APPLYING BETTER PROGRAMMING INITIATIVE - DO NO HARM

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In a changing context

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. With our 190 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we are in every community reaching 160.7 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes, as well as 110 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to saving lives and changing minds.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development, and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

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Content

Abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
BPI	Better Programming Initiative
CHAS	Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
DAPS	Dignity, access, participation and safety
FACT	Field assessment and coordination teams
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LCPP	Local Capacities for Peace Project
Movement	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
SAF	Safer Access Framework
VCA	Vulnerability and capacity assessment

Executive summary

*T*he current humanitarian environment is characterized by being increasingly crowded, complex and murky, with changing actors and partnerships, and new approaches to development and humanitarian work. The core elements of the Better Programming Initiative; the do no harm principle, conflict-sensitive context analysis, and community engagement should however continue to be an integrated part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent work in enhancing community resilience, together with a broader approach to do no harm through operationalization and adherence to humanitarian principles, protection mainstreaming and accountability to affected populations.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) identified a need to revise and update the Better Programming Initiative (BPI), which came about in the early 2000s as an adapted version of the *do no harm* approach. BPI provided National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and IFRC with a tool to analyse the positive or negative impact of activities on communities. The method employed by BPI is a conflict-sensitive context analysis that focuses on *connectors* and *dividers*.

The humanitarian context and how various actors approach it has changed since BPI came about. Both *factors* and *actors* are changing. Vulnerabilities and hazards are shifting. Urbanization and its consequences is one major factor; another is climate change. Increasingly, there is a realization of the necessity to understand the interconnectedness of many factors creating *fragility*, i.e. how violence and conflict affects disasters, and the impact of disasters on violence and conflict. New actors have entered the humanitarian and development scene. While this is creating opportunities in terms of funding, learning and maximizing outcomes, it also creates risks. Both on the donor and research and innovation side, as well as on the implementing side, there has been an increase in actors who are *not aware of humanitarian principles and standards*, or who are guided by other motives like economic and political gains.

To deal with these contexts, the humanitarian and development sector has adopted the *resilience approach* that brings with it a more holistic, multi-stakeholder methodology. Such an approach acknowledges the need to look at underlying risks and vulnerabilities and takes into account the *social dimension* when addressing humanitarian and development concerns.

Manoeuvring in new and complex contexts with diverse actors demands a thorough analysis of the context as well as a good understanding of the impact of humanitarian and development activities and how they are perceived.

In addition to the intersection of disaster and conflict, the nature of violence and conflict has changed with a decrease in state-based conflicts, and increase in non-state conflicts. Moreover, levels of social violence, insecurity, and social dislocation are increasing in communities in many countries. The breakdown of social cohesion and the erosion of social capital can be both causes and consequences of increasing levels of insecurity.

Strategy 2020's strategic aim 3 promotes social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace. Social inclusion is closely linked to resilience – it aims to improve the participation and engagement in society of individuals who experience systematic restrictions in accessing resources, opportunities and rights due to discrimination.[1]

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1. This is a working definition adapted from the draft Strategic approach to social inclusion, and a culture of non-violence and peace, currently under development – to be finalized at the end of 2016.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace in many ways, including reducing vulnerability and exposure to violence (whether emanating from armed hostilities, community and inter-personal violence and tensions, such as the rise in gender-based violence following a disaster). They are also working towards strengthening resilience and individual and community coping capacities to violence and reinforcing community-based responses aimed at rehabilitation and support to those affected by violence (whether communities or individuals).

With the holistic, multi-sectorial and *multi-stakeholder* resilience approach, the need for National Societies, as well as communities, to enter into partnerships has become more pronounced. For a community to become more resilient, a number of issues need to be analysed and addressed at the same time. It is hence necessary to collaborate with relevant actors in constructive ways. The *One Billion Coalition for Resilience* launched by IFRC in 2014, aims to maximize the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as a *convener and broker*, in particular at branch level, within local *coalitions* with organizations, private sector and the government.

The Safer Access Framework (SAF) developed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provides a set of actions and measures that can be taken by a National Society to increase acceptance, security and access to affected populations. SAF institutionalizes a *context analysis* with the purpose of understanding root causes of violence. It can help National Societies to prepare for and respond to context-specific challenges and priorities to reduce and mitigate the risk that it may face in sensitive and insecure contexts, and to earn the trust and acceptance of people and communities with humanitarian needs and those who control or influence access to them.

The basis of all engagement is a context analysis. Moreover, all community engagement and programming should comprise the broader do no harm approach that encompasses the interconnected and complementary approaches to humanitarian and development work, namely people-centred, principled humanitarian action, protection, and accountability to the affected populations. Additionally, the core of BPI – the *connector and divider* analysis can be applied.

Good programming and community engagement require a solid understanding of the local environment and the role – both actual and perceived – that we play – whether we operate in a context with high levels of social instability, violence, and conflict, or more stable and predictable settings.[2] There is always a risk that our presence, activities, and community engagement can have negative consequences.

To avoid unintended negative consequences (e.g. violence or discrimination), maximize impact and ensure access, we need to understand the *connections* in a community and how our presence and activities influence them.

It is important to note that:

- *Contexts change*
- *We influence context*
- *(A changing) context influences risks and vulnerabilities.*

It is therefore important to continuously analyse context, learn and adjust. Data gathering and information and knowledge management is hence key.

As a minimum, always keep the following questions in mind:

- Are we being *inclusive* in our approach?
- How is our presence and actions being perceived – by whom and why?
- What are the longer-term, and also indirect, consequences of our actions?
- Are we non-intentionally putting someone at risk or increasing their vulnerability (safety, lack of dignity, discrimination, lack of access to services and information)?

Remember, *inaction* can also cause harm by exposing people to increased danger or ignoring abuse of their rights.

2. The same context analysis is also the basis for good security management.

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Introduction

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) is dedicated to preventing and alleviating human suffering in war, disasters and crises. It is composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and 190-member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Each component of the Movement has its own legal identity and role, but they are all united by seven Fundamental Principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. Each component of the Movement is committed to respect and uphold these principles.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies act as auxiliaries to their national authorities. They provide a range of services including disaster preparedness, response and recovery, health and social welfare. In wartime, the ICRC and National Societies may assist the civilian population and support the medical services of the armed forces.[3]

The specific areas in which a National Society acts as an auxiliary to its authorities in the humanitarian field need to be clarified together with the State. The right balance between the auxiliary role and the duty of the National Society to preserve its autonomy of action and decision-making in all circumstances, and in particular in sensitive and insecure contexts, must be struck. Not being conscious about the auxiliary role could lead to violations of the *do no harm* principle.

Based largely on the first four fundamental principles, international humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC, humanitarian standards and codes of conduct for humanitarian workers and organizations have been developed by various humanitarian actors. This is the basis for *principled humanitarian action* and is strongly linked to accountability to affected populations, protection and humanitarian access.

At the core of principled humanitarian action and accountability to affected populations (AAP) is the realization that humanitarian assistance can do harm as well as good. The *do no harm* principle, derived from medical ethics, requires humanitarian and development actors to strive to minimize the harm they may do inadvertently by their presence and by providing assistance and services. Unintended negative consequences may be wide-ranging and extremely complex – for example, by inadvertently creating societal divisions or increasing corruption, if they are not based on strong conflict and wider context analysis and designed with appropriate safeguards.

While the concept of *do no harm* may seem to be low in ambition, it carries within it the potential to drive positive responses. Since harm can stem from the absence of good, humanitarian and (early) recovery activities should seek to ensure that assistance positively address tensions, insecurities, conflict, and fragility, and any underlying causes. The warning of the words *do no harm* reminds us to think before rushing to do good, not to stop us from considering the good altogether. Also, we do not avoid harm by avoiding action. Doing nothing when people are in need is clearly to do harm.[4]

Do no harm as an approach was developed by Mary B. Anderson in the 1990s, and progressed into a project, inspiring a series of training workshops for humanitarian workers.[5] Based on the *do no harm* principle and project, the IFRC adapted the approach and its methodology of *connectors and dividers* analysis to the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the early 2000s. It was named the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) and was initially used in conflict situations like Sierra Leone, Liberia and Afghanistan, as well as to analyse

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3. ICRC. The Movement Overview. 2013. Available at: https://www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/movement/overview-the-movement.htm
4. Wallace M. *From Principles to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm.* 2015.

post-conflict recovery situations. It since has developed into looking at all contexts as it was found to support efforts linking humanitarian assistance to recovery.

The IFRC recognizes the need to revise and update BPI in line with current humanitarian trends and approaches, and revive its use within the IFRC and its member National Societies. Conflict sensitivity, the principle of *do no harm* and methodology remain highly relevant, and should be promoted throughout the membership.

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5. Do No Harm began in 1993 as the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP). The LCPP was launched when a number of international and local non-governmental organizations formed a collaborative association to learn more about the secondary impacts of aid provided in conflict settings. Several National Societies, including the Danish and Swedish Red Cross, contributed to the LCPP in its early years. IFRC joined the network in 1999. Many colleagues in humanitarian and development work saw aid being used to support local populations in their efforts to escape conflict and to build peace. At the same time, they also saw aid being co-opted, misappropriated, and misused. Conflicts were being made worse due to assistance. They wondered how best to support the positive efforts while avoiding the negative impacts. The learning project, therefore, was two-fold: 1) How does aid exacerbate conflict? and 2) How does aid mitigate conflict? Wallace M. *From Principles to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm.* 2015.

Applying Better Programming Initiative – Do No Harm:

- Provides background and history of BPI.
- Provides an overview of important changes in the humanitarian context.
- Illustrates how IFRC is currently dealing with urbanization and emergence of new actors in the humanitarian arena.
- Explores the social cohesion aspect of this *resilience approach* linking it to conflict sensitivity, which is key to the *do no harm* context analysis.
- Shows how *do no harm* is *strongly interconnected with* principled humanitarian action, protection and AAP. It looks at the wider humanitarian community, but with a particular focus on the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
- Highlights how ICRC's Safer Access Framework (SAF) can help National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in implementing the *do no harm* principle.
- Highlights how the Red Cross and Red Crescent and others have changed their approach to dealing with humanitarian and development issues in this changing context, and argues that key aspects of BPI and *do no harm* – context analysis, dialogue with communities and affected populations are imperative.
- Provides guidance.
- Concludes and points out the way forward.
- Includes an example of how the Philippine Red Cross is using BPI.

