



150 years of humanitarian action
**Council of Delegates of the International
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**
Sydney, Australia, November 2013



Report on the workshops

Report delivered by Geoffrey Korir, IFRC Youth Commission member

Dear Movement colleagues,

As a result of time constraints, I cannot do justice to the rich substance which flowed from these well attended workshop discussions but I recommend that you consult the full written reports, which will be made available after the end of the Council of Delegates and use them as a basis for future discussions and follow-up.

There were workshops on a variety of topics; from the fundamental principles to safer access, from persons with disabilities to health care in danger, from promoting and enhancing the red response to the humanitarian education platform, migration and “external shocks”, sexual and gender based violence and making the most of the 31st International Conference.

**Workshop 1 - FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE RED CROSS AND RED
CRESCENT**

It was clear from the workshop contributions that the Fundamental Principles are considered valuable and relevant by all components of the Movement. There was sharing of good practice and reflection on the manner in which the Fundamental Principles, in particular those of Humanity, Impartiality and Neutrality, contribute to a distinct Red Cross/Red Crescent identity and how they enable us to bring assistance and protection to the victims and most vulnerable. Challenges faced in the application of the Fundamental Principles were also discussed, in particular in the application of Unity and Independence. The 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Fundamental Principles in 2015 was recognised, and it was considered that this anniversary should be marked. There was considerable

support voiced for the training and education of youth, volunteers, staff and governance in the Fundamental Principles, both in their substance and in their application. A joint programme of further work on the contextual application of Fundamental Principles was proposed, and accepted, which will be complementary to existing and on-going capacity building efforts, and will take the form of a series of regional workshops on dilemmas faced in the field and on how the Fundamental Principles guide their solution, ahead of the 2015 International Conference. Further consideration will be given to the involvement of governments in this process. The concluding statement was that the Fundamental Principles define our identity and safeguard our work, and that by binding us together they make us stronger as a Movement. They have served us well over the past 48 years, are embedded in our respective cultures and derived from our universal values. They safeguard Movement actors in the course of their work and although there are challenges in the application of the Fundamental Principles, they imbue the Movement with strength when we act together.

Workshop 2 – HUMANITARIAN EDUCATION PLATFORM (HEP)

The Humanitarian Education Platform workshop engaged panellists from National Societies featuring the diverse Humanitarian Education initiatives involving young people in implementing the RCRC Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values through voluntary service and furthering services to vulnerable people. This was followed-up by the launch of the Humanitarian Education Platform (HEP) which is currently hosted by the Red Cross Red Crescent Learning Platform and is accessible to National Societies as well as external partners. While the Humanitarian Education initiative is an excellent resource for National Societies, remain challenges are sustainable resources, easy accessibility and ensuring that it is open to all - components of the Movement, external educational actors, and those facing digital challenges. Overall, the feeling was that the Humanitarian Education Platform would facilitate dynamic knowledge sharing, peer project learning and coaching, encourage innovative ways of strengthening awareness of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, putting them into action through meaningful and tangible ways and channels. More specific recommendations suggests endorsing the Humanitarian Education Platform as a pilot by the workshop participants committing themselves to use it, promote it and report on it at the CoD 2015.

Workshop 3 – HEALTH CARE IN DANGER: HEALTH-CARE WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITIES AT RISK

This Council of Delegates is the middle point between the 2011 and 2015 International Conferences. In 2014, the focus will move from expert consultations to mobilising stakeholders and operationalizing recommendations. National Societies have a vital role to play both within their organisations and also with leveraging their influence to mobilise non-Movement actors. Many National Societies shared their experiences and the work they have underway to respond to the issue. As this work progresses, the

ICRC will continue to develop tools to help the Movement, Ministries of Health, States and the health care community to look at what will make a difference in their specific contexts. The welcome range of interventions highlighted the importance of context and the need to develop specific responses that resonate with local realities, including implementing the Safer Access Framework including training for staff and volunteers; working with States to adopt measures to protect the medical mission; collating and analysing data on incidents of attacks on the medical mission and working with the health care community to build knowledge on the rights and responsibilities of health care workers.

