



Global Advisory Panel

on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

*Good governance, safe **blood***





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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.

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.

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.



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.

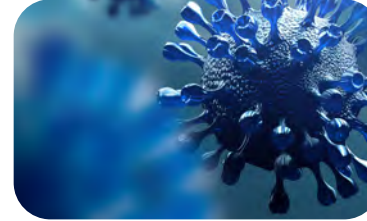
I am very proud of the collective efforts of all GAP members who have, over this period, helped to support and enable safe and sustainable blood programs. We look forward to delivering our strategy 2022–2025 where “Good governance, safe blood” will always be top of mind.

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



Developed GAP's new Vision and Strategic Plan **2022-2025**

Welcomed new GAP member **Laos**

> 450 participants attended GAP's 5 global webinars

Self-assessment
Improved GAP's primary risk management tool

32 requests for specific advice and support responded to

> 1,000 RC and RC staff and volunteers reached with 8 technical update briefs

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

Local expertise for program delivery



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

GAP Members

USA -
Mr Chris Hrouda



Honduras -
Dr Elizabeth Vinelli



Belgium -
Prof Philippe Vandekerckhove



Switzerland -
Ms Anita Tschaggelar



Germany - Prof Erhard Seifried



Austria - Prof Wolfgang Mayr



Finland -
Dr Satu Pastila



Israel - Prof. Eilat Shinar



Turkey - Dr Saim Kerman



Hong Kong -
Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee



Thailand -
Assoc. Prof. Dootchai
Chaiwanichsiri



Laos -
Dr Chanthala
Souksakhone



Japan -
Dr Masahiro
Satake



Australia -
Ms Shelly Park



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.

Strategic Plan

2022 and beyond

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.



GAP's Vision

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

Strategic Priorities (2022-2025)



Centre of excellence & expertise



Enhanced partnerships & collaborations



Optimised support for National Societies

Foundational Activities

Technical advice



Tools, guidelines and country support



Knowledge sharing, networking and partnership



Post-disaster assistance



Value of our partnerships

Collaboration for better outcomes

GAP is recognised as a trusted, reliable and credible support partner providing timely advice, expertise and resources to our network of Red Cross and Red Crescent blood services.

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



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.

"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



Tools, resources and training

Providing value where needed most



"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



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.

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.

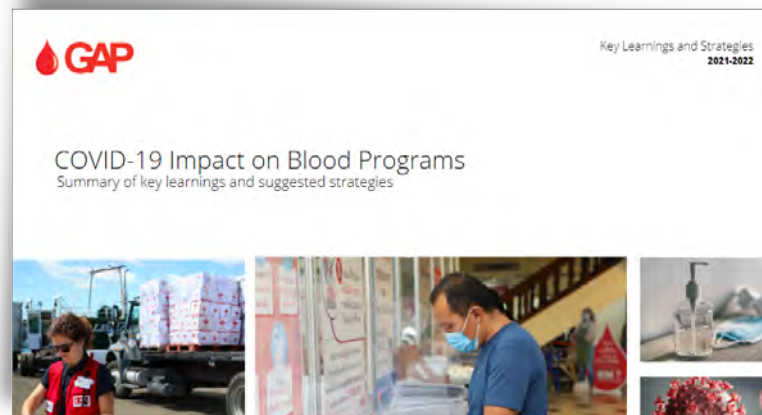
Current and relevant advice and support was provided in the essential areas of:

- **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.



