



Practicing humanitarian diplomacy: an introduction

Humanitarian diplomacy guidance

Acknowledgement

Practicing humanitarian diplomacy: an introduction, is the result of extensive consultation with National Societies and their secretariat. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) would like to specifically express thanks to its Advisory Body on humanitarian diplomacy for continued advice and support to the development of this guidance. Appreciation also goes to all those National Societies which have provided valuable experience and input to ensure its practical application. The majority of the case studies referred to were written by National Societies where snapshots of best practices have been used to share knowledge and expertise.

“Henry Dunant was not only the founder of our Movement but right from the start he was involved in service delivery and in advocacy. At Solferino, he mobilized the women of the village to work with him in helping those who had been wounded – he got involved in service delivery. But he also realized that service delivery alone was not enough and he needed to persuade the governments to create rules which they would live by with regard to the protection and assistance of the wounded. He therefore initiated the work of persuading governments to draw up and agree to the Geneva Conventions.”¹

¹ IFRC, *Advocacy: A Working Paper* (2001).

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1228904 12/2012 E

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year through our 187 member National Societies. Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development

challenges of this decade – we are committed to 'saving lives and changing minds'.

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

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Introduction

The adoption in 2009 of the IFRC's humanitarian diplomacy policy² and its Strategy 2020 by the General Assembly confirmed that humanitarian diplomacy should occupy a central role in National Societies' activities. This was the result of the recognition during the last decade that external trends in the humanitarian environment were placing increasing challenges on National Societies and their secretariat in meeting humanitarian needs. Turning these policy directions into concrete action has led to the production of this introductory guidance in order to assist National Societies with their humanitarian diplomacy efforts.

Guidance on practicing humanitarian diplomacy takes many forms depending on the situational context and the specific thematic humanitarian issue. However, there are common approaches and steps to follow, which cut across all contexts and thematic issues, when influencing decision-makers and opinion leaders. This guidance provides the fundamental considerations and steps to designing humanitarian diplomacy activities. Additional guidance documents will be produced which will provide separate thematic and tailored advice on the basis of identified need, and designed to support the membership with its practice of humanitarian diplomacy.³ The intended audience for this guidance is volunteers and paid staff that are managing programmes and delivering services to vulnerable people, and with limited experience in engaging in the practice of humanitarian diplomacy. This guidance should be taken into consideration as a part of the planning process for developing and managing programmes and services, as humanitarian diplomacy is a responsibility for all National Societies.

The introduction aims to provide the membership with general guidance on what to consider and how to apply humanitarian diplomacy in national and international contexts.

Chapter 1 emphasizes the importance of ensuring respect for the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (fundamental principles) in practicing humanitarian diplomacy. It also briefly touches on the auxiliary role between National Societies and their governments and places an emphasis on influencing policy and national law in support of vulnerable people. Both underpin the work of National Societies and their secretariat.

Chapter 2 provides the necessary steps required to develop a strategy and plan to practice humanitarian diplomacy.

Many National Societies have significant experience and expertise in humanitarian diplomacy and will therefore be familiar with some or all of the concepts and approaches described. Part 1, while intending to be a stand-alone guidance, should always draw on existing policy and tools such as the vulnerability and

² IFRC, Humanitarian diplomacy policy, *Governing Board and General Assembly (2009)*. Available online: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/HD/humanitarian-diplomacy/>

³ Refer to humanitarian diplomacy's Community of Practice on FedNet for additional guidance documents. Available online: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/communities/communities-of-practice>

capacity assessment guide⁴ and toolbox⁵ and the better programming initiative (BPI).⁶ This is a living document, and as learning is gathered, it will be updated accordingly. These chapters will be further supported with specific tools and templates to facilitate the work. Should your National Society have effective tools already available, please ensure you share these with the secretariat in Geneva.⁷

Part 1 of this guidance will not address practicing humanitarian diplomacy in conflict situations given that this falls under the ICRC's mandate. However, this does not preclude the possibility of addressing this issue in the future jointly with the ICRC.

The first draft of this guidance was carefully reviewed by a number of National Societies following the Red Cross Red Crescent statutory meetings in November 2011. There was consensus that National Societies are seeking a general practical guidance document to address their needs at the national and community levels; however, this should not override or exclude having an influence globally.

Part 2, which addresses legislative issues in disaster management and epidemic response, is close to production. Additional parts will be developed (i.e., strengthening the auxiliary role) according to areas of interest, need and concern of the broader membership.

Foundations of humanitarian diplomacy: policy, strategy, definitions and terminology

Strategy 2020 identifies humanitarian diplomacy as one of three enabling actions that are central to the achievement of the IFRC's strategic aims. The humanitarian diplomacy policy, and its accompanying explanatory memorandum⁸ and *Strategy 2020* are to be referenced as the foundations for engaging in humanitarian diplomacy. They should be used in full conjunction with this document as they provide substantial guidance on practicing humanitarian diplomacy.

By the nature of their mandates, many National Societies have always practiced humanitarian diplomacy; however, it has never been clearly defined. The humanitarian diplomacy policy and *Strategy 2020* provide clarity as to what humanitarian diplomacy is, and set out the parameters within which it should be applied. The policy is clear in that pursuing humanitarian diplomacy on behalf of vulnerable people is not a choice, but a responsibility, emphasizing that it is our 'responsibility to persuade.' The practice of humanitarian diplomacy policy can be carried out by virtue of National Societies' special access to decision-makers, as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, and the secretariat's permanent observer status at the UN General Assembly, as well as through other means. In this respect, National Societies and their secretariat should include humanitarian diplomacy as a core competency in their work.

Throughout the Red Cross Red Crescent, and beyond, there are many terms that are used to describe humanitarian diplomacy activities. For easy reference and clarity on the similarities and differences of terminology used in practicing humanitarian diplomacy, the following definitions are provided:

- 4 IFRC, Vulnerability and capacity assessment guidelines (2007).
- 5 IFRC, Vulnerability and capacity assessment toolbox (2008).
- 6 Last update: IFRC, BPI Training of Trainers (2007). The BPI guide (2003) is currently under revision.
- 7 International and movement relations unit (contact: nina.derochefort@ifrc.org).
- 8 IFRC, Humanitarian diplomacy policy – explanatory memorandum (2009). Available online: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/HD/humanitarian-diplomacy/>

Humanitarian diplomacy

Humanitarian diplomacy is defined by the IFRC as ‘persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles.’

Some National Societies that are engaged in persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders prefer to describe this process as ‘advocacy,’ or ‘humanitarian advocacy.’ It is important to not become fixated on terminology. The definition makes it clear that humanitarian diplomacy is rooted in the same process and ambition as that implied by the term **‘advocacy:’** the objective of *persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders*. In some respects, the term ‘humanitarian diplomacy’ is more appropriate for the work carried out by National Societies – it connotes engagement with decision-makers in discrete and context sensitive ways. Whether a National Society is more comfortable calling their work humanitarian diplomacy or advocacy, or uses these terms interchangeably, is their decision.

This guide will from time to time use these terms interchangeably but refers to advocacy as ‘all efforts to influence the thinking and/or behaviors of others in favor of vulnerable people.’

Advocacy

Advocacy is defined by the IFRC as speaking in support of a particular individual; group of people; a cause or a policy. Advocacy is the deliberate process of pleading in support of, or speaking in favor of someone (a cause or a policy). It is a means to an end, a tool for positive social change; a way to highlight the problems that may be solved through a change of government policy approach or emphasis; a change of funding or resourcing, through pressure brought to bear by the demands of the public or change to legislation.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy describes the objective of finding a solution to a particular problem, typically between states or individuals. In the humanitarian context, diplomacy is the term for all the techniques that may be applied in pursuing a solution consistent with the best interests of vulnerable people.

Forms of humanitarian diplomacy⁹

In addition to definitions and use of terminology, humanitarian diplomacy takes different forms described below:

Confidential diplomacy¹⁰

Strong confidential diplomacy should not be confused with remaining silent. Very often the most effective way of persuading someone to change their mind; change a policy; change their behavior; or act differently is through private conversation and contact. Confidential diplomacy includes high-level direct representation to government ministers and senior bureaucrats and is most successful when diplomatic persuasion and activities are based on knowledge, research and experience of the National Society.

⁹ IFRC, Pacific National Societies: Humanitarian Diplomacy Strategy 2012 (2012).

¹⁰ Also known as ‘quiet’ diplomacy.

