



ANNUAL REPORT

20 22

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Our vision

All Red Cross / Red Crescent blood programs 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.

Our mission

GAP will support Red Cross / Red Crescent blood services in **risk management and corporate governance** of blood programs, and promote **good practice and knowledge exchange**



President's message

2022 has been an important milestone year for GAP as we launched our new Strategic Plan to 2025 - laying the framework for our continued growth and impact in the years ahead.

Our plan's strategic pillars ensure a strong foundation by which to support Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (NS) to be well governed, while effectively managing the risks that are inherent with involvement in a blood program. In doing so, we are helping to develop resilient and responsive blood programs, in support of safe and sustainable blood supplies and improved community health outcomes.

GAP recognised a number of achievements under our new plan in 2022. We established an extra tier of scientific and technical advisory expertise which has provided expanded access to additional subject matter experts working within our membership.

The Swiss-Red Cross funded GAP program promoting voluntary, unpaid blood donation continued to keep on top of changes in donor behaviour throughout the year, supporting National Societies in their critical efforts to recruit donors in increasingly difficult circumstances. We welcomed new GAP member country El Salvador Red Cross Blood Centre which further expands our regional knowledge base in the Americas, and we also successfully facilitated an international request for rare blood, demonstrating the value of having a global network for knowledge sharing and rapid support when needed most.



We need to think differently about how we approach emergency response to global and domestic events, and manage disaster response and recovery (of blood programs) - with a clear and practiced plan.

President's message (continued)

A common theme this year was the domestic national security of blood and blood products. Meeting the demand for blood is always a primary challenge of blood services globally, however this now sits within an environment of increased uncertainty and disaster exposure - as our new norm.

GAP connected with six National Societies throughout the year to offer support in the event their blood service was impacted following disasters in their countries. The events of the last year have highlighted the increasing need for blood programs to ensure they are disaster-ready. We need to think differently about how we approach emergency response to global and domestic events, and manage disaster response and recovery – from critical supplies and infrastructure, to donor management – with a clear and practiced plan.

Another common theme we observed was an increasing number of requests from lower and middle income countries regarding plasma for fractionation. This is reflective of the growing global demand for plasma and GAP is providing risk-based advice and technical support to assist those blood services planning to increase their scope of activity in this area.



Image credit: IFRC ShaRED

We would like to thank all of our GAP Members, partners and networks for their expertise and support in 2022. We remain steadfast in our approach to promoting safe and well-governed Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs, for the benefit of blood donors, recipients, and communities globally.

*Sincerely,
Prof. Philippe Vandekerckhove, GAP President*

2022 snapshot

How we've tracked against the new GAP Strategic Plan 2022-2025



Pillar 1: Centre of excellence and expertise



New **GAP Scientific Advisory Group** established - access to additional **subject matter experts**

Increased global promotion - regular newsletters shared with network

Responded to 26 requests for **advice and guidance** from NS and IFRC across **technical topics for blood safety**

Improved accountability: revised IFRC Blood Policy approved by the Federation



Pillar 2: Enhanced partnerships and collaboration



Expanded GAP membership base: welcomed El Salvador Red Cross Blood Centre

Facilitated GAP member **knowledge exchanges**

Productive collaboration with Swiss Red Cross and Lao Red Cross on **certification**

Facilitated a **successful rare blood exchange**



Pillar 3: Optimised support for National Societies



Enhanced NS capacity through optimised Self-Assessment survey and reporting

Remote **training sessions** delivered to **improve NS capacity and strengthen programs**

Harnessed technology: **Suite of virtual resources** delivered (videos (3), eLearning courses (3), brochures (5))

Improved Category B NS blood donor recruitment programs through dedicated advice and specialised support

How we are governed

Executive Board



President *(re-elected 2022)*
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 *(elected 2022*)*
Dr Masahiro Satake
Japanese Red Cross Blood Service

