Humanitarian Dialogue:
The VisionLab

Power of humanity
32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
8-10 December 2015, Geneva

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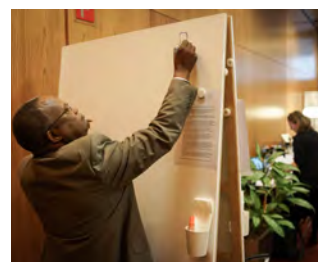8-10 December 2015, Geneva

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WHO IS THE WE?

The Humanitarian Dialogue's Vision Lab was an ambitious endeavour to finding novel approaches to addressing some of the most pressing long-term, strategic questions facing the work of the humanitarian community.

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Originally conceived as a single four-half-day workshop spread over three days of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, it transformed in loco into a dynamic relay-style workshop, with a hard core of about 15 participants maintaining the narrative coherence of a remarkably profound dialogue, plus an additional 35 participants providing insights, challenges, and novel perspectives on individual topics that emerged throughout the three days. The plurality of these participants came from the Movement itself (National Societies, ICRC, IFRC) with a large group from government, NGOs, the UN, and academia and private industry.

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The workshop began with a quick reflection on the recent work of the humanitarian community. Participants identified those areas that aroused the greatest pride and the greatest concern. Responsiveness emerged as the single attribute that the group was most proud of, followed by the handling of the Ebola crisis. The areas of concern were more widely spread, including the care the community shows to its volunteers, the response to the conflict, the migration crisis and, in particular, the Syrian civil war, as well as issues around collaboration among humanitarian players, funding, advocacy, and others.

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Ashanta Osborne-Moses of the Guyana Red Cross formally opened the Vision Lab explaining the intent of the workshop to ask the questions that we sometimes don't have the opportunity or the courage to ask. And beyond asking these questions, the workshop aims to answer some of them as clearly and as boldly as possible. Then the facilitator, Dan Newman of The Value Web, laid out a plan for the next three days' work, a plan that was re-designed several times to reflect the shifting participant group and the unexpected nature of some of the themes that subsequently emerged.

A group of 18 participants then developed their individual visions of what a more effective humanitarian community might look like by 2019, at the time of the 33rd International Conference. While there was significant divergence of opinion, a few common themes emerged: A surprising number of visions raised the dilemma of how the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the broader community 'lives' humanitarian values through its strategy, its way of working, and its behaviours and the need to inculcate these values universally, starting with children. There was also a widely-held frustration with the political and diplomatic constraints that fetter humanitarian work.

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Individual Visions

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Individual Visions

⑥ Volunteerism
– Comm. Strengthening
Policies
–
–

② – Good Governance
– Partnerships
– Common Monitoring
– Mechanisms

① adequate funding
IDRL
Strong, equipped Local
actors / Systems

univeral Access

AXEL

↗ = positive
↘ = negative/
no progress

Climate Change /: ↗ awareness, legal framework
DRR
↘ behavioural patterns of
government / industry / individuals

Migration ↗ awareness, response, protection
↘ root causes addressed, ending
conflict, behavioural patterns... ↑,
Corruption

Armed conflict ↗ better protection of:
• vulnerable, most
vulnerable,
• human. personnel
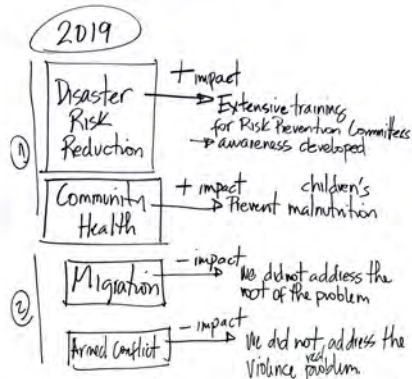↘ terrorist threat, corruption at all
Levels of society

Better effiency and effectiveness of hum. work:

• Improved resilience of communities, local govern-
ments / better preparedness to recurring disasters,
to major catastrophes / Better financial provision
through multiyear financing, more unear-
marked funding / better coordination within
the agencies, between UN and others

• Better link between
– government, UN, Red Cr/cr, CS, PS
– Humanitarian and Development Work

• Humanitarian Community started addres-
sing issues that go beyond it's mandate:
"Addressing the root causes"
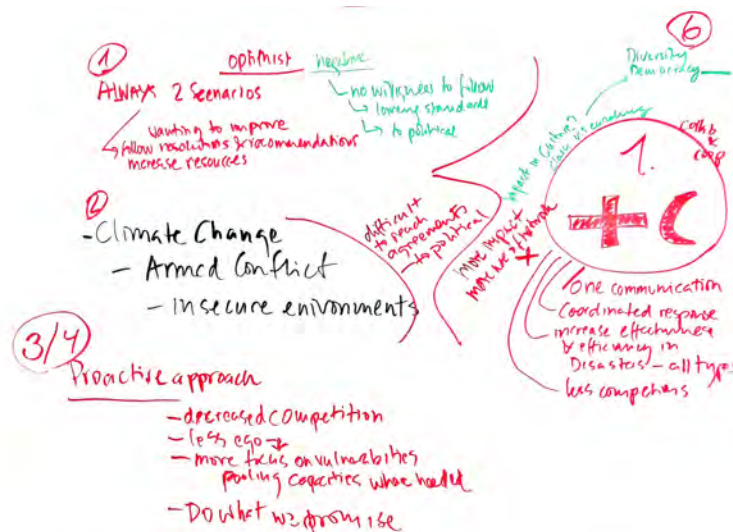but it needs new agents, new tools

