



# The road to strengthening community resilience in East Africa

## Advocacy Report

May 2013

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Saving lives, changing minds.

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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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 our 187 member National Societies. Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to ‘saving lives and changing minds’.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

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Cover photo: *Clockwork and solar-powered radios are among of the best ways of providing poor households in developing countries with “early warning” of disaster and other life-saving information, according to the latest edition of the International Federation’s annual World Disasters Report. The Freeplay company’s Lifeline radio, pictured in a Masai area of Kenya, was engineered to withstand dust, water and extreme temperatures. It ensures dependable access to AM, FM or shortwave stations. The radios have been used in Red Cross hurricane-preparedness work in Haiti, as well as in efforts to bring weather information to remote rural communities in Niger, Kenya and Uganda. Freeplay Foundation.*

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# Table of contents

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|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction:</b> Investing in National Societies' volunteers and partnerships  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>1. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer capacity</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>2. New partnerships</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>3. Adaptation through new opportunities and the use of technology</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>4. Linking relief and development</b>   | <b>14</b> |
| <b>5. Early actions to manage risks rather than crises</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| <b>6. Community infrastructures and social services</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| <b>7. Integrated community-based approach and community ownership</b>  | <b>22</b> |
| <b>8. Community and institutional capacity</b>   | <b>24</b> |
| <b>9. Coordination across initiatives and sectors</b>  | <b>26</b> |
| <b>10. Flexible, predictable multi-annual funding schemes</b>  | <b>28</b> |
| <b>Conclusions</b>   | <b>30</b> |
| <b>The way forward:</b> How to invest for greater and sustainable impacts to strengthen community resilience through National Societies' volunteers and partnerships | <b>32</b> |

# Introduction

## Investing in National Societies' volunteers and partnerships: the road to strengthening community resilience in East Africa

Imagine that the communities in which we work are on a road, and that groups within a community can agree on desirable development destinations.

There are daily challenges, recurrent hazards, and extreme disasters that act as speed bumps and detours. As a humanitarian organization, the Red Cross Red Crescent encourages community progress toward its destinations in both normal and extreme conditions. Development and emergency are not separate functions of this encouragement, but part of an integrated process of supporting communities to best navigate their road.

Before addressing potential roadblocks, communities need to trust that we are helping them by listening to their aspirations. Once credibility is achieved, we can encourage and support their progress through enabling actions for strengthening community resilience.

There are different levels of potential risk. As different groups across and within communities have different destinations and conditions, setbacks from these obstacles will also vary.

Owing to population, environment, development, and other factors, such as pastoralist to agriculturalist or rural to urban in East Africa, the roads and obstacles for different groups are changing.

As a humanitarian organization, our challenge is to **engage with change** by complementing communities' capacities to adapt to these changes in normal times, while preparing them to withstand and bounce back better from obstacles they encounter with no regrets.

**This report considers the extent to which Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer action is strengthening community resilience in East Africa.** It specifically focuses on the unique role of volunteers in implementing resilience enabling actions, as set out in the joint Call for Action issued by the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and IFRC in June 2012. **It emphasizes the roles of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies as respected long-term partners investing in East Africa's sustainable development.**

The Red Cross Red Crescent is uniquely placed to work with governments in the development of community based programmes addressing resilience thanks to the distinctive role of National Societies as auxiliary to their governments.

The experiences of volunteers strengthening resilience at the community level provide the Red Cross Red Crescent with the credibility and legitimacy to work with policy and decisions makers at local, national, regional and international levels to engage with change.



Based on lessons learned from implementation, this report is structured around the ten enabling actions that strengthen community resilience and aim to demonstrate **how increased investment in National Societies' volunteers and partnerships further empowers locally-led solutions for greater sustainable impacts on community resilience.**

These enabling actions give communities the characteristics needed to help them overcome obstacles on the road to resilience.

## The IFRC resilience approach and its long term commitment to respond differently to communities' vulnerabilities

IFRC defines resilience as the ability of individuals, communities, organizations, or countries exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of adversity without compromising their long term prospects.

The resilience approach is an attempt to protect development gains in the long term and to reduce dramatic declines in development caused by disasters and crises. For IFRC, this highlights the overlapping nature of preparedness, relief, and recovery work that we undertake. We also ensure that the voices of communities we serve are represented at national, regional and international fora to bring the field realities to policy discussions and better reflect the need and capacities on the ground.

The resilience approach is in part about bridging development and humanitarian work. It integrates many of the insights and approaches of development work with a humanitarian approach. Inclusive, sustained, accountable and participatory approaches, for example, are as relevant to humanitarian work as they are for development. Multiple risks and their impacts on vulnerable people must be considered together with assessments of capacities and efforts to strengthen these. Working in resilience mode comes with an understanding that the level of vulnerability to disasters and shocks is often determined less by the scale of a disaster or a shock and more by the underlying vulnerability, caused by a set of inter-related risks. Resilience programming involves sustained engagement that is explicitly participatory, inclusive and accountable.

IFRC has committed to dedicate 10 per cent of income from emergency appeals to programmes and actions that build long-term resilience in affected communities. At Rio+20 in June 2012, IFRC called on other humanitarian organizations to do the same and for governments to dedicate more resources towards programmes that build the long-term resilience of their own communities and of those they support.

## A resilient community

1. Is **knowledgeable and healthy** so it can assess, manage and monitor its risks, learn new skills, and build on past experiences.
2. Is **organized** so it can identify issues, establish priorities and act.
3. Is **engaged** in development of local policy for reducing risks.
4. Is **connected** with external actors who provide a wider supportive environment, and supply goods and services when needed.
5. Has **infrastructure and services** with a strong system in place to help mitigate adverse effects of change and the ability to maintain, repair and renovate the system.
6. Has **economic opportunities** with a diverse range of employment, income and financial services. It is flexible, resourceful and has the capacity to accept uncertainty and respond (proactively) to change.
7. Can **manage its natural assets** by recognizing their value and, through the ability to protect, enhances and maintains them.

