



The road to resilience  
**Bridging relief and  
development for a more  
sustainable future**

IFRC discussion paper on resilience – June 2012

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Saving lives, changing minds.



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



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

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

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

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Cover photo: Romulo Godinez/Philippine Red Cross. It is vital to increase the participation of all in the development process through initiatives including meaningful voluntary service and strong social capital.

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by Matthias Schmale, Undersecretary General of the IFRC **3**

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The purpose of this document is to present to our key partners the IFRC's definition of and perspectives on resilience. It also serves as a reference across the network of National Societies. We invite all key stakeholders to support the Red Cross Red Crescent's operational work on resilience so that together we can bring about the serious changes needed for sustainable development in the years ahead.





**NIGERIA.**  
**Young kid in Calabar.**

*This little boy will need to have his vaccinations up to date against preventable diseases, a mosquito net, health services accessible if he falls ill, a home, a school, healthy food, clean and safe water and a secure environment to grow in with dignity like you and me. If he gets all these basics, he will be able to grow and develop beyond mere survival.*

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# Foreword

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Since its creation, the Red Cross Red Crescent has been guided by a clear set of humanitarian principles and values that aims, in one way or another, to effectively contribute to building resilience. We strive to meet people's basic needs for health, shelter, education, food, water and security; make every effort to ensure that the social costs and benefits are fairly shared by all and inequities are eliminated; that human rights, human dignity and local values are understood and respected; and to ensure that non-renewable resources, biodiversity and the environment are managed responsibly.

As the Rio+20 Summit marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Red Cross Red Crescent offers these reflections on resilience and calls upon key stakeholders to work as partners with us to facilitate sustainable development and resilience. We see resilience as the ability of individuals, communities, organisations or countries exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of adversity without compromising their long term prospects.

We address social and economic determinants at different interconnected levels – individual, community, national, regional and global. It is important to understand how individuals' well-being can have an impact on their ability to contribute to the development of the community in which they live. Community development is dependent on government policies and market forces. These, in turn, depend on regional and global governance, demographic trends and universal trends such as ageing, urbanization, increased global connectedness, climate change and pandemics, to name but a few.

It is vital to increase the participation of all in the development process through initiatives including meaningful voluntary service and strong social capital. The Burundi example in this document illustrates the value of our grass-roots network in building community resilience: a visible, widespread impact on communities' resilience in the face of the potential risk for future ethnic violence, current and future food insecurity and the challenges of inadequate community services.

We are known for our vital relief work in disasters and crises, and we remain committed to be the world's leading humanitarian actor. At the same time, the Red Cross Red Crescent is not just active during disasters; we are also present in communities before disaster strikes and work well beyond the initial crisis phase. We are well-placed to contribute effectively to development.

Changing minds, attitudes and ways of working towards strengthening resilience, equity, and dignity is achievable when we work together to build bridges across established divides. We look forward to doing more of this with all our key partners.

Matthias Schmale,  
Undersecretary General,  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

# Implications for policy and action

- Risk Reduction and strengthening resilience are critical elements in promoting sustainable development and should be part of the international development agenda beyond 2015 (post Millennium Development Goals). In this respect we are fully supportive of the commitment governments made at the 4<sup>th</sup> High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in 2011 to “...ensure that development strategies and programmes prioritise the building of resilience among people and societies at risk from shocks, especially in highly vulnerable settings such as small island developing states. Investing in resilience and risk reduction increases the value and sustainability of our development efforts.”<sup>1</sup>
- It follows that risk reduction must be integrated into public investments policies and planning. Risk assessments, based on analysis of loss and estimation of potential future losses, are essential for informed decision-making. Governments, policy makers and other relevant key stakeholders should encourage the development and financing of plans for resilience in a coordinated and coherent manner across sectors.
- Disaster laws facilitate the strengthening of resilience and community engagement, and governments are encouraged to establish and/or update relevant disaster management legislation.
- Governments should ensure fair and lasting energy solutions that put vulnerable and poor people first and help cut greenhouse gas emissions. At international level this should include new financial and technical support to efforts of developing countries to provide the full range of energy services needed to help pull people out of poverty.<sup>2</sup>
- All involved actors must work in global and local partnerships to strengthen resilience including to enact necessary reforms of governance at all levels; to strengthen accountability, as well as citizen monitoring of environmental and development performance at all levels.
- Ownership, donor alignment and harmonization, and managing for results with mutual accountability remain as relevant as ever. However, this means nothing without the organized participation of local communities themselves. Their full engagement and contributions are key to progressing the resilience and sustainable development agendas.
- When resilience is framed as a critical part of development work, the basic humanitarian needs of vulnerable people cannot be forgotten. Both development and humanitarian initiatives must do no harm and contribute to making people less vulnerable and prone to avoidable inequalities in the determinants of health and well-being.
- Realising an integrated and coherent Red Cross Red Crescent vision and approach to resilience requires further mindset shifts and persistent and long-term work. Credible implementation of the resilience approach demands of the Red Cross

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 27 of the Busan Partnership document: [http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/images/stories/hlf4/OUTCOME\\_DOCUMENT\\_-\\_FINAL\\_EN.pdf](http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/images/stories/hlf4/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Red Cross Red Crescent joins the civil society call urging Rio+20 negotiators to commit their nations to the actions needed to eradicate poverty and regenerate the natural environment. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/pressroom/pressrelease/2012-05-04/business-usual-wont-do-rio20-summit>

Red Crescent to make – within our means and expertise – significant contributions to eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and achieving equity and dignity, while respecting the limits of our resources.

- In line with our *Strategy 2020*, we in the Red Cross Red Crescent will continue to use tested methods, but also explore innovative ways, on how best to practically mainstream a comprehensive approach to resilience into our current and future services.
- Opinion leaders, decision makers and donors are urged to support the Red Cross Red Crescent in this shift towards a more comprehensive approach to resilience, including working towards allocating a larger component of their funding for its role in delivering contributions to sustainable development.
- As one way of mobilising funds, the IFRC's General Assembly has decided that we should target investing at least 10 percent of any emergency appeal for the strengthening of resilience work. We are counting on back donor support to make this a reality.