**Ms Shelly Park, Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, retired February 2022*

Regional Coordinators

Local expertise delivering tailored regional support



Americas *(re-elected 2022)*
Dr Elizabeth Vinelli
Honduran 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



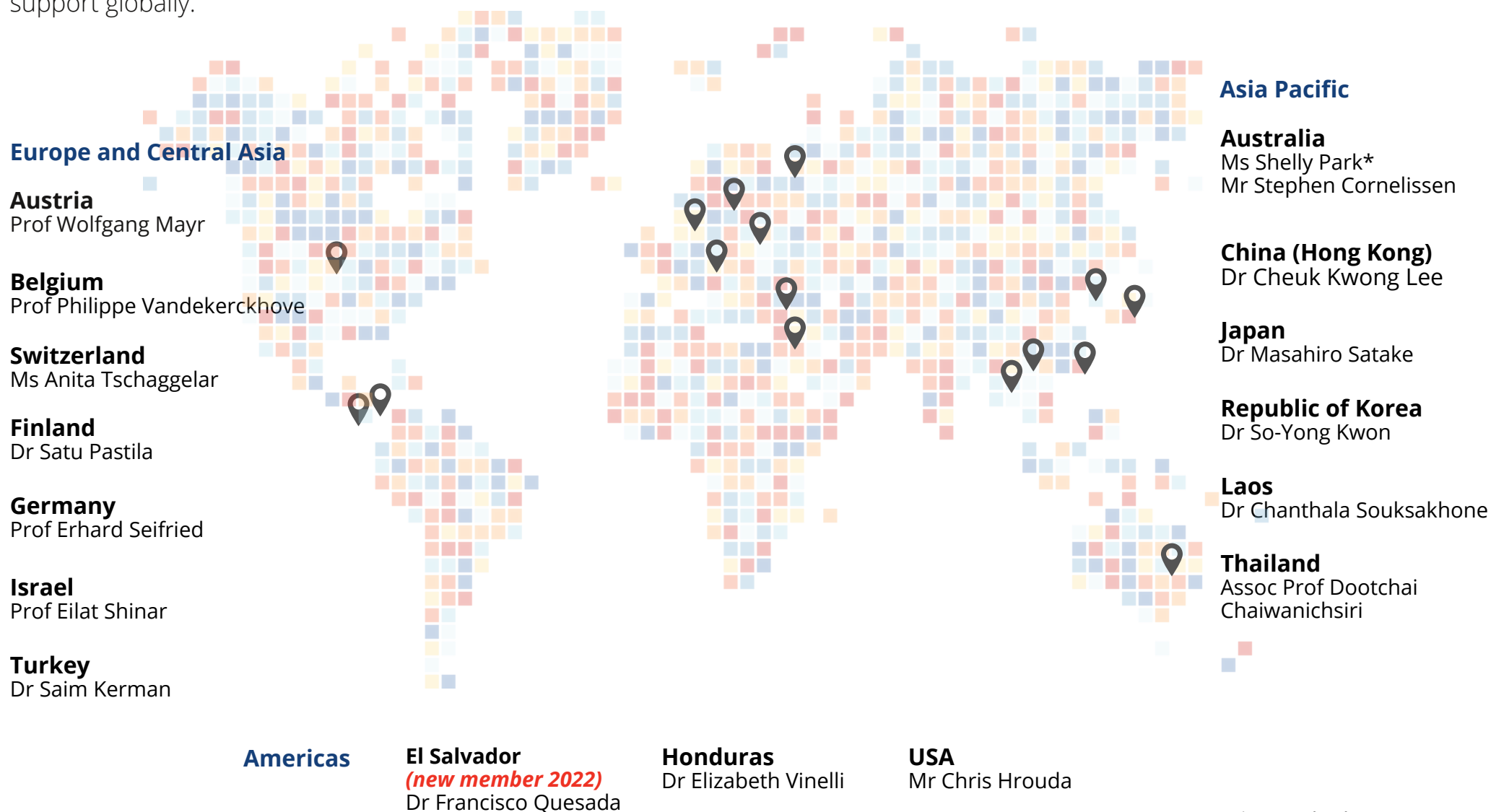
IFRC Observer



IFRC representative
Mr Panu Saaristo
IFRC Health and Care Department

GAP Membership: Our global network of experts

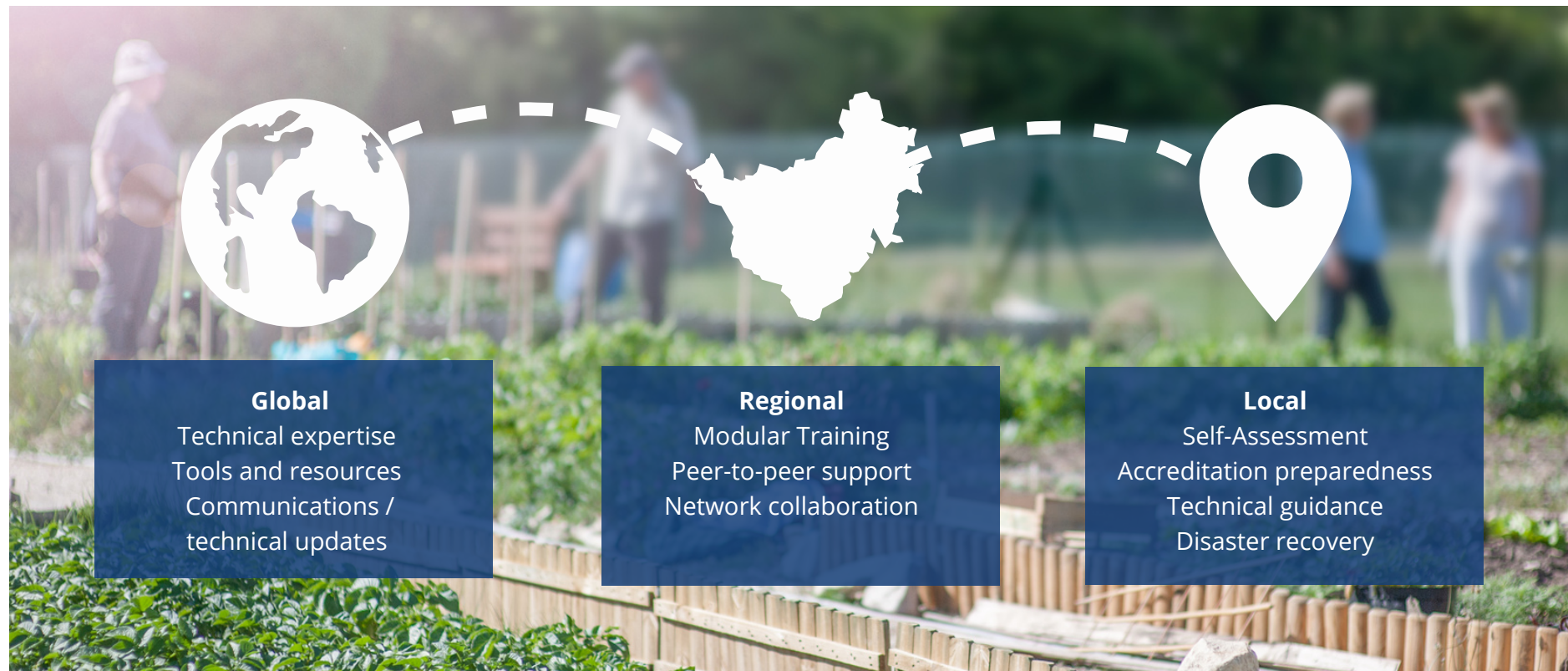
With a membership spanning 16 countries, providing expertise across all global regions - we strive to ensure the highest level of support globally.



How we help

Our support spans global, regional and local levels

GAP is uniquely placed as the only organisation providing dedicated support for the specific corporate governance and risk management requirements of Red Cross and Red Cross blood programs. We do this through a range of mechanisms from advice and advocacy, to technical training, to provision of resources for improving voluntary non-remunerated blood donation. GAP's collaborative approach helps 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.



