

2017

Community Engagement and Accountability

Good practices from around the world



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Introduction

Working in partnership with communities is at the heart of the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). Community engagement and accountability is the process of and commitment to providing timely, relevant and actionable life-saving and life-enhancing information to communities. It is about using the most appropriate communication approaches to listen to communities' needs, feedback and complaints, ensuring they can actively participate and guide Red Cross and Red Crescent actions.

Community engagement and accountability supports those involved in programmes and operations to adopt innovative approaches to better understand and engage with people and work with them to address unhealthy and unsafe practices. It maximizes the Red Cross and Red Crescent's unique relationship with the community to help them speak out about the issues that affect them and influence decision and policy-makers to implement positive change.

This publication presents examples of community engagement and accountability initiatives being implemented by the Movement in both emergency and longer-term contexts. Our work in Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East stands testament to how community engagement and accountability is not only enabling us to better respond to the needs of the communities we serve but also in reducing their vulnerability and in building safer, more resilient communities.

For further information, please see www.ifrc.org/CEA

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ICRC and South Sudan Red Cross

Engaging with communities through hyper-local, off-the-grid innovative approaches

The issue

Since conflict reignited in South Sudan three and a half years ago, two million people have fled across the country's borders, and two million more are internally displaced.

Physical and sexual attacks against civilians, the obstruction of healthcare, attacks against health workers, and other abuses continue to be reported across the country. Meanwhile, because of increased fighting, medical needs are on the rise.

Literacy levels are extremely low (27 per cent) and communication means are scarce. FM radio and telephone networks do not reach the whole country, and very few people have access to mobile phones or the internet.

The response

In order to successfully engage with communities and overcome both low literacy rates and the challenging media and telecommunications landscape, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the South Sudan Red Cross are using off-the-grid, hyper-local innovative approaches to share life-saving, useful and actionable information with affected people.

Dancing is one of the most important ways to express feelings in South Sudan. Capitalizing on this, in April 2017 ICRC's Health Care in Danger project and the South Sudan Red Cross started using street theater to raise awareness among community members on different topics, including the protection of health workers and facilities in the town of Wau, where conflict is still rife. The plays are performed in different locations each week, and are put on by the South Sudan Red Cross' theatre group, composed of 35 to 40 volunteers, including nine actors and three technicians.

"Drama is like a mirror. It is a place where people can see their mistakes and reflect on them", says Akuei Benjamin Majok, who wrote the script for the play. (Read more about this initiative [here](#).)

Another ICRC programme has been delivering Super Cereal, a nutritional supplement for children under-five years of age, since 2015 in areas where community members are affected by chronic malnutrition. The supplement is made of a blend of corn, soya and a small amount of sugar.

Training communities on preparing Super Cereal was challenging due to low literacy levels in rural areas, a lack of modern cooking tools, and different concepts of time. "Sharing instructions like 'Cook for five minutes on a gas stove' was not going to work", says Malaika van Klinken, ICRC's regional nutritionist. "This is a society that doesn't have watches".

Malaika and the team met with communities to develop visual and easy-to-understand cooking instructions, using intercultural notions of time. Malaika observed local activities and used these as reference points. For example, women were told to cook based on the length of time it took them to pound sorghum.

Radio announcements and radio drama were also broadcast through community radios. Cooking demonstrations and question and answer sessions were organized in communities and at distribution points to explain what Super Cereal was, how to cook it, and to promote good hygiene practices.

Moving forward, the South Sudan Red Cross will expand its community engagement work to other regions, in order to better bridge the gap between healthcare providers and the community, provide information, support behavior change processes, and strengthen feedback and complaints to influence the design and implementation of programmes.

The impact

In communities with low literacy rates, visual materials and innovative approaches are at the heart of engagement strategies to raise awareness among communities and establish a two-way dialogue. The primary challenge, however, hasn't been low literacy levels, but superstition and trust-building, specifically around outsiders bringing in aid.

To get a better understanding of local cultural practices and perceptions, and to build trust with communities, it is essential to spend adequate time listening and talking with communities.

