The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the National Societies.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

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 its 190 member National Societies. Together, the IFRC acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. It does so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions. Guided by Strategy 2020 — a collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade — the IFRC is committed to ‘saving lives and changing minds’.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies embody the work and principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in more than 190 countries. National Societies act as auxiliaries to the public authorities of their own countries in the humanitarian field and provide a range of services including disaster relief, health and social programmes. During wartime, National Societies assist the affected civilian population and support the army medical services where appropriate.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is guided by seven Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

All Red Cross and Red Crescent activities have one central purpose: to help without discrimination those who suffer and thus contribute to peace in the world.
In a time of mounting crises and rapid change, we must rethink our collective response

Humanitarians are forever striving for order. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the chaos that we see on a daily basis, we have an overwhelming urge to categorize, to organize. We distinguish between mandates, we cluster by sector and we respond in phases.

Of course we know that this is at least partly artificial. When conflict starts or a disaster hits, we respond, adapt, innovate and find new solutions to unexpected challenges. But as the situation calms, we use those experiences to reclassify, refine and refocus. A revised order emerges.

The changes we have seen over the past five years have forced some of us to ask whether the very foundations of this order are still relevant. We are witnessing more and more protracted conflicts plunging people into dire need and making it difficult to classify humanitarian contexts. Increasingly we encounter the same communities affected by multiple hazards: conflicts compounded by disasters, disasters aggravated by climate change and the acute risks associated with unplanned urbanization. We see them taking initiatives, too, building their own resilience, but also having very specific needs.

We are also observing a globalization of fragility and humanitarian needs. We can no longer consider suffering and vulnerability to be the sole domains of the global south (if this was ever really possible). The majority of the world’s poor live in middle- and upper-income countries. The arrival of more than 1 million vulnerable migrants on European shores in 2015 illustrated the regional and global consequences of chronic and intractable suffering.

Needs are changing and our response must adapt accordingly. The World Humanitarian Summit is an opportunity to do just that. Collective and collaborative responses should go beyond traditional boundaries, mandates and thinking. No single organization can hope to respond to the needs of vulnerable communities.

Crucially, these partnerships need to embrace the extremely important role of local humanitarian organizations, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The international system still places too much emphasis on international actors, leaving local organizations with not enough influence over decision-making and not enough access to global humanitarian financing.

This imbalance must change. While recognizing the importance of international actors, we need to ensure that the capacity of principled local actors is a key priority. They must be seen as true partners, not as mere implementers. This includes protecting and insuring those groups who operate in dangerous conditions. At the same time, we should be careful not to swap one form of imbalance for another. Our call is for an ecosystem that emphasizes the complementary strengths of local, national and international actors. There will always be contexts, for example, where the neutrality of international organizations will be needed. In those cases, roadblocks to international access must be swiftly and completely dismantled.

Finding the right balance will allow us to respond more effectively to need of all kinds. Crucially, by emphasizing long-term and mutually valuable relationships between local and international partners, it will also allow us to provide more sustained support for communities suffering from chronic crises. We will be better able to help them to identify and address their own risks and vulnerabilities, to integrate them in the response and to become stronger and more resilient in the process. The role of humanitarians will be to accompany communities as they design their own solutions, rather than prescribe answers to questions we might not always understand.

This approach will allow us to create linkages between the many different systems that are involved in humanitarian response. The component that many of us are most familiar with — what we often term the ‘traditional’ humanitarian system — is only part of a collection of diverse systems that are too often out of sync.

We need to embrace change. The World Humanitarian Summit is a once-in-a-generation chance to do this on a systemwide scale. We need to have the courage to seize this opportunity and to make it happen.

By Yves Daccord and Elhadj As Sy
Yves Daccord is director general of the ICRC; Elhadj As Sy is secretary general of the IFRC.

What is the World Humanitarian Summit?
The World Humanitarian Summit will bring together heads of state, thought leaders, representatives from the private sector and humanitarian organizations of all sizes to Istanbul, Turkey in May 2016 in order to “set an agenda for change to make humanitarian action fit for the great challenges we face”, according to the United Nations, which is organizing the gathering.
Voices

“If you don’t have the kind of engagement [in a project] that’s genuine and produces results that matter to the people then it becomes a white elephant — it just becomes another project.”

Evelyn Wangema, project officer in the disaster management department at the Kenya Red Cross Society (see page 7)

In brief

Horrifying conditions in besieged Syrian cities

With blockades of several Syrian cities creating catastrophic conditions for residents, the Movement called on all parties in the Syrian conflict to end all sieges being carried out across the war-torn country. As joint ICRC, United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent conveyed food, medicines and blankets into the besieged cities of Madaya, Kefraya and Foua in January, the head of ICRC’s Syria delegation, Marianne Gasser, visited a makeshift health centre and wrote about it for The Guardian newspaper.

“I was met by the sight of limp bodies lying on blue blankets on the floor: elderly people, weak from hunger and illness. There were several children, hollow-faced. The doctor, in a bloodied white coat, took me to the one and only bed. It had two occupants. One was a young woman on the verge of giving birth, but she had been drifting in and out of consciousness for the past four days. The second was an 8-year-old girl, unable to speak and move. She was too weak. There was silence. Then, next to me, the doctor started to cry.”

The fight against Zika

As the Zika virus spread rapidly through the Americas earlier this year, teams of Red Cross volunteers hit the streets, getting the message out about how to interrupt the spread of this mosquito-borne disease, which has been linked to an increase in the birth of babies with microcephaly and to Guillain-Barré syndrome. Zika is transmitted by the same *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that carries dengue and chikungunya, so the way to stop transmission from these daytime-biting mosquitoes to humans is to reduce the number of places with standing water, where mosquitoes breed, and to wear insect repellent consistently throughout the day, among other measures. “In the battle against Zika, knowledge is power,” says Julie Lyn Hall, the IFRC’s director of health.

Better shelter for Sri Lanka’s displaced

Following the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka in 2010, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society began a housing and livelihoods project in the northern part of the country to support the most vulnerable of the displaced people, who can now finally return to their homelands. The programme focuses on individuals such as Fathima, a mother of five who lost her home and husband during the conflict. She has lived in a temporary camp with her family for more than 20 years. “The concept of a home was an illusion to us. We never thought this conflict would come to an end and that we would stop running from one place to another,” says Fathima, who can now live in one of 21,000 homes provided with support from the IFRC, the government of India and other sources.

Supporting returning domestic workers

Some 6.5 million Indonesians work overseas and many of them are female domestic workers. As the Indonesian government increases efforts to ensure their nationals have protection before, during and after they leave the country for employment, the Indonesian Red Cross Society has recently started to provide support to female domestic workers who are returning to their families after lengthy periods away. “Some come back with a success story, but many of them come home with serious or chronic injuries,” says Leo Pattiasina, head of the National Society’s social services sub-division.

Taiwan Red Cross responds to deadly earthquake

Five rescue teams from the Taiwan Red Cross supported government and military emergency services in searching the ruins of collapsed buildings in Tainan City in early February, after a 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck in the south of Taiwan. In the most difficult cases, the teams spent hours digging through a maze of broken concrete walls and rubble. In one dramatic case, Red Cross workers discovered a little boy who was trapped deep inside one of the buildings. Red Cross staff and volunteers helped by providing psychosocial support to patients and their relatives, preparing hot meals, distributing blankets, sleeping bags and warm jackets, and delivering cash grants to the closest relatives of those who were killed, among other things.

With Ebola outbreak waning, a focus on early detection

As cases of Ebola virus disease dwindled to near zero in West Africa, the IFRC renewed its call for increased investment in early warning and response mechanisms. “Unfortunately, the threat has not passed and our focus now must be on strengthening capacity in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to effectively identify and respond to future outbreaks,” said Alasan Senghore, the IFRC’s regional director for Africa. “Ebola illustrated the weakness of health systems in this region. Let’s not wait for another reminder.”

Movement voice heard in Paris climate talks

After states taking part in the ‘COP 21’ climate talks in Paris in December 2015 adopted an agreement to reduce emissions and set specific targets for global temperature rises, the IFRC urged governments and partners to place communities most at risk from climate change at the centre of the agreement’s implementation. “This agreement will need to be implemented with a view to placing the interests of the most vulnerable people at its core,” says Garry Conille, IFRC under secretary general for programmes and operations. The final agreement aims at pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C and to hold it well below 2°C.

Humanitarian index

1.5: The limit in degrees Celsius that temperatures can rise under agreements signed during climate talks in Paris in December 2015.

87: Percentage of disasters in 2014 that were climate related.

2,300: Number of people who attended the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva in December 2015 (see page 11).

9,000: Approximate number of people killed in Ukraine during two years of fighting (see page 20).

2,700,000: Approximate number of people displaced by fighting in all of Ukraine since the conflict began in 2014.

