



Our Principles, our Move
Nos Principes, nos Actions
Nuestros Principios, nuestra Acción
مبادئنا, حراكنا



**CROCE
ROSSA
SAMMARINESE**

Original: English

12th Mediterranean Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Agenda item no. 5

Concept paper on

**SOCIAL INCLUSION AND THE PROMOTION OF A CULTURE
OF NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE**

CONCEPT PAPER

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND THE PROMOTION OF A CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE

“We will intensify efforts to mobilize community respect for diversity and action against racism, discrimination, xenophobia, marginalization and other forms of exclusion, faced by all vulnerable groups, also empowering volunteers and youth in humanitarian activities to prevent, defuse or mitigate violence, particularly in urban settings, basing ourselves on the considerable experience of National Societies.”

***Declaration ‘Together for Humanity’ adopted
at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (2007)***

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES REFLECTION

In order to address social inclusion and the promotion of a culture of non violence and peace, we draw on all of the Fundamental Principles including: on the principle of Humanity, and our respect for human beings, their well-being and dignity but also our desire to see lasting peace; our Impartiality underpins the importance of non-discrimination and inclusiveness, and our principle of Unity challenges our own inclusiveness and diversity as an organisation. In addition our Universality demonstrates the need to share the responsibility and cooperate together to work towards lasting peace.

INTRODUCTION

The most prevalent vulnerabilities arise not only from disasters and diseases. All communities have groups of people who are unable to enjoy the general benefits that are accessible to mainstream society. Such people may be neglected, marginalized or excluded for many reasons such as social or economic disadvantage, their employment status, a lack of access to information, knowledge or modern communication tools, or perhaps due to public attitudes that stigmatize or discriminate against them. Such disadvantaged groups include women and girls; older people; people living with certain diseases and disabilities; children and young people in difficulties; people who have been trafficked or displaced; refugees and other migrants; people of particular sexual orientation; members of minority groups; and countless of others deprived of their human rights. Many of them may live in circumstances where they are subjected to violence, abuse and exploitation.

Violence, discrimination and exclusion cause suffering for millions of people across the world today and undermine safety, health and human potential. They are a refusal to accept the other's difference, often based on the lack of knowledge which can trigger fear and lead to a loss of community support systems and isolation, especially for vulnerable groups.

The promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace means creating an enabling environment for dialogue and discussion and finding solutions to problems and tensions, without fear and violence, through a process in which everyone is valued and able to participate. Local communities as well as the global society need to approach differences from a mutual learning perspective. The more inclusive a society is, the less risk there will be of tensions developing between different groups, and of tensions turning into violence. Yet, the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace is also about prevention, as far as possible, of the causes of tensions and about taking action towards a more non-violent, humane and equal society, also improving the living conditions and livelihood of vulnerable groups in terms of access to resources, employment and social services for a sustainable human development.

The promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace is a crucial priority for the international community. It is intrinsic to Humanity and interrelated with other humanitarian challenges. It addresses multidimensional phenomena and involves appreciating the connections among different dimensions of exclusion (social, economic, cultural, gender-based, age-based, etc.).

The culture of peace has been defined in a number of different resolutions of the **United Nations**, including the one used in the **Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace** (adopted in 1999) and the 1998 UN resolution on the culture of peace: *“a culture of peace is an integral approach to preventing violence and violent conflict, and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament”*.

The education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament are the eight points of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted by the UN General Assembly.

The year 2000 was a starting point for a major mobilization, as it was the International Year for the Culture of Peace (UN Resolution A/RES/52/15). On this special occasion, a global movement for a culture of peace was initiated by the United Nations to create a “grand alliance” of existing movements that unite all those already working for a culture of peace in its eight domains of action.

From this movement the following were issued:

- The UN Manifesto 2000 for a culture of peace and non-violence which was written by a coalition of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, by initiative of the **UNESCO**.
- The Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001 - 2010).
- The International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013 - 2022) and related Plan of Action.

UNESCO points out how it has become more crucial than ever to promote and disseminate values, attitudes and behaviours conducive to dialogue, non-violence and the rapprochement of cultures in line with the principles of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), which states that: *“In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and*

participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life” (Article 2, “From cultural diversity to cultural pluralism”).

Changing a culture of violence into a culture of peace requires a transformation of problems into creative and constructive solutions. The Mediterranean region counts on over 3 million Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers of which about 60% are youth. They are not only the future of the Movement but also the present, being a dynamic resource in carrying out humanitarian initiatives at national level, interacting with local communities and leading towards the building of capacities and the change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours at local level. A prior commitment to inner change and being a living example of Red Cross and Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values are the best ways to participate in the decision making process, promote a culture of non-violence and peace and inspire a positive change in our surrounding environments.

Drawing from a number of statutory decisions, the IFRC created in 2008 a flagship initiative on the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace called “Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change” (YABC). It seeks, through skills- and values-based peer education and affective, experiential learning, to trigger a process of self-transformation amongst participants that result in empowering them as ethical leaders role-modelling and inspiring a positive change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours towards respect for diversity, social inclusion, gender equality, violence prevention and peace in their community.

