

WORKSHOP REPORT

CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT AND OTHER SITUATIONS OF VIOLENCE

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ICRC



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FOREWORD

By Angela Gussing, Deputy Director of Operations, ICRC

Children and young people have specific needs and vulnerabilities in armed conflict or other situations of violence. These needs must be addressed more effectively: this was the rationale for the workshop on children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) organized in March 2011 in Geneva.

Why focus on children and young people? In the devastation that accompanies armed conflict, children, one of the most vulnerable segments of the civilian population, are affected in various ways. As for young people, they tend to be the main protagonists, as well as the main victims, of organized violence. This is especially true in urban areas, particularly in Latin America, where the drug trade is thriving. Organized violence often has consequences for humanitarian action that are more severe than those stemming from more “conventional” armed conflicts, in terms of both the number of violent deaths and the toll such violence takes on families and communities as the social fabric disintegrates and traditional coping networks unravel.

The ICRC and the various National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies conduct a wide range of activities to address the specific needs of children and young people affected by armed conflict and violence. Although many organizations work with war-affected children, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement)¹ is in a unique position to make a difference, not only because of the breadth of activities that it can undertake, but also because of its connection to the people and communities affected and its capacity to reach

them. Indeed, communities are one of the main sources of protection available to children and young people affected by such situations; and the ICRC’s operational strategies to address children’s needs make full use not only of the organization’s direct access to areas not covered by other organizations, but also of the firm anchorage in the community that National Societies have.

Over the last decade, the need for a Movement strategy to tackle the issue of children affected by conflict and violence has become clear. This workshop was an opportunity, not only to share our different views and experiences, but also to reflect together on our current limitations and challenges, and to explore the benefits of working in partnership. The ICRC has experience in carrying out humanitarian action in conflict-affected zones and in facilitating humanitarian access to victims. The organization also builds on its international contacts and reputation for being a neutral and independent actor. As for National Societies, they have valuable knowledge of the local context, owing to their proximity to the victims through their network of volunteers and local partners. They ensure local anchoring and contextualization of the response, key factors in building programmes that benefit the victims. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) contributes to the action on the ground by developing global tools and conceptual frameworks and ensuring that our various activities are coordinated. Workshop participants demonstrated their willingness to work together more closely as a Movement and build a community of practice, to provide a holistic response to violence, which affects children’s daily lives, well-being and development. It is also clear that the Movement needs to learn from external partners who have developed expertise in the same areas of work. Several external actors took part in the workshop, which gave us an excellent opportunity to learn from them and enrich the Movement’s thinking on these matters.

¹ The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) is composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Given the expertise available within the Movement, we need to strengthen our partnerships to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to the specific needs of children in armed conflict and other situations of violence. This report testifies to the wealth of creativity displayed by Movement partners in their responses to the issues raised by CABAC: for instance, the Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation Centres in Liberia, which aim at reintegrating war-affected children; the psychosocial support provided by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to conflict-affected communities in the Swat Valley; or the street-based violence prevention programme carried out jointly by the Guatemalan Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. The report also reveals that, although these programmes are implemented in very different contexts, there are cross-cutting issues that all programmes need to address in order to be meaningful and relevant to their target population: these include youth participation, local ownership and monitoring and evaluation.

Given the complementarity of our expertise, the diversity of response, and the cross-cutting nature of the issues that arise when working for and with children and young people, it is crucial to build a community of practice within the Movement to respond to the vulnerabilities of children affected by armed conflict and violence in a more relevant and coordinated fashion. The CABAC workshop marks an important step towards the establishment of such a community, and this report should serve as a basis for further action.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Armed conflict and violence take a heavy toll on children's lives in different parts of the world. Not only do children suffer from the direct consequences of war and armed violence (recruitment in armed forces or groups, physical injuries, death), they are also indirectly affected by displacement, loss of relatives and the trauma associated with witnessing acts of violence.

Recognizing the importance of this increasingly global issue, the Movement, at its 30th International Conference in 2007, resolved to “work together to develop at all levels comprehensive violence-prevention and reduction programmes in order to build safer communities through practical measures that take into account social and economic development objectives, and to facilitate the rehabilitation of youth affected by violence.”²

The Movement's components have developed – separately or in partnership with other Movement components or organizations – a range of activities to benefit children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence: nationwide campaigns aimed at promoting applicable law, instruction in humanitarian values and life skills, activities specifically targeting children living in high-risk communities, initiatives addressing the psychosocial needs of children, social reintegration programmes for children released from armed forces or armed groups, and so on. At the initiative of the ICRC, representatives from 19 National Societies and the International Federation, as well as a number of external experts,³ gathered in Geneva in March 2011 for a three-day workshop to discuss best practices and lessons learned from National Societies' activities in the areas of social reintegration, psychosocial support and violence prevention in urban settings. This workshop also aimed to prepare the ground for a fresh Movement approach

to the issue of children affected by armed conflict and violence.

Though all the components of the Movement are working for a common goal, each has its distinct role and area of expertise. The ICRC has experience in carrying out humanitarian action in conflict-affected zones and in facilitating humanitarian access to victims. The ICRC shares a number of assets with its Movement partners, such as its contacts with other international organizations and with governments, as well as the advantages it owes to its reputation for neutrality and independence. National Societies provide knowledge of the local context and networks of volunteers and local partners. The International Federation develops global tools and conceptual frameworks to coordinate activities on the ground. In summary, Movement coordination is essential to ensure that the activities undertaken are relevant and coordinated, and that the response is adapted to the context and has a firm local basis.

This meeting suggested building bridges between practitioners from various contexts and areas of expertise. It called for greater operational synergy and emphasized the need for a better information-sharing system within the Movement. Participants renewed or established contacts and refined or expanded their views on the issue of children affected by armed conflict and violence by examining it from different angles. The following were identified as common priorities:

Holistic and multidisciplinary action – Holistic and multidisciplinary approaches allow comprehensive risk analysis, encompassing the whole range of children's vulnerabilities. Children are not considered in isolation; instead, their situation is analysed holistically, taking into account the various factors that may affect their development and well-being. This is the basis of community-based support, which aims to strengthen existing resources around the child. The holistic approach implies

² “Declaration: Together for Humanity,” annex to Resolution 1 of the 30th International Conference, 26-30 November 2007. Available at <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/ic-r1.pdf>

³ See the list of participants in the annex to this report.

a high degree of complexity because it relates to the whole system and emphasizes the interdependence between the various components of a given environment. In practice, such an approach can present a number of challenges, as it requires a broad range of expertise, sometimes going beyond the organization's mandate and capacity.

Building resilience – Programmes targeting children affected by armed conflict and violence tend to promote the process of building resilience, by strengthening the individual's and the communities' inner and external resources. Education and vocational training, for example, facilitate the professional reintegration of young people and their families and help them build a better future.

Youth participation – This implies not only working for young people, but also working *with* them to develop their own identities and increase their self-esteem. Youth participation leads to greater levels of ownership, and thus to greater acceptance of the programme in question and increased likelihood of its sustainability. However, because of the risk of it becoming tokenistic, care should be taken to ensure that youth participation is not merely symbolic: it should entail equal representation and power sharing.

Local ownership and sustainability – Local ownership is achieved when there are collective decision-making mechanisms in which the community is fully involved at all stages of the programme cycle. Community members will be motivated to volunteer for a programme because they want to help address problems that affect all of them and because they want to be part of the solution. Ultimately, the community must be able to say it is their programme, and not something that is entirely dependent on outsiders. If they feel it is theirs, they will work for it and it will become sustainable. Local ownership also ensures that programmes are culturally appropriate, follow a bottom-up approach, respect local traditions and are rooted in existing practices.

Recommendations for better Movement coordination

- **Regional cooperation among National Societies:** The creation of regional clusters should be encouraged among National Societies: these may take the form of operational alliances or consortiums, in order to guarantee closer cooperation on specific issues and thus a consistent or uniform approach to strategic priorities.
- **Balanced relationship between participating National Societies (PNS) and operational National Societies (ONS):** ONS-led initiatives should be preferred to PNS-driven programmes. ONS should demonstrate their willingness to learn from other Movement partners while assuming responsibilities and taking ownership in matters concerning strategy and funding. PNS should take into consideration both the needs that have been identified and the capacity of an ONS to implement projects, in order to set reachable objectives. PNS and ONS should, together, develop a long-term plan for the future.

- **Information sharing: a) At the Movement level:** Expert meetings on specific topics should take place more regularly, to share information and best practices and lessons learned among PNS, ONS, the International Federation and the ICRC; youth delegates should be invited to take part. Establishing a formal system of exchange would also help disseminate internal and external tools and create a community of practice at the Movement level; **b) Within National Societies:** Internal communication, particularly between national and international departments, should be improved, and headquarters should regularly exchange information with regional and in-country representatives.
- **Funding:** The ICRC and PNS should be more flexible in their funding policy, to be able to cover a wider range of projects. Child protection requires long-term commitment by donors. Because of their contacts with other organizations and their influence and profile in international arenas, the ICRC and the International Federation can play a role in linking National Societies with potential external donors.
- **Networking with external partners:** National Societies cannot address all the needs of the community by themselves. They should develop an effective relationship or partnership with the public sector (ministries, universities, local authorities, NGOs, etc.), to be able to work together closely in specific areas of the programmes. A survey should be conducted of the domestic and international reference organizations and the specialized services available, to ensure appropriate referral for children needing legal, social or medical support.
- **Learning from others:** The guiding purpose of this workshop was to learn from each other. Participants suggested that National Societies learn from existing strategic alliances and agreements with other actors – e.g. agreements between National Societies and UNICEF – and collaborate with academic research institutes.

The 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which will take place in Geneva in November 2011, promises to be another excellent opportunity for the ICRC, the International Federation and the National Societies to demonstrate their willingness to join forces and take further steps. A coordinated approach will help the Movement strengthen the relevance of its activities and guarantee that it has a greater impact on the lives of children affected by armed conflict and violence throughout the world.

INTRODUCTION

The components of the Movement are engaged – separately or in partnership – in a range of activities to benefit children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.⁴ Although this has been going on for years, our knowledge of what is being accomplished in many parts of the world is still rather limited. In light of this, and with a view to strengthening Movement activities in this area, the ICRC organized a three-day workshop to bring together representatives of 19 National Societies and the International Federation, as well as various external partners with expertise in working with children affected by armed conflict and violence. The following report summarizes the main issues raised at the workshop and suggests steps to improve any action the Movement may undertake in the future on behalf of children affected by armed conflict and violence.

HISTORY OF CABAC

- ▶ In 1995, the Council of Delegates adopted the Movement Plan of Action on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CABAC),⁵ which had two main objectives: to promote the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation of children under 18 in armed conflict and to take specific steps to protect and assist child victims of armed conflict.
- ▶ In 1999, the Council of Delegates encouraged all National Societies to support the adoption of international instruments implementing the principle of non-participation and non-recruitment of children under 18 in armed conflicts, particularly through dialogue and advocacy with their governments. A total of 41 National Societies and 33 governments⁶ signed a pledge at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to protect and assist children affected by armed conflict and prevent the targeting of children by ensuring that their rights are respected and by promoting their welfare; by addressing the psychosocial as well as the physical needs of war-affected children; and by adopting a child-centred approach to humanitarian assistance.
- ▶ In 2001, eight National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC took part in a study meeting on the Movement's efforts to help children affected

⁵ The Plan of Action concerning children in armed conflict is available online at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jpf.htm>

⁶ The pledges were signed by the following:
- National Societies: Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Norway, Poland, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Togo and Tunisia
- Governments: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁴ In this report, the acronym CABAC refers to programmes related to children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, including urban violence.

by armed conflict, which concluded that very little information was available on National Societies' activities aimed at children. In early 2003, the ICRC sent out a questionnaire to all National Societies to assess the implementation of the 1995 Plan of Action on CABAC. However, there were comparatively few responses and no concrete follow-up resulted.

What is CABAC?

'Children affected by armed conflict' (CABAC) is a very broad category referring to the various groups of children that are adversely affected by armed conflict. There is no single universally agreed upon definition of the term, which has been used in various ways. The Movement's 1995 Plan of Action on Children Affected by Armed Conflict promoted the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation in armed conflict of children under 18, but CABAC does not refer only to child soldiers. Children are the victims of serious violations of international humanitarian law, including recruitment into armed forces and armed groups. They are also victims of the indirect consequences of armed conflict and violence, suffering both physically and mentally. In times of war or armed violence, children are at high risk of either losing their loved ones to death or being separated from them. Children and their families are often forced to relocate and move from place to place to escape conflict. Many children witness violence or themselves suffer violence or abuse. Children's educational development is often interrupted. CABAC has also been used to describe a school-based psychosocial programme as well as its accompanying manual. In this report, CABAC is used to refer to children and young people who directly or indirectly suffer the consequences of armed conflict or armed violence. CABAC activities cover a wide range: nationwide campaigns aimed at promoting applicable law, instruction in humanitarian values and life skills, activities specifically targeting children living in high-risk communities, initiatives addressing the psychosocial needs of children, social reintegration programmes for children released from armed forces or armed groups, and so on.⁷

THE ICRC'S INVOLVEMENT IN CABAC

Because the ICRC responds to all the victims of a conflict, children naturally benefit from its assistance programmes. Some programmes, such as nutrition and maternal care programmes, and vaccination campaigns, target children directly; others target them indirectly, through the provision of support to communities. In the field of protection, the ICRC's response to children's needs has traditionally had a strong focus on tracing and family reunification for unaccompanied and separated children, an activity generally carried out in close cooperation with National Societies. Over the years, the ICRC has also developed legal expertise in issues related to the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups⁸ and has actively promoted the release of children from armed groups or armed forces as well as prevented their recruitment in the first place. In this area too, the ICRC has been working in cooperation with National Societies. An example of this is the support provided for the implementation of Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation Centres (CAR) in Sierra Leone and Liberia in cooperation with other Movement components. Moreover, for the past decade, the ICRC has been implementing an educational programme in international humanitarian law in over 50 countries to explore with young people the ethical and humanitarian issues arising from armed conflict.

