IFRC VIOLENCE PREVENTION,
MITIGATION AND RESPONSE
AN OVERVIEW
International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
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International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
National Societies

Cover photo: Syrian child refugee living in Jordan.

Seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement
Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence,
Voluntary Service, Unity, Universality
How does the IFRC define “violence”?

The IFRC defines violence as:
The use of force or power, either as an action or omission in any setting, threatened, perceived or actual against oneself, another person, a group, a community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, physical injury, psychological or emotional harm, mal-development or deprivation.

What is the IFRC strategic framework for addressing violence?
The costs of violence are very high. These include the provision of health, social, and legal services and costs of lost earnings.

What is the impact of violence?

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Death
Physical injury
Unintended pregnancy, induced abortions
Sexually transmitted infections including HIV
Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder
Harmful use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol

DEATHS
PEOPLE PER YEAR
1.3 MILLION
PEOPLE PER DAY
4,200

HOSPITALIZATIONS
16 MILLION

INJURIES
(UNKNOWN)

report predicts increases in injuries and violence by 2030

COLLECTIVE
SELF-INFLECTED
INTERPERSONAL
6%
58%
36%

ECONOMIC IMPACT
The costs of violence are very high. These include the provision of health, social, and legal services and costs of lost earnings.

The impact of violence can effect 1-4% of a country’s GDP

What National Societies were addressing violence through community based projects between the years 2011 and 2015?

Dirado (left) and Esha (right) are leading a women’s group to build peace between their tribes as part of a Kenya Red Cross project to address community violence.
What types of violence does the IFRC address?

**CHILD PROTECTION**
- projects in schools and communities to address:
  - bullying, physical, psychological and sexual abuse
  - child trafficking
  - youth conflict
  - domestic violence
  - child protection policies.

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
- projects to address:
  - domestic violence
  - physical and sexual violence against women and girls
  - violence against men who have sex with men
  - human trafficking, and female-genital mutilation (FGM).

**MIGRATION INCLUDING TRAFFICKING**
- projects to:
  - support refugees and IDPs during and after emergencies
  - provide humanitarian services for migrants and refugees arriving in a new country
  - address human trafficking.

**COMMUNITY VIOLENCE**
- projects to address:
  - inter-tribal conflicts
  - mob violence (e.g. during elections or sporting events)
  - gang-violence.

**SECTORS**
- HEALTH
- EMERGENCIES
- YOUTH
- ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
### What tools exist to address violence?

**HEALTH**

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**ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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What approach does the IFRC use to address violence?

**TAKE PRACTICAL ACTION**
- Build internal organizational capacity
- Provide support to community-based interventions

**DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN RESEARCH BASED TOOLS**
- Design tools
- Monitor implementation of tools
- Revise tools as needed

**CONDUCT HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY**
- Influence key stakeholders to integrate violence prevention into their own practice

**GENERATE RESEARCH AND LEARNING**
- Evaluate all projects
- Partner with academics to research specific issues

**APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS**

**IMPLEMENTATION**
- Build National Society capacity
- Work through partnerships and consortiums where possible
- Prioritize assessments with beneficiaries to drive action

**CONTENT**
- Address any form of interpersonal violence
- Focus on prevention, mitigation or response based on local context
- Recognize vulnerabilities and capacities of all genders, ages and backgrounds

**METHODLOGY**
- Ensure research-based approaches
- Use global minimum standards
- Evaluate or conduct lessons learned
What is the added value of the IFRC in addressing violence?

National Societies and their Federation have distinct added values for addressing violence. In particular:

- Our reach extends to development and emergency contexts around the world.
- Our Fundamental Principles, such as neutrality, impartiality and independence, provide us access to and credibility within communities.
- Our credibility allows us to act as a broker and convener to help diverse communities and agencies find local solutions to violence.
- Our female and male volunteers from diverse backgrounds and representing youth, adults and the elderly give us a diversity of understanding and experience.
- Our millions of volunteers are based in and come from local communities; as such they:
  - are attentive to local capacities, traditions and approaches;
  - have pre-existing local relationships and partnerships with governments, NGOs and humanitarian agencies;
  - are familiar with challenging and complex situations;
  - are often the first responders in an emergency.

Volunteers from the Maldivian National Society.
Male community members in Indonesia.
“Through the Philippines Red Cross training, I learned that violence is never the answer, and I wanted to share that with my community”
– Youth emergency response volunteer
ADDRESSING GBV AND CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES
PHILIPPINES

When Typhoon Yolanda / Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013, the damage was severe. As in other emergencies around the world, the risk of physical, psychological and sexual violence including human trafficking increased due to many factors including stressors on individuals and support systems. To address this, the Philippines Red Cross, in partnership with its Federation and several sister National Societies, addressed the risks from the start of the emergency response.