2,200,000: Number of Syrians who had registered as refugees in Turkey by the end of 2015. Roughly 87 per cent of displaced Syrians in Turkey live in cities as opposed to government-run camps (see page 24).
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On the cover: A volunteer with the Kenya Red Cross Society installs a fire censor in a home in the Mukuru informal settlement in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. Photo: Juozas Cernius/American Red Cross

Photos this page from top: Juozas Cernius/American Red Cross; Hussein Aboulenein/IFRC; Victor Lacken/IFRC; Anastasia Vlasova/ICRC; IFRC

Cover story
Bright ideas, local solutions
As humanitarians explore new technologies and innovation, how do they make sure these developments empower the people who need them most? A pilot project in two informal settlements in Kenya and South Africa offers some answers.

Phones, drones and beyond
Humanitarian innovation comes in many shapes and sizes but it’s not only about new gadgets and gizmos. Explore a sampling of humanitarian innovations, from 3D printing to novel approaches to fund-raising and partnership.

32nd International Conference
Movement meeting tackles mounting crises
As the world faces mounting humanitarian crises, government representatives from 169 countries met with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2015 to explore the best ways to reduce risk and enhance protection for vulnerable people.

Focus
A human touch in the face of Ebola
In many of the photographs taken by Victor Lacken during the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in 2014 and 2015, the faces of his subjects are obscured by masks and goggles, their bodies covered head-to-toe in protective gear. His photographs, however, still capture the humanity of the person within.

Technological disasters
Preparing for the worst
Technological disasters present great challenges for local first responders. Five years after the Fukushima nuclear accident, the Japanese Red Cross Society is at the forefront of Movement efforts to be ready for the specific dangers of man-made disasters. Meanwhile, 30 years after Chernobyl, the Movement’s preparations for such events are expanding.

Local action in times of upheaval
Helping hands
Civil unrest or conflict poses some of the greatest challenges for local humanitarian organizations. Often unprepared for the scale of needs, and the depth of divisions caused by conflict, they must expand rapidly under great pressure. The experience of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society offers insights.

National Societies
At the crossroads of crisis
People travelling to Turkey in May 2016 for the World Humanitarian Summit will have an unique chance to get to know the Turkish Red Crescent Society, which draws on a rich history and a spirit of innovation as it faces one of its greatest humanitarian challenges.

Resources
Publications, videos and online tools from the ICRC and the IFRC.
As humanitarians explore new technologies and innovation, how can local communities shape the technologies best suited for their needs? A pilot project in two informal settlements in Kenya and South Africa offers some insights.

U NATHI OSCAR KWEYI lost his father in a fire in Khayelitsha township, an informal settlement near Cape Town, South Africa. “It was very, very painful for me to lose my father in that kind of tragedy,” he says. “Fire kills. Fire is very, very dangerous.”

He is now a volunteer with the South African Red Cross Society, working with a community-based emergency response team to fight fires, manage disasters and deliver first aid. “If we can educate people about the danger of fire, it can reduce and minimize the death rate,” says Kweyi, who was trained for these tasks as part of the Fire Sensors for Safer Urban Communities Initiative, a collaborative programme of the American Red Cross, the South African Red Cross and the Kenya Red Cross Societies.

This initiative is centred around two informal settlements, Khayelitsha, on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa and home to roughly 400,000 residents, and Mukuru, in Nairobi, Kenya, with some 250,000 inhabitants.

In informal settlements such as these, fire is a leading safety concern. People live in neighbourhoods of densely packed, makeshift shacks separated only by narrow alleys. Houses are built of wood, cardboard and corrugated tin, so fire spreads quickly, destroying entire communities in a matter of minutes. The areas are difficult to access and help is often delayed by the lack of proper infrastructure.

“It’s important to understand the impact of fires in urban informal settlements, particularly how unreported they are,” says Everlyne Wangema, project officer for the Kenya Red Cross Society’s disaster management department. “The general causes are illegal electricity connection, household...
American Red Cross's Global Technology Initiative. “They are choosing which technologies they want to use. They are choosing how they are used and who uses them.

“With the fire-sensor project, that means working through a participatory design and innovation process with community members living in the settlements,” she adds. “We had to force ourselves not to make assumptions on behalf of the community nor let our opinions and the potential we see drive the decisions. The communities are the most knowledgeable about the problems and about what will work in the long run.”

This does not mean that there isn’t significant outside involvement in the project; more than 20 partners collaborated on this complex issue. To facilitate the process, for example, a private company that specializes in ‘human-centred’ design worked on cooking, lighting and water heating methods, and sometimes arson.”

On the surface, the project seems quite straightforward: to install fire sensors in homes and other buildings to provide faster warning while also helping to develop the means to prevent and respond to fires. But this project is about much more: it is deeply rooted in community participation. The end users have been involved at every stage, from project planning to design and implementation.

Set up as part of a wider American Red Cross initiative called the Global Dialogue on Emerging Technology for Emerging Needs, the fire-sensor projects began after community members in the two settlements were asked to identify the risks they considered most critical to their well-being and safety.

“This is an innovation process led by local communities,” claims Abi Weaver, director of the American Red Cross's Global Technology Initiative. “They are choosing which technologies they want to use. They are choosing how they are used and who uses them.

“With the fire-sensor project, that means working through a participatory design and innovation process with community members living in the settlements,” she adds. “We had to force ourselves not to make assumptions on behalf of the community nor let our opinions and the potential we see drive the decisions. The communities are the most knowledgeable about the problems and about what will work in the long run.”

This does not mean that there isn’t significant outside involvement in the project; more than 20 partners collaborated on this complex issue. To facilitate the process, for example, a private company that specializes in ‘human-centred’ design worked on cooking, lighting and water heating methods, and sometimes arson.”
with community members to help adapt devices already on the market to make sure they meet the needs of the community where it would be used— from colour and price to function and durability. In Khayelitsha, for example, the design company also engaged community members in developing a business model in which users pay a modest fee to support ‘fire clubs’ that help communities with fire preparedness, response and recovery. Rather than providing the sensors for free, it’s hoped there will be sustained market incentive for product development, marketing and use.

Residents have also been mapping their community as part of the project. Using hand-held GPS devices or phones, they enter GPS coordinates of potential hazards and assets, such as schools and water points and possible locations for shelters in the event of emergency. This kind of data helps the community both to prepare for disasters and to advocate for services, rights and resources.

In many ways, Khayelitsha and Mukuru represent some of the key challenges facing humanitarians today — rapid urbanization compounded by economic hardship and recurring crises, large and small. The projects under way in these settlements may also offer an example of how community-led innovation, combined with global and local partnerships with the private sector and civil society, can lead to sustainable, long-term risk reduction and community resilience.

Opposite, in their own words, several people participating in the project talk about what they’ve learned in the process.

By Anita Vizsy
Anita Vizsy is a freelance writer based in Nairobi.

Namatham ‘Thamie’ Sana Sibutha
Resident and community task force member from the settlement of Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa

As a community leader in Khayelitsha, Sibutha works hand-in-hand with the South African Red Cross Society to “uplift the way we live. Even if we live in shacks, we are still human and need to upgrade that standard.”

“This is the first time we engaged with Red Cross in this way. We normally saw the Red Cross when there was a disaster, bringing food or blankets. But this time it’s different. The Red Cross came to us and said: ‘Community, we are coming to help you, but we can’t help you unless you help yourself. You must engage yourself first so that we can work hand-in-hand to help the community.’

“Here in Khayelitsha, the firefighters are far from us and there is no space between the houses for the van to come. Because of the training from the Red Cross, now we can control fire. The sensor can alert us in time and we can prevent the fire from going further.

“We used to handle the fire carelessly, but now we’re cautious. We know how to help people who are injured from fire [and] how to prevent fire before it happens.”
David Gluckman  
Co-founder, Lumkani, Cape Town, South Africa

As a social enterprise that develops low-cost fire detection devices for informal settlements, Lumkani was already providing sensors in Khayelitsha before the American Red Cross initiative began.

“Social enterprises must always be market-focused and need to be innovative with their business models. Donors need to see themselves as investors in impact; the social enterprise will invest this revenue to ensure, in the most market-efficient way, that further revenue and impact is generated.

“The biggest lesson we’ve learned is that there are multiple stakeholders who have an interest in the project. To be sustainable, you need to get all the players in and be very engaged with them.”

Taariq Twaha  
Group Head of Information Technology, Kenya Red Cross Society

For Taariq Twaha, the fire-sensor project marked the first time the Kenya Red Cross Society integrated technology and innovation so deeply within a community-based project.

“We’ve learned that, for [the Kenya Red Cross information technology team] to give real value, we need to be heavily involved from the beginning to the end. Previously, we’ve been looked at as people who fix computers. Now, we’re moving to become a strategic partner.

“As humanitarians, we don’t have the money to invest in developing new technologies. We need to look at how we can borrow technologies that are already in use and see how best we can apply them to humanitarian work.

“The big question is how do we engage our donors to be able to accept failure? If we get donors that are willing to try out new technologies, I think we’ll go a long way in addressing humanitarian issues.”

