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COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

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Branding toolkit

REPORT

Document prepared by
workstream participants of the International Branding Initiative from Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Geneva, October 2013

Brand development model
Brand definition

When members of the Movement talk about their 'brand', it is not always clear what they mean. Some of them may be thinking of a logo or a design while others may have something more complex in mind.

Therefore, the ICRC and the International Federation, together with a number of National Societies, have developed a working definition of the term 'brand', and proposed in a resolution that it be adopted by the Movement.

Definition of 'brand' adopted by the Movement

Our brand is the sum of people's thoughts and feelings about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
The better we manage our brand, the more people will understand what we stand for, what we promise and what we do. And the better people feel they know us, the more we can improve the lives of those who are vulnerable.
How can we manage our brand well? By acting according to our values and our Fundamental Principles (both what we do and how we do it) and reflecting them in the words and images we use.

What do we mean when we talk about our brand?

When we speak of our brand we don't mean just our emblem (the red cross, red crescent or red crystal symbol) or our logos (the symbols plus the words describing our particular Movement component, i.e. a National Society, the International Federation or the ICRC). We mean all this: what people think of us, their feelings about us, how they see us, their experiences with us – locally, in each of our countries, and throughout the world. Of course, people's perceptions are influenced by what we tell them about ourselves; but they are influenced just as much by our conduct and their experiences with us. And nowadays, their views are often formed by what others tell them as much as by what we ourselves say. Managing our brand involves being aware of those perspectives and seeking proactively to positively influence them.

Brand development

The first steps in effective brand management are these: determining the current state of your brand, deciding what your ambitions are for developing it, and then designing a process for improving your position in your key areas of operation over time.

Step one – Brand audit and analysis: identify your brand strengths, challenges and ambitions

Strategic analysis

The first thing to do is to carry out a strategic review of your organization/National Society's mission statement, strategic goals and objectives with the senior management team, to clarify their ambitions for the brand.
This should enable the team to identify the current strengths of the National Society brand, in terms of the perceptions and experiences of members of the public and other key audiences. It should also be treated as an opportunity to weigh two things against each other: what is most important to the team, in terms of public perceptions of the organization, with what the team believes to be the key barriers, challenges and opportunities that might have an impact on the health of their brand and might therefore have to be addressed.

This process should enable the senior management team to articulate clearly the brand-related problems they are trying to solve – that is, problems revealed by the brand review. The team's first communication to staff and volunteers should state the purpose and objectives of the review; it should also invite staff and volunteers to participate by contributing their views.

The objectives of a review would generally include wanting to clearly articulate and pro-actively manage perceptions of your:

Purpose: To clarify for people what the National Society hopes to do
Essence: To be clear what the National Society is offering people in need
Values: To ensure that our Fundamental Principles are reflected in our work
Architecture: To improve visibility of the various kinds of work done by the National Society
Position: To strengthen our position in key areas of operation vis-à-vis our competitors.

Insight

First, you have to establish a strategic hypothesis: in this case, what the leadership think are the challenges facing their National Society. Then this strategic hypothesis has to be tested internally and externally.

Interviewing people who work or volunteer for your National Society can be helpful: it can provide useful insights and enable you to test some of the conclusions reached by your National Society. External research is also crucial. It is needed to understand what stakeholders are thinking and experiencing in relation to your National Society and how they view you in relation to your competitors.

You need also to find out what people think of your competitors in the key areas of operation – community work, health services, emergency response, etc.

The levels of need in your country – as well as the propensity to give, the place of volunteering in the culture and the strength of your competition – are also key areas to explore.

Where funds are available, working with external research agencies can be helpful in ensuring the objectivity of your research, the accurate representation (i.e. sound demographics) of the people you want to survey, the quality of your questions (making sure that they are not framed to elicit certain responses), and so on.

However if funds are not available, a lot of research can be carried out informally using the same methodologies – with the help of Google and/or through partnerships with other National Societies.

Where possible research should be both qualitative (typically groups, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews) and quantitative (typically surveys on and offline). This ensures that your thinking is directed by insights weighted by sheer numbers (that is, the number of people who think in a certain way about your National Society). It also ensures that your strategic thinking is not disproportionately influenced by the extreme views of a few individuals.

You can buy questions from specialized research agencies conducting omnibus surveys (research among the general public and other specialist groups conducted regularly).

Step two – Brand strategy development: identify strategic solutions for strengthening your position in key areas of operation

The research you carry out should not simply make clear what your key audiences think; it should also help to strengthen your position in key areas of operation by enabling you to identify what these people are looking for and what they believe they are getting from you in terms of:

Clarifying your Relevance

How relevant is what you are offering? For example: Is your ambulance service being replaced by government or private providers? Is there no longer a need for a national blood service?

Establishing whether people know what you are Promising

What do the public and other key audiences think the brand/your National Society is promising them? For example, support in the hurricane season, in times of food insecurity, and during floods. Are you able to meet or manage their expectations effectively?

Making sure that the public can Differentiate you from the competition

Can the public tell the difference between the work you are doing and the work of other aid or commercial agencies that offer the same services? If they can tell the difference, how do they rate what you offer as a National Society vis-à-vis your competitors?

Ensuring you understand the key Drivers of involvement for people

What are the key drivers for people using your services, volunteering, giving, and lobbying on behalf of beneficiaries? What motivates people to get involved and stay involved with you – and are you mindful of this in your communications

Using the insights generated during the audit and analysis phase described above, a National Society can now begin to develop its thinking in terms of its actual and desired:

- Brand purpose
- Brand essence
- Brand values
- Brand architecture
- Brand position
- Brand relevance
- Brand promise
- Brand differentiation
- Brand drivers

A brand strategy should begin to emerge from the analysis. The strategy should identify the most important messages and offers as well as the key audiences, key areas of operation, key external contexts and key competition. The next stage is to determine how to leverage the power of brand in various contexts and among different audiences.

Step three – Brand engagement: engaging key audiences with your brand

Once the strategic priorities have been established, plans for engaging key audiences have to be developed. This is to ensure that all of your stakeholders, internal and external, have a positive experience and that your brand is managed uniformly across all your points of interaction with your audiences.

Brand implementation – developing guidelines

All elements of the organization must 'live the brand'. It helps if you can create guidelines that enable everyone to present the organization and behave in a uniform and consistently positive way.
Ideally, all your work should have one look and the same feel. You will need to create guidelines for your design (visual identity), the type of photos you use, and the way in which you write and talk about yourselves (writing style, tone of voice and key messages). In addition you need to think about your conduct and how it reflects, at every level, the Movement's Fundamental Principles and any other values your National Society may have adopted.

