



The Red Cross Red Crescent approach to  
**Promoting a culture of  
non-violence and peace**

# Table of contents

Introduction	3
The Challenge: violence, discrimination and exclusion	6
Transformation towards a CNV+P: Common roots, common solutions	7
Snapshot: Values and skills-based education, an essential tool for CNV+P	8
How do these values and skills relate to Red Cross Red Crescent?	9
Snapshot: Promotion of a CNV+P in action: Youth as Agents of Behavioural	11
Transformation towards a CNV+P	12
Component 1: Non-discrimination and respect for diversity	12
Component 2: Violence prevention, mitigation and response	14
Snapshot: Volunteering, an essential tool for CNV+P	16
Component 3: Social inclusion: inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-generational dialogue	18
Conclusion: Promoting a CNV+P at multiple levels	20
10 key ideas of the paper	21
Annex: Examples of Red Cross Red Crescent and government programmes and policies contributing to the promotion of a CNV+P	22

© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2011.

Copies of all or part of this study may be made for noncommercial use, providing the source is acknowledged. The IFRC would appreciate receiving details of its use. Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the IFRC at [secretariat@ifrc.org](mailto:secretariat@ifrc.org).

The opinions and recommendations expressed in this study do not necessarily represent the official policy of the IFRC or of individual National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies. The designations and maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities. All photos used in this study are copyright of the IFRC unless otherwise indicated.

P.O. Box 372  
CH-1211 Geneva 19  
Switzerland  
Telephone: +41 22 730 4222  
Telefax: +41 22 733 0395  
E-mail: [secretariat@ifrc.org](mailto:secretariat@ifrc.org)  
Web site: <http://www.ifrc.org>

Cover photo: Marko Kokic/ICRC.

# Introduction

## Promoting a culture of non-violence and peace

Violence, discrimination and exclusion cause suffering for millions of people across the world today. Born out of fear, ignorance and mistrust, these factors undermine safety, health and human potential. Differences of opinion and disagreements are a normal part of humanity, but the question is: *how can we deal with these in a constructive way?* Violence, discrimination and exclusion are too often looked at in isolation, as separate issues. However, they are intertwined and have common root causes. By looking at these common root causes, we can seek common solutions.

The promotion of a **culture of non-violence and peace (CNV+P)** is not just about the absence of war. It is not an end or final goal, but a process. It is about creating an enabling environment for dialogue and discussion and finding solutions to problems and tensions, without fear of violence, through a process in which



everyone is valued and able to participate. Going even further, the promotion of a CNV+P is about prevention and minimization, as much as possible, of the sources of tensions.

A CNV+P is not a Utopian ideal. There are concrete actions we can take to work towards a more non-violent, humane and equal society. We have seen non-violence work as a foundation of a number of social and religious movements. It can also be used by individuals to reach out to others to find common solutions to problems. In this regard, developing non-violent communication is key, as an interpersonal skill for living peacefully together within families, in schools, communities, organisations and within our 'global village'. The promotion of a CNV+P is an intrinsic ideal of humanity.

For the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), comprised of 186 member Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, *the promotion of social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace* is one of the three strategic aims in the IFRC's *Strategy 2020*.<sup>\*</sup> The promotion of a CNV+P is an essential part of IFRC's activities, as it not only reduces violence and discrimination but also creates stronger, healthier and more resilient communities. Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies are well placed to have significant impact at the community level and in working with their governments to create enabling environments that can contribute to the promotion of a CNV+P.

The IFRC has defined a *culture of non-violence* in its Strategy on violence prevention, mitigation and response<sup>\*\*</sup>: a culture of non-violence *"respects human beings, their well-being and dignity; it honours diversity, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, mutual understanding and dialogue, willingness to serve, cooperation and lasting peace. It is a culture where individuals, institutions and societies refrain from harming others, groups, communities or themselves. There is a commitment to positive and constructive solutions to problems, tensions and the source of violence; violence is never an option."*



\* Strategy 2020, Strategic aim 3: Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace (Adopted by the IFRC's General Assembly in November 2009). Available at: [www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/vision-and-mission/strategy-2020/](http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/vision-and-mission/strategy-2020/)

\*\* Strategy on violence prevention, mitigation and response. Available at: [www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53475/IFRC%20SoV%20REPORT%202011%20EN.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53475/IFRC%20SoV%20REPORT%202011%20EN.pdf)