Craig Cisero  
Business Strategist, Frog Design, Milan, Italy

Frog Design refers to itself as a human-centred design firm. This approach guided the company’s efforts to facilitate a process in which community members play a central role in shaping the way the fire sensors are designed, distributed and used. The idea is to make sure the fire sensors truly suit local needs and will be embraced by everyone in the community.

“Ultimately what organizations would like to get out of technology is a situation in which [solutions develop on their own] without having to be constantly donated and kept up by people volunteering their time. Understanding what kind of business or self-sustaining opportunity there is — based on the way people react to the product — is where the real value comes from.”

Everlyne Wangema  
Project Officer, Disaster Management Department, Kenya Red Cross Society

Everlyne Wangema says this initiative brought technology and community engagement to a whole new level in the National Society’s disaster management programming.

“Without community buy-in we would not have been able to mobilize the numbers of people that we did. Sustainability is about continuously engaging and understanding the environment.

“If you don’t have the kind of engagement that’s genuine and that produces results that matter to the people then it becomes another white elephant — it just becomes another project.

“As an organization, [the Kenya Red Cross] has gone from response to being more proactive. Instead of just providing relief, we build resilience, improve capacity; we give the fishing rod to people so they themselves can fish. I think that is what humanitarian affairs and management at this point in the world should be.”
Mobile phones were commonplace for many years before becoming an integral part of the humanitarian toolkit. Now humanitarian organizations are being far more proactive as they try to keep ahead of the innovation curve. And not all the new ideas involve technology.
IT'S A GIVEN THAT MOBILE PHONES have changed nearly every aspect of life, from banking to finding one's way when lost. They are also a staple part of the humanitarian toolkit, used for data collection, cash transfers and mapping, among many other things. Likewise, drones or 'unmanned aerial vehicles' have received a lot of attention in humanitarian circles because of their potential for doing field assessments or for bringing aid such as medical supplies to places where access is difficult.

But the focus of humanitarian innovation is rapidly widening. As aid agencies' use of mobile phones in their work is becoming more sophisticated, their understanding of how to use, or not use, drones is also evolving. During much of this process, however, humanitarians have largely been beneficiaries of technologies already developed in the private sector.

But that is changing as more humanitarian organizations seek to drive technological change or at least to better understand developing technologies and apply them more quickly in the field. After all, mobile phones were ubiquitous in many parts of the world for a long time before they became part of the aid workers' toolkit.

Getting ahead of the curve, and working with local communities to best understand their needs, also puts everyone in a better position to ensure that the technologies being developed empower local communities and don't create new vulnerabilities. This is a key idea behind the Red Cross Red Crescent's 'principled approach to innovation', in which humanitarian values are placed at centre of the creative process.

But not all innovations involve gadgets or computer software. New platforms for sharing developments, such as the recently launched Movement website RedInnovation.org, aim to tackle problems through crowdsourcing, posing questions to fellow humanitarians about challenges such as how to develop a water purification system “that can be set up within a short period of time and continue to function for a long time without the need for maintenance... The heavy machines, tablets and filter systems [available] cannot yet provide this solution.”

Technology becomes an enabler for that most ancient of innovative incubators — conversation and brainstorming — but at a global scale.

When it comes to engineering humanitarian solutions, the answers sometimes have less to do with new gizmos than with new attitudes, behaviours, management or partnership models. Here are a few interesting innovations cropping up around the Movement.

Join the crowd

Have a humanitarian challenge that needs solving? Just ask the crowd — the thousands of people around the world who may be able to develop a solution, on their own or with others on the internet — or via a mix of web-based and in-person meetings. Known as crowdsourcing, this increasingly common method of casting a wide net for ideas is being used by the Movement on a number of fronts. Along with RedInnovation.org, another example is the ICRC's EnableMakeathon, a 60-day programme designed to bring together people with disabilities, designers, engineers and entrepreneurs to create better and more affordable assistance devices for people with a wide range of disabilities. In the first-ever EnableMakeathon, 17 teams from around the world competed for seed money that would allow them to develop their ideas and products further. The winning prize went to Team Mobility from India, which designed a low-cost device for children with cerebral palsy that allows them to both sit and stand. Normally, families have to buy two devices, one for standing and one for sitting. “That means double the cost and double the space in the houses,” says team member Trivikram, adding that Team Mobility’s device, a colourful wooden design shaped like a cartoon animal, adjusts in size as the child gets older.

Wearable technology

As microchips and other devices become ever smaller, some humanitarians are hoping that minuscule ‘wearable’ technology could prove useful during emergencies. Tiny sensors on a wristwatch or shirt collar could monitor a person’s body temperature, blood pressure or heart rate, for example. Other ideas include beacons embedded in clothing that might help during search and rescue, shoes that sense pending earthquakes, wristbands that find and communicate with loved ones if separated, and eyewear with embedded software for such tasks as real-time translation of street signs or navigation through city streets. Some devices, such as those that track and provide real-time feedback on a person’s movements and calories, are already on the market.

A vivid, virtual view

Virtual reality (VR) technology is not just fun and games. Several news organizations are using VR films, presented inside a specially designed set of goggles, that give viewers a sense of being immersed in events around them. The Swedish Red Cross recently released its own VR film showing a refugee transit camp in Serbia. The idea is to vividly and powerfully bring people closer to the plight of migrants on their way into Europe so that they can more fully understand the needs of migrants and the organizations trying to help them.
Printing in three dimensions

Imagine you are in a remote village after a devastating earthquake. You are trying to restore water services but some critical couplings that connect water pipes are badly damaged. The system is old and there’s little chance of finding replacement parts. What do you do? No problem, you send photos and the exact dimensions of the broken part back to the mobile 3D printing lab at the regional delegation and they have the piece printed and sent the next day. While 3D printing is still not ready at a cost and scale that is practical in the field — or that makes life as simple as the above scenario — many see potential for exactly these kinds of situations. Efforts are already under way to place 3D printers, other fabrication tools and the associated computing power in small-scale workshops in strategic locations around the world to be sent as a part of the early disaster response. Used along with other tools such as laser cutters, which can customize metal pieces, 3D printers could also be used by communities to develop customized solutions to specific disaster-recovery needs. 3D printing also holds promise for customized prosthetics for people who have lost limbs.

Mobile phones in crisis 2.0

In issue 2-2015 issue of Red Cross Red Crescent magazine, we told the story of how the IFRC’s Rapid Mobile-Phone Based survey, known as RAMP, helped geographically dispersed health workers track and manage a chronic problem of malaria in the Central African Republic. While RAMP proved to be very effective in ensuring treatments were always available in remote areas for this long-term health battle, it had yet to be fully tested in an emerging emergency. That is, until the Ebola outbreak in 2014–2015. As the number of infections and fatalities grew, burial teams used RAMP surveys on phones and tablets to document and analyze the deaths and to map the location of each Ebola-related victim. This helped to identify potential risks for new infection, target social mobilization efforts and do follow-up contact tracing. In both Benin and Côte d’Ivoire, RAMP solved the time and logistical challenges of paper-based surveys. “We had to handle piles of paper, making [data collection and analysis] impossible,” says Nicéphore Aguiar, supervisor and RAMP trainer for the Red Cross of Benin. “This new tool means we can undertake quick and comprehensive data collection.”

COMING NEXT ISSUE

Filling the funding gaps

Many in the humanitarian field agree that prevailing models of aid-financing are not adequate to meet today’s mounting needs and that they generally shortchange local actors. What should be done to fill the gaps and correct the imbalances?

Shaking hands with business

For many years, humanitarians have seen businesses mainly as potential sources for funding. Today, the relationship between humanitarians and the corporate world is about much more. Increasingly, the two sectors collaborate on new ideas and technologies that help vulnerable people become more resilient to crises. A look at the benefits, and potential pitfalls, of partnership with the private sector.

Beyond corporate social responsibility

New types of partnerships formed to manage complex, large-scale problems are also part of the Movement innovation portfolio. The Australian Red Cross, for example, takes part in the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities, which brings together companies and organizations with expertise in finance, insurance, telecommunications, infrastructure and humanitarian response to work together to improve the country’s ability to withstand natural disasters. One outcome so far: a roundtable-commissioned study that found that natural disasters cost the Australian economy more than US$ 4.5 billion annually. The research also found that carefully targeted, pre-disaster investments in risk reduction could lead to a savings of US$ 8.7 billion by 2050 (and a reduction of annual costs by roughly 50 per cent). Those findings are now backing up the roundtable’s efforts to strengthen government policy and commitments for annual coordinated investment in mitigation and community education, and to create new platforms for disaster-related data and research.
A call for humanity

In the shadow of mounting challenges, the Movement’s 32nd International Conference made a case for building a stronger humanitarian response from the ground up.

