



# Red Cross Red Crescent perspective on aid effectiveness

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## About us

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year through our 186 member National Societies. Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by Strategy 2020 – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to 'saving lives and changing minds'.

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

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**Cover photo: Turkish Red Crescent action after a powerful earthquake, magnitude 7.2 shook southeastern Turkey on October 23 2011, triggering the collapse of buildings and killing scores of people. © Turkish Red Crescent**

## Principles for aid effectiveness

Aid – through resource and knowledge transfers among countries and communities - is a valued expression of mutual solidarity that recognises our inter-dependent peoples and planet. This is all the more important in the context of a fast changing world where new needs, risks, insecurities and other vulnerabilities arise and interact in complex ways. At the same time, scientific and technological progress along with modern communications and networking methods are creating unprecedented opportunities to join effectively together to solve common problems and achieve common good.

Aid can play an effective role in catalysing sustainable development if its provision is aligned with partner countries' own policies and strategies. This happens when states lead and own their development processes and their authorities are held accountable for effective delivery by their own communities. The will and capability to do this must ultimately come from within communities and countries but judiciously given aid may help to nurture and grow capacities to do so effectively.

Conversely, poorly designed and executed aid for development programming can be harmful when it creates dependency or disincentivises states' own allocations to productive objectives. When that happens, the social contract between governments and their citizens that is so essential to the long-term stability and functioning of countries, is weakened. This is all the more important in the so-called fragile states.

Financial aid to meet basic human needs through measures that directly reduce poverty and vulnerability should never be linked to the requirement to procure goods and services from the aid providing country. This is for both moral and ethical reasons as well as on efficiency grounds.

Transparency and accountability for effective results should be considered essential conditions for aid provision not just to ensure that best value is obtained but also to raise standards and sustain the confidence of public, governmental and other donors in aid transfers and international systems for development cooperation.

Nowadays, most poor and vulnerable people on the planet live not just in the traditionally least developed countries but within middle and higher income countries. The relative aspects of deprivation are also changing as emotional and psychological factors as well as social exclusion and violence assume greater prominence alongside income poverty. The implication for aid effectiveness is in terms of its targeting to tackle divisive inequalities and in its design to meet more complex needs. This goes well beyond usual concerns over the volume of financial aid transfers.

In parallel, patterns of giving have changed considerably with the rise of philanthropic, corporate, NGO, and public donations in comparison with wide fluctuations in official governmental donor assistance. At the same time, resource transfers within countries and communities from the better to the less well-off are getting more significant especially in middle income countries. New government donors are also coming forward. This implies the need for wider inclusion and better coordination in designing regimes for aid effectiveness at both national and international level.

The principles in the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* and the *Accra Agenda for Action* - domestic ownership, donor alignment and harmonisation, and

managing for results with mutual accountability – remain as relevant as ever. However, the context for their application has evolved considerably. This is due to a world order that has altered so much in terms of power and influence between nations as well in the social and economic relations within them. In addition, cross-border communities and networks of interest are assuming greater influence across a globalised world.

In conclusion, a new deal for development cooperation that recognises these changing realities would increase aid effectiveness. This includes the explicit recognition that while governments bear ultimate responsibility for the welfare and well-being of their citizens, they cannot do everything in development by themselves. Thus the organised participation of their communities themselves is a vital contribution to progress. This is the context for the Red Cross Red Crescent role in development.

## The Red Cross Red Crescent in development

The Red Cross Red Crescent is well known in our emergency humanitarian role but we are equally active in development because we are present not just during disasters and wars but also much beforehand and long afterwards.

The Red Cross Red Crescent approach to sustainable development is outlined in our *Position Paper* which describes the foundations of our development role. This is based on our recognised mandate under international and national laws, our domestically-driven organisation, our special position in national life as legally-defined auxiliaries to governments, and our long-term outlook, substantial capacities, universal acceptability of our trusted volunteer-based network, and our permanent institutional presence locally, nationally, regionally, and globally.

These advantages are highly beneficial to governments and other partners wanting to leverage greater impact through working with and channelling resources through our network. For example, the *added* global value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteering is estimated at approx. US\$ 6 billion annually, with twenty unpaid volunteers magnifying the paid labour of every one of our staff.

Our vision of development is described in our *Strategy 2020*, adopted in 2009 by the General Assembly of the International Federation of 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Our specific contribution to development is through services in relation to disasters, health, and social provision that are guided by our Fundamental Principles and designed to

- prevent and reduce the underlying causes of vulnerability;
- build resilient and inclusive community and civil society capacities;
- change mindsets for societal and personal transformation.

The International Federation including our global secretariat and each of our National Societies welcome partnerships with governments, international and multilateral organisations, academics, NGOs and the private sector in furthering our practical contribution to development in the above service areas.

We are committed to accountability with all our stakeholders through our Federation-wide Reporting System. This strives to bring consistent

transparency on what we do with the resources entrusted to our stewardship and the impact we achieve. We are developing a system for the organisational capacity assessment and certification of our National Societies that is aimed at promoting standards of excellence for all our work.

## Partnering with the Red Cross Red Crescent in development

Public authorities and their National Societies as auxiliaries enjoy a distinctive and balanced partnership, entailing mutual responsibilities and benefits that are of direct value to enhancing aid effectiveness. This can be strengthened further in several ways. Governments can:

- strengthen the domestic legal basis for their National Societies through sound and specific Red Cross Red Crescent laws that are guided by globally agreed norms to that effect.
- create the conditions for more favourable access by National Societies to people in need, in all circumstances and especially in fragile circumstances such as during and after conflicts and disasters.
- Ensure a predictable, regular, and long-term flow of resources adapted to the operational needs of National Societies for the provision of services agreed in each context as well as for their sustainable organisational development.
- Recognise the wider benefits of volunteering for promoting development, and thus encourage public authorities at all levels to improve the environment within which volunteers operate, so that National Societies can increase the scale and the scope of volunteer service delivery. This includes, specifically,
  - Appropriate legal recognition of volunteers/volunteering activities;
  - Clarity with regard to employment and volunteerism;
  - Laws facilitating volunteerism from all sectors of society, regardless of employment status, gender, age, and any other forms of discrimination;
  - Appropriate protection for volunteers including clarity in responsibilities and liabilities and assurances for the health and safety of volunteers;

Finally, noting that National Societies are often the implementers of funds that go through other multilateral bodies, governments are requested to recognise the multilateral status of the International Federation itself. Contributions to the Red Cross Red Crescent are 100% DAC-eligible under OECD rules.



# The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** / The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** / It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** / In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** / The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** / It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** / There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** / The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



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