



Barbados Red Cross Society

Annual Report 2024



About Us

The Barbados Red Cross Society (BRCS) was incorporated on 24 July 1969 by an Act of Parliament as a Voluntary Aid Society auxiliary to Government. It became a full member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 1984. Guided by the **Seven Fundamental Principles**, the BRCS delivers core services such as Meals on Wheels, First Aid training, Disaster preparedness and response, Psychosocial Support, and Community Outreach.

In August 1984, the Society was approved as a member of the International Red Cross and became a full member of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (now known as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC or the Movement) with all the privileges afforded to its Member Societies.

The Barbados Red Cross is now a part of the world's largest humanitarian network, with nearly 117 million members, volunteers and supporters in 192 National Societies.

Message from the President



Fabianna Alexander
President

The year 2024 placed the Barbados Red Cross Society (BRCS) at the centre of national and regional humanitarian response. The devastating impact of Hurricane Beryl highlighted the urgent need for preparedness, resilience, and solidarity. Our Governing Board worked closely with staff, volunteers, government, and international partners to ensure BRCS was able to respond swiftly to immediate needs, while strengthening systems for future emergencies.

I was honoured to represent BRCS in the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) during the passage of Hurricane Beryl, ensuring that the National Society's capacities were fully integrated into the country's emergency coordination.

A major factor in our success was the strength of the **International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**, whose solidarity ensured that Barbados was not alone in this time of crisis. Through the IFRC's Emergency Appeal, we were able to quickly mobilize financial resources, logistics support, and technical expertise. This enabled BRCS to scale up operations rapidly, from distributing multipurpose cash assistance and supporting fisherfolk livelihoods to reinforcing emergency shelter readiness. Without this coordinated Movement response, our reach and impact would have been severely limited.

Equally important has been our commitment to digital transformation. In 2024, BRCS advanced the use of data systems and digital tools to improve assessments, reporting, accountability, and

volunteer management. From the use of Kobo for monitoring and evaluation, to exploring digital platforms for volunteer engagement and RedRose systems for cash assistance, these innovations are helping us operate more efficiently, strengthen transparency, and ensure evidence-based decision-making. Digitalization is no longer optional—it is central to how we serve vulnerable communities in an increasingly complex world.

As we look back on the year, we are reminded that the strength of BRCS lies not only in its small but dedicated team, but also in the solidarity of the wider Movement and our partners. Guided by our Fundamental Principles, we reaffirm our commitment to standing alongside the people of Barbados in times of crisis, while building stronger systems of resilience for the future.

Message from the Director General



Danielle Toppin
Director General

Hurricane Beryl was a defining moment for the Barbados Red Cross Society in 2024. Despite limited staffing and financial resources, our Society demonstrated remarkable agility and determination. With the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers, we were able to distribute hygiene kits to 100 households, deliver multipurpose cash assistance to 129 fisherfolk, and begin the process of supporting long-term recovery.

Our volunteers, staff and IFRC partners were the backbone of this response. They stepped forward with unwavering dedication, working in shelters during the passage of Hurricane Beryl, supporting distributions, and lending their skills to data collection, logistics, and psychosocial support. Their resilience and adaptability ensured that BRCS was able to serve vulnerable people quickly and effectively, even when our human and financial resources were stretched to their limits.

The year also brought opportunities for innovation and growth. Our Men's Wellness Event, held in partnership with the Ministry of Health and urologist, Dr. John Franklin from Saint Thomas, Virgin Islands, which reached over 200 men with screenings, education, and wellness services. Coupled with the Psychiatric Hospital, BRCS reached 190 people through Psychological First Aid training. In addition, 100 children benefited from free literacy screenings delivered in partnership with Spark Learning.

Partnerships were also key to our success. We strengthened our collaboration with government ministries, including the Department of Emergency Management, and Barbados Fisheries Division, while also benefiting from technical and financial support from the IFRC and other partners. These

relationships amplified our reach and impact, making it possible for BRCS to bridge the gap between immediate humanitarian relief and long-term community resilience.