Source: IFRC Road to resilience report June 2012

# 1. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer capacity

Volunteers who live in communities in which they work are a valuable, unique resource of the Red Cross Red Crescent. They understand the attitudes and beliefs of their communities and are able to break down barriers to ensure equitable and sustainable access to services and resources.

Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers ensure we reach the last mile through their efforts. The unique advantage of the Red Cross Red Crescent is its vast network of committed, dedicated volunteers who work through and with local communities. It is this grassroots level approach that helps ensure the Red Cross Red Crescent can reach its resilience goals.

Training, motivating, and encouraging creativity among volunteers increase their participation, which in turn enable community ownership and strengthen community resilience. **Voluntary service is at the heart of community strengthening.**

## Opportunities for investment

**Sustainability** – Volunteers play a crucial role in ensuring commitment to and continuity of actions beyond the initial scope of a programme. Skills developed among volunteers help address existing community needs, and identify and act upon new needs that arise.

**Encouragement and skills** – The spirit of pride, cooperation, sharing, responsibility, commitment and trust between volunteers and their communities is an important asset. It improves accountability through direct communication with communities in which volunteers work. It can be strengthened through the engagement of new volunteers and the provision of more opportunities for training and tools.



The Burundi Red Cross Society facilitates a spontaneous humanitarian response to the occult-based killings of albinos in Ruyigi province near the Tanzanian border. The response included local NGOs, UN-agency staff, churches and schools

**Training and tools** should be context specific based on identified roles in community action plans that are best filled by volunteers, complementing government or other partners roles.

## Community volunteering key to fostering resilience in Burundi

The Burundi Red Cross Society mobilizes 300,000 volunteers in 98 per cent of the country's nearly 3,000 communities. They meet weekly to identify vulnerable people in their communities and how best to meet their needs, carrying out activities to reduce shared vulnerabilities: digging fields for the elderly, collecting water and firewood for the sick, building houses and repairing houses for returning refugees. They take the sick to hospital, and often pay medical fees for people who cannot afford them. Volunteers target the most vulnerable such as widows with children, the elderly and those with disabilities. They also plants trees on slopes vulnerable to soil erosion, and construct terracing to prevent landslides.

Simple external support, such as basic first aid training, and risk mapping techniques, helps volunteer units extend their individual and collective reach. Volunteer groups develop simple stocks of first aid and emergency materials in members' houses, for use in emergencies. It is not just the outputs of their activities that increase individual and community resilience: in a country where ethnic violence during the 1990s is still vividly remembered, the process of Hutus and Tutsis coming together to work in a nonpartisan manner built social capital within communities, and hence their resilience to further outbreaks of violence. As one volunteer put it: *"Now we're working together to help vulnerable people, and, knowing each other, we will not return to civil war."*

This social capital accrued within units often becomes the basis for shared community development activities which build the resilience of individuals. A savings scheme is started; income generation activities are shared, and profits divided between local Red Cross funds and individual members. Quite often, local government will support these processes through donations of land. Perhaps the greatest contribution to resilience that the existence of these units brings however is an attitude of self-help. *"Burundians can be donors too"*, a saying that mirrors the spirit that even the chronically poor can take steps within their own communities to reduce their vulnerabilities, determine and contribute to their own development, and in doing so build their collective resilience.

While it is predominantly at the community level that this spirit is realized, there are signs that it can have regional and national impact. When famine hit a neighbouring province in 2008, volunteers in Makamba province started going door to door on their own initiative, collecting 300 tonnes of food in three days, in an area which was also facing food insecurity. While this was a fraction of the food needed, this type of shared responsibility and commitment will contribute to building the resilience of Burundians over the coming years.

In Burundi the existence of sustainable Red Cross community volunteer units is having a very visible, widespread impact on communities' resilience in the face of the potential for future ethnic violence, current and future food insecurity and the challenges of weak and nonexistent services for vulnerable community members.

*"Investing in Africa is investing in young people, investing in training, in building and strengthening National Societies and other associations trying to do good for the human being."*

*Dr Hussein Suleiman Abusaleh, President,  
Sudanese Red Crescent*

<http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Evaluations/Evaluations2011/Africa/978-92-9139-180-6%20Burundi-evaluation-report.pdf>





Staff at the Uganda Red Cross Society take part in sensitization sessions before meeting with communities to discuss the dangers of the Ebola virus.

## 2. New partnerships

The Red Cross Red Crescent connects communities and their volunteers with government and other stakeholders. Creating and brokering relevant partnerships or advocating for support is fundamental to bridging capacities beyond the scope of the Red Cross Red Crescent expertise and mandate.

Resilient communities cannot be achieved solely with Red Cross Red Crescent support, but we can play an important role in facilitating support from a range of stakeholders.

By combining resources and linking with other resilience-building efforts, partnerships allow more people in need to be reached. This complementary approach also encourages longer term sustained funding opportunities by donors who are currently looking for innovative partnership arrangements to synergize humanitarian and development efforts.

In addition to institutional donors, IFRC and National Societies have a wide range of partnerships, including the African Union, Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Development Bank as well as research institutes, governments, the private sector, UN agencies, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders.

*“It showed that after years of dependency on international aid, we could find national solutions to national problems. It gave us back our national pride and dignity.”*

*Dr Abbas Gullet, Secretary General,  
Kenya Red Cross Society*



## Citizen action spurred by corporate partnership in Kenya

In what has been described as one of Kenya's most successful fundraising drives, the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) partnered with major corporations and media houses to launch the Kenyans for Kenya initiative.