## Facts and figures

- Each day, 4,200 people die from violence (1.6 million a year), more than 90 per cent of them in low and middle-income countries; approximately 2,300 die from suicide, 1,500 from interpersonal violence and 400 from collective violence. Butchart, A., Brown, D., Wilson, A. and Mikton, C. (2008). *Preventing violence and reducing its impact: How development agencies can help*. World Health Organization.
- Violence is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15 to 44 years worldwide, accounting for about 14 per cent of deaths among males and 7 per cent of deaths among females. [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/summary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_en.pdf)
- Beyond the trauma and suffering of victims, violence involves staggering economic costs nationwide. In fact, these costs are estimated at about 8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) by including the security of citizens, and judicial and health system spending. *Crimen y violencia en Centroamérica. Un desafío para el desarrollo*. World Bank (2011).
- Violence within communities has shown to increase 50 per cent of security costs spent by local businesses, and decrease motivation to expand business ventures by 39 per cent. Butchart et al.
- Sexual abuse experienced during childhood accounts for 27 per cent of post-traumatic stress disorders, 10 per cent of panic disorders, 8 per cent of suicide attempts and 6 per cent of cases of depression and substance abuse in the general population. Butchart et al.
- Children who live with domestic violence are at increased risk of behavioural problems and emotional trauma, and mental health difficulties in adult life. Kolbo et al., 1996; Morley and Mullender, 1994; Hester et al., 2000, 2007, in [www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-articles.asp?section=00010001002200020001&itemid=1262](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-articles.asp?section=00010001002200020001&itemid=1262)
- Girls are 70 per cent of the 130 million children who are out of school [www.unfpa.org/swp/2008/includes/images/pdf\\_swp/04\\_reproductive\\_health.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2008/includes/images/pdf_swp/04_reproductive_health.pdf)
- Seventy per cent of the world's 1.3 billion poor living on one US dollar or less per day are women. [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/--dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_067595.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/--dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_067595.pdf)
- It is estimated that one in five women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. Nearly 50 per cent of all sexual assaults worldwide are against girls 15 years of age or younger. [www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf) or [www.wpf.org/reproductive\\_rights\\_article/facts#sexual](http://www.wpf.org/reproductive_rights_article/facts#sexual)
- Some 750 million people face socio-economic discrimination or disadvantage because of their cultural identities. *From UNFPA report: Negotiating Culture: Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (2008)*.
- A 10 per cent reduction in the levels of violence in Central American countries that have the highest murder rates could boost annual economic growth per capita to 1 per cent of GDP. *World Bank, supra and World Development Report, Conflict, Security and Development (2011)*.
- Proven and promising violence prevention strategies focused on individuals include preschool enrichment programmes during early childhood (ages 3 to 5 years), life skills training and social development programmes for children aged 6 to 18 years, and assisting high-risk adolescents and young adults to complete schooling and pursue courses of higher education and vocational training. [www.who.int/features/factfiles/violence/violence\\_facts/en/index6.html](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/violence/violence_facts/en/index6.html)
- A parenting programme improving emotional and behavioural problems in children from 2 to 12 years in the short term, including conduct disorders characterized by aggressive, destructive behaviour, reduced children to have dysfunctional behaviour from 48 to 22 per cent after one year, as reported by their mother. *Violence prevention. The evidence. Series of briefings on violence prevention*. WHO (2009).

## The Challenge:

### Violence, discrimination and exclusion

#### **The cost of violence, discrimination and exclusion**

Local and national economies suffer direct costs in areas such as: health, justice, education, social services, public safety, child welfare, treatment and rehabilitation.

Indirect costs reflect long-term consequences born by those affected, such as special education, mental health, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, welfare services, homelessness, addictions and criminal behaviour. From the IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response

Vulnerabilities are not only increased by disasters and diseases but also by complex factors like deprivation, marginalization, inequality and loneliness.

Discrimination and intolerance are a refusal to accept the other's difference, often based on fear or ignorance.

As technology brings the world closer together, it also changes the way we communicate and socialize. A breakdown of a sense of community belonging has led to greater isolation, especially for vulnerable groups like the elderly who may feel left behind. Youth can also be affected by a loss of community support systems. This can reinforce vulnerabilities and foster the appearance of different forms of communities such as gangs, particularly in urban settings.

There is a growing level of intolerance in many countries, especially between local and immigrant populations. A lack of cultural awareness can channel this intolerance into violent clashes that oppose segments of the population along lines of cultural or religious belonging and lead to exclusion.

Violence, discrimination and exclusion affect people in every corner of the globe, endangering health, lives and livelihoods and limiting human potential. While their effect is most severe on the vulnerable, no one is immune.



# Transformation towards a CNV+P: Common roots, common solutions

Changing a culture of violence into a culture of peace requires a transformation of problems to creative and constructive solutions that answer the needs of those involved.

When we think about violence, discrimination and exclusion, the challenges may seem insurmountable. However, these challenges are fundamentally connected. Ignorance and misunderstandings, assumptions based on a lack of communication and mistrust, feed discrimination and violence. These all influence and reinforce one another. Vulnerability to violence, discrimination and exclusion can also be linked to a number of common social determinants, such as alcohol and drug misuse or abuse, poverty, inequalities of income, gender or power and misuse of power. Seeing these connections, it becomes clear that it is essential to systematically address common root causes.