Innovation played a critical role in 2024. The integration of digital tools such as Kobo for monitoring and RedRose for cash and voucher assistance allowed us to deliver aid with greater transparency and accountability. At the same time, the production of a Volunteer E-Book and the piloting of digital volunteer engagement systems laid the foundation for a stronger, more connected volunteer network. These steps in our digital transformation are vital as we position BRCS for the future.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to building on the lessons of 2024—deepening our partnerships, investing in volunteer and youth engagement, and strengthening our capacity to respond to crises. Most importantly, we remain steadfast in our mission: to serve the people of Barbados with humanity, impartiality, and integrity, in times of both crisis and calm.

Highlight of Achievements in 2024:

- 723 people trained in Basic First Aid
- 229 people reached with disaster response and early recovery programmes
- 55 people served daily through the Meals on Wheels programme
- 145 people reached through Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRT training and eVCAs in White Hill, St. James and Bath/Welches, St. John)
 - 95 household surveys conducted in White Hill (St. James)
- 210 men reached with PSA Screenings
- 190 people trained in Psychological First Aid
- 250 people reached with heatwave preparedness (distribution of bottled water at Men's Wellness Day)
- 129 fisherfolk reached through multipurpose cash transfer programming
- 100 children received free literacy screenings in partnership with Spark Learning

Governance and Strategy

Effective governance and strategic leadership remained central to the Barbados Red Cross Society (BRCS) in 2024. Under the stewardship of President Fabianna Alexander, the Governing Board advanced reforms that reinforced accountability, strengthened systems, and positioned the Society as a credible humanitarian actor nationally and internationally.

Leadership and Governance Enhancements

Since assuming leadership in March 2023, the Governing Board has supported the introduction of significant procedural and structural improvements. These included:

- Driving the digital transformation of the National Society to modernize systems and enhance transparency.
- Implementing policies and frameworks to fortify governance, compliance, and operational excellence.
- Building strategic partnerships that expand BRCS' auxiliary role to government, ensuring stronger recognition in disaster preparedness and humanitarian coordination.

The Governing Board continues to embed a governance framework that balances innovation with integrity, bringing high standards of accountability to BRCS' work.

Legislative and Advocacy Milestones

In August 2024, with the support of the IFRC Cluster Disaster Law team, BRCS developed its first Legislative and Advocacy Strategy. This framework provides clear direction for strengthening the Society's auxiliary role, ensuring inclusion in disaster law, national coordination mechanisms, and policy processes. The strategy sets out a roadmap for formalizing partnerships with government, increasing subventions, securing tax exemptions, and advancing a new Red Cross law to replace the outdated 1969 Act.

As part of this process, BRCS held a key meeting with the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs (MPEA) to make the case for a formalized partnership. This engagement marked an important step in institutionalizing BRCS' role in social protection, community resilience, and humanitarian response.



President Fabianna Alexander and Matthew Wilson, Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva attending the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

International Engagement

At the global level, BRCS President Fabianna Alexander represented BRCS at the IFRC General Assembly 2024, where she highlighted the challenges and opportunities facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with emphasis on climate resilience, anticipatory action, and strengthened governance.

During the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in October 2024, President Alexander was appointed as the Chair of the Drafting Committee for the duration of the General Assembly. President Alexander was also elected as the Vice-Chair of the IFRC Elections Committee.

Looking Ahead

Building on these 2024 achievements, BRCS will:

- Finalize and adopt revised Statutes to modernize its governance framework.
- Implement the Legislative and Advocacy Strategy in partnership with IFRC and government stakeholders.
- Formalize strategic partnerships with key ministries, including the MPEA and the Department of Emergency Management.
- Strengthen BRCS' role in humanitarian diplomacy, influencing national disaster law and policy.

Through these measures, BRCS is positioning itself not only as a strong National Society in Barbados, but also as a respected voice within the international humanitarian community.

Humanitarian Diplomacy

In 2024, the Barbados Red Cross Society (BRCS) strengthened its role in national decision-making and policy dialogue. A major milestone was the Society's invitation by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) to serve on the newly established Technical Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Advisory Committee (TMAC).

The TMAC was formally launched on November 1, 2024, with an opening ceremony and inaugural meeting at the Savannah Hotel, hosted by DEM in collaboration with USAID and the Office of Policy and Regulatory Reform for Resilience (PROSE). This Cabinet-approved body provides oversight and guidance in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (NMHEWS) Policy.