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Ecuadorian Red Cross

Working with communities to enable a dignified recovery

The Red Cross does not decide the priorities of each family. We are giving the family the freedom to choose how to invest the aid.

—Alberto Cabrera, IFRC Panama.

The issue

On 16 April 2016, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit the northern coast of Ecuador, mainly affecting the provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabí; claiming 663 lives and affecting more than one million people. The earthquake caused vast damage and destruction to homes, roads and health infrastructure.

The response

Given the diversity of the people's needs, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), decided to implement first of its kind cash programme to enable the affected families to recover with dignity while, at the same time, stimulating the local economy. The affected families could use this money as they chose – to pay rent, buy medicines, on education, to repair or rebuild homes and/or to start a new business.

The first implementation of the cash transfer programme was carried out in July 2017. Some 740 families of Coaque and La Cabuya, in the province of Manabí, benefited from this support.

As cash as a form of assistance is a new concept in Ecuador, communication and community engagement was key to ensuring its success. At the onset of the programme, the Red Cross met with community leaders. Based on selection criteria, a list of the families to receive these grants was agreed upon together with the local authorities and community leaders. Each family received 200 United States dollars.

A mobile phone was given to the community leaders. If there were any doubts or comments, communities could call the Red Cross on a hotline service. People could also call the hotline to give their feedback and register any complaints.

Information and feedback desks were also set-up during registration and distribution.

On the day of the distribution, registered families received a pin-protected debit card. The concept of the cash grant was explained and safety tips (such as not to share the pin number with anybody) were provided. The card was activated 24 hours after receipt. A visual step-by-step leaflet with instructions on how to use an ATM was also handed out together with the debit card.

The impact

People were at the centre of the response. Timely and relevant information paired with feedback mechanisms fostered trust and accountability and strengthened two-way communication between communities and the Red Cross ensuring community ownership.

“These processes should be coordinated by the community with support from the Red Cross. This approach dignifies humanitarian aid... We are giving the family the freedom to choose how to invest the aid. They are the ones who know what they really need”, says IFRC's Alberto Cabrera.

A follow-up survey found that the cash grants had a positive impact on the recovery of the majority of the families. (Click here to see the [video](#).)



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National Red Cross Societies in the Americas

The fight against Zika

Consulting communities on their perceptions and key messages leads to an increase in ownership and more effective programming.

The issue

In May 2015, WHO reported the first local transmission of Zika virus in the Americas. By February 2016, Zika virus outbreak was declared a public health emergency of international concern.

The IFRC [Zika Operation](#) was launched in February 2016 in response to the international emergency appeal for Zika virus. Since then nearly 5 million people have been reached in the fight against Zika. The key to the success of the operation was the successful integration of risk communication and community engagement approaches with community-based epidemiological surveillance, vector control and psychosocial support activities.

Although WHO has lifted the emergency level since November 2016, the IFRC continues to support its [National Red Cross Societies in the Americas](#) to respond to and prevent Zika.

The response

An integrated approach to Zika prevention is one of the cornerstones of the new Community Action on Zika project that aims to reduce the transmission of the virus and minimize the risks of microcephaly and neurological syndromes associated with it. The regional project aims to reach 13.7 million people at high risk in Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua with a focus on the most vulnerable populations, i.e. pregnant women, and women of childbearing age.

Volunteers are trained in not only how to promote the participation and capacity of communities in surveillance measures but also through community empowerment and mobilization about vector control. Establishing two-way communication, feedback mechanisms, tracking and addressing rumours are all critical for Zika prevention.

Understanding community knowledge, attitudes and practices and assessing the level of participation is critical to effective community engagement actions. Surveys and interviews have been carried out in the five countries to inform evidence-based approaches

The survey results reveal that majority of the community members are aware that the Zika virus is mainly transmitted by the bite of a mosquito. However, most remain ill-informed to other ways of transmission, especially through sexual contact. Condom use is not seen as a method of Zika prevention but only as a contraceptive. Qualitative results highlight the myths surrounding the use of condoms, the low decision-making power of women, and the taboos associated with certain social and religious beliefs. Television, radio and health workers are the most common sources of receiving Zika-related information.