Just as there can be common roots of violence, discrimination and exclusion, there can be common solutions. Successfully addressing these three humanitarian challenges requires a change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours. We need a global mind and behaviour shift from the way we currently think and interact: from being locked into differences to valuing diversity and pluralism; from adverse reaction to joint response and even further to proactive prevention; from exclusion based on fear to connection based on our common humanity; and from resorting to verbal or physical violence when feeling threatened to constructive dialogue and trust.

We need a values-based transformation of human behaviour. We need to start with ourselves. We all carry bias and prejudice. Awareness, questioning and critical self-reflection can help break conditioning or correct bias learned through schooling, media and upbringing. Equipping parents, teachers,



## Snapshot

### Values and skills-based education, an essential tool for CNV+P

Values and skills-based education instils humanitarian values, like respect for diversity, compassion, care and friendship, mutual understanding, cooperation, equality and peace. In addition, it enables the development of CNV+P skills, i.e. interpersonal skills to live peacefully and interact harmoniously together, such as empathy, active listening, non-violent communication and peaceful resolution of tensions.

As with CNV+P, the process of values and skills-based education is crucial. This type of education is participatory and stimulates critical thinking and independence. It puts those involved at a level of equality, where both learners and 'transmitters' learn from each other and value this as part of a lifelong learning process.

An integral part of values and skills-based education is a non-cognitive methodology, as an entry point for learning. Values are *"core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions"*. [www.ethics.org/resource/definitions-values](http://www.ethics.org/resource/definitions-values). Values are generally more associated with feelings than with intellect or rational analysis. Values connect to our right brain. So, arts, music, sports are ideal vehicles to instil, develop and nurture values and interpersonal social skills, where feelings, experience, vibrations or body rather than intellectual analysis are entry points for learning.

A strong link has been shown between early childhood experiences and later adult attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, starting values and skills-based education as early as possible is essential. This can be done in a variety of settings such as family, preschool and school, sport clubs and social activities.

#### A call to action:

- For formal education, institutionalize values and skills-based education and cultural awareness programmes at the national level: incorporation as an integral part of the formal school curriculum, at the earliest stage, including primary and preschool level.
- For non-formal education, public and private schools to engage in partnerships with external actors who can transmit values and skills-based education through school or after-school interventions. Red Cross Red Crescent national societies can be valuable partners, as the promotion of CNV+P can be incorporated into already-existing collaborations in first-aid training, blood donation or dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of Red Cross Red Crescent.
- In the community:
  - (i) provide and encourage access for all to community-based activities such as sports, arts, music and theatre which favour the development of a sense of fair play, teamwork and creativity. Sports, for example, have also been successfully utilized to foster dialogue, respect and understanding to reduce violence;
  - (ii) reach out to vulnerable youth through non-cognitive empowerment programmes, which have proven to be more successful and cost effective than many traditional programmes for at-risk communities.



communities, organizations and each and every individual with skills to interact constructively and live harmoniously together, such as empathy, active listening and non-violent communication, will support and help sustain this values-based mind shift.

Values and skills-based education is a concrete action contributing to this required change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours (see box p. 8). Through values and skills-based education – whether in school, family or community life – children, for example, will learn how to act with non-judgement<sup>\*</sup> or listen actively and therefore gain a respect for diversity. Having respect for diversity will lessen their chance of participating in discriminatory behaviour and, later on, in adolescence or adulthood, to resort to violence when confronted with tensions or problems. This positive 'snowball' effect will ultimately benefit

<sup>\*</sup> This is a capacity not to judge or label the other, which favours trust, openness and a willingness to change.



society as a whole by helping to reduce the well-proven social and economic costs of violence and by creating safer communities.

Another strategy can be volunteering. This brings personal fulfilment in the well-being of our communities. Voluntary service creates social connection, develops a sense of belonging and consequently can be effective in reducing or preventing violence (see box p. 16).

## How do these values and skills relate to Red Cross Red Crescent?



The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is committed to and bound by seven Fundamental Principles (see box above). Proclaimed in Vienna, Austria, in 1965, the seven Fundamental Principles guarantee the consistency of the Movement and its humanitarian work. They are underpinned by humanitarian values such as human dignity, respect for diversity, mutual understanding and cooperation. When these humanitarian values are nurtured, a culture of non-violence and peace is fostered.

The seven Fundamental Principles dictate what Red Cross Red Crescent does and how it acts. Applying – and, even more, “living the Fundamental Principles” – is not self-evident. However, concrete skills, such as empathy, active listening or non-judgement, are precious tools to do so, as they are closely connected to the Principles. Impartiality, for instance, means that Red Cross Red Crescent action is solely guided by needs and prohibits discrimination and interference of personal preferences in action or decision-making. To apply and ‘live’ this, development and mastery of skills like active listening, critical thinking and dropping bias are essential.



When celebrating the 150th anniversary of Red Cross Red Crescent in Solferino, Italy, in 2009, the youth of the Movement committed themselves to:

1. Inner change and the development of skills to promote harmony and positive attitudes within communities.
2. Live our seven Fundamental Principles as agents of behavioural change in our communities...