The BRCS' appointment to TMAC represents national recognition of its longstanding contributions to disaster preparedness, response, and resilience building. It also provides an opportunity for the Society to influence policy and practice in alignment with its auxiliary role and the IFRC's Strategy 2030.

Role of BRCS within TMAC

As a committee member, BRCS contributes to:

- Reviewing and supporting the implementation of the MHEWS Policy.
- Providing technical input across the four pillars of early warning, particularly Pillar 4: Preparedness to Respond, where BRCS has been leading national and community-based initiatives.
- Strengthening coordination between civil society, government agencies, and international partners.
- Ensuring that vulnerable communities, including elderly persons, fisherfolk, and youth, are reflected in national preparedness frameworks.

Strategic Importance

Participation in TMAC elevates the Society's advocacy work under its Legislative and Advocacy Strategy (August 2024) and strengthens partnerships with ministries, particularly the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs (MPEA) and the Department of Emergency Management. It positions BRCS as a trusted technical partner in early warning systems, disaster law, and resilience-building, while further embedding the National Society within the National Emergency Management System (NEMS).

Looking Ahead

BRCS will continue to actively engage in TMAC's work, contributing updates on its community disaster risk reduction (CDRTs and eVCAs), disaster preparedness, and emergency response programming. This engagement will help ensure that community-level experiences inform national decision-making and that the auxiliary role of the BRCS is strengthened in practice and in law.

Strategic Priorities and Achievements

Climate and Environment

BRCS continued advocacy on climate change and resilience, recognizing Barbados' acute vulnerability as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS). In 2024, the Society began laying groundwork for a **Climate and Environment Policy**, with IFRC support, and partnered in the BBC Media Action project "Risk Communication for Early Action (RiCA)" to strengthen public understanding of climate-related hazards.

Disasters and Crises

Early Warning for All (EW4ALL):

- Supported the Gap Analysis for Pillar 4 (Preparedness to Respond), which highlighted urgent needs in laws, policies, anticipatory action financing, inclusive communication, and drills.
- Participated in the development of Pillar 4 Implementation Roadmap (2024–2027), assigning BRCS lead responsibility for strengthening community disaster response organisations, conducting community drills, and co-developing anticipatory action protocols.
- Trained 8 CDRT Trainers of Trainers and hosted 3 community engagement sessions in Bath and Welch.

Hurricane Beryl Emergency Appeal (EA):

- **Livelihoods & CVA:** Rolled out fishpot recovery activities and multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) to fisherfolk, with first installment successfully transferred in December. Partnerships with Fisheries Associations and MoneyGram facilitated distribution.
- **Shelter, Health & PGI:** Prepared to strengthen BRCS' role in emergency shelters in 2025, focusing on PGI (Protection, Gender, Inclusion), PSS (Psychosocial Support), and PFA (Psychological First Aid).
- **DRR & WASH:** Planned to scale up eVCA activities in 2025, with CADRIM support for training volunteers and engaging three target communities.
- **Logistics & Procurement:** Prioritised warehouse repairs, vehicle maintenance, and procurement of IT equipment, fishpot materials, hygiene and FA kits. BRCS staff benefitted from regional logistics training in Jamaica.
- **Coordination:** Maintained weekly regional operations meetings with IFRC and liaised with Government ministries and fisheries bodies to align interventions.
- **Funding:** The EA for Barbados was **100% funded**, enabling strong support to fisherfolk and vulnerable households. BRCS also pursued new partnerships with WFP and FAO to sustain livelihoods interventions.