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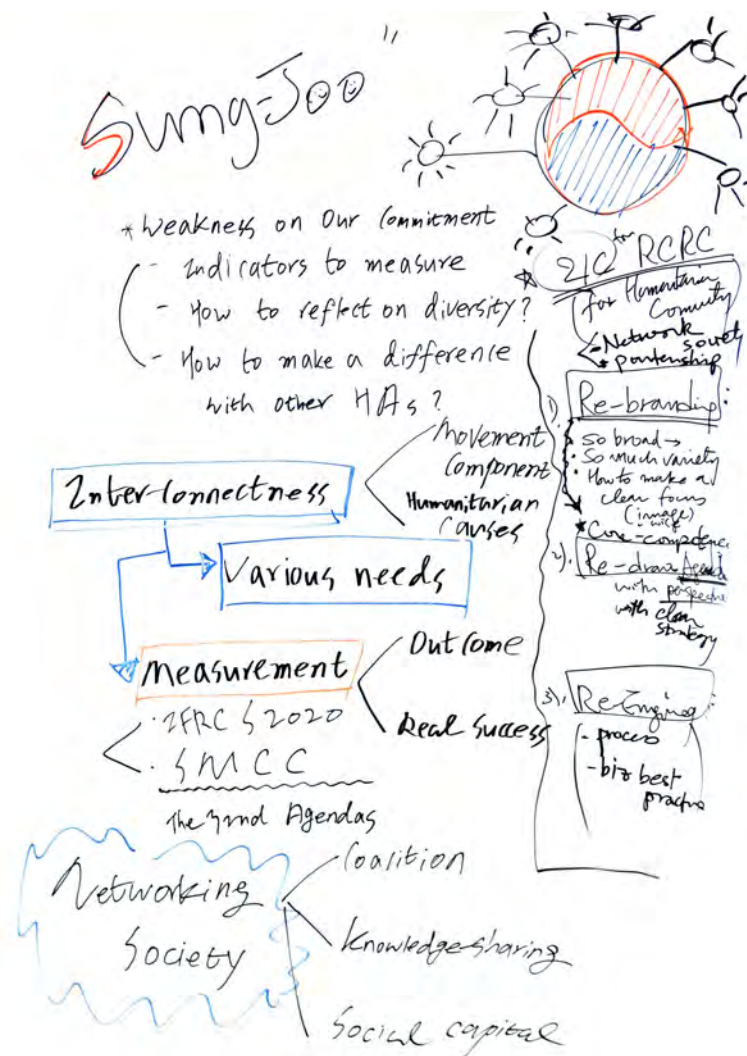
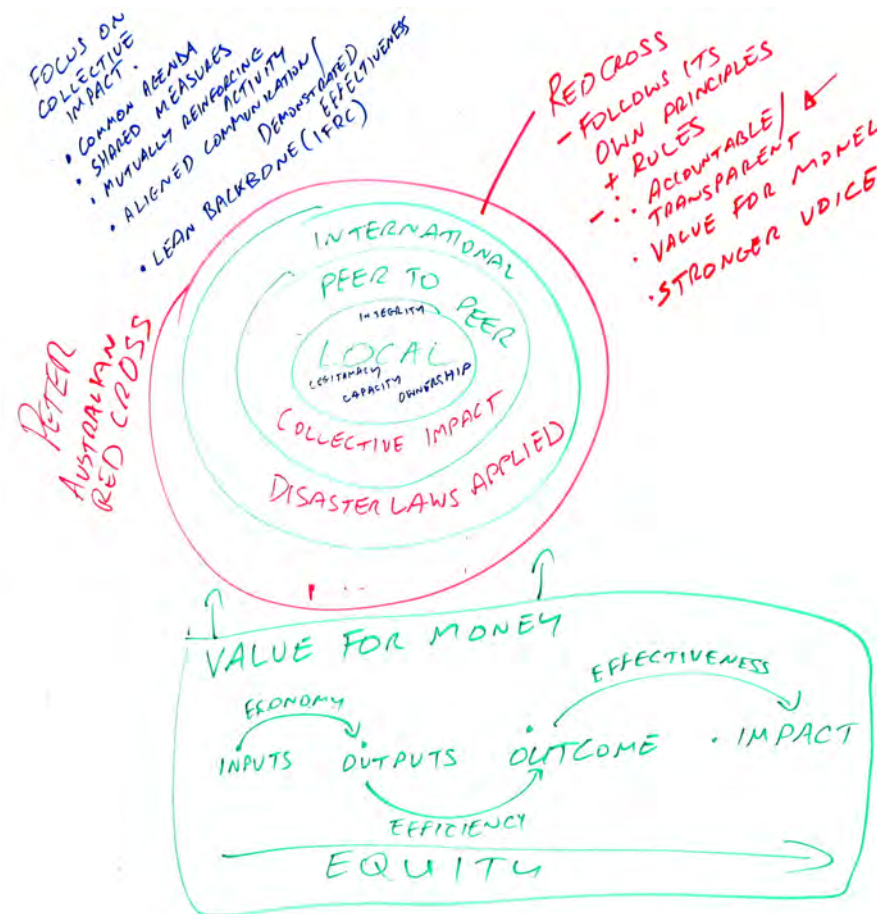# Humanitarian Dialogue - The Vision Lab

Individual Visions

M. HOG.

Q.1. DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS WE HAVE BEEN MOST SUCCESSFUL IN
BRING ABOUT A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT AND CHANGE IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT
ARCHITECTURE FROM RESPONSE TO DRR. YES THERE NOW A VERY BIG
DIFFERENCE IN CHANGING THE MINDSET OF THE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS
THO WE NEED TO INVEST MORE ON DRR TO WITHSTAND THE SHOCK OF DISASTER

Q.2. THERE HAS BEEN LESS IMPACT IN AREAS LIKE MITIGATION, CLIMATE CHANGE
AND COMMUNITY HEALTH.

Q.3. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION
AND MAKING BETTER USE OF SCARCE RESOURCES
BY STRENGTHENING COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION
AMONG RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS AND AVOIDING DUPLICATION
OF EFFORTS. WE CAN MAKE FURTHER IMPROVING
BY SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES AND GOOD
PRACTICES.

Q.4.

Sung-Joo"

* Weakness on our commitment
  (- Indicators to measure
  (- How to reflect on diversity?
  (- How to make a difference
        with other HAs?

21c for RCRC
for Humanitarian Community
Network Society partnership

Movement Component
Humanitarian causes

Interconnectness

Various needs

Measurement
· IFRC S 2020
· SMCC

Outcome

Real success

1) Re-branding:
- So broad → So much variety
- How to make a clear focus (image + ...)
2) Core-competence
2) Re-draw head with perspective with clear strategy

3) Re-Engine
- process
- biz best practice

The grand Agendas

Networking Society

Coalition

Knowledge sharing

Social capital

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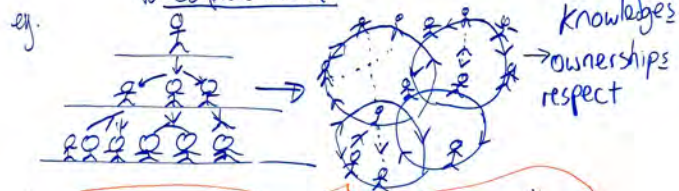
Individual Visions

MATT

help! fear of grand scale!?

Q1: Scale? Evidence? Programmed or accidental? Which do we "know" about? eg. migration ⇒ new openness at multiple levels - institutional / legal / dispositional.

Is this now or 2019?

Q2: Armed conflict - ? relative power of 'sector'

Q3+4: An embrace of + genuine commitment to co-production

eg.

Knowledges → ownerships respect

"Cosmopolitan" as mutual transformation → ie beyond change makers + 'changed'
→ Local + transnational dialogues to reconceive + transform ideas (eg. volunteering) together.

Q6. RC+RC = battling competitors or ..... ?

Camps for Refugees.

Community Center — For Refugees

① ⋀

②

Disaster Risk Reduction
Training activities.

WAR / conflict.
Migration ② ③

URBANIZATION / MIGRATION

Sitting on table.

100 $ 💲 $ 100
private sector
power
pressure
experience

Mehmet

③ Healthy Lifestyle Promotion.

NED

2019 - kids have left home / families?
New job?
living where?
What's next for NED?

It's 2019!

WHAT'S ON OUR AGENDA?