There are many rumours and fears that need to be addressed. Community members cannot comprehend how a single vector can transmit different kinds of diseases or why fumigation alone is not an effective measure for vector control. Even though, in general, Zika is not life-threatening, many fear they can die if they get infected.

“The baseline study showed a poor level of community participation which contrasts with an extremely high percentage of willingness to participate. Efforts should go in considering innovative ways of engagement to ensure individual responsibility and community motivation that finally leads to adoption of healthy practices”, says Monica Posada, IFRC’s community engagement delegate.

A good example of addressing effective ways of community engagement is the case of the Colombian Red Cross. The team engaged with [indigenous communities in Meta Department](#) to validate key messages on Zika virus. The team organized the screening of an animated video and a conversation with the community on Zika prevention and awareness to test the messages and gather feedback from the community members.

The impact

Combining evidence-based approaches with participatory techniques is the key to a successful approach to epidemics prevention. Consulting communities about their perceptions and engaging them in shaping key messages leads to an increase in ownership and inform more quality and effective behaviour change approaches.



Indonesian Red Cross Society

Integrating community engagement in emergency operations

Community engagement during emergency response is set as a priority in the Indonesian Red Cross Society's organizational policies.

The issue

In December 2016, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Aceh's Pidie Jaya district claiming 104 lives and affecting 85,000 people. The earthquake damaged some 11,300 houses, more than 100 offices, 88 shop-houses, nearly 60 mosques and over 30 schools. Approximately 80 per cent of the sub-districts of Pidie Jaya were affected.

The response

Community engagement during emergency response is set as a priority in the Indonesian Red Cross Society's (Palang Merah Indonesia) organizational policies. "Community engagement and accountability approach during emergency operations helps ensure that we deliver aid based on the most urgent needs of the affected communities", says Ritola Tasmaya, Secretary General of the Indonesian Red Cross Society.

After the earthquake, the National Society carried out participatory rapid assessments in the affected villages and collaborated with various government agencies to not only better understand the needs of the people but also to coordinate the aid effectively.

Trusted and preferred channels of communication were identified including radio, newspaper, hotline, SMS, social media, help desks and printed materials. Materials outlining the emergency programmes were produced and disseminated in the affected villages.

At an institutional level, the National Society established an information management system to ensure that feedback and complaints were documented and acted upon. A decision-making roadmap for feedback was established and

a three-person team was tasked with collecting and analysing information and providing answers. Updates were shared with the programme team on the needs of the affected people. Open discussions with the affected communities were carried out during the planning phase. A dedicated hotline number was also established and paired with SMS service for feedback.

From the needs assessment, the Indonesian Red Cross Society learned that the community members trusted a local newspaper called *Serambi Indonesia*. To disseminate critical information, the National Society published news articles in this newspaper.

Live radio talk shows from the National Society's Radio Rumoh station, located in the capital of the province, played a pivotal role in running two-way dialogue. Partnerships with local radio stations were established to enable wider coverage. Community members and government agencies were interviewed to provide updates on needs and the latest situation.

Based on the feedback and complaints received from members of affected communities, the National Society developed a questions and answers poster. The poster was distributed at community gathering points in villages so that everyone could access this information, including details regarding how communities where selected to receive aid.

The Indonesian Red Cross Society also used Facebook to amplify the voices and needs of the affected communities. For example, many community members requested hygiene kits for babies. The National Society was able to channel this request to partners and mobilized support from various private agencies.

The impact

Community engagement approaches and initiatives are critical in responding to immediate needs of the affected population in emergency situations. They put communities at the centre of the operation and supports their key role as first responders. Systematically engaging communities throughout the emergency phase helped the Indonesian Red Cross Society to respond to community needs and preferences. Effective community engagement strategies ensured that the affected communities informed humanitarian action, held the organizations accountable and had access to information they needed to make decisions and stay safe.