# Introduction

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Traditionally, much of the humanitarian effort focuses on immediate life saving responses to disasters or crises. At the same time, individuals and communities facing simultaneous or repeated shocks, such as economic crises, disease epidemics, or natural disasters with destruction of shelter or productive assets, are better supported when humanitarian action also addresses the underlying vulnerabilities and builds capacities to better cope with future shocks.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) *Strategy 2020* describes both the IFRC's engagement in life-saving activities in disasters and crises as well as highlighting the importance of protecting livelihoods, strengthening recovery and enabling healthy and safe living in the longer-term. The Strategy thus emphasizes the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent in both humanitarian action to respond to immediate needs and in addressing underlying causes of vulnerability through developmental activity.

To meet these ambitions the IFRC is further developing and improving its resilience approaches and programming by combining the humanitarian concern for imminent threats with the sustainable and longer-term approaches and institutional strengthening traditionally associated with development.



# 1. What is Resilience?

The sector-wide concept of resilience is rooted in material sciences and ecology<sup>3</sup> but has been applied in various social disciplines and psychology too. It typically relates to the **ability of systems to respond and adapt effectively to changing circumstances**. In concrete terms, it is the ability of critical physical infrastructure to absorb shocks<sup>4</sup>. From a more psychological point of view, it is the process of adaptation and a set of skills, capacities, behaviours and actions in order to deal with adversity.

For the IFRC, resilience is defined as:

*The ability of individuals, communities, organisations, or countries exposed to disasters and crises and underlying vulnerabilities to:*

- *anticipate,*
- *reduce the impact of,*
- *cope with,*
- *and recover from the effects of adversity without compromising their long-term prospects.*

Below each aspect of the definition is further described:

- The word **ability** is key in understanding resilience. Ability is capacity or capability based on different human, psychological, social, financial, physical, natural or political assets. The resilience approach acknowledges that there is always capacity in people or communities. The objective of resilience strengthening is to increase this capacity to withstand the effects of adversity.
- Resilience can be seen as ability of **an individual, community, organisation or a country**. A comprehensive approach to resilience requires understanding the interconnectedness of these different levels and their link with regional and global levels.<sup>5</sup> The Red Cross Red Crescent analysis often starts at the community level and focuses on community resilience. A comprehensive analysis requires understanding individuals and households and their resilience within the community. In addition, we need to understand the external environment and its impact on the resilience of individuals and their communities. Interventions to strengthen resilience can be taken on different levels and reinforce each other. An example is parallel advocacy for equal public health policies on a national level, access to improved waste management on a community level and delivering vaccinations on an individual level.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF humanitarian action for children, 'Fostering resilience, protecting children: UNICEF in humanitarian action', [www.unicef.org/hac2011](http://www.unicef.org/hac2011)

<sup>4</sup> Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, Project on Resilience and Security, 'Resilience in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Natural Disasters' Workshop Report, Syracuse University, 9 March 2009.

<sup>5</sup> *The Framework for Community Safety and Resilience (FCSR)* is a key piece of work, which was developed through extensive National Society collaboration and is central to any paper on resilience. We encourage our readers to consult it here: <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Case%20studies/Disasters/cs-framework-community-en.pdf>

## Figure 1. Interconnected levels of resilience<sup>6</sup>

**Addressing interconnected levels:** our comprehensive approach to resilience addresses the social and economic determinants at different interconnected levels – individual, community, national and global.

### AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Supporting people who live longer to become less isolated.

#### **Mongolia: Dolgor's story: a cure for loneliness**

Dolgor's face lights up as a group of visitors enter her ger. At 80, with no family nearby, she suffers from acute loneliness. Or at least she used to, before Munkhtuya, a Red Cross volunteer from Ulan Bator, began visiting her regularly. Dolgor calls Munkhtuya her 'daughter' and is very close to her. "She is so good to me," Dolgor says. "I used to have no company at all, but now I am so happy. Munkhtuya visits me every week and brings me so many things." When migration from rural spaces to the city takes place, traditional family networks that would act as a safety net are disrupted and the Mongolian Red Cross Society steps in to fill the gap, particularly with assistance to vulnerable elderly people. Dolgor is a good example of this. She had two children; one passed away and the other lives far away in the countryside. The local Red Cross branch wanted to support Dolgor, but it took a long time to track her down because she was constantly being forced to move.\*

#### **Canada: First Contact Programme**

The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) has many services aimed at the integration of migrants into Canada. The First Contact programme provides migrants with information on how to find affordable housing, process a refugee claim, secure employment, as well as how to apply for legal aid or social assistance. In addition, the CRC facilitates formal and non-formal education and training opportunities for migrants. A volunteer on the programme said: "First Contact has been a very meaningful volunteer experience and I feel as though the responsibility that I have been given has enhanced both my professional skills and my knowledge of this important community service. I appreciate the diversity of responsibilities that I have been tasked with and I admire First Contact's valuable mandate." From 2008 to 2011, First Contact volunteers have assisted over 1,300 individuals from 86 countries speaking 72 different languages. This year alone, over 50,000 hours of volunteer work has contributed to the First Contact program in a variety of capacities.\*\*

\* <http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Health-and-social-care/Social-support-overseas/Social-care-in-Mongolia/Dolgors-story-a-cure-for-loneliness>

\*\* <http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=8264&tid=071>

### AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Building resilience of migrants and communities in transit and destination countries.

#### **Sudan: Strengthening community resilience through integrated community-based programmes**

Over the course of the past 20 years the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), with the support of the Danish Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross, has developed programming aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the Beja nomads to recurrent droughts and to protect, where possible, the assets that communities have in order to build resilience to natural disasters. The projects were initiated between 1986 and 1990 in response to the food security crisis faced by the Beja population living in the Greater Sinkat Province (Derudeb, Haya and Sinkat) of the Red Sea State. The projects have gone through various phases of design and implementation over the course of 20 years. The Sinkat Community Development and Derudeb and Haya Integrated Rural Food Security Projects of the SRCS have and continue to aim at re-establishing the means of subsistence for Beja nomads to prepare them and the environment to cope with future climatic extremes. This has included programming in such sectors as food security/livelihoods, health, water and education development. The programmes have not only contributed to building the resilience of communities, but have also proved cost-effective.