WE'RE BACK @ CICR

① SAME OLD STUFF (WORLD HASN'T CHANGED THAT MUCH)
- CONFLICT & CHALLENGES
  - ANOTHER RESOLUTION ON IHL COMPLIANCE,
  - ANOTHER RESOLUTION ON THE MDR-RCS mov't, etc
- LEGAL FRAMEWORKS
- COORDINATION (WITHIN & OUTSIDE MOVEMENT)

② NEW STUFF?
- GREATER EMPHASIS ON LOCAL ACTORS
- LESS HUMANITARIAN STOVEPIPING
- BETTER DEFINED PARAMETERS FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION
  (HAVE WE LIMNED THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT HUMANITARIAN ACTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO ACCOMPLISH?)

WHO'S HERE!
① SAME OLD FOLKS
(WORLD HASN'T CHANGED THAT MUCH)
- NATIONAL SOCIETIES, GOVERNMENTS, IFRC, ICRC

② NEW FOLKS?
- NEW / BETTER DEVELOPED PARTNERS
  NGOs
  UN AGENCIES
  FAITH BASED ACTORS
  MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES

HOW'RE WE DOING
① SAME OLD CHALLENGES
- BROKE, OVERSTRETCHED, UNCOORDINATED

② NEW MODES
- RESOURCES MATCHED TO NEEDS
  ⇒ BETTER COORDINATION

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Individual Visions

LEENA

RCRC 2019

We are strong in:
- DRR
- Community based approach
- We are still strong in disaster response, but we work also on _prevention_ & _recovery_.

* working together
? armed conflicts increased violence ?

Important: · working in local communities
· working (with) vulnerable people

① DRR → Using Centralized Systems for Coordinating Disaster Relief Efforts.
  ① Dissemination of Resources.

② Climate Change: + Implementing outcomes of COP21
  + Recognising interlinkage between CC & DRR
  ① We are now able to mitigate adverse effects of CC through point①

③ Community health: - Mitigating adverse effect of CC on health through ① & ②
  - Vulnerable groups receive health care needed during conflicts & disasters through coordinated work of concerned community.

Least impact
Migration   Armed Conflict
Lack of influence on Policy Makers ⊕ There is no real solution to above without political will

Humanitarian Aid in all Policies
Meaningful stakeholder engagement
"Leaving no one behind"

MENER DES COMPAGNES DE SENSIBILISATIONS POUR:

1/ Un financement permanent des actions humanitaires
Action humanitaire

2/ changer l'idée suivante: Une personne déplacée est une menace socio-économique

Migration: Lien entre développement et migration

Les mouvées dans l'action humanitaire depuis 2015
* Anticipation
* Action rapide en cas de conflits armés
* Diversification des moyens de financement

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After a brief plenary conversation, during which the participants and facilitators devised a new workshop design – more a relay than a marathon – four teams looked at four different dimensions of change for the humanitarian community:

Scope
To what extent does change need to happen at the level of mission and vision, to what extent at the level of strategy (prioritizing use of scarce resources), to what extent at the tactical level (the day-to-day mechanics of humanitarian work)?

Scale
Where should we be questioning the global aspects of the humanitarian mission? Where does the mission and the way of working need to be refined to have greater impact on individuals? How are these needs integrated with national and community priorities?
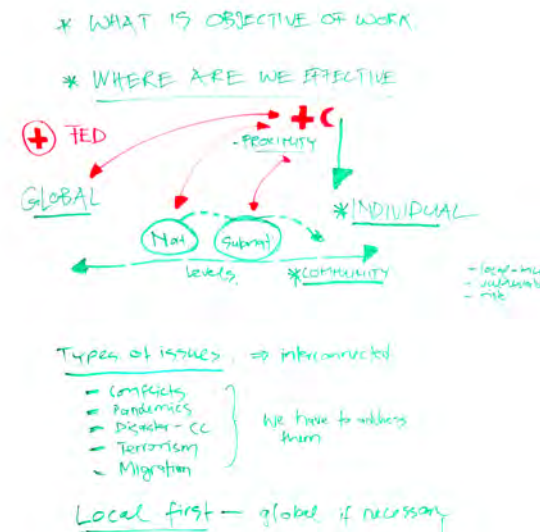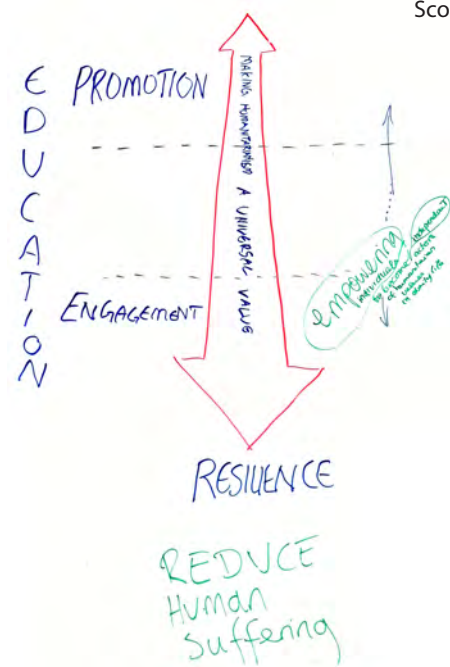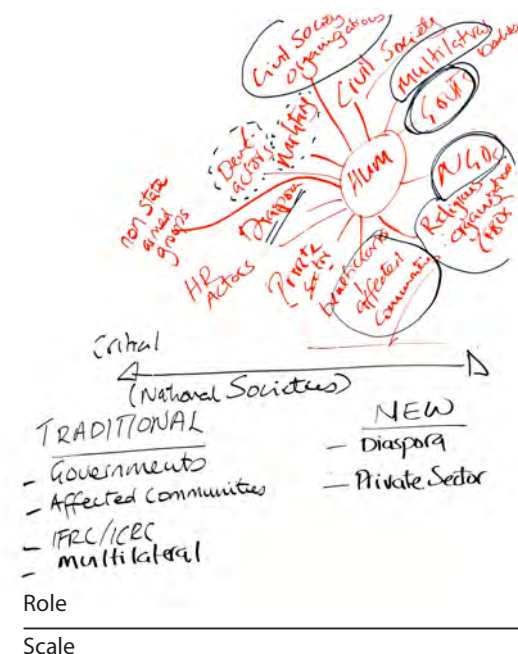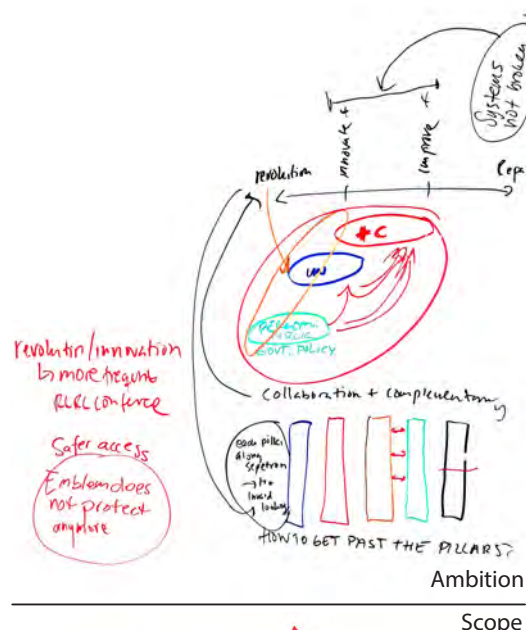
Role
How should the humanitarian community interact differently over the next four years with professionals, with governments, with volunteers, with affected populations, and with other stakeholders?