Public influence

Public influence is a form of advocacy that positions National Societies as experts on particular topics such as international humanitarian law (IHL) and can be utilized to complement strong confidential diplomacy. Examples include running seminars or workshops, speaking at conferences, giving interviews to the media, and publishing articles or opinion pieces. These are effective ways of pursuing advocacy goals through public means without actually investing in specific campaigns.

Public advocacy campaigns

Public advocacy is primarily used to inform, influence and educate the public in relation to humanitarian values and to raise awareness of the needs of vulnerable people, with a particular focus on areas of Red Cross Red Crescent knowledge and expertise. National Societies must be cautious and have an understanding of the consequences that will follow including the effect of publicity on beneficiaries, as well as on the relationship of the National Society with the government and the impact on the Movement as a whole.

Policy event

Policy events aim at educating a selected group of stakeholders and policy-makers about a given issue. It is important when considering the organization of a policy event to have a clear idea of the objective and how the event can help achieve stated objectives.

Grassroots advocacy

Grassroots advocacy is the action of demanding a solution to a common problem by lobbying and influencing decision-makers for change.¹¹

Tools to support the practice of humanitarian diplomacy

In addition there are tools that are used as a means to facilitate actions related to humanitarian diplomacy:

Inter-governmental resolutions

Arising from the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, resolutions and pledges represent not only the results of humanitarian diplomacy actions, but also agreements for mutual cooperation and action between National Societies and states on issues of mutual humanitarian concern.

Environment building

Environment building refers to the dissemination of Red Cross Red Crescent principles as a means of protecting the Movement's humanitarian space and influencing decision-makers and opinion leaders. The promotion of IHL, Red Cross Red Crescent principles and values, disaster laws,¹² and auxiliary role ultimately enhance the ability of the Movement to persuade.

¹¹ *ADHOC, PACT Cambodia, LWF, Grassroots Advocacy Handbook (2006).*

¹² *Formerly referred to as International Disaster Response Law.*

Partnership

Developing partnerships that pursue a common goal and reflect humanitarian and moral solidarity, while building on trust and joint commitment and aspiring to values such as equality and reciprocity¹³ should facilitate a stronger impact on decision/policy-makers and opinion leaders. Partnerships should be used as a means for increasing visibility, awareness and action on behalf of the interests of vulnerable people. Partnerships should be considered with external humanitarian actors (non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), international organizations, etc.) to strengthen the humanitarian voice. In addition, coordinated partnerships amongst the Movement's components are also encouraged to strengthen the Red Cross Red Crescent's voice on a common issue.

Key to applying these definitions, forms and tools, is the requirement that National Societies and their secretariat engage in persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders more often, ***through evidence-based and solution-focused messages.***

The humanitarian diplomacy policy clarifies **the context within which** the responsibility to persuade must be exercised. It notes that National Societies operate in diverse and complex environments throughout the world, and that the methods a National Society deploys to persuade their key audiences will differ accordingly. Recognizing this, the policy lists the essential considerations that must be applied by all National Societies when practicing humanitarian diplomacy:

- **Respecting the context:** National Societies and their secretariat must understand the specific context in which they are operating and design the humanitarian diplomacy approach that fits best with it. In most contexts this will entail recourse to 'confidential' diplomacy. In some other contexts, public advocacy may also be appropriate.
- **Ensuring evidence-based issues and solutions:** central to the credibility of humanitarian diplomacy messaging are well-researched facts, figures and other evidence for the stance taken and the solutions proposed. National Societies are in a good position to provide evidence based on their areas of expertise and competencies.

¹³ IFRC, Cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) guidelines (2007)

1.

The fundamental principles and the auxiliary role

Fundamental principles

Humanitarian diplomacy is not a simple process in the Red Cross Red Crescent world. It requires a careful balancing of considerations particularly in ensuring full respect for the fundamental principles. This chapter emphasizes the seven fundamental principles, their definitions, and *finding the balance* between engaging in humanitarian diplomacy activities and, at the same time, ensuring full respect of the fundamental principles. Each National Society should do an analysis of the application of the fundamental principles vis-à-vis all of its stakeholders. It should also take into consideration the *hierarchy*¹⁴ of the fundamental principles. Further information and analysis on the fundamental principles is provided in *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross*. Emphasis is placed in this chapter on the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality, as these are the most commonly raised principles regarding National Societies' assistance to vulnerable people, their auxiliary status with their governments, and relations with other humanitarian actors. They also fall within the upper levels of the hierarchy of the importance of the fundamental principles.

Drawing inspiration from the fundamental principles

Each fundamental principle in itself should inspire National Societies in their humanitarian work and they should spend sufficient time making these linkages when determining and managing their programmes and services. For the purposes of this guidance document, the focus is more on the risks that can be associated by engaging in certain humanitarian diplomacy activities and the necessity to find the right balance with full respect to the fundamental principles.

Abiding by the fundamental principles

All National Societies and their secretariat must abide by the fundamental principles when deciding whether to address an issue using humanitarian diplomacy. The following provides a brief understanding of the principles of

¹⁴ See page 9 of IFRC, Humanitarian diplomacy policy – explanatory memorandum, (2009).

impartiality, independence and neutrality and highlights considerations when deciding whether to address humanitarian issues.

Impartiality

The fundamental principle of impartiality provides a common message of particular relevance to the practice of humanitarian diplomacy. Impartiality emphasizes the obligation of National Societies to provide assistance to all those in need and solely on the basis of need, without discrimination to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. Therefore, National Societies should insist that national law not contain provisions which might compromise a National Society from being impartial in their assistance to people in need. For example, national laws should not ban National Societies from providing humanitarian assistance to migrants (irrespective of their legal status) in the event of disasters or health emergencies.

At international levels, governments have also expressly proclaimed these principles (as well as neutrality) be applicable to all international humanitarian assistance (UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of 1991, annex para. 2). Accordingly, national law should also allow space for all international humanitarian organizations to act according to these precepts when providing assistance in their territories (IDRL Guidelines, para. 4).

Independence

The fundamental principle of independence has benefits and risks vis-à-vis governmental authorities. National Societies must maintain sufficient autonomy from public authorities to allow them to carry out humanitarian activities with credibility while abiding by the other fundamental principles. Benefits resulting from respect for independence include the National Society's ability to decline requests from the government which conflict with the fundamental principles. Risks include, for example, other humanitarian organizations not partnering with a National Society to address humanitarian needs if the National Society is not perceived as being independent from its government. Another example includes the challenge to maintain independence in disaster response when National Societies participate in government organized humanitarian coordination mechanisms. It is important to jointly define clear roles and responsibilities in those mechanisms and to remind governments of the National Society's unique status. This will allow a National Society to withdraw from government coordination mechanisms should its participation come in conflict with the fundamental principles. This involvement can present questions of independence by other parts of the Movement and with other organizations which value and respect National Societies' adherence to the fundamental principles.¹⁵

Neutrality

While the fundamental principle of neutrality often relates to situations of hostility,¹⁶ attention is given to the issue of non-engagement in activities of a political or ideological nature. The act of persuading opinion leaders (through quiet diplomacy or public advocacy campaigns) can be seen to compromise neutrality, as even the most clearly defined humanitarian position (e.g., encouraging abstention from torture) has the potential for generating opposition and thus, political controversy. National Societies are most likely to retain general confidence, protect their image and credibility, if they restrict their advocacy to issues close to their humanitarian mandate. In doing so, they will retain the respect of all stakeholders; even if they do not all agree with the position advanced. This means that a full analysis of the risks and benefits of engaging

¹⁵ British Red Cross, 'The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: Relations with External Actors in Humanitarian Operations' (July, 2011).

¹⁶ Hostilities and conflicts are not addressed in this guidance, but may be addressed in the future in close cooperation with the ICRC.

in a particular issue must be conducted and balanced with the principle of neutrality. Finding the right balance in engaging in humanitarian diplomacy activity will require National Societies to conduct an assessment of their context, including understanding their relationships with others, public perception and the consequences of taking a particular course of action. This balance should also consider the National Society's specific areas of knowledge and expertise through its programmes and services.

National Societies must ensure that government authorities respect their independence and neutrality and this is demonstrated through humanitarian action. While National Societies have a duty to disseminate and to assist their governments in the dissemination of the fundamental principles, it should be stressed that "States shall at all times respect the adherence by all the components of the Movement to the Fundamental Principles."¹⁷

The auxiliary role

This section briefly describes the auxiliary role and highlights recent issues and solutions that should be considered when practicing humanitarian diplomacy. It emphasizes how National Societies can use their auxiliary status to influence the humanitarian agenda nationally, regionally and globally. More detailed and practical guidance will be found in the subsequent documents focusing on the auxiliary role.

