COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT GUIDE
FACT SHEET, HUMAN-INTEREST STORY, CASE STUDY, AND NEWSLETTER
AMCROSS - LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
The Regional Delegation of the American Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean works to ensure effective documentation of our programming in the region and to ensure that we communicate our key messages across different audiences.

To this end, the communications team has developed a support guide that sets out some of the suggested formats for materials produced by the regional delegations and National Societies. The materials and links provided with this support guide follow the branding standards set out by American Red Cross headquarters and look to standardize the types of documents that are produced across the region. This, to ensure that our brand is strengthened and recognized at every level - local, national, regional and international.

The guide focuses on 4 specific categories of materials: fact sheets, human-interest stories, case studies and newsletters. These are only some of the options that can be used for communications materials and reflect a few that are frequently used by regional delegations.

The materials outlined in this guide are meant for external audiences at various levels, as further detailed in each individual description. It is important to note that the templates can be further adjusted to the individual needs of each communications piece or campaign and are meant as a guideline only.
A fact sheet is meant to **summarize simple data and present it in a concise and easily readable way.** Fact sheets should be standardized and have a user-friendly layout, highlighting the most pertinent information through visually appealing details.

In the case of the Amcross LAC Unit, fact sheets are useful for **illustrating our programming and the main aspects and achievements of each project.** These are meant for an external audience, to allow anyone to gain a quick understanding of what we do in a given region or country.

It is important to produce annually updated fact sheets, in order to ensure that we have simple and concise material to share with interested stakeholders and partners. These can also be used as brochures or hand-outs.

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### Tips for Writing a Fact Sheet

- Use clear titles and include all pertinent logos
- Include numbers and achievements of a given project/program
- Use simple language and an easy-to-read layout
- Limit text to a maximum of 100 words per paragraph
- Do not include abbreviations or jargon
- Use graphics when possible, instead of heavy text
- Include contact information and relevant networks
- Limit to a one-page single or double-sided

### Media

- Digital or print
- One page, single or double-sided

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### Target Audience

- Current and potential donors
- Governments
- RC Movement

### Purpose

Provide the reader with an easy-to-read summary describing a project and/or program

### Frequency

- Annual
Fact Sheet Sample

Impact of American Red Cross Global Programs

Responding to Emergencies
We assisted an estimated **5.5 million** people in response to disasters in **25** countries in FY 2014.

Preparing for Disasters
We are helping families and communities in **33** countries prepare for future disasters.

Eliminating Measles and Rubella
Since 2000, we have helped vaccinate over **1.8 billion** children against measles, preventing approximately **15.6 million** childhood deaths.

Teaching the Rules of War
We helped more than **25,000** people learn about the laws that protect civilians and combatants during armed conflict in FY14.

Reconnecting Families
In FY14, we helped reconnect **1,115** families that had been separated by conflict or disaster.

American Red Cross Goals
- Reach more families around the world in the face of emergencies.
- Empower 1 billion households with tools and resources to take active steps towards increased safety and resilience by 2025.
- Eliminate measles worldwide by 2020.

As a co-founder of the Measles & Rubella Initiative, the American Red Cross has helped prevent **15.6 million** childhood deaths since 2000. Between 2000 and 2013, measles deaths fell by **75%** worldwide. No other single health intervention has accomplished such a reduction in mortality in such a short time. Despite this success, measles still kills an estimated 400 children every day, even though it only costs **$1 to vaccinate** a child against the disease. We have an immediate opportunity to stop measles at its roots and bring this number to zero.
Fact Sheet Template

FACT SHEET

COUNTRY NAME

Country Overview
RITA began its operations in Nicaragua in 2013 and is implemented by the Nicaraguan Red Cross, with technical and financial support from the American Red Cross. The intervention works in the areas of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Disaster Risk Reduction, among others.

About RITA
A multi-sectoral project, RITA (Resilience in the Americas) looks to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and socioeconomic impact caused by disasters by strengthening the Red Cross National Societies and contributing to more secure and resilient societies.

The two principal objectives of the project are:
1. Increase the capacity of the Red Cross National Societies to deliver, coordinate and advocate for disaster risk reduction.
2. Reduce risks associated with disasters and increase resilience, especially in vulnerable communities.

5 COMMUNITIES

2,245 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

US$126,000 IN FUNDS COMMITTED

RITA works in the following 4 areas:

- Capacities, Attitudes and Practices (CAP)
- Community Organization
- Physical Space Management
- Advocacy
A human-interest story is a feature that discusses a person or people in an emotional way. It presents people and their problems, concerns, or achievements in a way that brings about interest, sympathy or motivation in the reader or viewer.

For the Amcross LAC Unit, human-interest stories are important in order to relate the reader to real people we work with in the field. Through these, we can share field stories from each one of our projects and share them with our current and potential donors, but also with other actors, such as the public in general – to continue reinforcing our brand in the region.