As representatives of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement gathered with governments for the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2015, these were just some of the challenges shaping the agenda:

• The conflict in Syria, now in its sixth year, with worsening levels of violence, suffering and disregard for the rules of war.
• Enduring conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen, along with instability and violence in numerous other regions.
• An El Niño weather phenomenon causing drought in some areas and storms in others.
• Mass migration towards Europe of people fleeing wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, as well as political instability and poverty elsewhere, resulting in ever-more deaths at sea and misery along the migration trails.
• Ongoing humanitarian crises related to migration in Africa, Asia–Pacific and the Americas.
• A chronic lack of systemic healthcare in many parts of the world, leading to serious global health emergencies, such as the deadly Ebola virus disease epidemic in West Africa.
• Continuing attacks on aid workers and health facilities.

More than 169 governments and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from 185 countries, as well as the IFRC and the ICRC, took part in the three-day meeting, which centred on building consensus and crafting agreements aimed at better preparing for and responding to natural disasters, conflict, violence, health emergencies and chronic social problems.

In all, states and Movement components adopted ten resolutions on a wide range of issues: increasing action on the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence; strengthening international humanitarian law; protecting persons deprived of their liberty; protecting humanitarian volunteers and the provision of healthcare; and strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid.

The conference also authorized the ICRC and the Swiss government to continue consultations with states towards developing mechanisms for improving compliance with international humanitarian law. But it stopped short of adopting a proposal by the ICRC and the Swiss government for a voluntary system aimed at improving practices on the ground through self-reporting among states.

Let us work

The gathering was also a chance to raise awareness and build momentum for putting these resolutions, and other humanitarian initiatives, into action on the ground.
At a time when humanitarian access during conflict is increasingly difficult, one of the key messages to all parties was an urgent call to let humanitarians get on with their work — to ensure they have safe ways of reaching people affected by conflict or other calamities. It was also a chance to rally support around helping local communities themselves to become more resilient via concrete investment in disaster preparedness, health systems and small-scale economic initiatives.

In both cases, the locally based networks of volunteers of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, were a central part of the message. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent and its volunteers, for example, were honoured for their efforts in providing the bulk of international support, to people trapped by fighting, while Italian Red Cross volunteers were honoured for providing food, medical treatment, shelter and other services to newly arriving migrants.

Volunteers from West African National Societies were also able to share the story of their role in stopping the spread of the Ebola virus disease. As the number of Ebola cases dwindled in Western Africa in 2015, the Movement’s response showed how local volunteer networks were able to break through community fear and distrust, engage in incredibly sensitive work and, ultimately, fight back the deadly outbreak successfully.

Mariama Manneh, a 24-year-old volunteer with one of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society’s Safe and Dignified Burials teams, is one example. Until she joined her local team, only male volunteers were collecting the bodies — something that went against the traditional belief that only women should prepare female bodies for burial.

When Manneh’s team was called to prepare a female body for burial, she was the first to enter the home, disinfect the body and the area, and prepare the body so her male colleagues could transport it to its final resting place. “We have a saying on our team that we provide safety for the living and dignity for the dead,” said Manneh, who came to the conference to accept an award on behalf of the more than 500 burial team members in Sierra Leone. “Including women on the burial teams allowed us to provide dignity to everyone who passed during Ebola.”

**A global message**

At the same time, the conference was also energized by other global meetings such as the COP21 climate talks in Paris, where pressure from thousands of environmental, development and humanitarian groups (including the Movement) led world leaders to hammer out a climate accord that set specific targets for stabilizing global temperatures, reducing emissions and investing in mitigating the consequences of climate change.

In Geneva, meanwhile, the IFRC launched the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, aimed at creating communities less vulnerable to shocks.

The 20th General Assembly of the IFRC admitted the Tuvalu Red Cross Society to the IFRC and ICRC. Given the worries many in Tuvalu have due to rising sea levels around this island nation, this is very “good news”, said Isaia Vaipuna Taape, an executive board member of the Tuvalu Red Cross. “This is a special day for us,” he said, adding that the National Society’s new status will enhance its relations with local and international partners and help it represent pressing humanitarian concerns, such as climate change, at the international level. Sadly, the secretary general of the Tuvalu Red Cross, Olioliga ‘Oli’ Iosua, was unable to attend the assembly due to an illness that ultimately resulted in her passing away in late January. Widely recognized as an inspirational and visionary leader, Iosua stood out as an important humanitarian voice in the Pacific.

**Movement adopts new logo**

For the first time in its 150-year-plus history, the Movement has approved a Movement-wide logo representing all its components — the ICRC, National Societies and the IFRC. The new logo — a cross and a crescent partially encircled by the words ‘International Movement’ — does not replace existing logos of Movement components. Rather, it is to be used exceptionally, for representation, communication, global fund-raising and promotional activities and to represent Movement components collectively on matters of global concern or interest.

**Send us your impressions**

Send your comments about the new logo to rcrc@ifrc.org. We will forward them to the IFRC and ICRC communications teams involved in decisions about the new logo.
Another international meeting, set for Istanbul, Turkey in May 2016, was also on the agenda. Organized by the United Nations, the World Humanitarian Summit will bring together international aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and local humanitarian groups to discuss how to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. Based on comments gathered from community leaders, volunteers and front-line aid workers during five ‘hub’ events in each key region, as well as the Voices to Action campaign (see below), the Movement also crafted and approved a statement to the World Humanitarian Summit that called for “clear commitments on respect for human dignity and people’s assistance and protection in disaster, armed conflict and other emergencies”.

Aid workers must not be prevented from reaching those in need, the statement continued. This proximity is necessary in order to make sure that people affected by crisis play a leading role in their own recovery. “Participation is an important part of human dignity,” the statement adds. “Humanitarian response should actively include affected people in the relief of their own suffering and the reduction of their risk.”

For that reason, proximity and trust are essential. “To work together well, humanitarian agencies must be close to the communities who need them and work in cooperation with the relevant authorities.”

The statement also called on the summit to place more priority on funding locally based humanitarian action. “The international system still places an overwhelming emphasis on international actors, leaving local organizations insufficient influence over operational decision-making and humanitarian policy. “This imbalance must be changed,” the statement continues. “More sustained investment in national response systems and basic services will deliver stronger partnerships between local and international actors.”

While many humanitarian organizations (including the ICRC) are operating with record budgets, due to the enormity of needs, the continuous and growing scale of humanitarian needs globally has led to calls for change in the way humanitarian and development aid is delivered.

Some critics of the humanitarian sector argue that the aid system is broken and needs a complete overhaul, while others suggest it is simply underfunded and that the basic structure of the international aid system is essentially effective. Consultations leading up to the summit have brought several key themes to the fore, most notably, strengthening the capacity of national governments and local communities to respond to challenges rather than continually placing the lion’s share of resources in the hands of international humanitarian organizations.

Still, the statement concludes, support for local action does not need to come at the expense of international humanitarian aid. Rather, the Movement’s statement calls on the summit to “affirm the complementarity of local, national and international action”.

Movers and shakers
The Movement meetings were also a chance to hear from opinion leaders who challenge some of the assumptions that have guided development and humanitarian aid. One of them was economist Dambisa Moyo, the author of Dead Aid, why aid is not working, who has long argued that large-scale development aid can do more harm than good. Speaking to the gathering, she made it clear she was not arguing against emergency aid. “There is a moral imperative for us to act,” Moyo said. “If we are a part of a global human family we cannot stand by the sidelines when there is an atrocity occurring.” Her main concern is long-term, large-scale development aid. One key problem, she added, is that major aid packages create dependencies among recipient governments while breaking important social contracts by making aid-dependent governments more accountable to international donors than to citizens and taxpayers.

Voices to Action
A Movement initiative called Voices to Action aimed at bringing the perspectives and ideas of local humanitarians from communities around the world to both the International Conference, and the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2016. Here are just two of the comments from the roughly 7,000 people who contributed via social media, hub events and face-to-face interviews. “Advocate for greater collaboration between healthcare services, particularly between developed and developing countries, which could make a real difference in ensuring a timely response during natural disasters [and] disease outbreaks,” said one participant from Rwanda. “Each house or family should have one person who has been trained in emergency care so that he or she can perform first aid before the medical professionals arrive,” said another from Indonesia. Still more ideas and perspectives were added at the ‘Vision Lab’, a brainstorming space set up in one of the meeting rooms.
In many of the photographs taken by Victor Lacken during the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in 2014 and 2015, the faces of his subjects are obscured by masks and goggles, their bodies covered head-to-toe in protective gear. Despite this protective gear, which obscures even the slightest facial expression, Lacken’s photographs were able to capture a sense of the humanity of the person within: the sense of strain and fatigue under the sweltering outfits, the pride and defiance showing through, despite the stigmas associated with the work. Late last year, Lacken received the AidEx Photojournalism Award for photos taken over four months with members of the Liberian Red Cross Society’s Safe and Dignified Burials team. The photos tell a story of personal courage and of the absolute necessity of a locally based humanitarian response, backed by international solidarity.