The auxiliary role is one of the defining characteristics that distinguish National Societies from purely government entities, NGOs and other civil society actors. Auxiliary status provides National Societies with the opportunity to establish a constructive relationship with their public authorities. Where used appropriately, this can include a stronger platform from which it can advocate for better outcomes for vulnerable people.

Auxiliary role: definition

The status of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as *auxiliary to government in the humanitarian field* is based on international law. These laws allow National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to mobilize and organize the civilian population to work with public authorities in a neutral and impartial manner to alleviate human suffering. The auxiliary role is a two-way relationship which does not imply that the government controls or directs the work of a National Society.

Defining the content and scope of the auxiliary role

The importance of defining the specific content and scope of the auxiliary role was underlined, for example, in the "Agenda for Humanitarian Action:"¹⁸

States, recognizing the importance of the independent and auxiliary role of National Societies with respect to the public authorities in providing humanitarian services in the field of disaster management, should negotiate clearly defined roles and responsibilities with their respective National Societies in risk reduction and disaster management activities. This may include National Society representation on relevant national policy and coordination bodies as collaborative partners with States. States should also take specific legal and policy measures to support and assist National Societies in building sustainable volunteer and community capacity, particularly promoting the participation of women, in the areas of risk reduction and disaster management.

¹⁷ See Article 2 of Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

¹⁸ 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Final Goal, 3.1 of the "Agenda for Humanitarian Action" (2003).

The challenge

The precise meaning and scope of the auxiliary role has not always been clear between governments and some National Societies, resulting in a range of relationships from intense mutual involvement where management and governance lines are blurred, to very little interaction, leading to missed opportunities.

A study¹⁹ on the working relationship between governments and National Societies, published in 2003, called for a “balanced relationship,” allowing National Societies the independence required of them under the fundamental principles,²⁰ (as mentioned earlier) but highlighting the expectation that National Societies be reliable partners, capable of providing unique humanitarian services to communities as a supplement to the work of the government.

Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference (2007) calls upon public authorities and National Societies to consolidate a balanced relationship with clear and reciprocal responsibilities. It recognizes that National Societies have both the duty to consider requests of public authorities in the humanitarian field and to decline such requests where this could be in conflict with the fundamental principles.

Example: Netherlands Red Cross

Over a period of four years, discussion on the auxiliary role between the Netherlands Red Cross and its government focused on three main issues, because the role of the National Society vis-à-vis the government was not sufficiently defined:

- What kind of legal document is the most suitable form for acknowledgement of the Netherlands Red Cross?
- Which tasks can be defined as ‘auxiliary?’
- How can a better understanding on the content and scope of the auxiliary role be established on the side of the public authorities?

The National Society organized a roundtable conference and several working-level meetings to discuss its auxiliary role. It was concluded that the Red Cross Order 1988 (Royal Decree) required updating due to the absence of some responsibilities in the Decree which the Netherlands Red Cross had been conducting for a number of years. This led to the amendment of the Royal Decree to include tracing and IHL. The Royal Decree also clarifies the relationship between the government and the National Society. The updated Royal Decree became legally effective in September 2011.

The Netherlands Red Cross now has a unique partnership and a more regular and structured high-level strategic dialogue with its government, including inter-departmental and operational-level dialogue. Five humanitarian themes were identified where sharing knowledge and exploring opportunities for joint cooperation are to take place: migration, climate change, IHL, international aid, and self-reliance in relation to disaster relief.

¹⁹ In 1999, the 27th International Conference called on the IFRC, working with the ICRC and National Societies, to conduct a comprehensive study of the working relationship between governments and National Societies.

²⁰ Refer to Chapter 1 of this guidance.

The auxiliary role and domestic legislation

All National Societies are recognized by their governments through recognition laws. This forms a good starting point for any discussion about the National Society's role in humanitarian action. However, with some exceptions, these recognition laws generally provide little detail about the operational role of the National Society. National Societies will have more possibility of success in influencing government authorities when addressing issues close to their mandate and expertise, in particular, humanitarian sectors such as response to disasters and health emergencies. Some of the roles that National Societies can have are:

- a) influencing government legislation addressing humanitarian issues
- b) being included in legislation regarding humanitarian responsibilities
- c) influencing government decisions (not necessarily law) in humanitarian operations (disaster or health emergencies, for example) or programming.

Describing the National Society's operational role in law can bring a number of advantages:

- better predictability of its relationship with governments (including after changes of administration)
- better and more systematic access to decision-making bodies
- in some cases, better access to financial support, tax exemptions and other facilities related to their humanitarian activities
- governments benefit from greater predictability and clarity in the services National Societies provide.

Concluding remarks on the auxiliary role

The potential for the auxiliary role to be used as a platform for meaningful dialogue with governments goes to the heart of National Societies' ability to exert greater influence with decision-makers.

The auxiliary role entails "mutual responsibilities." To give meaning to the auxiliary relationship, National Societies must in the first instance be seen by their respective governments as a credible organization. Building a relationship of **trust and confidence** with public authorities must be based on National Societies demonstrating their capacity to deliver according to their humanitarian mandate. Regular dialogue and meetings take effort and time, and, if followed through with a focus on evidence-based and solution-focused analysis, can lead National Societies to their governments' decision-making tables on behalf of the vulnerable people they serve.

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Step-by-step guidance to successful humanitarian diplomacy approaches

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The first chapter briefly explained the Red Cross Red Crescent fundamental principles and the auxiliary role in relation to humanitarian diplomacy. These provide a good and important reference when reading and applying the steps identified in this chapter, which provides the steps to practicing humanitarian diplomacy. This planning should be seen as an integral part of National Society programmes and services planning.

The approach shown below is primarily intended for National Societies that have not yet proactively or regularly engaged in humanitarian diplomacy activities. More concretely, it is designed to **provide the basics**, to ensure well-prepared planning which includes all the key elements when engaging in humanitarian diplomacy.

Each of the ten steps is explained in detail below. It is important to bear in mind that the steps are not necessarily meant to be applied in strict chronological order (i.e., some steps may take place at the same time as others). Furthermore, the time and effort required to implement the different steps may vary considerably depending on the environmental context and the issue to be addressed. In this context, humanitarian diplomacy approaches and actions are almost always linked to National Society programmes and services. It is therefore **not a stand-alone project** but draws on National Society strengths, competencies, capacities and mandate. In fact, humanitarian diplomacy can support National Society objectives and help enhance the impact of programmes. Therefore, National Societies' short- and long-term strategic objectives should take humanitarian diplomacy into account, particularly as it relates to relations with their respective governments and other external actors to position themselves with credibility and respect within the humanitarian field.

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Planning humanitarian diplomacy action



Lastly, the steps below are accompanied by a set of tools and templates which are meant to facilitate the completion of each step. While two tools are included with this guidance, additional tools will be provided as learning is gathered on what works well.

Step 1 Situational analysis

Undertaking a **situational analysis** is an important step to understanding the environment in which the National Society is operating within. Identifying specific challenges and threats that are affecting the people being served by the National Society will help to identify priority areas and/or issues which could be addressed through humanitarian diplomacy actions. It is recommended that the results of assessments²¹ already carried out by National Societies be used as key references for the situational analysis. It will also help identify what capacities vulnerable communities have and can contribute to humanitarian diplomacy action.

In the **situational analysis** identify core aspects that affect the work of the National Society (i.e., existing programmes and services) as well as the community. For instance, identify and be aware of:

- political developments at the national and local level (e.g., elections, staff changes, political initiatives, proposals for legislation)
- political developments at the international level (e.g., treaties, agreements, UN resolutions)
- economic challenges
- societal and community needs
- inequality and hidden vulnerabilities in the given society
- activities of other stakeholders
- external factors that represent potential or actual threats (e.g., weather conditions, conflicts in another region).

Is there a window of opportunity?

In this process you should also be attentive to windows of opportunities for effective humanitarian diplomacy activities and which may include:

- commemorative anniversaries of a specific peace treaty/disaster/conflict (national or international)
- days of specific importance (e.g., International Women's Day)
- conferences on a related theme (i.e., climate change conferences provide an opportunity for humanitarian diplomacy on issues related to disaster risk reduction)
- major regional or international conferences (which include participation of various actors including donors, UN agencies, AU, EU, ASEAN, etc.) where decision/policy-makers and opinion leaders at the national level see opportunities for their own country in addressing key humanitarian issues.

