



# Power of humanity

Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross  
and Red Crescent Movement

22-23 June 2022, Geneva

## SUMMARY REPORT ON WORKSHOP

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### Movement Approach to Education

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**Date and time:** 5 May 2022, 9–10:30am and 5–6:30pm (Central European Summer Time)

**Chair:** Alasan Senghore, Secretary-General of the Gambia Red Cross Society

**Speakers:**

- **Werner Kerschbaum**, IFRC Special Envoy on Education
- **Kristin Barstad**, ICRC Head of Operations Thematics
- **Silje Wilhelmsen**, Norwegian Red Cross Senior Adviser on Access to Education
- **Nazeli Kirakosyan**, Armenian Red Cross Head of Organizational Development
- **Kimmo Juvas**, IFRC Branch and Volunteer Development Delegate in Azerbaijan
- **Nataliia Petrenko**, Ukrainian Red Cross Education in Emergencies Coordinator
- **Iryna Aleksyeyeva**, ICRC Access to Education Manager in Ukraine
- **Charlotte Tocchio**, IFRC Humanitarian Education Coordinator
- **Mark Chapple**, ICRC Head of Education

## Executive summary

Since the adoption of the resolution “[Education: Related humanitarian needs](#)” at the Council of Delegates in 2017, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the global education network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reiterated the need for a well-coordinated, complementary and collaborative approach to education, and so together started shaping and testing what this would mean and entail in concrete terms. The workshop provided the opportunity to take stock of the progress made at strategic, institutional and operational levels towards strengthening Movement coordination and collaboration to ensure individuals’ safe, continuous and equitable access to quality education at all times, especially in situations of crisis. It enabled the sharing of experiences, lessons learned and recommendations in this regard and prompted discussions around related opportunities, challenges and resources needed for support. Finally, it contributed to reaffirming interest in and support for featuring such a Movement approach at the next statutory meetings.

## General observations and key highlights

The survey conducted prior to the workshop, during which the results were presented, showed that the [Movement approach to education](#) is already under way. It confirmed the overall findings from the IFRC 2017–2018 desktop study in terms of the proportion and variety of education-related activities undertaken by National Societies, often in collaboration with other Movement components and education authorities,

in situations of armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies as well as in peace and non-emergency contexts.<sup>1</sup> Survey respondents<sup>2</sup> also gave important information on the way forward as they highlighted the need to strengthen each other's capacity to do more, including through joint training, sharing of expertise and experience, and securing additional human and financial resources.

The **IFRC** recalled that education is at the heart of the Red Cross and Red Crescent mission and an area of work in which the Movement components have been engaged almost since their creation. It reiterated the importance of Resolution 6 of the 2017 Council of Delegates and the [IFRC Strategic Framework on Education 2020–2030](#) as key milestones towards positioning – for the first time in its history – education as a strategic area of work for the Movement. To live up to its commitment to ensuring that all individuals can safely, continuously and equitably access quality education opportunities, the Movement was encouraged to do more and better in order to: (1) dismantle the barriers to education that confront people affected by armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies as well as people left behind or left out of the education system; (2) promote the protection and well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel, and ensure safe, secure and supportive learning environments; (3) ensure that the formal and non-formal education services, programmes or activities provided are of the highest possible quality.

The **ICRC** recalled that attacks on schools, military use of schools, destruction of schools or denial of access to education are humanitarian concerns that are core to the ICRC's mandate. The recently developed [Access to Education Strategy 2020–2026](#) clarifies the ICRC's approach to education and a comprehensive response oriented around three objectives: (1) increasing understanding of international humanitarian law among parties to conflict to reduce attacks on, and the military use of, schools and other education facilities; (2) directly improving access to education for children and adults affected by armed conflict, internal strife and their direct results; (3) using the ICRC's experience and analyses to influence global education sector discussions around education and conflict. The strategy also emphasizes that working with Movement partners is critical to maximizing our diverse skills and capacities, and ensuring the complementarity of each other's work so that the people we work with are able to access education and rebuild their lives.

The **Norwegian Red Cross** briefly explained the details of the significant multi-year financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that triggered the piloting of a Movement approach to education in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. They then moderated an interactive conversation with colleagues from National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC in those three countries about their experiences, and the challenges and lessons learned in relation to strengthening Movement collaboration and coordination in the field of education.

- In **Armenia**, where the National Society's school-based interventions date back to the 1990s, the Movement approach has strengthened the capacity of the Armenian Red Cross Society to set up and achieve its educational goals through the additional technical and financial support provided. As a result, it started a constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Education to embed first aid education into the general education system in Armenia. It was also able to provide extracurricular learning and psychosocial activities in support of children displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and children living in conflict-affected communities along the international border.
- In **Azerbaijan**, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society carries out education activities in close collaboration with, and with the technical support of, Movement partners in domains ranging from organizational, branch and volunteer development to policy, humanitarian diplomacy and operational response to education-related needs in conflict-affected areas. The cooperation notably led to the carrying out of a joint education needs assessment in those areas. However, the lack of a common framework seems to be holding back the implementation of a Movement approach to education, which reportedly remains quite fragmented. Ensuring broad participation at all levels was encouraged as a way to overcome this challenge.
- In **Ukraine**, an Education in Emergencies Plan for 2022 was developed by the Ukrainian Red Cross Society and suspended following the escalation in hostilities. The plan aimed to provide quality