How we've helped: globally

From large centres with high volume blood collection to smaller programs dispersed across multiple islands with low populations, GAP's diverse support capacity helps to strengthen and connect Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC and RC) blood programs globally.

Technical expertise for a well-informed blood community

GAP continued its role interpreting **World Health Organisation (WHO) and other industry guidance** as these relate to blood safety and sustainability. Relevant information is shared with RC and RC blood programs with advice regarding how it may impact their blood programs and decision-making.

In 2022, with the evolving pandemic crisis, GAP reviewed and shared updated recommendations for **COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma (CCP)** from leading industry organisations to assist NS considering the clinical value of CCP as an experimental therapy for improving donor outcomes. Other emerging infectious diseases prevalent this year included Mpox and Ebola virus. GAP shared guidance for blood programs on these, including recommendations for donor management or deferral, vaccination, and how to maintain blood safety.



On the donor front, every year GAP assists WHO and IFRC in promoting **World Blood Donor Day (June 14th)** in the RC and RC community. We do this by sharing annual themes and materials, and providing technical advice to NS and IFRC on key messaging and materials for the event. This important day always generates excellent creative ideas for promoting the importance of blood donation and celebrates the vital role of blood donors.

GAP helped to review the **AABB Fundamental Standards**. These standards are specifically designed for use in low resource settings, providing contextually relevant blood quality and safety standards, with the aim to strengthen blood programs through adherence and certification.

How we've helped: globally

Red Cross and Red Crescent Network sharing:
resource development and communications

In 2022, GAP further developed new materials as part of the publicly available **repository of GAP resources**, and these were shared with the RC and RC network regularly. GAP's resources are designed to educate and empower National Society blood programs in trending topics and technical updates on blood donation and safety. Our **engaged network** has grown to more than one thousand subscribers.

Nearing the final stages of a 6-year project supported by the Swiss Red Cross Humanitarian Foundation, this year GAP's support spanned a range of activities on **voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation (VNRBD)** - from online events and eLearning modules to information and customisable marketing materials. NS are always eager to receive these materials and learn from the experiences shared, and demand for these offerings remains high.

2022 saw new barriers to blood donation, particularly within the context of **changing donor behaviours**. GAP addressed this by sharing creative strategies to target blood donors, on topics such as communication techniques, youth and group blood donation, volunteer recruitment, and importantly post-pandemic – improving the donor experience.

"GAP is for me and my National Society, the "window to the world" in terms of voluntary, unpaid blood donation."