In its first four weeks, more than 10.5 million USD was raised, mostly from individual citizens who used Safaricom's innovative mobile phone-based money transfer service (MPesa) to donate as little as 10 shillings from across the country.

This method of fundraising succeeded in getting citizens of Kenya involved in tackling the serious issue of food security which the country has faced for decades and which came to a crisis point during the drought of 2011. The partnerships formed provided flexibility and innovation in responding to the most pressing immediate needs of the emergency, while allowing the opportunity to address mid-to-longer term programming.

## Partnerships at work: The Alliance for Malaria Prevention

The Alliance for Malaria Prevention (AMP), chaired by the IFRC, provides a good example of how partnerships can work effectively to deliver on the resilience agenda. AMP represents more than 40 partners, including government, business, faith-based and humanitarian organizations, that share a common goal of expanding the ownership and use of long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLINs) for malaria prevention.

Between 2000 and 2011, the percentage of households owning at least one net rose from 3 per cent to 50 per cent; over 294 million LLINs were purchased between 2008 and 2010, enough to cover over 70 per cent of the total population at risk in Africa.

As George Greer, Senior Advisor for Child Health and Infectious Diseases with USAID's President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), states, "AMP has brought together an extensive and unique group of partners to support countries with achievement of the Roll Back Malaria targets of reaching and sustaining universal coverage for malaria prevention.

"Through the collective efforts of these partners, we have seen policy changes and innovations in LLIN delivery that have rapidly scaled up coverage and reduced the burden of malaria on families, communities and countries, particularly in Africa where the malaria burden is highest. The AMP partnership, through its work with countries, supports movement towards achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals."

*Social mobilization during free bed net distribution.*



## Opportunities for investment

**Volunteers as surge capacity** – The capacity of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers need to be strengthened to enable them to provide assistance to the government and to other actors as surge capacity at community level, during and in-between drought, food-insecurity and nutrition crises.

**Redefine roles** – Lessons learned from pilot studies for replication and scaling up can help redefine appropriate roles to be assumed by government and communities in post-pilot programmes. Partnering with research institutes to perform operational research can reveal lessons learned on areas requiring improvement. These lessons learned should provide evidence of which roles and levels of activities are most appropriate for volunteers and others in the next project phase.

**Support government roles** – Partnerships should be sought that complement the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to their governments and allow maintenance of their independent status. Volunteers and Red Cross Red Crescent field and branch staff should continue working in tandem with government health, water, agriculture and other departments and

support them in their efforts. Incorporating such departments into identifying and implementing training and resulting actions help determine roles and how they evolve.

**Corporate and citizen partnership for funding** – The Kenyans for Kenya campaign exemplified how corporations and individual citizens can partner to mobilize innovative resources, resulting in funds that can be flexibly balanced between spending on immediate relief needs and investment in longer-term risk reduction efforts.

**Public private partnership** – In a public-private partnership between Land Rover UK, the Uganda government and the Uganda Red Cross Society, funding from a private corporation encouraged partnership between government health workers outside of communities, and Red Cross volunteers who lived in the communities and who could more effectively monitor conditions and encourage behavioural change. Similar examples include volunteers assisting mobile health clinics in Somalia, and promoting home management of malaria in Kenya through the support of partnerships with research institutes and UN agencies.





**Complementary roles** – For ten years, a partnership of five National Societies- Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – in the Lake Victoria project emphasized the significance of cross learning, branch capacity enhancement and partnerships for successful and sustainable impact. The objectives of the Lake Victoria programme are to improve the quality of life among communities living in the Lake Victoria Basin by developing comprehensive in-

terventions concerning health and care, water and sanitation, disaster preparedness, as well as institutional and local capacity development that address poverty levels, vulnerability to disasters and susceptibility to health hazards. Success depends on identifying appropriate partners and clearly delineating complementary roles for them, volunteers and community members.



### 3. Adaptation through new opportunities and the use of technology

Adverse events and changes in hazards require the application of new and traditional skills and finding innovative ways in which to address them. A resilient community has economic opportunities. It has a diverse range of employment opportunities, income and financial services. It is flexible, resourceful and has the capacity to accept uncertainty and respond (proactively) to change.



## Using technology to save lives at the community level

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The extraordinarily rapid spread of mobile telephone use in Africa is nothing but remarkable. It was in Africa in 2001 that mobile phones first outnumbered fixed lines, and by the end of 2012, 70 per cent of Africa's population was expected to have a mobile phone. Communication has never been so easy and it has opened up new opportunities across the globe.

However, when it comes to using mobile technologies to understand disease trends, African Ministries of Health and their partners have not kept pace. One of the major challenges has been collecting real-time data to provide health practitioners with the information needed for them to effectively target interventions.

The IFRC, in collaboration with technical partners, developed a low cost, user-friendly survey methodology that allows data to be collected using inexpensive and widely available mobile phones. After a short training period, Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers can conduct surveys and capture data on their mobile phones.

The new system is called Rapid Mobile Phone-based survey (RAMP), which is sufficiently flexible to be used for a range of tasks in many fields. "We are now producing preliminary results within 24 hours and a full draft report of a survey within three days," says Mac Otten, RAMP developer for the IFRC. "This allows us to analyze the data quicker with the end result being that we can adapt interventions quicker to the needs of the most vulnerable."

The Kenya Red Cross Society conducted the first RAMP survey in 2011 in Malindi district, and results helped assess the depth and nature of the malaria problem and shape the necessary response.

For Africa, which accounts for more than 90 per cent of malaria deaths worldwide, having sufficient data immediately available can help reverse this trend. Recent results from the second RAMP survey in the Kenya project are impressive: 90 per cent of households own at least one net and net use is at 80 per cent for the total population. Net distribution, combined with a community approach to malaria treatment demonstrates that empowering communities to respond comprehensively to malaria is part of the winning formula to beat the disease.

But malaria is not the only problem.

In Kenya, 35 per cent of children under five are stunted, 16 per cent are underweight and, with a Kenyan woman facing a 1 in 35 risk of maternal death, having the right information at the right time is vital to saving the lives of both mothers and their children.

"There hasn't been a nutrition survey in our project area for a long time," says Mwanaisha Marusa Hamisi, Assistant Secretary General for Coast Province, Kenya Red Cross Society. "Although we knew nutrition was an issue, the information collected through RAMP will allow us to better target volunteer actions. We need to tackle specific attitudes and behaviours to achieve results."

The project in Kenya is now moving towards comprehensive maternal and child health actions at the community level to provide broader health services closer to the people who need them most.

Advanced technologies such as drought-tolerant and disease-resistant crops in South Sudan or mobile phones in Kenya have been used for drought adaptation. Though appropriately beneficial given the local conditions, optimal innovations do not necessarily have to be high tech. The use of social media to improve disaster preparedness and response is also critical as it allows the Red Cross Red Crescent to open dialogue with a range of audiences, from beneficiaries, to donors, the general public and policy makers on issues relevant to our humanitarian mission. Social communications platforms encourage more personal relationships with the Red Cross Red Crescent, with the ultimate goal of strengthening brand trust, support and influence.

Adaptation can also use past methods such as farmer reversion to abandoned seed types that are more resilient. Sustainable adaptation will result from development of appropriate technologies, mixing current and previous methods with new options as deemed optimal by communities.

*“I am now able to collect data with my phone and upload it to the internet immediately, where managers can analyze it. No more having to write pages and pages of data and wait weeks or months for the results to come.”*

*Philip Fondo, Kenya Red Cross Society volunteer*

## Opportunities for investment

**Optimizing innovation** should be part of a community-driven process that creatively determines new possibilities of utilizing available resources to overcome challenges. Investment at the community level should reward participatory adaptive management processes and practices that encourage alternative approaches.

**Adoption and diffusion** of innovations being used successfully by others can be shared by documentation and distribution of lessons learned, site visits, model community learning centres, or the innovative use of participatory videos to transfer ideas across geographical distances. Volunteers can also model innovative practices as successful early adapters.

**Network partnerships** can provide missing links in enabling beneficial innovative solutions. Encouraging innovation networks by investing in volunteer training involves risk-taking, creative decision-making and an introduction to alternative solutions in different contexts.

**Beneficiary communication** – Improved communication between communities and humanitarian actors can not only save lives but also serve to empower people. Beneficiary communications enables the humanitarian community to be better informed as vulnerable populations can channel critical data about their situation and needs to aid agencies, increasing the speed, relevance and effectiveness of aid operations. This contributes to well-informed and better quality programming that has a greater impact on reducing vulnerability and may in turn lead to safer and resilient communities.

## Micro-credit for the most vulnerable in Djibouti and Uganda

In Uganda, groups have been established, with support from the Uganda Red Cross Society, to help rebuild lives in the northern villages of Bar and Boke. These groups provide women with knowledge and skills on livelihoods improvement and group unity. Members are able to borrow money at low interest rates to cover school fees and household expenses, or to try new approaches to producing food and earning income.

A similar programme in Djibouti lends money to urban dwellers who are considered too risky by banks. Loans of up to 279 USD are issued to build, strengthen and diversify micro projects that provide income for families. IFRC, the Djibouti Red Crescent Society, and the British Red Cross developed an innovative partnership with the Credit Union Savings and Credit Records to monitor projects until loans are repaid.

**Innovation in technology** for raising funds (mobile money), collecting monitoring information (crowd sourcing), and coordinating among communities, volunteers, community members, and other humanitarian actors (SMS for sharing security and early warning information) is enabling changes in the types of partnerships and their roles. New possibilities for public-private, research, media, and international organization partnerships should be further developed.



A year after the drought response, Kenya Red Cross opened a pizzeria to create a new market for flour made from cassava. Waitress Faith Ndunge is a Red Cross volunteer. The goal is to open several pizzerias.

## 4. Linking relief and development

While saving lives is the first priority of the Red Cross Red Crescent, experience shows that providing food and addressing survival needs help beneficiaries in the short term but could also result in longer-term aid dependency, reduced resourcefulness and productivity, and hamper coping, mitigation, and adaptation capacities.

**The Red Cross Red Crescent twin-track approach** addresses short-term relief and longer-term recovery

needs for livelihoods development in a way that encourages community strengthening through identification and procurement of assets. This approach is more sustainable, cost-efficient and conducive to strengthening community resilience to future disaster events.

**When people become more self-sufficient and no longer live from one emergency to the next, they start to be able to make choices that help them develop and grow to a point where aid will hopefully become a thing of the past.**

*“We want to end this in-out approach. We need to think how we rebuild communities – otherwise the same thing will continue to happen every year.”*

Ahmed M. Hassan, President, Somalia Red Crescent Society

Saving lives requires supporting and mobilizing communities to engage in and take ownership of continuous actions that reduce their vulnerabilities, mitigate hazards, and strengthen capacities rather than depending on cycles of aid assistance.

Chronically poor communities could be assisted in undertaking disaster risk reduction measures, and trained in areas such as financial management and farming. In aid dependant areas of Burundi, volunteer-led community groups initiated income-generating activities such as fruit and vegetable growing and goat-raising, resulting in better nutrition, improved access to school materials and fees through



Food security programming has assisted people like Mengeste Bala in Ethiopia who now has seven cows and is more confident in her ability to feed her family.