Ambition
What aspects of our collective humanitarian work needs to be completely re-thought (revolution)? Where are innovation or improvement more appropriate? Where do we simply face broken processes and tools that merely require repair?

These four teams met again the second morning and on-boarded new participants in their work. Each of the four teams developed a map of how we might think about the humanitarian community along their assigned dimension and briefly shared their findings with the rest of participants, in order to avoid the confusion with the IC plenary.

Talk

SAY IT, EVEN IF IT'S NOT COMFORTABLE

Ambition

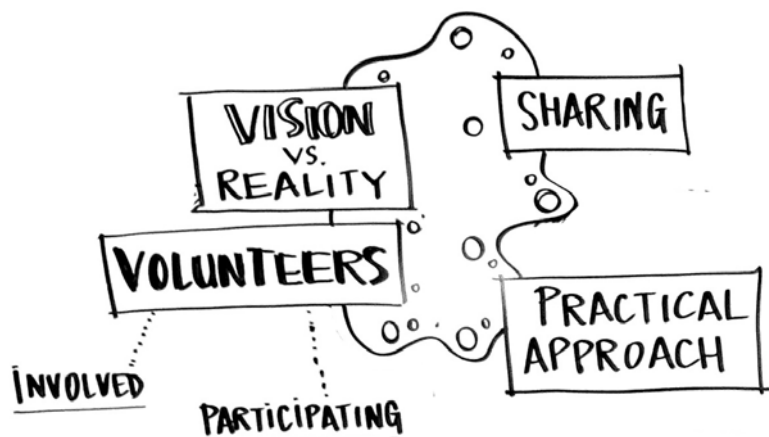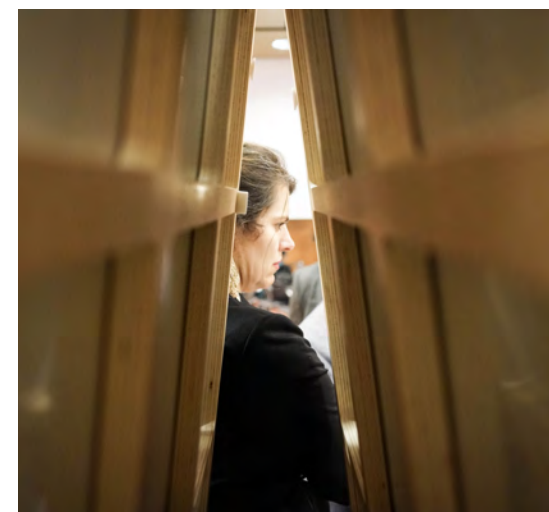Role

Scope

Scale

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Individual Visions

Then, based on the work of the previous day as well as inputs from the Thematic Sessions, being run in parallel, the whole group developed a list of key questions whose answers might help shape the humanitarian community's work over the coming four years. A long list of questions emerged from that discussion:

- **Why do we need Resolutions?**
- **How can we look after volunteers?**
- **Do we live our Fundamental Principles?**
- **Are we compromising our values?**
- **How can we teach courage and humanitarian values to children?**
- **What is our movement's dinstinctive power and how do we leverage it?**
- **How do we avoid/mitigate the next Ebola-like crisis?**
- **How do we bring communities to the table?**
- **How do we build effective coordination into the humanitarian community?**

to which the group added several additional questions, including:

- **What actions should the RCRC movement take to better benefit from the increase in global humanitarian and resources?**
- **How do we bring communities and individuals to the table?**
- **Governance / Accountability?**
- **How do we prepare, as opposed to react/mitigate?**
- **How do we deal with Black Swan risks?**

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New teams were formed mixing the four previous teams so that the work on all four dimensions was represented in each new team. These five new teams were tasked with choosing one of these questions and developing into a rich interview guide.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD THE RCRC MOVEMENT TAKE TO BETTER BENEFIT FROM THE INCREASE IN GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN AID RESOURCES?

Money

What is our MOVEMENTS dinstinctive power and how do we leverage it?

Power

HOW DO WE BRING THE → COMMUNITY → TO THE TABLE

We is Inclusive —

• Who are the communities
• How can we get their voice — How can we access?
  Connecting, disconnecting → neutralise last mile community
  identify - how to make
• The table is where the dialogue takes place
  ↳ anywhere & everywhere — facilitator
• How can we recruit members / volunteers from the community — Share a vision, touch ♡, Advocate
  Info & communication

Communities

PREVENTION
1. SUPPORT 1bn COALITION
   → spell out
2. USE MVT. ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE PREVENTION THROUGH PROXIMITY STRENGTHEN
   spell out
3. CAPACITATE EVERY ~~ONS IN CONFLICT SITUAT~~

Prevention

1. What is the purpose of a resolution? — commitment
2. How do we know if it has acheived it's desired...
3. For a more effective resolution who should be involved in putting it?
4. For a more efficient process who should be involved?
5. Is there a need to developour rules (are the present ones the right ones?)
6. How do resolutions address local communities and their needs
7. Do local communities comply by the resolutions? Why and why not?

Resolutions

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The five themes that were chosen were:
*   Communities
*   Power
*   Money
*   Prevention
*   Resolutions

