HEADQUARTERS

Managing Board

Vienna, 13 June 2024

# Pledge No OP330012

# Report on the Engagement of the Austrian Red Cross Regarding the Pledge "Addressing Education-Related Humanitarian Needs"

The ever-growing complexity of global issues such as pandemics, armed conflict, forced migration, climate change, and increasing social hardships or the rise in violence underscores the necessity for younger generations to acquire new skill sets to effectively navigate and address these challenges.

Humanitarian education (HE) is a value-driven, needs-based and people-centered education approach rooted in the universal pillars of the humanitarian principles. Humanitarian education enables individuals - especially children, adolescents and young adults – to interpret situations from a humanitarian perspective and empower them helping and caring for themselves and others, and thereby contributing to building resilience, social inclusion and lasting peace in their family, community and society.

The Austrian Red Cross has decades of experience in implementing humanitarian educational programs within the formal education sector, particularly emphasizing school-based education. This extensive experience has cultivated a firm belief that education is more than just a tool for transmitting knowledge; it is also a method for building social and critical skills, enhancing empathy, and increasing resilience. Furthermore, it plays a vital role in promoting social cohesion, especially during periods of societal upheaval.

Our vision is to expand humanitarian education globally, empowering individuals—especially children, adolescents, and young adults. By fostering social and emotional intelligence, self-help and empathy, we aim to cultivate resilience, social inclusion, and enduring peace within families, communities, and societies.

## Adopted measures to reflect our commitment to the pledge:

### Creation of a Master Professional in “Pedagogical Approaches to Humanitarian Education” (PATHE) in collaboration with the University College of Teachers Education of Lower Austria, in Austria.

This international postgraduate, part-time university course - offered at a bachelor's level or equivalent- equips students with didactic competencies to raise awareness among children and adolescents about humanitarian issues, foster their capacity for independent opinion formation, and enhance their ability to take action.

It is scheduled to commence in 2025 with the support of the Swiss Confederation and the University College of Teachers Education of Zug, Switzerland.

This Master's program benefits from the valuable experience gained through the DAS and MAS in Pedagogical Approaches for Education in Humanitarian Principles and Values offered by the University of Teacher Education Zug. Between 2019 and 2023, the program awarded Master's degrees to 18 humanitarian professionals and educators from 11 countries who successfully completed the program. Additionally, 30 humanitarian professionals and educators from 4 continents completed the CAS, while 21 humanitarian professionals and teachers from 3 continents successfully reached and completed the DAS level.

### Creation of a Reference Center in Humanitarian Education

We are in the process of establishing a Reference Center for Humanitarian Education, scheduled to begin operations in 2025. This Center will serve as a worldwide hub, advocating for the importance, relevance, and accessibility of Humanitarian Education in collaboration with the IFRC, the RC/RC Movement, the Swiss Confederation, universities, and foundations.

Our objectives encompass various aspects:

* To strengthen partnerships within and outside the Movement to support existing or new HE work of National Societies
* To enable National Societies to access to a growing body of research on humanitarian education, the cultivation of emotional skills and social competencies, and effective teaching methodologies.
* To offer adequate training opportunities that meet the depth and breadth required by the National Societies covering humanitarian education, emotional skills, and social competencies, ranging from formal workshops to online webinars.
* To amplify the efforts of the National Societies by raising awareness of Humanitarian Education by ensuring maximum exposure of the Reference Center

Both these initiatives fulfill notably the following objectives of this pledge

1. to “promote, support and/or participate in multidisciplinary, complementary and coordinated approaches – through enhanced partnerships and collaboration in education – to further leverage the central role of education and schools in the lives of communities as an opportunity to promote humanitarian values, risk reduction including environmental aspects and sustainability, social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Movement”.
2. And “to promote and/or support the provision of formal educational initiatives that foster awareness, understanding and application of the humanitarian principles, including through nurturing their underpinning values and developing related skills which enable individuals to take action accordingly”

By continuing to prioritize humanitarian education, the Austrian Red Cross aims to contribute to the realization of the pledge and the broader goal of ensuring access to quality humanitarian education for all.