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31st International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent
Geneva, 28 November–1 December – For humanity



**SIDE-EVENT “YOUTH AS DRIVERS OF A CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE: THE
POWER OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CREATIVITY”**

**31ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RED CROSS RED CRESCENT –
Geneva, 28TH NOVEMBER 2011**

REPORT

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The audience was welcomed by the side event’s chair, Dr. Jaslin U. Salmon, IFRC Vice-President for the Americas and former President of Jamaican Red Cross, who summarized the event’s objectives and context. (see annex 1). He introduced the co-chair, Ms. Geri Lau, Head of the Youth Action and Volunteering Development department of IFRC, and speakers from the IOC, British Council Global Changemakers programme, academia, Youth networks and the IFRC.

Key points of panel statements

Dr. René Fasel, Member of the [International Olympic Committee Executive Board](#)

- Dr. Fasel conveyed the greetings of the IOC President, Dr. Rogge. Sports, he said are essential for the harmonious and healthy development of the human being and at the community level they enable people to share a common vision of the world, promote humanitarian values, such as non-discrimination, gender equality and social inclusion and can help people and communities devastated by war, disasters, poverty and illness to overcome trauma and renew hope.
- He underlined the educational and pedagogical dimension of sports for youth, or the capacity to disseminate and develop values like self-confidence, self-esteem, discipline, mutual understanding, fair play and respect. He commended the 2003 MOU and partnership between the IOC and IFRC and called upon governments, NGOs and other entities to acknowledge and build on the power of sports as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

Prof. Michael Ungar, Professor at the School of Social Work at Dalhousie University

- Professor Ungar shared his world-wide research on resilience within children living in very difficult situations. He highlighted the following factors as particularly helping children to cope with adversity, overcome trauma and strengthen resilience: (i) *Relationships*, (ii) *Identity and self-pride*, (iii) *Sense of control over "their world"*, (iv) *Feeling of Social justice - ie a belief that one is treated fairly inside one's community and a (v) Sense of belonging, including cultural*.
- Professor Ungar underscored the usefulness and great value of arts, sports and culture as they can provide children with opportunities to express their story, what they experienced and how

it impacted on them and seek understanding from those around them. He also shared that resilience is neither static nor determined only by the child, but that adults have an active role to play in strengthening children's resilience through the creation of enabling environments that foster a strong set of values which are totally different from those which perpetuate the cycle of violence in which children may currently be locked.

Interlude by César López, Video "Turning guns into guitars" (Cultures of resistance)

Colombian musician Lopez, transforms AK-47's into guitars, and his video conveyed his message that human beings can change as much as guns can change, and that in this regard arts and culture are powerful means to equip youth with empathy and promote a culture of peace, even in very violent areas.

Dr. Katrien Beeckman, IFRC, Head Principles and Values department and Founder of YABC

- Katrien presented the Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) initiative, through which youth are empowered to become ethical leaders and inspire a change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviour aligned with a culture of nonviolence and peace. In YABC, questioning of black and white truths is crucial in order to change youth's perspective. The development of intra- and interpersonal or role-modelling skills (empathy, active listening, critical thinking, non-judgement, dropping bias, non-violent communication, mediation) are tools through which youth can put this change of perspective into practice and inspire their peers and community.
- She conveyed the message that ethical leadership is detached from function, authority and top-down control and comes from within, through alignment of thoughts, words, feelings and actions. This alignment or coherence generates trust, which opens the door for change and transformation.

Charlotte Tocchio, IFRC, Officer - Fundamental Principles and YABC

- Charlotte commented on the power of art as a tool for fostering creativity or unlocking talents and a force for progressive social change within YABC. YABC integrates creative platforms such as music, dance, theatre, visual arts or sports, for youth to explore their inner strengths, make a journey "from the heart to the mind" and reach out to their communities as role-models for the change they want to see in the world. Sports, in particular football, have been successfully used by YABC in North Africa to raise awareness on migration-related issues and in Papua New Guinea to engage in violence prevention.
- Relying on peer education, the YABC initiative is also rooted in a non-cognitive methodology, using feelings, emotions or body experiences as an entry point for learning, commitment and action.