Within its *Emergency Response Unit* (“ERU”; a portable field hospital) in the city of Ormoc, the Philippines Red Cross ensured that the global minimum standards for treating cases of sexual and physical violence were part of its health services. Within its outreach to communities in Ormoc and Taclobhan, volunteers reached adults and young people by integrating messages on GBV and child protection (using the IFRC Community Based Health and First Aid Violence Prevention module) into the delivery of food and non-food items in local villages.

Much of the outreach was led by youth volunteers such as Joseph Joshua (JJ) Magtuba: “It’s so important for kids and adults to learn to manage their stress,” he said. “Through the Philippines Red Cross training I learned that violence is never the answer, and I wanted to share that with my community.” JJ and the other volunteers reached over 4,000 women, men, girls and boys with prevention messages and referral services. Their efforts supported communities to find local and practical solutions to keep families safe in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.
ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN PROTRACTED CRISIS
KENYA

The heat blazes, it’s crowded and the dust can be overwhelming. Despite these and other harsh conditions, the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya has been a destination for refugees in East Africa for several decades. In 2011, conflict and drought in Somalia and insecurity in South Sudan led to an influx of thousands of families who arrived exhausted and with few possessions. The Kenya Red Cross was assigned the coordination role in two sub-camps with over 80,000 inhabitants. Assessments showed that the risk of violence was a serious risk, especially against women and girls and boys.

The Kenya Red Cross responded through a set of comprehensive actions: mass communication campaigns going block by block through the camp, the creation of safe spaces for women, school supplies and hygiene products to keep girls in school, education for teachers, safety clubs for boys and girls, creation of men’s groups, livelihood training for women, work with traditional leaders, support for self-protection committees, and psychosocial care for survivors of violence.

An external evaluation shows the project has increased the sense of safety among women, men, girls and boys. A young female student from a school club highlights that she has learned practical actions: “The project has helped the students to better understand violence and conflict resolution within the community through trainings and violence prevention clubs in schools.” Angela, a refugee from South Sudan’s Darfur region and the sole parent for nine children including nieces and nephews who she fears are at risk of exploitation, says, “I am the mother and father to these children.”
The mother to one of my nieces who is under my care was killed in the Darfur conflict”. However, through a Red Cross livelihoods project focusing on tailoring skills, Angela emphasizes: “I will now be able to sew clothes for my children and for commercial purposes. This tailoring training will make us self-reliant [and] thus stop being dependant on outsiders. God bless you.”

“A Kenya Red Cross volunteer facilitates a discussion on local solutions to address violence.

“Red Cross are the people who bring us up. In Dadaab our living conditions are very bad, but when I hear about a GBV case, I can report it to the Red Cross and they can help”
– Red Cross volunteer
“No one is born violent, it is not instinctive or in our nature. Violence is under our own control”
– Youth volunteer trainer
HEALTH PROGRAMS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN REFUGEE CAMPS
LEBANON

“No one is born violent, it is not instinctive or in our nature. Violence is under our own control,” says Diana Fouad Owayed. Diana and her school friend, Khaled Issa abou al Omarein, both aged 18 years, are among the volunteers of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Lebanon who deliver the Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) Violence Prevention module in Palestinian refugee camps.

Both Diana and Khaled live and volunteer in the Ain el Helwe refugee camp. The camp is one of many in Lebanon, where the rates of physical assaults, sexual violence and psychological harm are troubling and are being amplified by stressful and dense environments.

The Palestinian Red Crescent is addressing the problem by helping communities find their own local solutions to violence through community dialogue, education, first aid, interactive theatre and by supporting survivors of violence to access helping resources.

In their experience, Khaled and Diana believe that violence is the main problem in their camp. Khaled notes, “As a youth, I can have an influence on other young people.” He and Diana agree that “if we can reduce the percentage of people who resort to violence, even by a few percentage points, it will be a start that we can build on to make people safer in our community.”
At the end of the school day, 9-year-old Jeffrey Arley Murcia returns to his home in El Calvario, Colombia. After completing his homework, he will watch television or play games in-doors with his sister to distract him from the turmoil outside his walls which includes high levels of assault, homicide, drug dealing and sex trade work. Although his home provides some security, a thin line exists between this haven and the violence of the street, as Jeffrey’s family came to learn when an uncle was mistakenly killed in their doorway. Gang members had come to kill someone else. “They thought my uncle was this person and killed him,” explains Jeffrey in a barely audible voice with eyes fixed on the floor.

“Bad” is the only word Jeffrey uses to describe how the violence and crime affects him. But as he speaks about his experience of joining the Colombia Red Cross Programme for the Prevention and Support for Street Children (PANICA), he relaxes a bit and says that it “allows me to be with friends and spend time outside of the house.”

