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# Guidelines for National Societies

12.08.2010  
11.08.2011

to organize local youth actions and celebrate  
the **International Year of Youth**

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Use this practical guide to learn more about the International Year of Youth, be inspired and take action with your youth team to encourage *dialogue and mutual understanding* and promote the ideals of peace, solidarity, and respect for human rights.



**YOUTH  
ON THE  
MOVE**

Doing more.  
Doing better.  
Reaching further.



**INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF  
YOUTH**  
AUGUST 2010-2011  
OUR YEAR OUR VOICE



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



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**Strategy 2020** voices the collective determination of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

- 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises**
  - 2. Enable healthy and safe living**
  - 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace**
- .....

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International Federation of Red Cross  
and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2010

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# 01. Introduction

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Around half of the volunteer base of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) worldwide is made of young people. This amounts to an impressive 50 million young humanitarians in our global Movement.

The IFRC recognises the importance of volunteers in preventing and alleviating human suffering, and particularly the value of youth as key agents for social change and economic development. A top priority is placed on promoting youth volunteering as a way for young people to become aware of the benefits of civic engagement. Youth are active in most of National Societies' services: in health through HIV and AIDS peer education, primary health and promotion of healthy habits; in disaster preparedness and response through community based first aid, disaster risk reduction and response, and environmental activities; and in the promotion of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, through respect for diversity and social inclusion initiatives. Youth also focus on capacity building through youth leadership and volunteer skills development training, thematic international meetings and exchanges.

The IFRC Strategy 2020 reinforces a special focus on young people as a crucial investment, not only for today but above all for the future. The safety and protection of young people in vulnerable circumstances must be addressed, taking into account their age- and gender-specific needs.

In their multiple roles of contributors as innovators, inter-cultural ambassadors and peer-to-peer facilitators, young people are educated, enabled and empowered to lead and participate in voluntary activities, as well as in the governance, management and service development and delivery of their National Societies. Youth are supported to further their skills to undertake the spectrum of roles through non-formal approaches and participatory training and skills development. These are underpinned by dedicated youth networks and structures. We also encourage young people to continue membership as adults. Young people bring much-needed skills when working alongside the increasing numbers of older people in a spirit of mutual respect. This is crucial to the intergenerational transfer of experience that is vital to both progress and stability in society.

Through these guidelines, the IFRC wishes to encourage all National Societies to organize throughout the year local actions that promote an increased understanding of the importance and benefits of youth participation in all aspects of society, as well as those that support youth to devote their energy, enthusiasm and creativity to development and the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding.

**2010 as the International Year of Youth and 2011 as the International Year of Volunteers** are unique opportunities for National Societies to further its mission with its network of volunteers working locally according to our Fundamental Principles in saving lives and changing minds. This will enable all of us to do more, do better and reach further in making a difference in the lives of vulnerable people.

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## 02. Background of the International Year of Youth

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On 18 December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming the year commencing on 12 August 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The Year will coincide with the 25th anniversary of the first International Youth Year in 1985 which celebrated the theme Participation, Development and Peace.

The United Nations system's approach for the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (12 August 2010 – 11 August 2011) aims to provide a concrete framework for collective efforts during the Year. This common approach focuses on the three key areas outlined below. In each of these areas, collaborative partnerships with young people are fundamental.

## 03. A common approach

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### 1. Create awareness

(increase commitment and investment in youth)

- Increase recognition of youth development as a smart investment by the public and private sectors.
- Advocate for the recognition of young people's contributions to national and community development and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals
- Promote understanding of inequalities amongst youth and how to effectively address the needs of the most disadvantaged.
- Foster research and knowledge building on youth to better input to youth policies and programmes targeted at youth.

### 2. Mobilize and engage

(increase youth participation and partnerships)

- Institutionalize mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes.
- Support youth-led organizations and initiatives to enhance their contribution to society.
- Strengthen networks and partnerships among Governments, youth-led organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and the UN system, to enhance commitment and support for holistic youth development.

### 3. Connect and build bridges

(increase intercultural understanding among youth)

- Promote youth interactions, networks and partnerships across cultures.
  - Empower and support youth as agents of social inclusion and peace.
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## 04. Why make your move?