<sup>6</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 'Health Strategic Operational Framework', 2011



## AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Creating an enabling environment for the National Society to deploy its full potential against natural hazards.

### **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) – Strengthening capacity: development and disaster risk management**

The Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was founded more than 60 years ago, and today is a significant actor in the humanitarian field in the DPRK. It has received consistent support over the past decade from the IFRC, its Red Cross and Red Crescent sister societies and their donor governments. The society's disaster management programme was set up to address the risks of natural disasters and to help communities protect themselves and to mitigate against the effects of disasters. Its main objective is to raise awareness of disaster risks and how to prepare for disasters at the community level, but it also combines physical (structural) mitigation measures, such as building river embankments, with softer (non-structural) measures, such as early warning, contingency planning and risk mapping. The programme targets the most flood-prone provinces in the country. As a result of mobilizing large groups of community members to construct flood and mudflow defences, more than 100 communities could be supported in making the environment somewhat safer. Since 2008, the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has managed to pre-position emergency family kits in seven warehouses across the country, for rapid deployment to 27,000 families in case of emergency.\*

\* [http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/reducing\\_risks/201300-North-Korea-Case-Study.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/reducing_risks/201300-North-Korea-Case-Study.pdf)

## AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

Influencing the health agenda

### **Advocating with governments for access to life-saving services for key affected populations**

During UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 55<sup>th</sup> Session, 16 March 2012, in a side event co-organized by UNODC and the IFRC, the coorganisers made a strong call to action for governments to adopt harm reduction programmes for drug users\*. Mariam N. Musa, from the Kenya Red Cross Society, gave a presentation on her own National Society's efforts to deal with the problems that arose during a crackdown on druglords by authorities in early 2011 where many drug users suffered acute withdrawal symptoms and needed support. "What is alarming is that two thirds of female heroin users in the Kenya's coastal areas are infected with HIV due to unsafe sex practices," she said. "If we add the fact that there are hardly any rehabilitation facilities for these women – although they have special needs linked to reproductive health or teenage pregnancies – it is just a time bomb waiting to happen unless we deal with it within harm reduction programmes." As a result, and upon request from national authorities, the Red Cross provided relevant emergency assistance and put in place harm reduction programmes, checking and treating drug users and helping them stay out of harm's way.\*\*

### **Governments must include humanitarian concerns as key elements of climate change adaptation**

The IFRC has been monitoring the UNFCCC\*\*\* negotiations process since 2002 and actively participated with an Observer role to the UN Climate Conferences since 2007 (COP 14 to 17). The IFRC has advocated for the inclusion of humanitarian concerns as key elements of climate change adaptation, such as: i) disaster risk reduction and management to be seen as components of climate change adaptation; ii) Livelihoods, food insecurity and health impacts are addressed; iii) Migration and displacement are recognised as a challenge. As chair of the IASC Task Force on Climate Change (2008-2010), the IFRC worked to find common positions of the humanitarian actors in the climate change negotiation process, and build capacity on the subject. As a result of our involvement and chairing the interagency task, the humanitarian consequences of climate change, regarding adaptation, risk reduction and disaster management, were well captured by the Cancun Agreement during CoP16 (2010).

\* <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/opinions-and-positions/speeches/2012/to-the-commission-on-narcotic-drugs-55th-session/>

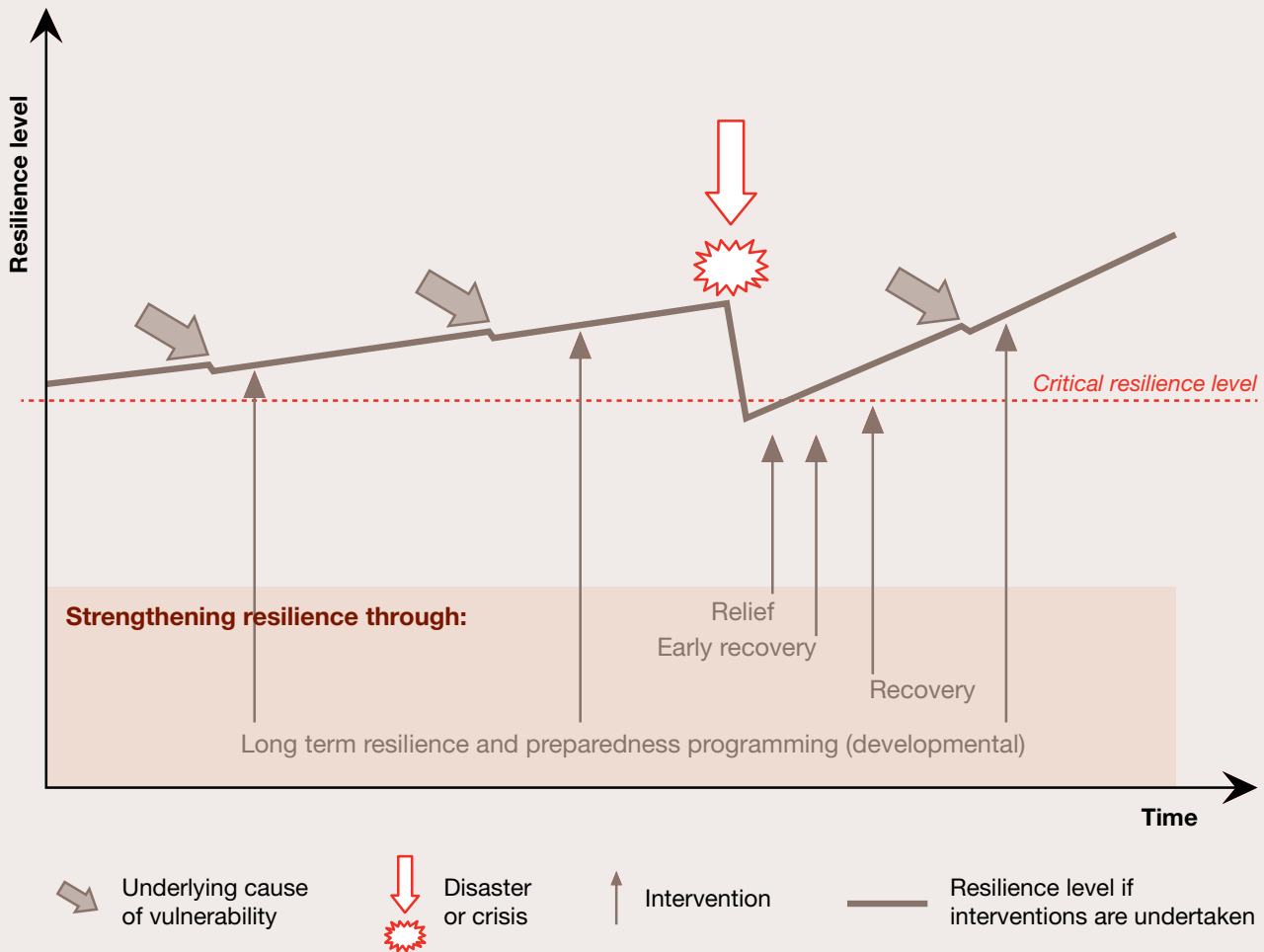
\*\* <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/international/drug-users-need-treatment-not-incarceration/>