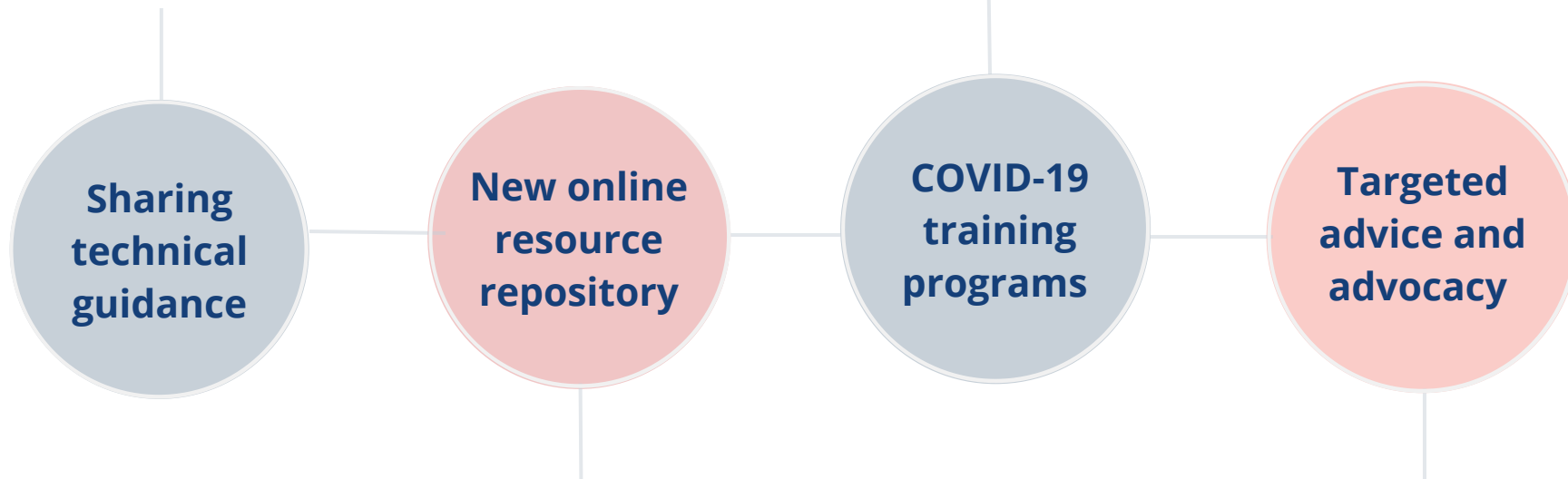
Global support - Achievements

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**



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

"It's really sharing with learning."
- GAP RC and RC network participant



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.

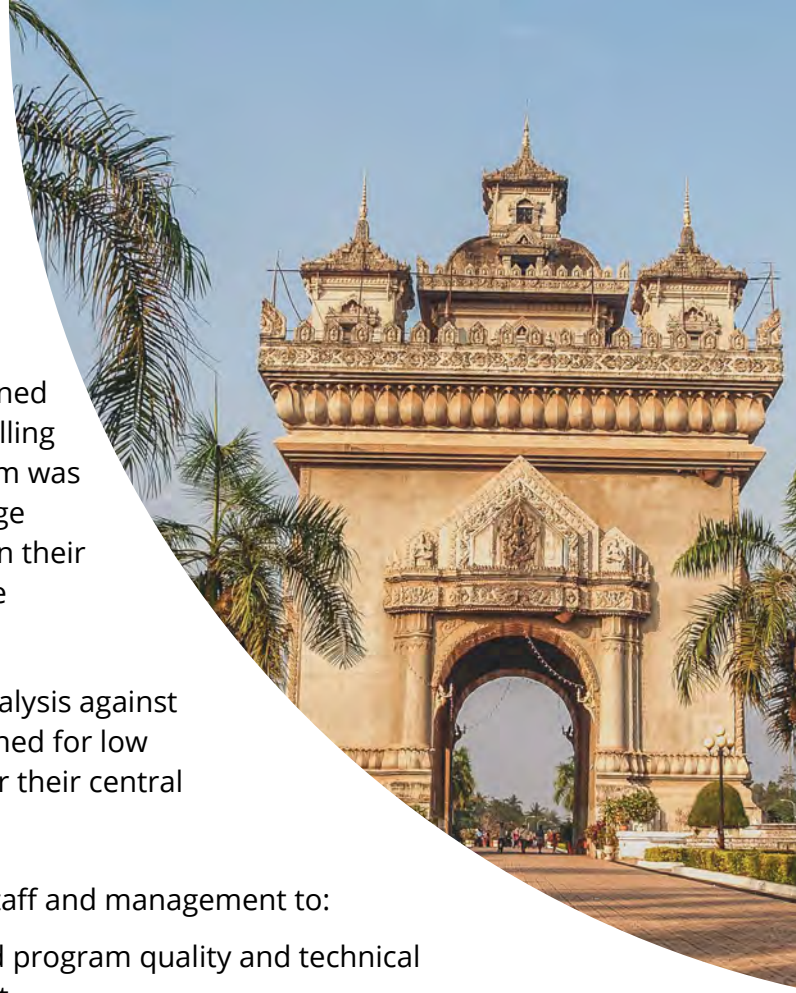
The interactive training workshops spanned donor selection, blood collection, counselling and donor care. The value of the program was demonstrated by the increased knowledge uptake of participants, further reflected in their implementation of new learnings into the workplace.

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"





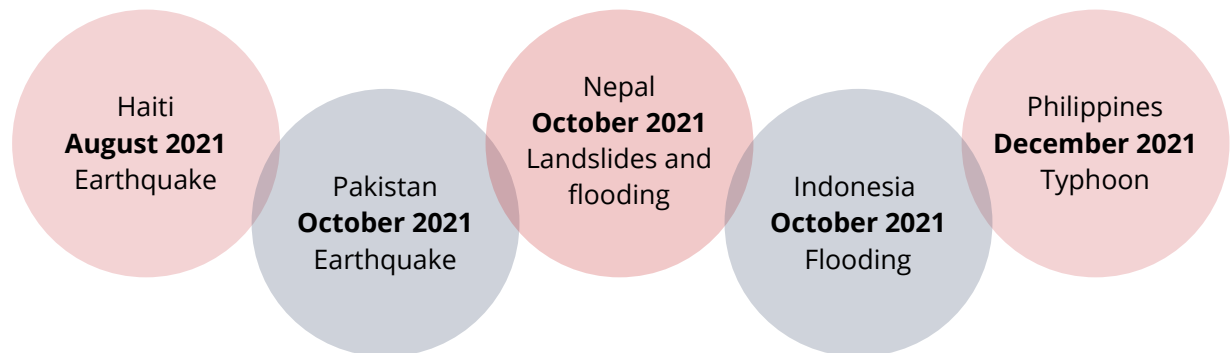
Disaster response

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.