Background

The 1990s saw a record number of conflicts around the world, and there was an increase in IFRC engagement in conflict-related emergency and recovery operations. During this decade, the IFRC built substantial experience in supporting post-conflict programming. There was, however, an absence of any formally defined IFRC policy or strategy for working in these settings. The Plan of Action for 2000–2003 adopted at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1999 requested IFRC to develop a strategy to guide *post-conflict relief and rehabilitation programming* based on National Societies' capacity for social mobilization and service programming. BPI as a methodology was embraced to help improve IFRC's support to post-conflict programming.

BPI became an impact assessment methodology and training initiative. It provided the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and IFRC with a framework to analyse the positive or negative impact of their activities on communities recovering from violence or conflict.

Based on their reach, which extends to development and emergency contexts around the world, the credibility of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies access to local communities allows them to act as brokers and conveners. Female and male volunteers from diverse backgrounds representing youth, adults and the elderly, enable the Red Cross and Red Crescent to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation. This gives the National Societies and IFRC a distinct added value in the work on addressing violence and protection issues, as well as implementing the *do no harm* principle.

BPI was created using the approach of and learning from the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP), which became the Do No Harm project.[6]

The project set out to answer the question:

- How can humanitarian or development assistance be given in conflict situations in ways that, rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict, help local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems that underlie the conflict?

After conducting 15 field-based studies with a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in conflict situations, the LCPP revealed patterns in how aid interacts with local tensions in both negative and positive ways.

There were, however, some differences between the BPI and the LCPP. BPI was not developed for NGOs, but for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as a programme planning and impact assessment tool. It was designed as a tool for post-conflict recovery programming, and not for live-conflict situations.[7]

Importantly, BPI did not set out to help establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems underlying the conflict, nor was it developed as a conflict resolution tool.

When IFRC analysed the implementation of the initiative in six National Societies (Bangladesh, Colombia, Kosovo, Liberia, Nigeria, Tajikistan) in 2003 it found that BPI was mainly used as a tool to assess the positive and negative impacts of IFRC and the National Societies supported activities in post-conflict contexts. Its value as a participatory planning process had quickly and widely been recognized, but the methodology was used primarily to analyse existing activities in order to test their usefulness. In most cases, it began as an analytical tool and then became a platform for engaging staff and community members to provide information and to partic-

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6. Wallace M. *From Principles to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm*. 2015.
7. This was because of the Seville Agreement. The Seville Agreement of 1997 provides a framework for effective cooperation and partnership between members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It gives the lead role to ICRC in time of conflict.

ipate in the revision of existing activities and the planning of new ones. However, trained field delegates and National Society staff recognized that this tool could also be used in other contexts. The BPI provided an element of analysis that links humanitarian and longer-term actions. To contribute to the institutionalization of BPI methodology within National Societies, and in accordance with the 2003 mainstreaming strategy, IFRC trained National Society staff and delegates as BPI trainers and integrated it in other IFRC planning and assessment tools including the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA), and material for field assessment and coordination teams (FACT).

BPI METHODOLOGY

BPI came with guiding principles and objectives as well as a methodology and tool to support the dialogue with communities on *connectors* and *dividers*.

- A *connector* has an interest in building bridges across societal divisions, and therefore enhances the capacity for local peace building, creates connections between people and generates positive effects.
- A *divider* has a vested interest in maintaining tension or conflict – divisions – in a given context and feeds into the source of tensions, creating division amongst people and has a negative impact that can cause harm. A *divider* can also create a situation that puts the staff and the programme at risk.

The approach has been integrated into IFRC tools based on a 2003 mainstreaming strategy and key IFRC tools still refer to BPI.[8]

Substantial resources were allocated and efforts put into developing and implementing BPI. After the mainstreaming process was completed, there does not seem to have been any further *systematic* follow up, advocating for the BPI agenda, emphasis on conflict-sensitive approaches or the importance of undertaking a thorough context analysis.

Nonetheless, National Societies continued to use the methodology with the result that the interpretation and practice vary. Case studies describe the use of the above-mentioned methodology until 2005, after which it becomes more infrequent. There is anecdotal evidence of National Societies using the methodology till recently, but little evidence can be found until 2015.[9] In this case, from 2015, the Canadian Red Cross supported Kenya Red Cross Society in developing a project focusing on addressing community violence, referring to BPI. In the case of Kenya Red Cross Society, it seems that the *intentions* behind BPI and its principles have lived on but not necessarily the methodology as laid out originally. It is not clear why the application of the BPI methodology became more sporadic. Possible explanations suggest that a combination of lack of global support and introduction of other and competing initiatives took away the focus and hence the use of BPI. Also, the methodology was seen to be rather cumbersome and resource demanding with its multi-stakeholder participatory workshop spanning several days.

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8. IFRC. *Disaster response and contingency planning guide. 2007*; IFRC. *Characteristics of a Well-Prepared National Society for Situations of Disasters and Conflict. 2001*; IFRC. *Promoting respect of Human Rights through Humanitarian Values and Principles. 2009; From planning to action Deciding on the best course of action*; IFRC. *Violence prevention strategy. 2008*; IFRC. *Contingency planning guide. 2012*; IFRC. *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Developing Recovery Surge Capacity: A discussion document May 2011 Based on the Pakistan experience*, 6.5 Checklist for developing a Recovery Framework.
9. Canadian Red Cross and Kenya Red Cross Society. *Addressing Community Violence in the Tana Delta*. 2015.

Case study

Philippine Red Cross: How the do no harm approach has been integrated into programmes

The Philippine Red Cross is independent and autonomous and works as an auxiliary to the government in delivering relief, health, welfare, disaster risk reduction and longer-term programmes. With its network of 102 chapters and sub-chapters nation-wide, it has extensive experience in disaster management, disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response, rehabilitation and recovery. The Philippine Red Cross also responds to conflict situations, e.g. in Mindanao province, mainly with first aid and ambulance services.

The Philippine Red Cross' disaster risk reduction and management programme aims to contribute to the general purpose of the *Republic Act 10121* that aims to build "Safer, Adaptive, and Disaster Resilient Filipino communities towards sustainable development." Furthermore, the National Society holds a permanent seat in the disaster risk reduction and management council, from the national to the local (provincial, municipal and city) levels. This enables the Philippine Red Cross to advocate for and lobby on behalf of the vulnerable population and to support disaster risk reduction and management planning, budgeting and implementation.

The Philippine Red Cross is open to learning and innovation, establishing new partnerships, and improving performance. It is working towards integrating protection and community engagement and accountability within all programmes and activities.

A number of staff from the Philippine Red Cross headquarters and chapters received training in the Better Programming Initiative as part of the initial global rollout of the methodology. However, a detailed *connector-divider* analysis was never applied as part of the National Society's activities. The *do no harm* principle and approach have nevertheless made its way into how the Philippine Red Cross conducts its activities. Not only important steps are made as part of this continuous process to integrate it into guidelines and policies but also as concrete actions within preparedness and response activities.

Disaster risk reduction and management training, as well as sector specific guidelines now incorporate guidance on protection and accountability to affected populations. This has proved to be useful when preventing conflict between host communities and displaced populations. For example, in Mindanao province, which has been ridden by armed conflict for more than 40 years, to ensure transparency and establish a feedback mechanism, the Philippine Red Cross initiated *barangay* (lowest government administration level) committees after tensions arose as a result of the selection process for a shelter project.

Response and recovery – learning from the Typhoon Haiyan operation

Typhoon Haiyan (2013), locally known as Yolanda, was the strongest typhoon to make landfall in the Philippines' recorded history. The Philippine Red Cross' response to the typhoon was immediate. With time, emphasis moved from emergency towards recovery efforts to support families affected by the disaster. Recovery work included providing the affected population with safe shelter, sustainable livelihoods opportunities, access to health, education, water and sanitation as well as strengthening of disaster response capacities and increasing public awareness on how to reduce risks to future disasters. Learning during and after the operation led to changes in approaches and activities, and later of operational guidelines. *Sector-wide Recovery Guidelines* with a strong focus on community engagement and accountability were developed.

Community engagement and accountability included involving communities in developing proposals for livelihood activities as part of the recovery initiatives.[10]

Careful consideration was put into defining the selection criteria to identify households that would benefit from the shelter repair and reconstruction programme. This was done in cooperation with the provincial government's Department of Social Welfare and Development that provided lists of the affected families. These lists were compared with those prepared by the Red Cross chapter, and discussed with communities, including both female and male representatives. Vulnerability criteria established included family size, capacity to construct a house, livelihoods options, age and pregnancy. To ensure that everybody had the opportunity to provide feedback, complain and/or ask questions regarding the selection process, drop boxes and a phone number were set-up to facilitate two-way communication channels.

Examples of unintended negative consequences included access issues due to the communities' previous experiences with aid organizations. In one community, the Philippine Red Cross encountered hostile attitudes because of the community's previous experiences with an organization that had made promises but did not deliver.

An example of how it is easy to be *blind* to one's own social structures is the non-intended exclusion of a marginalized group in Aklan. Four municipalities were left out of the emergency need assessments. The ethnic group Ati, who do not interact much with the majority population, mainly inhabit these municipalities. As there was little tradition of involving them previously, they were not included in the assessment process. This oversight was later rectified and those in need were provided with the necessary aid.

Reconstruction of shelter for a group of people who lost their homes due to the typhoon required careful negotiations with landowners, government officials and the affected population. Some of the affected population did not own the land their houses were built on. Following the negotiations, it was agreed that the affected population would continue to live on the given land for the next ten years.

An interesting learning from the Haiyan operation (post-operation evaluation) was on how gender equity was operationalized. It illustrated the need to link gender analysis to power and decision-making structures. Despite equal representation in community committees, there was an under representation of women in decision-making.

Preparedness work

The Philippine Red Cross recognizes that disaster risks can be reduced though systematic efforts, empowering communities with knowledge and resources to be better prepared.

The National Society is open to discussing and addressing protection related matters such as gender-based violence, child protection, gender and diversity as well as issues concerning people living with disabilities. The Philippine Red Cross is currently finding ways to include prevention of gender-based violence and abuse, exploitation, negligence and violence against children, and integrating thematic programming related to climate change adaptation, ecosystem management and enhancing its disaster risk reduction programmes and preparedness activities.

Moreover, the Philippine Red Cross is doing something few other National Societies are practising, preparing data sets on risks and hazards, as well as local government institutions and capacities, infrastructure, poverty, and demographics per province. The Red Cross chapters are providing data from their respective provinces to the Philippine Red Cross headquarters. This proved to be useful when developing the emergency need assessment for the Haiyan response.

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10. The Philippine Red Cross has a unique volunteer set-up. The Red Cross 143 programme is designed to have one community leader with 44 volunteers. The team is trained in disaster preparedness and response; health and welfare; and voluntary blood donation. As a resident of the community, a Red Cross 143 volunteer can provide immediate humanitarian assistance to his or her affected neighbourhood. Furthermore, based on first-hand information provided by Red Cross 143, the Philippine Red Cross, both at chapter and national levels, has a better picture of what is happening on the ground and can respond in time and more effectively. The Philippine Red Cross relies on the strength and reach of the Red Cross 143 volunteers to engage and assist the most vulnerable members of the community. The team is always ready to provide rapid response in the event of a disaster.

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A changing context

A changing context looks at the background influencing developments within the Movement as well as the wider humanitarian and development sector. Since BPI came about there have been changes in both factors and actors.

Vulnerabilities and hazards are shifting. Urbanization and its consequences is one major factor; another is climate change. Additionally, there is an increasing realization of the necessity to understand the interconnectedness of many factors creating fragility, i.e. how violence and conflict affects disasters, and the impact of disasters on violence and conflicts as well as other destabilizing factors.

In recent years, new actors have entered the humanitarian and development scene. This is creating opportunities in terms of funding, learning and maximizing outcomes, but it also creates risks. Both on the donor and research and innovation side, as well as on the implementing side, there has been as increase in actors who are not aware of humanitarian principles and standards, or who are guided by other motives such as financial and quick political gains.

FRAGILITY, CONFLICT AND DISASTERS

About 1.2 billion people live in countries affected by fragility, while about 800 million people live in developing countries with the highest homicides rates.[11] By any measure, the fact that some form of extreme violence impacts over two billion people in the developing world illustrates the nature of the development challenge: conflict and violence either bar the door to development for many countries or strip years of development gains when conflict occurs.

Poverty is increasingly concentrated in countries where fragility and conflict rob citizens of opportunity. The share of global poor living in fragile and conflict-affected environments today will double by 2030.[12] No matter the measure, if extreme poverty is to be eliminated by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal 1), it is these countries that need the closest assistance.[13]

A number of high profile disasters in fragile and conflict-affected states have increased attention on the *concurrence of disasters* and conflict, and there is an expectation that disasters and conflict will coincide more in the future. Climate change, continued urbanization, food price fluctuations, financial shocks and other stresses may all shape and complicate future trends in the disaster-conflict interface. There appears to be a close association between the risk of mortality from drought, state fragility and climate change vulnerability. However, the intersection between mortality risk from other natural hazards (such as cyclones and earthquakes) and state fragility appears to be much less pronounced, though still significant.[14]

THE IMPACT OF DISASTERS ON CONFLICT

Though the picture is far from clear, the balance of evidence suggests that disasters caused by natural hazards will exacerbate pre-existing conflicts. There are only a limited number of cases where disasters have supported peace-building and led to the resolution of conflicts. In every complex situation, numerous interactions exist, where disasters reduce some conflict drivers while exacerbating others.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is adding to this picture by being the ultimate risk multiplier. When the impacts of climate change interact with other stresses, the combination can overburden weak states, spurring social upheaval and sometimes, violent conflict. Even seemingly stable states can be pushed towards instability if the pressure is high enough or shock is too great. Seven compound climate-fragility risks emerge when climate change interacts with other social, economic and environmental pressures.[15]

A report commissioned by the Group of Seven (G7)[16] describes how climate change will stress the world's economic, social and political systems. Where institutions and governments are unable to manage the stress or absorb the shocks of a changing climate, the risks to the stability of states and societies will increase.

The planet's limited resources are under pressure. Demand for food, water, and energy is increasing. Widespread unemployment, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation challenge efforts to reduce poverty and increase economic development in many poor countries. In fragile regions, persistent inequality, political marginalization, and unresponsive governments can increase the potential for instability and conflict. Furthermore, the change in climate will multiply these pressures and strain countries' ability to meet their citizens' needs.[17]

11. World Bank 2015. Available at: www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview#1
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Overseas Development Institute. *When Disaster and Conflict Collide. Improving links between disaster resilience and conflict prevention.* 2013.
15. Adelphi, the European Union Institute for Security Studies, International Alert, and the Wilson Centre. For the G7. *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks.* 2015.
16. G7 comprises seven leading industrialized nations: The United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan, Canada and Germany. In addition, the European Union sends representatives to all the meetings. Available at: www.g7germany.de/Webs/G7/EN/G7-Gipfel_en/FAQs_en/faq_node.html
17. Ibid.

Climate Fragility Risks

1. Local resource competition
As the pressure on natural resources increases, competition can lead to instability and even violent conflict in the absence of effective dispute resolution.

2. Livelihood insecurity and migration
Climate change will increase insecurity among people who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, this could push them to migrate or turn to adopting illegal ways to generate income.

3. Extreme weather events and disasters
Extreme weather events and disasters will exacerbate fragility challenges and can increase people's vulnerability and grievances, especially in conflict-affected situations.

4. Volatile food prices and provision
Climate change is highly likely to disrupt food production in many regions, increasing prices and market volatility, and heightening the risk of protests, rioting, and civil conflict.

5. Transboundary water management
Transboundary waters are frequently a source of tension; as demand grows and climate impacts affect availability and quality, competition over water use will likely increase the pressure on existing governance structures.

6. Sea-level rise and coastal degradation
Rising sea levels will threaten the viability of low lying areas even before they are submerged, leading to social disruption, displacement, and migration, while disagreements over maritime boundaries and ocean resources may increase.

7. Unintended effects of climate policies
As climate adaptation and mitigation policies are more broadly implemented, the risks of unintended negative effects – particularly in fragile contexts – will also increase.

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY ON DISASTERS

There is strong evidence that conflict and fragility increase the impact of disasters, notably by increasing vulnerability to natural hazards. Conflict increases disaster risk by displacing people into areas more exposed to hazards and through the impacts it has on physical and psychological health, basic service provision and the security of livelihoods. Conflict can drive individuals to sell assets, which can further increase their exposure to disaster risk. In a limited number of cases, individuals and groups can gain from conflicts (through the so-called *war economy*) in ways that increase their resilience to disasters, and make them less susceptible to peace-building initiatives. Conflict can undermine the capacity of governmental and non-governmental actors to plan for and protect people against hazards. Governments can also exacerbate post-disaster suffering by inhibiting aid on security grounds or appropriating humanitarian aid to support conflict objectives.

Disaster risk management tends to assume a positive state-society *social contract* exists where the state adopts the management of risk as a public good. In some states, this may be the case while in others it is not.

THE URBAN CONTEXT

Rapid urbanization together with climate change is amongst the most significant phenomena of the 21st century. In 2010, for the first time in human history, the number of urban inhabitants outnumbered the rural population. Every day, more than 100,000 people move to slums in the developing world.

Urbanization, besides the social and economic opportunities, which it provides to communities and states, is also a source of risk to many people. Nearly 1.5 billion people currently live in

informal settlements and slums without adequate access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation. Many are at risk of hurricanes, cyclones, flooding, earthquake and epidemics, fires and industrial accidents, as well as crime. Urban sprawl and unplanned urbanization as consequences of improper development accumulate extensive risks, which threaten life, property and dignity of millions of people around the world.[18]

In addition to the above-mentioned risks, a prevalent urban trait is violence. Global studies show that 60 per cent of all urban residents in developing countries have been victims of crime at least once over the past five years; 70 per cent of them in Latin America and Africa. Increased levels of crime, violence and lawlessness have accompanied urbanization, particularly in the developing world. The growing violence and feeling of insecurity that city dwellers are facing daily is one of the major challenges around the world. In some countries, crime and violence have been exacerbated by the proliferation of weapons, substance abuse, and youth unemployment.[19]

Moreover, the effects of urbanization and climate change are converging in dangerous ways. Cities are major contributors to climate change: although they cover less than two per cent of the earth's surface, cities consume 78 per cent of the world's energy and produce more than 60 per cent of all carbon dioxide and significant amounts of other greenhouse gas emissions, mainly through energy generation, vehicles, industry, and biomass use. At the same time, cities and towns are heavily vulnerable to climate change.[20]

ACTORS

The global humanitarian system was born after the Second World War as a western response to the challenges of reconstructing Europe and decolonizing its former territories. Its focus has since shifted to the developing world and its members have grown in numbers and reach. Most of its donors are governments that belong to the Organisation of Economic Coop-

eration and Development (OECD), or groups and citizens of OECD member countries. These governments also have influence over the core pillar of the global humanitarian network, the UN and its specialized funds and agencies. Orbiting this system are a number of NGOs, as well as the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that receive most of their funds from major western donors. The system is bound together by common principles and shared convictions, namely that humanitarian aid must be neutral and impartial and that standards must regulate the delivery of services. Recent years have seen an increase in donor organizations from developing countries, as well regional organizations expanding their roles.[21]

On the implementing side, the humanitarian system in recent years has faced a number of major and often interconnected challenges. This includes increasingly integrated international assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states, growth in the frequency and scale of disasters and rapid proliferation of humanitarian actors, including NGOs based in rising economies and various faith-based organizations, and the private sector entering the humanitarian and development scene, as well as increased military engagement.

New donor and implementing actors do not necessarily adhere to the common principles and standards; out of ignorance or by pursuing purposes deemed more important, like economic gains, increased marked shares, goodwill with a particular group, and short-term political gains.

18. IFRC. *Partnership on Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: Pilot City Study on Urban DRR and DM Concept Note. 2012.*
19. UNHABITAT. *Safety*. Available at:
http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/safety/?noredirect=en_US
20. http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/climate-change/
21. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-06-16/regime-change-humanitarian-aid

When a crisis creates humanitarian needs, many countries deploy their armed forces to respond. Bilateral support to disaster-affected states can also be provided through international deployment of foreign military actors and assets. The last years have seen an increased engagement by the military in humanitarian crises, often led by the push for stabilization, and a continuing politicization and militarization of humanitarian assistance. This has been controversial since the use of humanitarian assistance for political or military gain is entirely contrary to the concept of humanitarian action, which should be "exclusively humanitarian, neutral, and impartial in nature."[22]

In addition, the sector is seeing more, largely autonomous, corporate players with a philanthropic arm, and foundations. Private sector actors are collaborating with humanitarian and development organizations in technical, research and product/concept development-like partnerships, sometimes involving direct financial support, sometimes not. Private sector actors are implementing their own community-based programmes as part of their corporate social responsibility strategies, and they provide (mainly in-kind) services in humanitarian operations. The private sector actors are often not familiar with globally agreed standards and principles in humanitarian aid, and their actions more often than not, are driven by other motives such as visibility, increased market shares, and financial gains.

As it is essential that humanitarian organizations and military can operate in the same space without detriment to the civilian character of humanitarian assistance, and when appropriate, pursue common goals, it is essential that outcomes of partnerships with private sector actors protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, and minimize inconsistency. Recent experiences from the West Africa Ebola operation provide examples of how this can be done without compromising the independence and neutrality of non-military humanitarian organizations.

22. Metcalfe V, Haysom S and Gordon S. *Trends and challenges in humanitarian civil-military coordination: A review of the literature*. HPG Working Paper. May 2012; Svoboda E. *The interaction between humanitarian and military actors: where do we go from here?* Overseas Development Institute (ODI). 2014.

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2

Conflict and violence today

BPI came out of conflict response situations, and developed into a tool relevant for Red Cross and Red Crescent activities in all contexts. The key focus was on how to avoid doing *harm and fuelling tensions and (potential) conflicts, especially when responding in conflict and post-conflict situations.*

The core elements of BPI, the do no harm *principle, context analysis, and community engagement, should continue to be an integrated part of Red Cross and Red Crescent work in enhancing community resilience.*

Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as in many other organizations, resilience programming is linked to disaster risk reduction and public health issues in longer-term activities. However, it should, also guide post-conflict and disaster (early) recovery activities. Moreover, several National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are responding in ongoing conflict situations, post-conflict situations and fragile contexts with low levels of social cohesion where tensions can easily turn to violence and conflict.

In addition to the intersection of disaster and conflict, the nature of violence and conflict has changed.

VIOLENCE

The nature of violence is fundamentally changing. The number of state-based violent conflicts dropped considerably over the last years, and most state-based conflicts today are intrastate conflicts that are fought between the government of a state and one or more non-state armed group over control of government power or a specific territory. Non-state conflicts have grown more numerous. Sub-saharan Africa remains the region with the highest number of non-state conflicts and death toll from non-state conflicts. However, conflicts between drug cartels in the Americas have recently grown both more numerous and deadly. Since 2011 the Americas has surpassed Central and South Asia as the region with the second-highest cumulative death toll for the period 1989 to 2011.

However, levels of *social violence, insecurity and social dislocation* are increasing in many communities and countries. Drivers of violence are accompanied and increasingly eclipsed by a combination of social fracture and fragmentation of armed groups, often linked to illicit economic activities. Levels of violence and insecurity are sometimes higher in non-conflict countries than in those that are experiencing war.[23]

The causes and dynamics of violence are different in each context, and may change over time, but common features include a break-down of the rule of law and of governance, and increasing levels of socio-economic inequality, social fragmentation, aggressive identity politics and youth unemployment, accompanied by the widespread availability of small arms and the rise of organized crime. Other drivers of violence and insecurity are corruption, war economies, cultural issues and population movement.

Violence and insecurity have a severe social impact, particularly for women. In conflict situations, there is evidence that the targeting of civilians and the use of rape as a tactic of war is increasing, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example. In many conflict *and non-conflict contexts*, heightened levels of violence in the community are matched by increased domestic and sexual violence. Research suggests that as levels of public violence reduces in the aftermath of conflict, domestic violence remains at conflict levels for many years in the post-conflict phase.[24] The sense of insecurity that domestic violence creates undermines social bonds that are the foundations of community security and peaceful co-existence in communities. The breakdown of social cohesion and erosion of social capital can be both causes and consequences of increasing levels of insecurity. Where social capital does exist in fragile countries, it is often of a *bonding* nature that holds a particular identity group (whether ethnic population, political group or gang) within a community together (and can marginalize other groups), rather than *bridging* social capital that links different groups together.[25]

SOCIAL COHESION

Strategy 2020's strategic aim 3 promotes social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace. Social inclusion is closely linked to resilience – it aims to improve the participation and engagement in society of individuals who experience systematic restrictions in accessing resources, opportunities and rights due to discrimination.[26]

Social inclusion measures focus on improving the situation and status of the individuals and groups who are excluded or marginalized. Community resilience builds on social cohesion and the combination of the individual resilience levels of the members of that community.

Therefore, effective and successful social inclusion measures over time will contribute not only the well-being, dignity and resilience of individuals or groups but also to the overall cohesion and thus resilience of the community itself.

23. Human Security Brief 2008; Human Security Report 2013
24. UNDP. Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index.
25. Ibid.
26. This is a working definition adapted from the draft Strategic Approach to social inclusion, and a culture of non-violence and peace, currently under development for finalization at the end of 2016.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace in many ways, including reducing vulnerability and exposure to violence (whether emanating from armed hostilities, community and inter-personal violence and tensions, such as the rise in gender-based violence following a disaster). They are also working towards strengthening resilience and individual and community coping capacities to violence and reinforcing community-based responses aimed at rehabilitation and support to those affected by violence (whether communities or individuals).

Social cohesiveness is, according to the IFRC Framework for Resilience, one of the characteristics of a resilient community. This term is closely linked to *social capital* of women, girls, boys and men and communities, as well as conflict sensitiveness. The IFRC resilience framework describes how typical Red Cross and Red Crescent activities support social cohesion. For the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the operationalization is associated with social inclusion of excluded and marginalized individuals and groups as described above – as well as efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to violence and promote a culture of peace.

Definitions by others refer to quality of coexistence between individuals within their own group and the institutions that surround them, well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization.[27] The OECD definition of social cohesion entails three major dimensions: fostering cohesion by building networks of relationships, trust and identity between different groups; fighting discrimination, exclusion and excessive inequalities; and enabling upward social mobility.[28]

UNDP breaks it down to two principal dimensions:

- The strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties (social capital).
- The reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion.

Social cohesion (like social inclusion) is however an elusive concept – easier to recognize by its absence than by any definition. A lack of social cohesion results in increased social tension, violent crime, targeting of minorities, human rights violations and, ultimately, violent conflict. Social cohesion is about tolerance of, and respect for, diversity (in terms of gender and age,[29] disability, religion, ethnicity, economic situation, political preferences, sexuality) – both institutionally and individually. Social inclusion is about putting in place processes and measures at the individual, community and societal levels to address the effects of that lack of cohesion on excluded and marginalized people. This overlaps with the drivers of conflict and violence, and there is undeniably a strong link between lack of social cohesion, and conflict and violence.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

Conflict, or tensions and insecurities, is not an inherently destructive or negative phenomenon. If seen as distinct from violence, then opportunities can be identified through which conflict can become a force for positive change. This core distinction is an important part of conflict-sensitive thinking.

- Opportunities for positive change that result from conflict include raised awareness of underlying injustices or systemic and structural forms of violence that have remained latent or unchallenged.
- Marginalized or excluded groups of people can channel this awareness into non-violent forms of social mobilization that initiative social change processes. This leads to better ways of doing things or improved and strengthened systems and structures that reduce the levels of structural violence experienced.

27. UNDP. Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index.
28. OECD. International Conference on Social Cohesion and Development.
29. Gender and age as universal determinants while everything else is a sub-group.

The basis for differing perceptions and perspectives, which can create tensions, insecurities and conflict are affected by:

- *Diverse and unique individual and group identities* that shape the way we see ourselves, others and the world around us.
- *Different experiences and upbringings* also contribute to different ways of seeing the same thing.
- *Gender* – conflict and violence affect women and men differently directly affecting their perspectives, priorities and responses to conflict and violence.
- *Values* – what is important to me, to us and to others.
- *Power* and equality – how much access and influence an individual or group has relative to others.
- *Wealth* – ownership of and access to money and property, including land, often entrenching unequal levels of privilege and access to opportunity.
- *Systems and structures* – that create and maintain social, economic and political differences and levels of equality/inequality between people and that enable or undermine social cohesion, development and transformation.

THE SAFER ACCESS FRAMEWORK

Humanitarian access is strongly linked to application of principled humanitarian action, protection, and accountability. SAF developed by the ICRC provides a set of actions and measures that can be taken by a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society to increase acceptance, security and access to affected populations. The framework "helps National Societies to prepare for and respond to context specific challenges and priorities to reduce and mitigate the risk that it may face in sensitive and insecure contexts and to earn the trust and acceptance of people and communities with humanitarian needs and those who control or influence access to them."[30]

SAF is primarily developed and applied in sensitive and insecure contexts, where violence or the threat of violence may impede access to vulnerable populations with humanitarian needs and put the lives of staff and volunteers at risk, as in accordance with ICRC's mandate. It is however acknowledged that also in peacetime certain situations may contain sensitivities that need to be prepared for and managed carefully.

SAF consists of eight elements. These are interlinked and interdependent, and part of a perpetual cycle.

SAF is institutionalizing a *context analysis* with the purpose of understanding root causes of violence. The underlying reasons for resorting to violence in a given context can be numerous, diverse and complex and may relate to power, politics and/or access to resources, including financial, natural and land. They may have additional dimensions such as ethnicity or religion. Understanding the history and root causes as well as the methods, weaponry and geographical implications is important as those factors influence the entire operational environment. In particular, they will determine which populations are the most vulnerable, their assistance and protection needs, and how the National Society responds. Gaining this understanding will form a key part of a context and risk assessment.

Providing services, while upholding accountability to affected populations in accordance with humanitarian principles in the increasingly complex and evolving environments is challenging. Sound foundations for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' organizational development, capacity building and emergency preparedness for response are essential. This is supported by various approaches and tools developed by the IFRC, such as organizational capacity assessment and certification (OCAC) process and the well-prepared national society self-assessment (WPNS).

30. ICRC. *Safer access Framework: An Introduction*. p. 2 2015. Available at: https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/4226-safer-access-introduction

Most of the concepts underpinning SAF are not new to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as they concern various familiar organizational development and capacity building actions. Many of the actions recommended in SAF are already clear requirements and commitments for National Societies established in policies and decisions adopted by the Movement and should therefore already be standard procedure. The application of SAF is a continual process. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies need to remain responsive to the evolving contexts and needs.

The seven Fundamental Principles are integral to the successful application of the framework, especially the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. According to ICRC, strict operational adherence to these principles is crucial to how a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society is perceived and therefore accepted by all stakeholders.

SAF AND PROTECTION

SAF acknowledges that in addition to providing services and assistance National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' mandate includes protection of affected people and communities. SAF refers to the ICRC definition of protection "all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or gender)"[31] – which corresponds to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) definition referred to above. Moreover, the SAF refers to the Sphere Project at its *Protection Principles* that should inform all humanitarian action. The SAF recommends that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies consider undertaking appropriate training of their personnel and support the work of carrying out protection activities for affected populations with suitable organizational systems.

This text has primarily been taken or adapted from ICRC's *Safer Access: An Introduction*.

31. Ibid.

The eight elements of the Safer Access Framework

1. Context and risk assessment
National Societies have a clear understanding of the interlinked political, social, cultural and economic aspects of the evolving operational environment and the inherent risks, which forms the basis for preventing and managing those risks.

2. Legal and policy base
National Societies have sound legal and statutory instruments and develop policies that provide a basis from which to carry out their humanitarian mandate and roles in conformity with Movement policies, international humanitarian law and domestic legislation.

3. Acceptance of the organization
National Societies have attained a high degree of acceptance among key stakeholders by providing relevant, context-sensitive humanitarian assistance and protection for people and communities in a manner consistent with the Fundamental Principles and other Movement policies.

4. Acceptance of the individual
Staff and volunteers have attained a high degree of acceptance among key stakeholders by working in a manner consistent with the Fundamental Principles and other Movement policies.

5. Identification
National Societies take all necessary steps to protect and promote the organization's visual identity and that of its staff and volunteers.

6. Internal communication and coordination
National Societies implement well-developed internal communication and coordination strategies and mechanisms, which enhance coordination with other Movement components.

7. External communication and coordination
National Societies implement well-developed external communication and coordination strategies and mechanisms, which enhance coordination with external actors.

8. Operational security risk management
National Societies assume responsibility and accountability for the safety and security of staff and volunteers by developing and implementing an operational security risk management system and structure.

3

Humanitarian action, protection and accountability

PRINCIPLED HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* is indicative of self-reflection within the humanitarian community in response to the rapid growth of engagement in conflict-affected countries during the 1990s. This period was marked by two defining trends: a growing willingness and ability of outsiders to help those at risk, as expressed in the expansion of the humanitarian system and funding; and the mounting dangers that complex emergencies pose for humanitarianism. The second trend concerns the unintended consequences of humanitarian action, in which organizations might be simultaneously improving the welfare of the affected population and inadvertently diminishing it because of other actions. In many of the cases where unintended harm was done,

the principles were not upheld; raising critical questions about how such an ethical framework can be better applied and adhered to. These debates shaped much of the discussion and subsequent frameworks for humanitarian action. At the same time, there was growing recognition of the need to improve the management and monitoring of humanitarian action and to strengthen accountability. This trend has continued as aid has increased in real terms and as the humanitarian system has expanded.[32]

The first four Red Cross and Red Crescent Fundamental Principles have become the humanitarian principles for the sector. The humanitarian principles are grounded in international humanitarian law and have been reaffirmed in various UN resolutions. Furthermore, these are integrated into frameworks developed by humanitarian organizations to guide them in their daily work; examples include the Code of Conduct for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the SPHERE Project. Many NGOs have since incorporated the principles into their policies and procedures. The principles are thus not merely a theoretical or ideological concept, but reflect commitments made by states and are applied by organizations to safely access populations in need, to draw attention to vulnerabilities, and to negotiate with communities as well as local and international stakeholders (civilian or military). Although legal and policy frameworks underpin the humanitarian principles and their daily use by organizations, critical challenges continue to hamper their implementation. The risks associated with decisions to prioritize the principles are not only borne by an organization, but also by the humanitarian community as a whole. When one humanitarian organization prioritizes (or compromises) a principle – that decision may have an impact on the perception and treatment of the wider humanitarian community.[33]

Although commitments to humanitarian principles are based in law and policy frameworks, they remain difficult to reconcile with operational realities, both within and beyond the humanitarian community. By adopting measures to ensure greater consistency of interpretation of the principles and subsequent decision-making, humanitarian actors can make significant progress in strengthening principled action. *Do no harm* is one of the approaches that incorporate humanitarian principles.

PROTECTION

Protection of persons affected by humanitarian crises and disasters is at the centre of humanitarian action. Protection encompasses *all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of all individuals in accordance with international law – international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law – taking into account their age, gender, social ethnic, national, religious or other background*.[34]

There has been significant debate about the meaning of protection in humanitarian work. The ICRC, many UN and other international agencies have protection functions, and a proliferation of notions of protection today is accepted as part of the broader humanitarian landscape. The challenge facing the international humanitarian and development community is to ensure that differences in understanding of the concept of protection enhance, rather than restrict, the assistance provided to affected populations. In particular, there is a need for more coherent and integrated protection analyses, strategies and accountability mechanisms among actors. It is vital to leverage complementary roles of different actors in maximizing protection outcomes. It is also vital to ensure that at the core of any notion of protection is the affected populations own understanding of what protection would mean in the given context.[35]

32. Norwegian Refugee Council and Humanitarian Policy Group. *Supporting Principles Humanitarian Action*. 2012
33. Ibid.
34. IASC. *Statement on the Centrality of Protection. 2013.*
35. UNHCR. *Placing Protection at the Centre of Humanitarian Action: A contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit*. 2015.
Available at: http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/557ea67c4.pdf

Regardless of the nature of the situation, the purpose of protection activities is to save lives, ensure safety and security, alleviate suffering and restore the dignity of affected populations. Protection activities may therefore be preventive, responsive, remedial or environment building, depending on the context. A protection response can also include a series of interventions, and is rarely a single event. *Coherent, joined-up analyses of protection risks are therefore necessary to ensure complementarity in protection activities.*

In practice, the delivery of protection goes beyond upholding legal rights and norms and should be defined to include all of those activities through which a person's rights are secured. In other words, if protection is to be placed at the centre of humanitarian action, a link should be made between rights accorded under national, regional and international law and the assistance activities that will enhance the protection of these rights. Protection and provision of services are not separate sectors or activities: rather, *assistance and services is a way to achieve protection outcomes for people, while protection concerns will affect how appropriate assistance is identified, prioritized and delivered – including by the affected population themselves.*[36]

States have the primary responsibility to protect people affected by humanitarian crises, as well as to facilitate access by humanitarian actors to affected people if the State itself is unable or unwilling to protect. In situations of armed conflict, non-state parties to conflict are also obliged to protect affected persons, in accordance with international humanitarian law. Where States are unable or unwilling to provide protection, the support of the international community may be required. The ICRC together with some UN agencies, such as UNHCR, UNICEF and OHCHR, are mandated with protection responsibilities. NGOs and civil society may also have a protection role. This will be based on their particular humanitarian expertise, in accordance with national legislation in the country concerned and in line with the general principle that individuals and groups, as well as States, have a responsibility to promote and respect human rights.

All affected populations have their ways of providing or enhancing their own protection. Communities have their own institutions, support systems, risk-reducing strategies and healing mechanisms. The goal of humanitarian action is not to substitute but to support and facilitate such community-based protection mechanisms.

Placing protection at the centre of humanitarian responses requires, in addition to leadership and coordination, dedicated capacity and resources, dynamic concept of protection delivery, and enhancing normative frameworks:

- *Humanitarian access:* Access of affected persons to assistance and protection, in practice. Where the State is unable or unwilling to provide this, access of humanitarian actors to conflict- or disaster-affected populations is assured, in line with international principles.
- *Age, gender and diversity analysis:* Tailored humanitarian assistance to take account of the differing capacities and needs of, as well as the risks faced by, various segments of an affected population. This requires accounting for specific vulnerabilities, including those experienced by women, girls, boys and men and groups such as internally displaced people, older people, people with disabilities, and people belonging to ethnic, sexual, religious and other minorities.
- *Accountability and community-based protection:* Accountability of humanitarian actors to people affected by humanitarian crises, so that their priorities and needs are fully reflected in any programmes and activities, and they take part in decision-making. Reinforcing community-based protection mechanisms to enable affected people to exercise their rights and meet their own needs is a priority.[37]

The text on Protection has primarily been taken or adapted from UNHCR. *Placing Protection at the Centre of Humanitarian Action: A contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit.* 2015.

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36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.

PROTECTION AND THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

National Societies often have a broader mandate, focusing not just on alleviating suffering, but also addressing root causes through development, relief and an agenda of social change. Building on the resilience approach enables communities to better cope with and recover from violence. ICRC, IFRC, and National Societies have a unique opportunity to build a complementary framework for community-based protection.[38]

IFRC does not have its own definition of protection, but does adhere to the Sphere Project and its Humanitarian Charter *(where do no harm is one of the protection principles)* that clearly establishes that protection is one of the *critical pillars* of humanitarian action.[39] This also includes adherence to the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, which are accompanying the SPHERE standards.

The work of IFRC and its member National Societies is based on identified *needs, vulnerabilities* and *risks*. Together they support and implement what are *de facto* protection activities. The Red Cross and Red Crescent approach has traditionally been to address these issues from a health perspective, and more specifically as violence prevention.

A review of the mid-line evaluation of the *IFRC's 2011 Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response* finds that the issues addressed by National Societies include child protection, gender-based violence, violence against migrants, as well as an emerging theme of community violence. Projects to address violence are mainly integrated into and delivered through several programmatic areas, such as, health, disaster management, youth activities and organizational development.[40] The important issue of prevention and response to gender-based violence is increasingly recognized and integrated into National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society programmes.

With the aim of advancing gender equality, embracing diversity and reducing the impact of other related humanitarian problems, including violence, inequitable healthcare and the negative consequences of disasters, IFRC launched its *Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues* in 2013. To facilitate the work of the National Societies a set of minimum standard commitment to gender and diversity in emergency programming was developed.[41]

The commitments draw on rights-based frameworks like the IASC's Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (2006) and Guidelines on Gender-based Violence (2005 and 2015). IFRC commitments are based on the dignity, access, participation and safety (DAPS) framework.

The tool recognizes nonetheless that dignity means different things to different people, is influenced greatly by cultural and social context. Hence, making it difficult to measure the degree to which *dignity* has been incorporated into programmes and to ensure accountability. IFRC is conducting research on the *gendered nature of dignity*, which will inform necessary revisions to the DAPS framework and the implementation of the commitments and evaluation of performance on their application.

Significantly, during the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent a resolution on addressing gender-based violence in armed conflict and disasters was adopted in December 2015.[42]

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38. Danish Red Cross. *Programming Guide. Protection and Social Cohesion.* 2015.
39. The Sphere Project. *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.* 2011. The Sphere Project is a voluntary initiative bringing together a number of different agencies around a common aim of improving the quality of humanitarian assistance and accountability.
40. IFRC. *Mid-line Review 2015. IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation, and Response*. 2015.
41. IFRC. Minimum Standard Commitments to Gender and Diversity in Emergency Programming. Pilot Version. 2015.
42. IFRC. *Mid-line Review 2015. IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation, and Response*. 2015; The IFRC has defined 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." The IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response is based on the World Health Organisation's typology of violence. The categories of violence falling under the strategy – and the work supported by the IFRC are: self-directed *violence*, which refers to violence by an individual against oneself, and is subdivided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse; *Interpersonal violence* is violence that occurs between individuals. Interpersonal violence occurs between people who know each other; it can occur in homes, schools, workplaces and institutions; and *community violence*, which is a type of interpersonal violence that takes place at the community level, (e.g. in urban settings) between people who may or may not know one another. As according to its strategy, IFRC does not support work on *collective violence*. IFRC. *IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation, and Response.* 2011.