\*\*\* United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: [http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/items/6031.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php)

- Another key aspect of the definition is the acknowledgement that individuals, communities, organisations and countries are exposed to **disasters and crises as well as underlying causes of vulnerability**. These two categories are defined as follows<sup>7</sup>:
  - **Disasters and crises** are the immediate causes or imminent threats, directly related to life and death situations, e.g. natural disasters, epidemics, conflict outbreaks, sudden volatility in food prices.
  - **Underlying causes of vulnerability** are longer-term causes and trends that undermine the potential for development and increase vulnerability, e.g. natural resource degradation, demographic changes, effects of climate change, non-communicable diseases, economic decline. The underlying causes of vulnerability can be further categorized as follows into intermediate and root causes:
    - Intermediate causes affect people's well-being and opportunities for development. Intermediate causes generally point to what people lack or need. Examples include access to basic services, lack of skills, low livelihood productivity, and inadequate care for women and children.
    - Root causes relate to the structural underpinnings of underdevelopment, specifically social systems and political economic structures and environmental issues. They focus on why intermediate causes exist. Examples include poor governance (political), marginalization and social exclusion (social), terms of trade (economic) or environmental carrying capacity (environmental).
    - There are many interdependencies between immediate causes and underlying causes of vulnerability. For example, the risk of famine or a violent conflict may rise due to chronic natural resource degradation. Similarly, adapting to climate change and carefully managing migration may help to reduce the risk of disasters and conflicts. The nature of vulnerability is such that it is often impossible for National Societies to address vulnerability to imminent threats without addressing some of the underlying causes.
- The definition lists the different abilities of **anticipating, reducing the impact of, coping with, and recovering from the effects of adversity**. Resilience is therefore not just the immediate ability to respond to negative 'events' but rather a process of positive adaptation before, during and after adversity. At its core the resilience approach is an attempt to protect development gains in the longer term and to reduce the dramatic decline in development that disasters and crises cause. For the IFRC, this highlights the overlapping nature of preparedness, relief, and recovery work and bridging these to more developmental work (see figure on page 11).

<sup>7</sup> Modified from: Department for International Development (DFID), 'Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper', November 2011 and M. Katherine McCaston, Michael Rewald and CARE's Integration Team, CARE, 'A Conceptual Overview of Underlying Causes of Poverty', January 2005.

**Figure 2.** Interventions to strengthen resilience aim to (a.) address underlying causes of vulnerability in order to protect development, (b.) reduce and mitigate radical drops in resilience caused by disasters and crises and (c.) enhance bouncing back from adversity.



- Finally, an essential part of the definition is that resilience means coping with adversity **without compromising long-term prospects**. This distinguishes resilience from bare survival. Resilience is an ability to 'bounce back' or even to 'bounce forward' rather than simply return to vulnerability. Strengthening resilience can be associated with windows of opportunities for change and transformation, often opening after a disturbance<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Tom Mitchell and Katie Harris, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 'Resilience: A Risk Management Approach', January 2012.



خواب

AFGHANISTAN.  
The Afghanistan Red  
Crescent Community-  
Based Health and First  
Aid trainers having  
a session on how to  
purify water.

Training, education, raising awareness, sensitisation and advocacy are important aspects to enhance resilience. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers also work in sensitising individuals and communities to improve their knowledge and capacity to reduce the risk of, prepare for and respond to adversity.

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## 2. How to strengthen resilience?

The resilience approach is in part about bridging development and humanitarian work. It integrates many of the insights and approaches of development work with a humanitarian approach. Inclusive, sustained, accountable and participatory approaches, for example, are as relevant to humanitarian work as they are for development.

Multiple risks and their impacts on vulnerable people must be considered together with assessments of capacities and efforts to strengthen these. Working in resilience mode comes with an understanding that the level of vulnerability to disasters and shocks is often determined less by the scale of a disaster or a shock and more by the underlying vulnerability, caused by a set of inter-related risks. Resilience programming involves sustained engagement that is explicitly participatory, inclusive and accountable.

The following principles further describe resilience strengthening. And short case studies in the next chapter illustrate how these principles are being put into practice.

### 1 Accepting PEOPLE must come FIRST

Resilience is not something outsiders can do or bring to individuals or communities. The starting point for any humanitarian or development support must be recognition and appreciation of the efforts of individuals and their households and communities to strengthen their own resilience.

#### Honduran Red Cross promotes men's participation in maternal, newborn and child health

In Honduras, like many other countries, family health is mainly seen as the sole responsibility of women. However, in the areas of Copan and Santa Barbara in Honduras, many men have started taking on new roles, as active and engaged participants and advocates of maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH).