- VNRBD Program manager, Red Cross of Serbia

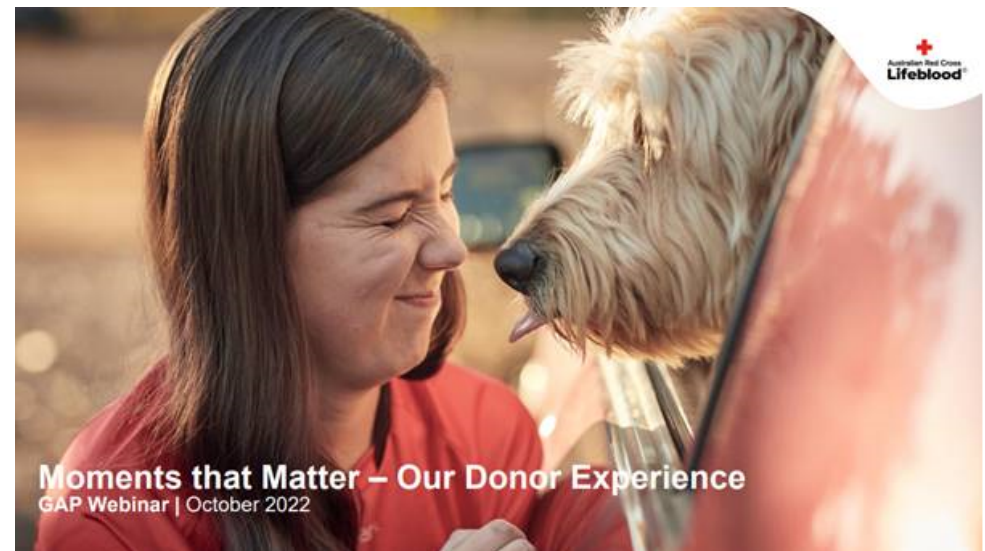


Image credit: Australian Red Cross Lifeblood (from webinar)

National Societies value hearing from their peers regarding their own strategies in recruitment and blood safety delivered via GAP's virtual platform of webinars and videos.

How we've helped: globally

Highlight: A request for rare blood



GAP is proud of the work we do in being able to effectively connect RC and RC blood services to directly impact people's lives.

GAP's experience in facilitating connection between blood services was highlighted this year with a unique request from a Red Cross blood service in the Asia-Pacific region, seeking an **urgent rare blood type** for an anaemic patient requiring surgery.

A successful outcome was achieved, with a neighbouring GAP member blood service able to rapidly dispatch units of rare blood to the country in need.

We would like to acknowledge all GAP members who offered support for this specific request.

How we've helped: regionally

Capacity building: Regional training support

GAP's **Self-Assessment tool** is used to identify regional strengths and challenges for blood program risk management. Thematic training is delivered **through our Modular Training program**, including comprehensive workshop packages. All training is tailored to meet the unique needs of the recipient or region, with the overall goal of advancing progress towards adherence to local or international standards.

In 2022, GAP delivered training in the **Asia Pacific region via a regional workshop for VNRBD**. Funded by the Swiss Red Cross, the workshop brought together Category B NS from the region for training over two sessions on donor recruitment and retention. The event was well attended by 24 participants from 10 NS and provided attendees with an important platform to share experiences and questions, access resources, and discuss regional strengths and common challenges.

Staying in the Asia Pacific region, GAP also presented at an **IFRC-led regional workshop** for Category B National Societies. GAP provided information on the levels of NS involvement in a country's blood program, with a specific focus on risk management for NS planning to expand or scale back their specific involvement in blood.

Special acknowledgement goes to our 2022 webinar and training guest presenters from Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, Belgian Red Cross - Flanders, Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service, Korean Red Cross Blood Service, Sri Lanka Red Cross, Samoa Red Cross Society, Singapore Red Cross Society and IFRC Asia Pacific Office.



How we've helped: regionally

Network collaboration and peer-to-peer support

GAP recognises the importance of peer-to-peer support between blood services and actively facilitates the exchange of information and experience sharing through its well-established regional networks and member base.

GAP facilitates member **knowledge exchanges across a range of topics** from blood donor selection criteria to advice on setting up mobile blood collection vehicles. The practices and approaches shared in these exchanges is communicated at both regional and global levels and can be further applied in local programs where appropriate.



GAP is also the **blood-related 'go-to' point for IFRC regional offices**, providing locally relevant technical expertise and advice as required. For example, this year we provided logistical, regulatory and risk management advice to the IFRC Europe and Central Asia office regarding blood drives planned across the region to support blood needs in Ukraine, **during the ongoing conflict**.

We continue to play a pivotal role in improving opportunities for **blood service collaboration** in the Movement through regional networks and peer-to-peer support.

How we've helped: locally

Bringing international expertise to a local audience

As knowledge on the importance of having a strong national blood program grows, so too does the need for technical guidance and support at the local level.

Self-Assessment of blood program risk

In 2022 we launched a new format for both Category A (full blood service) and B (donor recruitment and retention) GAP Self-Assessment surveys, enabling National Societies to **more effectively assess their risk management and governance challenges**. Participating National Societies receive confidential feedback helping them to ensure they are managing their involvement in blood via individualised recommendations and strategies.