²¹ If not used already, consider the following guide and toolbox: IFRC, Vulnerability and capacity assessment guidelines (2007) and IFRC, Vulnerability and capacity assessment toolbox (2008).

Step 2 Identify issues based on evidence

The situational analysis will allow not only for opportunities to be identified, but will also highlight key humanitarian issues facing communities. Issues will be based on evidence that the National Society has captured through its work. The National Society will then make a decision on what could be addressed through a focused humanitarian diplomacy approach. Reliable data and comparative figures or examples are powerful tools to convince others of the urgency, impact and need to act.

Where can evidence be obtained?

There are a several methods for accessing and collecting data. Consult with colleagues in different departments such as disaster management, health and care, social services, etc. They will know what the key issues are, based on documentation they have collected. What is important is that the sources are reliable and that the origins of data are identified. Data may include:

- recent assessments conducted by the National Society and/or other Red Cross Red Crescent partners
- additional assessments as required or necessary
- academic studies or ongoing research (particularly in health, sociology or another field) can be useful to provide a different view of the humanitarian situation
- newspapers and/or news websites may also provide good comparative examples.

Additionally, it will be equally pertinent to:

- Ensure that government and other humanitarian organizations' publications, statistics and research are reviewed, and reliable data is extracted as relevant for the National Society.
- Contact other National Societies which may face similar challenges (e.g., from neighboring countries).
- Consult the IFRC's FedNet for information on particular issues, including CoPs in different technical sectors.
- Cross reference issues that have been identified on relevant websites (e.g., the United Nations agencies, World Bank, government, other organizations or stakeholders) to compare with regional and global issues. This may be useful in supporting a position with decision-makers or opinion leaders.

How to stay informed about policy developments?

Political decision-making and politics evolve and change quickly. In order to be well informed about the specific political developments in a country, monitor policy developments on a regular basis, including the adoption of legislative initiatives, relevant events and stakeholder discussions. To stay informed, look regularly at the websites of relevant institutions and stakeholders, press/media and related publications. When information is not easy to access, plan regular meetings with decision/policy-makers, stakeholders such as research organizations, NGOs, CSOs and universities. Identify and attend relevant humanitarian events to learn more.

National Society example – smart research

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Output and outcome
<p>In 2007, in consultation with the ICRC, the Canadian Red Cross Society in partnership with the Liu Institute for Global Issues, at the University of British Columbia, came together to launch the <i>On the Edges of Conflict</i> project. This dynamic initiative was created to better understand the changing nature of armed conflicts and the application of IHL in complex security environments.</p>	<p>With funding from Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of National Defense, this project had three objectives, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine and debate contemporary challenges in armed conflicts • develop innovative policy recommendations to address emerging issues in armed conflict • raise awareness on issues pertaining to IHL with key stakeholders within Canada and internationally. <p>In addition, the <i>On the Edges of Conflict</i> project was specifically designed to foster Canadian capacity in the area of IHL by examining Canadian case studies and creating impact-focused policy recommendations.</p>	<p><i>On the Edges of Conflict</i> is an example of a successful initiative undertaken by the National Society. By using its convening power, the Canadian Red Cross Society was able bring together a range of academics to help identify and research key challenges in contemporary armed conflict. The project stimulated discussion and analysis of these issues in Canada and resulted in useful and innovative policy inputs.</p>

Step 3 Define humanitarian diplomacy objectives

Defining clear and concise objectives are critical to ensuring a good humanitarian diplomacy process to address an issue. Based on the outcomes of the previous 2 steps, organize relevant internal department (health, disaster response, etc.) meetings to discuss where the National Society strengths are to act on the identified issues. Analyze the topics at hand by using the Issues Continuum²² and Advocacy Criteria.²³ Ensure that the fundamental principles and auxiliary role are considered and respected. Then, prioritize the issues which may be addressed. As part of this process, distinguish between specific short-term and more long-term objectives:

- Short-term objectives may be responding to a crisis, engaging in specific disaster response, health crises, etc.
- Long-term objectives may involve building relationships with your government, influencing legislation, or raising awareness of the National Society's work and achievements.

The objectives will be based on the needs **identified through existing programmes and services**. They should also be in line with the IFRC's **Strategy 2020** and should also consider the International Conference, Council of Delegates, and General Assembly Resolutions and Decisions. In general, the objectives should aim to achieve:

- better access to and/or outcomes for vulnerable people and communities
- achieve a more tolerant society including respect for diversity, non-discrimination and social inclusion
- increase public support for the National Society and/or the Movement

²² Refer to Annex I.

²³ Refer to Annex II.

- enhance understanding of Red Cross Red Crescent humanitarian principles, auxiliary status and fundamental principles among decision-makers and opinion leaders.

The following questions may help you to identify and shape your objective:

Can the objective be measured?

The more specific your objective is, the easier it will be to measure the outcome. If you can already base your objective on concrete evidence and link it to a specific timeframe, it will enable you to measure progress and improvements in the future. Take into consideration, objectives that are already defined within the scope of the National Society’s general and specific technical programme areas, such as disaster and health services.

National Society example – advocacy opportunity due to a national disaster

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Outcome
<p>The newly established Palau Red Cross Society responded to its first major disaster in the Republic of Palau after the collapse of the Koror-Babeldaob Bridge in 1996.</p> <p>The National Society identified the need to clearly define its auxiliary role to the government while promoting its status as an independent humanitarian actor.</p>	<p>The Palau Red Cross Society had to persuade Palau’s decision-makers to let it take a more effective approach. This included allowing the National Society to distribute water containers on their own terms and not through hamlets of elected representatives. Thus avoiding the perception that the National Society is a governmental instrument.</p> <p>Methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Meeting with the Vice-President at the time and effective communications based on open dialogue, cooperation and cultural sensitivity. ↳ Explanation of the National Society’s global mandate and of the fundamental principles, especially independence and neutrality. ↳ Water distribution based on needs assessment of a number of affected households. 	<p>The humanitarian diplomacy activities helped the Palau Red Cross Society to build a constructive relationship with the Government of Palau. The government in turn recognized the importance of the National Society being a non-partisan entity. In addition, it helped to enhance the visibility and credibility of the National Society as an independent humanitarian actor.</p>

Considerations in defining objectives

Can relevant legislation be influenced?

If the issue at stake is closely linked to policy-making and legislation, then it is important to understand decision-making procedures and be aware of exactly what will be discussed (e.g., new law, amendment, report, etc.). With regard to legislative advocacy, you should identify if a law/draft law can be strengthened before a new disaster strikes. However, if this does not apply, general engagement with policy-makers can help you to build relationships, which will make it easier to act when conditions change.

Can the issue be linked to an international decision?

Decisions or agreements by international bodies (such as the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change or the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction) and regional organizations (such as ASEAN, CEPREDNAC and ECOWAS) can generate momentum for political action and change at the national level. National Societies also have a special opportunity, responsibility and standing to promote decisions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

National Society example – effective use of the Movement’s decisions

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Outcome
<p>In 2000, the ICRC published Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo: Explosive Remnants of War. While the report clearly showed that cluster munitions are causing vast humanitarian suffering among civilians, its conclusion was not a call for a total ban. However, its recommendation was a prohibition on the use of cluster munitions in populated areas and a suspension on the use of these weapons until an international agreement had been achieved.</p>	<p>NATO’s military intervention in Kosovo was still on the political agenda in the autumn of 2000 when the Norwegian Red Cross presented the ICRC report to the Norwegian Parliament and the government. In June 2001, the Norwegian Parliament instructed the government to work for an international prohibition on the use of cluster munitions. However, Norway would lose credibility if it excluded its own type of weapon in the definition of cluster munitions that ought to be banned. Meanwhile, CSOs continued to argue that the final prohibition had to embrace all kinds of cluster munitions.</p> <p>The ability of the Norwegian Red Cross to draw on the Movement’s knowledge and resolutions proved critical. A Council of Delegates resolution asked all parts of the Movement to promote initiatives ending the use and transfer of cluster munitions.</p> <p>Soon a political decision was made to take the weapon out of the military stockpile, awaiting destruction. This paved the way for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work on an international legally binding treaty prohibiting all known cluster munitions.</p>	<p>The Convention on Cluster Munitions was negotiated in Dublin in May 2008, signed by 94 countries in Oslo in December 2008, and entered into force on 1 August 2010. Several National Societies were present in Dublin under the IFRC’s umbrella to put pressure on their respective governments and to ensure that the humanitarian arguments prevailed. In the margins of the signing conference in Oslo, in November, more than 20 National Societies met to discuss how they could play a role in monitoring implementation on the ground.</p>