## Food security and disaster risk reduction through sustainable livelihood initiatives in Ethiopia

Situated in northern Ethiopia, the Tigray region is one of the country's nine regional states bordering Eritrea and Sudan and is often prone to drought. The Tigray food security project has the goal of improving the food security situation of 2,259 vulnerable households (10,500 people) in Dedba, Dergajen and Shibta sub-districts of Enderta Woreda in a sustainable manner.

The major focus of the project is to improve alternative agricultural production and reduce vulnerability. The project succeeded in improving the livelihoods of targeted communities through training on income generating schemes, health and sanitation, which includes participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation.

Amina, who heads a household of two sons and three daughters, received a loan of 154 Swiss francs/124 euros, of which 146 Swiss francs/118 euros) was principal; the rest was interest. She also received technical support from Tabia agricultural experts on how to manage cattle fattening, marketing and the feeding of animals. Before joining the Red Cross intervention, Amina's annual income was 314 Swiss francs/254 euros. Her current annual income has doubled and as a result, she now has the means to feed her family three times a day and send her children to school. Amina also has productive assets including one ox, eight goats, ten sheep, one donkey and ten chickens.

*“One of the main aims of our food security project is to move people away from food aid dependency, so we're trying to create more self-reliance by repopulating the trees and crops.”*

*Helina Tsegaye, project coordinator,  
Ethiopian Red Cross Society*

income generated from crop sales, and the ability to train and assist others in need. In flood-affected Uganda, volunteers led the building of flood-resistant shelters, monitored agricultural improvements after input provision, and conducted trainings on water use and hygiene.

Bottlenecks to sustainable community action could be overcome through expensive investment, requiring resources and efforts beyond the level or scope of volunteer action. But volunteers also have an important role in starting small-scale initiatives such as constructing and maintaining community infrastructure. In addition, volunteers can mobilize and facilitate community actions and help agencies and

governments engage in these actions. Volunteers can and should play the role of change agents, as models of perseverance and resourcefulness.

### Opportunities for investment

**Productive livelihoods** – Avoiding the East African aid dependency trap requires an integrated approach, addressing short term emergency response and longer term recovery and development issues. Best practices and lessons learned from programmes combining relief with livelihoods initiatives and other enhanced community capacity building efforts should be widely shared and replicated.

**Local solutions and ownership** – Community-led identification of bottlenecks for livelihoods and related capacity needs should lead to the development and implementation of locally made solutions. Although external provision of relatively complex technological solution products may be most appropriate in some situations, analysis of alternatives should include potential benefits of social cohesion, maintenance, and sustainability through locally generated and owned processes. For example, cash transfers in Kenya were appropriate for encouraging creative solutions by volunteers and communities. Tree plant-



Victor Lachen/IFRC

*A woman spreads natural fertilizer on land in the Akaboti Valley in southern Rwanda. Rwanda Red Cross is helping with various land cultivation projects in an effort to improve food security in the densely populated country.*

ing and other small-scale anti-erosion measures can decrease vulnerability and increase productivity as they have in Rwanda and Ethiopia.

Twin-track approach of relief work and development is critical to address the underlying causes of vulnerability, prepare for and respond to disasters and crises. This approach must be considered from the onset of operations, and addressed throughout the overlapping phases as disaster management segues to early recovery and onwards to longer term development programming

## 5. Early actions to manage risks rather than crises

Early action entails routinely undertaking activities and investments before a disaster occurs, making best use of scientific information as well as local community knowledge for developing early warnings that would trigger action, and increasing awareness and preparedness. Whereas volunteers continue to be at the forefront of a response by providing relief in times of crises, more lives could be saved and suffering and losses reduced through synthesizing effective early warning and early action.

Early action is a paradigm shift for people and agencies which have grown accustomed to equating humanitarian action with crisis response. Communities which have adopted this paradigm shift appreciate



*“The implemented Food Security & Livelihoods project has two components: Food Security & Livelihoods and Water & Sanitation. We provide 4000 households with farm implements and farm seeds and we want people to multiply their seeds. It is the access to food which we want to improve. Based on the community’s knowledge and the potential they saw in beekeeping, the beekeeping activity was implemented. It was the community itself that chose to implement the project as an income generating activity in one of the weekly group dynamic sessions. There have also been improvements in the water system. Wherever there is little water or the population is great and there is only one borehole people in the community always report this to the Red Cross, who take up the action and drills a borehole wherever it is needed. Through the boreholes the availability and quality of water has been improved for household consumption, irrigation and livestock rearing.”*

*Paul Ongon, Food Security & Livelihood project manager in Kitodo, Uganda Red Cross*



A woman whistles to call the wind as she separates grain from chaff near the town of Kotido in the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda.

the opportunity to make decisions about how to avoid recurrent extreme losses.

Volunteers understand and are able to identify triggers and sound alerts in collaboration with relevant authorities or institutions. A database of trained volunteers would help in identifying roles and respon-

sibilities for early action. Simulation exercises like those in Darfur help identify which aspects of preparedness and early action are ready for implementation and which need improvement.





Uganda Red Cross Society volunteer Nakitende Masitula, from Luwero, Uganda. Masitula has been helping to sensitize the local community in Luwero to the dangers of Ebola following a recent outbreak in the area.

## Opportunities for investment

**Early warning triggers and early actions** – Timely early warning information collection and dissemination remains a major challenge to plan early actions. National Societies need to work in partnership with government and other stakeholders to develop and harmonize early warning indicators that trigger action to enhance timely response and risk reduction led by volunteers with the relevant skills and resources.