BRCs volunteer conducting household surveys in White Hill, St. James

Other Preparedness and Response Actions:

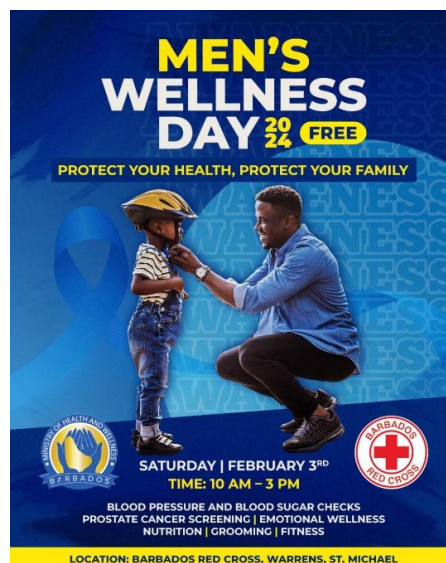
- Prepositioned **120 household hygiene kits** and **80 kits in BRCs warehouse** with USAID BHA support.
- Exhibited and provided First Aid services at the **CARIGUARD National Disaster Preparedness Expo.**



Over 200 men attended the BRCS and MoHW first ever *Men's Wellness Day*

Health and Wellbeing

- Partnered with Ministry of Health and Dr. Joh Franklin, Urologist to provide free PSA screenings for 209 men. The first **Men's Health and Wellness Day**, which reached **209 men** attracted a significant number of men from across the island who sought access to the complimentary services offered, including screening for prostate cancer, blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and various other men's health concerns.
- Trained **190 members of the Public Service in Psychological First Aid (PFA)** in partnership with the Psychiatric Hospital.
- Expanded **First Aid training** with a sharp rise in public and corporate demand.



Meals on Wheels (MoW)

- The BRCS was awarded a grant from the Maria Holder Memorial Trust Fund to support the expansion of the MoW programme. The project, which will run from 2024-2026, supports the purchase of a new MoW vehicle, the refurbishment of the MoW kitchen and establishment of a curbside cafe, the training of staff and volunteers and the establishment of a MoW kitchen garden.
- Maintained daily meals for 50 elderly beneficiaries despite kitchen refurbishment, through partnerships with caterers and volunteers.
- Planned expansion to **100 beneficiaries in 2025** with upgraded facilities.



National Society representatives taking part in Sustainable Livelihoods Programming training in Grenada.

Training

In 2024, the Barbados Red Cross Society strengthened its commitment to continuous learning by equipping staff and volunteers with a diverse set of skills to meet evolving humanitarian needs. Training programmes spanned critical areas such as **Logistics and Warehouse Management**, **Sustainable Livelihoods Programming: Training of Trainers**, and **Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRT) ToT**, enhancing our operational readiness and community outreach. Staff and volunteers also deepened competencies in **Community Engagement and Accountability**, **Legislative Advocacy**, and **Financial Management** (under the Emergency Appeal), ensuring sound governance and accountability. The BRCS – with participation from the Barbados Association of Professional Social Workers (BAPSW) – further advanced its capacity in data-driven decision-making through the **Understanding Kobo: Data Collection** workshop, fine-tuning our field assessment tools to better serve vulnerable groups such as fishing communities

affected by Hurricane Beryl. Collectively, these initiatives reinforced the capabilities of our teams, empowering them to deliver humanitarian assistance with greater efficiency, transparency, and impact.



Volunteers take part in the Understanding Kobo workshop ahead of conducting field assessments with fisherfolk

Volunteer Development & Youth Engagement

- Conducted **6 volunteer training sessions** (Disaster 101, CEA, Warehousing, Exhibitor Etiquette) and **2 First Aid trainings**.
- Produced a **Volunteer E-Book** to guide recruitment and retention.
- Strengthened youth engagement through Youth Links reactivation and plans for a dedicated Youth/Volunteer Department in 2025.



David Griffith, Disaster Management Officer, facilitating the Disaster 101 training for BRCS volunteers

Institutional Development

- **Governance:** Initiated a review of statutes to align with IFRC recommendations, strengthen compliance, and modernize auxiliary role recognition.
- **HR & Finance:** Contract gaps in early 2024 led to staff turnover, but by year-end, new staff (Programme and Operations Manager, Finance Officer, Volunteer Officer) were being onboarded with IFRC support.
- **PMER:** New systems established for monthly reporting under the Unified Plan and EA.
- **Warehousing & Logistics:** Bolstered capacity with international training, improved procurement systems, and emergency appeal funding.