Step 4 Identify target audience

To achieve an objective, identifying and engaging with people that have the power to help or to influence a change in the situation is required. Meet with National Society colleagues to **identify who these individuals or groups are** and whether the National Society has the ability to interact with the right people who can achieve the humanitarian diplomacy objective(s). A good analysis will be grounded in an understanding of different power dynamics in a society, recognizing that some groups may be invested in helping or in fact blocking progress on the chosen issues. Individuals, groups and levels of government should all be analyzed. In addition, a National Society should do an analysis of opportunities and risks, taking into consideration the fundamental principles and the National Society's auxiliary role status. Some different types of audiences are described below:

- 1. Decision/policy-makers** are all people who have the mandate of decision-making. Some are referred to as lawmakers (e.g., parliamentarians, members of congress) due to their role in drafting and adopting laws. Others are in the executive branch of government. This group includes heads of states/governments, ministers, as well as administrators within the government structures. They may also be community leaders. Other members of government, such as those in opposition or coalitions, should be considered as well. Decision-makers usually work for an institution or authority with political powers. Next to national governments and parliaments this includes the United Nations, AU, EU and ASEAN. Engaging with them also means that you have to deal with and know their internal procedures and timelines.
- 2. Opinion leaders** are public figures that strongly influence public opinion such as academics, health professionals, former politicians and authors. They are a point of reference and can have an impact on a decision or action. For example, opinion leaders can be religious leaders, influential academics, research institutions, or celebrities/VIPs. These people tend to have the following characteristics: they become interested in the National Society's issue; they know people they can influence; they are actively involved in the issue, they have the trust and credibility in the community and/or nationwide. There should be a strategy to identify which particular individuals or groups would be useful for the stated objectives, keeping in mind that some people may not be appropriate due to other relationships or endorsements.
- 3. Third party groups** are organizations (e.g., UNICEF) or associations (e.g., national doctors association), NGOs (e.g., Care International) and research institutes that have an interest in the humanitarian field and can contribute to advocating for the National Society's issue. Identify what the other organization's expertise is, what they are actively involved with, and what their credibility is within the country and/or community. Determine the added value to the National Society if approached for joint collaboration on the issue. Any work in coalition should consider guidelines for partnerships (see step 5 below).
- 4. Civil society/public** encompasses all people who do not have a special role or particular expertise in the humanitarian issue the National Society is attempting to address. This is the largest group of stakeholders and may include those communities which the National Society serves (older persons, those affected by natural disasters, etc.). However, they can be the hardest to interact with directly and their influence may be limited especially on

specific topics. Depending on the issue, identify whether there will be different opinions or if your cause will unite them. As a part of the situational analysis described in step 1, the National Society should have an analysis of the general characteristics and demography of civil society, such as history, ethnicity, class, level of poverty as well as location and level of engagement by the National Society.

5. **Volunteers, as an integral part of civil society, should be involved in** the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy activities. They are often the voice for vulnerable communities, understand the issues which the National Society wishes to address, and can influence changes at both community and national levels. They are also an audience for capturing evidence-based issues described in step 2, and therefore will have already understood and are in support of the humanitarian diplomacy issues the National Society wishes to address. In addition, identify National Society governing board members who can influence decision-makers and/or other audiences. Meet with volunteer groups and, as relevant, identify ways for engaging in humanitarian diplomacy related issues.
6. **Donors** are any organization, company or institution which provides National Societies with resources to enable a stronger service delivery to vulnerable communities. Often, issues requiring a humanitarian diplomacy approach are included as a part of the support from donors. Many National Societies have 'partnership' relations with donors where issues of common concern can be addressed and have more influence through the partnership. These types of donor relations are encouraged. Review and analyze existing donor relations to determine whether the donor may be interested and capable of supporting a humanitarian diplomacy issue. Also, identify and meet with potential donors and discuss how they can be supportive in addressing the issue.

Target audience mapping

When identifying target audiences²⁴ assess the degree of power and influence they have. Prioritize audiences according to their ability to influence humanitarian diplomacy issue(s). Undertake an **audience mapping** which will provide a consolidated understanding of the influence an individual or institution may have.

The list of names, contact details, responsibilities and comments should regularly be updated. List the level of influence they have (e.g., high, medium, low) in a particular area. Indicate any previous cooperation with these individuals and build on the good relationships.

A good way of ensuring that the mapping provides a realistic picture of existing working relationships that your organization has with stakeholders is to make sure that all relevant people from your National Society are given the opportunity to provide input into the mapping process.

²⁴ Note that some countries have Data Protection Laws meaning that the collection and the use of, as well as the access to personal data are extremely restricted. Check if this is in existence in the country. This concerns the agreement of the persons whose personal data are collected, as well as the kind and evaluation of the collected personal data. In this context, "particular personal data" has to be handled extremely sensitively. These comprise for instance political leanings, religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as membership to certain institutions (e.g., trade unions).

Tip: In addition to researching contacts' background (e.g., is the parliamentarian a former physician), it is advisable to look out for any "personal and political" interests, as it may be a motivation for them to become active, or, in deciding that, given their previous activities and stances, they should not be engaged.

Information on the main contact persons can come from public statements, research papers, regulatory documents, participation in events and through personal contact. Monitoring relevant sources such as institutions' and stakeholders' websites, online and written press, radio, TV, research publications, blogs and social media will help you to identify names and their background.

Step 5 Identify partners

Partnering with other groups, organizations or institutions can strengthen a National Society's position considerably – the more people work towards the same objective, the higher the chances that voices will be heard. Before engaging in a partnership, **assess possible partners carefully. Consider asking the National Society the following questions:**

- What issues they have been addressing – successfully and unsuccessfully?
- Where are the gaps?
- Are there areas where partnership would be useful to advance Red Cross Red Crescent aims?
- Is it appropriate for the Red Cross Red Crescent to lead the discussion or initiative?
- Is it more appropriate for someone else to lead?

If the decision is made to engage with other groups, ensure that the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality are not jeopardized, thus potentially diminishing the National Society's reputation. In addition, ensure that partnerships do not compromise the auxiliary role status or needs-based approaches. If there are sister National Societies working together in one country, consider involving them in the humanitarian diplomacy approach as good practice can be gained from others' experiences. Red Cross Red Crescent coordinated approaches may have a greater impact.

Example – plan to build relationships

Building on the IFRC's humanitarian diplomacy policy, endorsed by the General Assembly in 2009, the Australian Red Cross has produced a **Parliamentary and Government Relations Plan**. It is an example of the kind of planning, research and follow-up required to build relationships with key decision-makers.

The plan notes: "Effective parliamentary and government relations includes anticipating, understanding, and taking appropriate action to manage policy, legislation and government decisions, including funding choices." The plan emphasizes the need to build "strong long term relationships between Red Cross staff and individual parliamentarians, their advisers, political parties, governments, and oppositions to improve understanding, build profile, establish partnerships, maintain and grow funding and exert long term influence to assist Red Cross in effectively addressing disadvantage and vulnerability."

Opportunities and risks of engaging with other actors

Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ More resources ↘ Wider spread of message(s) ↘ More impact/credibility ↘ Added value of organizations ↘ Possible access to funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ Compromising the fundamental principles and image/ reputation of the components of the Movement ↘ Diluted messages ↘ Less focus on audiences ↘ Risk of delay due to coordination efforts ↘ Compromises and consensus building required ↘ Emblem and reputation protection

How to identify the right partner?

There are a number of criteria that can be used to decide whether to engage with a possible partner. A certain degree of common ground is important. This means that the partner should be in line with the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy objectives and have common interest on the issue and common set of goals.

Map the partners (same concept as audience mapping) to identify an appropriate organization and best contact person. The following aspects should be looked at:

- Analyze which can be most/least receptive to the National Society's position. This means who could care about the humanitarian diplomacy issue. Look at their past history and actions, current reputation and credibility, and whether they are partners with other organizations facing similar issues.
- Speak to representatives in the organization.
- Examine their previous impact/influence/power on humanitarian diplomacy audiences (e.g., on policy-makers)
- Consult with other National Societies who may have partnered with the same organization.

In addition, and of equal importance, is to examine the current partnerships that the National Society has and determine, using the same methodology above, where these could be strengthened to address a humanitarian diplomacy issue.