The International Year of Youth can generate strong youth participation and youth development, and facilitate the implementation of the Movement's commitments made in the following areas:

- the IFRC Youth Policy and Strategy (1991 and 1999),
- the Pledge 129 on strengthening youth volunteering (2007),
- the Solferino Youth Declaration (2009),
- and last but not least Strategy 2020 (2009).

This year marks a significant opportunity to highlight some **key messages** and:

- Remind everybody about the importance of HUMANITY in today's world. This is our Movement's first Fundamental Principle which aims "to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples."
- Disseminate and put into action Strategy 2020 vision and IFRC objective: "to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world."
- Further promote the Solferino Youth Declaration, to:
  - Recognize youth as key agents for social change and economic development.
  - Encourage the unique abilities and skills that young people alone can bring to the table, such as intercultural communication and innovative use of technology.
  - Include youth in decision-making and planning processes at all levels.
  - Push for youth to have a stronger role in programme development and implementation to empower their communities.
  - Increase focus on formal and non-formal peer education as a primary method of prevention.
- Recall the IFRC Pledge 129 (2007–2011) and encourage National Societies to commit and sign it. The pledge recognizes the value of youth and the importance of promoting youth volunteering and engaging young people in leadership arenas and advocacy for vulnerable people.
- Contribute to and channel the youth motivation, energy and idealism to reinforce the humanitarian action of the Movement.
- Encourage young people to dedicate themselves to fostering progress, including the attainment of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which seek to slash a host of social ills, ranging from extreme poverty and hunger to maternal and infant mortality to lack of access to education and health care, all by 2015.

In conclusion, make your move to:

- Promote the Movement Fundamental Principles, social inclusion and a culture of dialogue, respect for diversity, non-violence and peace.
- Value the impact of Red Cross Red Crescent youth as agents of change at the local level and their capacity to engage other people in humanitarian issues.

- Share and celebrate the unique abilities and skills that youth can contribute towards, such as intergenerational and intercultural dialogue, and innovative use of technology.
- Be a model and show the value of active youth participation and non-formal peer education approaches as effective methods to educate and engage people in the community.
- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for the youth voice to be heard and show the positive Red Cross Red Crescent action.
- Profile the local youth contributions to the humanitarian work of our unique Red Cross Red Crescent global network.

## 05. Be inspired by some examples of Red Cross Red Crescent youth projects around the world!

While living the Movement's principles and celebrating diversity, the youth in the Red Cross Red Crescent take action and develop skills to promote harmony and positive attitudes within the communities. Below, you can read just a few among many inspiring examples.

In **Netherlands**, 33 per cent of the population over 65 feels lonely, seven per cent of the people in elderly homes never get visited, and ten per cent celebrate Christmas and national holidays alone.

Youth in the Netherlands Red Cross took action and developed the "Give-a-day" programme in order to match the senior people needs with the willingness of youth to make a positive contribution. Since 2008, thanks to the collaboration of Red Cross local branches with elderly organizations/homes, schools and community services, the "**Meet & Greet**" project facilitated 1000 "matches" between seniors and youth, such as meetings to have coffee or dinner, go to the cinema together, handing out roses at elderly houses on St Valentine's day, spending some time together to figure out how mobile phones or internet work... and even to play wii-fit!

**Tunisia**, due to its geographic position, is a departure, transit and destination country for irregular migrants on their way to Europe. Concerned by this humanitarian issue, Tunisian Red Crescent young volunteers took action to improve the protection and living conditions of migrants. They convey key messages using a campaign as an effective vehicle to change perception, mindset and behaviour towards migrants. They have therefore integrated the migration topic in their regional program "safe summer" by launching the initiative "the other bank" and are now working with their peers and other community groups, such as taxi drivers, to reinforce the culture of mutual understanding, social inclusion, non-violence and peace.





In **Gambia**, the Red Cross realized that people with hearing difficulties had been neglected. The youth commission of the Gambia Red Cross, in collaboration with the St. John's school for the deaf, organized a national training on sign language for its volunteers to facilitate a special dialogue. The ultimate goal of this project was to teach first aid to people with hearing difficulties in order to disseminate necessary knowledge and skills, and make them less vulnerable in specific circumstances that could occur in everyday life.