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<sup>1</sup> See a consolidated overview of the preliminary findings of this global mapping exercise in the IFRC Strategic Framework on Education 2020–2030 (p.15) at <https://www.ifrc.org/education>

<sup>2</sup> 67 respondents representing 40 countries; 75% from National Societies, 16% from the ICRC, 9% from the IFRC.

education for all-age learners, with a particular focus on socio-emotional life skills and the most vulnerable groups, such as children living with disabilities and communities affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Challenges to adopting a Movement approach to education included the lack of operational tools and approaches, the lack of a clear structure or standard format for broad, multipartite Movement partnership agreements and feedback mechanisms, as well as language barriers and organizational set-ups. The ICRC access to education coordinator in Ukraine underlined three key lessons learned from the pilot implementation of such an approach: (1) the vast array of resources and network the Movement brings to education is a unique force; (2) to be productive as a Movement, the National Society must be embraced with all its possible internal challenges and supported as much as possible using a true localization agenda; (3) maintaining the link with the Education Cluster proved to be of added value for the ICRC and should be similarly pursued by the National Society and other Movement partners if any are considering engaging in education interventions in the deteriorating crisis in Ukraine.

Ultimately, attendees were invited to share their views and suggestions regarding opportunities, recommendations and challenges to scale up joint efforts and strengthen Movement cooperation and coordination in the field of education in their own contexts. They were also asked about the support they would need (if any) to strengthen their capacity to address education-related needs.

## Key points raised

The Movement approach to education is about: (a) capitalizing on the strengths and complementary roles of each Movement component; (b) holding each other mutually accountable to ensure the greatest quality, impact and sustainability of our education work, to the benefit of the populations in need and who are asking for our support; (c) cross-checking with colleagues in other sectors and in the ICRC, the IFRC or other National Societies, what is already being done or planned, what know-how or support they might bring to the table, and what synergies could be made. Doing so will help demonstrate the significant contribution and added value of the Movement as an educational actor – especially in armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies – and also make concrete the National Societies' auxiliary role to public authorities in the humanitarian field. It also holds great potential for establishing new partnerships and mobilizing untapped resources.

The importance of talking about education as an essential service and of building a robust education coordination architecture across all levels of each Movement component (including possibly a Movement coordinator) was emphasized as critical to changing the mindset and ensuring the continuity and scale-up of education-related work within the Movement. The need to identify the Movement's top priorities in education for the next two years and to set a clear Movement agenda accordingly, against which progress could be tracked and a yearly joint Movement report issued, was also highlighted. Attendees strongly recommended enhancing cooperation both inside the Movement (e.g. through common platforms for knowledge management purposes, including the sharing of tools, materials, experiences and practices) and outside (e.g. through strengthened partnerships with local civil society, government agencies and authorities, including for instance to implement the Safe Schools Declaration and/or the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, or to support formal education in camp settings).

Workshop participants reported that the lack of guidelines, tools, expertise and support in addition to the shortage of dedicated financial and human resources and heavy dependence on volunteers (that are to be properly trained) for the education-related work hampered the implementation of a Movement approach to education in their contexts. They also underlined the difficulties faced in adapting, contextualizing and incorporating their educational programmes into the country-specific formal and non-formal education systems, and said that education is sometimes seen as outside the National Societies' mandate and therefore not prioritized – as is particularly evident when crises hit and educational responses are put on hold.

To strengthen their capacity to address education-related needs, participants therefore expressed the need for adequate financial and human resources as well as (further) guidance and technical support – including in relation to national education strategy development, pedagogical innovation, quality

assessment/insurance, a joint approach to the training of trainers, strengthening National Societies' auxiliary role in the humanitarian field, and the building/management of relationships with education authorities and other relevant stakeholders. They would also welcome training on education, especially education in emergencies, as a way to advance the consideration for and integration of education-related needs into the Movement components' strategic and humanitarian response plans and operational strategies. Finally, they emphasized the need for a structured approach including feedback mechanisms, and called for the establishment of common spaces for dialogue, networking and exchange of experiences among Movement components (especially between National Societies), alongside shared platforms to access relevant materials, standards and frameworks.

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## Conclusions and recommendations

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The workshop demonstrated a widespread interest in the strengthening of a coordinated and complementary Movement approach to education, which is already under way in various contexts. Building on the many opportunities and challenges identified, as well as the lessons learned so far, the Movement components should continue their efforts to bolster their capacities for addressing education-related needs. The further development and sharing of operational frameworks, standards and tools – alongside increased technical support, networking and investments in joint training and appropriate human resources – are strongly recommended to reinforce Movement expertise, coordination and collaboration in the field of education. Ultimately, continued internal and external advocacy efforts and products (e.g. case studies) to profile the unique role, added value and overall contribution of the Movement components to education, including the featuring of a complementary Movement approach to education at the next statutory meetings, are highly encouraged as being critical to the success of this collective ambition and endeavour.