



Power of humanity

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

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SUMMARY REPORT ON WORKSHOP

Strengthening integrity within the Movement

Date and time: 10 May 2022, 09:00–10:30 and 17:00–18:30 (CET)

Chair/facilitator/moderator: Kate Halff (ICRC) and Frank Mohrhauer (IFRC)

Speakers/panellists/presenters: Kate Halff (ICRC), Frank Mohrhauer (IFRC), Kristin Hjalmtysdottir (Icelandic RC), Nabih Jabr (Lebanese RC), Jane Hollman and Melinda Godber (Australian RC), Jukka Pietiläinen (Estonian RC), RK Jain (Indian RCS), Satoshi Sugai (Japanese RCS), Alejandra Mora (Costa Rican RC) and Amina Mustapha (Nigerian RCS).

Executive summary

The workshop focused on exploring how the Statement on Integrity of the Movement (adopted by the 2019 CoD) is understood and how the implementation of its commitments has progressed within the Movement. It included a brief presentation of the Statement and an account of some of the highlights of the report to the CoD on its implementation. The session was a useful platform for engaging participants in the sharing of National Society (NS) good practices and concrete examples and discussion of the progress made in selected areas of the Statement. The workshop also raised awareness about the role and plans of the Working Group (WG) which facilitates follow-up on the Statement. Participants shared their feedback and ideas regarding the WG's two key projects, contributing to determining their future direction.

General observations and key highlights

Although the Statement on Integrity addresses the subject through nine areas, this workshop focused on three: (1) the Fundamental Principles (FPs); (2) individual behavioural standards and whistle-blower protection; and (3) accountability to donors and partners. These three topics were explored through a short introduction on global progress and specific case stories shared by NSs. The aim of this sharing of experiences was to contribute to another commitment area, namely “pooling resources and experience to strengthen integrity”.

This report does not include all the information and experiences shared at the workshops, but rather focuses on some common observations and lessons shared.

(1) Maintaining and promoting the Fundamental Principles

Several initiatives developed by the IFRC and the ICRC in recent years were presented, including the IFRC's Guide to Strengthening the Auxiliary Role through Law and Policy, which provides practical guidance to NSs, promotion of the Safer Access Framework (SAF) and activities aimed at promoting and disseminating the FPs.

Experiences shared by NSs showed that ensuring adherence to the FPs among staff and volunteers in a fragmented and polarized society is challenging. Lessons learned included the following:

- a. Strictly maintaining the FPs could mean losing staff and volunteers and decrease motivation. In these situations, balanced dialogue was seen as highly important to ensure that staff and volunteers understand the need to adhere to the FPs at all times.
- b. Integrity is strengthened when individual and organizational behaviour is influenced positively, achieving a shift in the right direction.
- c. These processes should be seen through a long-term lens; building a culture of integrity and a positive perception can take decades.
- d. When a NS has a clear policy on integrity in place, it serves to strengthen a culture of accountability throughout the organization and supports adherence to the FPs.
- e. Publications, social media campaigns and virtual conferences were also recognized as useful platforms for promoting the importance of the FPs in the implementation of a NS's mandate and for raising awareness.
- f. Also underlined as key factors in the process were having a clear plan in place and using every opportunity to position the issue (examples mentioned included international humanitarian law and SAF initiatives).
- g. Lastly, engaging and motivating branches as part of this process was seen as a necessity. A NS shared its experience of developing awards to recognize branches that perform well in this area.

(2) Ensuring compliance with individual behavioural standards and whistle-blower protection

The commitments made in the Statement on Integrity have been translated into practice at different levels, from high-level policy to practical implementation. A new IFRC policy on Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) has been developed and is complemented by an operational framework. Support provided to NSs includes the Integrity Line set up to provide effective channels for reporting misconduct and now made available to them. The ICRC has also actively pursued its institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion in its internal rules, policies and practices. Its Code of Conduct is an integral component of the Ethics, Risk and Compliance Office's intensified efforts to foster a culture of integrity across the organization.