Financial Overview (2024)

The Barbados Red Cross Society (BRCS) ended 2024 in a relatively stable financial position, in large part due to the Hurricane Beryl Emergency Appeal, funding received from the Maria Holder Memorial Trust and the new subvention from the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs. The National Society ended 2024 with positive net earnings and improved liquidity, despite the challenges of responding to Hurricane Beryl and sustaining its core humanitarian services.

Income and Revenue Streams

BRCS' revenue base in 2024 reflected a growing balance of funding sources, underscoring both the Society's resilience and its growing role as a trusted partner. Emergency appeal funding following Hurricane Beryl provided critical support for human resources, the provision of large-scale cash assistance, livelihoods recovery, and preparedness initiatives; while income from First Aid and related training continued to expand, cementing its role as a key driver of financial sustainability.

Donations, service contracts, and event-related income highlighted strong community backing and the value of BRCS' partnerships, while smaller but steady contributions from volunteer-led First Aid services added further diversification. Institutional donors also made a pivotal contribution, with new commitments that strengthened core services such as Meals on Wheels and regional disaster response.

This broad-based mix of funding reduced reliance on any single stream, enabling BRCS to sustain essential programmes while scaling up in response to humanitarian needs.

Expenditure and Programme Investment

In 2024, BRCS directed its resources across both administration and frontline programmes, balancing the costs of sustaining operations with the delivery of vital humanitarian services. A significant portion of spending was devoted to maintaining a small but overstretched staff team and the infrastructure required to support national-level responsibilities.

Programme investments focused on disaster response—particularly early recovery efforts following Hurricane Beryl—alongside community services such as the Meals on Wheels programme, First Aid training, and volunteer engagement. These allocations ensured the Society was able to sustain essential services while also meeting urgent humanitarian needs.

Although administrative costs were comparatively high, reflecting the demands placed on a lean organisation, BRCS exercised careful financial management and successfully ended the year with a surplus, strengthening its overall financial position and ensuring readiness for 2025.

Financial Highlights and Analysis

1. Surplus and growth: BRCS achieved a surplus of Bds\$132,301, enhancing reserves and positioning the Society for future expansion.
2. Diversified income: Balanced streams of donations, training revenue, service contracts, and institutional grants reduced reliance on a single funding source.
3. High administrative costs: While necessary to sustain a lean but overstretched team, administration accounted for the bulk of expenditure, underscoring the importance of further donor investment in staff and systems.
4. Programme resilience: Funding was effectively channelled to disaster response, Meals on Wheels, and training, ensuring continuity of core services during crises.
5. Asset stability: BRCS maintained a strong balance sheet with significant long-term assets and minimal liabilities.
6. Liquidity strength: Growth in cash reserves ensures operational flexibility and the ability to pre-finance activities pending donor disbursements.

Outlook for 2025

With a strong asset base, positive liquidity, and diversified revenue, BRCS is well positioned for growth in 2025. Priorities include:

- Expanding the Meals on Wheels programme to reach 100 daily beneficiaries.
- Scaling up disaster preparedness and recovery initiatives, especially community-based resilience work.
- Strengthening youth and volunteer engagement with new digital systems.
- Deepening partnerships with government and donors to sustain funding.

Sustaining this trajectory will require continued emphasis on fundraising, donor diversification, and investment in staff capacity, ensuring that the National Society remains a stable and effective auxiliary to government in a complex humanitarian landscape.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Limited staffing capacity and high turnover constrained project delivery.
- Fleet and infrastructure deterioration hindered logistics.
- Coordination with external humanitarian actors in-country remained weak, requiring stronger convening mechanisms.
- Need for sustainable **anticipatory action financing** and inclusive EWS mechanisms.

Looking Ahead – Priorities for 2025

1. Expand Meals on Wheels kitchen to double service capacity.
2. Successful implementation of the Emergency Appeal.
3. Strengthen emergency shelter SOPs, with integrated PGI and PSS standards.
4. Scale up fisherfolk recovery and livelihoods resilience post-Beryl.
5. Recruit Youth/Volunteer Officer and expand digital engagement platforms.
6. Enhance governance, MEAL, and financial systems for sustainability.

Acknowledgements

The Barbados Red Cross Society thanks its volunteers, staff, donors, government, and international partners for their continued support. Our achievements in 2024 reflect the strength of collaboration and the enduring commitment to humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality.