

Voices to Action Report

August - December 2015



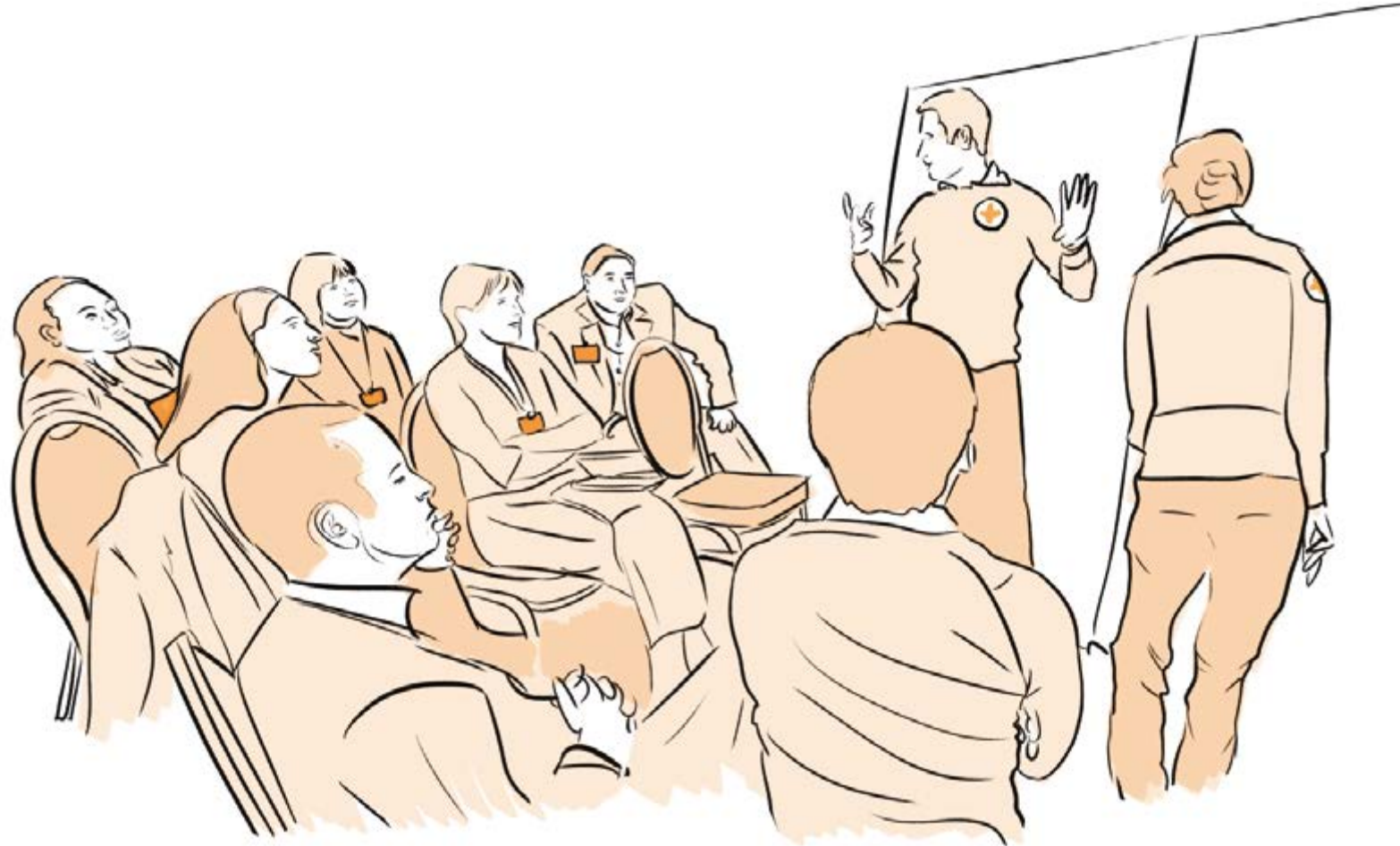
Overview

Voices to Action starts from the premise that, in the face of humanitarian challenges like disaster, conflict and violence, community-driven solutions are sustainable solutions.

Objectives

The initiative aims to:

- Identify the most pressing local humanitarian needs, as well as existing local solutions that can be amplified, and new innovative solutions;
- Engage with a wide audience – including Red Cross and Red Crescent and government representatives, community members and leaders, local humanitarian actors, government decision-makers, local media and others – before, during and after the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference);
- Foreground local realities throughout the International Conference.



Methodology

From August to November 2015, **Voices to Action** collected voices, ideas and solutions on humanitarian issues via: five humanitarian hub events (in Austria, Bangladesh, Honduras, Lebanon and Liberia); online channels (www.voicestoaction.org and social media); and “offline” engagement (e.g. face-to-face

surveys, focus groups, etc.). Voices to Action does not provide exhaustive data but rather aims to engage with communities whose voices are not usually heard in global forums.





Outcomes

5 humanitarian hub events organized worldwide: *Liberia, Honduras, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Austria*

This represents about **300** people engaged

Including community representatives, Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers, local authority and government representatives, and local humanitarian actors.



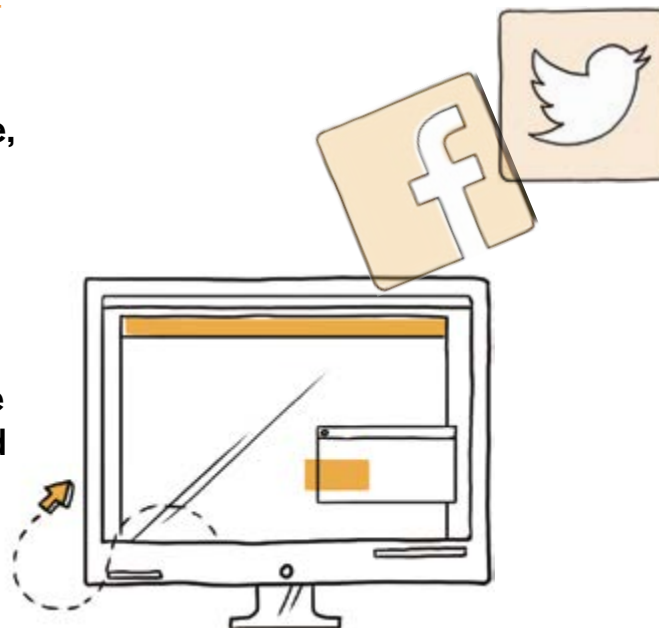
7157 of people contributed from **179** countries



3885 contributed offline, (e.g. face-to-face interviews, focus groups worldwide)



2972 contributed online, Spain, Colombia, Yemen, Mexico, Pakistan, United States, France, Switzerland and South Korea were the most engaged countries



Level of engagement on Social media: **3735** tweets and **67** Facebook posts¹. **3885** comments on Facebook

¹Only Facebook posts made from public accounts could be counted.

Viral Outbreak

01/ If there was a viral outbreak in your town what would worry you the most?

Access to food and water:

30,3%

Connecting with family and friends:

30,7%

02/ What could you or others do to respond to or prevent a viral outbreak?

Become a volunteer:

19%

Learn first aid:

25,7%



Earthquake

01/ If there was a natural disaster in your town what would worry you the most?

Access to food and water:

23,7%

Connecting with family and friends:

25,9%

02/ What could you or others do to respond to or better prepare for a natural disaster?

Join a community preparedness group:

24%

Learn first aid:

28,3%

Violent Event

01/ If violence broke out in your town what would worry you the most?

Access to health services:

27%

Connecting with family and friends:

29%

02/ What could you or others do to respond to or prevent violence?

Learn about conflict resolution:

20,5%

Learn first aid:

25,2%

Humanitarian hub events

The hub events were not intended to be representative of the challenges faced by a whole country, but rather focused on specific regional communities, with the idea of bringing local realities into the International Conference.

Between 60 and 90 people participated in each hub event. They represented different components of society, from Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers, to community members and leaders, to local authorities and government representatives, to local media and humanitarian actors.

Despite the cultural, religious and geographic distance between each of the hub events, it is worth highlighting some similarities that emerged across the five events:

- Participants at each hub event were extremely committed and engaged. They said how important it was for them to be listened to and to know that their voices would be heard at the International Conference.
- The hub event as a platform allowing people from different backgrounds to exchange on an equal footing was seen as an extremely necessary initiative. It was a safe space where participants could exchange views and ideas in a neutral setting.
- A common remark heard in each hub event was that when communities are consulted and involved from the very beginning of a project, the project is more likely to have a positive impact. The importance of communities being united and working together was also stressed.
- Dissemination of information is crucial.

“Participants from conflicted areas in Lebanon expressed their surprise at possessing such energy for communicating with those who did not share their political mindset and affiliation. This proves that only the umbrella of the Fundamental Principles could unify on the humanitarian stage all Lebanese actors.”

Hala, Red Cross Red Crescent staff, hub event participant in Beirut

The main challenges identified were:



In Liberia

Lack of safe drinking water; poor sanitation; lack of health-care facilities; bad roads; no farming tools and training for communities; teenage pregnancy; lack of decentralization of policy-making and resources; maternal and neonatal mortality; illiteracy; corruption.



In Honduras

Insecurity and violence; migration; domestic violence; poverty; no access to basic services; no work opportunities; family disintegration; teenage pregnancy; drug addiction; discrimination owing to illness and disability; corruption; social exclusion.



In Bangladesh

Cyclical river erosion; regular floods; lack of land ownership; lack of safe drinking water; unavailability of nearby health services and facilities; maternal and child health; waterborne diseases and cold-related illnesses; bad roads; lack of housing built on raised plinths; lack of education; child labour; child marriage; dowry system; weakening of family and social ties; migration to big cities; unemployment; illiteracy; poor sanitation.



In Lebanon

Poverty; lack of education; Syrian refugee crisis; lack of urban planning; health care; armed conflict and brain drain; electricity crisis; political crisis; traffic; unemployment; environmental crisis.



Online engagement

Voices to Action gathered ideas and solutions for addressing local humanitarian challenges through the www.voicestoaction.org platform. The website features realistic scenarios of humanitarian challenges. Visitors navigate a virtual natural disaster, health emergency and/or violent event, and make decisions on how they would respond. Visitors are asked to respond to three questions, such as “If there was a viral outbreak in your town, what would worry you the most?”, and are invited to give their feedback and ideas on how such a challenge could be addressed in their local area. In this way, the platform simulates the humanitarian crises that affect millions of people every day, and offers insight into the preparedness skills that are needed to tackle humanitarian issues at a local level.



06 November 2015

Make your voice count: Help shape future humanitarian action



Every day, hundreds of refugees and migrants are forced to flee conflict and violence, seeking safety and security for themselves and their families.

Offline engagement

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world contributed to the Voices to Action initiative by conducting face-to-face surveys and focus group discussions with communities and volunteers. It was important to get feedback from communities that are not connected to the internet and would not be able to visit the web platform.

Respondents were asked to react to the same three key questions as on the Voices to Action website, and then invited to give their feedback and ideas on how local challenges could be addressed.

The following Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies organized offline surveys: Brunei, Burundi, Cambodia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Myanmar, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Thailand.



Rwanda Red Cross/Rwanda/2015

Voices from the field

Health and sanitation

“
Make first-aid training courses part of education.

Hub event participant in Beirut, Lebanon

“
Governments need to plan the budget to allow local health-service preparedness in case of virus outbreaks.

Online contribution, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

“
Put in place a health record for each family member and make good use of it.

Hub event participant in Beirut, Lebanon

“
Designate water guards to protect the water sources.

Hub event participant in Nimba, Liberia

“
Encourage community story-telling to spread information on disease prevention.

Hub event participant in Nimba, Liberia

“
Establish community drama clubs to disseminate vital information.

Hub event participant in Nimba, Liberia

“
Boil water before drinking at home and keep the home environment clean to stop mosquitoes breeding.

Hub event participant in Nimba, Liberia

“
Every community should identify specific burial places.

Hub event participant in Nimba, Liberia

“
Every community should have an inspector trained to assess needs and inform the whole community in order to channel aid to where it's needed, whether in terms of medical care, food or water.

Online contribution, Frutillar, Chile

“
Get more information to people who are far from the capital in the event of an epidemic.

Online contribution, Lima, Peru

Voices from the field

Health and sanitation

“
Make an effective contribution to developing health awareness and understanding of the risks of epidemic diseases in the third world.

Online contribution, Baghdad, Iraq

“
Provide medicine for malaria because many people, and children in particular, are suffering from malaria in my region.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“
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.

Offline contribution, Indonesia

“
Teach first aid to people of all social backgrounds.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“
In most communities where there is violence there are no adequate health-care facilities, especially here in Africa. There is not even a vehicle to take the injured to the nearby health centre. This has caused a lot of health problems and needs to be addressed.

Online consultation, Warri, Nigeria

“
Fully support health needs and provide materials for health services.

Offline contribution, Philippines

“
Raise awareness in our communities about viral outbreaks.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“
Advocate for greater collaboration between health-care services, particularly between developed and developing countries, which could make a real difference in ensuring a timely response during natural disasters/disease outbreaks. This would significantly reduce the number of people who die as a result of these catastrophes.

Offline contribution, Rwanda



HOLT, Kate/ICRC/Burundi/2015

Voices from the field

Migration crisis

“
Create safe spaces to share migration experiences and support each other.

Hub event participant in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

“
Look at migrants and refugees as an opportunity rather than a problem.

Hub event participant in Vienna, Austria

“
Promote (peer-to-peer) cooperation between cities of origin and cities of destination.

Hub event participant in Vienna, Austria

“
Eradicate illiteracy. A decent education, good governance, social cohesion and patriotism is the answer for the migration crisis.

Facebook contribution, Bujumbura, Burundi

“
Every family could host two or three people in their home.

Facebook contribution, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala



Benoit Matsha-Carpentier /
IFRC/Tunisia/2011

Voices from the field

Violent contexts

“
Control the proliferation of arms and promote a culture of peace in schools.

Hub event participant in Beirut, Lebanon

“
Even the police and trauma personnel are not fully trained to deal with a violent emergency situation. Conduct regular workshops for all.

Online consultation, Islamabad, Pakistan

“
Human trafficking should be one of the priorities for action.

Offline contribution, Philippines

“
Collective protection: neighbours should draw up safety rules together.

Hub event participant in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

“
Raise awareness about, and make use of, previous security incidents and their fallout by presenting and discussing them with the parties concerned in conflict areas.

Hub event participant in Beirut, Lebanon

“
Increase advocacy on crimes against humanity, especially rape and child abuse.

Offline contribution, Rwanda

“
Invest in health infrastructure not just before and after conflicts, but also during conflict when the local population need health care more than ever.

Online contribution, Oslo, Norway

“
Violence often thrives in places with economic instability and poverty. It is economic instability, poverty and social inequality that should be addressed in order to tackle violence.

Online consultation, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

“
We must strengthen the culture of disseminating international humanitarian law. It is necessary to do so in peacetime in order to preserve the integrity of the person and alleviate human suffering in wartime.

Online consultation, Puebla, Mexico

Voices from the field

Environmental protection and disaster risk reduction

“
Draw the attention of the appropriate authorities to problems related to river erosion, and initiate community awareness-raising campaigns.

Hub event participant in Rangpur, Bangladesh

“
Identify local non-governmental organizations who know the context of the city or village.

Online contribution, Abalak, Niger

“
Make monitoring and maintaining embankments and dykes part of a community’s responsibilities.

Hub event participant in Rangpur, Bangladesh

“
Set up village disaster management committees.