The only IFRC area with a clear rights-based approach is the Migration Programme. The IFRC Policy on Migration states, "Recognize the Rights of Migrants National Societies provide assistance and protection to migrants, irrespective of their legal status" and "By working with migrants to ensure that their rights are respected – including the right to the determination of their legal status – National Societies will also promote their social inclusion and their aspirations."[43]

Most National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are not so well-placed to engage directly with arms-bearers on protection issues during open conflict, and relatively few have developed the necessary skills to provide care for victims of violence, e.g. specialized counselling services, the clinical management of rape, healthcare or reintegration of former combatants.

ICRC has the mandate and experience to engage directly with arms bearers on violations of international humanitarian law, as well as extensive experience in providing assistance to reduce the risk and exposure of civilians to violence. ICRC uses international humanitarian law as the guiding framework for its dialogue and community engagement. This is an active choice related to its operational strategy and in line with ICRC's mandate to alleviate suffering related to conflict.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Principled humanitarian action, protection and *do no harm* are related to the question of *accountability* and in particular *accountability to affected populations*. One could say that an absolute minimum standard for accountability should be that at least no harm is done. Most organizations, projects and operations have legal and financial requirements, as well as codes of conducts for personnel, but there are no such requirements towards affected populations. There are standards that organizations can voluntarily commit to (such as the Core Humanitarian Standard), but there are no built-in sanctions if they choose not to do so. The humanitarian community has struggled to come up with a common definition of accountability, as there are many

different stakeholders to which organizations are accountable. The Core Humanitarian Standard[44] (former Humanitarian Accountability Partnership), applies the following definition of accountability: *the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power.*

Building on lessons learnt and growing recognition of certain weaknesses in the multilateral humanitarian response, the IASC Principals reviewed the approach to humanitarian response, made adjustments and laid out the IASC Transformative Agenda on leadership, coordination and accountability in 2011. A protocol on AAP is part of this operational framework. As part of their Transformative Agenda, the IASC put forth five Commitments on AAP to complement the framework and to establish a shared understanding of what it means to be accountable to affected populations and engage in effective collective action. All actors should commit to leadership/governance, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation, design, monitoring and evaluation. IFRC and ICRC did not sign up to these commitments as they reported to have their own frameworks in place.

AAP is about holding humanitarian actors accountable and responsive to the people they serve. Accountability is a legal, practical and ethical obligation for humanitarian and development agencies. AAP, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and communications with communities are all interrelated approaches. They interact and are to some extent interdependent, but any accountability plan should address aspects of all three and include a strong emphasis on the gender and diversity analysis they require.

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43. IFRC. *Policy on Migration*. 2009.
44. The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. It also facilitates greater accountability to communities and people affected by crisis: knowing what humanitarian organizations have committed to will enable them to hold those organisations to account. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action. The CHS is the result of a 12-month, three-stage consultation facilitated by HAP International, People In Aid and the Sphere Project, during which many hundreds of individuals and organisations rigorously analysed the content of the CHS and tested it at headquarters and field level. CHS. *Core Humanitarian Standards*. 2014.

AAP at its core is about *systematically and meaningfully engaging the affected populations, neighbouring communities and local actors* into all stages of the planning and implementation cycle, ensuring they have a voice and a hand in the decisions that affect their lives. For humanitarian actors, this requires respect, transparency and a willingness to listen to and work with affected communities, and be influenced and judged by them. This means including the affected populations in needs assessments, programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, establishing open channels of communication for feedback and information sharing and complaint mechanisms, and facilitating participatory processes for decision-making and mutual learning). Doing so is not only fundamental to humanitarian principles including *do no harm*, but also a practical means to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian and longer-term work and ultimately the sustainability of humanitarian response and development programmes. A key part of AAP is sharing information with and listening to, affected communities, and adapting the international response's strategic objectives and operational planning based on their inputs.[45]

IFRC AND ACCOUNTABILITY

According to Strategy 2020, accountability is a key value, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent should work in accordance with the Fundamental Principles in a *transparent and accountable manner*.[46] IFRC does not have an accountability framework, but is in the processes of developing one. The draft definition focuses on *respect*. Accountability is an on-going process that creates relationships of respect between the organization and those affected by its work being accountable one fulfils a commitment to enable and facilitate stakeholders to assess action against defined commitments and expectations, and to respond to the assessment appropriately.

Although the organization does not have an accountability framework as such, the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance[47] constitute an important instrument to ensure accountability. It is a Movement adopted document. Under quality and accountability it makes reference to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief and with the Code for Good Partnership of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (the Sphere Project) and other relevant standards in all humanitarian assistance operations, including mentioning the *do no harm* principle specifically.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent has been focusing on developing meaningful ways of community engagement (previously referred to as beneficiary communication). Community engagement and accountability (two-way communication) activities are delivered through a number of different channels and should prioritize feedback from the concerned population, especially given that their participation in the process facilitates improving their overall situation. Community engagement engages people in a dialogue, by managing the information both sent to and received from them and integrating their feedback into the decision-making process of programmes.[48]

There is ongoing work within IFRC looking at how the Red Cross and Red Crescent engages with communities and how to ensure accountability.

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45. Global Cluster for Early Recovery. *Guidance on Early Recovery Coordination 2015*. 2015.
46. IFRC. *Mid-line Review 2015. IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation, and Response*. 2015.
47.IFRC. *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance*. 2013.
48. IFRC. *Beneficiary Communications and Accountability. A response, not a choice. Lessons learned and recommendations. Indonesia, Haiti and Pakistan*. 2011.

4

How is IFRC adapting to the changing environment?

URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Urbanization is reshaping the world. More than half the world's population is now living in urban areas. This is changing the nature of many humanitarian disasters. Despite the awareness of the need for new ways of working, the humanitarian community is still not *fit for purpose* to deal with the challenge of the urban context described earlier. Experiences, approaches, tool and skill-sets remain grounded in rural or camp settings. In displacement situations, host populations have been excluded from assistance in urban areas, increasing social tensions and undermining the *do no harm* principle.[49]

The Red Cross and Red Crescent have always been present in cities and urban areas. IFRC's growing work in urban settings is taking into consideration the findings of a number of reports, research publications and initiatives undertaken

within the scope of the IFRC. This also includes the Partnership on Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, initiated in 2013. The outcomes and findings of regional consultations and pilot projects show that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are concerned about the increasing challenges that vulnerable people face living in urban areas and they are eager to find effective ways to address these.

IFRC acknowledges that the complexity of urban contexts requires deeper understanding and more effective assessment and monitoring of the risks communities face including hazards and interconnected vulnerabilities as well as more advanced capacities to ensure efficient delivery of services in cities. While IFRC and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have always been present and active in cities, most of IFRC's disaster risk management work and approaches have been firmly embedded within rural settings and designed for rural communities. The IFRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies do however have important comparative advantages that can significantly contribute to building urban resilience. There is nonetheless a need to establish systematic processes that access, gather and integrate information on city-level hazard, vulnerability and risk into programmes and policy formulation, and for more effective collaboration with local authorities, private sector, academia and other local urban actors, as well as the prioritization of integrated programming within National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Existing methodologies and tools such as guidelines,[50] training materials and manuals have been mostly designed for rural communities and should be further adapted for urban areas.[51]

NEW ACTORS AND PARTNERSHIPS

With the holistic, multi-sectorial and *multi-stakeholder* resilience approach, the need for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as communities to enter into more partnerships has become further pronounced.

For a community to become more resilient, a number of issues need to be analysed and addressed at the same time. It is hence necessary to collaborate with relevant actors in constructive ways.

The IFRC and its members are partnering with other organizations and governments, as well as private sector with the aim of securing funding, and to cooperate on innovation of methods and technology which serves various purposes for the participants; branding and reputation building, access to new markets, learning and development of new products. IFRC has developed guidelines for how National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies can safeguard themselves against some of the risks rising from collaborating with the private sector, and is currently working on guidance that will help them in choosing and managing their partnerships.

There are a number of opportunities in partnerships and networks, not at least for greater reach and larger impact of the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The One Billion Coalition for Resilience launched by IFRC in 2014 aims at maximizing the role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as a *convener and broker*, in particular at branch level within local *coalitions* with organizations, private sector and governments. This will increase the potential to work at-scale and address issues like urban challenges and social protection concerns. The One Billion Coalition for Resilience project is developing further guidance for this work.

When partnering up, it is very important to ensure that our actions are based on the Fundamental Principles and other humanitarian principles, like *do no harm*. The need to be able to assess potential harm has not decreased with the potential of collaborating up with actors who are not familiar with, or choose not to adhere to these principles.

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49. International Rescue Committee. *Humanitarian Action in a New Urban World. Regional Consultations, Europe and Others. 2015.*
50. An example is the IFRC – *Integrating climate change and urban risk into the VCA*. 2014.
51. IFRC. *The Road to Urban Resilience: The IFRC's Perspective*. 2015.

BPI AND THE RESILIENCE APPROACH

How is the humanitarian and development sector, and in particular the Red Cross and Red Crescent approaching these more complex, crowded, murkier, contexts? Is BPI still relevant?

Since BPI came about, the sector saw increased professionalization, which brought with it increased specialization. At the same time, the sector saw an increased focus on accountability. Often based on studies of good practices, a number of guidelines and standards were developed.

Resilience thinking brings with it a more holistic methodology and questions the silo approach. Discourse as well as actual implementation is shifting towards demand-based service delivery – as reflected in IFRC's Strategy 2020, and smaller scale context specific assistance with room for testing and failing before potentially scaling-up. The IFRC World Disaster Report from 2014 reflects this by reminding us not to forget to take into account local culture, knowledge and practices.

This holistic and multi-stakeholder approach acknowledges the need to look at underlying risks and vulnerabilities – and taking into account the *social dimension* when addressing humanitarian and development concerns. The *resilience approach* provides a way to bridge humanitarian and development approaches, which is necessary if we are going to succeed in addressing risks, needs and protect rights.

For a long time, the symbiosis between humanitarian and development work was ignored in terms of how the international community responded to crises and disasters. The result was an institutionalized gap between humanitarian and development actors as well as within donors and funding structures.