In addition to the global progress reported by the IFRC and the ICRC, examples from NS lessons learned highlighted that:

- a. Establishing a clear ethical framework and influencing the skills, behaviour and qualities of leaders through different activities has proved useful in guiding and encouraging important and at times difficult conversations.
- b. The impact of such activities can be monitored periodically by conducting what are known as pulse surveys to see if the organization is shifting towards a stronger culture of ethics.
- c. Discussing ethics and behavioural standards also encourages more active whistle-blowing/reporting.
- d. Including a behavioural component in performance appraisal is important because it makes it possible to assess how things were done and not just what was done.
- e. The importance of appropriate whistle-blowing channels was emphasized. This can include setting up an integrity line (using and customizing the IFRC Integrity Line) as a way to encourage a speak-up culture and protect whistle-blowers.
- f. The importance of a strong case management platform to ensure the safe handling of sensitive information was highlighted.
- g. Establishing an integrity line is not a stand-alone process and should be accompanied by a comprehensive ethics programme to instil a culture of ethics. This involves developing or revising

existing policies to establish an appropriate policy base (including anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy, whistle-blower protection policy, etc.), raising awareness among staff and volunteers and ensuring that the necessary capabilities are in place.

- h. Some challenges, such as a lack of capacity to investigate and the effort required to build a strong reporting culture, were also shared.
- i. While NSs underlined that receiving support from Movement partners to set up new mechanisms (such as an integrity line) was essential, they also acknowledged the importance of coordination among the providers of support.

(3) Accountability to donors and partners

An overview of global progress was provided by the IFRC and the ICRC. The survey conducted in 2021 by the IFRC among NSs showed an upward trend in those having arrangements in place for annual external audits of their financial statements. Under the wider financial sustainability framework and with a view to enhancing peer-to-peer learning, the IFRC has set up a Finance Development Competency Network, with the support of the Norwegian Red Cross and other Movement partners. Building on the results of its revised Due Diligence Assessment tools, the ICRC has increased its support in priority areas agreed with NSs to protect their integrity and reduce risks.

Lessons learned on this topic included: (a) in an emergency context, opening donation channels quickly with clear messages and instructions was key to success; (b) effective and transparent communication with donors on how donations were used was flagged as an important follow-up measure; and (c) investing in a long-term relationship with donors (e.g. with the help of a CRM system) is beneficial in building trust and accountability.

(4) Presentation of the WG and two key areas of work

The WG is a forum for discussion and advice and aims to facilitate efforts to follow up on the Statement. Its action plan has allowed it to identify some key areas to explore in different phases. The first phase focuses on promoting integrity think tank events and exploring the development of a consolidated library/resource platform for integrity-related policies, guidance and practices. These two initiatives were further discussed and explored with the workshop participants.

Key points raised

Through a real-time survey¹ and Q&A session, participants shared their views on a number of issues, particularly on progress in meeting the commitments of the Statement on Integrity and the two projects currently planned by the WG:

- i. Asked to assess advances in the different areas addressed by the Statement, the participants considered that they had made most progress on “accountability to donors, including access to institutional and financial records”, followed by “maintaining and promoting the FPs”. On the other hand, “ensuring compliance with individual behavioural standards and whistle-blower protection” was signalled as an area where more work needs to be done.
- ii. On the question of resources that it would be useful to have in an integrity-related library/resource platform, participants generally preferred learning from best practices, with “case studies” considered the most desirable approach, followed by “visuals such as illustrations, videos and interviews” and actual “examples of laws, policies and guidelines developed by NSs”. Thematic guidance in the form of tools and resources in selected areas was also a common choice. Additional forms of learning and sharing were also suggested, such as a pooled resource for advice and mentoring in practical cases and sharing consolidated

¹ Results from AM session: <https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/abb4bc558408f4619b04a1703a72940d/c934062fe7fd>

Results from PM session: <https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/668a507f6fe405c50f8298bac44e780f/cc1af9f532c8>

information on the integrity-related policies, training, reporting mechanisms, etc. the Movement components have in place, to better provide support.

- iii. When questioned about integrity-related topics that should be a priority for a think tank or dialogue, participants primarily opted for “individual behavioural standards and ensuring compliance”, followed by “FPs and their practical meaning” as a second interest area, and “workplace safety, diversity and gender balance in the workforce” as the third.

Conclusions and recommendations

The workshop demonstrated the value and interest of sharing experiences and practices across Movement partners and learning from each other on selected areas of the Statement on Integrity. To follow up on this, the WG will use the feedback provided by the participants to steer its two key initiatives: the integrity-related think tanks and the integrity-related resource platform/library. The participants' feedback will help to shape the topics for the think tanks and the content of the consolidated integrity-related resource platform/library, with a view to best meeting the needs and preferences expressed. All participants were also encouraged to support the WG's work. Finally, the efforts of each Movement component to further capture progress and learning were welcomed and encouraged.