Children suffer both the direct and the indirect consequences of armed conflict and violence, which affect them physically and mentally, hindering their educational development. In such situations, the ICRC intervenes at the community level to implement or support programmes in partnership with Movement components and local organizations. Some examples of the ICRC's involvement are: sensitizing both communities and armed actors to the adverse effects of child recruitment into armed forces or groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, projects supporting reunified children who faced protection concerns upon return to their family in Liberia, the setting up of safe play areas in Chechnya, and provision of support for the reconstruction of schools in several locations.

The ICRC's focus, limited to armed conflict, has also been enlarged to include other situations of violence that do not reach the threshold of armed conflict, but which have serious consequences for the lives and well-being of children. These situations that fall below the threshold of applicability of international humanitarian law are "internal disturbances and tensions, such as riots, isolated and sporadic acts of violence and acts of a similar nature."⁹ They represent new challenges for all Movement components and are likely to become more prevalent in years to come, especially armed violence in urban settings.¹⁰

7 The 2010-2011 CABAC consultation excluded tracing and reunification activities because these are areas in which the ICRC has already developed expertise, and of which it has a global overview. Furthermore, tracing does not target children specifically, but rather the population at large. That is why it was decided to leave aside such activities.

8 ICRC, *Legal Protection of Children in Armed Conflict*, February 2003. Available at www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/ang03_03_juridique_newlogo.pdf

9 Article 1, para. 2 of Protocol II of 8 June 1977 additional to the Geneva Conventions.

10 For more information, read the special issue of the *International Review of the Red Cross* on urban violence (Vol. 92, No. 878, June 2010).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since the adoption of the Plan of Action in 1995, the Movement's components have made much progress in protecting children affected by armed conflict and preventing others from joining armed groups or gangs in many parts of the world.

In 2009, the ICRC conducted two feasibility studies on children at risk of involvement in armed forces or armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Nepal. These studies focused on the nature and scope of the problem affecting young people and assessed the ICRC's capacity to respond to their needs in a more relevant and effective manner. Findings highlighted the need for a multidisciplinary approach and strong partnerships with Movement partners.

In 2010, the ICRC therefore decided to renew attempts to conduct a global survey of the Movement's activities to benefit children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. It organized a consultation aimed at mapping the differing practices of National Societies implementing CABAC activities, which concentrated on three main themes:

- reintegration of children associated with armed forces or groups;
- psychosocial support for children affected by armed conflict and violence;
- prevention of violence in urban settings.

Respondents to the survey highlighted the need for establishing closer partnerships, building a Movement approach and enhancing information sharing. In light of these conclusions, the ICRC organized a three-day workshop in March 2011, with the following objectives:

- to share and deepen knowledge of the activities carried out by Movement components to benefit children affected by armed conflict and violence;
- to improve future action by Movement components by strengthening knowledge and sharing practices;
- to renew and foster a Movement approach towards children affected by armed conflict and violence.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Prior to the workshop, participants expressed their willingness to share experiences and learn from others; they saw the workshop as an opportunity to reinvigorate the Movement's discussions on CABAC activities. They also saw the value of getting to know each other and working more closely as a Movement. The workshop was a

success and fulfilled its objectives comprehensively.¹¹ Limitations of time meant that each issue could not be discussed in depth. However, the workshop was a first step towards renewing the Movement's approach and making it uniform. Following up on this meeting, the ICRC and the International Federation will explore ways to improve information-sharing mechanisms or create a platform to enhance Movement coordination on activities related to children affected by armed conflict and violence. Meetings of this nature may also be repeated at the regional level to bring together experts on issues of common concern.

Workshop participants unanimously said that future opportunities for exchange were welcome and even necessary. The ICRC's approach of having all these different actors around one table was appreciated and felt to be helpful. Participants established or renewed contacts and agreed to stay in touch after the workshop. Representatives from African National Societies have already gone one step further by agreeing on mutual field visits; another group of participants suggested establishing a consortium of "child protection countries" within the Movement.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Based on feedback from the consultation and on the participants' initial expectations, the workshop was structured around three main themes: reintegration (part 1), psychosocial support (part 2) and urban violence (part 3). The distinction between themes may sometimes seem artificial because they are often interlinked.

The first day was dedicated to panel presentations that provided an overview of a limited number of field experiences from various parts of the world. On the second day, participants worked in groups and had an opportunity to discuss the various challenges and lessons learned that had been presented in plenary the day before. Discussions concentrated mainly on youth involvement, monitoring and evaluation, and community ownership (part 4). The last day was devoted entirely to Movement coordination. The ICRC and the International Federation presented their perspectives and discussed possible improvements with the participants (part 5).

11 Approximately 74% of respondents to the post-workshop questionnaire were entirely satisfied with the workshop. Most participants expected to be able to network and learn about others' experiences. These expectations were fully or partially met for all respondents: networking, learning and sharing were among the most valued aspects of the workshop. More than half of the respondents thought that the workshop had confirmed their views on working to benefit children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. They saw the workshop as a means of broadening their views, as well as encouragement for and validation of their daily work. Some 42% of respondents found that the workshop had actually changed their views on working with these children.

PART 1: REINTEGRATION

EXPERIENCES FROM NORTHERN UGANDA, SIERRA LEONE, AND BURUNDI¹²

The first set of presentations was dedicated to reintegration programmes in post-conflict settings. The panellists presented their activities in northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Burundi and shared with participants their experiences and lessons learned.¹³

Although these programmes focus on the reintegration of children into their families, schools, communities, and/or into the labour market, their primary objective is to reduce the vulnerability of former child soldiers and street children. Vulnerability goes beyond material considerations; it is not limited to economic vulnerability. Feeling safe, being accepted by the family and the community, being valued and envisaging a future are crucial elements in the successful reintegration of these children. The programmes call for a variety of activities aiming to prevent recruitment and break social isolation: psychosocial support, vocational training, income-generating activities and recreational activities.

ADDRESSING TRAUMA AND BREAKING ISOLATION: PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Children's feelings and emotions are deeply affected during an armed conflict. The resulting trauma exacerbates their sense of isolation. Most programmes therefore acknowledge the importance of incorporating basic psychological support into the activities that are planned.

12 The panel consisted of Alex Ssimbwa, Senior Programme Officer, Uganda Red Cross Society; Morten Madsen, International Coordinator, Danish Red Cross Youth; Christine Tokar, Programme Support Manager, British Red Cross; Victor Fornah, Humanitarian Values Coordinator, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society; Catherine Ransquin, African Desk – International Department, Belgian Red Cross – Francophone Community; and Sylvère Ncabwenge, National Child Protection Coordinator, Burundi Red Cross.

13 Presentations available in a CD-ROM compiled after the workshop.

Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers are trained to perform 'supportive communication'.¹⁴ In certain countries, it is sometimes difficult to talk directly to children because the society does not grant them a voice. The challenge is to get the parents to listen to their children. In Sierra Leone and in Liberia, for example, children often said that the Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation (CAR) staff listened to them more than their own parents did.

Through the CAR programme, children gather in youth groups and socialize among themselves through sports, dance, music and drama, conveying messages of peaceful and harmonious coexistence among their peers and other members of the community. Recreational activities involving parents aim to improve or rebuild the relationship with their children and facilitate the latter's reintegration in school, at home, and within the community.

Two main challenges emerged from the discussions:

- ▶ Counselling is sometimes perceived as a foreign concept. That is why it is crucial to acknowledge traditional healing practices and take them into account. Understanding local customs and incorporating them into the programmes is also a way to facilitate the children's acceptance by the community.
- ▶ How can volunteers support others while they are themselves affected and traumatized? Their proximity to the beneficiaries facilitates interaction but it can also hamper their ability to cope with children's trauma. Staff, too, may need to receive psychosocial support.

14 Supportive communication implies empathy, concern, respect and confidence in the child.

Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation (CAR) centres in Liberia



Proposals for the CAR project were put forward in 1997 from within the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, with support from the Swedish Red Cross. The same method was then replicated in Liberia and adjusted to local needs.

Objectives: To rehabilitate and reintegrate war-affected children through psychosocial and educational programmes, and assist in changing children's attitudes, behaviour and practices, along with that of their families and communities, in order to ultimately reintegrate children in their communities.

Methodology: Psychosocial support (individual and group counselling), community advocacy, vocational training, and income-generating activities.

Beneficiaries: Every year, 300 children aged between 10 and 18 (150 per centre) enrolled for an 11-month programme. To date, over 1,000 children have benefited from the programme in Liberia, in Monrovia in Montserrado county and in Zwedru in Grand Gedeh county (in south-eastern Liberia).

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE: EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES

In armed conflict and other situations of violence, educational systems are often disrupted and children's development hindered. Scholastic support, basic literacy and vocational training help build a brighter future for these children. Not only do they acquire new skills that they can put into practice to earn money, but they also increase their self-esteem. The interaction with other children such activities allow for is also very important for their recovery and reintegration. Making a positive contribution that their family and community will value increases their acceptance, in turn leading to higher self-esteem. This is essential for the long-term well-being of the reintegrated children, as it improves perceptions of them within the family and/or the community, often hostile to the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

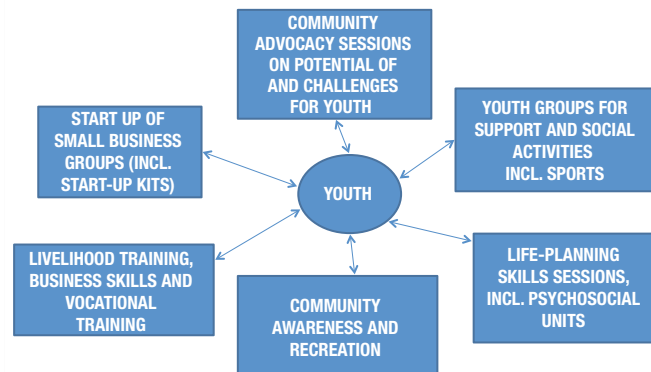
Following up on vocational training, income-generating activities are a core element of reintegration programmes, providing young people with concrete livelihood opportunities. They enable young people to start small businesses and avoid returning to the bush or turning to the sex trade or to other exploitative activities. Income-generating activities go beyond ensuring

economic survival or improving living conditions. They foster acceptance within the community because they give young people an opportunity to play a productive and valuable role in society.

Participants identified two **main challenges** related to educational and vocational support:

- In many African countries, school attendance is low. It is hard to reach out-of-school children and child mothers. In addition, children who have abandoned school for many years may not be interested in formal education. That is why it is important that programmes offer non-formal educational alternatives and organize skill-development sessions that attract large numbers of children.
- Children or young people sometimes consider training programmes as a protective space for a short period of time and lack a long-term plan for their lives. They may receive training to become hairdressers, electricians or mechanics, all urban occupations, while they disregard farming, an activity more useful to the community where they live. Vocational training must therefore be carefully tailored to community needs and to the local labour market. Acquiring unsuitable skills can lead to frustration.

Life-Planning Skills Programme in northern Uganda



The life-planning skills programme is managed by the Danish Red Cross Youth in partnership with the Uganda Red Cross, and supported by the Danish Red Cross.

Objectives: To develop life skills, improve livelihoods and change the community's perception of young people.

Methodology: Peer-to-peer approach, life-planning skills sessions, vocational training, and income-generating activities. Beneficiaries build business plans in small groups and share the profits from their business activities in order to sustain themselves.

Beneficiaries: About 1,000 young people between 12 and 25 years old who were affected by armed conflict, not only those abducted by armed forces or armed groups.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES IN POST-CONFLICT SETTINGS

The panellists pointed out a couple of issues they all encountered during their reintegration activities.

Sustainability and community ownership

The presenters expressed certain concerns regarding the sustainability of the programmes. Reintegration is a costly process that requires long-term commitment. They all agreed that community ownership was the single most important factor in ensuring effective and sustainable programmes. Mobilizing and empowering the community are essential from the outset. The community should feel collectively responsible for addressing child reintegration issues and take ownership of the programme, from designing it to implementing and evaluating it. The panel discussions also covered topics such as:

- ▶ involving beneficiaries and getting support from community leaders (traditional chiefs, female elders, elected community officials, religious leaders, etc.);
- ▶ building on local capacity and forging partnerships with universities: not only on-site training is needed, but also the incorporation of child protection training in university curricula. This will make it easier for local people to take over reintegration programmes – as they will have been taught to do such things as manage projects and provide psychosocial support – and should prevent the creation of a vacuum when international agencies withdraw;
- ▶ thinking carefully about an exit strategy when giving direct assistance in order not to create dependence;
- ▶ the disjunction between planning and achievement caused by a “listening gap” between programme managers and communities.

Local anchoring and bottom-up approach

Panel presentations and discussions underlined the advantages of a bottom-up approach over a top-down one. Practitioners must be aware of local customs and identify existing coping mechanisms in order to anchor their own practices within the community’s structures. For programmes to be effective and sustainable, it is essential to build upon local resources and community channels.

Involvement of volunteers

The role of volunteers in post-conflict reintegration programmes was a recurrent theme in the presentations. Proximity to the community and peer support were identified as factors crucial for success. The involvement of trained young volunteers helps create a familiar and

comforting environment and increases the legitimacy, and the community’s ownership, of the programme. The following conditions for the involvement of volunteers were discussed:

- ▶ there should be a network of volunteers in place before the ICRC or any other Movement component becomes involved. This is not always the case. The pool of volunteers is still comparatively small and may not be well distributed geographically;
- ▶ training and capacity building is key to maintaining volunteers’ motivation, but it must remain simple and undemanding. Volunteers must be able to refer difficult cases if basic psychosocial counselling is insufficient. It is always important to take into consideration the volunteers’ own vulnerability, which may influence their ability to deal with traumatized children;
- ▶ diversifying the activities that volunteers carry out (vaccination campaigns, blood collections, etc.) ensures that they feel an integral part of National Society life and are not limited to working on child reintegration;
- ▶ ensuring long-term and genuine involvement is challenging, yet it is necessary to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the reintegration process.