Myanmar Red Cross Society

Putting community engagement at the heart of its work

Community engagement is an approach that is integrated into all core areas of Myanmar Red Cross Society's work.

The issue

Myanmar is one of the most disaster prone countries in Asia and the Pacific. Every year more than one million people are exposed to floods and cyclones. Myanmar also has one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in south-east Asia with child mortality rates above 70 per 1,000. Approximately, 70 per cent of the country's population lives in rural areas.

The response

The Myanmar Red Cross Society engages with people affected by crisis to increase their overall resilience. The National Society not only responds to ongoing and new emergencies but also works in long-term programmes with remote communities in Chin State, and in the regions of Sagaing and Mandalay.

Community engagement is an approach that is integrated into all core areas of [Myanmar Red Cross Society's work](#). In its 2016–2020 Strategy, the National Society has a clear outcome stating: "All programmes include a community engagement component based on a set of minimum standards for accountability".

Community engagement and accountability is anchored in both organizational and operational level commitments with clearly defined minimum standards and actions. The activities relating to programmes are prioritized in three categories:

BRONZE: minimum standard and critical for implementation,

SILVER: good practice and important for implementation, and

GOLD: outstanding practice.

All programmes must fulfil bronze at a minimum, but ideally strive for silver and gold.

Promoting community engagement for behaviour change requires targeted and innovative approaches. Harmonizing messages and stimulating dialogue through different channels is the way to success. The National Society works together with village committees and community mobilizers to build trust and enhance two-way communication. In addition, notice boards, posters, videos and meetings are used to facilitate engagement. For example, to improve access to health services and disseminate health-related messages effectively, the Myanmar Red Cross Society has provided 40 hard to reach villages with televisions, dvd players and educational films on various health topics.

"Everyone in the village participates and brings their children. Because of the films the health education is much more interesting and engaging", says Zin Mar Oo, a community health worker and volunteer.

In another example, based on the diversity of the people's needs following Cyclone Komen in July 2015, [unconditional cash grants](#) were distributed to help people get back on their feet. Community engagement was critical to understanding local practices and communication networks ensured people received key information and had a voice in the process.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society's ability to work with village recovery committees helps with engaging the most vulnerable people, building trust for data collection and establishing a feedback mechanism to address complaints and settle minor disagreements between recipients. The village committees also helps break down language barriers, as not everyone speaks Burmese, the predominant language in Myanmar. Because all could not necessarily understand banners and posters describing the programme, and the selection criteria, information was shared verbally as well.

The impact

The Myanmar Red Cross Society recognizes that innovative and participatory communication approaches help communities adopt safer and healthier practices. Its minimum standards for community engagement and accountability build on the four pillars – transparent communication, involvement, feedback mechanisms and community-led monitoring and evaluation. Integrating these standards into all core areas of its work ensures localized and effective community engagement.



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**POLITECNICO
TEAM**

S. E. ROS
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Austrian Red Cross and Italian Red Cross

Regular feedback from and dialogue empowers communities and builds trust

Collecting feedback is the first step to understand if the assistance we provide is relevant and effective and how we can improve what we do.

The issue

In 2017, approximately 85,000 people escaping violence, persecution and poverty came to Italy. In June 2017 alone, more than 770 people arrived every day, having undergone a harrowing journey to reach safety. Fifteen per cent were children, almost all of them travelling alone. At one point, more than 10,000 migrants and refugees were entering Austria every day.

The response

Engaging with people migrating and systematically listen, learn and respond to their views helps build trust and is an essential step in shaping more effective and efficient humanitarian action.

The IFRC, Italian Red Cross and Austrian Red Cross have partnered with Ground Truth Solutions to [establish and manage feedback mechanisms](#) through regular perception surveys with migrants in Italy and those seeking restoring family links services in Austria. Real-time, actionable information from people receiving aid contributes to better programme performance and empowers people to express their views.