There has however been an increased recognition of the fact that rebuilding physical and social infrastructure, reintegrating returning populations, strengthening governance and

civil society, maintaining security while developing a justice system, and protecting peoples' rights and dignity must be addressed simultaneously. Additionally, the need to think longer-term already in the relief phase, together with addressing risks through relief, recovery and development efforts have gained traction. Three approaches aim to bridge humanitarian and development efforts – early recovery, resilience and risk reduction – and the three are interlinked. Emergency response as well as early recovery, recovery and development programmes should be risk-informed. Early recovery activities should contribute to strengthening community resilience, and activities implemented aiming to use a *resilience approach* should include risk reduction activities.

IFRC recognized the developments described above and an important change from its Strategy 2010 to Strategy 2020 was an "*enhanced focus on our development activities* alongside our well-known disaster assistance efforts." The strategy under strategic aim 2 emphasizes that IFRC's specific contribution to sustainable development is through strengthening community resilience.[52]

IFRC defines resilience as "the ability of individuals, communities, organizations, and countries exposed to disasters, crisis, and underlying vulnerabilities, to anticipate, prepare for, reduce, the impact of, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects." Although the definition recognizes that resilience can be observed and strengthened at multiple levels;[53] for IFRC resilience relates to all activities that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies carry out, and the quality of the programmes and services that they deliver in response to the demands of their communities.[54]

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52. IFRC. *Strategy 2020*. Geneva: 2010.
53. Individual, household, community, local government, national government, organizations such as National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and regional and global levels.
54. IFRC. *Strategy 2020*. Geneva: 2010.

According to the framework,[55] resilient communities are socially cohesive, have economic opportunities, have well-maintained and accessible infrastructure and services, can manage its natural assets, and are connected. Additionally, greater equality within communities is important to increase resilience.

Community resilience is about a demand-driven, people-centred approach. This entails that all initiatives should recognize the capacities and strategies that women, girls, boys and men of all ages and abilities have and adopt to survive with dignity are integral to the design and approach of any developmental or humanitarian response. Such an approach seeks to improve local communities' self-reliance and self-protection, social justice and participatory decision-making. A people-centred approach must be gender and diversity-sensitive to ensure that the key role of individuals and communities is supported through equal and meaningful inclusion of individuals and communities in procedural, resource and decision-making processes. Key to this approach is a "comprehensive understanding of local culture, customs and traditions in order to ensure appropriate levels of programmatic sensitivity and the development of initiatives that best respond to needs within a given context."[56]

BPI provided a methodology to open a dialogue and engage with communities with the purpose of minimizing unintended negative consequences and harm that development and humanitarian activities may be doing unintentionally. Hence, it also provided a tool for understanding how external actors may be *perceived* – something that is crucial for ensuring access to local communities and affected populations, especially in conflict situations. Moreover, it provided a tool to analyse potentials for conflict, i.e. divisive factors.

There is no evidence to suggest that ensuring humanitarian access, protection and minimizing unintended harm have become less important. In addition, there is a greater realization that we need to address underlying causes. Manoeuvring in new and complex contexts with new and diverse actors demands thorough analysis of the context and a good understanding of the impact of humanitarian and development activities and how these are perceived. The core principles and methodology of the BPI are thus relevant. There is, however, a need to ensure that the methodology and tools are in line with current approaches in the sector at large and with Red Cross and Red Crescent approaches and tools.

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55. IFRC. *Framework for Community Resilience*. 2014.
56. See SPHERE Core Standard – No. 1. Danish Red Cross. *Programming Guide. Protection and Social Cohesion. 2015.*

5

Towards implementation

Good programming and community engagement require a solid understanding of the local environment and of the role – both actual and perceived – that we play – whether we operate in a context with high levels of social instability, violence, and conflict, or more stable and predictable settings.[57] There is always a risk that our presence, activities, and community engagement can have negative consequences.

To avoid unintended negative consequences (e.g. violence, or discrimination), maximize impact, and ensure access we need to understand the *connections* in a community and how our presence and activities influence them.

It is however important to note:

- *Contexts change*
- *We influence context*
- *(A changing) context influences risks and vulnerabilities.*

It is therefore important to continuously analyse context, learn and adjust. Data gathering and information and knowledge management is hence key.

- *Undertake one initial integrated risk and vulnerability assessment guiding further sector specific assessments if deemed necessary. Use available tools like the IFRC VCA to help the data gathering and analysis.*[58]
- *Cooperate with others working in the same context in undertaking the assessment and analysis.*

Partnerships are becoming increasingly important, and cooperation can include context analysis. Agreeing on the outcomes of a context analysis and how to take things forward can form good basis for partnerships and help the understanding of the advantages of *division of labour* in humanitarian responses and enhancing community resilience. Moreover, sharing recourses makes in more cost effective.

- *Use secondary data*, including from others like academic institutions, government, UN, regional organizations and NGOs.

There is no need to start from scratch. There is often easily accessible data on demographics, health, livelihoods, education, socio-economic issues, participation in decision-making processes and structures, ownership of and access to resources (means of production, land etc.), environmental risks, climate-related risks, history of conflicts, history of disasters, and migration patterns.

- *Include in preparedness work*

Putting together data sets for conflict and disaster prone areas should be part of preparedness work. Available preliminary analysis can decrease the risks of unintended negative consequences of responses and recovery work. It is especially important for people coming to support operations who are not necessarily familiar with the context.

Both integrated risk and vulnerability assessments and emergency need assessments (primary data collection) should be sensitive to existing social instability and conflicts, as well as tensions and conflicts that may have arisen has a

result of presence and community engagement.[59]
A general context analysis begins with looking at the broader picture, using secondary data. This includes:

- Origins of the modern state and its history, including colonial legacies, if any.
- Its relations with key neighbours and great power states.
- The overall domestic political situation, including the nature of the government, the political party situation, the conduct of elections and the way in which average people interact with and experience government in their lives.
- Any *social struggles* between groups or regions over resources, territory or control of government, or discrimination or exclusion grievances.
- *Identity groups* (based on religion, caste, class or ethnicity, for instance), and how ideology, myths and symbols have been used to mobilize these groups should be included.
- *Religion and social and political ideology*: key beliefs, symbols and areas of sensitivity and respect.
- *The traditional social structures* used to manage conflict and uphold norms – whether they are they still functional or influential.
- *Social norms* and codes governing public behaviour, dress and the interaction between men and women.
- The history of aid assistance.

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57. The same context analysis is also the basis for good security management.
58. The IFRC VCA tool is under revision. The plans suggest that it will be adapted to the organization's resilience framework, and keep elements of social inclusion as well as *do no harm*. While this tool is adapted to Red Cross and Red Crescent and the realities of National Societies' work, and therefore easily accessible, the importance is nonetheless on assessing, analysing and understanding the context – not which tool is used. One may in fact use several complementary tools.
59. The original BPI was mainstreamed into IFRC policy, tools and guidance, and is still to be found in IFRC VCA toolbox. It guides the user through a *connector and divider* analysis that is carried out through a participatory workshop. This methodology is similar to the LCPP methodology. BPI revision process found however that this methodology was seen to be too cumbersome and therefore not used. ICRC's SAF institutionalizes context analysis with the purpose of understanding root causes of violence, and is an important and well-developed tool available to National Societies.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN CONFLICT AND VIOLENT CONTEXTS

Understanding the conflict

- Causes (structural or root causes)
- Dynamics (current state and conflict scenarios)

Understanding armed groups

- Actor analysis (who they are)
- The resource base and war economy

To illuminate connections, motivations, sources of threat, and understand how various factors influence each other, and how multiple conflicts can be interwoven – a *detailed context analysis* should be undertaken.
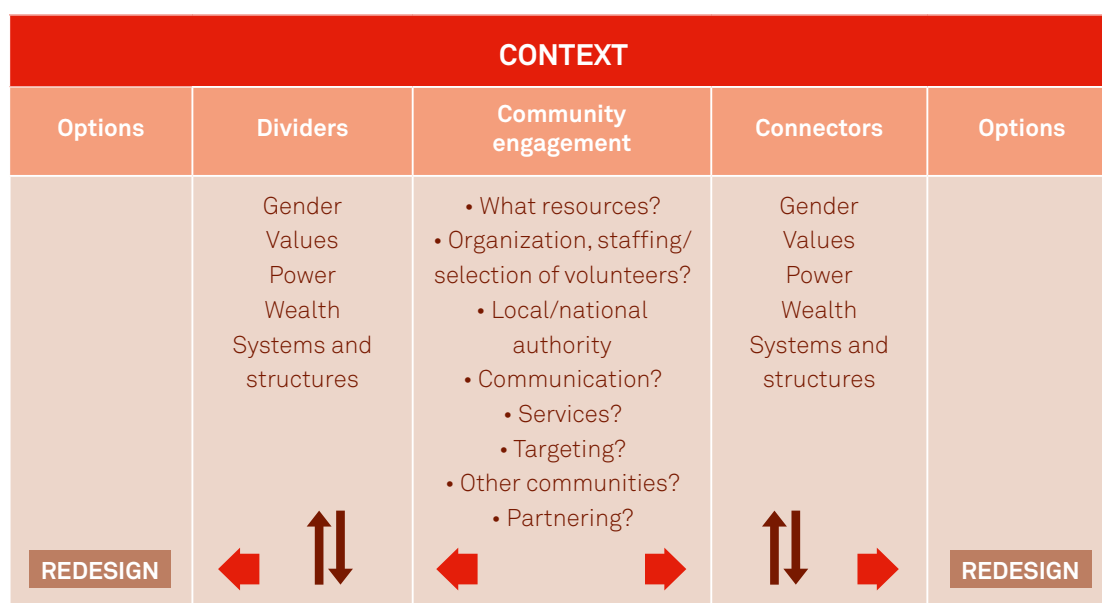
Violence is preceded by tensions that may be less visible: the *deep divisions* and *fault lines* in a society. These too must be explored and understood.

Data must be collected either through secondary sources, or as part of an assessment at community level to tell us something about the aspects of communities and its individual members, and how they relate.

At the centre of how human beings perceive and respond to tensions and conflict are:

- *Values* – what is important to me, to us and to others.
- *Power* – how much access and influence an individual or group has relative to others.
- *Wealth* – ownership of money and property, including land, often entrenching unequal levels of privilege and access to opportunity.
- *Identity* – how people define who they are and how they define others.
- *Systems and structures* – that create and maintain social, economic and political differences between people and that enable or undermine social cohesion, development and transformation.
- *Gender* – conflict and violence affect women and men differently, directly affecting their perspectives, perceptions and responses to conflict and violence.