and most of the rest of the workshop was devoted to developing these themes; initially refining smart questions and then launching the work of finding insightful answers.
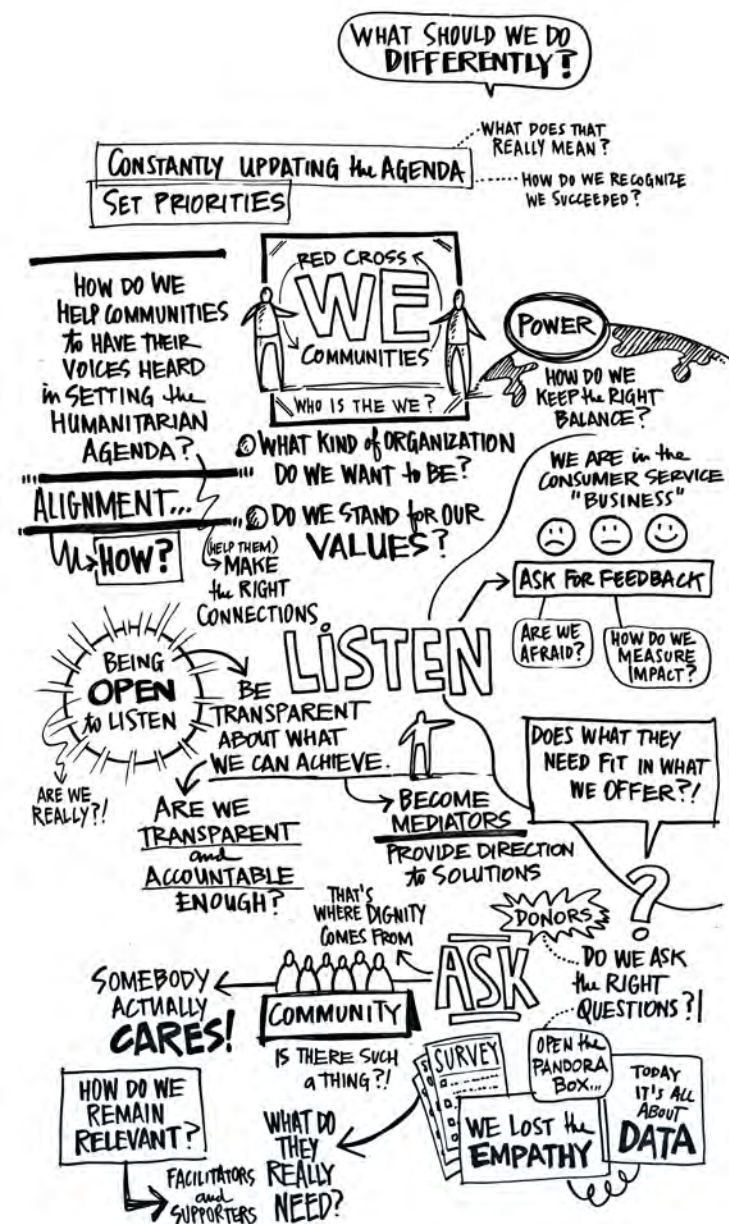
As participants spread out in the Conference Centre to participate in other sessions and to socialize, several of them used this interview guide to solicit input from a broader public. One of the teams – Communities – invited about a dozen participants who had not been part of the Vision Lab to an ad hoc workshop facilitated by one of the teams.

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Of the numerous themes discussed in this workshop-within-a-workshop, perhaps the most important was the focus on the listening vocation of the humanitarian community; i.e., the idea that the dignity of affected populations (refugees, victims of natural disasters, etc.) depends not solely on providing supplies for basic survival and comfort, but on listening to individuals and communities and developing a shared idea of their needs and how to serve them. As such, the humanitarian community should be held accountable directly to the communities served. When all five teams returned to the Vision Lab to share their findings and develop some insightful answers to the smart questions they developed earlier in the day, several important themes emerged. Simply put, the top-down nature of the Power, Money, and Resolution teams met the bottom-up ambitions of the Community and Prevention teams to produce a small number of powerful messages.

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The **Power** team looked for the means to have greater influence on decision-makers at the political level and decided that access to that power could be found through the communities, through volunteers, and through the humanitarian actors themselves, such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent, thus turning the power equation upside-down.

The **Money** team also sought a bottom-up logic to what is commonly viewed as the top-down challenge of funding humanitarian work. Their principal insight was to propose re-directing fund-raising from a geographic or institutional basis to a more thematic basis, thereby matching the programmatic work of many donors. This thematic approach would provide the foundation for constructive feedback loops between donors, communities, and humanitarian actors. This team also discussed the challenge of managing earmarked funds.
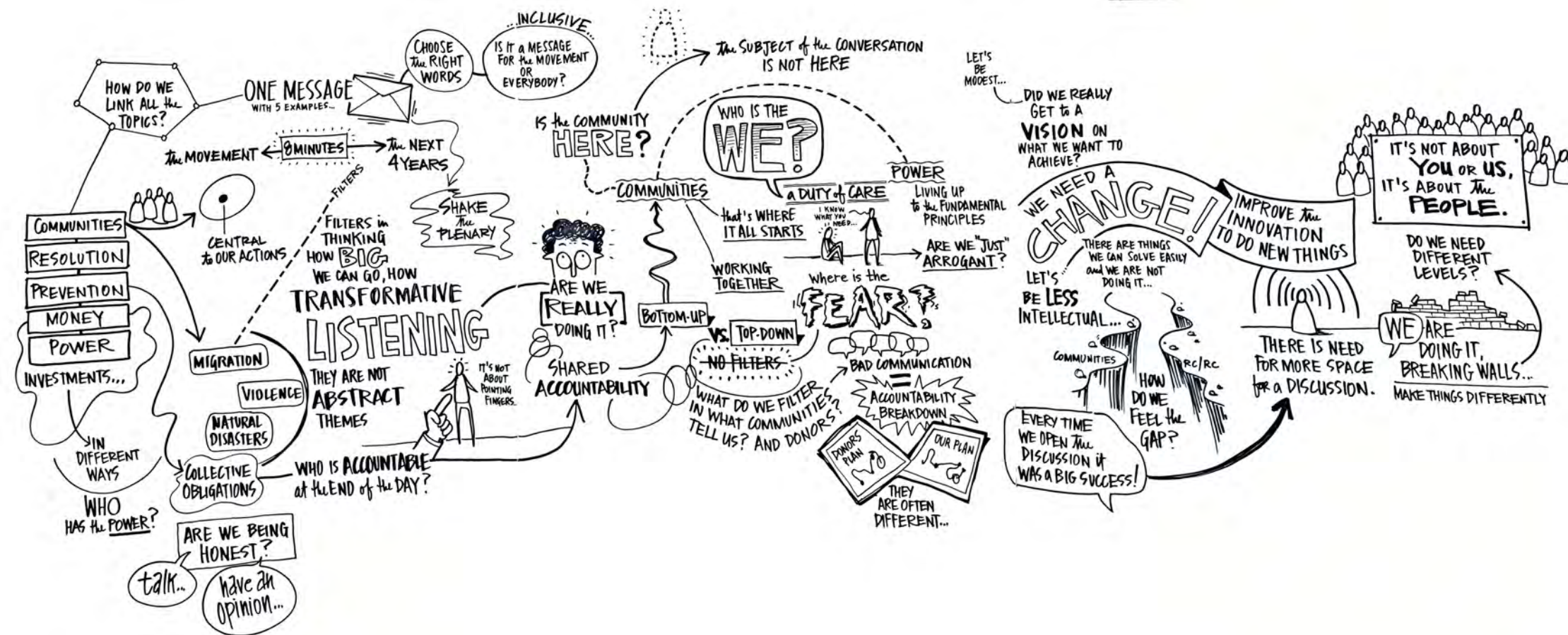
The **Resolutions** team expressed a certain amount of frustration with the existing approach to decision-making (or decision-postponing) in a bubble rather than being integrated into broader community discussions. They suggested, for example, that the approach adopted by the Vision Lab itself, as well as the local Hub events that preceded it, might serve as a model for a more inclusive approach to the governance of the humanitarian community, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent in particular.