Participants contributed many ideas for how the project can be further implemented. There was a call for better sharing of experience and good practice between Movement components to develop best practice and not repeat the same mistakes. This sharing of lessons learned needs to be extended beyond the Movement to authorities, health care professionals and the academic community. While the recently implemented online platform is a useful start, participants called for a permanent space for National Societies to facilitate the sharing of good practice and experiences. Participants also expressed a need for more operationally focused guidance for staff and volunteers, to build on the tools and publications that have already been developed as part of the project. National Societies were encouraged to convene roundtables with their authorities, health care community and other stakeholders to interrogate the recommendations and determine which are most appropriate in their contexts.

Both workshops emphasised the importance of coordination and collaboration not just within the Movement but also with external stakeholders. With respect to the challenge of providing insurance for staff and volunteers, it was recommended that a small working group comprised of Movement Reference Group members and the Federation and ICRC develop recommendations to be put to the 2015 International Conference.

Workshop 4 - SAFER ACCESS AND THE PROTECTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Access to those we aim to serve is a key pillar to our humanitarian mission. Upholding our fundamental principles, particularly Neutrality and Independence, is fundamental to guaranteeing this access, protecting the lives of our staff and volunteers. National Societies in close collaboration with ICRC, the Secretariat and Movement partners should ensure that all actors receive information and are aware of those principles.

Where there is armed conflict and other situations of violence including social unrest, gang violence, criminal gangs, we face new and existing challenges. We must be prepared to protect our volunteers, staff and members in National Societies to ensure safe access to

those in need and respond to those emerging challenges.

Understanding well the current country security situation and having the tools to be prepared to face future challenges is critical to achieving this. The use of the Safer Access Framework can be a very useful tool in operational security risk management. National Societies also need to carry out a risk assessment and plan accordingly as well as to disseminate policies and train staff and volunteers. Movement coordination is essential in guaranteeing our safety. National Societies should continue to lead these processes and ensure that in-country the Movement is visible with one voice. Participating National Societies and other Movement partner safety should not be jeopardised.

The indicative and protective use of our emblem should continue to be one of the top priorities in ensuring our safety and National Societies, with the support of the ICRC and the Secretariat, should continue to disseminate the appropriate use and protection of our emblem and create the necessary links with governments to advocate for emblem protection laws. Sharing of information between National Societies on this vital topic is fundamental and should be facilitated and encouraged.

Workshop 5 – PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In relation to Persons with disabilities the workshop identified the social, economic and attitudinal barriers faced by people with disabilities (representing 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. It was noted that people with disabilities are a significant untapped potential resource in our communities which is not being recognised/used. Accordingly it was 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; to support the full inclusion, sense of belonging and empowerment of persons with disabilities, ranging from: addressing their needs, contributing to the removal of barriers, employing humanitarian diplomacy at the national, regional and international levels, and changing mind-sets and behaviour from discrimination, stigma and exclusion to respect for diversity and social inclusion; to implement relevant instruments of international law to support the rights of persons with disabilities and to 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.

Workshop 6 – PROMOTING AND ENHANCING THE RED RESPONSE: WORKING WITH EXTERNAL ACTORS

The “Promoting and Enhancing the Red Response: working with external actors” workshop focused on the fundamental strategic questions of when and how we should seek to work and coordinate with external actors, what should funding streams look like and how can we best mitigate the potential risks of operational relationships. The need to ensure respect for Fundamental Principles was stressed as well as the need to ensure fair and equal partnerships, and the necessity on NS to meet the expectations of accountability and transparency placed on them. The debate led to the following main recommendations: call for clear and simple policies/guidelines adaptable to each contexts, including better clarity on the means and mechanisms to ensure the proper level and depth of coordination with UN mechanisms (in particular the cluster system), moving from being seen as ad-hoc task focused implementing partners to equal operational partners, ensuring the sustainability and reliability of such partnerships, need to ensure that our definition of vulnerable persons coincides with that of our partners and ensure that we serve our stakeholders – not necessarily that of the UN agency, need to manage the balance between humanitarian imperative and the perception/security risks, increased demand and opportunities on local actors that should be met with systems of transparency and accountability and finally welcomed the focus on external actors through the Strengthening Movement Coordination/Cooperation initiative including the need for strategic alignment on these issues in the Movement.