Sharing high-quality compelling material about the people that we serve is a way to connect the audience to the communities that we work with. It is also an excelling fundraising tool.

Tips for Creating a Human-Interest Story

- Answer the following five questions: When? Why? Where? What? How?
- Try to include a before and after to the story.
- Include a central theme – why are you writing about this (or filming it)?
- Make sure you have the following: name(s), community and country, project the person is involved with, age and gender if relevant.
- Link the story to specific project/program actions.
- Support the story through visual components, such as photos or videos.

Media

- Digital or print article
- Video footage
- Photo report
- Radio story

Target Audience

- Current and potential donors
- RC Movement
- General public

Purpose

Spread our key messaging, aid in fundraising efforts and work as a motivational tool.

Frequency

- Monthly (minimum)
There are many different ways to present human-interest stories. In order to determine which is the best for you, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Who is your audience?**
- **What resources do you have - time, money, staff?**
- **How will you disseminate the material?**

Once you have thought about these questions, it will be easier to identify the best option for your needs and resources. Let’s take a closer look at what you will need and how to use each of the resources mentioned in this section. Please note that you are not limited to using these options - there are always new and creative ways to communicate human-interest stories.

### Written Story - Blog vs. Article

There are two main ways to present a written human-interest story: by writing an article or a blog. **An article is usually more formal**, reflecting a report-like style (for example, a newspaper article). A blog, on the other hand, is written from **your own perspective** and experience.

There are certain rules that apply to both. Because it is likely that you are writing to post this online, **keep the article or blog short** - between 300-500 words. Make sure to include the most important information first and thus peak the interest of your reader. You should also **include at least one great photo** go with your post. [Click here to download photo release form](#).

### Photo Report

Another way to communicate a human-interest story is through a photo report. Did you go in the field and get some really great photos? Then use them! This a less time-consuming way to share a story and often more effective. The digital attention span is very low, and scrolling through photos with short captions can be easier and more fun for a reader.

There are a couple of things to keep in mind when putting together your photo report. Try to look for **compelling photos and close-ups**. Once again, you will need to keep your photo release forms on file. Make sure to **include a caption with each photo** - you can even add a quote if you can, these should not be longer then 100 words total. [Click here to access the Photo Guide Folder](#).

### Video

Today, video is probably the most dynamic way to present information. It is also a great way to share information with local communities. But be careful! Making videos can be time-consuming and heavy on the use of technology and software - so **make sure you have the time and resources** to get your footage edited after you have taken it.

Here are some tips when putting together your video. Keep it **no longer than 3 minutes** - otherwise you will lose your viewers’ attention. When including interviews, include their name (if permitted) and relation to the project. **Keep your videos dynamic** by switching between frames and content! [Click here to access the Video Guide Folder](#).
School Kids in Costa Rica Prepare for Emergencies

When a natural disaster strikes, it’s often the split-second decisions that save lives. Where to seek shelter. When to evacuate. How to apply first aid. Throughout Latin America, the Red Cross has been providing communities with the tools and training they need to stay safe during natural disasters.

Residents of San Rafael recall the bands of rain that pelted Costa Rica for nearly five days in November 2010. By the time it was over, Hurricane Tomas had killed 23 Costa Ricans. “People in our community died,” recalls a local school teacher. “We didn’t have disaster preparedness plans in our school or know what to do.”

There was one certainty, though: they’d do everything they could to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

So for the past two years, the Red Cross has been working with communities in Central and South America to equip children and adults with the skills they need to survive and thrive when natural disasters strike. The Red Cross has been training residents on first aid, disaster preparedness plans, emergency simulations and other life-saving activities with the involvement of local governments and
HUMAN INTEREST STORY

Document title
Document subtitle


Heading 1


"Vivamus ultrices lorem non ex rhoncus. In dignissim lectus pharetra. Mauris ullamcorper tincidunt dictum. Nullam est dolor, interdum nec elit eu, finibus porttitor massa."


Alongside the Red Cross, Amaril teaches her neighbors about safe water and sanitation practices and is especially dedicated to improving the health of children. She leads the local women’s group, which is active in disaster preparedness activities in San Victor.
Document title


The main purpose of a case study is to share knowledge obtained from project implementation. Unlike a lessons learned document, case studies are more detailed and more engaging to an external reader. They are meant to ensure comprehension for external audiences, who may not have in-depth knowledge of the project or initiative.

In the case of the Amcross LAC Unit, case studies are useful in sharing specific experiences of the National Societies or Amcross regional teams during implementation. They can provide the reader with knowledge that was obtained and a higher level of detail than, for example, a human-interest story. At the same time, the information is presented in a more engaging way than a report; therefore the reader has an easier time interacting with it.