PANICA has the overall goal of improving the quality of life of vulnerable girls, boys, youth and their families. Specific objectives include reducing the vulnerability of persons who have been internally displaced to project areas, who live or spend a great deal of their time on the street, or who suffer from urban school and juvenile violence. The programme activities aim to improve the self-esteem and personal identity of children and mothers.
“The psychologists and volunteers of the Colombian Red Cross have pushed me forward while also helping me to improve my self-esteem. I have come to better value myself as a woman and to accept my mistakes and learn from them so that I don’t repeat them”
– Adult participant

Jeffrey believes his own behaviour has changed due to participating in football matches, attending handicraft workshops and benefitting from home visits and counselling provided by a programme psychologist:
“Now I no longer disturb my classmates or scorn my teacher.” Jeffrey’s words are matched by programme psychologist Diego Fernando Valencia’s who observes: “He used to be a very problematic boy who refused to listen to his parents. Today, he is much more respectful and less explosive.”
When the school bell rang at an elementary school in Rakovica, Serbia on October 18, it was not ringing to start playtime like it would on most days. On this day, to mark the European Anti-Trafficking Day, Red Cross volunteers began a dialogue and played interactive games with children around the theme of staying safe from trafficking as part of the Red Bell Campaign.

A few hours later on Knez Mihailova, Belgrade’s main pedestrian shopping street, a peculiar scene was played out. In front of a shop sat a young girl with bruises on her face, her hands tied; next to her stood another girl with red tape across her mouth. She sat in a box with the words “She can’t ask for help.” Another girl, dressed in a doctor’s outfit, leaned above a mannequin as if cutting out his heart. Nearby, Red Cross volunteers handed out educational leaflets to passers-by. Across the country, 80 local branches of the Red Cross of Serbia organized events with thousands of volunteers taking part. Volunteers, including local celebrities, also produced TV spots that were broadcast free of charge.

The Red Bell Campaign brings together four countries in the Balkans region: Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina. Its aim is to address human trafficking in the region. National Societies use the same logo: the red bell with the red cross emblem, together with the slogan “ring for freedom.” It creates awareness among the public and professionals, highlights the legal consequences for the consumers of services by trafficked people, and it provides information about preventing trafficking and the rights of those who have been trafficked.
RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AMONG YOUTH
NORWAY

In Oslo, as in any city around the world, struggling youth can be at risk of marginalization and violence. “Since I was a kid, I have liked to make a lot of trouble, testing the boundaries. In secondary school it gradually developed to minor crimes. If it hadn’t been for Red Cross Street Mediation I don’t know how it would have ended” says 19 year old, Kristoffer Agari.

Kristoffer is among the thousands of young people who have benefitted from and help lead the Norwegian Red Cross response to youth violence in twelve cities around the country. The Street Mediation program uses a youth peer education model that builds skills to manage conflicts in nonviolent ways. A comprehensive three-step approach involves: conflict workshops, mediation workshops and instructor workshops.

Through its training, young men and women learn how to communicate effectively in conflicts, how to help others in conflict, and how to teach other youth about resolving conflicts. Youth then work in partnership with schools, youth clubs and social services to help prevent conflicts and support mediation between young people when violence does occur.

Peer educator, Muhammed Yassin, explains: “Street Mediation allows you to go inside yourself. Often violence happens and we don’t know why. We are not thinking this will hurt someone. The Red Cross helps makes you think.”
“I was a rebel, but after becoming a street mediator I stay away from violence and conflicts”
– Youth peer educator

Norwegian Red Cross Street Mediation volunteer, Kristoffer.
“The Red Cross listens to us...
I was so used to listening to others but we can make a voice.
That, I like. It makes me feel human and really good!”
– Adult participant
CHILD PROTECTION IN CHALLENGING CONTEXTS
CANADA

Canada is a vastly large country with many areas in its far north that are hard to access, have high poverty and persistently high levels of violence against children that are among the highest in the world and many times higher than the rest of Canada. These challenges have been compounded by multiple forms of colonization and climate change. The Canadian Red Cross has been working with Aboriginal communities for nearly two decades to find local, culturally-appropriate solutions that are led by Aboriginal communities themselves. “We have been waiting for this for a long time,” says an elder who participated in a Red Cross community training in her hamlet of 300 people above the Arctic Circle in the territory of Nunavut. Violet, a youth advocate, explains that many of the youth in the community “stay out late if they hear there is trouble at home and it’s not safe when it is so cold for them to be out.”

However, communities are taking practical action. This includes partnering with the Canadian Red Cross and applying its research-based “Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments” in which communities come together to identify the problem of violence, create local prevention teams, conduct risk assessments, and implement grass-roots action plans. One participant notes: “Today we have action planning; I wish more parents and others could be part of these meetings if they love their [children’s] future. Someday my daughter will grow older and I’d like to see something going for her... so I choose to take that challenge to change having nothing for her to something.”

Each year the Canadian Red Cross reaches over 700,000 children, youth and adults with projects that address bullying, child abuse and youth relationship violence.
The vision of the IFRC is 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.