**Partnership and coordination** – Early warning and early action requires delineation of specific partnership roles for monitoring, triggering, and acting. Investments should be made in this coordination and the requisite location-specific volunteer training and tools provided to make early warning/early action effective. Awareness is the first step toward community early warning and early action, and Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers are strategically positioned to raise local awareness and ascertain information regarding effective triggers in their communities.

**Surge capacity** volunteers should continue to be trained in needs assessments, disaster management,

health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and any other skills that can be useful for surge deployments. Surge capacity approach and community management need to be scaled up to continue supporting governments in early actions to prevent disasters.

## 6. Community infrastructure and access to social services

Knowledge, infrastructure and basic social services enable communities to be healthier and more resilient. There are compelling examples from African National Societies to show the positive difference that can be realized by investing in people and basic infrastructure. A resilient community has infrastructure and services. It has a strong system in place to help mitigate climate change, for instance. It has the ability to maintain, repair and renovate the system.

## Mobile clinics in Somalia

The Somalia Red Crescent Society (SRCS) provides health services through its network of maternal and child health outpatient clinics and 14 mobile clinics. The programme targets reduced mortality and morbidity among vulnerable groups such as mothers, children and wounded individuals. Volunteers are trained to provide valuable services in remote areas with limited access to health services, targeting nomadic and internally displaced communities.

In SRCS Hargeisa branch, comprehensive training is offered to volunteers on skills including basic first aid, disaster management, branch emergency response, vulnerability and capacity assessments and hygiene promotion. Training of new recruits by experienced volunteers facilitates the transfer of skills and organizational learning at minimal cost. Communities benefit from the provision of free and convenient health services, improved sanitation and access to safe water.

Evaluations of these initiatives have indicated improvement in vaccinations against preventable diseases, early referrals of complicated cases, safe deliveries and post natal and antenatal care. Changes in hygiene and sanitation practices have led to a reduction in cases of acute diarrhoea, and can be attributed to the programme.



Olav A. Saltbones/IFRC

Somalia Red Crescent's HalumAne's health clinic in Badweyn, near Galkayo city.



As evidenced through the rehabilitation of water points and extended water pipes in Somalia during the 2011 drought, volunteers can effectively fulfil their roles and mobilize surge capacity to respond appropriately to adverse situations in their communities, in support of their government.

Malnutrition, malaria, and other preventable diseases can be reduced through partnerships of volunteers with government health departments. Such partnerships have resulted in community-based and home management programmes to reduce malaria symptoms in Kenya, and immunization and hygiene improvement programmes in Uganda. Volunteers can be responsible for early detection and stimulating behavioural change if given the necessary training, tools, and authority.

In areas in which government resources are inadequate and access to health clinics is difficult, volunteers can be trained to monitor health and nutrition, promote healthy practices, and treat minor illnesses and injuries so clinics can focus more effectively on

immunizations and more serious health conditions which require specialized training and knowledge.

To improve access to water during dry seasons and help prevent outbreaks of water-borne diseases, South Sudan Red Cross supports the establishment of water management committees to ensure proper use and maintenance of water points. Volunteers are trained in hygiene and the use of pre-positioned water and sanitation disaster response equipment. While some volunteers migrated to Sudan, they later returned to the project area to continue training others, lending to the sustainability of the training and action system.

A similar initiative in Djibouti is enabling volunteer-led participatory hygiene and sanitation training, which increases community capacity to reduce the spread of diseases related to unsafe water. Additionally, Djibouti Red Crescent Society has conducted training for assessments of cholera outbreak, cholera screening and referrals to government health facilities which have pre-positioned cholera response kits for timely and effective response.

## Responding to triggers in Darfur

In Darfur, Sudan, early warning of floods enabled communities to activate contingency plans. Communities are trained by Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers to identify triggers and take appropriate action. In Tulus district, this resulted in the widening of a river valley and its tributaries, together with education and mobilization of communities to relocate their shelters out of flood zones.

These measures were undertaken through partnerships between the Sudan Red Crescent Society (SRCS), relevant UN agencies, non governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and communities themselves.

Over the past 20 years, SRCS volunteers in the Darfur region have provided consistent humanitarian assistance to affected communities, shifting between emergency to development interventions as necessary to reflect the changing needs of the population.

*Sudanese Red Crescent volunteer raises awareness in the market place.*



Thomas Benelgeny/Danish Red Cross



## Health care preparedness and training



Tomas Bertelsen/Danish Red Cross

Volunteers with South Sudan Red Cross conduct an emergency response demonstration.



More food for school children at Kaitese primary school, Turkana, Kenya.

Nutrition and education challenges can be addressed concurrently through supplementary feeding. School feeding programmes implemented by IFRC improves child nutrition rates while at the same time improving school retention, thereby enhancing a child's options for the future, as well as the success of future community initiatives. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers have a significant role to play by raising awareness of the importance of education and the necessity of keeping children in school which will serve in the long run to assist with community development. In turn, volunteers are viewed as credible sources of information and trusted members of their communities, which results in support for future volunteer programme implementation.

## Opportunities for investment

**Scaling up the role of volunteers** in primary health care requires analysis of their roles, their capacities and identification of gaps in existing healthcare services, coordinated jointly between National Societies and their Ministries of Health.

**Investing in volunteers** through the provision of training, tools, and development of monitoring skills is critical as they live in the communities in which they serve. Training should continue to be funded, as volunteers play a key role in promoting public awareness and instigating behavioural change.

**Creative school feeding initiatives** maintain and encourage school attendance in areas of chronic food crises, which allow children to become equipped with skills for a better future, while allowing adults to focus on their livelihoods and provide for their families.