How to reach out to potential partners?

Once potential partners have been identified, you will need to build relationships to convince them to join the National Society in order to address a particular humanitarian diplomacy issue. Reaching out can be done in several ways:

- Inviting a representative(s) of the organization to visit the National Society and presenting its work, and then focusing on the humanitarian diplomacy issue; ensuring evidence-based data, and awareness of the fundamental principles, auxiliary role status, and provide benefits for partnering.
- Asking the organization for a visit to their offices to understand their work and discuss advantages of partnering on a particular common issue.
- Determining who (individuals – volunteers and/or paid staff) is best placed to make contact with other organizations, which already have contacts and/or relations with other organizations.
- Using existing National Society networks, as relevant, to access other organizations (youth groups, committees, social networks, etc.).

If considering partnering with several organizations, it is advisable to keep the group small to avoid it from becoming too bureaucratic and losing focus. In addition, one of the most challenging tasks in a partnership with multiple actors is to align messages and agree on the way to proceed. Also bear in mind that the more people are involved the longer the decision-making process can take.

Tip: Building trust is essential in a good partnership. While formal meetings are necessary to move projects and activities forward, consider more informal settings to get to know partners. For example, organize a meal or arrange to have a coffee/tea with individuals in the organization.

Once a partner is identified, it is common practice to conclude an agreement to define roles and responsibilities and purpose of the partnership (e.g., partnership agreements, terms of reference, memorandum of understanding). Remember that the image and fundamental principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent must be respected at all times.

Step 6 Define which humanitarian diplomacy form²⁵ to take and develop an action plan

In order to achieve the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy objectives, several forms may be taken. Definitions of these forms are provided on in the introductory section of this document. A few of these forms are described below and are **some of the most common approaches**. Choosing a form of humanitarian diplomacy should be based on an assessment of current relationships, opportunities, risks and the power to influence change.

Important: manage your resources!

When choosing a form of humanitarian diplomacy, plan and assess resources, including staff and budget, required to carry out the activity. In many cases, these should be planned for in the National Society's annual programming plan. In case of resource scarcity, consider mobilizing volunteers, using pro-bono services, for example, of law firms for legal research, using interns or engaging in more targeted resource mobilization activities.

Strong confidential diplomacy

Strong confidential diplomacy should not be confused with remaining silent. Very often the most effective way of persuading somebody to change their mind, a policy, their behavior or to act differently is through **private conversations and contact**. Confidential diplomacy includes high-level direct presentation to policy/decision-makers and is most successful when diplomatic persuasion and influence activities are based on knowledge, research and the National Society's experience.

²⁵ Refer to earlier section on 'Forms of humanitarian diplomacy.'

- Depending on the national context, building relationships should be a key element in the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy action plan, for instance by:
- Setting up meetings with decision/policy-makers (e.g., Members of Parliament²⁶) to present the work of the Red Cross Red Crescent, in general, and then to address key issues.
- Setting up meetings with ministers' special advisers in charge of the health or disaster ministries on these issues.
- Inviting decision/policy-makers to serve as honorary chair of local disaster campaigns.
- Networking with influential people in the private sector on issues of mutual interest (for example, working with telecommunications companies to allow people access to mobile phones in disasters to enhance response efforts and to improve beneficiary communication).
- Adding decision/policy-makers to mailing lists for news and invitations to events.

National Society example – strong confidential diplomacy

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Outcome
<p>The Nepal Red Cross Society managed and supported relief camps set up by the government of Nepal as a result of the floodwaters from the Saptakoshi River in August 2008.</p> <p>In this context, the National Society realized that the government plans would lead to overcrowding of the camps. There was thus a need to persuade decision-makers to find a better solution.</p>	<p>The Nepal Red Cross Society engaged with Nepal's decision-makers to convince them of the need to guarantee the quality of shelters and relief items for those impacted by the disaster.</p> <p>Methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ Several meetings with government leaders at central and local levels as well as other NGOs. ↘ Effective communication with decision-makers based on open dialogue. ↘ Providing an overview of the globally recognized Sphere standards which offer guidance on emergency relief. 	<p>The advocacy activities helped the National Society to educate the government and other stakeholders on humanitarian principles in shelter and other relief areas.</p> <p>The number of families per camp was reduced considerably (from 400 to 275) and new land has been made available for additional families.</p>

Public advocacy

Public advocacy is primarily used to inform, influence and educate the public in relation to humanitarian values and to raise awareness of the needs of vulnerable people, with a particular focus on the National Society's areas of expertise and competencies. Before engaging in public advocacy, conduct an analysis of the possible consequences, taking into consideration the effect of publicity on beneficiaries, the National Society's relationship with the government, and on the Movement's image.

²⁶ Refer to forthcoming edition of guidance focusing on parliamentarians.

National Society example – public advocacy

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Outcome
<p>In 1994 the Austrian Red Cross decided to enforce a national ban on anti-personnel landmines using strong confidential diplomacy. However, talks about a landmine ban with the Ministry of Defense as well as government representatives and parliamentarians were unsuccessful.</p>	<p>Thus, the Austrian Red Cross decided on a two-fold strategy: the legal department drafted a proposal for a law banning landmines. First, strong confidential diplomacy ensured its acceptance in parliament. At the same time, a public campaign was carried out to gain public support for a landmine ban.</p> <p>Activities undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Key political supporters who cooperated with the Austrian Red Cross were identified. ✎ A series of awareness and advocacy activities were undertaken: media reports, talks, events and press conferences. ✎ Information was disseminated through the National Society’s quarterly publication to its 800,000 members. ✎ Media trips to the ICRC’s orthopedic centers were organized. ✎ Background talks with ICRC war surgeons were organized. ✎ A journalist network was established. ✎ A letter campaign aimed at parliamentarians and a nationwide petition supporting the ban law was initiated. 	<p>By autumn 1996, efforts to shape public opinion through officials and diplomats was so influential that the landmine ban law was discussed in parliament. Everybody voted for the ban, except for one parliamentary faction. On 1 January 1997 the relevant federal law entered into force. The unusually vocal public support of the National Society’s stance led to Austria’s renouncing its landmines before all other states. Subsequently, the government emphatically advocated for an international landmine ban, and Austrian diplomats drafted the document for what was to become the Ottawa Convention.</p>

Public campaign

A public campaign can for instance help to indirectly influence law-makers by convincing the public about the need for certain measures (e.g., laws through public messages and/or events). They can often be much more powerful than simply telling a lawmaker what the National Society wants. However, depending on the topic they are also more likely to raise issues around the principle of neutrality. In this context, the way to carry out the campaign plays an important role. A clear transparent explanation on reasons for engaging and why it matters may, for example, mitigate the risk of being perceived as partisan. A risk analysis should be carried out in these cases.

National Society example – public campaign

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Output and outcome
<p>Following a “People on War Survey” the Australian Red Cross realized that more than 40 per cent of the population thought that torture to obtain important information is acceptable.</p> <p>As a result the need of educating the public and decision-makers on the effect of IHL in warfare was identified.</p>	<p>To achieve its objective, the Australian Red Cross launched a public campaign in every major Australian city:</p> <p>Methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Spreading the IHL message ‘Even Wars have Laws.’ ✚ Using online polls and public displays on issues such as the illegality of using torture and the protection of laws relating to child soldiers. ✚ Distributing postcards with information about IHL. ✚ Mentioning the importance of humanity during war on TV, radio and in print media. ✚ Displaying child soldiers in the lobbies of train stations. ✚ Educating parliamentarians about IHL. A handbook on IHL ‘Promoting Respect for International Humanitarian Law: a Handbook for Parliamentarians’ was developed and distributed to every state and federal parliamentarian. 	<p>The advocacy activities have been successful in educating, informing and engaging key stakeholders about IHL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty mentions on TV, radio and print media. • Campaign website received 10,000 hits. • Six thousand people completed an online survey. • The poll indicated that only five per cent of the population believed it was acceptable to use torture.

Policy event

The aim of a policy event is to inform a selected group of policy-makers about an issue. It is important when considering the organization of a policy event to have a clear idea of the objective and what the event can help the National Society achieve.

A policy event is an opportunity to gather the key interlocutors around the table to discuss the issue at stake and to convince that action should be taken as soon as possible. In order to grasp the interest of speakers, participants and the media (if deemed appropriate in the context of public advocacy), it is vital that the timing and theme of an event are in line with the general policy context. Cooperation with credible and influential partners can increase the success of the event through facilitating access to quality speakers, co-hosts or moderators and even limit the cost of the event.