© A Liberian Red Cross Society Safe and Dignified Burials team removes a body from a house in Freetown, Liberia. For the photographer, Victor Lacken, the photo is about anticipation. “I cased the building,” he says. “I knew where they were going to come out. What I didn’t know was that a curious neighbour would be watching from above.”
“I captured this photo of two burial team members as they walked to pray for someone who had died during the Ebola outbreak,” says photographer Victor Lacken. “At a time when people were not allowed to touch, this was the safest way to do so.”

“Once inside their protective clothing, only their eyes are visible. Here, a member of a Safe and Dignified Burials team gets suited up with help from a fellow team member.

“When I take a photo I am constantly moving to find that best angle, such as the reflection in the water in this photo,” says Lacken.
Technological disasters present great challenges for local first responders. Five years after the Fukushima nuclear accident, the Japanese Red Cross Society is leading Movement efforts to be ready for the specific dangers of man-made disasters.

MASAYUKI KANNO once wondered what would happen if there were ever an explosion at one of the nuclear power plants in his home prefecture of Fukushima. As a member of a medical relief team at Fukushima Red Cross hospital, he asked a senior staff member how the teams would cope in the aftermath of such a disaster.

“If there is a radiation leak, nothing can be done,” Kanno recalls his superior telling him. “There is nothing we can do. However, a nuclear power plant accident will never happen.”

That attitude reflected the complacency towards nuclear energy that was prevalent in many countries, including Japan, before the catastrophic events five years ago, on 11 March 2011, when a magnitude 9.0 earthquake triggered a series of tsunami waves that slammed into Japan’s north-eastern Pacific coast, killing thousands and crippling the No. 1 Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Nuclear plants provided around 30 per cent of Japan’s electricity before March 2011 and, according to Masahito Yamazawa, director general of the Japanese Red Cross Society’s Nuclear Disaster Resource Center (NDRC), the country had total faith in the industry. “We could only think of a nuclear accident as being a slight possibility,” he says. “We could not think of it as a probability.”

Like many in Japanese society, the Japanese Red Cross was not ready for what unfolded in the days after 11 March. Shoichi Kishinami, director of operations at the Japanese Red Cross’s Fukushima chapter, realized this the next day, when he began receiving calls from concerned relief teams working at evacuation centres in Minami Soma, around 30 kilometres north of the nuclear plant.

“I felt a lot of pressure and worry about not knowing enough about radiation and radiation exposure,” says Kishinami, 56, who has been with the Japan Red Cross for 38 years. “We had had no training in how to operate after a nuclear accident and it was frightening to deal with that kind of invisible threat.”

Eventually, he ordered the teams to withdraw temporarily from the area. Ayumi Watanabe was a member of a Fukushima Red Cross hospital relief team. “With mixed feelings of guilt and a sense of fear of the radiation, we forced ourselves to move [further away] to Kawamata,” the nurse later recalled. “My heart was nearly broken with sorrow.”

“That dilemma of having to leave communities behind was the motivation for the Japanese Red Cross to establish its nuclear disaster guidelines,” says Yamazawa, 61, who joined the National Society in 2011 after a career in Japan’s civil protection forces.

On 13 March, a day after a hydrogen explosion in one of the reactor buildings, the Red Cross relief teams that had travelled to Fukushima from around Japan decided to move to areas outside the prefecture. Without the proper training and equipment for working in a radiological environment, they didn’t feel comfortable. “I was grateful to all the teams,” says Kishinami. “They
didn’t want to leave, but they couldn’t work under those circumstances.”

Two years later, the Japanese Red Cross had the tools in place to begin the work of ensuring its relief teams, made up of doctors, radiological technicians, nurses and administrative staff, wouldn’t be left vulnerable again. The organization released a nuclear disaster manual and equipped its 498 relief teams in all 47 chapters with the necessary protective suits and devices for measuring radiation. The Tokyo-based NDRC was set up later that year.

Under Yamazawa, the NDRC established a set of guidelines for preparing for and responding to nuclear emergencies. These have been issued to all Japanese Red Cross staff and local volunteers. It also created an online archive of related data in both Japanese and English and launched a nuclear disaster response training programme to educate its relief teams in the fundamentals of radiation, contamination, safety and protective equipment use. So far, around 400 first- and second-wave responders have received the training.

“If we know the radiation basics and how to use the protective gear, then we can face the next disaster with more confidence,” says Yamazawa.

International repercussions

The Fukushima disaster also spurred the IFRC, at its 2011 General Assembly, to adopt a resolution to better prepare for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies (CBRN). Such disasters pose particular challenges and risks for first responders while preparing for them requires a significant investment of time and resources due to the specialized knowledge needed for an effective and safe response.

Such investment is essential, stressed Simon Eccleshall, head of disaster and crisis management for the IFRC. “With ageing infrastructure in many parts of the world, technological hazards unfortunately are expected to increase,” he says. “Urbanization and industrialization compound the vulnerabilities to such disasters while climate-related events can bring additional threats to technological infrastructure.”

In some cases, preparing for such disasters does not necessarily mean the creation of entirely new specialist teams or response systems. Martin Krottmayer, head of IFRC’s CBRN Emergency Preparedness Programme, says radiological and nuclear hazard preparedness should complement a National Society’s existing services.

A fishing boat washed up by the 2011 tsunami sits next to black plastic bags containing radiated soil, leaves and debris collected during decontamination operations near the crippled reactor in Fukushima.

Photo: REUTERS/Toru Hanai

With mixed feelings of guilt and a sense of fear of the radiation, we forced ourselves to move (further away) to Kawamata. My heart was nearly broken with sorrow.”

Ayumi Watanabe, a nurse and member of a Fukushima Red Cross hospital relief team

© A fishing boat washed up by the 2011 tsunami sits next to black plastic bags containing radiated soil, leaves and debris collected during decontamination operations near the crippled reactor in Fukushima. Photo: REUTERS/Toru Hanai

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The Japanese Red Cross already played a unique role in the nation’s response to radiological disasters due to its history following the Second World War. Since the Fukushima crisis, the NDRC has established a team of specialist advisers, drawn from Japanese Red Cross hospitals, including two in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, established to help people suffering long-term effects of radiation from the atomic bombs dropped on the two cities in 1945. In the event of a nuclear accident, these experts would be dispatched to the Red Cross’s national headquarters and the affected local area.

Last September, the National Society launched the next phase of its preparedness, with a two-day exercise in Fukushima. Some 200 staff and 200 volunteers from across northern Japan simulated a natural disaster on the first day and a nuclear disaster on the second.

While Kishinami says the relief teams in Fukushima now feel far better prepared to provide help in any future nuclear disaster zone, he thinks the teams should each be led by an experienced nuclear disaster specialist.

Five years after one of Japan’s greatest catastrophes — a combination of a man-made and a natural disaster — the National Society is in a much better position to react. “If we were in an 11 March situation now, I feel confident we could handle it,” says Kishinami.

By Nick Jones
Nick Jones is a Tokyo-based freelance journalist.

“We had had no training in how to operate after a nuclear accident, and it was frightening to deal with that kind of invisible threat.”
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Few people know better about the long-term effects of a major nuclear disaster than the volunteers and staff of the Belarus Red Cross. Three decades after the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident, the National Society continues to help people cope with the life-threatening health effects caused by exposure to excessive levels of radiation.

“More than 2 million people suffered — one-fifth of our population,” says Viktor Kolbanov, secretary general of the Belarus Red Cross. “More than 135,000 people were resettled from the contaminated areas, which covers 23 per cent of the nation’s territory.”

Belarus, the Russia Federation and Ukraine were the countries hardest hit. And like the two other National Societies, the Belarus Red Cross brought food, clothing, medical care and other basic necessities of life to those who lost everything. In the years following the accident, for example, the incidence of thyroid cancer increased dramatically, particularly among children.

The work continues to this day. Belarus Red Cross mobile medical clinics travel to remote areas to provide healthcare and screen residents for thyroid cancer. Due to early detection and specialized medical treatment, survival rates have increased significantly, Kolbanov says.

These long-term efforts in Belarus, and similar programmes in Russia and Ukraine, were part of a larger response known as the Chernobyl Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme (CHARP), supported by IFRC and a number of National Societies for more than two decades. The programme included immediate relief at evacuation centres, radiation screening of people and food, health and psychosocial care, and financial assistance among other things. In total, CHARP helped more than 4.2 million people.

Preparing for the next disaster

As needs have become less acute, and more services are absorbed by local services, CHARP has come to an end, though the National Societies in the affected countries continue their work. For the IFRC and many National Societies, the emphasis now is on reducing risk and strengthening the ability of National Societies and communities to prepare for and respond to similar disasters in the future.

The 2011 Fukushima crisis in Japan, which followed a period of numerous other technological disasters (oil spills, gas leaks, industrial accidents, etc.), brought renewed urgency to the Movement’s readiness activities.

One of the outcomes was the IFRC’s Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Preparedness Programme, which aims to support National Society efforts in all areas from preparedness to response and recovery for chemical, radiological, biological and nuclear disasters. In 2015, the programme released a comprehensive, 110-page document, Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Guidelines: Preparedness, Response and Recovery, which offers broad guidance on how National Societies and communities can be better prepared for a nuclear or radiological emergency.