Dawar Adnan Shams, Deputy Director - Youth and Volunteer Program (Pakistan Red Crescent)

- Dawar shared his National Society's experience with YABC, counting over 30 trained peer educators in Pakistan, including youth and volunteers of all ages reaching out to others to build a more caring and compassionate community.
- Integrated into core areas of the Red Crescent's work, such as disaster management, health and care, gender sensitization and volunteer development, the YABC program has reached over 640 beneficiaries within the country in less than one year. Dawar shared that YABC constituted an attractive platform to further youth participation in community building programs and to constructively challenge negative dogmatic beliefs and ideas or traditional harmful practices.

(Interlude) [YOUCAN](#), video

The audience was presented with a short video on this Canadian youth-led organization, which seeks to equip youth to engage and inspire others to peacefully resolve conflicts and develop healthy relationships in their communities. YOUCAN has reached over 30 000 youth in schools, communities, as well as opened and closed custody/ correctional centers and prisons across Canada.

João Rafael Brites, founder of “[Transformers](#)” and British Council’s Global Changemaker

- Before presenting the Transformers initiative, João started by highlighting that *people practice arts and sports first and foremost because they enjoy it, not because it improves their self-esteem or teaches them about conflict resolution*. Transformers, a youth-led initiative based in Lisbon and supported by the British Council’s Global Changemakers program, offers youth the opportunity to learn without cost what they are passionate about (e.g. graffiti, cooking, rap, break-dance) and encourages them to use this learning to transform their communities.
- Arts and sports allow for self-expression and creativity, which when released even in an “aggressive” song or dance voicing frustration, anger or despair, will contribute to preventing further violence. Arts and sports help to transform conflicts and tensions in kids, they generate an instant connection with people and the community, which creates an environment for change to happen.

Video, [Eddy Gicheru Oketch](#), founder of the [White Fingers Peace Initiative](#) and a [British Councils Global Changemaker](#)

The White Fingers Peace Initiative pursues economic empowerment of vulnerable youth and promotion of peace among Kenyans. It uses theatre as a platform to reach out to communities on tribalism and cultural challenges such as female genital mutilation, early children marriages, wife inheritance, and has reached 200 000 people in Kenya and Africa to date.

[Oliver Rizzi Carlson](#), [United Network of Young Peacebuilders](#) and [Sower and Caretaker of Culture of Peace Organisation](#),

- Shared the main recommendations from the Civil Society report on the UN decade for a culture of non-violence and peace for the children of the world (2000 – 2010), amongst which figure the need to (i) institutionalize peace education in existing infrastructures at all levels, (ii) support and engage youth and youth organizations, and (iii) foster partnership and collaborations amongst civil society, governments and the United Nations.
- Oliver highlighted the importance and unique position of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in his view to contributing to infrastructures for peace, by operating as a bridge between government and civil society. He commended the IFRC and IOC’s initiative to promote the institutionalisation of skills and values based education through the pledge submitted to the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (annex 2). Through skills and values based education, we can learn a different way of dealing with conflict, to solve problems creatively, understand the needs and feelings behind violence and respect diversity.

[Contributions from the audience](#)

- **Marcus Vancouver, Austrian Red Cross** underlined that sports also teach us to handle failure, which according to him is the most valuable lesson since *‘in life we lose more than we win’*. Sports are an avenue for children to develop and display empathy, be themselves and are a healthy way to channel energy and foster team work, fairness and friendships. The Austrian Red Cross, in the context of the existing MOU between the IOC and IFRC, is actively planning awareness-raising

activities around our principles and values for athletes, staff and the local community during the first Youth Olympic Winter Games to be held in Innsbruck.