Abu Bakar Thorodor Jalloh  
**National Youth Officer**  
**Sierra Leone Red Cross Society**

*“What has YABC done in my life? Working as the National Youth Officer in the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, I have been able to apply YABC in all aspects of my work and life. The skills learnt in my YABC journey are applied from the instant I wake up in the morning till I go to bed at night. It has positively impacted my working relationship with colleagues and my personal life with family and friends. For me, that is the power of YABC: being able to honestly express oneself in all our shortcomings and assuring others that no matter what situation they might find themselves in, picking up the pieces is a process and accomplishable.”*

# Snapshot

## Promotion of a CNV+P in action

### Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) initiative

YABC is the IFRC's flagship initiative on the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace, created in 2008 for youth and with youth from Red Cross Red Crescent worldwide.

IFRC views youth as a powerful source of change, whose energy and skills need to be harnessed to foster a culture of non-violence and peace built on non-discrimination and respect for diversity, gender equality, prevention of violence by addressing its underlying root causes, inter-cultural dialogue and social inclusion.

**YABC empowers youth to take up an ethical leadership role in inspiring a transformation of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours within themselves and their community. This is done through:**

1. *the development of behavioural or interpersonal skills:* active listening, empathy, critical thinking, dropping bias and non-judgement, non-violent communication, mediation and peaceful resolution of tensions;
2. *a non-cognitive or 'from the heart to the mind' methodology* using games, role-plays, visualizations and storytelling;
3. *peer education.* Youth are more receptive to learn from other youth instead of being 'taught down to' by adults. Actually, YABC learning comes from within and from exchange with peers. Understanding is fostered by referring to one's own experience and sharing with peers. Peer education, therefore, favours exchange at a level of equality, trust and thought-provoking learning where solutions are explored and found together;
4. *creative artistic platforms to reach out to the local community:* art, dance, theatre, music, digital stories, video and sports;
5. *inner change*, i.e. the commitment and action to start with oneself, to "be the change we want to see in the world" (Mahatma Gandhi). This means embarking on a lifelong learning process to 'walk our talk', which instils a sense of humility and of taking up responsibility;
6. *the development of a capacity to operate from inner peace.* Pursuing peace and harmony within ourselves is essential to be able to inspire change outside. To this purpose, YABC has put together 'inner arts', like Qi Gong, breathing and relaxation techniques. This further enables youth to strengthen resilience to cope with stress, peer pressure or resistance when faced with energy-intensive challenges like violence, discrimination or exclusion.



To date, more than 2000 youth from 150 Red Cross Red Crescent national societies have been familiarized with YABC at an international or regional level. A total of 285 youth from 75 national societies worldwide have been trained as YABC peer educators. Youth have developed an online YABC toolkit with 60 non-cognitive games and exercises, as well as 20 thematic and skills concept papers and a peer education manual that will be launched in the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 2011.

# Transformation towards a CNV+P:

## Component 1: Non-discrimination and respect for diversity



We live in a world with enormous diversity: there are many different perspectives and ways of thinking. Rather than being perceived as making us richer and stronger, differences or diversity are causes of tension and problems all too often, especially when not approached from a CNV+P perspective. The key to creating a CNV+P is to develop the ability within individuals and communities to deal with and respect these differences, rather than to reject them. As discrimination is frequently born out of fear of the unknown, it is important to foster active listening and communication between communities in order to lead to mutual understanding, respect for diversity and a willingness to explore solutions together.

Values and skills-based education is key to overcoming discrimination. Learning and cultivating open-mindedness and understanding will help us to accept those around us and to respect their differences. When we respect others, we can avoid tensions from forming and, where they do exist, to resolve them peacefully without resorting to violence. With self-reflection, we can identify our own biases and work to erase them by developing skills such as active listening, empathy, dropping bias and non-judgement.

It is equally important to ensure the participation of the more vulnerable groups, such as children, disabled persons, elderly and migrants, so we can gain further respect of our diversity and equality. As an example, promoting respect for diversity at an early age can help to reduce future discrimination based on gender. This can have far-reaching impact by helping, more generally, to change stereotyped or perceived gender roles, thereby creating greater and more equal opportunities. It can also help to reduce gender-based violence of which gender inequality is a root cause.

As a universal network, the Red Cross Red Crescent is a living expression of diversity. Red Cross Red Crescent diversity is reflected in the composition of our national societies. These societies attract their members, volunteers and staff from diverse backgrounds that reflect the communities in which they work and regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, class, religion or political opinions. Unity, a Fundamental Principle of the Movement, means that we are therefore also open to all and embrace diversity.