The IFRC is working more closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to receive early notification of nuclear emergencies. It is also supporting efforts to establish a pool of experts who support National Societies in adjusting existing response capacities to meet the specific needs of a nuclear emergency, among other efforts.

So far, 25 National Societies from all regions are actively working to improve their own, as well as overall Movement capacity. The Asia region, for example, is creating a technical response team that can serve as a regional resource in the event of an emergency. Such efforts are gaining momentum as National Societies from increasingly industrialized and urbanized countries see more nuclear plants come on line.

Such preparedness should be a priority for all National Societies, says Kolbanov, because fallout from nuclear accidents does not recognize national borders. “It is important to remember that our tragedy is not ours alone,” he says. “Only together can we solve our major problems.”

Uncommon risks

Nuclear accidents and other technological disasters are rare. But 30 years after Chernobyl, the disaster reminds us of the urgent need to prepare.

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Civil unrest poses some of the greatest challenges for local humanitarian organizations. The experience of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society offers insight into those challenges and the benefits that local humanitarian organizations offer.

Even before active fighting broke out in eastern Ukraine in the summer of 2014, there had been no pharmacy or local medical service in Semyonivka, a village just outside the city of Slovyansk. Today, the needs are more dire than ever.

It’s here that every day, in all weather, Red Cross visiting nurse Natalia Babenko rides her bicycle along the pot-holed streets to visit her 22 patients, elderly people living alone.

Previously, Babenko worked at the same district psychiatric hospital in Semyonivka that brought 80-year-old Raisa Onyschenko here in 1959 to work, build a house and raise two sons. After the house was hit by a shell in July 2014, Onyschenko managed to save little more from the ruins than the dress she was wearing.

“Who would have ever thought I’d end up with nothing,” she says.

With her husband and one son dead, and the other somewhere in Russia, Onyschenko lives in her tiny summer kitchen, which survived the blast, with two cats for company. Now Babenko comes regularly to check her health, buy supplies and provide support. “She’s like family,” says Onyschenko. “I don’t know what I’d do without her.”

The visiting nurse programme is one of the longest-established services provided by the National Society. It is much needed now as more people are left alone and isolated from basic services.

The Semyonivka psychiatric hospital, also destroyed in July 2014, is just a grim ruin. But on the rubble of Onyschenko’s home a new house has been built, thanks to a joint project with the Ukrainian Red Cross and the Luxembourg Red Cross, which is providing ten new homes for people affected by the crisis. On an evening in January it’s practically finished, already papered with pristine pink flowered wallpaper. “I’ve already been inside,” Onyschenko says, “on tip-toes.”

Challenges since the beginning

Such services from the Ukrainian Red Cross have played a critical role in helping people around the country cope since civil unrest in late 2013 erupted into armed conflict in 2014. Providing a response that meets the growing needs has not been easy.

From the beginning, Ukrainian Red Cross staff and volunteers have experienced challenges similar to those many local humanitarians face when their societies undergo upheaval.

One incident foreshadowed some of those changes. On 9 May 2014, masked, armed men entered the Ukrainian Red Cross Society’s Donetsk regional office and detained volunteers from a Ukrainian Red Cross emergency team from the capital of Kiev. The city was tense. After months of civil unrest in Kiev, people protesting in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk had organized in opposition to the new national government. Members of the volunteer emergency team were in Donetsk. Their tunics showed they were with the Red Cross, but their identification documents showed they were from Kiev. This led the armed men, part of the opposition movement, to question and detain the volunteers.

They were released the following day, but by then other Red Cross volunteers had informed the media, and it was clear the National Society was caught up in a split that would pose many challenges for those trying to deliver neutral and impartial humanitarian services.

Nearly two years on, the conflict has cost over 9,000 lives, displaced more than 1.6 million people internally and caused some 1.1 million to seek refuge outside Ukraine, according to the United Nations. And it has presented the National Society with an enormous task: to expand services rapidly in extreme circumstances to provide aid to the huge numbers in need.

The Ukrainian Red Cross has made considerable progress, transforming from a National Society providing fairly routine services in a peaceful, relatively stable country, to an important first responder and...
provider of aid for people going through tremendous upheaval.

Among other things, the National Society has continued providing first-aid training by volunteer emergency response teams, visiting nurses for the elderly, mobile medical brigades and tracing services. These services have been supplemented by vouchers for food and medical items, shelter vouchers, first-aid kits, other basic necessities such as hygiene and household goods, as well as cash assistance.

The National Society’s transition has been about not only building up operational capacity, supported by the Movement, but about less tangible yet vital attributes such as retaining public trust and acceptance while internalizing principles that before the conflict seemed relatively abstract.

“We held seminars, we talked about the importance of these principles, but until the conflict broke out, however much we talked we didn’t really understand them, we didn’t take them to heart,” says Iryna Mitchenko, deputy head of Donetsk regional branch. As the crisis escalated, many of the Donetsk volunteers left the branch, and even the city. “They realized they couldn’t be neutral,” says Mitchenko.

**Learning on the move**

The Ukrainian Red Cross is a well-known entity represented at town and region levels throughout Ukraine. But as the Red Cross symbol had come to be used for anything from private pharmacies to computer repair shops, few people were really aware of what the organization stood for or what it actually did.

That changed in late 2013. Red Cross emergency response brigades were in the thick of the violent civil unrest that seized Kiev and other cities, their tunics and helmets with the Red Cross symbol highly visible in images shown across the world as they tended the wounded.

But some demonstrators also set up their own first-aid teams using a red cross symbol and since

**Operations at a glance**

- 18 emergency response teams with a total of 136 active volunteers, 651 certified first-aid instructors and 36 certified first-aid trainers are active in the country.
- 26 mobile medical teams are operational in five regions, providing essential healthcare to internally displaced persons in their places of residence.
- Ukrainian Red Cross teams also offer psychological support, the visiting nurse programme brings healthcare to people where they live and the National Society helps people find lost loved ones.
then, the National Society has had to deal with several other instances of emblem misuse. With the help of Movement partners, the National Society countered with public education campaigns aimed at educating people about the Red Cross and international humanitarian law. But the improper emblem use complicated the National Society’s efforts to gain the trust of those in need throughout a divided eastern Ukraine and to inform and persuade all the parties operating there to allow them to work freely.

“We never thought that this could ever happen to us,” says Mitchenko.

“After nearly two years, I’ve truly learned how to use the Red Cross principles. Since then, it’s become easier for me to work, and to accept reality.”

Ivan Usichenko, president of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, says the crisis has forced the National Society to adapt quickly under pressure. “When this situation began we were resolving questions on the hoof together with the ICRC and IFRC about how better to provide aid in Donetsk and Lugansk regions, to displaced people, hospitals, civilian and military wounded,” Usichenko says.

A more recent challenge, he adds, is the waning interest internationally for the conflict in Ukraine. Overshadowed by other major events — migration, terrorism, different conflicts — some worry that Ukraine is becoming what humanitarians call ‘a forgotten crisis’ even though the needs are just as great as ever.

“I follow the news,” says Violeta Lombarts, head of the IFRC country office in Kiev. “The Ukraine crisis is invisible… so how can we attract people [and convince them] to provide support?”

Growth under pressure

Nevertheless, since early 2014, implementing bilateral aid projects with 30 Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and 12 external partners, National Society committee staff has grown significantly, according to Liliia Bilous, Ukrainian Red Cross first secretary deputy general and head of the newly-formed disaster management department.

“The National Society, with the support of the IFRC and ICRC, has managed to increase its potential quickly and react rapidly to emergency situations, during civil unrest in Kiev,” says Bilous. “New challenges have arisen, but the more challenges we overcome, the stronger we grow.”

Alongside mobile medical teams (now numbering 26 and funded by the World Health Organization) and more than 3,000 visiting nurses, National Society branches deliver humanitarian aid to front-line settlements and to the huge numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) who have moved into towns such as Slovyansk and Severodonetsk.

One morning in January, three visiting nurses from the Severodonetsk Red Cross branch, having already seen their patients before 10 in the morning, are distributing food vouchers to people they have invited to the office.

“When 300 people were coming per day, we had to be psychologists and labourers and listeners all at once because there was no one else,” says nurse Yelena Menayeva. “To start with, there was only the Red Cross, and it was all so sudden and we had to orient ourselves so quickly among this huge crowd of people.”

The vouchers, introduced in 2015, can be spent in any branch of a supermarket chain. “People can buy what they need,” says Menayeva. “Before, people would come who had diabetes, and all we had was rice and other goods that diabetics can’t use.”

A more recent innovation is the cash-assistance programme, which gives people even more flexibility to cover their needs; monitoring shows that most of the money gets spent on gas and electricity through the long cold winter.

The National Society, working together with the ICRC, also offers a critical service for people seeking answers about lost loved ones who’ve gone missing during the crisis. Often requests come from people abroad or elsewhere in Ukraine who have lost touch with relatives in the conflict zone, in areas where electricity services and postal services no longer function.