## 7. Integrated community-based approach and community ownership

Local ownership, assets and capacity must be fully respected and relations with local government and other local actors strengthened. Dependence on outside support or substitution should be avoided as much as possible.

**IFRC designs its programmes through a holistic, integrated approach which aims to address the different needs of communities and ensure cross-sectoral complementarity.** Working with and through the communities it serves, Red Cross Red Crescent increases resilience at household and community levels by working to improve health, nutrition, education, sanitation and livelihood status and ensure coordinated and coherent programming.

A community-based approach addresses various issues through community action plans and locally led solutions that respect local ownership. It is important to focus





on strengthening such ownership, assets and capacity, as well as linking with local government and actors to avoid fostering dependency or substitution. **Community ownership has a direct impact upon both the success and sustainability of programmes.** Communities need to be involved in the earliest stages of programme inception to ensure interventions not only meet their needs but also capture their engagement and support.

**Changing perceptions of the Red Cross Red Crescent as an emergency responder to a partner in resilience strengthening is a dynamic process.** However, an evaluation of programmes in Uganda and Kenya reveals that the new perception enables communities to implement both preventative actions and early response activities. Emphasis on community-based activities helps ensure the message is consistently delivered and understood / accepted.

## Community participation and contribution paramount to reducing vulnerability in Eritrea

The threat of recurring drought and flash floods, and a lack of safe infrastructure for water and sanitation in rural areas have created high levels of morbidity and mortality in Eritrea, especially among children. Tapping into and reinforcing the existing resilience of communities may be the best strategy to overcoming the multitude of social, economic, health and humanitarian challenges.

Vulnerable rural communities face the challenges of coping with, and recovering from, droughts, floods and food shortages. Additional priority projects in disaster risk reduction support more effective adaptation to climate change; improved protection of water catchment resources; development of new water sources; soil conservation; tree planting; and renewable solar energy.

Moreover, there are increased efforts to promote fuel efficient stoves, rainwater harvesting, community-based and emergency healthcare, and better education around HIV prevention and road safety.

Yisehak Kiflay, water and sanitation project manager for the Red Cross Society of Eritrea says, “We now focus more on capturing water in sand storage dams, such as at the 12 metre high Begu which will pipe water to a reservoir for 10,000 people. We could not have constructed this dam without the contributions we have had from the community in labour and materials, and the cooperation and support of the local government, which also provided some of the materials.”

“This can only be achieved by engaging with communities and local government at the outset to jointly agree on what they can contribute to face the different challenges,” says Nura Mohammed Omer, Secretary General of the Red Cross Society of Eritrea.

<http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/africa/eritrea/resilience--not-a-new-concept-for-many-vulnerable-eritreans/>





Community action plans result from participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA) that are at the heart of positioning communities as drivers of their development and resilience agendas. Sustainability of resulting actions depends upon plans that are well-formulated, and actions that are designed with a long-term focus, allowing for flexibility to adjust and adapt to potential changes.

Although their role in identifying challenges and coordinating training and VCAs is essential, volunteers in their own communities can be perceived as too familiar to be experts and trainers. One solution is to conduct volunteer exchanges between communities, thereby facilitating the transfer of skills and widening exposure to the broader Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer network.

### Opportunities for investment

**Community action plans** – Investments in volunteer training to effectively conduct VCAs that develop community action plans are essential to the transformation of National Societies into resilience-strengthening organizations. Poorly facilitated VCAs and formulated community action plans will undermine the ability of communities to be resilient, and the credibility of National Societies to act.

**Decision-making and communities' voices** – In the spirit of the twin-track approach, investments in the provision of long-term solutions during crisis situations should be undertaken, when possible, in agreement with affected communities. Community-based decision making is an intensive and time consuming process which may constrain a quick response, but it enables communities to decide on their immediate and long-term needs and solutions. Resilience depends on empowering communities to articulate their own needs and take the necessary decisions and actions to address them.

**Auxiliary role** – The Red Cross Red Crescent is uniquely placed to work with government in the development and generation of local and national level support for community-based programmes. This relationship is important for ensuring that governments at all levels are increasingly focused on strengthening community safety and resilience, and that this focus is reflected within local and national laws, policies, strategies and programmes. Such relationships help identify the risks as well as vulnerabilities and capacities among people in need and generate local solutions for increasing community resilience (i.e. using VCA as a tool).

**Locally lead solutions** – community-based processes can empower communities to develop confidence and credibility as respected partners in humanitarian preparedness and response rather than being perceived as passive recipients of aid. Such initiatives also facilitate greater awareness of their needs and allow for increased engagement of communities in how best to address them. To increase the effectiveness of community empowered initiatives, communication channels must be created through networking and engagement of community members with relevant external stakeholders.

## 8. Community and institutional capacity

Strengthened management capacities of communities, cohesion, organizational structures and arrangements enable communities to overcome obstacles in achieving the goals of community action plans.

Contextualizing tools and interventions such as shelter, hygiene promotion and sanitation, and tailoring training to the needs and capacities of volunteers and communities is essential to ensuring their success. Training kits should be contextualized by incorporating local ideas, tools and practices, and should be updated, as and where relevant, to include new and appropriate technologies.

### Opportunities for investment

**Surge capacity** volunteers should continue to be trained in needs assessments, disaster management, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and any other skills that can be useful for surge deployments. Surge capacity approach and community management need to be scaled up to continue supporting governments in early actions to prevent disasters.

**Evaluation of progress** should be conducted using locally-generated benchmarks that take into account the effects of progress on the most vulnerable groups, as well as the challenges encountered and strategies to overcome them.

**Training for specific capacity building** should aim to adopt local ideas and materials and be reviewed and updated as appropriate to be most effective.