Produce a report on the event and determine if a press release will add value to further outreach in obtaining support for the issue.

Grassroots advocacy

Grassroots advocacy involves National Society volunteers and paid staff at local community levels engaging officials in local humanitarian issues. This is an excellent opportunity to:

- Build relations with local authorities that may influence humanitarian action locally and nationally, including during times of disasters.
- Providing evidence of community-based humanitarian issues at national and possibly international levels.

National Society example – grassroots advocacy

Identified issue	Humanitarian diplomacy activity	Outcome
<p>In Pakistan, many people are tenants which can make them vulnerable, as they have no legal right to the land they have lived on and cultivated for years. Following the devastating floods in 2010, one of the key issues that the Pakistan Red Crescent Society wanted to address was the precarious situation of ‘landless farmers.’ The absence of legal agreements and statutory protection was a formidable obstacle in enabling farmers to rebuild their livelihoods.</p>	<p>To address this, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society formed ‘village committees’ consisting of village elders, respected men in their society, and government officials from the village. These village committees were the means used to advocate on behalf of the landless people. However, the challenge remained in persuading the landlords.</p> <p>Methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↘ The Pakistan Red Crescent Society and IFRC staff and volunteers used the expertise of the village committees’ members to negotiate with landlords. Negotiating techniques with the landlords, included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>maintaining an atmosphere of respect</i> amongst all parties involved • <i>building trust</i> through effective communications methods – placing importance how issues are communicated. • <i>fostering buy-in</i> – the concept of reciprocity was emphasized, reiterating that it would be a win-win situation for all. • <i>taking concerns of landlords seriously</i> – village committee members explained to the landlords that signing the agreement, did not stipulate a transfer of legal ownership, but only the occupancy rights for a stipulated period. 	<p>Legal agreements were signed between the landlords and individual farmers granting occupancy rights for five years and which thus allowed the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to help farmers with the construction of houses.</p>

How to translate the chosen approach into an action plan

Once the form of humanitarian diplomacy is decided, plan when to engage and determine the steps needed. Draft an action plan which describes in detail the envisaged activities. Include the following elements:

- Provide an outline of the humanitarian diplomacy form chosen.
- Describe the specific activities and tasks that will be carried out (e.g., for a meeting indicate who you will contact and the purpose).
- Develop a timeline for when each task will be completed. Include key milestones such as key meetings, external events and, conferences, reports, media events, etc.

- If in a partnership, develop a plan of action jointly identifying each other's activities.
- Include the required resources.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are included.

The action plan is a “living” document and should be updated on an ongoing basis to reflect developments and changes in the timeline, as further information may become available.

Step 7 Develop key messages

In order to communicate the National Society's position effectively, **develop a set of solid, consistent and compelling messages**. This is important to ensure that the information given to identified audiences is coherent and provides the right perception of the issue and the relationship to the National Society's work.

How to develop messages

1. Messages should be developed with the respective technical programming department within the National Society, and preferably with communications staff and any others who are working in relation to the issue.
2. In a meeting, start developing the messages, keeping in mind the following criteria:
 - ✓ Start with general messages which can be complemented with specific and detailed points.
 - ✓ Be short and convincing.
 - ✓ Contain arguments that support the humanitarian diplomacy objectives.
 - ✓ Respond to the external policy environment (e.g., link it to a larger issues or opportunities).
 - ✓ Be evidence-based by providing relevant statistics, data, quotes, case studies, best practices.
 - ✓ Point out differentiating factors.
3. Once the messages have been drafted, they should be tested with people inside the National Society and outside (e.g., a partner organization). Based on the feedback, the messages should be adapted.
4. The messages should be integrated coherently in all relevant materials (e.g., content of speeches, presentations, websites, and direct contacts with policy-makers/stakeholders) as well as by volunteers and paid staff representing the Red Cross Red Crescent. It is therefore necessary that the relevant people be trained to communicate effectively. Role-play and a question and answer session can be a useful starting point.
5. When using messages, carefully assess how they are perceived and understood by the intended audience. It may be that some of the messages need to be reworked slightly or adapted to new evidence and developments.

Messages also need to be adapted to the identified audience. A policy-maker will require a different focus than for instance civil society. Some messages are designed to be more human focused with, for instance, testimonials; others may need to contain more data. Thus, there may be different versions for different uses.

Tip: Bear in mind that at the political level you may speak directly to the decision-maker who will have most power to act. However, members of staff usually have a greater technical knowledge and may be able to advise you on relevant details. The messages should therefore reflect the level of expected knowledge.

Step 8 Develop supporting materials

Supporting materials will help to explain the National Society's cause in writing and to present and circulate arguments in a wider, yet succinct way.

They are often left behind in meetings or conferences. Personally sharing the material may help to initiate useful contacts. The messages developed should be used coherently in all materials. Add a short description on what the Red Cross Red Crescent is and in particular what the National Society does, as not everyone will know about its activities.

The following supporting materials may be useful for supporting the National Society's humanitarian diplomacy objectives:

- **Fact sheet:** a fact sheet is a document (one to two pages), which is purely based on facts and lays out the humanitarian situation and issues. It is backed with figures. It should be written in a neutral language using bullet points, graphs and tables which are visually easy to read.
- **Policy brief:** a policy brief is a short paper (not more than three to four pages) addressed to policy-makers and policy influencers and designed to express the National Society's views on the identified issue. It should be clear, succinct, and memorable while including examples of the National Society's work. The style of the brief should be descriptive and argumentative. Use titles/sub-titles and cut the argumentation into several paragraphs to ensure the brief will be easily readable.
- **Call to action:** a call to action is a short (one-page) written document requesting your identified audience to take action on a specific issue. The written piece of paper should use simple and clear language and include the following elements:
 - ✓ clear statement of the issues and need(s)/key message(s)
 - ✓ meaningful action people are being asked to make/do
 - ✓ evidence-based
 - ✓ concrete proposals for actions.
- **Case studies:** a case study is a short summary of the Red Cross Red Crescent's work and achievement on a particular project. It should showcase the involvement of the National Society concerned, its impact and experience. The case study is a useful tool to illustrate added value and approach taken in a specific context. It should be no longer than two pages and be evidence based. Please note that the secretariat has a number of case studies on disaster management, health, and promoting a culture of non-violence and peace (available on FedNet).

- **Question and Answers (Q&A):** The Q&A is a useful tool to prepare for meetings with stakeholders. The aim is to preempt questions that may be more difficult to answer. Typically, a Q&A would address the following questions:
 - ✓ Why is this issue relevant to my work?
 - ✓ How would my work have any influence on what your National Society is trying to achieve?
 - ✓ What do you expect from my work/organization?
 - ✓ Who else is involved in raising awareness on this issue?
 - ✓ What evidence does the National Society have?

A Q&A can be prepared only for internal purposes, or, it can be used also with external contacts.

- **Testimonials:** testimonials are very useful to illustrate the impact of actions or situations on the people. They are short accounts of personal experience. Make sure that:
 - ✓ prior authorization is obtained for use where needed
 - ✓ the information is true
 - ✓ full name of individuals are included
 - ✓ the text is short and concise
 - ✓ it is powerful (tells a story, avoids jargon).

Tip: Many decision/policy-makers have limited time available. It is therefore vital to provide them with short and succinct documents.

Step 9 Meet the stakeholder

On the basis of the work outlined in the previous steps, it is now time to begin engaging with identified target audiences. This will involve **making contact, arranging meetings, and beginning the process of persuading and negotiating**. These efforts may be part of a longer-term effort to consolidate and nurture relationships or represent a first step towards establishing a new relationship. As a general rule, direct face-to-face engagement is the most powerful way of convincing someone to act. Direct response to questions can be provided and the National Society representative will more likely be remembered.

1. **Arrange the meeting.** If the individual(s) has a busy agenda, he/she may not respond right away. Therefore follow-up with a telephone call a couple of days later so as to give more detailed explanations about the importance of the meeting and increase the chance of a positive answer. During the follow-up call:
 - ✓ Refer to the written meeting request (have the sent message in hand).
 - ✓ Introduce yourself and briefly explain why you are contacting him/her.
 - ✓ Explain the subject of concern.
 - ✓ Explain why you would like to meet him/her.
 - ✓ Reiterate the importance of the subject and of meeting that person and what she/he can do to help.
 - ✓ Suggest a date and time!
2. **Prepare the meeting:** once the meeting date has been confirmed, prepare carefully. Prior to the meeting, go through the following checklist:
 - ✓ Be ready to explain the objective and request.
 - ✓ Have the messages ready (e.g., prepare speaking points).