“Some are old people with no means of communication, sometimes they are IDPs,” says Irina Tsariuk, who heads the tracing service. “We ask our
volunteers to visit them, or help find them via the IDP registration.”

As of February 2016, more than 500 families contacted the Ukrainian Red Cross to re-establish links with a family member from whom they were separated due to the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. Some 140 cases have yet to be solved.

The price of conflict
Meanwhile, life for long-time residents of towns such as Severodonetsk, which has increased by a half since the conflict began, is also hard. Local National Society branches, which have long served the community, are well aware of simmering resentment towards IDPs.

“Local people need help, too, with pensions so small and prices going up,” says Tatiana Babich from the Lisichansk branch, near Severodonetsk. “People see the help we’re giving IDPs and they run to us, weeping, ‘Give us something as well! We have to explain, ‘At least you are living in your own home’.”

Donors now allocate 20 per cent of aid to local residents and the rest to IDPs.

Mikhail Maslov, a soft-spoken father and former factory worker, says he understands the plight of both local residents and IDPs. Maslov fled Donetsk with his family in August 2014, and initially came to the Red Cross for help. Now he helps determine which people qualify for the voucher and cash-assistance programmes using specific selection criteria.

“I can tell those who’ve just arrived where to go and where to register, and what documents are needed,” he says. “I’ve been through it all myself and can share my experience.”

The other volunteers and staff members, many of whom are also IDPs from Luhansk, provide him with invaluable psychological and moral support. “I offer them some help and in return I get to be with people I can talk to and who understand.”

Volunteering for change
That social and moral support is important to keep Red Cross volunteers motivated to work under difficult circumstances. While long-established Ukrainian Red Cross volunteer groups have collapsed in some places under the pressure of the crisis, others have sprung up anew, in different forms.

The Lugansk volunteer emergency team, one of the oldest and strongest in the country, worked in hugely dangerous situations in the summer of 2014 when the city was under siege, providing an inspiration to active young people like Andrey Suleiman, a student in Lisichansk. As in Donetsk, the team has since disbanded; half its members moved to government-controlled territory.

But in Lisichansk, Ukraine’s youngest emergency response team established itself in late 2014, when conflict engulfed the town and Suleiman and other members of a school-based sports club approached the Red Cross to help distribute humanitarian aid.

Suleiman, 19, moved to Ukraine from Syria in 2012. “I came from a war to a war,” he says. “Here I also saw a town cut off from all help, people hiding in basements without water… and no real aid.”

Now these team members — students and teachers aged 18 to 24 — are part of the Safer Schools project with the ICRC, visit front-line schools to conduct extended first-aid and mine-safety courses for teachers who can then pass on their knowledge.

The Lisichansk brigade are also active members of the Ukrainian Red Cross youth movement, which is bringing new life, ideas and aims to the National Society in a challenging environment. As in many countries experiencing civil conflict, in Ukraine politics inform everything; working with the Red Cross may mean giving up membership in certain other groups and perhaps losing the understanding of friends and family.

“The task of the organization is to find a spot for each person,” says Natalia Vasilyuk, who was the Kharkiv Ukrainian Red Cross youth coordinator before moving to the ICRC to work in Slovyansk. “Success lies somewhere in combining an understanding for volunteers and how useful and meaningful their work is, and how much support they find within it as a social group.”

By Lily Hyde
Lily Hyde is a freelance writer and public health researcher based in Kiev, Ukraine.
At the crossroads of crisis

As humanitarian groups from around the world meet in Istanbul, Turkey for the World Humanitarian Summit in May, they have a unique chance to get to know the Turkish Red Crescent Society, which draws on a rich history and an entrepreneurial spirit as it faces one of the world’s greatest humanitarian challenges right at its doorstep.

At the Turkish Red Crescent Society community centre in Eyyubiye, a district in the ancient city of Sanliurfa, a group of 15 children play and do art projects while their mothers take turns looking after the children and practising sewing on machines made available to refugee women.

Roughly 100 kilometres north of the Syrian border, Sanliurfa has one of the highest concentrations of Syrian refugees in Turkey, some of whom live in nearby camps and others in urban neighbourhoods.

Opened in January 2015, the centre is an example of the National Society’s efforts to help people
who have fled the violence in Syria for safer grounds in Turkey. On any given day, the centre welcomes about 50 boys and girls and offers Turkish language lessons, psychosocial support and basic vocational training as a way of helping new arrivals cope in their new surroundings.

The National Society, known in Turkey as Kizilay, has opened four such centres in the past year specifically for newly arrived Syrians living in Sanlıurfa, Istanbul, Konya and Ankara. The centre’s services are intended to offer hope for the future for people like 45-year-old Zeynep, who came from Damascus in Syria five years ago after losing her husband in the conflict. Zeynep attends a needlecraft course while her college-aged daughter gives painting lessons to children in the community centre.

Many who take advantage of the centre’s courses also work as volunteers as they try to keep their dreams — interrupted by war — alive. Sara, a 17-year-old from Deir ez-Zor, had to leave school because of war and now she can at least stay active and learn new skills by volunteering at the centre.

Aliye, aged 8, is from Iraq and despite her tender age has suffered from the conflict. Her sister was blinded during attacks in the Iraqi province of Al Anbar and now Aliye comes to the centre’s ‘child-friendly space’ for comfort, activities such as painting and to play with other children. She wants to be a teacher one day. “This is my favourite place in Sanlıurfa,” she says.

Looking at the long term
The registered Syrian refugee population in Turkey numbered more than 2.2 million at the end of 2015 (and there are no official figures for the unregistered population) and it is estimated that at least 87 per cent of displaced Syrians live in cities as opposed to government-run camps.

This is one reason that Ahmet Lutfi Akar, president of the Turkish Red Crescent Society, says that community centres are among the most important services developed for their Syrian guests. Aside from helping them move past their experiences of the war, the centres can help them be productive and ultimately learn the Turkish language.

“We know that communication enables maintaining their life more comfortably and helps them solve the problems they may face,” he says, adding that the centres are particularly meaningful for children. “We can show them there is another world apart from guns and bombs and teach them in these community centres that all people are not bad. We have the chance to raise a generation that doesn’t find the solution to all problems in weapons.”

Given the difficulties of migrating elsewhere, and the impossibility of returning to their homes in Syria, it’s clear that longer-term solutions are warranted. The near-complete destruction of city landscapes that support civilian life means that many of these people have nothing to return to even if fighting were to end, notes Mehmet Gulluoglu, director general of the Turkish Red Crescent.
“Cities such as Aleppo, Hama, Idlib — these are the important cities in Syria and, in many cases, there is virtually no city left,” he notes. “There are no houses, work, schools, hospitals or government buildings. Even if today or tomorrow, the guns are silent, what will they do when they go back?”

Responding to the needs of those who are trying to make their way in Turkish cities is one of Kızılay’s latest adaptations to a massive and growing humanitarian crisis that erupted after the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 rapidly devolved into an increasingly complex conflict.

As tens of thousands of refugees began to arrive at Turkey’s borders, Kızılay quickly mobilized, helping Syrians arriving at the border and at camps established for the refugees by the Turkish government. Today, more than 260,000 Syrians live in 25 government-run camps near the Syrian border. There, some 150 Turkish Red Crescent staff members provide key services such as healthcare, food and psychosocial support, among other services.

There from the beginning

Throughout the crisis, the National Society has worked with national and international partners to find new ways to better serve those in need. In 2012, for example, the Turkish Red Crescent and the World Food Programme launched an e-voucher programme, in cooperation with the Turkish state-owned Halkbank, which gives people a means to generate income for humanitarian activities. Today, the Türk Kızılayı brand of bottled water is a market leader in Turkey.

The Turkish Red Crescent has also done what it can to help communities inside Syria by bringing food, medical and household supplies to 12 points along the Syrian–Turkish border. “One of the problems we need to solve is what to do to help those who have not crossed the Turkish border,” says Akar, noting that people living just inside Syria deserve as much help as those who have taken refuge inside Turkey.

The total amount of humanitarian relief items delivered from the Turkish border to Syria is more than US$ 400 million, he says. “I believe we would have faced more hunger problems if the Turkish Red Crescent and other international aid organizations had not provided this aid,” he says.

Beyond relief

Given the protracted nature of the Syria crisis, however, humanitarian organizations including the Turkish Red Crescent see the need to go beyond emergency relief. “In the short term, nutrition and shelter are critically important,” says Gulluoglu. “But in the middle to long term, the community centres and the things we can do to reduce the impact of this crisis on the guest communities are equally important.”

According to the needs assessment report prepared for the Sanliurfa community centre by Başak Yavcan, professor at the University of Economics and Technology in Ankara, life for refugees living in cities is in many ways even harder than for those living in the camps.

“Refugees live in crowded, single-room households, working for very low wages in aggravated conditions [and] facing discrimination,” Yavcan writes in her report, which was commissioned by the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies, the IFRC and the Turkish Red Crescent.