Acceptance

Mutual acceptance within the family and the community is essential for successful reintegration. Many children targeted by reintegration programmes live on the margins of their community, because they are feared and rejected. Acceptance must be gained by re-establishing family and community links disrupted by the conflict. It is a two-way process that aims to change not only the community’s perceptions of the children, but also the children’s behaviour and their perceptions of the community. However, advocating acceptance means little unless people are also given ways to accept one another. Recreational and income-generating activities have contributed to increasing mutual acceptance, bringing families, community members, elders and young beneficiaries together, improving the communication between them and highlighting the positive contribution these young people can make to the community.

Images and perceptions of the organization are also central to guaranteeing the success of reintegration programmes. Children and communities must feel able to trust the Movement (and other organizations working with affected children): this is crucial. The principle of neutrality was discussed during the session. It is imperative that the Movement’s mission and values are fully understood; they must be clearly stated and incorporated into the programmes.

Defining target groups

The question of whom reintegration programmes should target is an important one. Although all programmes place the child or young person at the centre, the nature of the activities undertaken varies.

Managers of the CAR programme in Sierra Leone and Liberia mentioned the initial scepticism within the Movement regarding projects focusing on a specific target population, e.g. the most vulnerable children. Identifying specific target groups was seen as breaking with the traditional approach of dealing with the population as a whole.

Over the years, reintegration programmes have tended not to limit their activities to children formerly abducted during a conflict, but have targeted other vulnerable children as well, such as street children and orphans. Moreover, programmes that are inclusive have proven to be more effective. They ensure that “invisible” children, equally traumatized and vulnerable, are not discriminated against and can access the programmes without having to identify themselves as former combatants. For that reason, the life-planning skills programme run by the Danish Red Cross Youth, in partnership with the Uganda Red Cross Society, is purposely open to all young people, whether or not they have been directly or indirectly affected by the conflict in northern Uganda. Such an approach avoids stigmatization and reaches a wider public.

The overall conclusion of the discussion on defining target groups was that it was preferable to adopt a balanced approach, evenly dividing the focus between the individual (separating children with special needs) and the community (holistic approach to reintegration targeting the entire community). The gendered approach was also discussed, emphasizing the need for support that was adapted to the specific needs of young women and young men. There was general agreement that the “do no harm” principle must prevail in all cases. Discriminatory criteria sometimes do unintended harm and exclude less visible but equally vulnerable populations, such as girls and young women associated with armed forces or armed groups.

Building a safe environment: Preventive measures and a systemic approach

With regard to the issue of child recruitment, participants underlined the importance of switching from curative action to a preventive approach. Otherwise, reintegration will not go very far and re-recruitment will become the norm. Vulnerable children living in the streets, in extreme poverty, or abused by their families often fall prey to armed forces or armed groups. A more systemic and holistic approach to child protection allows for comprehensive risk analysis, encompassing the whole range of vulnerabilities. Community mobilization is again crucial to building a safe environment and imple-

menting preventive action. Such mobilization can take the form of vigilance committees, children’s clubs, and so on. The question of setting minimum security conditions before starting a reintegration programme was also raised. Ongoing conflict or poor security conditions will obviously jeopardize the chances of successful and durable reintegration.

Technical expertise

Child protection – reintegration in particular – requires a certain level of technical expertise. Although National Societies possess local knowledge, they sometimes lack the expertise necessary in the reintegration process. Therefore, partnerships with other specialized organizations are encouraged. For example, in Burundi, the National Society’s partnership with a local NGO working with street children has been beneficial so far and has also lowered the risk of counterproductive competition or duplication. Other issues were also discussed, such as:

- ▶ regional spillover and expertise-sharing to replicate successful programmes (e.g. Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda);
- ▶ links with academic institutions (e.g. collaboration with Columbia University);
- ▶ rights-based approach versus needs-based approach, in particular the development of a local child-rights culture;
- ▶ need for legal guidance from the ICRC on issues related to international criminal justice and to individual responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law.

PART 2: PSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH

EXPERIENCES FROM PAKISTAN AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES¹⁵

The second set of presentations discussed the psychosocial approach to children affected by armed conflict, based on expert knowledge gathered from various psychosocial projects around the world, and paying special attention to experiences from Pakistan and the occupied Palestinian territories.

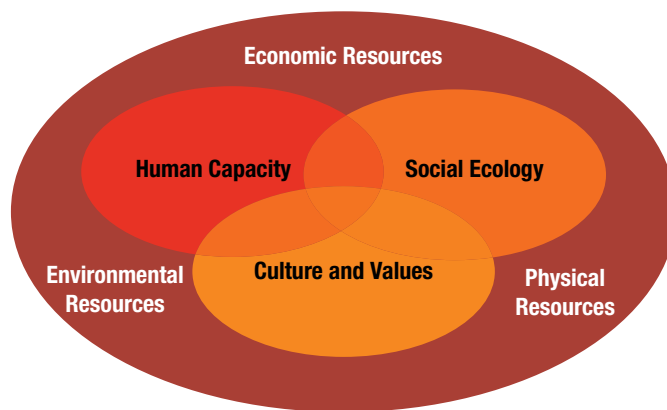
The psychosocial approach addresses both the psychological and the social aspects of children's lives. Armed conflict and violence affect children's well-being and development, directly or indirectly. During armed conflict and other violence, children are at high risk of either losing their loved ones to death or being separated from them. Many children witness violence or themselves suffer violence or abuse. Psychosocial programmes aim to strengthen children's resilience and alleviate their suffering by increasing the level of trust, playfulness and tolerance among them.

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

Psychosocial well-being refers not only to a person's strengths, but also to what is happening in the family, the community and the society as a whole. The concept of psychosocial well-being is best understood by considering three important aspects of a person's life:

- ▶ human capacity – that is the person's physical and mental health, which includes knowledge, skills, strengths and values;

- ▶ the social environment or ecology – which includes the relationships the individual has with others and the support he or she can draw from these relationships;
- ▶ culture and values, which determine the norms and behaviour linked to the society the individual lives in.



The experience of psychosocial well-being is thus determined by the resources the person is able to draw on from these areas of life. It is important to note that psychosocial well-being is also influenced by external factors, such as economic, physical and environmental resources.

Many years of research into children's development and well-being have helped us reach the understanding that there are some very basic conditions that need to be in place for children to experience psychosocial well-being:

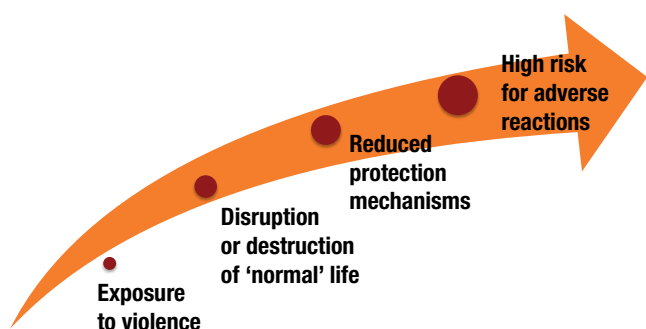
- ▶ **close bonds and relationships**, either with their parents, or with other caregivers. A close relationship helps children to develop trust in other people and in their surroundings, which is also seen as crucial for healthy emotional development;

¹⁵ The panel consisted of Nana Wiedemann, Director of the International Federation's Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support; Amjad Hilal, Programme Manager, Pakistan Red Crescent Society; Despina Constantinides, Clinical Psychologist, Palestine Red Crescent Society; and Lucia Pantella, Area Impact Manager, Save the Children – Sweden.

- ▶ **stability and routines in their daily lives**, which are related to the experience of trusting their environment;
- ▶ **protection from harm**: children are a particularly vulnerable population owing to their dependence on others for survival, and as they grow older, for nurturing and care. Their physical size and comparatively low status in society put them at risk of exploitation and abuse, against which they have a right to be protected.

IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

Armed conflict or other situations of violence can either disrupt or completely destroy the conditions described earlier as essential for healthy development and psychosocial well-being. Both direct and indirect exposure to violence (enrolment in armed forces or armed groups, loss of relatives, displacement, witnessing violence, etc.) – reinforced by the disruption of normal routines and by the breakdown of societal protection mechanisms – greatly increase the risk of adverse reactions.



RESILIENCE AND HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILD

There are two important considerations that guide the implementation of responses:

- ▶ **holistic understanding**: children are not considered in isolation; instead, their situation is analysed holistically, meaning that all the factors that may affect their development and well-being are examined. This is the basis of community-based psychosocial support, which aims to strengthen existing resources around the child and encourage community members to support each other. Activities addressing psychosocial needs take into account the resources of the child and those of his or her immediate network of support, such as parents or peers, and the resources of the community and of institutions and other service providers around the child;
- ▶ **resilience**: resilience is the ability to ‘bounce back’ after experiencing a particularly difficult or challenging situation. Resilience is not something that some people have and others do not. It is something like a process that helps people get through traumatic experiences and cope with stress and adversity. It is a process determined by a person’s inner strengths and external support structures.

The International Federation’s Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial Centre

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation’s Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support has been an outsourced function of the International Federation’s Secretariat since 1993. It focuses on capacity building among National Societies to ensure the implementation of a sustainable strategy for psychosocial support. The Centre also develops generic tools related to the school-based approach, life skills, layman counselling, sexual violence and support for volunteers.

The resource kit: The resource kit developed by the Centre is based on lessons learned and best practices, gathered not only from National Societies but also from a large variety of organizations and bodies that have done similar work with children for many years, and in many different countries. It is not only for children affected by armed conflict, but also for children forced to cope with extremely difficult situations, such as those associated with disasters, HIV and AIDs, abuse, and exploitation.

For more information, visit the Centre’s website: www.psp.drk.dk

COMMUNITY-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

When a psychosocial approach is taken, ways to promote resilience are explored, by studying opportunities to strengthen individuals' and communities' internal and external resources. This means, for example, that the coping mechanisms usually adopted by a community during a crisis are reviewed and analysed in order to find ways to provide support for them. Moreover, an approach based on the concept of resilience implies looking for ways to strengthen the power and abilities that people have, rather than focusing on their weaknesses. The ultimate aim is always to assist people to take care of themselves and of each other.

Psychosocial support for communities affected by the conflict in the Swat valley, Pakistan



J. Oortmans/Netherlands Red Cross

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society provides psychosocial support and education for children affected by the conflict in the Swat valley.

Objectives: To provide children affected by the conflict with a safe place where they can express themselves freely and lead a normal life free from violence; to enhance trust and tolerance among children; to improve the relationship between schools and children.

Methodology: The volunteers and field staff provide psychological services for children in schools and outside, sensitize the parents to the children's reactions and train teachers. The activities consist of:

- psychosocial sessions for school children and non-school children;
- basic training for all teachers in seven government primary schools (5th and 6th grades);
- picnics and cultural events for community children and school children, to **strengthen their ties** to their culture, and traditional games;
- hygiene and health awareness sessions;
- identification of children who are extremely vulnerable and referral for professional treatment when needed.

KEYS TO PROVIDING EFFECTIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

The presentations highlighted a number of factors that were crucial to the success of psychosocial programmes, such as securing the participation of children and parents, taking a school-based approach and contextualizing responses:

- **Children's participation:** It is extremely important to involve the children in question as much as possible in all aspects of the programmes, because they know best what their challenges are, and often what the best solutions are. Although it is not possible in all situations, children have been successfully involved in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating and even reporting on programmes. Involving children in this way empowers them with a variety of skills – such as problem solving. It also increases their self-confidence and improves their communication skills; most importantly, it shows that their opinions are respected and their importance to society is recognized.
- **Involvement of parents/caregivers:** It is vital that parents or caregivers, and other community members, be as involved as possible in psychosocial activities. Their involvement provides children with an external resource, and also increases opportunities for adults to provide support for one another.
- **School-based approach:** It is important to involve not only parents but also teachers in the programmes. School is a very important part of a child's environment. It may also be a site of violence. Combining the community-based approach with the school-based approach is very useful: it will make possible broader coverage of children's protective environment. It is essential to take a holistic approach, one that includes education.
- **Contextualized responses:** There may be similarities between various situations of armed conflict, but we should never lose sight of the fact that every situation is unique, with its own distinctive challenges and solutions. It is also important to make sure that all activities are culturally appropriate.

Community-based and school-based psychosocial support for children in Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories



The school-based and community-based psychosocial programme is implemented by the Palestine Red Crescent Society, in partnership with the Danish, Icelandic, Italian and French National Societies.

Objectives: To enhance the emotional well-being and coping mechanisms of children, parents and community members; to improve the support mechanisms linking children and their peers, as well as their teachers; to enhance the social support mechanisms within communities and strengthen the social fabric.

Methodology: Psychosocial first-aid, support for Palestine Red Crescent volunteers and rescue teams during crises; guided psychosocial support workshops for children between the ages of 10 and 13, to enhance their ability to deal with stress and sadness, increase playfulness, trust and tolerance among them, and improve their relationship with teachers; recreational activities for younger children and life-planning skills for teenagers; community workshops and open days (festivals) to strengthen the social fabric and encourage families and communities to provide support for children; support for parents/caregivers to empower them in their roles, improve their relationship with their children and promote awareness on child protection; counselling for children, individually or in a group setting (peer support).

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Workshop participants discussed the challenges faced by psychosocial programmes and the lessons learned from field experiences in various countries. They concluded that it was important to ensure a holistic approach, a certain measure of flexibility in the programmes, and a bottom-up approach, and also to focus on volunteer training.

