foundational activities is to develop and deliver technical tools and training to National Society blood services, improving their capacity to provide safe blood to meet patient demand.

Modular training
GAP’s modular training program is a suite of materials for vein-to-vein training and support for blood programs at both the country and regional level. The training package is aligned to assist countries with progressing towards and achieving local or international accreditation, and can be customised to suit a specific local context and theme.

In 2021, the focus of development was for training resources on COVID-19, VNRBD program support and ensuring remote delivery capabilities.

E-learning
Forming a part of the modular training packages and also existing as a standalone teaching tool, GAP has published several online e-learning courses. Hosted on the IFRC learning platform, these courses are widely and easily accessible to National Society blood service staff and volunteers across the IFRC network.

Self-assessment
The GAP Self-assessment enables National Society blood programs to assess their corporate governance and risk management strengths and challenges. A comprehensive review of the questionnaire was completed during the year to ensure this remains relevant and useful. The improved questionnaire will be distributed to Red Cross / Red Crescent blood services in the Asia-Pacific region during 2022.

“Very informative and useful course.”
“I hope that after this course I will be able to serve humanity in a better way.”
- GAP e-learning reviews
Global support - COVID-19
Managing pandemic impacts on blood programs

Blood programs experienced a range of challenges impacting donors, recruitment and blood sufficiency since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. With dedicated funding from IFRC, GAP was able to respond to these challenges by providing specialist technical advice and assistance to National Societies in this fast changing landscape.

Current and relevant advice and support was provided in the essential areas of:

- **Policy and procedural support** for COVID-19 related aspects of blood programs
- **Voluntary blood donor recruitment** at different phases of the pandemic, and into recovery
- **Operational changes** in the core areas of the blood service (blood collection, testing, storage)
- **Blood stock sufficiency** with inventory and surge capacity planning and shifting patient demand
- **Supply chain** shortages
- **Safety** of staff and donors
- **Convalescent plasma**, following latest research and recommended advice

Program design and delivery was tailored specifically to reflect individual country and regional needs, the evolving pandemic situation and challenges, and WHO recommendations.

**Lessons Learned**
GAP developed and distributed a publication capturing global insights on the impact of the pandemic on blood programs to further assist National Societies to respond to these challenges.
Global support - Achievements
Guiding National Societies through pandemic-related challenges

Analysis and sharing of WHO and other industry relevant technical guidance and resources to global network

E-learning courses on the IFRC Learning Platform
Targeted VNRBD remote training program for Nepal and Bangladesh

Sharing technical guidance

New online resource repository

COVID-19 training programs

Targeted advice and advocacy

5 webinars with 435 attendees
8 newsletters to >700 global subscribers,
6 brochures, 3 videos
Topics included: strategies to address COVID-19 impact, vaccination, supply chain (English and French)

Advice to IFRC and NS on topics such as risk management, VNRBD and policy, convalescent plasma, COVID-19 vaccination, donor management, supply chain
Global support - VNRBD

Promoting effective Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation programs for National Societies

Global pandemic-related challenges in recruiting blood donors and maintaining blood sufficiency carried into 2021. GAP continued to provide the focal point for National Society blood programs via remote advice, knowledge sharing and release of new blood donor recruitment tools and resources during this time. We provided:

- **A platform for knowledge sharing**: via a range of webinars on topics such as blood donation experiences during the pandemic, and digital and communications basics for recruiting and retaining blood donors.

- **Improved NS capacity to address blood sufficiency and safety challenges**: via communication of new resources (brochures, videos) and sharing of industry guidance in regular newsletters to the well-established Red Cross and Red Crescent network and the IFRC (refer to the GAP VNRBD Resources webpage).

- **Global and regional training and development**: The Africa region received two targeted VNRBD workshop sessions, well attended by 10 National Societies and the IFRC. The event provided a valuable opportunity to share challenges and success stories. Globally, three e-Learning modules in blood donor recruitment were released on the IFRC Learning Platform.

- **Specific advice and advocacy** was provided on request across a range of areas, including provision of advice to support Category B NS in understanding the risks involved in increasing their involvement in blood to include full blood service activities.
Regional support - Africa training

VNRBD Training for Red Cross Blood Donor Recruitment Programs in Rwanda and Tanzania

Blood programs in Africa face the global challenge of ensuring a safe and sustainable blood supply, with some countries relying heavily on replacement donations as their predominant source of donors and blood.

In collaboration with, and funded by Belgian Red Cross, GAP designed and led a tailored blood donor recruitment and retention training program for Rwanda and Tanzania. The sessions aimed to educate National Society employees and volunteers who could influence change in their respective communities.

The three-week virtual training program shared advice and best practice across a range of topics, to shift the focus from replacement to volunteer donors as a means to address safety and sufficiency challenges. The sessions were also attended by the respective national blood services to ensure synergy in recruitment strategies across the whole blood program.

Since the training, both National Societies have gone on to develop their own training guides and programs to support local sustainability. GAP’s resources have been adapted to fit their local context and are being used in the community to train new blood donor recruiters.

Value of this program:
- The volunteer’s role as a blood donor recruitment trainer in low resource settings - fostering sustainable, locally-owned projects
- A multi-partnered approach to program delivery, covering both remote and in-country implementation
- Successful piloting of a program in Tanzania and Rwanda which can then be further implemented across Africa as a proven model
- The National Society and the national blood service working together in Category B programs

“The training is very essential in saving lives, especially in our communities where blood donation awareness education is still a problem to the majority.”

“The training was so well prepared and the materials are of such great quality, it has been an amazing added value to our project (and will be used as a foundation for future projects!).”
Country support - Laos
Working towards accreditation

GAP is working closely with the Laos Red Cross Blood Service towards the implementation of AABB Fundamental Standards.