The International Federation will be able to put you in touch with other National Societies who have done this work already. The guidelines produced by the International Branding Initiative, on the use of the emblem, will also be of help

Brand empowerment – access to resources

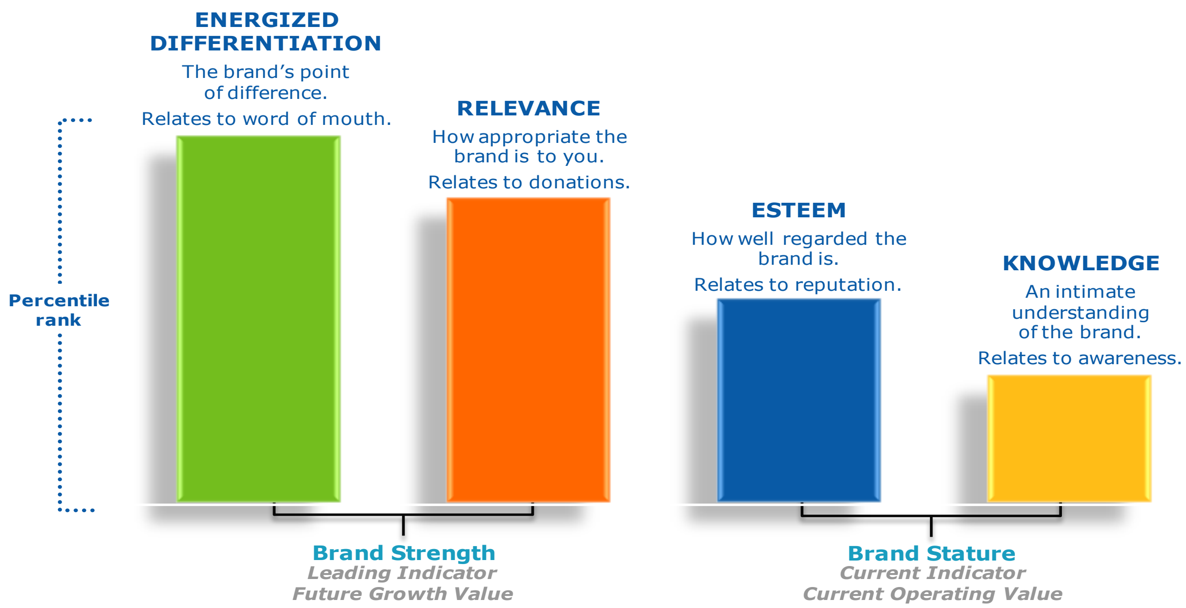
Creating guidelines is not enough; you also need to provide tools and templates to help people to implement them. Some National Societies have created online brand portals (websites) where staff and volunteers can access all of these resources. Others have created printed guidelines. It is vital that the guidelines do not stifle all creativity. A certain amount of flexibility should be built into them, keeping in mind the need for compliance with the 1991 Emblem Regulations. Social media, workshops, online training, award and rewards can all be used to inspire your people to live your brand. Brand champions are key and are needed at every level of the organization, starting with the secretary-general and senior management.

Brand engagement – inspiration through storytelling

Finally, engagement is best facilitated by storytelling - both positive and negative, evidencing both successes and areas for improvement. To show the positive impact of your work on brand you can share results from research. Choose key metrics/indicators to highlight your successes when explaining what has been achieved internally and externally by your organization. Storytelling can be key in bringing to life the brand ambition, challenges, values and the Fundamental Principles.

Step four – Brand monitoring and evaluation

Ideally, each National Society should be measuring how it is seen in its key areas of operation with key audiences and tracking those perceptions over time.
Informal surveys and focus groups and anecdotal feedback can be useful when budgets are not available for other, more rigorous methods of assessment.
Some National Societies have already started using proprietary models linked to specific brand consultancies: for instance, the Brand Asset Valuator model outlined below.



There are opportunities for other National Societies to use the same model; they can pursue these through the International Federation, or other National Societies, who will put them in touch with those who have experience of this or other simpler models.

The business case for branding

Finally, in order to gain the support of your governing board and senior management team, and to obtain the investment needed to strengthen your brand, the case for investment in research, design, promotional materials, workshop activity with staff and volunteers etc. needs to be made. It should include the need to remain competitive in terms of resource mobilization, recruiting volunteers and increasing access to services. Trust, reputation, loyalty and access can all be built up through effective brand development and management.

A full presentation on this is available at [insert link]

Brand process (version 2)

A helpful generic seven-stage process has been identified:

1. Strategic analysis: Mission statement, objectives, focus group, research, audit, strategic alignment, identification of issues, ambitions and purpose.
2. Insight: Internal and external research, context analysis, perceptions, competitors.
3. Strategic solutions: Brand model and architecture, key messaging, engagement, presentation of insight gained from research, differentiation, values, attributes, what people can expect, how to leverage the power of brand in different contexts.
4. Implementation: All elements of the organization must 'live the brand'. Need to create guidelines for visual identity, behaviour, images, writing style, tone of voice, website and social media, merchandise, etc.
5. Empowerment: Creation of brand portal. Allow user to maintain some creativity and flexibility in what they want to produce. Use social media to interact. Think of awards/rewards. Create a short memorable phrase to describe your National Society that everyone can remember and use consistently. Give technical assistance. Use brand champions and political influence to create a positive brand culture.
6. Engagement: Storytelling - both positive and negative, evidencing both successes and areas of improvement. Share research results, using clear metrics to highlight successful achievements. Work on gaining internal commitment to live out your values and Fundamental Principles.
7. Monitoring and evaluation: Brand metrics tracking and evaluation. Evaluate usability, A/B testing, qualitative and quantitative research. Conduct stakeholder analysis and evaluate business impact. Bespoke competitor analysis to explore what is more relevant.
8. Brand model (version 2)
   Working with a simple brand model can clarify the importance of a brand exercise for the Movement or for a particular National Society. In particular, a brand model can help an organization to understand where it is and to visualize where it wants to go and what it wants to achieve.

An ambition moving forward would be to create a clear and simple model that could be used by the Movement and by National Societies, as a starting point in terms of brand development. However, in order to identify a model that might be of help to the Movement, it was necessary first of all to review existing models.
Key components have been identified in the models available. They might be grouped as follows:

Clarifying our brand identity and offer
- Purpose
- Essence
- Architecture
- Values

Strengthening our position in our key areas of operation
- Relevance
- Promise
- Differentiation
- Drivers

Engaging key audiences with our brand
- Customer
- Audience
- Engagement
- Platforms

It is noted that some National Societies have already started using proprietary models linked to specific brand consultancies–the Brand Asset Valuator model, for instance. However it has been agreed that at this moment in time using such a model across the Movement would create some challenges: for instance, we would need to agree that the metrics of the model are the ones that matter to us all and we would need funds to be able to determine how we are performing against them. We are therefore simply sharing the principles of brand development at this moment in time and the offer of the Federation to put National Societies in touch with others who are further along the brand journey.

Dos and Don’ts in Social Media

Dos

> **Relationships in social media are real.** The value of both real-life and virtual networks should be recognized.

> **Engage.** Social media are two-way communication channels. Take time to get to know your audiences, and recognize them for their contributions.

> **Integrate.** Incorporate social media in your overall communications efforts instead of treating them as one-off channels.

> **Remember to listen**. In social media, listening is as important as speaking. Monitor what users are saying about your brand and organization, and make sure that this information influences dialogue and decision-making in the future.

> **Measure online communication**. Measurement tools are widely available in the digital world. Find the ones that work best for your needs.

> **Remember to be personal.** Be informative but also personal.

> **Call for action**. Ask and inspire your fans to participate: ask them to like your pictures or share your content – and always say “Thank you.”