Josephine  
**Beneficiary of the HIV home-based  
care programme of  
the Uganda Red Cross Society**

*“I remember when I wished for death because my late husband’s relatives sent me out of the house saying that I am the one who brought the disease that killed their son.*

*One evening I found Red Cross people having a sensitization meeting in the market. After one hour of counselling, my life was not the same anymore. I am now a Red Cross volunteer helping other people living with HIV (PLHIV) to take their drugs, and open up and talk to their family members about their HIV status. Can you imagine, my children are now the ones reminding me to take my medication?”*

# Transformation towards a CNV+P:

## Component 2: Violence prevention, mitigation and response

### Types of violence

**Self-directed violence** refers to *violence by an individual against oneself*. It is subdivided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. Suicidal behaviour includes suicidal thoughts, attempted suicides and completed suicides. Self-abuse covers self-mutilation and substance abuse or misuse.

**Interpersonal violence** is *violence that occurs between individuals*. It can occur in homes, schools, workplaces and institutions.

Examples include child abuse, bullying and harassment, family violence and abuse of the elderly.

**Community violence** 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. (Ibid) Common forms of community violence include gang violence, violence by supporters of sports teams, mob attacks and sporadic crime.

*Adapted from Krug, E., Dahlbert, L., Mercy, J., Zwi, A. and Lozano, R. (Eds.) World report on violence and health. Geneva, Switzerland. WHO(2002).*

Violence is predictable and therefore preventable. To be effective, the promotion of a CNV+P needs to focus on the root causes of violence. Vulnerability to violence is often linked to social determinants such as alcohol and substance misuse and abuse, mental illness, poverty, gender inequalities, access to weapons, discrimination and stigma, as well as to economic disparities (income inequality). Every day, more than 4000 people, over 90% of them in low- and middle-income countries, die because of violence. Of those killed, approximately 2300 die by their own hand and over 1500 because of injuries inflicted by another person\*. So, it is important to advocate for a shift in focus from response to prevention.

Children, who are particularly vulnerable being dependent on others, are disproportionately affected by violence. Violence undermines their safety, health and potential. Children subjected to violence are also more likely to resort to violence as adults. They may express pain and trauma in violent

\* Source: Butchart, A., Brown, D., Wilson, A., & Mikton, C. (2008). *Preventing violence and reducing its impact: How development agencies can help*. World Health Organization. Retrieved from: [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596589\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596589_eng.pdf)



ways or use violence as a way to socialize and get what they want. To avoid this potential 'cycle' of violence, children need to become the total focus and priority. The inclusion of values and skills-based education at an early stage of life provides children with the tools necessary to prevent this cycle of violence from continuing. Parents need to be supported and equipped with CNV+P skills too.

Women are also disproportionately affected by gender-based violence which is often rooted in inequality or misuse of power. In this regard, increasing respect for diversity, including gender mixture, can play a valuable role in reducing violence. The potential of values and skills-based education is again emphasized, as is the importance of including girls in this type of education. When seeking solutions to gender-based violence, whether affecting men or women, the participation of both as well as that of the entire community is important to ensure bottom-up and community-wide support. Involving cultural or religious leaders can be an effective strategy when dealing with harmful practices.

It is also important to develop and build on resiliency factors (see box p. 20). Individuals and communities have strengths to help avoid, and abilities to 'bounce back' from, harmful experiences. These individual, family, community and societal factors help to provide safety, security and support.

In a CNV+P, communities are able to deal positively and constructively with differences, allowing for transformation of mindsets and actions. The development of skills and abilities to express oneself and communicate non-violently is essential for this to occur. This is an ongoing lifelong learning process.

The IFRC's focus in the area of violence prevention is on self-directed and interpersonal violence, in particular on violence against children, gender-based violence and violence by, with or against youth. Red Cross Red Crescent national societies, as auxiliaries to their government in the humanitarian field, can work constructively with public authorities to address the root causes and social sources of violence and develop community-based action-strengthening resilience.



DJ Joseph

**RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme Educator**  
**Canadian Red Cross**

*“As a Movement, Red Cross Red Crescent is ideally positioned to build bridges with cultures that have otherwise been left isolated. I have seen this in my own experience. I have travelled to many First Nation communities in Canada to open conversations about creating safe environments free of harm and on how communities can take ownership of both the problem and the solution. This has brought me to a much deeper, fuller understanding of the inter-generational impacts of the legacy of violence, its painful consequences that my people have endured for generations and the importance of healing. I now think differently and value alternative ways of dealing with violence: the participatory, equality-based and circle approach of the aboriginals, very different from hierarchical sentencing and sanctions.”*

## Snapshot

### Volunteering, an essential tool for CNV+P

Volunteering is at the heart of community building. Perhaps one of the most powerful ways to create or enhance a sense of community belonging is to participate in activities which strengthen the community. Volunteering is an excellent way for an individual to become involved in the life of the community. It brings together people from different backgrounds, cultures and religions and helps to develop compassion and friendship, thereby fostering respect for diversity. Volunteering can also be an effective method to reduce vulnerability to participating in violence.