Through this Self-Assessment program, GAP also identified **common regional themes**, including several Category B National Societies seeking to increase their level of involvement in their national blood program. Advice was provided via targeted education sessions to ensure any changes in activity are managed appropriately.



Working with Laos on accreditation-preparedness

GAP continued to work with the Laos Red Cross Blood Service towards **achieving certification** to the AABB Fundamental Standards. We also provided partnering support to the Swiss Red Cross who commenced their own dedicated program in Laos. GAP works closely with partners, leveraging the individual capacities and expertise of each to maximise available support, for the benefit of local blood programs.

This links with GAP's ongoing involvement with the AABB standards committee, providing the opportunity for GAP to advise NS on the appropriateness of this accreditation program in resource limited settings, and the **documentation and audit requirements for certification**.

How we've helped: locally

One-to-one tailored technical support and guidance to improve local access to safe blood

Requests for GAP's technical guidance covered a diverse range of vein-to-vein topics during 2022.

Across Asia Pacific and African regions where many Category B NS are located, we saw more requests and interest for **donor recruitment and retention** support than ever before, emphasising how valuable this component of GAP support is for a growing number of National Societies.

For example, GAP assisted an African NS to further strengthen their **relationship with the Ministry of Health** by reviewing and providing advice on their Memorandum of Understanding for donor recruitment activities.

We also utilised our diverse network to link a Red Cross blood bank in India with a **global corporation to coordinate a blood drive** in the community. We work to harness the power of humanity in the Movement.

Plasma for fractionation has been an emerging theme among lower- and middle-income country blood programs in recent years. This year GAP played a role in providing risk-based advice and technical support to blood services planning to expand their scope of activity in this area.



Image credit: Australian Red Cross Lifeblood

How we've helped: locally

Monitoring global events

Protecting the blood supply from Ebola virus

With Ebola outbreaks in neighbouring countries, an African Red Cross Society proactively sought advice from GAP on how to best protect their donor pool and blood supply from a possible spread of the virus. As the 'go-to' point for expert technical advice, GAP provided up to date information to this NS to help them confidently navigate the potential risk.



Disaster response

Where required, GAP provides **coordination of blood program technical support** to National Society blood services immediately following a disaster. During 2022, we connected with several National Societies following significant events in their countries, to offer GAP assistance.

Finance - Income and expenditure

(all figures in CHF)

	2022 Budget	Actual I&E 2022
OPENING BALANCE - 1 JANUARY 2022	566,242	566,242
Income		
Membership fees	253,006	254,068
Bank interest	2,500	5,878
Partner funded programs (VNRBD, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal Bhaktapur)	168,930	214,212
Total Income	424,436	474,158
Expenditure		
Secretariat expenses	(189,513)	(189,513)
Insurance	(750)	(665)
Website hosting, technical maintenance and software	(1,000)	(1,183)
Specialist advice (including translation)	(2,000)	(1,131)
Annual General and stakeholder meetings	(13,500)	(111)
Bank fees	(100)	(131)
Investment fee and exchange rate gains / loss	0	(786)
Contingency funds	(20,000)	0
Country / regional support	(183,374)	(102,839)
Modular Training	(121,500)	(101,500)
Partner funded programs (VNRBD, GAP website, Indonesia)	(265,932)	(161,148)
Total Expenditure	(797,669)	(559,007)
Surplus / (Deficit)	(373,233)	(84,849)
CLOSING BALANCE - 31 DECEMBER 2022	193,010	481,393

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, 2022** to **December 31, 2022**. 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 2022, to ensure that closing balances for 2021 were correctly transferred to the opening balance for 2022,
- 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,
- Review of the secretariat expenses for reasonableness, and
- Review of partner founded programs: the mobilisation of new resources is necessary in due future.

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

In my opinion, the detailed Report of Income and Expenditure for 2022 has been properly prepared and is a veritable reflection of the transactions that occurred during the period of January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.



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

Vienna, May 10, 2023



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Good governance, safe blood

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