- **A Ugandan Red Cross** youth representative shared that the YABC initiative, through sports and life skills development, is a good way to change the behaviour of young people within his region which has been affected by conflict for the last 20 years. The organization of sporting events by his National Society aimed at raising awareness on young women's empowerment and equality or social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, such as people living with HIV/AIDS and the severely ill, has yielded an impact on reducing feelings of loneliness and exclusion within vulnerable population groups.
- **Christophe Lobry-Boulanger, IFRC New York Delegation**, applauded the innovation and impact of YABC and recommended that the IFRC also expand its scope beyond youth, so as to reach out to the elderly and serve as a tool for inter-generational dialogue.
- **Cameroon Red Cross'** youth representative requested a YABC peer educators training, within the framework of the 5th forum of Red Cross Red Crescent youth clubs in universities to be held in July 2012, with a view towards building the capacity of the National Society's youth on humanitarian education and behavioural change.
- **Emmanuel Tommy, Sierra Leone Red Cross**: in the aftermath of the civil crisis, Sierra Leone Red Cross has actively engaged in post-conflict development through key issues such as the promotion of non-violence, healing of trauma (in particular with children), as well as reintegration of youth into society through vocational skills training. YABC has brought significant value in consolidating and linking previous Red Cross achievements. He said that as Africa is currently facing a massive rural exodus, resulting in deterioration of values which traditionally held communities together and where youth represent over 60% of the population, sports, particularly football, serve as magnets for change. The Sierra Leone Red Cross called upon the IFRC to further support National Societies in implementing YABC, and to allocate resources to the initiative which has furthermore been crucial in ensuring that volunteers acquire the right intra and interpersonal skills sets to effectively contribute to disaster management, health or sanitation activities that profile the qualitative added value of Red Cross Red Crescent.
- **Chris Lamb, Australian Red Cross**: was impressed with the quality of the debate and shared that the Australian Red Cross would be happy to work with the Australian Olympic Committee on engaging youth in non-Olympic sports, such as cricket or rugby in light of the overall ambition of peace and non-violence enshrined in the existing MOU between the IOC and IFRC.
- **Sally Ashour, Egyptian Red Crescent**, underlined the role of humanitarian diplomacy to create a comprehensive and integrated approach towards the promotion of a culture of nonviolence and peace, as well as the importance of engaging in partnerships in this regard.
- **Mae Chao, United Nations Volunteers**: congratulated the organisation of and discussion at the side-event and called for further partnerships between UNV and the IFRC, such as the recent co-organisation of the Global Volunteer Conference for the International Year of Volunteering + 10. She shared examples of UNV activities in the areas of youth capacity-building, volunteering development and how UNV successfully uses sports in refugee camps.

Live artistic performance – the event concluded with a highly energising break dancing performance by João Rafael Brites which clearly reflected the potential and dynamism of youth as agents of change and a song performed by Karim Dabo and Boubacar Tall.

For the video of the side event, <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/principles-and-values/>



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CONCEPT NOTE

SIDE EVENT

Youth as drivers of a culture of nonviolence and peace: the power of sports, arts and creativity

I. Organizer(s)

- IFRC: Principles and Values Department & Youth and Volunteering Development Department
- International Olympic Committee
- British Council (Global Changemakers)

II. Short description of the issue(s) to be presented and the links with the objectives of the Conference

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a membership-based organization comprising 186 Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies world-wide, whose mission is to prevent and alleviate human suffering, thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace.

Thanks to its diverse base of 13 million of active volunteers, of which more than 50% are youth, the Red Cross and Red Crescent reaches out to even the most remote communities and ensures the last mile delivery of humanitarian aid or services.

The IFRC strongly believes that youth are a powerful actor with creativity, energy, ideals and skills that need to be harnessed when pursuing lasting social change leading to a culture of non-violence and peace. In fact, the Arab springs have shown to the entire world that youth today are determined to take up an ethical leadership role in building a culture of non-violence peace. Social media have proven to be a powerful tool for youth; sports, arts and music are also great vehicles to empower youth and foster dialogue, respect for diversity and non-violence.

The proposed side event will (i) bring together youth leaders and other experts engaged in fostering a culture of non-violence and peace through sports, music and arts, (ii) share

experience and recommendations for success and (iii) creatively explore with the audience ways of collaboration, innovation and increasing impact.