Holistic approach: The holistic approach implies a high degree of complexity because it relates to the whole system and emphasizes the interdependence between the various components of a given environment. In practice, such an approach can present a number of challenges, as it requires a broad range of skills, sometimes going beyond the organization's mandate and capacity. Yet, it is this diversity of challenges and the skills needed to cope with them that contribute to making these projects particularly interesting. The combination of the community-based and the school-based approach, for example, seems to be a good mix of methodologies that leads to a

wider outreach and provides comprehensive responses to vulnerable children's needs.

Flexibility: The programme framework for psychosocial support should remain flexible, in order to be able to adjust to an evolving situation and adapt to changing needs. Local anchoring is therefore essential, as was mentioned during the panel discussions on reintegration. The challenge, then, is to know how to generate standardized approaches that can be adapted to different contexts.

Layman's approach: The psychosocial approach is not clinical. Volunteers who provide psychosocial support are not professional practitioners: they are members of the community who have been trained to provide basic psychosocial support. The layman's approach to counselling is one that builds on community resources. Nevertheless, the panellists acknowledged the limits of this participatory approach when it comes to complicated cases that have to be referred to a specialist or require external expertise. It is therefore necessary to secure effective referral mechanisms, including for child abuse cases that need to be referred to higher authorities.

Training volunteers: Volunteers are sometimes hesitant to engage in counselling because they are afraid of doing harm, or simply do not know how to react to the difficult stories children tell them. That is why it is crucial to dedicate special care and attention to National Society staff members and volunteers working in such situations. Ongoing staff training makes it possible to link theory and practice and ensures continuous follow-up and supervision of volunteers. This requires the establishment of structures and procedures, which are costly and time-consuming but nevertheless necessary, since if the helpers themselves are not well, it will affect the beneficiaries and lower the quality of the service provided, thus potentially endangering the project. It is therefore important to help the helpers.

PART 3: VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN URBAN SETTINGS

EXPERIENCES FROM HONDURAS, GUATEMALA AND BRAZIL¹⁶

The panellists shared their experiences of working with children and young people in situations of organized violence in urban settings in Honduras, Guatemala and Brazil. They noticed that they had a lot in common: for instance, they all work in low-income communities where there is a high rate of unemployment and few opportunities for young people; and where the sense of belonging provided by membership in gangs often replaces the need for family life and role models.

The Red Cross programmes in Honduras and Guatemala, as well as the Fight for Peace programme in Brazil, have the same overall objective: to prevent young people at risk of social exclusion from becoming members of gangs by providing them with opportunities for personal development. They all take the view that working in situations of urban violence entails understanding social problems and dealing with the root causes from within the community.

The presentations on violence prevention programmes in urban settings drew attention to the three following common characteristics:

- ▶ Targeted and integrated action
- ▶ Multidisciplinary activities offering alternatives to young people
- ▶ Youth and community involvement

TARGETED AND INTEGRATED ACTION

Violence prevention programmes target young people at risk of social exclusion in violent urban areas. Such precise identification of the target groups allows Movement actors to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized young people, those lacking education and training opportunities. Even so, the presenters agreed that it was more useful to talk in broader terms about the indirect beneficiaries, e.g. the community as a whole, where the young people live. As was the case with the reintegration programmes, targeting the wider environment not only avoids stigmatization of individuals and their communities, but also results in the development of a wide range of activities to tackle the problem of urban violence, in a more integrated and systemic way.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES: STREET EDUCATION, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Violence prevention programmes offer alternatives to gang involvement by encouraging personal development. The projects focus on certain broadly defined subjects, such as education, employment, health and family; but they also address certain cross-cutting concerns, such as the promotion of humanitarian principles and values. The four main areas of activity are:

- ▶ **street education (“meet them where they are”):** to reach young people in their own environment, trying to build trust;
- ▶ **recreational activities (arts and sports):** to explore young people’s individual and collective capacities, raise their self-esteem, reclaim the management of public spaces and improve the image of youth in the eyes of the community;

¹⁶ The panel consisted of Juan José Martínez, Coordinator for the Regional Strategy for Violence Prevention in Central America and the Caribbean (ERPV – Estrategia Regional de Prevención de la Violencia), Spanish Red Cross; Marina Martínez, PAO (Proyecto Ampliando Oportunidades, or Expanding Opportunities) Coordinator, Honduran Red Cross; Simona Ranalli, Country Delegate for Honduras and El Salvador, Italian Red Cross; Wendy Mansilla, Project Coordinator, Guatemalan Red Cross; and Gabriela Pinheiro, Institutional Relations Manager, representing the Fight For Peace Academy in Brazil.

- **psychosocial support:** to encourage young people living in the streets to reconnect with their families and their community. Programmes sometimes include health care (e.g. a medical facility – attached to the community health centre – that provides psychosocial and medical care, with special emphasis on reproductive and sexual health, exclusively for young people);
- **vocational training:** to facilitate the professional reintegration of young people and their families.

The speakers insisted on the importance of education in their programmes. As was noted in previous panels, education equips young people with essential basic skills and opens alternative routes to a better future. Moreover, the combination of education with recreational activities encourages participation and cohesion within the group. Recreational activities are a means rather than an end. They are a way to spark the young person's interest in the programme and an opportunity to start a dialogue with those working in the programme. They also channel young people's energies and reveal any natural leadership skills they may have. Leadership is also a key element of these programmes, which seek to identify potential youth leaders and develop their capacity to think and speak critically about concrete issues and experiences, analyse situations, identify problems, and become agents of change in their communities.

PAO project (Proyecto Ampliando Oportunidades) – Expanding opportunities in Honduras



PAO is a community-based violence prevention project that began in 2002. It targets approximately 8,000 young people aged 12 to 25 in five different neighbourhoods of Tegucigalpa (Colonia San Francisco, Altos de San Francisco, Vista Hermosa, Fátima, San Buenaventura, Tegucigalpa). The Honduran Red Cross runs the project, with technical and financial support from the Italian Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross and the ICRC.

Objectives: To limit social exclusion and promote a culture of peace by providing vulnerable and marginalized youth and their families with opportunities for personal development.

Methodology: The project promotes an integrated approach that concentrates on four main areas: health, education (basic education provided by the EDUCATODOS programme, as well as citizenship education and promotion of humanitarian principles), youth employment (vocational training in technical schools), and family support (schools for parents and promotion of solidarity networks at the community level).

PAO managers are now in the process of systematizing the model and strengthening the coordination mechanisms established with the National Institute for Vocational Training (INFOP), universities, the ministries of health and education, the National Institute for Youth, etc.

Fight for Peace in Brazil: Combining education and sports



Fight for Peace was founded in 2000 by Luke Dowdney in the *favela* community of Complexo da Mare, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to prevent the involvement of children and adolescents in crime and drug-related violence.

Objective: To realize the potential of young people in communities afflicted by crime and violence.

Methodology: The programme uses sports activities that attract young people in the *favelas* and provide them with alternatives to marginalization, crime and violence. The methodology is based on an integrated model composed of five pillars that combine sports with education:

- boxing and martial arts training and competition;
- personal development and formal education;
- youth support services (mentoring and case work);
- job training and work access;
- youth leadership.

For more information, visit the Fight for Peace website: www.fightforpeace.net

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In their presentations, the speakers reiterated the value of involving young people and communities in the entire programme cycle (design, implementation, evaluation). This implies not only working for young people and the community, but also working with them to develop their identities and increase their self-esteem. When young people and communities make programmes theirs, it guarantees success because ownership is linked to greater acceptance and sustainability.

However, all the programme coordinators admitted that keeping young beneficiaries involved until the end of the programme was a challenge. Giving them a monthly food basket, for example, was a good solution: it prevented them from returning to the street to sell drugs to support their families. This point was also made: at the same time, it was important for young beneficiaries to feel committed to the community and not be interested only in material benefits; they should be encouraged to contribute to their community's development.

The meaning of community ownership was also debated. 'Community' is a complex and heterogeneous concept. Participants agreed that one must be aware of the social determinants of power in order to create genuine com-

munity ownership. A mapping of the strengths of the community, the gaps and the potential partnerships in a given geographical area was necessary. Young people could be involved in this mapping exercise.

Paulo Freire's methodology

Most projects dealing with urban violence follow Paulo Freire's pedagogical methodology, which promotes the development of capacities within the community, empowering them sufficiently to allow a measure of sustainability once the project cycle is completed. Freire (1921-1997) was an influential Brazilian educator and educational theorist grounded in Marxist critical theory. He argued that critical consciousness was an educational tool that engaged learners in "reading the world" and questioning their own situation. Students and teachers are equal: both learn, both question, both participate in the meaning-making process. On the one hand, the instructor is just an adviser who provides help when asked. On the other hand, children are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility for their actions and learn by doing. Programme beneficiaries eventually acquire a sense of responsibility and use their newly acquired capacities to tackle problems themselves.

P. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Continuum. 1970; and P. Freire. Education for Critical Consciousness. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group. 2005.

ISSUES RAISED AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

Definition of urban violence: The need to define urban violence came up regularly during the discussions. Does it refer to any kind of violence (including domestic and school violence, not only street violence) happening anywhere in that area (location-based definition), or is it defined as violence involving only small arms or knives? The ICRC responds to organized armed violence in urban settings and has operational expertise that it shares with its Movement partners, while the International Federation has expertise in community-based approaches and addresses self-directed, interpersonal and communal violence. These different types of violence are often interlinked in urban areas. The discussions during the workshop showed that the operational implications of these theoretical definitions are not always clear.

Participants also asked about the role of the State with regard to violence prevention programmes in urban settings. It was acknowledged that the State had a significant role to play because of the underlying social causes of gang violence, in particular the links with poverty and drug trafficking. The programmes that were presented during this panel dealt with young people at the micro-level, but the panellists recognized the existence of a trans-national aspect that was beyond the scope of the programmes.

What are OSV?

In its mission statement, the ICRC refers to "other situations of violence," which is sometimes abbreviated as OSV. While the ICRC operates mainly in situations of armed conflict, it also responds to this growing phenomenon: violence that does not reach the threshold of armed conflict, but whose consequences for humanitarian action can be as serious as those stemming from armed conflict. Working closely with National Societies, the ICRC steps in when its expertise, neutrality, independence and international profile represent an advantage in protecting vulnerable people affected by other situations of violence. The term OSV covers in particular civil unrest, State repression, communal violence and organized violence in urban settings.

Preventive action: The main focus of programmes tackling urban violence is preventive action, which targets youth *at risk* rather than those already involved in gang violence, the latter being difficult to reach for security reasons. Similarities were drawn between the field of reintegration and urban violence: in both situations, perpetrators of violence are not explicitly targeted. The idea is rather to build resilience and develop young beneficiaries' capacity to bounce back. Presenters, nonetheless, mentioned that violence prevention programmes have found favour with gang members, even when they do not take part in the programmes themselves.

The representative from the Guatemalan Red Cross added that, although the focus is on violence prevention, it cannot be said that the programmes prevent violence (meaning that they stop violence from happening or arising) in areas where security conditions are so poor. Moreover, talking openly about violence prevention may stigmatize the population living in the targeted area and endanger the security of the project team and the beneficiaries. It may be preferable to talk about "community development" instead.

Gender focus: Participants indicated on several occasions that it was essential to include a gender-based perspective in all activities to empower both women and men, especially in Latin American societies. Young men need to explore new ideas of masculinity, learn how to conduct themselves with women and change their violent behaviour.

Role models and exit strategy: Role models are fundamental for young people's personal development. In the absence of parents who would normally serve as role models, Red Cross staff or volunteers often play that part, while also serving as a substitute family. This may lead to problems later, when the programme provider's withdrawal may leave the beneficiary with a sense of personal loss. This must be prepared for well in advance to avoid jeopardizing gains made by the programme.

Exporting the model: The presenters shared their willingness to expand violence prevention activities, to systematize the model and to replicate it in other locations. The techniques should however be adapted to local needs, respecting each community's dynamics and way of functioning. The Spanish Red Cross also spoke of the desirability of establishing a Working Network

on Violence Prevention, which would represent all the National Societies involved in such projects, with support provided by the ICRC and the International Federation.

Violence prevention among juveniles in Central America and the Caribbean



ERPv (Estrategia Regional de Prevención de la Violencia), or Regional Strategy for Violence Prevention for Central America and the Caribbean (2008-2012)

The 11 projects supported by the Spanish Red Cross are taking place simultaneously in eight Central American and Caribbean countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The regional strategy came into being at the same time as the PAO project in Honduras (Proyecto Ampliando Oportunidades). The strategy is being implemented with the technical and financial support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID).

Objective: To prevent young people at risk of social exclusion from becoming members of gangs by promoting their rights and responsibilities, strengthening youth involvement in civil society, and incorporating a gender-based perspective into all activities.

Methodology: Increase young people's social and institutional skills and capacities by strengthening youth leadership skills in marginalized urban areas through socio-cultural and recreational opportunities, with special attention to young women, management of public spaces for young people, establishment of youth networks and increased youth participation in decision-making at the community level.

For more information about the Regional Strategy for Violence Prevention in Central America and the Caribbean, visit <http://www.cruzroja.org/pvh/edicom/erpv-en.htm>

PART 4: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

National Societies' activities in the areas of reintegration, psychosocial support and urban violence share certain characteristics and face similar challenges. The three main cross-cutting issues that emerged from the presentations and from the plenary and group discussions were: youth participation, local ownership and monitoring and evaluation.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in securing the active involvement of children and young people in programmes that concern them. Throughout the workshop presentations and discussions, participants reiterated that youth participation had become a vital concern for all those working in the areas of reintegration, urban violence, and psychosocial support.