- **Be prepared.** Given the speed at which news travels online, it is critical to have a crisis plan in place so that you can act quickly when an issue arises.
- **Be proactive and responsive.** Think in advance about how you will handle criticism or adverse public sentiment. Try to quickly address whatever isolated complaints come up, in concert with internal stakeholders who may be affected by such complaints.
- **Educate.** Provide staff and volunteers with guidelines and training for using social media responsibly and effectively as brand ambassadors.

Don'ts

- **Don´t repeat yourself**. Try to mix it up. Even if you need to repeat an update or promotion, make sure you add a new twist each time.
- **Don´t neglect.** Social media is, above all, 'social'. Therefore, it is important to provide a steady flow of updates and a constant level of engagement to meet online audiences' rising expectations for a personal brand experience.
- **Don´t rely on text alone.** For the sake of variety and to liven up conversation, use images and videos as well.
- **Don´t be impolite**. Always be clear, courteous, and composed. Do not take criticism personally, but see it rather as an opportunity to provide a positive brand experience. Do not get involved in altercations.
- **Don't spread yourself too thin**. It is not necessary to provide a brand presence on every single social media platform. Identify the channels that are most popular with your target audience—and the ones that fit best with your communication strategy.

To learn more, go to:

- http://likealyzer.com/
- http://mashable.com/how-to/
- https://www.facebook.com/help

Managing a reputational crisis in social media

A set of best practices for National Societies on using social media[1] before, during and after a crisis[2]

Best practices in the everyday use of social media can help to ensure active, loyal online communities that are well positioned to respond to – and recover from – a crisis. For this reason, we include a brief sampling of simple tasks a National Society can employ on a regular basis to strengthen its relationships as well as its online identity. We also outline steps for addressing crises via social media that aim to mitigate reputational risk while meeting audience expectations.

[1] "Social media" is often defined as a set of platforms that facilitate the creation, exchange and consumption of multimedia content. Sometimes the term is also used to describe how mobile technology and network services have shifted the way people communicate, as well the volume and the speed of such communication. The first definition is used in this paper.

[2] A "crisis" is an event that represents a critical threat to the health, safety or well-being of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area. Armed conflicts, epidemics, famines, natural disasters and other major emergencies may all involve or develop into a crisis. In this document, an event that might have an adverse impact on the reputation of the Movement is also a crisis.

Before a crisis

- Define workflow, internal stakeholders and the approval process as necessary for social media communications. Obtain approval from senior management to ensure that your leadership shares your expectations for how official social media channels will operate.
- Establish a contact list of fellow social media practitioners across the Movement.
- Identify, monitor and connect with industry experts, government bodies and peer organizations able to provide information beneficial for the Movement's work.
- Adopt a daily system for monitoring online conversations of pertinence to your National Society. Beginning and ending each day with a simple "listen" can help you keep abreast of social activity.
  - Free web-based tools such as HootSuite.com, TweetDeck.com, SocialMention.com, Topsy.com and Google.com/alerts enable you to search for references to key phrases – e.g. "Red Cross" or "Red Crescent" – on social networks. For more sophisticated listening capabilities you can invest in a social media monitoring platform, such as Radian 6, that can monitor, measure and analyse public sentiment across numerous social media properties.
- Develop active online communities where volunteers, supporters and others are encouraged to participate openly.
- Ensure that social media are integral components of all official communications channels in order to ensure consistent messaging, voice and tone.
- Make sure sufficient resources and staffing are in place for communicating regularly during periods of crisis and of calm, allowing for the sharing of responsibilities where needed.
- Have a system in place through which you can obtain official information from designated sources in an efficient and timely manner.
- Set up a convenient online system through which the public can donate money to your National Society. For example, a prominent link on your website, to a donation page, can help to facilitate fundraising.

During a crisis

- Given the speed at which information travels on social media, these channels will oftentimes provide your first alert to a crisis. If you identify a "red flag" of information, share it with internal stakeholders, seek verification and agree on next steps.

First signs of a reputational crisis

  - Try to determine whether the party responsible for the adverse communication has a legitimate concern or is simply trying to cause a disruption. Also try to determine how influential this person is: for instance, how may followers he or she has on Twitter, for example. In the online world, users known as 'trolls' bully online communities. Check for provocative behaviour in the user's personal profile or past communications. It is best to be on the look-out for this kind of personality – and to ignore them.
  - User-generated comments, whether positive or negative, are opportunities to engage those users in discussion. Clarifying or introducing new information, thanking them for sharing their point of view or simply letting them know that you are listening can help to defuse a tense situation and give users a positive brand experience.
  - If a "red flag" comment or conversation mentions your National Society in a negative light – but has not yet reached crisis proportions – monitor it closely.

Before responding to a negative post, ask your manager for a second opinion and request suitable responses for the specific topic or issue.
- Alert the International Federation's communication team at the first signs of a crisis so that it can provide support for your National Society in minimizing potential damage to the Red Cross/Red Crescent brand and help to coordinate response if the crisis spills over into other National Societies.

First signs of a physical crisis

- Use the established workflow and approval process to quickly address immediate concerns related to the crisis. Share information that has been verified – via your National Society's social networks – to explain how the Red Cross/ Red Crescent – whether it is your National Society or a combination of parties – is responding to the emergency.
- Notify the International Federation's communication team – and the ICRC's, if appropriate – so that it can help coordinate communications activities internationally.

> If a critical mass of users is directing similar questions, accusations or concerns at your National Society, but verified information is not available internally, acknowledge publicly that your National Society is aware of the situation and is looking into it (suitable responses for such situations should be available).
> Monitor incoming correspondence and references to the Movement more frequently than usual, ideally every hour. Use this information to gauge the level of concern and understand public sentiment, to inform staff, and to adapt ongoing communications.
> Work with internal stakeholders to develop key messages and/or suitable responses that can be used to address questions and concerns in your online communities. Try where possible to personalize correspondence.
> To promote a unified response, provide your professional network (other National Societies, local chapters, etc.) with pertinent information to distribute through their social media channels.
> Use multimedia (photos, videos) to provide a visual account of how your National Society is responding to the crisis. Increased transparency can help to build trust, dispel rumours and enhance credibility by showing the Red Cross/Red Crescent in action.
- To expedite the sharing of National Society-produced multimedia materials, consider using Creative Commons licences. These licences permit external parties – for example, news agencies or another National Society – to use your content as long as proper credit is given (as well as other restrictions, based on the Creative Commons licence you select). If your National Society commissions an audio-visual professional to produce multimedia materials, content licensing and rights should be dealt with in his or her contract.

> During a physical crisis, ask the public to support the respective Red Cross/Red Crescent National Society response by donating money. Tell them how and where they may do so.

After a crisis

> Provide regular follow-up, assuring online communities that your National Society is taking the crisis seriously. If possible, try to show, rather than tell, how the situation is being handled.
> Remember to thank and show appreciation for your online communities by highlighting the ways in which they are providing support, whether directly or indirectly.

- Continue to monitor online discussions and user sentiment, and report these findings to internal stakeholders.