Case studies can be the follow-up to a human-interest story from the field. For example, if you report on a great story and see that there is program knowledge that is important to share with an external audience, you can go in more depth and write a case study.

Tips for Writing a Case Study

- Background: describe context around the project
- Project: write a simple summary of the project and/or specific actions taken within a community
- Results: how does the project/action impact communities where it is carried out?
- Lessons learned: what went well, what had to be changed to achieve project goals?
- Looking forward: how is this project / action sustainable?
- Include visual aid, such as photographs, infographics, charts, graphs, etc.

Media

- Digital or print
- Two to six page document

Target Audience

- Amcross and NS Staff
- RC Movement
- Peer organizations

Purpose

Share knowledge acquired through a specific project with a wider audience.

Frequency

- Ad-hoc
Bridging the gap
Integrating climate change and disaster risk reduction

Summary
The climate is changing and communities in some countries are already feeling the heat. Climate information in the form of trends and forecasts, combined with tried and tested disaster risk reduction measures, can help anticipate disasters before they happen and enable communities to prepare for and cope with them. Fundamental to this approach is strengthening partnerships between the humanitarian sector and those working in the field of climate change. National Societies in the Asia-Pacific region have been showing the way in this important area.

Rising to the challenge of climate change
Meeting the humanitarian challenges posed by climate change requires not only strengthening capacities to respond to disasters when they occur but also investing in disaster risk reduction, that is, in making communities stronger and more resilient in the first place.

Want to read the full case study? Click here
Case Study Template

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE
Newsletters are used to share recent and most important news with a given audience, often members of a society, organization or business. It is also intended for sharing upcoming events and activities, specific campaigns, and key messaging.

For the Amcross LAC Unit, newsletters can be helpful in reporting on monthly or quarterly activities in a user-friendly manner, and sharing messages through easy-to-read material. When appropriate, newsletters can include invitations to events or activities, as well as key messaging, for example on resilience. They are also meant to compile the materials outlined previously in one place and share these with our audiences.

It is useful to include links to external sources in your newsletters. For example, if you would like to share a video or a case study, all you need to do is include a summary or description of the document and then include a link to where this document can be accessed.

### Tips for Writing a Newsletter

- Share valuable and exclusive information that will engage your audience
- Keep each item short and concise, provide links to longer articles if necessary
- Use clean and compelling design in line with our brand
- Include visuals, such as photographs or icons to highlight your messages
- Utilize call-to-action to engage your audience
- Link the newsletter to social media and external resources

### Media

- Digital or print
- One or two-page, double-sided
- Published online and on social media

### Target Audience

- Current donors
- Facebook followers
- Peer organizations

### Purpose

Inform the audience about past and upcoming activities; share key messages.

### Frequency

- Quarterly
You Give Hope Across the Country

Each year brings unforeseen disasters. In 2011, devastating home fires were abundant, while severe weather patterns across the United States caused tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, and flooding. In every county, the Red Cross brought relief, providing for the immediate needs of disaster victims with food, shelter, emergency first aid, clean-up kits and other necessities. The ongoing support of monthly Champions like you make this relief possible.

For some, temporary shelter, a hot meal and a kind ear were all they needed before they could go back home. But others, whose homes had been damaged or lost, needed much more.

The Red Cross was always there, meeting one-on-one with people and families to help them plan for long-term recovery.

It’s our goal to help individuals and families get back on their feet as soon as possible.

Tornadoes, hurricanes and flooding

Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee disrupted the lives and destroyed the property of thousands along the Eastern Seaboard. Immediately, the Red Cross was operating or supporting nearly 500 shelters in the service of more than 25,000 displaced residents, and relief work continued for weeks afterward to help those affected by the flooding that followed.

In Florida, many Red Cross shelters were opened in response to tornadoes, thunderstorms, high winds, and flooding. Emergency Response Vehicles were dispatched to bring supplies to affected area residents and also to provide canteen services to the emergency responders.

In mid-April, one of the most deadly and devastating storms in U.S. history launched 241 twisters across 14 states, killing hundreds of people from Oklahoma to North Carolina and destroying countless homes. Within hours, the Red Cross was on the ground, working around the clock to provide shelter, hot meals, comfort kits and more.

Counting on the Red Cross

From temporarily disrupted lives to catastrophic loss, the Red Cross is ready to meet emergency needs for disaster victims across America. Not just to provide shelter and a warm meal, but to lend the support needed to rebuild homes and lives. Thanks to your generous support, people in need know they can count on the Red Cross.

Inside

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P3 Ready at a moment’s notice
P4 Saving a rescuer’s life

To find out more about how you can be a Red Cross volunteer, visit www.chapteruni.org
Newsletter Template

Click here to download template.