Don Ramon is one of these men. In his rural village in Copan, Don Ramon works as a community health monitor and as a traditional birth attendant. After his sister died giving birth, he raised her daughter as his own. When his own wife gave birth to their children, the option of going to a birthing clinic was not available, and so he learned to assist during the home delivery. Don Ramon is challenging the views on gender roles held by most people in his communities. With such changes taking place, he is becoming a model for these men; he is trusted among the women and men in the surrounding villages as a knowledgeable person in matters of pregnancy, birth and post-partum issues.

The Honduras Red Cross REDES (meaning "Networks") project has been implemented since 2006, with support from the Canadian Red Cross and in partnership with the Honduran Ministry of Health, municipal organizations, and local communities. The project fits into IFRC's flagship initiative *Youth as agents of behaviour change* that strives to mobilize youth to change their behaviour and lifestyle. Such initiative is a prime example of the Movement's commitment to tackle health inequities in the region and ensure the health and well-being of men, mothers, and children.

By the end of the 2011 year, the project has benefitted almost 80,000 men, women and children. The Number of children registered has gone from zero in 2006 to more than 11,000 in November 2011, and with an attendance rate of 92 per cent. A reduction of 62 per cent of cases of infant death in the project area; the publication of three gender booklets for training; and above all, more men present during monthly prenatal checkups, birth of babies and to monthly weighing of babies.





## 2 Respect LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Local ownership, assets and capacity must be fully respected and relations with local government and other local actors strengthened. Dependency on outside support or substitution should be avoided as much as possible.

### Eritrea: community participation and contribution is paramount to reduce their vulnerability

The threat of recurring drought and flash floods, and a lack of safe infrastructure for water and sanitation in rural areas has created high levels of morbidity and mortality in Eritrea, especially among children. Tapping into and reinforcing the existing resilience of communities may be the best strategy to overcome the multitude of social, economic, health and humanitarian challenges. Vulnerable rural communities face the challenges of coping with, and recover from, droughts, floods and food shortages. Additional priority projects in disaster risk reduction support more effective adaptation to climate change; improved protection of water catchment resources; development of new water sources; soil conservation; tree planting; and renewable 'solar' energy. Moreover, there are increased efforts to promote fuel efficient stoves, rainwater harvesting, community-based and emergency healthcare, and better education around HIV prevention and road safety. Yisehak Kiflay, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea water and sanitation project manager, says: "We now focus more on capturing that water in sand storage dams, such as at the 12 meter high Begu which will pipe water to a reservoir for 10,000 people. "We could not have constructed this dam without the contributions we have had from the community in labour and materials and the cooperation and support of the local Government, who also provided some of the materials." "This can only be achieved by engaging with communities and local government at the outset to jointly agree what they can contribute to face the different challenges," says Nura Mohammed Omer, Secretary General of the Red Cross Society of Eritrea.\*



\* <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/africa/eritrea/resilience--not-a-new-concept-for-many-vulnerable-eritreans/>

## 3 COMPREHENSIVE cross sector assessments, planning and implementation

Understanding the diverse underlying causes of vulnerability and disaster and crisis risks requires holistic assessments, planning and implementation across various sectors.\*

### Nepal: Dealing with local hazards

In Nepal, after conducting a VCA-type process, the National Society worked with villagers to create community-based programmes to deal with local hazards such as flooding. The participatory nature of the process and the difference that people were able to make through their own actions helped them to realize that disasters were something they could influence and as a result they have become less fatalistic about risk.



\* For instance, the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) uses various participatory tools to gauge people's exposure to and capacity to resist natural hazards. It is an integral part of disaster preparedness and contributes to the creation of community-based disaster preparedness programmes at the rural and urban grass-roots level. <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/preparing-for-disaster/disaster-preparedness-tools/disaster-preparedness-tools/>

## 4 LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE

Strengthening resilience does not happen overnight and requires long-term engagement and investment.

### **Qatar Workers Health Centre: A model of community-based non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention**

Nearly 75 per cent of Qatar's 1.7 million people are migrants coming mainly from South Asia, the Philippines and other Arab countries. The country's growth is expected to continue as Qatar embarks on a number of huge infrastructure projects, such as the preparation for the 2022 World Cup and a nation-wide railway network. Roughly 15 per cent of those migrants are reported to have problems with NCDs such as hypertension, diabetes and occupational asthma: diseases that are mostly connected with lifestyle habits that include tobacco smoking and chewing, poor diet and lack of health-related knowledge. Those migrants are also more likely to be illiterate, live in sub-standard living conditions, and vulnerable, and thus prone to develop chronic diseases.

This is one of the main reasons behind the opening of the Workers Health Centre in December 2010 by Qatar Red Crescent Society in collaboration with the Qatari Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and selected private partners.

Representatives of private companies are invited to help their workers improve their health-related knowledge and reduce NCDs. As of July 2011, 12 teams from five private companies have volunteered at the Centre. As part of the intervention, companies print leaflets in different languages and conduct separate information seminars for their workers. Health Centre staff check on progress by conducting site visits to company premises and by confirming if workers' understanding and knowledge has increased.



"Our country is changing and public and private sector alike recognize that our approach to NCDs must change too. Ten years ago, we didn't have as many migrants as we have today but our growth depends on them. Encouraging them to have a healthy lifestyle, physical activities and early diagnosis are a must. By the way, this is not only applicable for migrants but also for our own citizens," says Dr Daoud AlBasty, head of the health department at the Red Crescent Society.

## 5 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Creating and brokering relevant partnerships or advocating for support, especially in areas which are not in the core of Red Cross Red Crescent expertise or mandate. Resilient communities cannot be achieved solely with Red Cross Red Crescent support, but we can play an important role in facilitating support from a range of stakeholders.