Branding in the digital sphere and social media

Top tips for daily online communication

- When planning your digital communications remember to engage on several platforms: website – create a version for mobile phones when possible – and various social media platforms. This will help you to engage, and position your National Society with, many more online communities and reach more people. It will also make it easier for members of the general public to find you or the information you are delivering in the digital sphere – emergency communications, updates on critical situations, and so on.
- Engage your digital audience constantly. Ideally, you should interact every day to keep your social community engaged and to enable it to grow and develop loyalty.
- Interact: organizations communicate successfully online when the audience can interact with the content. Try to facilitate two-way communication, ask questions, invite comments, give out prizes (a mention on Twitter, a picture posted online, etc.) and talk to your audience when appropriate. Be a living brand online.
- Keep your digital communication simple: whether it is a campaign, a news article, or information about your National Society, try to keep it clear, free of jargon, and accessible to all.
- Make your website and social media pages easy to navigate. This will allow people to find what they are looking for easily and will make them come back for more.
- Integrate messages and communications. To make successful use of the interconnectivity of the digital sphere you must ensure that you are speaking the same language at every point of interaction and delivering the same message on all your webpages and websites. Make it possible for users to navigate from one platform to another smoothly – for instance, from a Facebook post to the National Society's website.
- Learn from your experience and use the existing tools. Some social media platforms allow the owner of a page or account to analyse the traffic he or she gets (https://developers.facebook.com/docs/insights/, http://www.google.com/analytics/, https://analytics.twitter.com). This can show you when best to communicate, when your target audience will connect and if your content is doing its job. Use the tools to learn and adjust your strategy accordingly.

Top tips for planning a communication campaign

Communication campaigns are a way to enhance our brands. They also enable us to interact with the general public and to establish a dialogue with pertinent audiences. Such campaigns can help an organization shape people's perceptions of its brand.
Carefully consider the following issues when planning a campaign:

- Keep the message simple. People have less time now than ever before and are being overwhelmed by information. So it is crucial to keep messages simple and straightforward and not overcomplicate what you want to say. Otherwise, people will simply lose interest and turn to something more immediate and understandable.
- Make sure that what you are saying is relevant to your target audience. Spend time researching the context and shape your message accordingly. "Message" in

this instance means language and tone of voice also. If what you say is pertinent, the audience will pay attention to your message and think better of your organization.

> Try to make the audience think. Keeping the message simple will stimulate your audience to think. This will ensure that your message – and therefore you – will make more of an impression on them.
> Allow debate, if appropriate. Engagement online works when people are involved and can offer their opinion. Try to secure their involvement by asking questions, conducting polls, inviting them to comment, and so on.
> Take care with the production of campaign materials. Audiences today are much more adept at judging the quality (visuals, sound, imagery) of a campaign. If your message is 'beautiful' they will pay attention.
> The element of fun: if appropriate, try to make your audience smile. Social media is a space that most people access in their free time. You may want to consider posts that have a lighter tone than usual. Making them smile will also have a positive impact on your online followers' engagement and will make them come back.
> Involve celebrities in your campaigns. By doing so you will be taking advantage of an audience already established online. Remember to check their reputation; associating with someone with a dubious public image can be risky.

Managing media relations during a reputational crisis

Dos and Don'ts in managing a reputational crisis

Dos in crisis communication

- **Be prepared** – refer to the reputational risk checklist (available at https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/communications/) to learn how to prepare.
- **Analyse the potential impact of the crisis** on the reputation of your National Society and the Movement.
- **Take control of all communications,** internal and external.
- **Stop unauthorized communications and prevent unauthorized persons from communicating.**
- **Consider obtaining external support.** Ask for advice and support from the International Federation/the ICRC/other National Societies that have experienced similar crises.
- **Try to understand the bigger picture**. Do not think things will get better by themselves.
- **Develop a communication plan and adapt it to the crisis.**
- **Establish the communication team** and draw up procedures in advance of a reputational crisis (in other words, be prepared).
- **Select spokesperson(s) who are media-trained and have a good personal reputation.**
- **Draft key messages.** Prepare and distribute statements for internal and external use.
- **Expect every piece of communication to find its way to the media.** So, be careful with what you write and circulate.
- **Engage in a dialogue with the media if you consider it worthwhile.** Do so only after you have drawn up a plan and established key messages and your position.
- **Use the media** (traditional, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to communicate your messages if appropriate.
- **Communicate accurately, clearly and promptly.**
- **Correct the media's mistakes**. If their reporting on an issue of concern is inaccurate, explain the situation to the editor, or someone else in a position of authority, and ask for a correction or retraction.
- **Use your channels to communicate.** For example, use the National Society's website and social media, as well as the relevant people, to reach your audience.
- **Remember that the media is almost always on the side of the beneficiaries**, stakeholders, etc.
- **Consider the impact of the crisis on other National Societies in your region.** Keep them informed to ensure that they are able to manage any adverse spillover.
- **Be truthful.**
- **Stay calm.**

Don'ts in crisis communication

- **Don't comment on rumours, speculation or information that you cannot verify.**
- **Don't shut down normal lines of communication.** Reply to email and comments on your website and social media pages after careful consideration.
- **Don't underestimate what reporters know.**
- **Don't ignore media calls but consider carefully whether or not to take part in an interview. Sometimes a short statement is best.**
- **Don't speculate.**
- **Don't consider speaking "off the record." There is no such thing.**

Transnational crisis management flowchart

Crisis communication flowchart

National crisis management guidelines

Before a crisis – crisis prevention and mitigation

The best way to manage a crisis is to prevent it. Although not all crises can be prevented, many can.

In general, proper management of your internal and external communications will help you to prevent issues[3] from developing into full-blown crises. Therefore:

> Create a culture of positive and open communication within your National Society and with external stakeholders.[4]

> Ensure that all National Society staff and volunteers understand the values of the organization and the Fundamental Principles and that they recognize the importance of reflecting these in their actions and attitudes. Make sure that they understand how your National Society wants to be perceived.

> Build up a strong reputation and manage it properly to ensure that your organization can "weather the storm." Ensure that perceptions of your organization accurately reflect its identity and values.

> Build strong relationships between the various departments within your National Society and with key stakeholders[5] (government, donors, journalists, etc.). Regular and open communication is crucial for creating positive relationships, internally as well as externally.

> Have media/communication guidelines for staff and volunteers in place to ensure consistent messaging, voice and tone in all official communication channels. Click this link for an example of social media guidelines: https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/communications/communication-tools/

> Develop active online communities (within the National Society and elsewhere) where staff, volunteers, supporters and others are encouraged to participate openly. Engage in and monitor these conversations regularly.

[3]An issue is a trend or condition that, if permitted to continue, would have a significant impact on the functioning of an organization; it can also have an adverse impact on the mission of that organization.

[4]A stakeholder is any person or group that has an interest, right, claim or ownership in an organization.

[5]Key stakeholders are those people or groups whose actions can harm or benefit an organization.

Early warning – crisis management

1. **Monitoring external and internal environment:** identify issues that could develop into crises and damage the reputation of the National Society and/or the Movement. Regularly scan and monitor your internal and external environment for news, trends and conversations pertinent to your National Society and the humanitarian environment in which you work.

Monitoring your internal and external environment: Basic steps

> Establish a system for monitoring media (print, broadcast (radio, TV) and digital/social media) for news and conversations pertinent to your National Society. (For example, free tools such as SocialMention.com enable you to search for references to “Red Cross” or “Red Crescent” in popular social networks.)