Youth mobilization and ownership – Participants insisted that programmes were more effective when young beneficiaries were involved. First, getting young people involved in the various phases of a programme results in higher levels of youth ownership and wider acceptance of the programme, which in turn leads to greater mobilization of young people. Second, young beneficiaries should participate in the needs assessment, planning and evaluation stages because they are the best judges of what their needs are and of what is important to their well-being. Finally, active participation in programmes raises their self-esteem and gives them a voice.

Child-rights culture – Youth participation may be an end in itself, but it is also a slow and highly context-dependent process. One major challenge that is frequently encountered is the absence of a child-rights culture in many countries. Local norms often dictate that young people cannot speak for themselves because they are not mature until they reach adulthood. In many societies, inter-generational communication is difficult and adults

sometimes oppose direct outreach to young people. Workshop participants mentioned that the promotion of children's right to participate in all aspects of the programmes also imposes an obligation on adults to listen to and take into account children's views. Programmes that support child-led initiatives and develop youth skills encourage changes in community perceptions. For example, when young people stage plays or are involved in income-generating projects, it forces the community to acknowledge their potential and see them afresh.

Peer-to-peer education – Empathetic and motivated peers are in a better position to help and understand others who are having to cope with similar, difficult experiences. It becomes easier then to break isolation, develop a sense of belonging and create a safe and trustworthy environment, all of which is essential for the success of reintegration, psychosocial or violence prevention programmes.

Incentives to get young beneficiaries involved – It is not easy to secure the long-term commitment of young people. Recreational activities, skills training, and the "copy-cat effect" (wanting to imitate peers) are ways to attract and sustain the interest of young people. Moreover, the participatory approach develops or reinforces such skills as critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making and enables young beneficiaries to become agents of change within the National Society and/or within their communities.

Genuine and substantial participation – Most programmes have incorporated this element and guarantee youth representation at the various stages of the project cycle. However, workshop participants raised the issue of genuine and substantial participation, as there is often the risk of youth participation becoming tokenistic. Care should be taken to ensure that youth participation is not merely symbolic: it should entail equal representation and power sharing, even in external forums. Furthermore,

the holistic approach goes beyond youth participation: it seeks to involve caregivers, key community leaders, local authorities, and other local and international organizations to increase the effectiveness of programmes.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Although local ownership is not the prerogative of programmes targeting children affected by armed conflict and violence, it was one of the topics that was discussed at length during the workshop. Participants unanimously recognized that local ownership was vital to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of programmes in various contexts.

Local ownership is achieved through collective decision-making mechanisms in which the community is fully involved at all stages of the programme cycle. Community members get involved and are motivated to volunteer for a programme because they want to help address problems that affect all of them and because they want to be part of the solution. Ultimately, the community must be able to say that it is their programme, and not something that is entirely dependent on outsiders. Only then can it become sustainable.

Local ownership also ensures that programmes are culturally appropriate. Programme staff concerned with local ownership look for ways to build on existing local resources and learn from local practices. This is crucial to fostering acceptance by the community and winning local support for programmes.

Based on the participants' experiences, it was recommended that a bottom-up approach be followed, respecting local traditions and anchoring programmes in existing practices, rather than implementing alien concepts in a top-down manner. Nevertheless, programme staff may find themselves in a delicate position sometimes: for instance, when they are confronted by community members hostile to a culture of children's rights. The challenge then is not only to highlight existing positive practices within local customs, but also to address harmful practices prevailing in some communities. The other inherent challenge arises from the fact that "community" is rarely a homogeneous concept. Therefore, programmes must also take into consideration issues of representation and power sharing.

An inter-agency review of community-based child protection mechanisms: Seven factors influencing effectiveness

Community mobilization is essential for identifying, preventing and responding to the problems faced by children in armed conflict and other situations of violence. The community is a vital element in reinforcing care and protection for the child. A study conducted by Mike Wessells of Columbia University in 2009 offers guidance for improving community-based practices in the area of child protection and suggests a list of seven factors that determine their effectiveness:

1. **Community ownership:** Community-based groups feel collectively responsible for addressing locally defined child protection issues and experience a sense of ownership over the group's activities.
2. **Building on existing resources:** Programmes should begin with a careful assessment of the mechanisms already in place in the local context to protect and support children.
3. **Support from leaders:** Non-formal and formal community leaders (traditional chiefs, female elders, elected community officials, religious leaders, etc.) who support the project bring trust and legitimacy, give resources such as land, food or even money, and also serve as role models within the community.
4. **Child participation:** When children get involved, their creativity and resourcefulness increase the effectiveness of community-based child protection groups and encourage other children to participate.
5. **Management of issues of power, diversity and inclusivity:** Effective child-focused community groups include representatives of different ethnic, linguistic and religious sub-groups who take an active part in discussions and in decision-making on child protection committees.
6. **Resources:** Programmes require a good blend of human and material resources provided by local actors and by international agencies without undermining volunteerism and local ownership.
7. **Linkages:** Linkages with both formal and non-formal systems (e.g. traditional justice systems, religious groups or NGOs) contribute to diversifying resources, expanding the scope of impact, and building trust among local networks.

This study is one example of the benefits and value of fruitful collaboration between those working in the field and academic researchers. Such synergy should be encouraged to improve practice based on evidence.

Read the full article, "What Are We Learning About Protecting Children in the Community? – An inter-agency review of the evidence on community-based child protection mechanisms in humanitarian and development settings," by Mike Wessells. Available at: http://www.crin.org/docs/What%20We%20Are%20Learning%20About%20Protecting%20Children%20in%20the%20Community_Full%20Report.pdf

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial for the effectiveness of programmes. It is difficult to collect data, and therefore even more important to share information and cooperate with other organizations working in the same field. The International Federation and the ICRC may have a significant role to play in developing guidelines and establishing working relationships with other organizations.

At the start of the programme, collecting best practices would help in designing the project. It is true that it is extremely difficult to develop indicators that can signify the extent to which the differing expectations of young people, families, communities and donors are being met. Moreover, young people should be involved in defining indicators to measure the success of programmes. Timing is also an issue when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Changes in behaviour should be assessed not only in the short term (one to two years) but also in the long term, following an anthropological approach. For example, how do former child soldiers evolve in their community in comparison with a control group, i.e. the rest of the community?

Quantitative tools and qualitative variables – It is important to make good use of mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative. Donors often insist on having quantitative data, but qualitative data is equally important. Defining the variables and indicators is a particularly complex phase of the monitoring and evaluation process. Psychosocial programmes, for example, are unlike clinical studies: it is extremely difficult to quantify their impact. The qualitative dimension is therefore crucial. Moreover, the design of a particular programme and the way the target group is defined will influence the way we set objectives and indicators for measuring success.

Following mobile groups – It is rather difficult to evaluate the long-term impact of a programme on groups that are relatively mobile. A tracking system involving the different branches of the National Society is then needed to make individual follow-up possible, but the beneficiaries must consent to its use.

Contextualized indicators – Indicators are context and community-specific. Well-being, for example, is understood differently by different individuals or groups. It cannot be measured in the same way everywhere. Participatory needs assessments, based on ‘focus groups’ and questionnaires, help to define well-being and to develop contextualized indicators that take into account the beneficiaries’ and community’s perspectives. Standardized tools based on best practices help to frame monitoring and evaluation procedures, but these should be flexible enough to reflect specific needs and should be adapted to the context.

Challenges of the holistic approach – Employing a holistic and multidisciplinary approach complicates the monitoring and evaluation of programmes because a variety of services are provided and the performance of each has to be measured. It also makes monitoring and evaluation more expensive.

Purpose of the evaluation – Evaluations, too often, are donor-oriented instead of being beneficiary-oriented. Reversing this entails persuading donors that measuring behavioural changes over years is more fruitful than focusing on the duration of the project’s existence.

PART 5: MOVEMENT COORDINATION

The discussions between the ICRC, the International Federation and participants highlighted the need to strengthen Movement coordination and cooperation so that the complementarity of Movement initiatives can be exploited to the greatest extent possible.

The results of the pre-workshop questionnaire showed that there were a number of areas in which National Societies wanted support from the ICRC: not only financial support, but also knowledge sharing, development of resource materials and the establishment of a Movement framework for working with children affected by armed conflict and violence.

Participants called on the ICRC and the International Federation to work more closely together on these issues. The example of the International Federation's Global Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response was brought up. It was developed with the help of all the components of the Movement; but further coordinated Movement efforts are needed to realize its objectives.

The International Federation's Global Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2010-2020

The Declaration, "Together for humanity," at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2007,¹⁷ recognized violence as a "leading cause of preventable death, injury and human suffering worldwide." The International Federation's Secretariat, fulfilling its duty to develop global tools, elaborated a document to provide National Societies with strategic guidance for addressing, specifically, interpersonal and self-directed violence. This strategy is the result of a successful collaborative process involving a network of National Societies under the leadership of the International Federation, the Canadian Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. The scope of the strategy excludes collective violence and is limited to interpersonal (bullying, harassment, domestic violence, etc.) and self-directed (suicide and self-inflicted harm) violence.

STRATEGIC VISION AND MOVEMENT COOPERATION

A fast-changing environment, with growing humanitarian needs and operational challenges, has led the ICRC to change the way it works. National Societies are becoming more operational, capable, and assertive. The ICRC and other Movement partners must adapt to that reality.

The ICRC has a distinct obligation to work with National Societies as its primary partners, but it also has obligations to contribute to the wider Movement response. The ICRC strategy for 2011-2014 prioritizes investment in National Society partnerships, with a focus on armed conflicts and other situations of violence.¹⁸ The Strategy builds on existing resilience and capacity, both of the communities and of National Societies. The objective is to be more effective and have a greater impact.

17 Resolutions adopted by the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent available at http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_1108.pdf

18 *ICRC Strategy 2011-2014: Achieving Significant Results for People in Need*. Available at <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-4050.pdf>

Its cooperation policy describes how the ICRC works with National Societies and the International Federation. It explores avenues for being more efficient and effective together. The three key elements of ICRC support to National Societies are:

- ▶ working with National Societies to strengthen capacity in a specific area;
- ▶ working with National Societies to deliver a service, a set of services or a programme to a group of beneficiaries. This can take the form of partnerships with National Societies operating locally or internationally;
- ▶ working with National Societies that are active internationally, to meet identified needs.

The idea is that the different components of the Movement each have specific strengths, each member having developed its own expertise in distinct areas. Partnerships coordinated within an agreed Movement coordination mechanism are the best way of making use of these different kinds of expertise. The ICRC has worked internally and with National Societies to develop a set of criteria for effective partnerships, to know how and when to work together, as well as a set of characteristics to identify what effective partnerships between the ICRC and National Societies should look like.¹⁹

Characteristics of an effective partnership

- ▶ **Needs-based** following a mutually agreed assessment of the situation and of the issues of humanitarian concern
- ▶ Established on the basis of a **relationship** of mutual respect and trust, which both parties want to strengthen
- ▶ Ensures **mutual added value**, incorporating aspirations and expectations of each partner
- ▶ Has a defined **strategy** to achieve the objectives outlined in the needs assessment with both partners considering the objectives as priorities within their capacities and existing commitments
- ▶ Ensures a **transfer of skills and/or knowledge** to increase the partners' capacities
- ▶ Shares **responsibility** for outcomes, by identifying the partners' accountabilities, obligations and aspirations in writing

Criteria for an effective partnership

- ▶ **Access to victims:** quality of relationship with stakeholders in the field (beneficiaries, armed actors, Movement) enhanced for increased safe access to beneficiaries
- ▶ **Enhanced reputation / Acceptance:** of both the ICRC and the National Society among the communities affected, political actors, and stakeholders; there is mutual understanding, and respect and support for each other's mandates
- ▶ **Decision making / Organization:** are facilitated by an effective relationship between the National Society and the ICRC that aims at equity, transparency, trust, mutual benefit and strong communication through the promotion of effective coordination mechanisms
- ▶ **Human resources:** the National Society and the ICRC at local, national and (where relevant) international levels ensure that they have adequate personnel with the required skills to implement the partnership and that they inform all personnel about joint activities
- ▶ **Competitive positioning:** the quality of the Movement response, enhanced monitoring of the environment and a unified Movement strategy give the Movement a competitive advantage over UN and other humanitarian actors

Participants' proposals to enhance Movement cooperation and coordination

The last part of the workshop was a brainstorming session on recommendations to strengthen Movement coordination on issues related to children affected by armed conflict and violence. Four types of coordination were identified: coordination between National Societies, coordination between the ICRC and National Societies, coordination between the Movement and external partners and coordination within the Movement as a whole. The following proposals came out of the discussions:

Regional collaboration among National Societies

The creation of regional clusters should be encouraged among National Societies: these may take the form of operational alliances or consortiums, in order to guarantee closer cooperation on specific issues and thus a consistent or uniform approach to strategic priorities. The school-based psychosocial support consortium in the occupied Palestinian territories, led by the Palestine Red Crescent Society, in collaboration with the Italian Red Cross, the Icelandic Red Cross, the French Red Cross and the Danish Red Cross, is an example.

¹⁹ ICRC Guidelines for Effective Partnership with National Societies, June 2010, DC/MOUV 10/88.

Balanced relationship between participating National Societies (PNS) and operational National Societies (ONS)

After reviewing the relationship between PNS and ONS, workshop participants reached the following conclusions:

- ▶ ONS-led initiatives should be preferred to PNS-driven programmes because ONS have a better knowledge of the context and needs. This also reinforces local anchoring of the programmes, which was identified earlier as a key factor in the success of programmes.
- ▶ ONS should demonstrate their willingness to learn from other Movement partners while assuming responsibilities and taking ownership in matters concerning strategy and funding.
- ▶ PNS should take into consideration both the needs that have been identified and the capacity of an ONS to implement projects, in order to set reachable objectives.
- ▶ PNS and ONS should, together, adopt a long-term vision.

Information sharing

A better information-sharing system would encourage the development of joint policies and strategies.