Benoit Matsha-Carpentier/IFRC

### Partnerships at work: The Alliance for Malaria Prevention

The Alliance for Malaria Prevention (AMP), chaired by the IFRC, provides a good example of how partnerships can work effectively to deliver on the resilience agenda. AMP represents more than 40 partners, including government, business, faith-based and humanitarian organizations, that share a common goal of expanding the ownership and use of long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLINs) for malaria prevention. Between 2000 and 2011, the percentage of households owning at least one net has risen from 3 per cent to 50 per cent; over 294 million LLINs were purchased between 2008 and 2010, enough to cover over 70 per cent of the total population at risk in Africa. As George Greer, senior advisor for child health and infectious diseases with USAID's President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), states, "AMP has brought together an extensive and unique group of partners to support countries with achievement of the Roll Back Malaria targets of reaching and sustaining universal coverage for malaria prevention. Through the collective efforts of these partners, we have seen policy changes and innovations in LLIN delivery that have rapidly scaled up coverage and reduced the burden of malaria on families, communities and countries, particularly in

Africa where the malaria burden is highest. The AMP partnership, through its work with countries, supports movement towards achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals."

\* <http://www.allianceformalariaprevention.com/index.php>

## 6 KNOW THE LIMITS

Acknowledging that strengthening and sustaining resilience is not possible in all contexts at all times (e.g. due to access or resource issues). Even in these contexts it must be ensured that the intervention is not undermining resilience and rather contributes (even if at small scale) towards resilience. Tools such as the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) may be useful in insecure contexts to facilitate resilience strengthening.

## 7 STRENGTHEN DISASTER LAWS AND POLICIES

The legal framework should mandate involvement by vulnerable people and their communities, Red Cross Red Crescent, civil society and the private sector in risk reduction. Strengthened laws and policies will support allocation of adequate funding for work with vulnerable people and their communities, risk mapping, access to disaster information, development planning, enforceable building codes and land use planning, and accountability for results.



### 3. Characteristics of resilient communities

Around the world communities are facing some of the most challenging universal trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: ageing populations coupled with non-communicable diseases, AIDs epidemic peaking, limited resources, rapid urbanisation, environmental degradation, uncertainty of climate change and poverty. The current global economic crisis, for instance, is leaving more than 100 million people in poverty every year. While these challenges are enormous, there are numerous examples of effective local action and scalable solutions built on win-win partnerships. From the short case studies below, we provide examples of the ways we define characteristics of safe and resilient communities. We intend to use these *characteristics* in the design, monitoring and evaluation of future programmes. They have been pulled together by the consultancy group Arup's on behalf of the IFRC as part of a wider Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Study of the Tsunami Recovery Programme.<sup>9</sup>

#### 1. A resilient community is knowledgeable and healthy. It has the ability to assess, manage and monitor its risks. It can learn new skills and build on past experiences.

##### Supporting integrated food security and livelihoods in Ethiopia

Situated in northern Ethiopia, the Tigray region is one the country's nine regional states bordering Eritrea and Sudan and is often prone to drought. The Tigray food security project has the goal of improving the food security situation of 2,259 vulnerable households (10,500 people) in Dedba, Dergajen and Shibta sub-districts of Enderta Woreda in a sustainable manner. The major focus of the project is to improve alternative agricultural production and reduce vulnerability.

The project has been able to improve the livelihoods of the targeted communities through training on income generating schemes, health and sanitation, which includes Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation. Amina, who has two sons and three daughters and is the head of the family, has participated in the Ethiopian Red Cross Society's household package in 2009. She received a loan of 2,940 Ethiopian Birr (154 Swiss Francs/124 Euros) of which 2,800 Ethiopian Birr (146 Swiss Francs/118 Euros) is a principal, while the rest 140 Ethiopian Birr (7 Swiss Francs/6 Euros) is interest.

She found the training very useful. She has also received technical support from the *Tabia* agricultural experts. Before joining the ERCS's intervention, Amina's annual income was 6,000 Ethiopian Birr (314 Swiss Francs/254 Euros), however, her current annual income has doubled to 12,000 Ethiopian Birr (629 Swiss Francs/509 Euros) as a result of the household. Moreover, her children have the means to attend school. She now has the means to feed her family three times a day. As a result, Amina has productive assets including one ox, eight goats, ten sheep, one donkey and ten chickens.



*Amina was provided with technical training by the ERCS on how to manage cattle fattening, marketing and feeding animals.*

<sup>9</sup> Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Study of the Tsunami Recovery Programme. Document was not yet ready when this document went to print; to retrieve it, please consult [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org).

## 2. A resilient community is organised. It has the capacity to identify problems, establish priorities and act.

### Philippines: Communities become prepared to effective disaster response

To address risks specific to the Philippines and to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable people, the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), the IFRC and other partners have over past 15 years together designed and implemented innovative models for community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) using integrated, multi-sectoral and multihazard community disaster preparedness approaches. PNRC's initial foray into CBDRM programmes in 1994 was intended to help the organization move from a largely response-oriented approach to disaster management towards a more pro-active focus on enhancing the preparedness capacity of vulnerable communities and mitigating the impacts of recurring disasters. The initial programme sought to lessen the damage to health, homes or livelihoods caused by natural hazard events by addressing the numerous 'small' risks faced in local communities.

Throughout its evolution, the programme has included activities to create and train local disaster preparedness and response teams, called Barangay Disaster Action Teams (BDATs), to train and equip Barangay Health Workers or Barangay Health and Welfare Assistants, to conduct hazard assessments using the hazard Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) methodology, to prepare local hazard maps, to produce Barangay Disaster Action Plans, and to engage youth and school teachers through disaster preparedness and first aid training. The BDATs were also provided with basic equipment such as rubber boots, rain jackets, flashlights, and megaphones. In some Barangays, geophysical mapping activities were implemented through partnerships with private sector companies.