> Identify, monitor and connect with industry experts, government bodies, other National Societies in your region, and peer organizations that can provide information beneficial for the Movement’s work.

> And last but not least, do not forget to monitor the organizational culture, employee satisfaction and motivation within your National Society.

- TIP: Do an employee satisfaction survey once a year, communicate the results to your staff and follow up with measures for improvement if necessary.

Note: Keep in mind that issues are often cyclical and can reappear. A ‘dormant’ issue can be revived by people for a variety of reasons, so issue management and monitoring is a continuous process.

2. **Analyse & prioritize** issues and risks and try to understand every trend/issue/event. Use the risk register and the reputation risk management tools. Keep the following in mind while conducting your analysis: the importance for your internal and external stakeholders, public perceptions, the possible impact on your organization and the likelihood of these issues arising.
    - TIP: Develop a risk matrix for the main issues/risks that could harm your National Society – like the one below – in which you match possible reputational damage (impact) with likelihood of occurrence (likelihood).

Likelihood

Very likely	Medium 2	High 3	Extreme 5
Likely	Low 1	Medium 2	High 3
Unlikely	Low 1	Low 1	Medium 2
What is the chance it will happen?	Minor	Moderate	Major

Impact

You can find reputational risk management resources by clicking this link: https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/communications/

- Identify issues (very likely to occur and major impact on National Society) for which concrete action is needed to prevent crises and discuss with senior management actions or strategic resolutions that are necessary; they must address both organizational and public interests,.
- You may decide that no action is needed and may continue to closely monitor the issue. However, if action is needed, consider the following steps: a change in policy, a change in practice, targeted communication with key stakeholders or active organizational involvement in drafting public policy.

3. **Action planning:** Implement and communicate the organization's position and the actions it will take to address the situation: an employee education/training programme to prevent incidents involving staff/volunteers whose conduct is not in keeping with the Fundamental Principles, an advocacy campaign, lobbying efforts; media relations, and so on.

Before a crisis – crisis preparation

As highlighted in the previous chapter on crisis prevention, issue management (including environment scanning and monitoring), risk management/aversion and relationship building with key stakeholders are crucial for preventing or for being prepared to deal with a crisis. However, thorough crisis preparation includes some additional steps.

1. **Establish crisis communication processes and ensure representation on the crisis management team**

   - Agree on roles and responsibilities of communication staff with senior management. Ensure beforehand that the important role of communication in managing a crisis is understood and recognized.

   Agree with senior-level management that when a crisis develops, a communication representative will be part of the crisis management team.
   - Define workflow and the approval processes for communication materials.
   - Obtain approval from the leadership for the functioning of all official communication channels (including social media) and the crisis management[6] and crisis communication teams.
   - Analyse the flow of information internally, the people involved and their roles and responsibilities beforehand to create an information flow chart. This will ensure effective internal information sharing during the crisis.

2. **Create a crisis management and communication plan including:**

   - A description of the agreed crisis communication processes and information flow.
   - Agreement on who initiates and will be part of the crisis management and crisis communication teams (for instance, for the crisis management team: representatives from senior management like the secretary-general, and colleagues from such departments as operations, communication, law and finance; and for the crisis communication team: representatives from the press office, the online/social media team, the department of internal communication, and so on).
   - Contact lists of relevant internal and external stakeholders, including other components of the Movement that might be affected. Make sure a representative

[6] The crisis management team is a cross-functional group that creates and puts into effect a crisis management plan, and that has been designated to handle all crises.

of the communication department is on the phone, text and email lists for receiving alerts and updates.

- Trained spokespersons for each issue. The spokesperson is the face of the organization during a crisis. One of his or her primary responsibilities is to ensure that the messages communicated are accurate, consistent, relevant and clear.
- Create templates for the media and key messages and responses for stakeholders in connection with various issues/crises.[7]

For a reputation risk checklist that summarizes these actions and tips, click this link:
https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/communications

3. Conduct a crisis simulation once a year

- The crisis management and communication team and others involved must be trained. Drills and simulations will teach them how to handle a crisis and will also show where improvements need to be made.

During the crisis

- Given the speed at which news travels on social media, these channels will often provide your first alert to a crisis. If you come across a "red flag" issue, share it with internal stakeholders, seek verification and agree on next steps.
  - Reputational crisis: If the "red flag" comment or conversation mentions your National Society in a negative light – but has not yet reached crisis proportions –monitor closely.
  - Physical crisis: Use the established workflow and approval process to quickly address immediate concerns related to the crisis. Share information that has been verified – via your National Society's social and media networks – to explain how your National Society is responding to the emergency.
- Mobilize crisis management and crisis communication teams.
- Gather as much relevant information as possible and define the type of crisis in order to determine the communication strategy:
  - Consider the risks/advantages of non-disclosure (giving very little or no information) versus those of full disclosure (tell it all and tell it fast), legal issues (involve your legal adviser) and the degree to which stakeholders blame the organization for the crisis (crisis responsibility).
- Communication during a crisis presents a number of challenges: "If you say something before you really know the facts, you are speculating. If it is subsequently wrong, you are a liar. If you don't say anything, you are a stonewaller."[8] However, if your National Society is under pressure to respond to numerous questions or accusations, and the facts have not yet been verified internally, acknowledge publicly that your National Society is aware of the situation and is looking into it (responses for such situations[9] should be available; see the section on crisis preparation). Let people know that you are listening to them. This will give you some time to gather information and obtain agreement on key messages within your National Society.

[7] Please see the next section in this document.

[8] Warren Anderson, former CEO of Union Carbide

[9] See the next section for examples of such responses.

- > Identify and prepare spokespeople. Choose the right persons for each type of crisis and provide training. Help them to manage their schedule (organizing media interviews, and handling logistics etc.) and provide key messages and talking points. Keep in mind that a crisis can intensify. Depending on the seriousness of the crisis, it may be necessary for members of your senior management – your secretary-general or even the president of the board of your National Society – to assume the role of spokesperson.

- > Work with internal stakeholders to develop key messages, reactive lines and answers to frequently asked questions. These can be used to address the concerns of relevant stakeholders: government, donors, media, civil society, the public, your online communities, staff, volunteers, etc. Obtain approval as soon as possible. Delays in communicating can lead to more reputational damage. Try where possible to personalize correspondence.
- > Share key messages, media guidelines (see the section on crisis preparation) and contact details of press office/spokespersons with front line staff – field staff, front desk, branch offices and volunteers.

- > If your senior management agrees, inform the International Federation and the ICRC and get their support and advice if needed. Keep them informed at every stage of the crisis, so that they can communicate to the rest of the Movement to prevent or limit trans-national reputational damage.

- > Create a communication plan for all stakeholders, including internal audiences. Staff, volunteers, donors, community partners all need information and can help communicate key messages to their respective audiences. Do not forget to regularly update your own staff and volunteers, as they too can play a key role in managing a crisis.
- > Continuously monitor incoming correspondence and references to your National Society or the Movement for the duration of the crisis to gauge common concerns and public sentiment. Use this information to update staff as well as to adapt ongoing communication.
- > Continuously update messages online.
  - o Update website information as often as possible.
  - o Communicate key messages through prevalent social media in your region, such as Facebook and Twitter.
  - o Depending on the crisis and your communication strategy, consider asking staff, volunteers and donors to distribute information through their networks, such as email, Facebook and Twitter.
- > To ensure a unified response, provide your professional network (other National Societies, local chapters, etc.) with this information so that they can distribute it through their respective communication channels.