**For the elderly**, volunteering can be a way to stay active and avoid becoming isolated. The elderly will have a chance to share and pass on their valuable knowledge, skills and experience to younger generations. Also, this type of active participation in community life highlights that the elderly are a resource to be respected and valued by the community as a whole.

**For children and youth**, volunteering can help to develop values and skills. Youth feel a sense of pride and usefulness, as they are able to actively contribute to their community. Volunteering strengthens community support systems, which increase resiliency and reduce vulnerability to participating in violent activities.

**For youth offenders**, community service has the potential to be a lifeline in the struggle to avoid the circle of violence. The impact of being imprisoned can have more negative than positive effects for youth. They may come out of prison more violent than when they entered, as a consequence of having to adapt to the very violent 'society' inside the prison, of being in close contact, at a very impressionable stage of life, with a large number of violent offenders, and of being stigmatized or 'branded' once out of prison.

Heide, Kathleen M.; Solomon, Eldra P. *Treating Today's Juvenile Homicide Offenders. Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice Volume: 1 Issue: 1* Dated: January 2003

So, organized community service, when prescribed by the court, can be an effective tool and an opportunity to promote more positive social values and develop skills and resiliency to avoid future violence. Participation in successful service projects in their own communities can help youth to regain their self-esteem and a sense of belonging and personal investment in their community. This can also facilitate the youth's reintegration, as other community members will see this positive effort to assist and improve the community, helping to rebuild trust.

The 186 Red Cross Red Crescent **National Societies'** base of volunteers is diverse and includes people of many different cultures and religions, enabling Red Cross Red Crescent to reach out to even the most remote communities in the promotion of a CNV+P. Voluntary service is one of the Fundamental Principles of the Movement. Volunteers come from within the community, ensuring knowledge of those for and with whom Red Cross Red Crescent works. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers who spend their time and talent to address root causes of discrimination, violence and exclusion can help reduce violence. Red Cross Red Crescent can offer a platform for the organization of volunteering or community service projects.

#### A call to action

- Promote the engagement, especially of youth, in voluntary service or community programmes to nurture humanitarian values and increase community cohesion.
- Institutionalize voluntary service at the national level, through introducing the Movement's Fundamental Principles and avenues for voluntary service as part of the formal school curriculum, in particular at the primary and secondary level.





Ashanta Osbourne

**Volunteer**

**Guyana Red Cross Society**

*“I volunteer because I discovered a passion which could not be explored in any other way. I believe learning to care about others on a human level changes one’s perspective. Through the Red Cross Red Crescent and learning to live the Fundamental Principles and values, I have grown into a person who sees the world through the eyes of one who cares about the suffering of others and I am propelled to act in whatever way I can. It is a good feeling to know that I am contributing to a cause which is greater than all of us and which will certainly outlast me.”*



Amal Emam

**Volunteer**

**Egyptian Red Crescent**

*“I think I was born a volunteer. Volunteering gives me the confidence to make a change and to contribute to the betterment of my community. It helps me get closer to the people and their needs, and to put myself in others’ shoes so I can feel what they feel. Volunteering has taught me to freely express myself and to respect our differences and to build on our commonalities. It gives me the satisfaction that I seek in my life and the energy to sustain it.”*



Joram H. Oranga

**Volunteer**

**Kenya Red Cross**

*“Volunteering has built a great joy in me to continue helping the most vulnerable and contribute to building resilient communities. I volunteer for the Red Cross Red Crescent because here I have found a family that reaches across the globe, spanning every ethnicity, culture, religion and region. I strive to uplift the lives of people in need, see smiles restored on countless faces and rebuild their hope. The work we do is restorative and refreshing and I am particularly confident that we really do change lives of millions every single day.”*

# Transformation towards a CNV+P:

## Component 3: Social inclusion, inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-generational dialogue

Differences, ignorance about the reasons behind those differences and the lack of ability to constructively deal with differences bring fear. This fear creates a mistrust of what is 'different', separating 'us' and 'them'. This can lead to discrimination, exclusion and even violence.

All communities have groups of people – often hidden – who are unable to enjoy the general benefits that are accessible to most. These groups are often particularly vulnerable. Creating intercultural, interreligious and intergenerational dialogue can help to reduce the isolation of vulnerable groups and increase community cohesiveness and social inclusion.

Local communities as well as the global society need to approach differences from a learning perspective. We need to seek to understand where others come from and why world views are different and to respect the right to think differently. It is essential to note that our differences as individuals can create stronger communities instead of weaker ones. There is an opportunity to learn from those who come from other cultures, practise different religions or are not of the same generation. Being able to understand the perspectives of others can increase the scope of our own world view and help us to be more open-minded and accepting.

The promotion of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue creates an opportunity for people of different backgrounds to get to know each other and understand each other's points of view. When we have a personal connection with someone, it is more difficult to make generalities or to consider him or her as 'them'. Creating these types of personal connections then translates to a more connected and peaceful community. When individuals in a diverse community create relationships and mutual understanding based on dialogue, there is less risk of tensions developing and when there are tensions present, they are more likely to be solved with respect and non-violence.