The Italian Red Cross, for example, focuses on better understanding the experiences of the newly arriving migrants, those waiting to hear about their asylum request or have received their refugee or other protection status and their perceptions of the assistance they are receiving. Surveys are conducted regularly at reception facilities in Rome and Turin as well as a safe point along the migrant trail in North Italy. Information fosters deeper dialogue among staff and migrants, encourages follow-up action, and increases engagement.

According to Francesca Basile, Head of Migration, Italian Red Cross, “Involving migrants and refugees in the programme as volunteers, listening to their views and being able to reach out to them in their native languages, has helped build trust and confidence”.

The Austrian Red Cross helps family members [keep in touch or find one another](#). As people travel through Europe, they can lose contact with their families back home or with their travelling companions. Some disappear along the way.

The Austrian Red Cross mainly is collecting feedback from migrants who are using its face-to-face counselling services on family reunification. In parallel, it also seeks feedback from its staff and volunteers to improve its services through online surveys.

The impact

The overall perception of the migrants at the Fenoglio Centre in Turin is positive. Eighty per cent of the respondents feel that their basic needs are met and 68 per cent have the necessary information for the help they need. The vast majority of them (over 90 per cent) feel that their opinions have been taken into account and most importantly, say that they feel safe. However, for 60 per cent of them there is still lack of clarity in understanding the asylum procedures. During the first phase of reception activities, the Red Cross is indeed working towards simplifying information about the very complex asylum procedures in Italy.

In Austria, most migrants feel that the counselling offered by the Red Cross helps them to better understand the family reunification process. Seventy-eight per cent of those surveyed found out about the family reunification programme only once they were in Austria. The overall perception is that their opinions are taken into account.

Regular feedback from and dialogue with communities is key to community engagement. Its success relies on returning to migrants to discuss the findings of the surveys, explore the issues that matter the most to them and integrate the feedback to improve services.



Hellenic Red Cross

Migrants need to be listened to and tell their stories

We all live with so much uncertainty here. It's so important that organizations like the Red Cross are providing clear and accurate information, that they listen to what the community needs and does something with that information.

—Saleh, volunteering with the Red Cross in Nea Kavala camp, Greece.

The issue

The acute migration crisis that unfolded in 2015 as a result of economic and political instability in several Middle Eastern and African countries has led to wide-scale displacement. In 2015 alone, Greece saw an influx of more than one million migrants. In 2016, tighter border restrictions and the agreement between the European Union and Turkey has left more than 40,000 migrants currently stranded in Greece.

Migrants live with much uncertainty. Access to right information reduces their vulnerability as they cross borders and navigate new cultures, foreign laws and processes. They not only require critical information regarding how to survive but also timely and accurate information on the next steps to secure their future. Most importantly, migrants need to be listened to and tell their stories.

The response

Since the start of the crisis, IFRC together with several European National Red Cross Societies have supported the Hellenic Red Cross to scale up its response to meet the migrant community's needs. In particular, continuous efforts are made to engage migrants in leading community engagement initiatives and sharing their opinions. The Red Cross is providing hotline services for migrants in 11 different languages. The hotline received almost 10,600 between March and October 2017.

Listening to the migrant communities' opinion in the aid they receive and giving them the time and space to communicate about what is and isn't working, what they need and what they don't need, providing information and creating two-way communication has been central to Red Cross' response.

The [active participation of the migrant community](#) has been especially relevant in interpretation, gathering feedback and the implementation of community-based services such as health and hygiene promotion, and psychosocial support.

In addition to the hotline, and community engagement activities within migrant camps supported by the Red Cross, the IFRC has also designed and developed [virtualvolunteer.org](#), a web-based application that helps people access reliable and practical information wherever they are. Currently, there are 20,747 users in Greece – the application has been accessed more than 60,000 times.

At the peak of the crisis, the Red Cross with the support of the local radio station also broadcasted a 20-minute news bulletin in Arabic and Farsi called the [Walkie Talkie Information Service](#). To help people navigate the humanitarian services available, these programmes were saved on USB sticks and broadcasted in transit camps.

Since early 2017, as the emergency situation became more stable, feedback is being collected regularly through suggestion boxes, face-to-face interaction, group meetings and satisfaction surveys including SMS surveys using open data kit (ODK).