Workshop 7 – ADDRESSING THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF ‘EXTERNAL SHOCKS’ ON VULNERABLE MIGRANTS, HOST POPULATION AND NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The workshop on Addressing the humanitarian impact of external shocks on vulnerable migrants, host populations and NSs aimed to contribute to a better understanding of migration in the context of “external shocks” and the Movement wide response. The external shocks include the global financial crisis and on-going economic, social and political pressures as a result of increasing urbanisation, climate change and environmental degradation, as they affect National Societies’ ability to respond to increasing needs of both migrants and host populations. The recommendations were formulated in line with the three strategic objectives of the Federation’s three year migration strategy and include among others: the Movement need to engage more proactively from both a humanitarian assistance and a human rights perspective, the role of the youth volunteers, migrants and host

communities in ensuring joint work on raising awareness and proactively acting as agents of change in the dialogue on migration, Movement language must always take into account the rights of migrants, respectful culturally appropriate dialogue with Governments in addition to the use of communication and education tools should aim to combat any negative attitudes about migrants and promote diversity and social inclusion, the Movement should work more closely with governments to address the root causes of migration appreciating the complex nature of “push / pull” factors driving migration and finally National Societies in their auxiliary role should engage in effective lobbying with an aim to strengthen positive government dialogue as well as policy and legislation change on migration.

The second Workshop within the same theme recommended: the cross border approach of National Societies in countries of origin, transit and destination is key to the Movement’s engagement on migration, the universal implementation of the Movement’s Migration Policy requires more human and financial resources, advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy based on empirical evidence, experience and cooperation is essential in partnership with other actors to ensure Government responsibility. It was further noted that there was no single legal framework to protect migrants and recommended the need for a universal legal provision to protect migrants irrespective of their legal status. Finally, as migration is a complex issue there are no quick fixes and it requires a consistent and sustained Movement response.

**Workshop 8 – MAKING THE MOST OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:
OUTCOMES OF THE 31ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (2011) AND
PREPARATIONS FOR THE 32ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (2015)**

The International Conference is a privileged opportunity for the Movement to set an agenda for a high-level discussion with states. We have seen important success stories, such as around small arms control and disaster law, where the Conference has played a powerful role in creating momentum on humanitarian issues. However, many participants in this workshop do not feel that the Conference is meeting its full potential.

Participants acknowledged the importance of thorough preparation before the Conference, and serious work in implementation between Conferences to make the tool effective. In addition, the topics must be chosen very carefully. They should be core concerns of the Movement and interesting to states, which should be involved as much as possible. We should try to avoid duplication of topics addressed in other fora. We should aim for a Conference that is globally relevant, distinctive but also linked up to other international

developments.

National Societies shared the challenges and good experiences they have had in preparing for the Conference and implementing resolutions and pledges. National Societies also shared lessons learned on effective ways to engage with states. They called on the Standing Commission, IFRC and ICRC to ensure a highly consultative approach in the preparation of the agenda for the 32nd International Conference in 2015.

Workshop 9 – MOVEMENT RESPONSES TO SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ARMED CONFLICT, AND DISASTERS

SGBV is often a continuum of a pre-existing situation of vulnerabilities and risk, discrimination and violence, exacerbated by the conditions of conflict/disaster. The workshop considered the issue of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in conflict, post-conflict, disaster and its aftermath but also violence that is normalised in society and communities.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence is perpetrated against women, girls, boys and men. People with existing vulnerabilities – older people, people with disabilities, people from minority groups, detainees, etc. – are also at relatively higher risk. The issue continues to be one that is shrouded in silence and stigmatisation.

Despite considerable national and international efforts, legislation and investment, as well as Movement policies, the issue persists and indeed in many situations is increasing.

The fact that the issue is a cross-cutting theme for which everyone is responsible was identified as a major challenge. Accordingly, there was a call for rethinking our strategy and increasing capacity and investment.

Aid workers and Movement actors can themselves be victims, perpetrators and agents for change. The workshop concluded with three recommendations; namely, the elaboration of common terminology around gender, GBV and SGBV across the Movement; the importance of undertaking a mapping exercise of work in this area Movement-wide; to recall to Member National Societies the importance of signing onto the relevant Pledges (i.e. IHL, gender, violence prevention); and the recommendation that it be included in the agenda of the 32nd International Conference in 2015.

A clear theme across the workshops was the need for the Movement to speak with one

voice, to better coordinate and strive toward a stronger Movement.

I would like to finish by thanking all the National Societies for the great amount of work that they put into organising and implementing workshops and all the panellists whose knowledge and expertise stimulated the debate. I would also like to thank the rapporteurs from each workshop for their comprehensive written reports.

Thank you.