Today, the programme counts with a global network of over 1,350 trained peer educators in 123 different countries. The global impact study recently conducted in collaboration with an academic researcher from Brighton University reports that *“the consistency with which YABC leverages the Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values to deliver transformational changes of attitude and behaviour, cross-culturally and on a global scale, in an extremely short period and sustained over a long time, makes it a truly remarkable achievement, an outstanding model of best practice in peer-education internationally and a worthy benchmark for behaviour change interventions inside and outside the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.”*

*The promotion of social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace is one of the three strategic aims of the **Strategy 2020 of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**, adopted in 2009, and an essential part of its activities to create stronger, healthier and more resilient communities. It recalls the need to promote intercultural dialogue and harmony within and amongst communities: “... In the context of our mandate, we promote social inclusion through all our activities and services. We promote behavioural skills to communicate, mediate and diffuse tensions in a peaceful manner. We actively counter social prejudice, and encourage tolerance and respect for the many different perspectives that are to be expected in a diverse world. That includes advocacy on the adoption of non-violent approaches to bridging these differences and pre-empting violent conflict...”*

Moreover, IFRC Strategy 2020 highlights the fundamental role of young people, as intercultural ambassadors, agents of change and peer-to-peer facilitators, and encourages

enabling and empowering them to be even more active in promoting a global culture of non-violence and peace.

Inspired by IFRC Strategy 2020, the **11th Mediterranean Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent**, held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) in March 2010, through its final declaration sets out actions to tackle current and future humanitarian issues among which are those related to respect for diversity, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and cooperation. It points out the need to mobilize human resources, above all young people as agents of behavioural change, while intensifying training, education and dissemination actions on RC/RC Principles and Values, as well as strengthening dialogue with governments and humanitarian diplomacy in favour of changing mentalities towards a more encompassing social inclusion of the most vulnerable.

In September 2010, the IFRC officially launched its **Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response** in order to provide specific directions to National Societies to implement activities to promote a culture of non-violence and peace. In this Strategy, IFRC defines a culture of non-violence: *“it respects human beings, their well-being and dignity; it honours diversity, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, mutual understanding and dialogue, willingness to serve, cooperation and lasting peace. It is a culture where individuals, institutions and societies refrain from harming others, groups, communities or themselves. There is a commitment to positive and constructive solutions to problems, tensions and the source of violence; violence is never an option”*.

Furthermore, IFRC published the **RC/RC Approach to Promoting a Culture of Non-violence and Peace** in 2011, with the aim to highlight 10 key ideas to reduce violence and discrimination within communities, proposing actions and methodologies also based on National Societies' knowledge sharing.

The theme of Promoting a Culture of Peace and Non Violence was among the major issues dealt with by National Societies participating in the **8th Middle East and North Africa Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent**, held in Teheran (Iran), in April 2013. In the final Teheran Declaration, National Societies of the MENA Zone, recognising the challenges they are facing in this area, stressed how their programmes are promoting a culture of Peace and Non Violence to reduce vulnerability and include this concept in their planning. They also encouraged increased efforts aimed at bridging cultural divides and promoting a culture of non-violence, tolerance and peace through peer-to-peer networking such as YABC and exchange among MENA RC/RC youth and volunteers and with youth and volunteers from outside the MENA region.

Also, political violence, economical stress and poor living conditions are directly associated with increased prevalence of interpersonal violence, thus prevailing towards the most vulnerable. This situation affects several countries in the region, facing national and international crises with thousands of refugees and internal displaced people, and therefore violence prevention programmes through RCRC volunteer network at grassroots level are crucial in their work with the community.

Within the Florence Call for Action, adopted by the National Societies participating in the **9th European Regional Conference** of Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Florence (Italy) in June 2014, emphasis is placed on striving towards meeting diversity goals, at all levels of National Societies and the IFRC with particular focus on nationality, age and gender;

promoting social inclusion and fight against all forms of discrimination. It also recalls the importance of the implementation of the Resolution n°3 of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent emphasizing the importance of dignity, respect for diversity, and the social inclusion of migrants.

GOALS OF THE SESSION

Halfway through the implementation of IFRC Strategy 2020, and 10 years after the setting up of the Permanent Office for the follow up of the resolutions of the Mediterranean Conference of the RC/RC - which has constantly worked on the promotion of our Principles and Values as a crosscutting priority with National Societies - the general goal of the session is to strengthen the commitment of RC/RC Mediterranean National Societies towards the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace and social inclusion.

National Societies will cooperate in order to:

- a) Identify critical humanitarian needs requiring the implementation of IFRC Strategy 2020 Strategic Aim no. 3
- b) Define the requirement for support (including support that may be required in the areas of assessment, planning and advocacy);
- c) Transfer expertise and capacities in accordance with support requirements
- d) When required, develop additional skills through coordinated efforts.

Discussions should therefore focus on country-specific examples. To this end, the content of the session will include the presentations delivered by National Societies to provide a background briefing, focusing on three main areas:

- 1) *Outline of the activities required to address the critical needs identified by the National Societies concerned*
- 2) *Analysis and inventory of constraints and obstacles affecting the response.*
- 3) *Identification of specific skills and capacities required to overcome the constraints and obstacles.*

FORMAT

- chair: Slovenian RC
- introductory speech: tbc
- Panellists: Libyan RC; Montenegro RC; Palestine RC; Spanish RC

Date: 28th May 2015

Time: 8:30am – 10:00am