

Key Messages

The Red Cross and Red Crescent's Principled Approach to Innovation

WHY

Humanitarian challenges are set to further intensify.

- Armed conflicts, natural disasters and health crises, compounded by population growth, climate change and rapid urbanization, are putting more lives at stake and prolonging suffering.

Humanitarians face the challenge of becoming more agile and adapting operations in order to help address the needs, vulnerabilities and aspirations of individuals and communities.

- Innovation provides a vehicle for change and a process for improvement as organizations strive to strengthen effectiveness and broaden their reach.
- Innovation is a dynamic, managed process, which focuses on the creation of new or improved tools and approaches.
- It can deliver incremental change, significant progress and disruptive transformation in the form of products, such as new technology, processes, programs, policies and societal shifts.

WHAT

The Red Cross and Red Crescent approach to innovation is principled, ensuring that the process does not undermine humanitarian values. We apply the Fundamental Principles to:

- **Partner with people affected by crises**
Examples that support human-centered and participatory innovation: emerging technology-focused workshops and experiments as well as community feedback loops
- **Reach people in new ways**
Examples that develop and adapt a mix of platforms, approaches and incentives: photograph book for reconnecting families, participatory games for climate change adaptation, sports therapy for psychosocial support, environmental planning for a greener response as well as video games for educating on international humanitarian law
- **Enable expansion and scale**
Examples that replicate and grow the most promising ideas: barcode scanners, mobile apps, integrated vaccination campaigns and SMS messages
- **Transfer approaches between communities**
Examples that support reverse innovation, transferrable approaches and coalitions: radio programs and peer-to-peer education
- **Improve decision making with data**
Examples that take action based on evidence: forecast-based financing, sensors for monitoring safety and security, mobile data collection as well as big data analysis for migration programs



Based on the June 2015 report, "The Red Cross and Red Crescent's Principled Approach to Innovation"

Read the full report: www.tech4resilience.org

continued

HOW

The Red Cross and Red Crescent relies on dual scenario designing, systems thinking and business planning to produce human-centered solutions at scale through an iterative process.

- Users—individuals experiencing the problem and who will ultimately be impacted by the solution—must co-design solutions to their challenges and inform decisions at every stage of the process through planning, development, implementation and assessment.
- Equal partners in the innovation process, local actors and global representatives must work together to develop business models and plans to sustain the solution locally and grow globally those that are successful and replicable.
- We must consider opportunities and implications beyond the initial objective. Through our systems approach to project design we strive to reduce the number of potential dependencies, ensure any solutions have the capacity to grow and expand, vet them for future changes and stressors, and identify the most sustainable mechanisms to support the resulting ideas.

CALLS TO ACTION

To catalyze the process and sustain improvements, the Red Cross and Red Crescent encourages:

- **Humanitarian, development and civil society organizations** to actively seek collaboration across disciplines and industries and share information on innovation processes, funding, results, best practices and failures to mitigate duplication and other unnecessary setbacks.
- **Donors** to offer flexible funding mechanisms that adequately support innovation through all of its phases, encourage intelligent risks, accept the possibility of failure, and promote co-creation at the community level through an iterative process.
- **Governments** to establish responsible policies that attract and incentivize innovative pursuits, impose ethical regulations on technology advancement that protect the most vulnerable, open data for humanitarian decision making, and provide citizens with education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as other creative disciplines.
- **Social entrepreneurs and private businesses** to consider the [Red Cross and Red Crescent Criteria for Resilience-Strengthening Solutions](#) when developing or investing in market-based solutions for vulnerable populations.
- **Universities and think tanks** to explore new areas of research that add to our collective understanding of humanitarian problems, societal and economic dynamics, and emerging trends and solutions.