To support them in this process and in collaboration with partner German Red Cross, GAP delivered a virtual training program and mock audit for the Lao Red Cross National Blood Transfusion Centre in March 2021. Program design was tailored for the blood service’s identified areas of need and current priorities.

The interactive training workshops spanned donor selection, blood collection, counselling and donor care. The value of the program was demonstrated by the increased knowledge uptake of participants, further reflected in their implementation of new learnings into the workplace.

A mock quality systems audit and gap analysis against the AABB Fundamental Standards (designed for low resource settings) was also completed for their central site and two provincial blood centres.

The audit provided the opportunity for staff and management to:

- Gain **practical experience** of a blood program quality and technical audit, in preparation for the real audit,
- Improve their understanding of the **AABB Fundamental Standards**, 
- Establish grounds for their own **internal audit program**, 
- Identify any areas of **improvement** required, 
- Assess variations in process between **central and regional sites**.

"I would like to organize this training once a year and bring many places together to share good experiences to develop mobilization and blood services in the province"
Disaster response
Immediate advice and long-term rebuilding

When a disaster hits, whether environmental or man-made, it can be overwhelming to consider how to recover. As a network of experts and a focal point for Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs, GAP has a role in providing immediate advice as well as coordination assistance for long-term recovery in post emergency situations.

During 2021, GAP reached out to the blood services below immediately following events in these countries. These are Category A (full blood service) National Societies, with a primary role in provision of their national blood program. This initial contact from GAP highlighted the importance of including blood in any appeals to ensure resourcing for disaster recovery.

The existence of a resilient blood service is a critical aspect for disaster response and recovery. GAP also assists blood programs to develop a robust disaster preparedness framework and provides business continuity capacity building training, tailored for the local context.
**Disaster support - Indonesia**

Blood program recovery following the devastating 2018 earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi

Acknowledging the frequency of disasters in Indonesia and the significant impact on blood service provision, GAP, together with funding partner Belgian Red Cross supported Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI) to strengthen their capabilities in effective disaster preparedness planning and risk mitigation.

With the program completed during 2021, the PMI blood service now have operational and business continuity strategies that can be rapidly implemented in the event of any disaster, directly benefitting Palu, Sulawesi, as well as the wider PMI blood service network which spans 224 blood centres across the Indonesian archipelago.

Program achievements:

- **5 virtual training sessions to develop a disaster preparedness framework** including business continuity plans for 6 blood centres in the Sulawesi region and Jakarta.
- **A Disaster Preparedness Recommendations and Roll-out Plan** outlining activities to support the internal cascade of the program and ensure the disaster plans remain current and sustainable.
- **Blood storage / transport equipment** - to enable movement of blood in acute emergency or disaster phase, including blood transport containers and temperature monitoring dataloggers.
- **Critical blood bank information and communications technology equipment** to improve management, visibility and connectivity for the national blood supply and support network growth within PMI.
- **A complete transfusion safety training package.** 4 virtual training sessions and pre-recorded sessions provided for 21 blood service staff addressing transfusion testing, quality and safety, antibody screening and clinical transfusion medicine. To complement this training, micropipettes were purchased to upgrade the laboratory technical capabilities in Palu.

"Gain useful knowledge that can be directly implemented in blood service activities" PMI training participant
## Finance - Income and expenditure

(all figures in CHF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021 Budget</th>
<th>Actual I&amp;E 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPENING BALANCE - 1 JANUARY 2021</strong></td>
<td>862,405</td>
<td>862,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>252,000</td>
<td>262,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank interest</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner funded programs (VNRBD, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal Bhaktapur)</td>
<td>184,994</td>
<td>20,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>252,000</td>
<td>262,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>184,994</td>
<td>20,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>439,994</td>
<td>287,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website hosting, technical maintenance and software</td>
<td>(1,000)</td>
<td>(748)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist advice (including translation)</td>
<td>(2,000)</td>
<td>(1,183)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual General and stakeholder meetings</td>
<td>(18,100)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modular Training</td>
<td>(141,500)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Support (Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Laos)</td>
<td>(203,374)</td>
<td>(26,433)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner funded programs (COVID-19, VNRBD, Indonesia)</td>
<td>(445,628)</td>
<td>(376,591)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank fees</td>
<td>(500)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment fee and exchange rate gains / loss</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency funds</td>
<td>(20,000)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>(1,016,845)</td>
<td>(588,512)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial reclassification of equipment expenditure - corrected January 2022</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus / (Deficit)</td>
<td>(576,851)</td>
<td>(296,163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLOSING BALANCE - 31 DECEMBER 2021</strong></td>
<td>285,554</td>
<td>566,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Global Advisory Panel (GAP) on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

To ensure compliance with the Swiss Code of Obligations (as they apply to an association established under Swiss Law) which allows small organizations to appoint internal auditors without accounting expertise, I hereby present the report of the internal audit process conducted for the period from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. I believe that the evidence reviewed is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for this internal audit opinion.

The following activities have been conducted during the internal audit process:

- Review of the GAP Income and Expenditure Report for 2021, to ensure that closing balances for 2020 were correctly transferred to the opening balance for 2021,
- Review of the membership income as stated in the financial report,
- Review of the expenses for meetings and for the support of priority countries for reasonableness, and
- Review of the secretariat expenses for reasonableness.

During the audit, all necessary information and explanations required have been obtained.

In my opinion, the detailed Report of Income and Expenditure for 2021 has been properly prepared and is a veritable reflection of the transactions that occurred during the period of January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

[Signature]

Em. o. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Wolfgang R. MAYR
Acting as Internal Auditor for GAP

Vienna, May 10, 2022
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