- ▶ **At the Movement level:** Expert meetings on specific topics should take place more regularly, to share information and best practices and lessons learned among PNS, ONS, the International Federation and the ICRC; youth delegates should be invited to take part. Movement partners, in particular the ICRC, should learn what National Societies do, make better use of their expertise, knowledge and capacity, and endorse existing Movement practices. Establishing a system of exchange would help disseminate internal and external tools and create a community of practice at the Movement level. Building upon existing networks, the International Federation and the ICRC could establish mechanisms to safeguard (or preserve) institutional memory and agree on a common language to describe its work with children affected by armed conflict and violence. A better information-sharing system would encourage the development of joint policies and strategies.
- ▶ **Within National Societies:** Internal communication, particularly between national and international departments, should be improved, and headquarters should regularly exchange information with regional and in-country representatives.

Funding

- ▶ The ICRC and PNS should be more flexible in their funding policy, to be able to cover a wider range of projects.
- ▶ Child protection requires long-term commitment by donors. In post-conflict settings, for example, it is essential to maintain funding to organize follow-up meetings, even when the issue in question is no longer a top priority.
- ▶ Because of their contacts with other organizations and their influence and profile in international arenas, the ICRC and the International Federation can play a role in linking National Societies with potential external donors.

Networking with external partners

- ▶ National Societies should explore the possibility of being part of national child protection committees and other national and/or international coordination platforms (including clusters).
- ▶ National Societies cannot address all the needs of the community by themselves. They should develop an effective relationship or partnership with the public sector (ministries, universities, local authorities, etc.), to be able to work together closely in specific areas of the programmes.
- ▶ A survey should be conducted of the domestic and international reference organizations and the specialized services available, to ensure appropriate referral for children needing legal, social or medical support.
- ▶ The question of working with external partners on data collection was debated. Most of the time, data collection is a very difficult but essential task for which the cooperation of partners is needed. However, sharing information is a delicate matter, and the issues of confidentiality and the protection of personal data are likely to come up.

Learning from others

The guiding purpose of this workshop was to learn from each other. Participants suggested that National Societies learn from existing strategic alliances and agreements with other actors – e.g. agreements between National Societies and UNICEF – and collaborate with academic research institutes. Participants also called for joint training programmes to strengthen National Society capacity and synergy in specific areas (child participation, case management, confidentiality, school-based psychosocial support, etc.). National Society delegates should also be seconded to strengthen inter-agency cooperation, as has been done in Haiti.

Participants also listed specific recommendations concerning the ICRC:

- the ICRC has a role to play in facilitating access for National Societies to remote or dangerous areas;
- the ICRC should clarify its role and expectations, especially regarding psychosocial support, and explain how National Societies can provide support that enables it to reach its objectives;
- the ICRC should encourage capacity building among National Societies and be more responsive to specific requests from ONS.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This workshop was an opportunity to confirm that the components of the Movement had a common mission and a reminder of the importance of working together to alleviate the suffering of children and young people living in areas affected by armed conflict and violence. The ICRC, being the lead agency within the Movement for tackling armed conflict and other situations of violence, is assuming its responsibility for strengthening its partnerships with National Societies, providing support for activities to benefit war-affected children and facilitating dialogue and exchange of views within the Movement.

National Societies are the ICRC's primary partners. Not only do they provide local knowledge and ensure a truly contextualized response, they also offer a network of young volunteers and anchor programmes in the community. They provide the ICRC with the opportunity to work – more significantly – with and for young people and address their specific vulnerabilities and needs by providing multidisciplinary responses. Coordination, orchestrated by the International Federation, is needed to maximize the knowledge and expertise Movement components have in different areas.

The workshop, organized at the initiative of the ICRC, successfully ended the isolation of Movement partners by renewing contacts among them. National Societies greatly benefited from this occasion to meet their counterparts, exchange ideas, discuss lessons learned from different contexts, and identify common issues for future cooperation; attention was drawn to the potential synergy between reintegration activities concerning former child soldiers in Africa and violence prevention among youth at risk of involvement in gangs in urban settings in Latin America. Learning about the experiences of others gave participants a fresh angle from which to assess their own work.

Participants also agreed that cooperation with external partners was essential for extending their knowledge

of the issues that affect children and young people. In the future, activities should be oriented towards raising awareness of CABAC issues and developing methods to gather best practices and disseminate them within the Movement. The establishment of an effective information-sharing system was identified as the first step towards building a stronger Movement approach for CABAC.

Three months after the workshop, a follow-up questionnaire sent to participants confirmed that a formal platform for sharing information was still considered necessary, in addition to the individual contacts participants have made since the workshop. The participants' responses showed that the workshop had led to new joint projects, and had strengthened those already established. For example, the Spanish Red Cross is looking into translating and printing the materials of the International Federation's Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support in order to extend the reach of the Centre. The Belgian Red Cross (Francophone Community) has shared information with the Burundian, Danish and Ugandan National Societies regarding opportunities for South-South study trips. Fight for Peace has been in touch with the British Red Cross in order to link up with its anti-gang-violence project staff. These examples illustrate how the workshop has deepened and strengthened cooperation, and has opened up new opportunities for the participating organizations.

Respondents to the questionnaire also showed interest in a follow-up workshop at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva in November 2011.²⁰

²⁰ Learn more at <http://www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/movement/international-conference/index.jsp>

ANNEXES

- ▶ Overview table of National Society activities
- ▶ Summary of consultation 2010
- ▶ Programme
- ▶ Outcomes from the working groups on Reintegration/
Urban Violence/Psychosocial support
- ▶ Contact details of participants
- ▶ Resources: Key documents produced by the ICRC,
the International Federation, National Societies and
external experts

OVERVIEW TABLE OF NATIONAL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Belgium (French-speaking community)	Dissemination of humanitarian rules Humanitarian education and development of mediation techniques and ways of resolving conflicts	To make children and young people aware of IHL, humanitarian rules and the principles of the Movement.	Educational modules and games (Limito)	6-18 (Democratic Republic of the Congo) 6-25 (Lebanon)	Democratic Republic of the Congo and Lebanon	Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Lebanese Red Cross	DRC: 1998 – ongoing Lebanon: 2009 – ongoing
	Protection of children Protection of children in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To reduce the vulnerability of children (street children, orphans, children previously associated with armed forces and groups, children or young adults who are heads of household). ▶ To prevent the phenomenon of street children and, if possible, to reintegrate them sustainably into their family or the community. 	Community approach directed at children and their families, with the aim of mobilizing the entire community in prevention and in promoting the rights of the child	0-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Burundi (provinces of Ngozi and Gitega) ▶ Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou and 5 peripheral provinces) ▶ DRC (Kinshasa only) ▶ Rwanda (districts of Huye, Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru) 	National Societies of Burundi, Burkina Faso, DRC and Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burundi: early 2008 – ongoing Burkina Faso: 1997 – ongoing DRC: 1998 – 2010 Rwanda: 1996 – ongoing
Burundi	Protection of children Protection of children in general	To reduce the vulnerability of children (street children, orphans, children previously associated with armed forces and groups, children or young adults who are the head of their family).	Targeting vulnerable children (education, health, socio-economic capacity building, vocational training, psychosocial support)	0-18 (sometimes extended depending on the young person's situation, e.g. young person who is head of household)	Ngozi and Gitega	Financial and technical support of the Belgian Red Cross (French-speaking community) for the projects in Ngozi and Gitega EuropeAid joint financing for street children In addition, synergies with Terre des Hommes, Giriyuja, Fondation Stamm, Maison Shalom, etc.	Early 2008 – ongoing (currently, strategic plan 2010 – 2013)
	Protection of other vulnerable children Protection of children in general	To reduce the vulnerability of children (orphans, children previously associated with armed forces and groups, children or young adults who are heads of household, children from very vulnerable families, repatriated children).	Global approach (target the family and the child's environment). Community approach. Contribution from the hillside units.	0-18 (sometimes extended in exceptional cases, depending on the child's situation, e.g. young person who is head of household, vulnerable child at secondary school or undergoing vocational training)	Cibitoke and Ruyigi	Financial and technical support of the Norwegian RC for the projects in Cibitoke and Ruyigi	2009 – ongoing

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Canada	RespectED: Violence & Abuse Prevention Primary prevention in schools, communities and organizations Comprehensive prevention with organizations, communities and National Societies	Create safe environments, free of violence and abuse, especially for children and young people. 4 Focus Areas: ► Implementing violence prevention ► Preventing violence against children and young people ► Promoting healthy youth relationships ► Preventing bullying and harassment	► Capacity-building with local community organizations to educate their own staff and members through a 10-step process. ► Participatory, evidence-based training with certification ► Partnership delivery model ► Cognitive and personal skills training in all 4 focus areas ► On line education	► Adults who work with children and young people ► Children and young people 5 to 18 years old ► Indigenous people in remote, rural and urban communities ► Identification of beneficiaries through NS, community organizations, local communities, online surveys, etc. Number of beneficiaries: more than 4.4 million adults, young people and children.	Americas, Asia, Pacific, Europe and Africa	16 National Societies and partnership with the International Federation for more than 5 years	Canada: 1984 – ongoing In the Americas for 3 years, in Asia for 5 years, in Africa for 3 years, in Australia and Europe for 1 year
Colombia	PACO – Paz, acción y convivencia (Peace, action, and coexistence) School-based violence prevention programme; implemented by the youth section of the CRC	► Prevention and reduction of school violence and urban violence among young people ► Education for peace and coexistence in volunteer training ► Protection and support to children in situations of displacement In general, reduce vulnerability of children (many of them internally displaced) confronted with urban violence and violence in schools; increase their resilience; strengthen protection factors	► Experiential education where recreation is used as a pedagogical tool and participation as a focal point for activities	6-20	Medellin, Bogotá, Sincelejo, Bucaramanga (only in a few schools)	Currently funded by the Norwegian Red Cross	1995 – ongoing

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Denmark	Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) School-based IHL education programme and dissemination activities for children outside the school system	Build EHL capacities (cognitive and social skills, IHL knowledge) among youth in Serbia	School modules	12-18	Serbia	Partnership with the Red Cross of Montenegro and the Serbian Red Cross Technical support from ICRC and the International Federation	2003 – ongoing
	Life Planning Skills Psychosocial support	Develop life skills, improve livelihoods and change how young people are perceived in the community	Capacity building, Psychosocial Life Planning Skills Sessions and vocational training	12-25	Northern Uganda	Managed by the Danish Red Cross Youth (DRCY) in partnership with Uganda Red Cross Support from Danish Red Cross	2009 – 2010 Pilot 2011 – ongoing implementation
	Volunteer Management (pilot project) Promotion and dissemination of humanitarian principles	Recruit and mobilize young people and prevent conflict	Combination of EHL and YABC (Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change) approaches	Under 30	Jordan and Yemen	Danish Red Cross and DRCY, partnership with Jordan Red Crescent and the Danish Youth Council for the Jordan project Partnership with the Yemen Red Crescent and the Danish Institute of Human Rights for the Yemen project	October 2010 – 2012
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Sunga Bana (Help the children) Community support programme	To reduce the vulnerability of 2,160 street children and to reintegrate 390 children separated from their families sustainably into their families (beneficiaries in Kinshasa only)	Dialogue, psychological support, guidance and reintegration	0-18	Post-conflict area (Kinshasa)	Partnership with the Belgian Red Cross (French-speaking community)	1998 – 2010
	Dissemination of humanitarian rules in primary schools Humanitarian education + Development of mediation techniques and ways of resolving conflicts	To reduce violence in schools and elsewhere; to help children develop humanitarian behaviour; to promote mutual aid and to prevent conflicts through the system of mediation	Educational modules, role-playing (EHL methodology)	6-15	Post-conflict area and area affected by OSV (Kinshasa and some provinces)	Partnership with Belgian Red Cross (French-speaking community)	
	Restoration of family links (RFL)	Other (volunteers trained)			Area of armed conflict, post-conflict area, OSV and area at peace		

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Guatemala	Proyecto Jóvenes Activos Marcando la Diferencia (Active youth making a difference) Street-based violence prevention programme	Contribute to enhancement of social skills among young people at risk of social exclusion in deprived urban areas	Play-based, theoretical basis: constructivism (learning by doing), popular education, people-centred psychosocial approach	14-21	Colonia El Limón, Guatemala City	Spanish Red Cross	2009 – ongoing
Honduras	PAO – Proyecto Ampliando Oportunidades (Expanding opportunities) Community-based youth violence prevention project. (self-inflicted, interpersonal and urban violence)	Limit the social exclusion and risk factors of vulnerable and marginalized youth and their families by providing them with opportunities for human development	<p>Strategy of integrated interventions at various levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ approaching young people directly in the streets (street education) ▶ creating spaces where they feel comfortable to discuss their problems (psychosocial attention clinic for youth) or to socialize (leisure centre) ▶ involving families in all aspects of the intervention ▶ transmitting humanitarian values and active citizenship practice through vocational training (technical school) ▶ facilitating inter-institutional coordination ▶ creating or strengthening community networks ▶ encouraging beneficiaries to become community volunteers 	<p>12-18</p> <p>Number of beneficiaries: 8,355 direct beneficiaries in the period 2011 – 2013 (children, young people and their families) and 12,571 indirect beneficiaries (residents of catchment area)</p>	Colonias San Francisco, Altos de San Francisco, Vista Hermosa, Fátima, San Buenaventura (Tegucigalpa)	<p>Consortium with the Italian and the Swiss Red Cross and the ICRC</p> <p>Coordination mechanisms established with INFOP (National Institute for Vocational Training), Universities, Ministries of Health and Education, National Institute for Youth, Christian Youth Association, Institute for Sustainable Development</p>	2003 – ongoing