Hub event participant in Rangpur, Bangladesh

“
Install tube wells on high ground above the flood level.

Hub event participant in Rangpur, Bangladesh

“
Improve the conditions in places of evacuation. Low temperatures are very dangerous for children and the elderly. Preventing disease is key.

Online contribution, Concepción, Chile

“
Launch tree-planting campaigns.

Hub event participant in Beirut, Lebanon

“
Increase the use of cash transfers to meet people’s needs.

Online contribution, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

“
Preparedness plans should be accessible to the public, and community-based first-aid training sessions should be run for all target groups.

Online contribution, Bülach, Switzerland

“
Apply building codes in all areas of the world to address structural issues. This can be done with trained local volunteers who can show people who are building their own homes how to make their homes more resistant to disasters (wind, floods, earthquakes, etc.).

Online contribution, Missoula, United States

Voices from the field

Environmental protection and disaster risk reduction

“

Set up early warning systems to disseminate and provide information before, during and after disasters.

Offline contribution, Cambodia

“

Equip communities with the knowledge and equipment they need in the event of a disaster, calamity or outbreak.

Offline contribution, Philippines

“

Designate or set up an evacuation centre in every municipality.

Offline contribution, Philippines.

“

Establish a world disaster risk reduction platform where strong decisions on natural disaster prevention and management should be made with a view to protecting vulnerable people.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“

Increase efforts geared towards environmental protection and combating the effects of climate change, especially in developing countries, as a way of reducing disaster risk.

Offline contribution, Rwanda

“

Set out a sustainable policy in terms of environmental protection and human rights and dignity.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“

Students should be taught at school how to act in emergencies, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, fires, floods, etc.

Facebook contribution, Quilpué, Chile

“

Study carefully why land is progressively becoming barren because of climate change. And think seriously about how to protect the environment.

Offline contribution, Burundi

Voices from the field

Environmental protection and disaster risk reduction

“

Get exposure to disaster response and preparedness activities in other countries around the world.

Offline contribution, Brunei

“

Eradicating extreme poverty is the most effective way of reducing susceptibility to the devastation of natural disasters and other issues that affect humanity.

Offline contribution, Rwanda

“

Create a community fund to be used in times of disaster to support the victims. This fund would be co-managed by the public authorities and a local disaster management committee, which would also be in charge of fundraising.

Facebook contribution, Bamako, Mali

“

Put in place a global coordination mechanism for preventing and responding to natural disasters.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“

National Societies should be empowered to have individual mass communication channels (radios, TVs) through which unbiased messaging and news on humanitarian issues can be shared and discussed.

Offline contribution, Rwanda



YAZDI, Pedram/ICRC/Liberia/2012

Voices from the field

Fundamental Principles

“

Have more flexible forms of voluntary service to enlarge the pool of volunteers, including from among the beneficiaries of our work.

Hub event participant in Vienna, Austria

“

Evaluate how impartiality and neutrality can better protect humanitarian value.

Offline contribution, Burundi

“

Renewing our pool of volunteers and bringing in fresh people will bring fresh ideas and help to keep the Fundamental Principles relevant, but means we must organize ourselves in new ways.

Hub event participant in Vienna, Austria

“

Include volunteering education on school curricula.

Hub event participant in Vienna, Austria.



Jakob Dall /Danish Red Cross/Kenya/2011

Next steps

The outcomes of Voices to Action so far will feed into a parallel track for dialogue during the International Conference, entitled “Humanitarian Dialogue: a Vision Lab.” This will provide a platform for exchange among International Conference participants and other individuals and organizations.

As part of the “Humanitarian Dialogue,” International Conference participants will draw on the Voices to Action input to generate creative ideas and solutions for responding to the most pressing humanitarian needs in the next four years and beyond. Some of these ideas may inspire individuals, components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, government organizations, businesses or policy-makers, who could, on a voluntary basis, turn them into concrete action at community level before the next International Conference in 2019. These new ideas may ultimately shape the agenda of future International Conferences.