In **Indonesia**, the youth department initiated a youth peer-education programme to promote character building among young people, spread information about good mental health, and advocate for reducing discrimination related to mental illness. As a result, staff is more skilful on project planning, networking, and on developing an enabling environment for youth and volunteers to participate in decision making processes. The programme also includes visits to a mental health hospital. Youth become more comfortable talking to people with mental illness. The dialogue between staff and volunteers, the study visits, as well as the youth to youth interviews and the joint activities allow youth to reduce consistently the stigma and discrimination towards mentally ill people.



In **Honduras**, social inequality, exclusion, lack of opportunities and increasing violence are factors that affect people, especially children and youth. From 2004 to 2009 the death toll has increased seriously due to violence, mostly murder. The population between 12 and 30 years is the most affected in the country.



In December 2003, the Honduran Red Cross decided to undertake the challenge of facing this situation by creating the project **Expanding opportunities** (Ampliando Oportunidades) for adolescents with the aim to prevent youth violence through establishing recreational and educational centers, care clinics for adolescents, computer courses, technical training and an interagency network for integration. This cooperation brings together staff, volunteers, expertise and physical space, and allows reaching young people from 11 to 18 years of age, as well as their families and community members.



Thanks to this programme, young people like Durban improved his life by participating in professional training modules including humanitarian values. "First, I started as a volunteer, than I attended a course to become a mechanic. I have learned to forgive instead of taking revenge". He justifies this change of behavior with the opportunity he had thanks to the *Expanding opportunities* programme.

## 06. Suggested activities: why, who, how, when, with whom?

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### Why

- To meet and involve Red Cross Red Crescent youth, young people in the community and the general public providing them with the opportunity to spend some time differently.
- To establish dialogue, exchange and celebrate diversity, and promote non-discrimination and a culture of peace.
- To take action together, engage more people in the Red Cross Red Crescent actions, and further encourage a community and solidarity spirit.

### Who (Target population)

- Red Cross Red Crescent youth volunteers as well as other volunteers, members and staff.
- Young people in the wider community (schools, streets, squares, discos, religious centres, etc.) who are not usually exposed to the Red Cross Red Crescent work and to the youth volunteering activities.
- The general public in different settings: programmes and settings serving the elderly, hospitals, markets, malls, workplace, etc.

### How to celebrate

- Go public! Target the “hot spots” where people gather.
  - Be visible! Identify “cool” ways to attract the public’s attention and interest (i.e. visible booths, interactive competitions/games, gadgets distribution, and public events.)
  - Involve youth, involve all people! Tell individual experiences, organize talks/testimonies, arrange community surveys/questionnaires/discussions, simulations, run informal training sessions, play theatre, concerts, art exhibitions, film festivals, etc.
  - Show the most attractive part of your Red Cross Red Crescent youth voluntary services distribute and present the Solferino Youth Declaration (and translate it if necessary).
  - Gather as many young volunteers as possible to celebrate together and increase Red Cross Red Crescent visibility.
  - Organize interesting events in advance to inform and attract local media.
  - Be prepared to provide any necessary information and/or contact on your Red Cross Red Crescent local branch or National Society.
  - During the event, take good pictures of youth volunteers in action.
  - Right after the event, do not forget to share your successful stories with us!
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### With whom (potential partners)

- Red Cross Red Crescent youth volunteers, other volunteers and staff.
- Other youth organizations promoting similar values and working for similar goals (for e.g.: Scouts, Guides, YMCA, YWCA, Duke of Edinburg Award, etc....)
- Community members, particularly vulnerable/marginalized groups.
- Internal Red Cross/Red Crescent partners.
- External partners – local authorities (particularly for using public space!), governments, local NGOs, media, corporations, sponsors, etc.

## 07. Expected results

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- A better image and understanding of the Red Cross and Red Crescent youth engagement and their collective contribution to the community, general public, humanitarian causes and media.
- Increased public awareness of the Red Cross Red Crescent work nationally and internationally.
- Increased collaboration with partners promoting non-formal education and youth participation in meeting humanitarian challenges and needs.
- Increased involvement of youth within Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies, more specifically in decision making, service development and delivery and being a “voice” for the “voiceless”.

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

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## **Humanity**

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

## **Impartiality**

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

## **Neutrality**

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

## **Independence**

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

## **Voluntary service**

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

## **Unity**

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

## **Universality**

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

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# Guidelines for National Societies

to organize local youth actions and celebrate  
the International Year of Youth

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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