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Liberia	CAR Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation	To rehabilitate and reintegrate war affected children through psychosocial and educational programmes, assist in changing attitudes, behaviour and practices of the children, their families and communities, and reintegrate them in their communities	Psychosocial support, vocational training, income-generating activities	Every year, 300 children aged between 10-18 (150 per centre) enrolled for an 11-month programme To date, over 1,100 beneficiaries have benefited from the programme	Started in Montserrado County, Monrovia; then the programme was extended to a second area: Grand Gedeh County, Zwedru (South eastern region of Liberia)	Financial support from the British, Swedish and Norwegian Red Cross	2005 – ongoing (but concept being revised)
	Youth Programme Development Youth in schools (School clubs and Girls' Unit)	Build young people's capacities to provide voluntary services to the most vulnerable	School-based activities: YABC (Youth as Agents of Behavioral Change) methodology	3,500 school children	In 144 schools covered by 15 Red Cross chapters	ICRC (financial and technical support), Swedish Red Cross (financial support and leadership in the Girls' Unit programme in Liberia, Malawi and Sweden), and UNICEF in the past	2003 – ongoing
Norway	Street Mediation Programme Mediation/conflict resolution	Enabling young people at risk of engaging in criminal and violent activities to use communication and mediation skills in their everyday life to help them manage conflict non-violently	Violence prevention: education in workshops, peer-to-peer instruction, "learning by doing" Conflict resolution: mediation and conferencing	13-25, youth at risk of engaging in criminal and violent activities (school drop-outs, unemployed youth, young immigrants and asylum seekers) People working with young people (police, child welfare officers and social workers) are also beneficiaries of the programme	Oslo and Tromsø (there are 21 street mediation units altogether) Planned to be implemented in 3 more Red Cross districts by the end of 2011	Close coordination with police (violence prevention task force), social welfare services, child welfare teams, municipal youth clubs, football clubs, mosques Programme is financed by the city of Oslo	2004 – ongoing
Pakistan	Psychosocial Support Programme	Provide psychological support and education to children affected by armed conflict; provide them with a safe place where they can express themselves freely and experience a normal life away from the fact that they are victims of violence; enhance trust and tolerance among children; improve and develop the relationship between schools and children	Psychosocial support and education modules	14,800 beneficiaries between 5-18	Swat Valley, Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa (Pakistan)	Danish Red Cross	2008

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Occupied Palestinian Territories	CABAC School-based and community based psychosocial project. Involvement of teachers, school counsellors and parents or caregivers	Develop children's capacity to play in a safe way; help them regain trust in themselves and others; help them gain tolerance and develop their coping mechanisms	Art, play and discussion groups	10-12 (5th and 6th grade)	West Bank and Gaza	Consortium of National Societies: Danish, Italian, French and Icelandic Red Cross Local Government: Ministries of Education, Welfare, ex-detainees, Youth and Sports. International Organizations: MSF, Médecins du Monde, Mercy Corps, Save the Children Local organizations: YMCA Palestine, Palestine Counselling Center, Trauma Center	2002 – ongoing
	Emergency psychosocial support to children Emergency response following interventions by the Israel Defence Forces	Restore a sense of normalcy to traumatized children	Play and art interventions; discussion groups	5-18	West Bank and Gaza		2000 – ongoing
	Psychosocial centres Individual, group counselling and restoring family links	Provide a safe physical space for members of the community (adults, teenagers and children) seeking basic counselling and advice Supporting detainees' families and individuals with chronic diseases	Individual and group counselling; community workshops, distribution of information material	All ages	West Bank and Gaza	Consortium of National Societies: Danish, Italian, French and Icelandic Red Cross Local Government: Ministries of Education, Welfare, ex-detainees, Youth and Sports International Organizations: MSF, Médecins du Monde, Mercy Corps, Save the Children Local organizations: YMCA Palestine, Palestine Counselling Center, Trauma Center, Gaza Mental Health	2005 – ongoing

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Sierra Leone	Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation (CAR) Rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by the conflict	Rehabilitate and reintegrate vulnerable and war-affected children into child friendly communities	Individual and group counselling; vocational training; community advocacy	10-18	Port Loko, Kambia, Kailahun, Western area, Koinadugu, Moyamba	Financial and technical support of the British, Swedish, Swiss, Canadian, Spanish, Finnish and Icelandic Red Cross, through the International Federation and on bilateral basis	2000 – ongoing
	Youth Empowerment Providing young people with alternatives to joining armed groups	Continue benefits of CAR project for older age group by providing young people with alternatives to joining armed groups	Vocational training; income-generating activities	18-35		Financial support from the Spanish Red Cross	Sept. 2010 – ongoing

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Spain	ERPV – Estrategia Regional de Prevención de Violencia (Regional Violence Prevention Strategy) Violence prevention among young people in deprived urban areas	General objective: transform power structures which contribute to generating violence and reproducing inequalities Specific objective: create social spaces and citizenship-based leaderships that encourage change	Community interventions coupled with advocacy towards State authorities Street-based interventions, using games, art and sports to engage with young people and encourage them to participate positively in their community Identification of natural leaders who are then encouraged to strengthen their leadership skills in a positive way	14-21: young people at risk of joining armed gangs	In urban and peri-urban areas: programme present in 8 Central American countries in which National Societies signed a cooperation agreement with the Spanish Red Cross (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panamá, Dominican Rep., Haiti)	National Societies implementing the programme in Central America and the Caribbean. Financial support from Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development	2009 – 2012
	Estrategia PRE20 (Prevention Strategy 2020) Prevention of risk-taking behaviour among young people	General objective: promotion of a culture of prevention, involving volunteers and the general population as beneficiaries Specific objectives (4) ► raise awareness of the importance of prevention and create a culture of prevention at all levels of the institution ► create prevention agents using principles and values beyond their relationship with the Institution ► create knowledge adapted to the real needs, minimizing risk and avoiding it ► establish a transversal preventive intervention model	Strategy based on informative, formative, participative and direct actions: ► informative: disseminating and gathering information ► formative: educating the community on prevention measures and on changing attitudes and behaviour ► participative: users and beneficiaries are encouraged to take responsibility for setting and reviewing their priorities in connection with interventions and services targeting them ► direct: providing communities at risk with adequate resources, quickly and efficiently Some tools are web-based	All ages	Spain	Spanish Red Cross implementing the programme in Spain throughout its branches network. Financial support from a wide range of public and private partners (Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Labour and Immigration, European Fund for Integration, Accenture, etc.)	January 2011 – ongoing

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
Uganda	Psychosocial and rehabilitation support for children affected by armed conflict in Northern Uganda Humanitarian education, conflict resolution/mediation training, vocational training, income generating activities, child advocacy and rehabilitation/reintegration, social welfare support, psychological support, case management	Providing raw counselling (supportive communication) to children, vocational skills for out-of-school children, scholastic support for in-school children and reintegration of former abductees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Child to child peer sessions, parent to child sessions on children's rights and responsibilities ▶ Train children in leadership and psychological support skills (youth clubs in and out of schools) ▶ Train school teachers in psychological support and case management skills (handling children with special needs and trauma) ▶ Counselling and supportive communication to formerly abducted children (with trained community volunteer counsellors) ▶ Children recreation activities (play, dance, drama...) once a week organized by volunteers to increase interaction and acceptance in the community and reduce stigmas ▶ Life skills sessions for in and out of school children ▶ Advocacy for formerly abducted and vulnerable children (local authorities, parents) 	1,920 school children, 480 out-of-school children and 960 households	Gulu and Lira Districts (4 sub-counties, 24 parishes, 288 villages)	Finnish Red Cross	2008 – 2012
	Sexual and Gender-based violence prevention (SGBV) Humanitarian education, child advocacy and rehabilitation/reintegration, health services, psychological and community support	Reduce the incidence of and provide support to children affected by sexual and gender based violence in Northern Uganda			Post-conflict area	Technical and financial support from the British Red Cross	2005 – 2009

Country	Name and type	Objective	Methodology	Age of beneficiaries	Location	Partners	Start/ finish date
USA	Coping with Deployments: Psychological First Aid for Military Families	Help military families build resilience skills and teach them how to help others; provide information on how to support the children of deployed service members	4.5 hour interactive course presented by licensed mental health professionals who are Red Cross volunteers	Adults	Various	None	Various/ongoing
	The Coming Home Series	Series of modules designed to help military families deal with problems frequently faced during the reintegration period after a deployment; one module focuses on children and the problems they may face	Small group course presented in 90 minute increments; participants choose the module that best fits their needs; led by licensed mental health professionals who are Red Cross volunteers	Adults	Various	None	Various/ongoing
	Masters of Disaster Program	Curriculum is centered on "ready-to-go" lesson plans to assist family members, organizations and educators in educating youth about disaster safety and preparedness Curriculum utilizes fun and engaging lessons to educate children by using hands-on activities and interactive discussions	Two types of kits are available: one for educators and one for families Each of these products contains a comprehensive set of materials targeted for specific age groups of children up to grade eight The programme is also available online at http://www.redcross.org	4-13	Various	Teachers, school administrators, parents	Various/ongoing

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION 2010

INTRODUCTION

Following the endorsement by the Council of Delegates of a plan of action on children affected by armed conflict (CABAC) in 1995, the ICRC and other members of the Movement have implemented a number of activities aimed at protecting and assisting children affected by armed conflict in general, and preventing their recruitment and participation in armed conflict in particular. All these activities, projects and programmes have been implemented in parallel by different National Societies in many parts of the world, using local knowledge and expertise, and with limited consultation with other members of the Movement.

In 2001, a short report and meeting convened by the ICRC to evaluate CABAC²¹ activities by those National Societies that had signed the pledge showed that very little information was available on National Societies' activities aimed at children. In 2003, a consultation initiated by the ICRC to assess the implementation of the CABAC plan of action did not result in a report or in concrete follow-up. Until now, there has therefore been no global overview of Movement activities in favour of children affected by armed conflict, and even less on those affected by armed violence.

In 2010, the ICRC decided to renew the attempt of assessing current practice among Movement partners and provide a global overview, this time enlarging the scope to include armed violence. The 2010-2011 consultation aimed not only to fill that gap but also to open up avenues of dialogue and interaction among Movement partners.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

According to desk research conducted by the ICRC in July-August 2010, 57 National Societies had either pledged and/or were implementing activities in favour of children affected by armed conflict or violence.

In October 2010, the ICRC sent a questionnaire to 43 National Societies deemed to have relevant projects²². A total of 28 National Societies replied (a 58% response rate), 24 of which had activities, projects or programmes related to the issue. The present document summarizes the replies of these 24 National Societies²³.

21 In this instance, CABAC refers to programmes in general related to Children Affected by Armed Conflict, as outlined in the 1995 Plan of Action, and not specifically to school-based psychosocial programmes implemented in the occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan and elsewhere.

22 It should be noted that activities related to tracing and family reunification of children are not included in these projects.

23 The 24 National Societies which reported activities, projects or programmes related to the issue were: Afghanistan, Armenia, Belgium (Francophone), Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Sierra Leone, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, Uganda.

Part 1 – Quantitative results based on answers to the questionnaire

1. Age of beneficiaries

A majority of the beneficiaries fall within the **12-18** age range, followed by the **5-12**. Only 3 National Societies included **0-5** year-olds while 9 focused on young people between **18-25**.

2. Do you target children in general, children at risk of being affected by armed conflict or armed violence, or children already affected?

Projects were equally balanced between these three categories. However, some respondents worked with all three categories of children, others with two categories and yet others replied "children in general" meaning one or both of the other categories.

3. How would you describe the area where you carry out activities in favour of children affected by armed conflict or violence?

Eleven respondents said they worked in **post-conflict areas**, followed by nine in **other situations of violence**, seven in **non-conflict areas** and only five in **conflict areas**. Some respondents had programmes in more than one area.

4. How do you reach your target groups?

In order of importance, respondents reached children and young people essentially through:

- ▶ psychosocial support
- ▶ humanitarian education (IHL/values and principles)
- ▶ community support
- ▶ cognitive and personal skills training

To a lesser extent, activities included:

- ▶ conflict resolution/mediation training in situations of interpersonal conflict
- ▶ social welfare support
- ▶ vocational training
- ▶ health services (preventive, medical treatment and/or physical rehabilitation)
- ▶ child advocacy
- ▶ income generating activities
- ▶ legal support

5. Are your beneficiaries involved in the project at any stage? If, yes, at what stage?

Only three respondents **did not** involve their beneficiaries (children/young people) in the project cycle. Although the overwhelming majority did involve them, it was mainly at the implementation or evaluation level, or a combination of both. Only seven respondents involved beneficiaries at all three levels: design, implementation and evaluation. At the implementation level, beneficiaries were often involved in peer to peer training or advocacy.

6. Have you conducted reviews or evaluations of your project?

A little over half of respondents said they had carried an evaluation. In follow-up conversations, many participants recognized this was an area for improvement.

7. Do you work in partnership with other organizations or Movement members?

In terms of partnerships, an overwhelming majority of projects (23) involved other National Societies, especially Participating National Societies (PNS), 18 were conducted with organizations outside the Movement, 17 with the ICRC and eight with the International Federation.

8. Additional value, if any, of potential support from the ICRC to NS activities related to children and/or young people?

Providing financial support was at the top of the list, followed by:

- developing a long-term Movement strategy on the issue
- supporting the development of programmes
- supporting the development of resource materials and the transfer of knowledge
- facilitating knowledge sharing among National Societies and within the Movement (via workshops and online)

To a lesser extent, ICRC support was deemed useful in:

- providing training
- placing the issue of children affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence on the agenda of Statutory Meetings, such as the International Conference
- facilitating access to beneficiaries

Part 2 – Qualitative results based on follow-up phone interviews

Following conversations with 26 people from 18 National Societies and from the International Federation, it gradually became clear that practitioners working with children affected by armed conflict and violence could be broadly divided into three groups:

1. Those working with children affected by an ongoing situation of conflict or a conflict only recently ended or winding down.