After the crisis

- > Build on the communication lessons you have learnt:
  - o Conduct an evaluation with senior management and the crisis management and communication teams, requesting feedback on performance and activities.
  - o Incorporate lessons learnt in the crisis management and communication plan and other crisis communication materials to be better prepared for or to prevent the next crisis.

- > Provide regular follow-up, assuring your stakeholders, the general public, the media, and your online communities that your National Society is still taking the crisis seriously.
- > Continue to monitor online discussions and user sentiment, and report these findings to internal stakeholders.

Draft responses/reactive lines

To address the five main reputational issues that can threaten a National Society's reputation and turn into a trans-national reputational crisis, certain basic statements of response have been drawn up.

An allegation of fraud/corruption or other misuse of funding within a sister National Society

- > We have been made aware of these very serious allegations. We understand that they are being treated as a matter of urgency by the XX Red Cross/Red Crescent. We have no further details at this point, but are confident the National Society is taking all necessary actions to clarify and address the situation.

- > The XX Red Cross / Red Crescent is an independent organization, with its own internal mechanisms and processes for dealing with alleged incidents such as this. It is therefore the responsibility of the leadership to make sure that this matter is fully investigated.

- > As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, we are of course extremely concerned about these allegations. However, we are confident that our counterparts in the XX Red Cross / Red Crescent will conduct a thorough inquiry. They may also rely on the Secretariat of the International Federation and/or the ICRC for additional assistance or guidance in this matter.

Unsatisfactory progress post-disaster: Why so little to show a year later?

- > The XX Red Cross/Red Crescent's response to this disaster was immediate and continues to this day. The challenges surrounding this disaster have been significant, including (difficult terrain, remote areas, bad weather, constant flooding, difficulties with land ownership, political instability, lack of funds, etc.). This is a complex operation and a number of important activities have been undertaken throughout the year, in a professional manner by committed people, including (provide concrete examples). While we would all like the work to go faster, we must recognize that the challenges are huge. It takes time to thoroughly understand the situation and people's specific needs. Only then can we effectively help them recover from the crisis, by meeting their basic needs and by providing emotional support.

- > As the country's largest and most experienced emergency response organization, the XX Red Cross/Red Crescent has an excellent understanding of rescue and recovery operations. We know what works and what does not in a post-disaster response. We are especially aware of the need to manage large numbers of donations responsibly and efficiently. Emergency situations and natural catastrophes are, by their very nature, unpredictable and it can take time to determine what is needed and the best way of handling the recovery process.
- > In order to make sure the money we receive is spent wisely and provides the maximum benefit for the people who need our help, at the Red Cross / Red Crescent, we rely on our network of dedicated volunteers who are based in local communities and on the experience of our disaster experts to decide on the best

approach. Of course the quicker the response the better, but the quality of the response and the lasting benefits it can provide are equally important considerations.

Allegations about a National Society's lack of neutrality and independence

> In their efforts to alleviate human suffering, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are guided by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality. These principles guide all our actions and we are committed to ensuring that our staff and volunteers respect and uphold them. Our National Society takes these allegations of lack of neutrality and independence very seriously and is looking into the matter. If these allegations have any validity, we will take the steps necessary to ensure that our work remains in line with our principles.

> National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are neutral: we do not take sides between those at war, regardless of whether they are international, government or opposition forces.

> National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are impartial: we help people whose needs are greatest during armed conflict, regardless of who they are: civilians or fighters no longer participating in hostilities.

> National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are independent: we do not represent governments or any other authorities, but act as an auxiliary to the State on purely humanitarian issues. As part of our role as auxiliaries to governments, we provide a broad range of services, including disaster relief and social programmes. In wartime, National Societies may assist people not participating in the fighting and may provide support for the medical services of armed forces.

> The principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality enable the Red Cross and Red Crescent to gain acceptance amongst parties at odds and amongst local populations. This acceptance enables the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to acquire safe access to areas that may otherwise be dangerous.

> Remaining neutral between the parties at odds and being independent of any other parties, States or institutions enable the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to act impartially: the Movement provides support according to humanitarian needs, free from political, ethnic, religious, ideological or any other considerations.

> A neutral International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that refrains from participating in conflicts and controversies is ready and in a position to help alleviate the suffering of people without ulterior motives and without discrimination.

Emblem misuse

> We are looking into the reports alleging misuse of the emblem. We take these issues very seriously since the red cross, red crescent and red crystal emblems must be displayed properly to ensure that they can fulfil their primary function – to protect.

> The red cross and red crescent emblems carry no religious or political meaning. They are purely humanitarian emblems, enshrined in international law.

> The emblems were born on the battlefield and created to distinguish and protect medical and religious personnel providing care and assistance for the wounded and

the sick. They indicate that a person who is not, or who is no longer, fighting is protected under international humanitarian law and may not be attacked

> The red cross emblem is derived from the Swiss flag, which has a white cross on a red background, and was chosen to honour the founder of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, who was from Switzerland.

> The use of the protective emblems (the red cross, the red crescent and the red crystal) is regulated by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and in many countries by domestic law. As signatories to the Geneva Conventions, States are responsible for ensuring that the emblems are displayed in accordance with the regulations.

> **Protective function:** In armed conflicts, the red cross, red crescent and red crystal emblems are the visible signs of the protection conferred by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols on the medical personnel, units and transports of armed forces and on authorized relief workers and civilian medical personnel, hospitals and medical units. The emblems were created to notify parties to an armed conflict that a certain person or object is protected under international humanitarian law and may not be attacked. When used during armed conflict, the emblems should be displayed on their own; they should be as large as possible.

> **Indicative function:** The emblems also show that a person or an object has a link with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In such cases, the emblems must bear additional information (for example, the name or the initials of the National Society). The emblems must be displayed in relatively small dimensions and may not be placed on armlets or on the roofs of buildings, in order to avoid any confusion with the emblems used as protective devices.

For more information, please consult the ICRC document available at http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/emblem/overview-emblem.htm

Misconduct of staff or volunteers

> We are aware of the very serious allegations that have been made against one of the members of the staff/volunteers of the Red Cross / Red Crescent. It is our understanding that this matter is being looked into carefully and that the person concerned will be given an opportunity to provide an explanation. We will inform you as soon as we learn the results of the investigation and of the meeting with the person in question. We will also let you know of any other steps that may be required. Once all the facts are known, we will do what is necessary to deal with the situation and ensure that these actions are not repeated.

> Whatever the case may be, the alleged conduct is not in line with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – independence, impartiality and humanity – which all the members of our staff and our volunteers are committed to upholding.

Branding templates – logos for National Societies

A set of templates have been developed to provide helpful suggestions for National Societies planning to undertake a re-branding process in the future.