The recent [Red Cross household survey](#) capturing migrants' feedback¹ highlights that the vast majority of site residents who needed medical assistance looked for the services of the Red Cross. A third of the migrants consider the external medical assistance not adequate and feel unsafe in the camps, with the majority being women.

The impact

The regular feedback mechanisms combined with targeted surveys enables the Red Cross and the wider humanitarian community to better understand migrants perceptions, shape services, improve communication and advocate for change. Migrants not only know their needs best but also can highlight the gaps in information required and express the challenges they face.

Community engagement approaches leads to effective programming by helping us better understand people's needs. It creates an environment of trust, mutual respect, transparency and accountability.

.....

¹ In camps with Red Cross presence.



ICRC in Yemen

Using WhatsApp to disseminate information and engage in two-way dialogue

Messaging apps are changing the way people respond to humanitarian crises.

This issue

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is catastrophic. After almost two years of conflict, every aspect of daily life has been dramatically affected – food and fuel prices, access to clean and safe water, electricity, jobs, education, and the ability to move around safely.

More than 80 per cent of the country's 27 million population are in need of aid. Around 24.3 million lack access to electricity, and only 45 per cent of health facilities across the country are functioning. Yemen is facing the worst cholera outbreak in history.

Due to security concerns, restrictions or the difficulty of travel, it is not possible for the ICRC to physically reach certain areas across the country, and engage with affected people face-to-face.

The response

Despite connectivity and energy crises in Yemen, WhatsApp continues to be one of the main channels that people with access to smartphones use to communicate – Facebook being the other one.

In June 2015, ICRC launched a WhatsApp number to share messages with hard to reach communities. This number was initially disseminated using ICRC's Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as existing WhatsApp groups in Yemen. Later, the number was also included in posters, visiting cards, and flyers inserted in aid packages that were distributed to the affected people.

Those who added the ICRC number were put on a broadcast list and receive a maximum of one to two messages a week about ICRC activities in Yemen, or other important ones related to public services.

At first, these messages revolved around the ICRC's mission and mandate, as well as the need to protect civilians, humanitarian workers, and the infrastructure. Progressively, based on demands from WhatsApp subscribers, the delegation started to share practical and useful information on, for example, how to better protect oneself in case of air strikes and tips on preventing cholera, among others.

Currently, the delegation has more than 2,000 subscribers; every time a message is sent, dozens of responses are received, from people in Yemen and beyond. The feedback spans from generic thank you messages, to direct and very specific requests for assistance, to accusations that the ICRC is being pro or anti one group or another.

The communications department analyses response trends, and follows up on relevant messages. The most urgent ones (such as security incidents or request for life-saving assistance) are immediately shared with the relevant departments, who follow up with the person concerned, on case-by-case basis.

However, the introduction of technology comes with certain limitations. Communicating through WhatsApp means that only those who have access to smartphones and have a certain level of literacy can be reached through this channel (read more about messaging apps [here](#)).

There is also a critical need to better understand the opportunities and risks associated with messaging apps in armed conflicts. It is very important not to forget that, amidst armed conflict or other situations of violence, many of the most vulnerable might remain, or abruptly find themselves, offline.

The impact

When security and access are precarious, useful and actionable information may be the most important commodity, and often times the only thing that people can receive from humanitarian organizations.

WhatsApp has brought added value in terms of creating two-way communication with people, and bringing in information from places where the ICRC has no physical access.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

HUMANITY The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

IMPARTIALITY It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

NEUTRALITY In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

INDEPENDENCE The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

UNITY There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in anyone country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

UNIVERSALITY The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



ICRC

The ICRC helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their dignity and relieve their suffering, often with its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. The organization also seeks to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles. People know they can count on the ICRC to carry out a range of life-saving activities in conflict zones and to work closely with the communities there to understand and meet their needs. The organization's experience and expertise enables it to respond quickly, effectively and without taking sides.

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**International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. With our 190 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we are in every community reaching 160.7 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes, as well as 110 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

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