The development of respect for diversity and especially the skills of dropping bias and non-judgement are examples of essential elements for the promotion of a CNV+P. Values and skills-based education can be a valuable tool from an early age.

For a CNV+P to exist, everyone must be able to participate fully in its creation. This is particularly true in multicultural or multi-religious societies. A culture of non-violence and peace must belong to everyone. The more inclusive a society is, the less risk there will be of tensions developing between different groups, and of tensions turning into violence. Sharing traditions and positive cultural support mechanisms can increase resilience and strengthen society as a whole.

Promoting inter-generational dialogue can ensure that the values and knowledge of society are passed down from one generation to another effectively. It

is also essential to include all generations in community dialogue to make certain that their needs are met and to reduce vulnerabilities. Inter-generational dialogue helps to ensure that the elderly stay connected and are valued by their community. It helps to make sure that youth have guidance and support so that they can be more resilient. More generally, inter-generational dialogue increases mutual understanding, respect for diversity and can be a powerful tool to increase a sense of belonging within a community and to reduce and prevent violence.



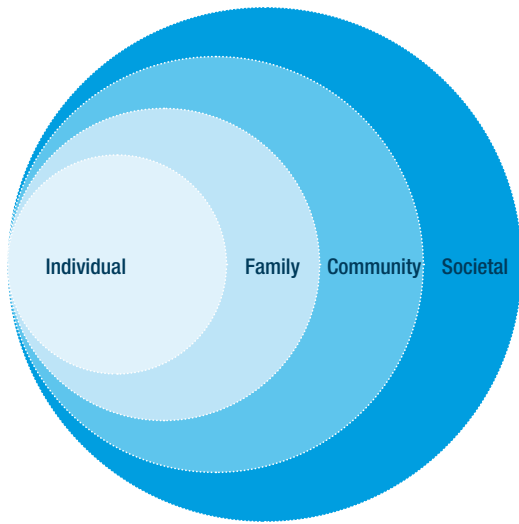
Deb Fitzsimons

**Campus Community Coordinator  
Cyril Jackson Senior Campus, Western  
Australia, leader of Harmony Day activity  
organized with Australian Red Cross**

*“Harmony Day is a major calendar event at Cyril Jackson Senior Campus which has students from over 40 different countries, many of whom are from either refugee or impoverished backgrounds. Their pathways to our campus are as individual as fingerprints but we come together as one on Harmony Day to celebrate our diverse community and show that each student makes a significant contribution to our campus and its friendly atmosphere.”*



# Conclusion: Promoting a CNV+P at multiple levels



Adapted from World Health Organization. World Report of Violence and Health. Geneva. WHO. (2002).

A CNV+P is promoted at multiple levels, mutually reinforcing and complementary.

- Starting with inner change, a CNV+P can be promoted at the **individual level**. YABC, the IFRC flagship initiative for youth discussed on p. 11, first focuses on this level before reaching out to the community.
- A CNV+P can be promoted on a **family level**. At this level, it is key to start equipping parents with essential CNV+P parenting skills, such as active listening, non-violent communication or peaceful resolution of tensions.
- A CNV+P is, of course, also promoted at the **community level**. Role models are crucial at this level. Through the presence of well-trained grass-root volunteers from within the community, Red Cross Red Crescent national societies contribute to healthier, more resilient and peaceful communities.

- A CNV+P can be promoted at the **societal level**, through policy and legislative frameworks that promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

While there exist multiple levels of risk that pose threats to individual safety, each person is not without inherent and socially supported strengths and capacities, or resilience. Resilience is within each human being, however its tenacity and vigour are shaped by individual, relationship, community and social factors that combine to enhance safety and to help people ‘bounce back’ if violence or discrimination does occur. Our actions to promote CNV+P need not only to focus on minimizing risks but also on leveraging the abundance of strengths within each person, each home, community and society.

So, each one of these levels is interconnected with the others. At the community level, it can be necessary to seek support from community and religious leaders to ensure community support and buy-in for societal organizational or legal frameworks.

## Resiliency factors

### Individuals factors

- Assertiveness
- Ability to solve problems
- Self-awareness
- Empathy for others
- Having goals and aspirations
- Sense of humour

### Community context factors

- Limited exposure to violence within family, community and peer groups
- Government provision for children’s safety, recreation, housing and jobs when older
- Access to school and education, information and learning resources
- Safety and security

### Relationship factors

- Presence of positive mentors and role models
- Perceived social support
- Appropriate emotional expression and parental monitoring within the family
- Peer group acceptance

### Cultural factors

- Tolerance of differing ideologies, beliefs
- Having a life philosophy
- Cultural and/or spiritual identification
- Being culturally grounded