Using these templates is not compulsory. In fact, every National Society is free to decide how it wants to represent itself, within the limits laid down by the 1991 Emblem Regulations. These suggestions are intended to serve as a resource for National Societies that are beginning to work on their visual identity. The design files are available and ready to be used or adapted [insert link]. Also, because some National Societies may feel the need to be more specific about the provenance of a Red Cross / Red Crescent body – that is, convey more than just the country of its origin – a design giving the name of a branch or city was also developed.

If National Societies use these options, they could, in the long term, make Red Cross / Red Crescent visual identities, as well as our 'look and feel' throughout the world, more uniform.

XXXXX
RED CROSS

XXXXX
RED CRESCENT

XXXXX
RED CRESCENT

XXXXX
RED CROSS
(CITY/BRANCH)

XXXXX
RED CRESCENT
(CITY/BRANCH)

XXXXX
RED CRESCENT
(CITY/BRANCH)

Emblem misuse management documents

Misuse of the emblems by a third party – management workflow and model materials to use

Among the factors that most seriously affect recognition for and understanding of our red cross and red crescent brands is their misuse by third parties who, often, do not realize that they are protected symbols.

Pharmacies, veterinarians and medical practices often use the emblems to promote their businesses and sometimes – as was the case in some countries during the recent uprisings in the Arab world – tradesmen such as electricians, and even politicians, do so as well. Such misuse is really a form of flattery, as it reflects the credibility and positive associations of the brand; but it undermines the credibility of the Movement and causes brand confusion.

As the emblems are protected by the Geneva Conventions, third parties are in fact breaking international and, most often, domestic laws by displaying them. Often, a simple letter to the person or business in question, bringing the matter to their attention and asking them to discontinue use of the emblem, is all that is needed. Dealing with these sorts of misuse of the emblem should not be an onerous task for National Societies with few resources, as it is usually not an expensive or complicated process. Every National Society should be vigilant in this regard as its brand positioning in the country can be significantly affected by instances of misuse.

The sample or model letter that is attached [insert link] can be adapted for use by your National Society.

The simple five-step process below can be used to deal with misuse quickly and effectively.

Step 1. Identify the business or individual misusing the emblem and find out their postal or email address. Often, National Society staff members and volunteers who have been made aware of the issue of misuse can become your eyes and give you examples to follow up.

Step 2. Send the model letter to the business or individual, alerting them to the fact that they are breaking international and/or domestic laws and asking them to stop using the emblem to promote their business.

Step 3. Set up a meeting with the individual or business and discuss how and when they are going to withdraw or phase out use of the emblem on items such as brochures and signage and on advertisements posted online.

Step 4. If they take no action, use the model 'follow up' letter to try to convince them to do so; and perhaps set up another meeting.

Step 5. After the individual or business has taken action, send them the model 'thank you' letter; if the misuse persists, refer it to the relevant department or minister (e.g. Defence) in your government.

Emblem misuse management – First contact letter

[date]
[to address]

Dear [name],

I am writing to you in connection with your use of the red cross emblem – displayed, we believe, [on your company vehicle]. I would be grateful if you would read the information about the emblem below, so that we can chat about this matter in a few days' time.

The use of the red cross and red crescent emblems is regulated by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and in many countries (including ours), by domestic law.

The emblem of the red cross, red crescent or red crystal on a white background has a special meaning. These emblems are internationally recognized as signs of protection and impartiality. They save lives every day in armed conflicts throughout the world. In peace-time, they may be used to show that a person or an object has a link with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – for example, in our country, to indicate association with the (insert the name of your National Society here).

(Insert your country name here) law is clear. The red cross / red crescent emblem should not be used without the written consent of (insert relevant government minister or reference here e.g. Minister for Defence). The law also prohibits the use of any designs that closely resemble the emblem, as these may be mistaken for the emblem or understood to be referring to the emblem. Nations all around the world have similar laws. Why? Because every time the red cross or red crescent emblem is misused, the protective power of the emblem is reduced, and the lives of those who depend on the emblem's protection during armed conflict are endangered even more.

It has been reported that [your company vehicle displays a large red cross on both front doors]. I am sure that there was no intention to misuse the emblem: many businesses have inadvertently made the same mistake. Please rest assured that our aim is to educate the community. At the same time [the logos on your car] may well need to be altered because you may be in breach of the law.

I look forward to discussing this with you, and working towards a solution.

Kind regards,

Emblem misuse management – Second contact letter

[date]
[to address]

Dear [name],

I am writing in connection with the letter we sent you recently / discussion we had recently about the use of the red cross / red crescent in your (insert vehicle, promotional material, etc. here). We note that your (insert relevant item here) still prominently display representations of the red cross / red cress emblem and that such use of the emblem may not be in compliance with the Geneva Conventions Act of (insert relevant legislation or law and country here).

For these reasons I would strongly advise you to seek permission from (insert relevant government department or minister here) if you wish to continue using your current logo.

The reason the red cross / red crescent emblem is so strictly regulated is simple. The emblem's purpose is to provide protection from attack for military medical personnel and certain other parties who undertake humanitarian work during armed conflict. Every time the emblem is misused, its protective power is reduced, the public understanding becomes confused, and the lives of those who depend on the emblem's protection in situations of armed conflict are endangered.

(Insert National Society name here) has been given the role of assisting the (name of country government here, e.g. Government of Fiji) in ensuring proper use of the emblem. I must therefore request you to make arrangements either to seek permission to use the emblem or to modify your logo so that it ceases to resemble any of the protected emblems. I am happy to discuss this further with you if needed.

Yours sincerely,

Branding for youth audiences

Our youth are not the future. They are the here and now. Young people are part of our organizations now, and it is important that we recognize their relevance to the work of the Movement. If we think of our youth as the future we will miss the opportunity to benefit from their energy and imaginativeness, which are so vital to our development.

Young people have redefined the music store, the search tool, and social networks; they have had the Walkman, television and the credit card redefined for them because they wanted it. How best should our Movement involve young people?

> Treat youth as an audience and not a programme

> Young people may be one of the toughest audiences today, but there is none more important

> Need to relate – be relevant to their lives, speak the same language

> Need to engage – become part of their lives, be something they value and respect, become someone they want to listen to

> Need to involve – make them feel valued, listened to and part of your organization

Youth can be seen in our Global Youth Strategy as:

1. Innovators
2. Leaders
3. Partners
4. Promoting humanitarian values and life skills.

Dos and don'ts

Relating to youth

It is difficult to make oneself heard today. Millions of messages are addressed to young people every day; so ours has to be one that grabs their attention. When talking to young people it is important to use the right tone of voice and speak the same language as them, without being condescending and patronizing.

This will increase our chances of being heard.

TONE OF VOICE

Dos

> **Be open, clear and give relevant and concrete information.** Youth are accustomed to fast and effective communication. Do not overcomplicate things.
> **Open up a two-way conversation**. Be ready to listen to feedback and opinions.
> **Let them think independently**. Get them to think critically about their actions and decisions. Give them as much information as possible (from all angles) about the issue you are dealing with. Allow them to make up their own minds.
> **Work on the packaging**. Always make your message look interesting and appealing. If you are boring or dull, young people will not even listen to you.