The **Prevention** team focused their discussion on making better use of the Movement action plan and investing more effectively in the capacity of National Societies to prevent (and of course, respond to) humanitarian crises.

Finally, as mentioned above, the **Communities** team focused on listening and accountability; i.e., on how the humanitarian community as a whole can effectively play the role of convener and connector with a bottom-up spirit of humanitarian diplomacy.
The workshop then shifted gears and, after a quick de-brief of the five team's discussions, the group had a lengthy discussion of how to summarise shared outcomes and, in particular, how to communicate this summary at the closing plenary of the 32nd International Conference by way of an 8-minute presentation by Ashanta Osborne-Moses.

This proved surprisingly easy since the powerful theme of Accountability clearly linked all five team's discussions. This illustration captures the key themes of the discussion and the text of the closing plenary speech follows this report.
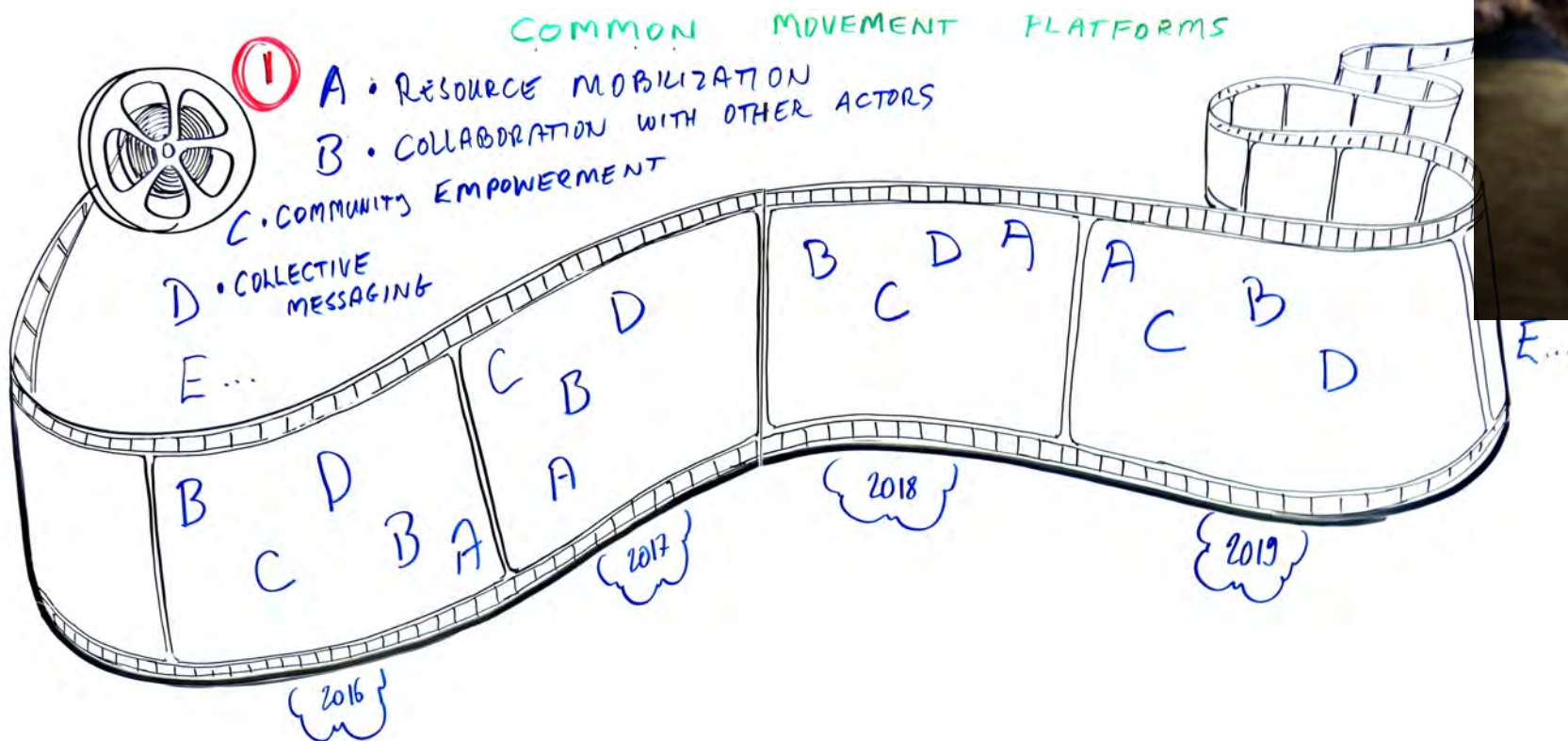
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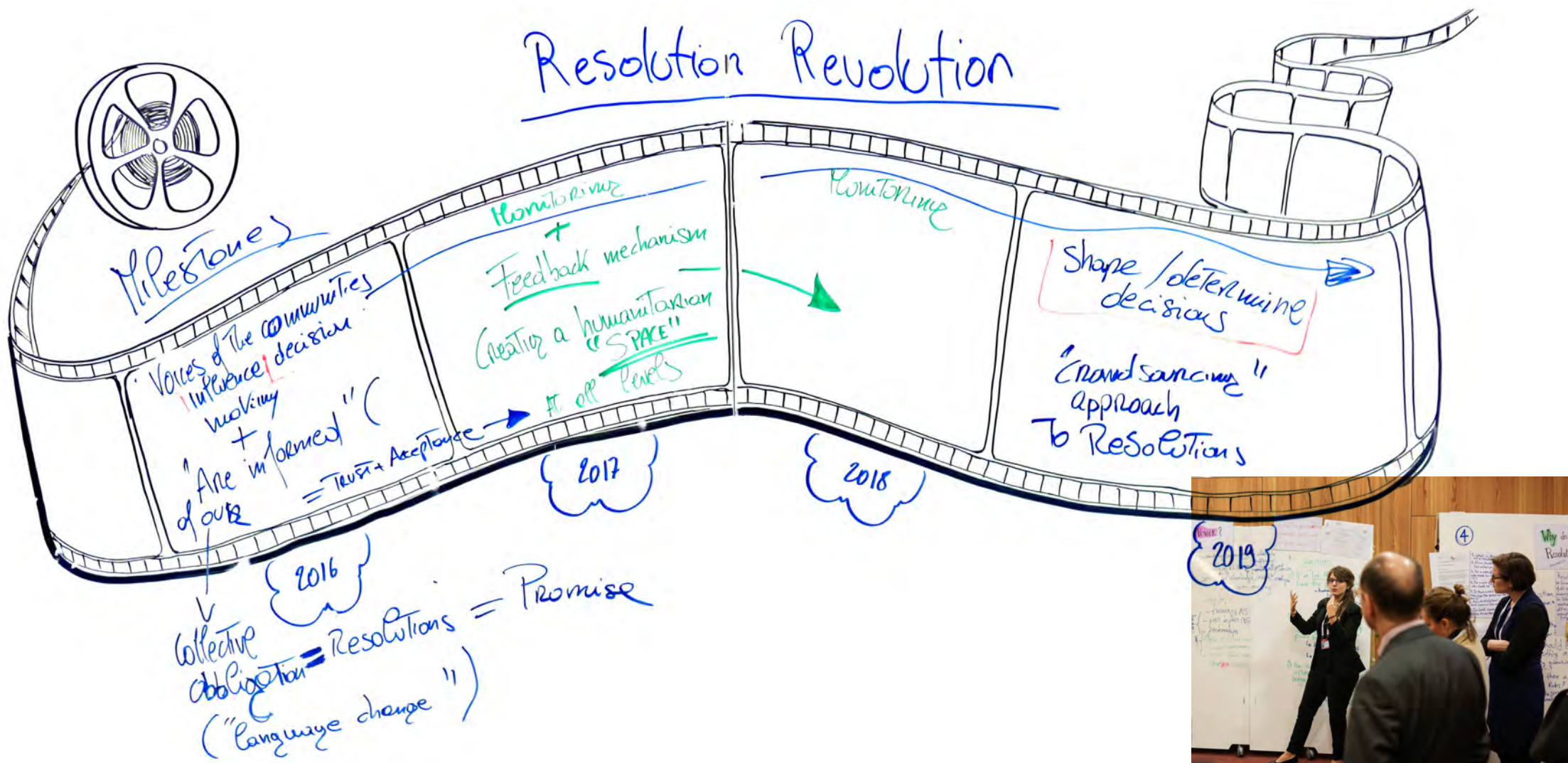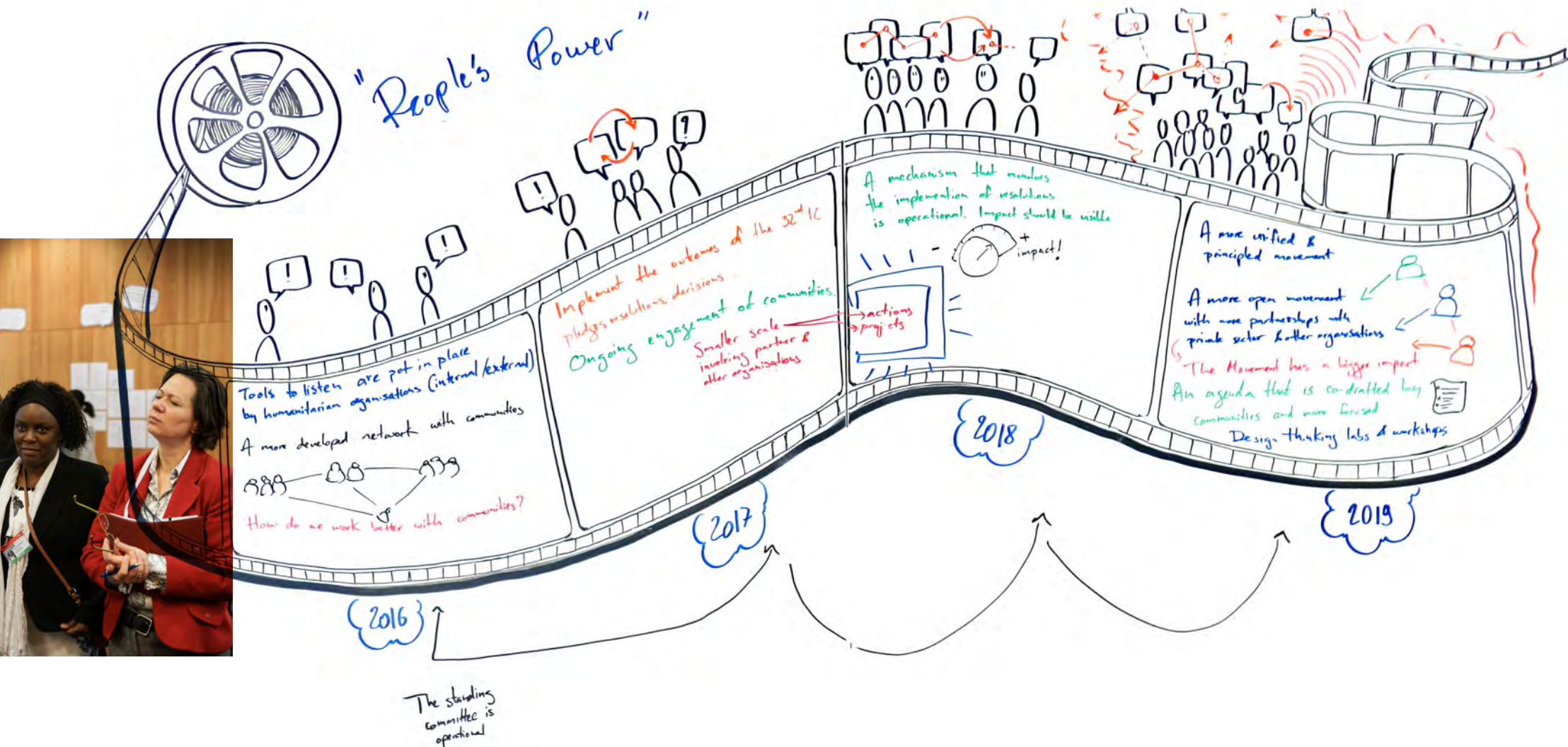
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To close the workshop, four teams quickly laid out, in the form of film storyboards, four-year scenarios for how the work of the Vision Lab might influence the humanitarian community and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement over the next four years leading to the 33rd International Conference.