## 10 key ideas of the paper

- 1** We need a global mind and behaviour shift from the way we currently think and interact to value diversity and connect with each other based on our common humanity.
- 2** Violence, discrimination and exclusion undermine safety, health and human potential, deepen social differences and disrupt participation of disadvantaged people, and are significant humanitarian challenges that must be resolved. They share common root causes and need to be addressed through holistic solutions.
- 3** Violence prevention is a joint responsibility of policy-makers, opinion-leaders and donors. The priority focus needs to shift from response to prevention, and from collective violence to self-directed and interpersonal violence, such as gender-based violence or violence against children.
- 4** Children and youth are disproportionately affected by violence, discrimination and exclusion and therefore need to become the focus of our attention and action.
- 5** The promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace (CNV+P) is a process of finding constructive and creative solutions to problems and tensions, without fear of violence. Participation and social inclusion is vital for creating CNV+P.
- 6** Red Cross Red Crescent is uniquely positioned to create CNV+P, as a partner with a presence at the community level and a voice at the global level.
- 7** Children and youth have tremendous capacity to help build CNV+P and need to be empowered to take up an ethical leadership position in the CNV+P process.
- 8** Including values and skills-based education in formal and non-formal learning can help us to interact constructively and live harmoniously together. Non-cognitive methodology needs to be actively used; this encourages a 'from the heart to the mind' learning process and values creative and right-brain vehicles for learning – such as games, visualization, storytelling, arts, music, theatre, dance and sport.
- 9** Volunteering provides a valuable platform to promote social inclusion and community cohesiveness and has the potential to reduce and prevent violence.
- 10** Embracing a CNV+P needs to be the foundation in the entire volunteer network of the Red Cross Red Crescent and integrated into all Red Cross Red Crescent work, from health, to disaster response, and to organizational development of our 186 National Societies.

## Annex:

Examples of Red Cross Red Crescent and government programmes and policies contributing to the promotion of a CNV+P

### Red Cross Red Crescent National Society

(please visit the individual websites or contact [principles@ifrc.org](mailto:principles@ifrc.org) for further information)

- **Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Congo:** SOS for Pygmy Minorities: food aid and social reintegration in Kinshasa
- **Nepal Red Cross Society:** Turning Fear and Bitterness into Tolerance and Impartiality
- **British Red Cross:** Positive Images campaign and Learning about migrants in the classroom
- **Spanish Red Cross:** Building inclusion through integration into the labour market and La diversidad, nuestra mejor opción
- **Bangladesh Red Crescent Society:** Humanitarian Values Programme
- **Solomon Islands Red Cross, Australian Red Cross and AusAID project:** Changing Stereotypes
- **South African Red Cross:** Soccer Against Violence (SAV) and Bringing hope to HIV patients in Zuzuland
- **Danish Red Cross:** Humanity on the school bench
- **Belarusian Red Cross:** “Youth on the Run”
- **Australian Red Cross:** Harmony Day and Save a Mate
- **Canadian Red Cross Society:** RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention
- **Honduran Red Cross:** Expanding opportunities
- **Colombian Red Cross:** “Transformación de Conflictos en Procesos de Resocialización” and PACO
- **Austrian Red Cross:** Breaking the Taboo
- **Guatemalan Red Cross:** ERPV\_Guatemala Proyecto Jóvenes Activos Marcando la Diferencia
- **Botswana Red Cross Society:** Gender-based violence programme
- **Netherlands Red Cross:** Meet and Greet and 1001 Strengths
- **Red Cross of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:** Red Cross in Action/Promotion of human values
- **Italian Red Cross:** Cultural Mediators
- **Red Cross Society of Bosnian and Herzegovina:** Friendship Without Borders and Home care programme

### Government

(weblinks available on the electronic version of this report):

- **Australia:** Diversity and Social Cohesion Programme (DSCP) and national framework for education and Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- **Trinidad and Tobago:** Peace promotion programme
- **Mexico:** Department of Public Education, Secondary Education Reform, Plan of Studies (2006)
- **Honduras:** Department of Education, National Plan for Values Education (2007-2015)
- **Colombia:** Department National Education, National Decennial Education Plan (2006-2015) and Educational Policy for Coexistence Education and Curricular Guidelines for Ethics and Human Values Education
- **Brazil:** Ministry of Education, Ethics and Citizenship Programme - Building Values in School and Society
- **Kenya:** Peace education instilling values and life skills in schools and Tuelewane Youth Exchange Programme to Enhance Peace
- **Uruguay:** Law of Education, Article 16 and National policy on values education
- **Russia:** Tolerance Programme of the St Petersburg Government (2006-2010)
- **Costa Rica:** Ministry of Justice and Peace (2009) - General Directorate of Peace Promotion and Civic Coexistence: National Campaign on Violence Prevention; National Commission for Violence Prevention and the Promotion of Societal Peace; Youth Network. Ministry of Public Education - National Programme on Values Education.

# 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.



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
**[www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org) Saving lives, changing minds.**

For further information please contact  
the Principles and Values Department at:

[principles@ifrc.org](mailto:principles@ifrc.org)