You can consult resources focused on branding for youth audiences by following this link:

[insert link to other youth brand-related materials]

Don’ts

- **Don’t patronize or judge your audience.** This will annoy them and they will not listen to you.
- **Don’t sound presumptuous or all-knowing.** If you do, you will only sound boring and outdated and young people will not listen.
- **Don’t scare them.** Young people can interpret such tactics as attempts to influence and control them. The result of this is that youth will withdraw the message, ignore you, or become angry.

LANGUAGE

Dos

- **Use simple language**. Keep your message simple and clear; this will increase its chances of getting attention.
- **Use humour and be informal.** This will stimulate interest in what you have to say.
- **Keep it brief.** Young people are bombarded with many messages every day. Do not overdo things.
- **Refer to current youth culture** when giving examples and explaining concepts.

Don’ts

- **Avoid jargon and technical language.** Using complicated language will make your message boring and inaccessible; and you will lose young people’s attention.
- **Don’t use formal language,** as that can be intimidating.
- **Don’t try to be one of them.** Do not use slang or words that are not part of a normal adult’s vocabulary.
- **Don’t make demeaning statements** like “You’re smart for a teen-ager!” or “You’ll understand when you grow up.”
- **Avoid using examples that are inappropriate** for young people or unrelated to youth culture.

TALKING TO YOUTH

Dos

- **Know your audience.** You must know who you will be talking to so that you can tailor your message accordingly.
- **Involve them in your presentations.** When doing presentations or talking to a large audience, use ice-breaking exercises to create a warm atmosphere. Exercises of this kind are useful in situations where most of those present do not know each other. They allow people to get to know one another and provide assurance that the rest of the day is going to be fun and engaging.

Don’ts

- **Don’t put people in opposite categories.** Don’t create an ‘adults v. children’ scenario.
- **Don’t embarrass them.** Never make them the centre of attention in a group or ask them questions that they might not be able to answer. Always let them decide if they want to be in the spotlight.

Engaging youth

After you have established a connection with young people, it is important that you maintain the relationship and cultivate it. This can secure their involvement and loyalty, which can make a real difference to your organization.

Engagement depends on your behaviour and on the nature of your interaction with your audience.

YOUR BEHAVIOUR

Dos

- **Be enthusiastic.** When recruiting or involving youth, be passionate! Young people will not want to participate if it does not look like fun or if they think it will be boring.
- **Develop a framework for youth involvement that is flexible enough for them to be able to engage with your organization properly.**
- **Be true to yourself and authentic.** Young people live in a world of ‘fake virtual friends’ and curated identities, and truth is more important than ever. Be authentic and consistent and they will recognize it.
- **Be transparent.** Integrity and transparency are much appreciated today. This is even truer for charitable organizations and young people do consider these values when evaluating a brand.
- **Engage with new technology.** Young people spend a lot of time using new technologies and the internet. Their favourite global brands are Microsoft, Google and Apple, which are shaping their world more and more. To attract and engage them, try and meet them online as well as offline.
- **Build strategic partnerships.** Build partnerships with other strong brands. This will enable your organization to win the favour of young people. To be associated with strong and highly rated brands is important.

Don’ts

- **Don’t be exclusive.** Make them feel welcome in your organization and let them bring their friends.
- **Avoid one-off messaging.** Keep them constantly involved and keep talking to them. Whether you engage online or offline, find opportunities to engage their attention and to talk to them.
- **Don’t underestimate their friends’ opinions.** Friends are a very important aspect of their lives and because of social media, a constant presence as well. Try to secure their good opinion.
- **Don’t make a promise that you can’t keep.** Loyalty to a brand develops from a relationship of trust. This is especially important in the constantly changing world inhabited by young people. If you let them down, they will no longer trust your organization and you will lose them.

WORK WITH THEM

Dos

- **Make them feel part of the organization.** Involve them in projects and give them a role. Explain the contribution they can make through their work.
- **When working with them, set out clear roles.** It is important to clearly define their roles so that they know what they are responsible for. This will make them feel included.
- **Reward them for their contribution.** Make them feel valued for what they have done. Do not be dismissive.
- **Teach them something.** Young people can offer an added value to your organization, but it is important that they walk away with something as well. Give them an experience, skills and tools that they can also use in the future.

Don’ts

- **Don't make them feel useless.** Young people are very perceptive about problems in their communities and want an opportunity to help and to be heard. Give them detailed information about the nature of their involvement and the impact that their participation will have.
- **Avoid confusion and fake promises.** Do not make a promise that you cannot keep. Do not promise a job, money or goods in exchange for their contribution, if you cannot give them any of these things. Be clear about what you can give them and what they can expect.

Retaining youth

Dos

- **Always offer a high-quality experience.** Quality is a very important factor. As we are not selling a product, we need to offer a valuable and high-quality experience.
- **Invest in long-term engagement.** Ensure that young people see themselves in the future of the organization, whether as volunteers, staff members, board members or even donors.

Don'ts

- **Don't let them feel ill-used after you have worked with them.** Always reward them and show them that you value their contribution, or they will go way feeling exploited and will not come back.

Branding Dos and Don'ts

Dos

- Young people really respect the Red Cross /Red Crescent brand and what it stands for. It is an asset that we can/should leverage. It is especially important in giving a message weight, therefore it is always important to brand our communication materials to show it comes from a respected source.
- Try to create pieces of "edutainment" – educational messages delivered in an entertaining way. Such messages, if suitable for the context, usually work well with young audiences.
- Use humour, but be very careful while doing so. Jokes are not the same everywhere. What works in the UK might not work in Korea, and so on. Using humour means loosening up branding rules (departing from your usual tone of voice and style) while still respecting certain other regulations – displaying the National Society's logo properly, for instance.
- Representation – diversity and inclusivity: you must be mindful of the need to provide representation for every group in the society. And young people must be involved in any communication with others of their age.
- When developing a campaign on social media you must bear in mind safeguarding issues with regard to young people. Protecting them, as well as their privacy, is always of paramount importance.
- Engage in peer-to-peer communication as young people respond best to it. If possible, use sources respected by young people (leaders on social networks, celebrities etc.) to communicate your message.
- Engaging the audience is crucial – social media allows you to have a conversation with the audience. This is important for bringing the brand closer to younger audiences. But tone of voice is key. Do not patronize. Your tone of voice should be genuine.

- Collaborate with your audience when you create messages and materials for them. Consult and listen to young people through focus groups or research (these can be organized even if you are operating on a small budget).

Don’ts

- Don't follow a trend - it will go out of date very quickly, e.g. if a colour palette or a different font or choice of vocabulary is particularly trendy, don’t follow it as your communication material might outdate soon.
- Don't create major differences between the visual identity for young people and that for adults, particularly where teenagers (13-18) are concerned. If something very different is done for them, it will come across as patronizing and might alienate. The case may be different for younger audiences, i.e. those under the age of 13.
- Don’t target youth audiences as a whole, as that might alienate some or even most young people. Children need communication that targets their needs. Teenagers are not a homogenous group. You need to segment them: 11 and 12-year-olds will probably have more in common with nine-year-olds than they would with a 15-year-old. And young adults will need a different style and tone of voice again.
- Don’t impose your brand. Collaborate with young people when developing communication to make sure what you will communicate is appropriate and will be accepted.