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*Scale physical mitigation works were also incorporated into all programming, albeit in different forms including hazard reduction, environmental protection, health-related projects, and rehabilitation or construction of buildings to serve as multi-purpose evacuation centres.*

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### 3. A resilient community is engaged in the development of local policy for reducing risks

#### Mozambique: Reducing barriers to humanitarian assistance

With its 2,700 kilometres of coastline and numerous rivers, Mozambique is often – and increasingly – subject to major floods as well as cyclones. It has frequently benefited from international assistance to supplement its domestic responses to major disasters, such as the cyclones and floods of 2001 and 2007. However, managing that aid has not always been easy. In 2011, the Mozambique Red Cross (MRC) began a project to support the Mozambiquan authorities to assess their legal preparedness for disasters in line with the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (which were adopted by the state parties to the Geneva Conventions in 2007). One gap that they found related to the importation of relief goods, including medications. In response to the MRC's recommendations in 2011, the Government of Mozambique initiated a revision of its law on medications to include clauses on the delivery of emergency medications. Other recommendations of the study are also being incorporated in new draft legislation on disaster management.

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*“The import of medications has been a challenge,” notes MRC Secretary-General Americo Ubisse. “We experience delays at the border due to bureaucracy, which is time consuming.”*

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**SOUTHERN TANZANIA,  
Mtwara region.**

Children in the 300-year-old fishing village of Msanga Mkuu, 40 kilometres north of the border with Mozambique. The village lost several boats in the 2004 tsunami, but there were no human casualties. In support to the Tanzania Red Cross society, it is one of the locations for a French Red Cross-backed tsunami-preparedness programme that includes risk mapping, evacuation procedures and supplementary first-aid training.

© Alex Wynter/IFRC



## 4. A resilient community is connected. It has relationships with external actors who provide a wider supportive environment, and supply goods and services when needed.

### Pioneering better emergency communications in Haiti

Since the massive earthquake hit Haiti in January 12, 2010, the beneficiary communications programme has provided information on a wide variety of topics, from health, hygiene and cholera, to weather alerts and hurricane preparedness tips. It has also increased its focus on two-way communications as a way of giving Haitians a voice, ensuring their needs and opinions are represented in the recovery process.

The programme uses a variety of old and new technologies. For example a SMS system has been used to reach millions of mobile phone users, a weekly radio show broadcasts live to the nation, posters are used in camps, and a local call centre provides beneficiaries with a questions and complaints line. Thanks to a partnership with Trilogy International Partners, who own the Voila network in Haiti, 50 million SMS messages have been sent since January 2010. A quarter of people interviewed reported receiving information from the Red Cross through their phone; 95 per cent found the information useful and 90 per cent reported that they changed some aspect in their life as a result of Red Cross information. Allowing beneficiaries to ask questions about the services the Red Cross provide is critical, and a partnership with a local call centre lets water and sanitation and shelter recipients ask questions and log complaints.

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*“Mobile technologies are genuinely changing the way we work in terms of our ability to impact populations, collect data in real time, adopt real strategies adapted to the field that we hadn’t thought of before, and the results are tangible and promising.” says Matthias Schmale, Undersecretary General of the IFRC\**

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\* The Beneficiary Communications evaluation report was launched on Tuesday 18 October in Haiti. To learn more about it, click on the link referenced hereunder <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/reports/IFRC-Haiti-Beneficiary-Communications-Evaluation-EN.pdf>







**MONGOLIA,  
Khentii province.**

Buyannasan comes from a herder family and is a long-standing member of the Mongolian Red Cross Society in Khentii province, east of the capital Ulaanbaatar. Backed by British Red Cross, her fellow volunteers visit elderly beneficiaries at least twice a month to assist with household and personal chores, bringing food and medicine or simply being a friend.

© Palani Mohan/IFRC

## 5. A resilient community has infrastructure and services. It has a strong system in place to help mitigate for instance climate change. It has the ability to maintain, repair and renovate the system.

### Viet Nam: Breaking the waves? Yes, but not only

Mangroves have also a role to play to enhance local livelihoods and help mitigate climate change. Since 1994, the “Community-based Mangrove Reforestation and Disaster Preparedness Programme” has been implemented by Viet Nam Red Cross. Realizing damaging results of the accelerated destruction of mangrove forests over previous decades, Thai Binh chapter proposed in 1993 to reverse the trend and reforest the intertidal eco-systems. The Danish Red Cross picked up the idea and supported a reforestation programme in Thai Binh from 1994 onwards. After initial setbacks, the programme got encouraging results, and by 1997, the programme was expanded to include another seven coastal provinces. The Japanese Red Cross Society then funded activities in six provinces through the IFRC. From the early 2000s, the focus was broadened to include disaster preparedness training and also afforestation with bamboo and casuarina trees in communes along rivers.

The programme has had a significant impact both towards a reduction of disaster risk and an enhancement of communities’ livelihoods. Comparing the cost of damage caused by similar typhoons before and after the intervention, it finds that damages to dykes have been reduced by 80,000 to 295,000 US dollars in the studied communes – these savings represent less than the costs for mangrove planting. However, much more substantial savings due to avoided risk are found for the communities at large – with savings of up to 15 million US dollars in communes, the protective impact value in the few cases studied alone already exceed the costs of the entire programme.

\* <http://community.eldis.org/.59ed5e90>

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As Bhupinder Tomar, IFRC country representative in Hanoi says: “There are still two crucial questions that need to be addressed. First, mangroves, bamboo and casuarina trees cannot be seen as being there for good but rather require long-term work on protection, future planning and awareness. Second, the current lack of an exit strategy endangers the sustainability of some of the achievements, in particular as Viet Nam Red Cross chapters remain financially dependent on outside support to implement many of their activities.”\*

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## 6. A resilient community has economic opportunities. It has a diverse range of employment opportunities, income and financial services. It is flexible, resourceful and has the capacity to accept uncertainty and respond (proactively) to change.

### Community volunteering key to fostering resilience in Burundi\*

The Burundi Red Cross Society mobilises around 300,000 volunteers in 98 per cent of the country's nearly 3,000 communities. They meet weekly to identify vulnerable people in their communities and how best to meet their needs, carrying out activities to reduce shared vulnerabilities: digging fields for old people, collecting water and firewood for sick people, building houses and repairing houses for returning refugees. They take sick people to hospital, and often pay medical fees for people who cannot afford them.