- ✓ Have printed copies of the supporting material ready.
- ✓ Take business cards.
- ✓ Make sure notes are taken.
- ✓ Rehearse messages with a colleague (adapt messages to the contact's background and position).
- ✓ Listen!

Decide strategically who should attend the meeting. The voices of local branches/chapters can often be very persuasive, in addition to those of headquarters leadership. A small delegation is often best in order to build relationships.

3. Attending the meeting: remembering that first impressions are important, a good image is very important to build a relationship. If a group is attending the meeting, make sure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined; agree who speaks about which part of the dialogue, and who is responsible for taking notes. **Always state the purpose** of the meeting at the beginning. If it is the first meeting, provide some general information on the National Society's activities and the Movement. Be knowledgeable about current Red Cross Red Crescent issues in the media and be prepared to answer any questions.

During the meeting, be as clear as possible. Establish precisely what they are willing to do, and what specific actions they can commit to, rather than accepting vague promises/general answers. Listen to their comments carefully and build on their reaction and response. Provide them with supporting documents towards the end of the meeting to avoid distractions and do not forget to leave National Society contact information.

Tip: As there is limited time to bring across key messages, case studies and testimonials are useful tools to showcase real-life situations which the National Society faces.

Step 10 Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation

Following-up on your meeting **is an important factor in continued engagement**. This means that follow-up with a thank-you letter or e-mail, reiterating the National Society's request and summarizing the discussion. A good meeting will usually lead to facilitated contacts/access and introductions to potential partners; it is therefore essential to remain in contact after the meeting. This can be achieved by:

- sending additional documents mentioned during the meeting
- proactively informing the contact - whether formally (letter, email) or informally (phone call) - of further developments
- inviting contacts to events (policy and/or social depending on the quality of the relationship established).

Together with relevant colleagues, assess how the meeting went, discuss and collect the feedback of each participant. Such a debriefing should lead to the planning of next steps, and if necessary to adapting your action plan.

How success is measured

Measuring success is and will remain one of the most challenging aspects, as there are many factors that cannot be measured. If the humanitarian diplomacy objective can be quantified, then some concrete conclusion may be identified.

Humanitarian diplomacy is however more of an ongoing engagement, which is reflected by the circular chart at the beginning of this chapter. Success is therefore embedded in your long-term efforts. However, a number of general success indicators can be identified:

- The humanitarian diplomacy objective has been met and the issue has been addressed successfully.
- Has the National Society built new and valuable relationships?
- Have messages been effectively communicated and follow-up carried out?
- Does the National Society have credibility and has it consulted decision-makers or other audiences?
- Is civil society aware of the National Society's work and does it trust the National Society?
- Are National Society volunteers and paid staff regularly invited to events as speakers? Has the engagement facilitated the National Society's work (e.g., easier access, support, funding)?

In evaluating success, be as self-critical as possible. A meeting itself is not the end-goal but rather a means to it. Success may be achieved if the meeting leads to an action or a concrete commitment on a humanitarian issue. In the evaluation, consider re-assessing the environment, thereby starting with the situational analysis again and adapting humanitarian diplomacy activities accordingly.

Annexes

In order to facilitate the development of humanitarian diplomacy strategies, simple to use tools are being developed. Two examples of the tools are provided in the following section. These will be expanded and shared through existing Federation-wide networks and knowledge-sharing platforms. Movement components are invited and encouraged to share tools which have been successful in practicing humanitarian diplomacy on the humanitarian diplomacy's CoP: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/communities/communities-of-practice/>

Annex 1

Issues continuum: facilitating National Society decision-making on addressing a humanitarian issue

No Attention At This Time	Sector, Country, or Project Attention Only	Monitoring	Reactive Positioning and Messaging
<p>Issues deemed outside of the National Society's focus; no significant link to its programs; not currently a topic being addressed by the International RC/RC Movement ; not likely to generate public, branch or press inquiries.</p>	<p>Issues that are pertinent only to a specific sector, country or project. May be monitored and analyzed by operational and technical staff if necessary. Not considered a National Society priority and unlikely to generate public, branch or press inquiries. Periodic survey of program staff to determine whether such issues merit increased attention.</p>	<p>Issues that may eventually require analysis, leadership briefing, and position development. Most frequently arise because they are considered priorities by humanitarian partners or become agenda items for International RC/RC Movement statutory meetings. Basic analysis and monitoring until they merit increased attention or are no longer an issue.</p>	<p>Issues that National Society representatives may need to speak about but which are not National Society programming priorities and policy objectives. Can relate to other humanitarian organizations advocacy messaging, upcoming Federation and/or Movement meetings, or, controversial topics being</p>

Confidential or Quiet Advocacy	Public Advocacy by Coalition or International Movement Partner	Public Advocacy by the National Society	Large National Society Advocacy Campaign
<p>Issues that significantly relate to National Society programs and policy objectives. NS Management determines importance of informing key decision-makers or advocating a particular policy change to improve access, effectiveness or space for principled humanitarian action. Targeted representation and advocacy focused on key-decision makers in government, the International RC/RC Movement and external organizations. Decision reached that public statements would be less effective.</p>	<p>Issues that are prioritized for public advocacy by the International Federation, ICRC, group of National Societies, I/NGO's, or other groups to which the National Society belongs. The NS understands and appreciates importance of issue and position of coalition, but decides to play a supporting role only respecting the Fundamental Principles. "Strength and safety in numbers" may be a consideration. The National Society depends on partner/coalition for most analysis and messaging, and may participate in advocacy efforts as part of broader group.</p>	<p>Issues that significantly relate to National Society programs and policy objectives. Management determines importance of informing the public and key decision-makers to advocate a particular policy change to improve access, effectiveness or space for principled humanitarian action. Public statements, press releases, interviews, briefings/ events organized to inform and alert. Representation and advocacy are focused on key-decision makers in government, external organizations, and the International RC/RC Movement, as relevant. Can complement or be conducted on behalf of International Movement/coalition partners. Decision reached that public statements will improve impact. May be able to achieve result within a few weeks or few months.</p>	<p>Issues that are central to the National Society's program and policy objectives. Initiative is meant to solve a complex or widespread humanitarian problem while reinforcing public image and understanding of the National Society. Requires building a significant coalition; informing and inspiring the public; and involving NS branches, volunteers, and senior leadership including governing board. Includes special events, speaking tours, fundraising, proactive media outreach, and/ or legislative outreach. May complement or influence International RC/RC Movement strategic priorities. Duration of many months to years. Requires organizational buy-in and dedicated resources.</p>

Annex 2

National Society advocacy criteria

These criteria should be used jointly with the Issues Continuum tool to determine what capacity and level of engagement the NS can pursue. It is important to understand that if an issue will be addressed, it must first and foremost be in full respect for the Fundamental Principles.

Questions to consider when determining whether and how to advocate on a humanitarian issue:

Will advocacy uphold or call into question our *Fundamental Principles*?

- What is the humanitarian issue which needs to be addressed?
- Are there humanitarian consequences for staying silent on this issue?
- Will advocacy harm the:
 - National Society's reputation as a neutral, impartial, and independent actor?
 - the Red Cross and Red Crescent's reputation as a neutral, impartial, and independent actor?
- Will advocacy pose risks to:
 - Service delivery and/or operations?
 - Security of personnel?
 - Relations with the government in relation to the National Society's auxiliary role?

Will advocacy be *strategic and effective*?

- Does the National Society have the necessary evidence to prove the issue exists?
- Is the National Society competent to address the issue?
- Does the issue fall within the National Society's policy or program priorities?
- What is the National Society's added value to addressing the issue?
- Does the National Society have the resources required to advocate effectively?
- What will advocacy cost in political capital, both within the National Society and with external actors?

How will advocacy affect *relationships* with:

- other departments within the National Society?
- government, donors, and non-governmental organizations? The general public?
- the Movement's components?
- Is advocacy on this issue necessary for the National Society to fulfill its obligations within the Movement?
- Will others within the Movement look to the National Society for guidance?

Does advocacy in *coalitions* present opportunities or risks?

- When advocating in coalitions, will the National Society be able to preserve its distinct identity?
- Can the National Society defer to NGO coalitions or the Movement's components on issues that are particularly sensitive in the national context, or on those of a lesser priority to the National Society?

Sources and further information

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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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