These factors should be seen in relation to each other. For example, gender roles have to be analysed in relation to power structures and access to wealth. The analysis will be incomplete if for example, you look at social, economic and political structures without also analysing them from a gender perspective.

CONTEXT				
Options	**Dividers**	**Community engagement**	**Connectors**	**Options**
	Gender Values Power Wealth Systems and structures	• What resources? • Organization, staffing/ selection of volunteers? • Local/national authority • Communication? • Services? • Targeting? • Other communities? • Partnering?	Gender Values Power Wealth Systems and structures	
REDESIGN	← ⇅	← →	⇅ →	REDESIGN

Adapted from: Marshall Wallace *Principle to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm* (2015)

The factors can represent both connecting and dividing forces and should be analysed accordingly. The influence of community engagement on perceptions and behaviour of *connectors and dividers* should inform design, and redesign of the engagement.

- A *connector* has an interest in building bridges across societal divisions, and therefore enhances the capacity for local peace building, creates connections between people and generates positives effect.
- A *divider* has a vested interest in maintaining tension or conflict – divisions – in a given context and feeds into the source of tensions, creating division amongst people and has a negative impact that can cause harm. A *divider* can also produce risk to the staff and the programme.

In the model below, the column in the middle labelled *community engagement* is the humanitarian actors bringing in resources, selecting volunteers and hiring staff, working closely with local and national authorities. It is about how transparent we are, and how we communicate, whom we partner with, and what services we provide to whom. All these factors influence each other, and are again influenced by the factors described above (gender, values, power, wealth, and systems and structures).

The method and model suggested here is an adapted and simplified version of *do no harm* connector and divider analysis.[60]

Conflict sensitivity is however more than just the application of a *tool* to specific activities. Enabling conflict-sensitive practice involves capacity and skills of staff, institutional policies and commitment, and flexibility of donors and other stakeholders.[61]

Useful resources

- Conflict sensitivity consortium
- From principle to practice: A user's guide to do no harm

As a minimum, always keep the following questions in mind:

- Are we being *inclusive* in our approach?
- How is our presence and actions being perceived – by whom and why?
- What are the longer-term and indirect consequences of our actions?
- Are we non-intentionally putting someone at risk or increasing their vulnerability (safety, lack of dignity, discrimination, lack of access to services and information)?

Remember, *inaction* can also cause harm by exposing people to increased danger or ignoring abuse of their rights.

THE BROAD APPROACH TO DO NO HARM OR AVOIDING FURTHER HARM

Gender and diversity analysis and mainstreaming, protection mainstreaming, accountability to affected populations, and the Fundamental Principles all incorporate a *do no harm* approach (avoiding unintended negative consequences). Within a resilience framework they contribute to all the building blocks – a risk informed, inclusive, holistic, demand driven and people-centred community engagement.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Every individual possesses a unique profile and capacities. It is important to consider these differences because these can be leveraged to improve the situation of those affected, but also since they may give rise to specific protection risks. By promoting respect for differences as an enriching element of any community, we promote progress toward a situation of full equality and increased social cohesion. Equality means respect for all. It includes the promotion of equal opportunities for people with different needs and abilities and direct, measurable actions to combat inequality and discrimination.

60. Wallace M. *Principle to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm.* 2015.
61. CARE. Conflict Sensitivity.

- *Always include gender and diversity in context analysis*
  By analysing the gender and diversity dimensions as interlinked personal characteristics, you will be able to better understand the multifaceted protection risks and capacities of individuals and communities, and to address and support these more effectively.
- *Ensure a systematic application of a gender and diversity approach*
  Through a systematic application of a gender and diversity approach, humanitarian and development actors must seek to ensure that all individuals in affected communities have access to their rights on an equal footing.

Useful resources

- [Community-based gender checklist disaster risk assessment](#) (GENCAP)
- [Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action](#) (IASC, 2015)
- [Women, girls, boys and men. Different needs – equal opportunities. Gender handbook for humanitarian action](#) (IASC)
- [Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming](#) (IFRC)
- [A practical guide to gender-sensitive approaches for disaster management](#) (IFRC)

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Humanitarian principles define what humanitarian aid is: delivering assistance to those in need without any adverse distinction. They distinguish humanitarian action from other activities, for example those of political, religious, ideological or military nature. Adherence to the principles helps humanitarian workers carry out their work; it facilitates *access and acceptance*. These principles provide the foundations for humanitarian action. They govern humanitarian actors' conduct.

- *Promote humanitarian principles*
  Promoting humanitarian principles and, importantly, ensuring that we act in accordance with them are key to gaining acceptance by all relevant actors on the ground for humanitarian action to be carried out. This acceptance is critical to ensuring humanitarian personnel have safe and sustained access to affected people. Sustained access is, in turn, crucial

for strengthening the implementation of the humanitarian principles. For example, it allows humanitarian actors to engage with communities, or directly undertake and monitor the distribution of assistance to people, thus ensuring that aid is distributed impartially and reaches those most in need.
- *Walk the talk!*
  It is not enough to repeatedly recite humanitarian principles. Leadership and practice must match rhetoric.
- *Ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and no- governmental in disaster relief.*
  The Code of Conduct is the expression of a common operational approach for providing help to those in need, based on the principles and international humanitarian law.
- *Ensure compliance with the IFRC Child Protection Policy (2013)*

All Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel should have signed, be briefed on and behave in ways that reflect the provisions of the Code of Conduct and the IFRC Child Protection Policy 2013.

Useful resources

- [Safer Access Framework](#) (ICRC)
- [Principles and rules for Red Cross Red Crescent humanitarian assistance](#) (IFRC)

PROTECTION AT THE CENTRE OF YOUR ACTIONS

The Red Cross and Red Crescent engage with protection by mainstreaming, integration and stand-alone programming. *Stand-alone* programming refers to the development of specific programmes targeting an identified protection need. *Integration* refers to the practice of addition of specific activities or projects into larger programmes. Although all types of protection activities strengthen the *do no harm* approach; these guidelines concern protection *mainstreaming*, as this approach intersect with do no harm to a larger extent. There are links below for guidance for stand-alone and integrated protection activities.

All humanitarian actors share an ethical responsibility for *mainstreaming protection* across the humanitarian response. Mainstreaming protection ensures that the protective impact of programming is maximized. Protection mainstream-

ing is the process of ensuring that activities target the most vulnerable, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the human rights of the beneficiaries and affected populations without contributing to or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation.

Including the elements below in all engagement and programming protection can be mainstreamed. Protection mainstreaming indicators for each sector should be included.

- *Prioritize safety and dignity, and avoid causing harm.* Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended negative effects of the intervention that can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
- *Ensure meaningful access.* Arrange for people's access to assistance and services – in proportion to need and without any barriers (e.g. discrimination). Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services.
- *Set-up appropriate mechanisms through which the target and affected populations can measure the adequacy of assistance, and raise concerns.*
- *Support the development of self-protection capacities, and assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health and education.*

Useful resources

- [Support package for protection mainstreaming](#) (Global Protection Cluster)
- [Child Protection Working Group 2013: Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action](#) (Global Protection Cluster)
- [Handbook for the protection of internally displaced persons](#) (Global Protection Cluster)
- [The Centrality of Protection: What it means in practice](#) (Global Protection Cluster)

- [Guidelines for gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings](#) (IASC, 2015)
- [Operational guidelines on the protection of persons in situations for natural disasters](#) (IASC, 2011)
- [Professional standards for protection work carried out by humanitarian and human rights actors in armed conflict and other situations of violence 2013](#) (ICRC)

BE ACCOUNTABLE TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

- *Accountability to affected populations is about how we do things.*
  It is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian and development organizations seek to assist.
- *The link between accountability, protection and protection mainstreaming*
  Accountability is not only about improving humanitarian programme effectiveness but also about rights. Accountability and protection complement each other. In many ways safety, dignity and meaningful access constitute the *end* goal of protection mainstreaming, while participation and accountability are essential *means* to that end.
- *The link between accountability and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse*
  Sexual exploitation and abuse of affected community members by anyone associated with humanitarian and development organizations constitutes one of the most serious breaches of accountability. It frequently occurs when the essential needs of those most at-risk in communities are not adequately met. Issues of lack of accountability and of sexual exploitation and abuse are derived from asymmetries of power. It is also a serious protection concern and erodes the confidence and trust of affected communities and the host country in all those providing assistance.

Useful resources

- [Core humanitarian standard](#)
- [Protection and accountability to affected populations in the humanitarian programme cycle](#) (IASC)

Key things to keep in mind

- Contextualize the approach.
- Ensure local participation and representation in all stages of engaging with the community.
- Invite local actors to meetings.
- Create safe meeting places.
- Provide women, girls, boys and men, families and households affected by a disaster or crisis with the opportunity and entry points to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them. Plan how information will be shared, at regular intervals and via media channels and languages that are convenient and accessible to the affected populations.
- For all projects and programmes, make provision to allow users to share feedback, in a safe and confidential manner. These mechanisms should be timely and should enable project and partnership managers to learn from the information, process it and adjust programming accordingly.
- Do not ignore or duplicate existing local feedback mechanisms.
- Issues raised by affected individuals touching on violations of human rights (such as sexual abuse or exploitation) may be received via the same mechanism, but there should be separate procedures developed for these. Programme, monitor and evaluate with the communities.

- Enable those most affected by the crisis to influence the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Feed the learning from such discussions back into future programme design and implementation. Enable reflections and course corrections at both policy and programme level.
- Build feedback and accountability mechanisms into all project proposals and strategic response plans. Oblige partners to demonstrate that they have robustly consulted different groups – including the most marginalized and socially excluded – in the design and implementation of programmes.
- Make available to affected populations unrestricted information on partnership arrangements, response actions, targeting criteria, funding levels and other issues that affect them.
- Include AAP as a benchmark, goal or skillset in all recruitment, performance reviews, assessments, reporting and partnering arrangements.

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6

Conclusions and recommandations

How can we enhance community resilience in all contexts – and in particular social cohesion, without creating tensions or fuel existing conflict in sensitive contexts? Doing harm can be avoided by basing activities on a context analysis sensitive to the factors creating tensions and insecurities, and possibly conflicts, while upholding humanitarian principles, address protection concerns and being accountable to affected populations – all complementary approaches.

This broad approach to *do no harm*, or *avoiding further harm* is important to keep in mind throughout assessments, preparedness work, response, as well as (early) recovery activities, and equally throughout the planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting cycle and different sectorial initiatives. In addition, a more thorough and systematic *connector and divider* analysis can be undertaken as part of the context analysis, and when deemed necessary.

It is recommended that IFRC promotes both the broader approach linking interconnected and complementary frameworks and approaches as well as the core of the *do no harm* analysis.

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

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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