In such situations (e.g., occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan), response to psychological trauma tends to be the priority and, therefore, **psychosocial support** the preferred response. Children are given the necessary space to express their feelings, using art and drama as vectors. Indicators of success in drawing children out and achieving some measure of psychological well-being are: trust, tolerance and playfulness. Teachers, parents and caregivers are encouraged to become active participants in the programme.

2. Those working with children in post-conflict situations

In such situations, (e.g., Burundi, DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Northern Uganda), although psychosocial support is often used to deal with past trauma, the emphasis is on programmes that will facilitate children's reintegration (into their family, school, the community, within a profession or productive activity). **Advocacy** vis-à-vis families and communities, together with counselling and material support to vulnerable families, **cognitive and personal skills training** for young beneficiaries, as well as **vocational training**, are activities of choice to achieve the aim of **reintegration**. Partnerships are established with local artisans to facilitate apprenticeships. In certain cases, to avoid reintegrated children/young people being perceived as burdens by the community, they are supported in participating in **income-generating activities**.

With regards to **vocational training** in Africa, one issue that stood out was that, even though this may seem, intuitively, as an essential step towards reintegration, in practice, it can be costly to implement and not always effective, given that market outlets for skills are scarce. Young people may train as mechanics, carpenters, hairdressers or tailors, and may even receive start-up kits to set up their small businesses, but in the communities where they live, people often don't have the means to pay for such services.

3. Those working with children/young people in situations of urban violence

In such situations (mainly Central America, the Caribbean and Colombia), the emphasis is on children **at risk** of social exclusion and of joining armed gangs/groups. The focus is therefore on **prevention**, including

violence prevention. Some of these prevention activities can be done:

- ▶ **In schools**, through curricular or extra-curricular programmes. These programmes often use play-based methodologies to impart certain humanitarian values, such as tolerance, responsibility, honesty or solidarity. As such, they are a form of “peace education”. As the school can be considered a microcosm of society, it is often a good platform to reach families and the community at large.
- ▶ **Directly in the street**, by offering children at risk recreational, sports and artistic activities through which they can develop their self-esteem and their leadership skills. Emphasis is placed on reinforcing the capacities and skills of natural leaders with a view to re-channelling their energies towards activities benefiting the community. Such programmes also seek to reclaim public spaces through art.
- ▶ **Through integrated programmes** implemented in a specific neighbourhood. By “integrated programmes” we mean those that address an issue from different angles: health services, psychosocial support to young people and their families, creation of recreational spaces, education for school drop-outs, education in responsible citizenship for parents, vocational training, creation of micro-businesses. The idea of “integration” also extends to the creation of partnerships with other institutions, including national or local authorities (Ministry of Health, of Education), universities or vocational training centres. Such an integrated programme also encourages the creation or consolidation of solidarity networks, in which volunteers from the community itself are active.

Common threads/recurring themes

- ▶ The issue of sustainability and how to achieve it was an issue that came up regularly. Most respondents underlined the importance of a community-based approach in order to achieve sustainability. Such an approach could take several forms: from involving parents and caregivers, teachers and other members of the community in the programme, to encouraging beneficiaries (children, young people and adults) to become volunteers in the programme.
- ▶ Many respondents mentioned the fact that, for a project or programme to be successful, it was important to establish partnerships or cooperation agreements with other actors: other Movement members, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local associations, UN organizations or, even more importantly, as they are there to stay, institutional entities (local authorities, Ministries, State universities etc.). By the same token, it was important to “plug into” existing community solidarity networks or reinforce them.

- ▶ The gamut of needs of children and young people affected by armed conflict or violence range from:
 - the very basic (food, shelter, health care, especially in African contexts)
 - psychosocial support (as a response to trauma, through individual or group counselling or through art therapy)
 - recreational needs (“occupation of free time”, especially in Latin America)
 - educational needs (usually, basic education, although in some instances, up to university level)
 - the need for vocational training
 - involvement in income-generating activities

Some National Societies focus on one particular need (psychosocial, for example), but most try to address a wide range of needs in a holistic manner.

- ▶ Many respondents found that, in terms of prevention, schools were an ideal place for interventions, as they represented a microcosm of society, and, through students and teachers, parents and other members of a community could be reached and involved, helping to make the children’s environment more secure.
- ▶ Most respondents agreed that monitoring and evaluation was very important. However, only a little over half had conducted an evaluation of their programme/projects.
- ▶ Many respondents felt that one advantage the Movement had in implementing programmes for children affected by armed conflict and violence was the ability to count on a large reservoir of Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers (often young people themselves) embedded in the target community.

CONCLUSION

The consultation established the fact that, since the 1995 Plan of Action, many National Societies had embarked on programmes and activities aimed at either alleviating the suffering of children caught up in an armed conflict, reintegrating those affected by the aftermath of a conflict and preventing vulnerable children from joining armed groups and gangs. Broadly speaking, three distinct groups or categories emerged, dictated by the necessities of the type of conflict addressed and, to some extent, geographical considerations: reintegration and child protection in Africa, a psychosocial approach in the occupied Palestinian territories and Pakistan and violence prevention programmes (aimed mostly at adolescents and young adults) in Latin America. Although many of the programmes are, to a large extent, “home-grown” and respond to specific local needs, they also share many similar tools and approaches, even across very different continents. This shows that programmes can be contextualized and use “universal” tools.

Most respondents understood the value of working in partnerships and most, if not all, were working with a Movement partner, NGOs, the UN or local institutions or associations.

However, it also emerged from the consultation that, beyond obvious “communities of practice” (for example, Latin America and Spain with violence prevention), most of the respondents were not aware of what other National Societies were doing and expressed a strong interest in filling this knowledge gap. They welcomed the idea of meeting other National Societies from different continents to share best practices and discuss lessons learned.

PROGRAMME

Monday 14 March 2011

Time	Session	Theme	Presentations
09:00 – 09:45	Welcome Presentation of participants Introduction		Kristin Barstad, Chairperson, ICRC Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC Angela Gussing, Deputy Head of Operations, ICRC
09:45 – 10:30	Panel	Reintegration: Experiences from Sierra Leone, Uganda and Burundi Community-based approach and wrap-up	Morten Madsen, Danish Red Cross (RC) / Alex Ssimbwa, Uganda RC Christine Tokar, British RC / Victor Fornah, Sierra Leone RC Catherine Ransquin, Belgian RC / Sylvère Ncabwenge, Burundi RC Mike Wessells, Columbia University
Coffee break			
11:00 – 12:30	Panel	Reintegration	Continued
Lunch			
14:00 – 15:35	Panel	Psychosocial approach Experiences from the occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan	Nana Wiedemann, Reference Center for Psychosocial Support, International Federation Amjad Hilal, Pakistan Red Crescent Despina Constandinides, Palestine Red Crescent Lucia Pantella, Save the Children
Coffee break			
16:00 – 18:00	Panel	Urban Violence Experiences from Honduras, Guatemala, Brazil	Marina Martínez, Honduran RC / Simona Ranalli, Italian RC Wendy Mansilla, Guatemalan RC / Juan José Martínez, Spanish RC Gabriela Pinheiro, Fight for Peace Academy

Tuesday 15 March 2011

Time	Session	Theme	Animation
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome Organization of the day		Kristin Barstad, Chairperson, ICRC Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
09:30 – 10:40	Group work	Psychosocial Reintegration Urban violence	Facilitators, ICRC
Coffee break			
11:10 – 12:40	Working groups visit each other	Psychosocial Reintegration Urban violence	Facilitators, ICRC
Lunch			
14:00 – 15:15	Sharing the results of working groups	Psychosocial Reintegration	ICRC Facilitators/Group rapporteurs
		Summary	Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
Coffee break			
15:45 – 16:50	Sharing the results of working groups	Urban violence	ICRC Facilitators/Group rapporteurs
		Summary	Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
16:50 – 17:00	Closure of the day		Kristin Barstad, Chairperson, ICRC

Wednesday 16 March 2011

Time	Session	Theme	Animation
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome		Kristin Barstad, Chairperson, ICRC
	Organization of the day		Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
09:15 – 10:00	Presentation	Cooperation within the Movement – ICRC perspective	Donna Williams, Head of Sector, Cooperation and coordination within the Movement, ICRC
		Cooperation within the Movement – International Federation perspective	Katrien Beeckman, Head of Principles and Values Department, Federation
10:00 – 10:30	Open discussion	Cooperation within the Movement; observation of past experiences	Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
Coffee break			
11:00 – 12:15	Group work	Cooperation within the Movement	ICRC Facilitators
Lunch			
13:45 – 15:15	Sharing the results of group works	Cooperation within the Movement	Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
Coffee break			
15:45 – 16:00	Evaluation of the workshop	Learning, dynamics, possible improvements	Christiane Amici Raboud, Facilitator, ICRC
16:00 – 16:30	Closure of the workshop		Bruce Biber, Head of Division, Cooperation and coordination within the Movement, ICRC

OUTCOMES FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

Brainstorming on REINTEGRATION

1. Lessons learned

- ▶ Anchoring
 - Being open to existing practices / traditions / structures
 - Analysis of success in an evolving environment
- ▶ Holistic approach
 - 7 effectiveness factors
 - Balance between community and individual approach
- ▶ Time factor
 - Long-term commitment
 - But short-term programmes can also have long-term benefits
 - Acknowledging the process and pacing of the community
- ▶ Don't forget adolescents
- ▶ Learn from “overseas” experience in reintegration programmes in Europe (former child soldiers, refugees)
- ▶ Two-way process: Acceptance of the child by the community and vice-versa
- ▶ Image and perception
 - of those working with children / young people
 - of young people / children in the community and in the media
- ▶ Importance of gendered approach
 - in needs assessment
 - in programme planning

2. Youth involvement

- ▶ Get the beneficiaries on board and keep them in on the long-term (youth forums / clubs, leadership trainings)
- ▶ Need to attract rural youth with recreational activities and education
- ▶ Peer-to-peer: need to establish trust among the group members, opportunity to share a common problem
- ▶ Support and promote children-led initiatives
- ▶ Convince local authorities of the value of involving young people in the development of the community

3. Monitoring and evaluation

- ▶ Engage young people in the evaluation process, including the definition of the success indicators
- ▶ Be clear on definitions: objectives and target groups
- ▶ Set baseline at early stage
- ▶ Time factor
 - Short-term: 1-2 years
 - Long-term (anthropological approach)
- ▶ Mixed methods: quantitative and qualitative; appreciative inquiry, change in behavior

Brainstorming on URBAN VIOLENCE**1. Lessons learned**

- ▶ Define urban violence
- ▶ Define a vision
- ▶ Understand causes / social determinants of urban violence
- ▶ Mapping of geographical areas (strengths, risk assessment, partnerships)
- ▶ Ownership / power
- ▶ Holistic
- ▶ Start simply and prepare for complexity
- ▶ Always remain focused
- ▶ Impact – Prevention – Sustainability – Partnership

2. Youth involvement

- ▶ Youth participation in the whole intervention's process
 - Red Cross/ Red Crescent youth (leadership trainings)
 - Community youth (open spaces in schools, family, health centers, etc.)
- ▶ Raise youth skills to achieve personal and community psychosocial wellbeing
- ▶ Youth participation in external coordination platforms
- ▶ Enhance peer education as key methodology for youth involvement
- ▶ Include community (stakeholders, community leaders, National Society governance, families, local NGOs, etc.)

3. Monitoring and evaluation

- ▶ Know the context very well
- ▶ Have very precise indicators that are measurable (simple, specific, not too many)
- ▶ Build the baseline based on the context and the chosen indicators
- ▶ Make sure young people (and other beneficiaries) participate in the evaluation
- ▶ Respect the uniqueness of each intervention
- ▶ Use mixed evaluation methods (quantitative and qualitative), taking into account the context
- ▶ Written lessons learned to share with other Movement partners

Brainstorming on PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

1. Lessons learned

- ▶ Clarify terminology (CABAC/ Psychosocial Support) and “system-ize” information sharing within the Movement
- ▶ Adjust intervention methodology according to target groups
 - Holistic
 - Flexibility
 - Encourage ownership and trust
 - “Layman” approach
- ▶ Anticipate challenges
 - Standardization vs. contextualization
 - Building on local capacities and strengths
 - “Self-care” (volunteers / staff)

2. Youth involvement

- ▶ Needs assessment and planning – involving young people and children, recognizing limitations and options
- ▶ Involvement of caregivers and key leaders to support the programmes and ensure child participation
- ▶ Meet young people where they are: build on something familiar with innovative components
- ▶ Making participation and involvement attractive: “cool factors”, acquire skills (volunteering, fundraising, etc.)

3. Monitoring and evaluation

- ▶ Challenges:
 - “Soft” sector rather than clinical approach
 - Following mobile groups
 - Indicators are context and community-specific (wellbeing is perceived differently)
 - Balance between best practices / standardization and flexibility / needs based / participatory approach
 - Holistic approach: complexity / cost of monitoring and evaluation
 - Purpose of evaluation? (Donor vs. communities)
- ▶ Overcoming the challenges
 - Development of quantitative tools measuring qualitative variables
 - Individual follow-up when feasible and tracking system /protocols (follow-up and beneficiary’s consent)
 - Participatory needs assessment leads to tailored indicators: focused groups, risk and resilience questionnaires
 - “Balanced approach”: flexibility / recognizing best practices.
 - Holistic (systemic / individual)
 - Advocacy

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RESOURCES

Note: The following list is a selection of useful resources for practitioners working with children and youth affected by armed conflict and violence. It includes publications produced by National Societies, the International Federation, the ICRC and other external publications. It is not meant to be a comprehensive bibliography.

- I. General
- II. Reintegration
- III. Psychosocial support
- IV. Urban violence
- V. Youth participation
- VI. Community-based mechanisms
- VII. Monitoring and evaluation

I. General

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