

Council of Delegates 2013 - REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP

People with Disabilities - Disability Inclusion

Chair: Doan Van Thai, Vice-President and Secretary General, Vietnam Red Cross Society

Rapporteur: Kerry McGrath, Head of Community Programs, Australian Red Cross Society

(A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The workshop identified the social, economic and attitudinal barriers faced by people with disabilities (15% of the world's population), as limiting people with disabilities access to: full and effective participation and economic development; education and employment; and health services, resulting in increased poverty and disempowerment.

Seven guest speakers highlighted the barriers facing people with disabilities including: infrastructure; negative expectations of participation; and a disempowering system which limits opportunities for people with disabilities to learn relevant skills to fully participate in their communities. Through their own experiences, speakers who live with disability, emphasised their expertise in understanding these barriers and underlined the importance of including people with disabilities within any program or measure attempting to reduce such barriers. As one speaker with disability commented: *"we are the experts – we live and work with our condition"* and another stated that *"we must shift the power to people with disabilities and give and teach us the skills to manage our own lives"*.

The speakers noted that people with disabilities are a significant untapped potential resource in our communities and that this is not being recognised/used. Interventions from the workshop delegates highlighted the importance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and specific previously agreed action plans from the Movement's International Conferences. The Workshop participants agreed to work to:

- prevent the incidence of disabilities and increase protection of people with disabilities in armed conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, as well as in times of peace;
- support the full inclusion, sense of belonging and empowerment of persons with disabilities, ranging from: addressing their needs based upon placing people with disabilities at the centre; contributing to the removal of barriers; humanitarian diplomacy at the national, regional and international levels; and changing mindsets and behaviour from discrimination, stigma and exclusion to respect for diversity and social inclusion;
- implement relevant instruments of international law to support the rights of persons with disabilities in order to address discrimination, change perceptions and combat stereotypes and prejudice; and
- adopt the Council of Delegates Resolution *"Position Statement Promoting Disability Inclusion in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement"* and support the development of a Movement-wide Strategy on Disability for consideration for adoption in the next Council of Delegates in 2015.

(B) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

As noted above, panel speakers provided an insight into the personal experiences of living with a disability, and the work of the Movement. The speakers were:

- Dr. Mark Bagshaw – Managing Director Innov8 Consulting Group, Red Cross volunteer and advisor, who is a person with disability and advocate for disability inclusion reform in Australia;
- Brett McClymont – Australian Red Cross staff member and Special Olympian;
- Christopher Banton, Special Olympian;

- Lucy Murillo, Colombian Red Cross, Youth Delegate;
- Dr. Katrien Beeckman, Head of Principles and Values (IFRC);
- Pascal Hundt, ICRC Assistance Division & Head of Delegation in Sudan (ICRC); and
- Rabah Jaber, Head of Operations, Palestine Red Crescent Society.

Workshop participants provided unanimous support for the Council of Delegates Resolution including with Kenya, Cambodia and Chilean Red Cross speaking in favour of lending their specific co-sponsorship for the Resolution. There were a number of Movement speakers during the workshop including: British Red Cross, IFRC, Australian RC, Kenyan Red Cross, Uganda Red Cross, Senegal Red Cross, Chilean Red Cross, Guinea Red Cross, Cambodian Red Cross, Colombian Red Cross, Cyprus Red Cross, Jamaican Red Cross, and Belarus Red Cross. The workshop participants unanimously endorsed the presentation of the Resolution to the Council of Delegates plenary. The workshop also endorsed the practical next steps as detailed below (C) and (D).

(C) KEY POINTS RAISED ON GUIDING QUESTIONS

The workshop determined the following action items in relation to the guiding questions and the position statement:

- Ensure the principle of “*nothing about us without us*” is firmly embedded and that people with disabilities have a sense of belonging to communities– that is, persons with disabilities are central to all decisions and at all levels in the activities of the Movement;
- Ensure that the Movement components recruit people with disabilities, including as volunteers in line with the Movement’s commitment to be open to all;
- Implement disability inclusion measures based upon empowering people with disabilities and ensuring their sense of belonging within each Movement component, through revised/new policies, strategies, practices and programs;
- Work to change attitudes, values, mind sets internally and externally to break myths and stereotypes, and proactively involve the youth and youth networks for awareness training, with the IFRC supporting behavioural change initiatives to further expand within National Societies; and
- Share learning and approaches to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are met in situations of risk, armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

(D) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The workshop endorsed the Resolution “*Position Statement Promoting Disability Inclusion in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*” to go forward to the Council of Delegates 2013 Plenary for adoption and supported the development of a Movement-wide Strategy on Disability for consideration at the next Council of Delegates in 2015.

In the meantime, the workshop urged the Movement to continue the momentum of ensuring disability inclusion in all parts of the Movement, as detailed in (C) above, on the basis that people with disability are driving and central to the disability inclusion methodology and agenda within the Movement.

ENDS

Kerry McGrath, Australian Red Cross, Rapporteur

Approved: Mr Doan Van Thai, Vietnam Red Cross Society, Chairman

17 November 2013