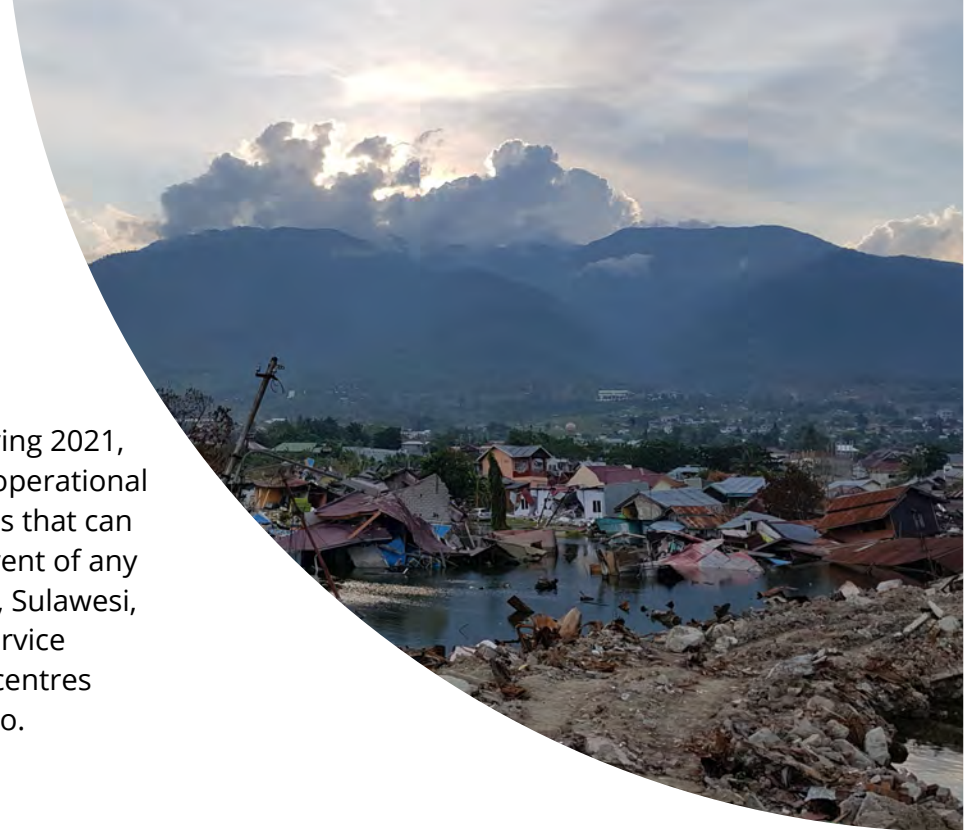
With the program completed during 2021, the PMI blood service now have operational and business continuity strategies that can be rapidly implemented in the event of any disaster, directly benefitting Palu, Sulawesi, as well as the wider PMI blood service network which spans 224 blood centres across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

	2021 Budget	Actual I&E 2021
OPENING BALANCE - 1 JANUARY 2021	862,405	862,405
Income		
Membership fees	252,000	262,500
Bank interest	3,000	4,174
Partner funded programs (VNRBD, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal Bhaktapur)	184,994	20,996
Total Income	439,994	287,671
Expenditure		
Secretariat expenses	(183,993)	(183,993)
Insurance	(750)	(665)
Website hosting, technical maintenance and software	(1,000)	(748)
Specialist advice (including translation)	(2,000)	(1,183)
Annual General and stakeholder meetings	(18,100)	0
Modular Training	(141,500)	0
Country Support (Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Laos)	(203,374)	(26,433)
Partner funded programs (COVID-19, VNRBD, Indonesia)	(445,628)	(376,591)
Bank fees	(500)	(60)
Investment fee and exchange rate gains / loss		1,161
Contingency funds	(20,000)	0
Total Expenditure	(1,016,845)	(588,512)
Financial reclassification of equipment expenditure - corrected January 2022	0	4,678
Surplus / (Deficit)	(576,851)	(296,163)
CLOSING BALANCE - 31 DECEMBER 2021	285,554	566,242

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

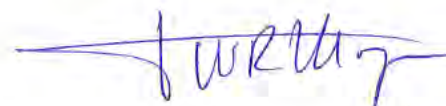
To ensure compliance with the Swiss Code of Obligations (as they apply to an association established under Swiss Law) which allows small organizations to appoint internal auditors without accounting expertise, I hereby present the report of the internal audit process conducted for the period from **January 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.



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

Vienna, May 10, 2022

gapsecretariat@redcrossblood.org.au
globaladvisorypanel.org

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