Volunteers target the most vulnerable such widows with children, old people and those with disabilities. They also plant trees on slopes vulnerable to soil erosion, and construct terracing to prevent landslides. Simple external support, such as basic first aid training, and risk mapping techniques, helps volunteer units extend their individual and collective reach. Volunteer groups develop simple stocks of first aid materials and emergency materials in members' houses, for use in the case of emergencies.

It is not just the outputs of their activities that increase individual and community resilience: in a country where ethnic violence during the 1990s is still vividly remembered, the process of Hutus and Tutsis coming together to work in a non-partisan manner builds social capital within communities, and hence their resilience to further outbreaks of violence. As one volunteer put it: ***"Now we're working together to help vulnerable people, and, knowing each other, we will not return to civil war."*** This social capital accrued within units often becomes the basis for shared community development activities which build the resilience of individuals. A savings scheme is started; income generation activities are shared, and profits divided between local Red Cross funds and individual members. Quite often, local government will support these processes through donations of land. Perhaps the greatest contribution to resilience that the existence of these units brings however is an attitude of self-help. ***"Burundians can be donors too"***, a saying that mirrors the spirit that even chronically poor people can take steps within their own communities to reduce their vulnerabilities, determine and contribute to their own development, and in doing so build their collective resilience.

While it is predominantly at community level that this spirit is realised, there are signs that it can have regional and national impact. When in 2008 famine hit a neighbouring province, volunteers in Makamba province started going from door to door on their own initiative, collecting 300 tonnes of food in three days, in an area itself facing food insecurity. While this was a fraction of the food needed, this type of shared responsibility and commitment will contribute to building resilience of Burundians over the coming years.

\* In Burundi the existence of sustainable Red Cross community volunteer units is having a very visible, widespread impact on communities' resilience in the face of the potential for future ethnic violence, current and future food insecurity and the challenges of weak and non-existent services for vulnerable community members. <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Africa/978-92-9139-180-6%20Burundi-evaluation-report.pdf>



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*"When I broke my leg, Red Cross volunteers dug my field. I would have had to sell it in order to eat otherwise."*

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## **7. A resilient community can manage its natural assets. It recognises their value and has the ability to protect, enhance and maintain them.**

### **Building resilience in areas of Lao and Cambodia contaminated by weapons and landmines**

Lao and Cambodia are the most heavily bombed countries in the world. The prevalence of unexploded ordinances and landmines prevents the use of land for agriculture and animal husbandry, and creates a major obstacle to food security in affected areas. Both countries are also severely affected by natural and man-made hazards witnessed in recent times, exacerbating local communities' vulnerabilities. Both National Societies work with their respective authorities, sister National Societies and different other partners to bring about the necessary assistance and prevention work. In Lao for instance, they provide health services for HIV and TB caring, community based health focusing on nutrition training and mother and child health, targeting vulnerable individuals particularly women and working to ensure people live longer and healthier lives. In Cambodia, they offer micro finance projects enabling most vulnerable people to start their own businesses, such as grocery shops, farming, animal raising, soya bean production, barber shops, bike repair, TV repair, mushroom planting, food vending, hair dressing, and dress tailoring. The financial support also include people living or practicing high-risk activities such as collecting wood and scrap metal in mine contaminated areas, poorest families and people with disabilities.

Men Neary Sopheak, Deputy Secretary General of the Cambodian Red Cross says: "In Cambodia, many people continue to die, lose limbs and their eyesight to anti-personnel mines. Our duty is to keep our guard against complacency and keep the momentum up on our prevention and mine education work. If not, we will certainly have more accidents, deaths and injuries and people will just forget the problem until another accident happens."





**PAKISTAN,  
Dr. Riaz.**

Dr. Riaz is part of a mobile health team of Pakistan Red Crescent Society. He is talking to a patient in the village Soomer Khan Chandio of Sindh province. These mobile health teams cater around 200 patients daily.

4.8 million Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers work in the area of health around the world.

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## Conclusion: Towards a turning point

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As this document goes to press, we are yet again witnessing terrible food insecurity in the Sahel and other parts of the world. The suffering of millions of people who do not have enough to eat is a dramatic reminder that relief in the form of handouts is just not good enough. While we save lives, we must do everything we can to invest into strengthening the resilience of vulnerable people and their communities, and to contribute to eradicating the underlying causes of vulnerability.

The Red Cross Red Crescent is known for its humanitarian work around the world, but has for a long time been equally involved in developmental activity. In reality the distinction between these two spheres is an artificial one for the people affected by crises. We are calling for a serious shift in mindset and for all concerned to work together to bring about long-term and sustainable change in the lives of vulnerable people. This requires moving beyond placing labels on organizations and looking at what we can – concretely and to scale – contribute not only to disaster response, but to risk reduction, public health, sustainable development and the protection of human rights. We look forward to taking this journey together with our key partners and stakeholders.



**INDONESIA,**  
Reroroja village, Flores.

It's taken 20 years, but Baba Akong, his wife Anselina and their six children, and their friends and neighbours, have now planted the astonishing total of 30 hectares of mangrove, or 300,000 square metres (pictured), to protect their coastal village from storms and tsunamis. Baba Akong, a fish farmer whose breeding lakes are embedded in his mangrove plantations, is now an inspiration to the disaster risk reduction (DRR) community worldwide. He was awarded the 2009 Kalpataru prize in the category of Environmental Pioneer. He is a folk hero on Flores.

© Alex Wynter/NLRC





**JAMAICA,  
Jermaine Murray.**

*Jermaine Murray, a 23 year old musician, is a trainer of the Jamaican Red Cross Sexually Aware, Sensitized and Savvy Youths (SASSY) Project since February 2011. Each Friday, he organizes a workshop with youth in his neighbourhood to raise awareness among his peers about HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.*

*At the individual level, resilience is about bouncing forward and maintaining a quality of life, despite different setbacks we may face. Jermaine voluntarily contributes effectively to promoting healthy living.*

© Nigel Dickinson

# 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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