It will highlight how Red Cross Red Crescent youth are committed to this and acting upon the Youth Declaration adopted in Solferino in June 2009, for example through the Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) initiative. It will also present initiatives developed by other major international actors, such as the International Olympic Committee, the British Council (Global Changemakers), members of the Alliance of Youth CEOs, and youth organisations or networks. Finally, it will highlight findings from academic experts in the transformation of violence through arts, sports and music.

The side event will be inter-active, using presentations, videos, music and engage the audience. It will lead to a call to action and collective co-drafting of a **pledge** submitted to IC participants and external partners.

III. Contributors

Chair: Prof. Jaslin Salmon, IFRC Vice-President for the Americas, President of Jamaica Red Cross

Contributors:

- **Dr. René Fasel**, Executive Commission Member, International Olympic Committee (keynote)
- **Prof. Dr. Michael Ungar**, Psychologist, Professor at the School of Social Work at Dalhousie University, Canada, author of “We generation” & “The Social Worker” (keynote)
- **British Council Global Changemaker**, João Rafael Brites
- **YABC** founder Dr. Katrien Beeckman, Charlotte Tocchio, YABC trainer and Dawar Adnan Shams, Deputy Director Youth and Volunteer Programme of Pakistan Red Crescent Society
- **Oliver Rizzi Carlson**, Representative at the UN for UNOY, Editor of Global Campaign for Peace Education Newsletter, Sower and founder of Culture of Peace Organisation (CPO)
- **Video testimonies** from former violent youth and current promoters of a culture of nonviolence and peace through sports, arts or music (YOU CAN, Cesar Lopez, White Fingers Initiative)
- **Live artistic performance**



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Skills and Values based education pledge (proposed at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent)

For the years 2012-2015, we hereby pledge:

The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, governments, the International Olympic Committee and other actors are committed to the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace through nurturing humanitarian and Olympic values, developing interpersonal skills to interact constructively and live peacefully together.

With a view to building respect for diversity, nonviolence and social cohesion, we emphasise the importance of values and skills-based (formal and non-formal) education, cultural awareness programmes, and the use of sports, arts and other creative methodologies (hereafter “non-cognitive”) reaching out to children, from the earliest age possible, youth and the community at large.

We pledge to:

- Enhance partnerships and collaboration through non-cognitive activities with a view to reaching out to all sectors and people of all ages of society.
- Promote skills and values based formal education, including its institutionalisation at the national level.
- Promote physical education, healthy lifestyles and avenues for voluntary service as part of the formal school curriculum, in particular at the primary and secondary level.
- Engage or increase engagement in non-formal education, transmitting values and skills based education through school or after school interventions.
- Promote access for children and youth to community-based activities such as sports, arts, music and theatre which foster dialogue, mutual understanding and non-violence.
- Support and promote initiatives empowering youth to take up a leadership role in the promotion of a culture of nonviolence and peace, such as the Olympic Truce, the IFRC YABC¹ and other youth-led initiatives.

Proposed evaluation criteria (in 2015):

- ➔ Increase in the # of countries having institutionalised values and skills based education, including at primary level
- ➔ Increase in the # of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies engaging in non-formal education
- ➔ Increase in youth engagement in voluntary service through sports, arts, theatre, music, etc.

¹ Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change

Sponsor(s) of the pledge:

Full name: _____	Date: _____
Title or organization: _____	Place: _____
Signature: _____	
Person / service / institution in charge of follow-up:	

Documents

- Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC), Change Yourself and Act (brochure): <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53518/FinalYABC-Change%20yourself%20and%20act-EN.PDF>
- The Red Cross Red Crescent approach to Promoting a culture of non-violence and peace, position paper: <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53518/1205900-Advocacy%20report%20on%20Promotion%20of%20culture%20of%20peace-EN-LR%20%282%29.pdf>
- Solferino Youth Declaration: http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/youth/170700-Youth_declaration-EN.pdf
- Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion, Resolution passed at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Geneva, Switzerland, 23 November – 1 December 2011
http://www.rcrcconference.org/docs_upl/en/R3_Migration_EN.pdf
This resolution includes a commitment of States and the Red Cross Red Crescent community to promote respect for diversity, non-violence and social inclusion for all migrants (**operational paragraph 3**).

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