Despite this, the city-based refugees are generally satisfied with the relative safety of their new surroundings, the free services and humanitar-
In the past decade, the Turkish Red Crescent has also become increasingly active in international operations, delivering humanitarian assistance in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Montenegro, Myanmar (pictured here), Pakistan and Somalia, among others.

Throughout the crisis, the Turkish population has been generous to people fleeing from Syria, Gulluoglu says. While international aid and donations from private individuals have played an important role, the government of Turkey has shouldered most of the costs of caring for the Syrian people living in camps.

But as the conflict drags on and refugee numbers continue to swell, will Turkish society continue to be tolerant and supportive? “The level of acceptance of Turkish society for the Syrian people is just as important as the question of the financial load,” Gulluoglu says. “The government can arrange the budget, but the level of acceptance and the level of absorbing Syrians at the community level are critical.”

Growing international operations
The Turkish Red Crescent’s international humanitarian efforts have also been increasing in recent years. When major crises occur and an international Movement response is mobilized, such as in Haiti in 2010, Nepal in 2015 and many others in between, Kizilay has been there.

Its most extensive ongoing international operation is in Gaza, where it has received significant public support for campaigns that fund food distributions, water-rehabilitation projects, support for local hospitals, agricultural projects, donation of ambulances and student scholarships, among many other things.

One of the more complex and ambitious international operations in recent years has been in Somalia, where Kizilay began working in 2011 following drought and a major food security crisis that came in the midst of protracted armed struggle between armed groups and the transitional government.

Kizilay brought in 4.6 million kilograms of food items and built a camp for 2,500 families, as well as initiating several development aid projects including a public works and engineering facility to

ian aid, the hospitality of locals, the welcoming attitude of the Turkish government and the professionalism of the Turkish Red Crescent, according to the study.

But the availability of these services doesn’t mean their problems are solved. Far from it. First, there is the language barrier. While there is much cultural affinity between communities on both sides of the border, few Turks speak Arabic and few Syrians speak Turkish.

Then there are legal roadblocks. The Syrians who settle in urban areas and who do not always register as refugees in camps are generally subject to Turkey’s ‘guest law’ as opposed to national refugee laws, meaning that their rights and access to some services are reduced. One common complaint is that their children cannot attend school, which stymies their potential relationships with local children, their academic development and their ability to overcome the traumas of war, according to the report.

As the number of centres expands, the assessment of the Sanliurfa community centre offers insights into the opportunities and difficulties ahead. One potential challenge is if local residents begin to resent the services offered to refugees, given that life for locals has also deteriorated since the war in Syria began. The report recommends increased collaboration and inclusion of locals, especially children, in centre activities.

Also, if the job skills learned through the centre’s courses cannot be applied or result in few jobs, people may lose interest. The report suggests active dialogue with employers and local chambers of commerce, as well as flexible course hours, so people don’t have to drop out once they do find work.

These efforts take on greater significance given the increased pressure to stop the flow of migrants from Turkey towards Europe. Refugees and their host communities may well face the prospect of living with each other for some time to come.
help clean rubble, dispose of rain water and rebuild roads, among other things. It is also involved in constructing a machinery, electrical engineering and computer science school for 360 students.

These are ambitious undertakings in a country as fragile and volatile as Somalia and the efforts are not without challenges. The National Society’s emblem helped it work alongside the Somali Red Crescent Society, generally accepted by most actors, and Kızılay’s presence helped spur further action by other international humanitarian organizations.

**Humanitarian crossroads**

Kızılay’s international experience and its central role in the Syrian conflict and the related migration phenomenon have placed it at the intersection of some of today’s most vexing humanitarian challenges.

A long-time leading voice in the Movement, Kızılay belongs to both the old guard of National Societies created in Europe in the late 1800s and a vanguard of Red Crescent societies increasingly making their mark in an aid world that has been historically dominated by Europe and the West. That is starting to change and Red Crescent societies are part of that process, playing a larger role in international humanitarian operations and leading relief efforts on the front lines of many of today’s emergencies.

“Turkey was always a bridge country: between East and West; between North and South; between Africa and Europe,” says Gulluoglu.

As leading humanitarian organizations meet in Istanbul for the World Humanitarian Summit in May, the Movement’s oldest Red Crescent society is in a position to bring all its experience to bear as humanitarians collectively re-imagine how to develop more sustainable and effective responses to the world’s most intractable problems.

“We have to use humanitarian aid resources efficiently and effectively,” says Akar, when asked about his hopes for the summit’s outcomes. “We are providing help to millions of people as a humanitarian organization, but there are more people in need. This means we have to find new resources and also use current resources more effectively.

“We must push and mobilize our governments for both support and protection of our work. Governments should understand that we are impartial humanitarian aid workers,” he says. “If [this understanding] is achieved, we will then be able to provide more help to places such as Gaza, Somalia and Iraq. I hope that the summit will produce a new approach and more coordinated road map of humanitarian aid.”

© Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, Turkish Red Crescent Society workers have mobilized to help Syrians seeking refuge inside Turkey. Here, a Turkish Red Crescent worker hands a bottle of water to one of the many thousands of civilians who fled across the border into Turkey in September 2014.

Photo: Turkish Red Crescent Society
Resources

PUBLICATIONS

The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Ethics and tools for humanitarian action
ICRC and IFRC 2015
This booklet uses personal stories and case studies to explain what the Fundamental Principles are and how they apply in today's world. Imagine you're a volunteer driving an ambulance in a country going through civil war. What do you do when a soldier refuses to let you through a checkpoint because your patient is from an opposition-controlled area? Or you're delivering aid after a catastrophic flood. Who do you help first? These questions are common for aid workers around the world. To help answer them, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement makes use of its seven Fundamental Principles — humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish

Global Review on Volunteering Report
IFRC 2015
This report draws on the voices and perspectives of almost 600 volunteer managers, delegates and volunteers from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as external experts in 158 countries, to explore the challenges of promoting and supporting volunteering in the context of significant local and global change. Available in English

Urban services during protracted armed conflict
ICRC 2015
Urbanization is constantly on the rise, with cities already absorbing more than half of the world's population and armed conflicts increasingly being fought in urban settings. Regions facing protracted armed conflict see a steady decline in essential public services, while the relief–rehabilitation–development paradigm and funding mechanisms fail to provide a satisfactory response in these settings. Based on more than 30 years of ICRC experience in protracted armed conflict in urban settings, this report underlines the challenges, describes the characteristics and complexity of essential services, questions current paradigms and proposes new avenues to be explored to better respond to the needs of urban communities increasingly affected by these phenomena. Available in English

ONLINE TOOLS

Advocacy Resource Centre
Global Road Safety Partnership/IFRC 2015
The Global Road Safety Partnership, a hosted project of the IFRC, has released an essential new web-based resource to support advocacy efforts for improved road safety policies and implementation of programmes. This new online Advocacy Resource Centre is a one-stop resource for civil society organizations, National Societies and individuals campaigning for road safety policies or policy implementation. Content has been gathered from 43 countries, including the work of many National Societies, and will continue to be built upon throughout 2016, with a key focus on low- and middle-income countries, who share the largest burden of fatalities and injuries resulting from road crashes. Available in English www.grsroadsafety.org/advocacy

Unseen, unheard: Gender-based violence in disasters
IFRC 2015
Although it is increasingly recognized that gender-based violence (GBV) is a major feature of many conflicts, its occurrence during disasters is not as well understood. This study, commissioned by the IFRC, is designed to foster that discussion within both the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and the larger humanitarian community. Full report available in English; executive summary in Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish

VIDEOS

War surgery in DR Congo: A new splint for the wounded
ICRC 2016
Part of a series on innovations in war surgery, this latest installment explains the ICRC’s new traction splint, which can be put together in five minutes, folded up and adjusted to any size of femur. What’s more, it doesn’t rust and is available at an unbeatable price. ICRC surgeon Hassan Nasreddine drew on his long experience in the field to design this splint for leg fractures. From Ndosho hospital in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, he explains the advantages for both patient and doctor. Available in English and French

The Power of Humanity – International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
IFRC 2015
This dynamic and dramatic promotional video shows the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement at work. While the video has no narration and few texts, the images and graphics give viewers a sense of the Movement’s values and how the different members of the Movement provide vital assistance in times of crisis and support communities in becoming stronger and safer through a variety of development projects and humanitarian activities. Available in English

ICRC materials are available from the International Committee of the Red Cross, 19 avenue de la Paix, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland. www.icrc.org.
IFRC materials are available from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, P.O. Box 303, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland. www.ifrc.org.
The Red Crescent was first used unofficially as a protective symbol for humanitarian and medical services during the Russo–Turkish war, from 1876 to 1878. Half a century later, in 1929, the Geneva Conventions were amended to officially recognize the crescent as a protective emblem. This painting shows a Turkish Red Crescent nurse wearing the emblem while aiding a wounded soldier during the 1912–1913 Balkans War.

Photo: Turkish Red Crescent Society