One of the teams produced a remarkably pessimistic vision, coloured by the increasingly frequent and destructive consequences of climate change. The other three teams laid out more hopeful scenarios, one concerning a more open approach to Resolutions, a second imagining a more collaborative model for leading the humanitarian movement, and a third conceiving of the changes that had been discussed during the three days of the Vision Lab as forming a rolling set of change instigators, shifting in form opportunistically and maturing in effectiveness over the course of the next four years.

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HUMANITY

COP 21 !!!
- Follow up to
- N of all action of conflict included
  in Humanitarian Action

2016

2017

New Weapon Technologies Deployed

2018

A.C dend get Less !!

All actions in Conflict included in Humanitarian Action

2019

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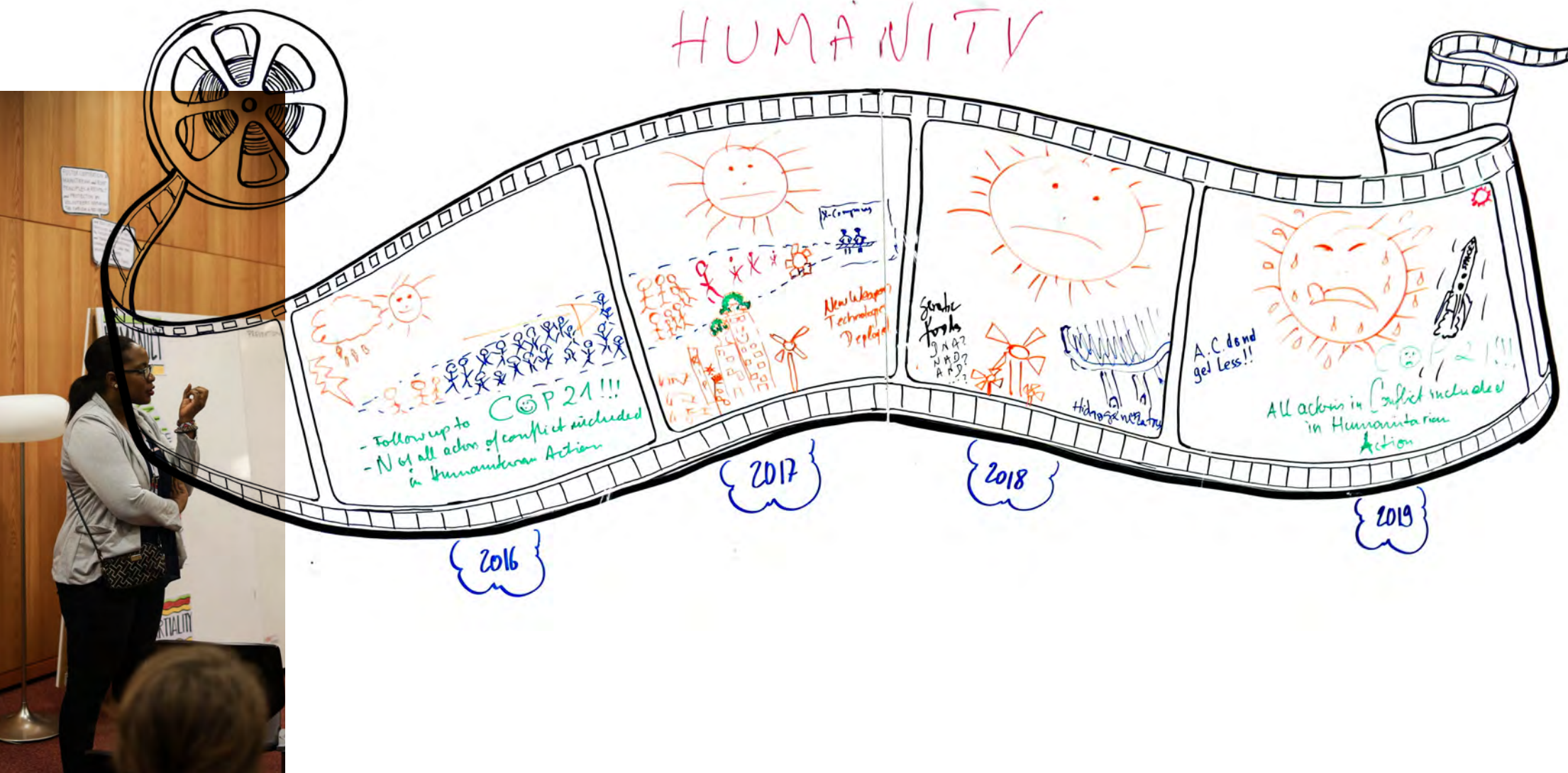32nd International Conference of
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What follows is Ashanta Osborne-Moses's summary presentation as part of the Conference's closing plenary.

In order to hold each other accountable we need to take risks, we need to face the fear, we need to be bold and open to each other. So today I am here to take a risk in openly and honestly sharing with you the voices of approximately 200 people who spend the last three days exploring a new collaborative way of thinking. We have given our time, opinion, feedback and aspiration to collectively try to connect the discussions happening in the Conference to the ground.

In that space we dared to dream, explore, challenge, disagree as people on what are the main changes that are needed in order to be more impactful as humanitarian actors.
From my personal point of view I can assure you that these discussion made us uncomfortable in many instances and at times caused us to question: the influence of our values on the way we work and interact in the humanitarian space.

What was positive however, was that in this laboratory of voices, from a princess to a volunteer to a Secretary General, to UN representatives and to Governments, we were able to identify some key elements that have to inspire our actions.
Our accountability to communities should be guided by the extend we respond to their needs and the honesty with which this is done. Dignity comes from the conversation and the dialogue with communities.
As humanitarian actors, what are the filters we use when listening to communities? Are we listening to learn or do we listen to validate what we already decided? How do we learn to listen better? Do we ask the right questions? How do we do this systematically? Are you ready to accept that the next humanitarian kit won't be a hygiene kit but will be a smartphone.

We have choices, either we evolve as humanitarian communities and truly listen to the need of people or we become irrelevant.
Communities' voices give us the power and the legitimacy to transform the humanitarian agenda.

Let's talk about power. What is our distinctive power? Do we have the power we need as humanitarian actors to influence the bigger decision makers? We need to be empowered to drive the humanitarian agenda.
Our power as humanitarian actors today, is about influencing decisions making about our collective future informed by the voices of the communities. In order to do this we need to turn our values into actions and not hide behind them. We need to engage new and sometimes unpopular stakeholders. We need to have uncomfortable conversations. We need to step in to unfamiliar territory.

Being accountable means using our power to influence as a humanitarian community the decisions that are made on lives and livelihood of people. Over these last three days, we have defined our collective obligations towards humanity for the next four years. In this 32nd International Conference, we have will/have passed 9 resolutions. Coming to the Conference, the evaluation shows that only 50% of resolutions adopted were implemented. This begs the question: what is our collective accountability to the people for the decisions we adopted in these spaces as humanitarian community? Who is accountable to who? What is the point of spending all of the hours negotiating the text, spending the time debating the substance and context if we have no intentions of implementing them where it really matters. There are things we can easily do but we are not doing it. We need to explore why. How do we follow p to support compliance, conduct 360° of monitoring? Ultimately, this is about fulfilling our collective obligations and being accountable to the people we serve.

We have started a humanitarian dialogue not discussing new things but in a new conversation about old challenges. This has reaffirm that we do not need change the substance of what we are doing but we need to change the way we are doing it.

BOLD IDEAS
REAL ACTION

ACCOUNTABILITY

OLD WAYS OF WORKING

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It was very interesting to see that the outcomes of the five thematic sessions matched the outcomes of the Vision Lab in a way that several key strategic questions should be addressed going forward. Key matching themes were the need for more collaboration & trust building, accountability & decisions-making, matching opposing voices, and putting communities at the center of our action.

HOW DO WE HELP COMMUNITIES to HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD in SETTING the HUMANITARIAN AGENDA?

RED CROSS WE COMMUNITIES
WHO IS THE WE?

WHAT KIND of ORGANIZATION DO WE WANT to BE?

DO WE STAND for OUR VALUES?

ALIGNMENT...
HOW?

(HELP THEM) MAKE the RIGHT CONNECTIONS

BEING OPEN to LISTEN
BE LISTEN
TRANSPARENT ABOUT WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE.

ARE WE REALLY?!

ARE WE TRANSPARENT and ACCOUNTABLE ENOUGH?

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