Red Cross volunteers in South Sudan practice first aid skills.

## Building returnee shelters through community capacity in Sudan

In El Salam and El Jabalain in the White Nile State in Sudan, 20 Red Crescent branch volunteers were trained in construction of self-built emergency shelters to support 6,294 returnee families who migrated from South Sudan.

Training involved suitable site identification, ground planning, safety precautions for personnel and shelters under construction, and assorted techniques including how to incorporate local insulation materials to improve the thermal comfort of the structures.

The shelters were constructed using local materials that could withstand the harsh weather conditions of extreme heat and rains.

**Synergies and cost-effective practices** should be encouraged by building on the skills and experience of previously trained volunteers who could be deployed to other areas and assist in the training of new volunteers.

**Gender balance and roles in strengthening sustainable community capacity** should be encouraged during the design of training sessions.

## 9. Coordination across initiatives and sectors

To avoid duplication of efforts and maximize synergies and opportunities, it is crucial to put more emphasis on coordination across initiatives and sectors.

Addressing vulnerability and improving community resilience at individual, family or community levels requires a multi-sectoral (health, education, social protection, psychosocial support, climate smart disaster risk reduction, livelihood, food security, water and sanitation, etc.) and complementary approach, based on local vulnerability and capacity assessment.

This does not necessarily fit with a standardized sectoral way of working but requires increased cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships in programme implementation, as well as integration and openness to tailor-made programming. It needs to fully encompass all sectors and apply in all contexts, be that relief, recovery or development.

Keeping volunteers motivated to train and lead community effectively is a common concern. Complementing the model village approach in Rwanda, the district plan performance contract competition concept provides an incentive for branches and volunteers to engage in constructive action. In Burundi, volunteers are engaged in activities related to their training soon after it is completed to ensure the acquired knowledge and skills are reinforced in practical situations.

The working village is a model of coordinated community-based planning that uses integrated steps to strengthen community capacity, and to clearly assign roles of a community's members and volun-

teers, the National Society branch and headquarters, and local government. Several positive factors were identified indicating opportunity for replicable success in building strong ownership, sustainable actions, and willingness to contribute to agreed-upon actions. These include: a strong network of active volunteers, decentralized decision-making, National Society monitoring, a positive community image, and enhancing existing community strengths by working through community associations and cooperatives.

### Opportunities for investment

**The community-based approach** – Small-scale community level projects do not necessarily require heavy investment. They can be set up through limited training. They contribute to producing visible and immediate results that can be credited to the National Society. They are replicable, and can be imitated and transported from one community to the next. Rwanda's model villages are in essence an inexpensive and attractive proposition for potential investors.

**Partnership coordination** – Early warning and early action, community health services, and other aspects of resilience require delineation of specific partnership roles for monitoring and triggering action. Investments in this coordination and the requisite location-specific volunteer training and tools are required to ensure such initiatives are effective and efficient.

**Integrated approach at community level and surge capacity** – Addressing vulnerability and strengthening community resilience at individual, family or community levels requires a multi-sectoral (health, social protection, psychosocial support, climate smart disaster risk reduction, livelihood, food security, water and sanitation, environment, etc.) and complimentary approach based on local vulnerability and capacity assessment.



## Model villages for sustainable development in Rwanda

In Rwanda, the National Society developed a project called model villages as a way to look at a community-based risk reduction approach. The project known as 'Agazozu ndatwa' is aimed at preparing model villages for self-reliance, and creating impact in communities. It has been running since 2008.

In a context where challenges can be daunting and basic amenities are a luxury to many, the Rwandan Red Cross model villages combine integrated volunteer development with sustainable project design. The ultimate goal is to overcome donor dependency and go beyond heavyweight projects in favour of smaller scale community-level operations.

Secretary General of the Rwanda Red Cross, Apollinaire Karamaga says: "We have been known for disaster management interventions. But the question is what do we do in the absence of these disasters? We will not wait for disasters to strike for us to work; eradicating poverty – which is the root cause of some of these disasters – is our new motivation."

The model villages project took off following an IFRC community-based health and first aid and evaluation workshop. Rwanda Red Cross identified the 270 most vulnerable cells – the smallest administrative subdivision – in the country. In each cell, two villages were identified for a total of 540 model villages throughout the country. All 30 districts of the country were covered by this project.

Secretary General Karamaga underlines local solutions often already exist for local problems: "From experience, most of the challenges don't require a lot of funds to be addressed. Most of the issues like sanitation, hygiene and nutrition only require sensitization. The communities themselves have the ability to provide solutions. We help people help themselves. We don't construct latrines but we show them that it is within their capacity to do so. Kitchen gardens are very easy to plan, but we provide seeds where they are needed."

Liberata Uwimana, 37, bears witness to the success of the model villages. A mother of two, she used to struggle. She joined a model village cooperative two years ago. She can now afford decent housing, and is able to provide her family with a balanced diet. She says: "Thanks to the Rwandan Red Cross, I can now provide for my family. Working in a cooperative and receiving support from the Red Cross has helped me to improve my social welfare. I now have hope for a better future."

Red Cross volunteers from the community have also managed a hygiene and sanitation campaign promoting proper feeding habits. Jean Baptiste Ndahiriwe, 30, observes that the lives of Mbeho residents have changed and this has improved sanitation. Residents can now drink milk and use animal droppings as manure on their farms. As a cooperative, they are expecting a harvest of over three tons of cassava from part of their 30 hectare piece of farmland. "This is a significant example of how our lives are improving," says Joseph Iyakaremye, coordinator of Indatirwabahizi cooperative.



A Rwandan Red Cross volunteer listens to a 13 year old girl who lost both parents to HIV/AIDS and who is now being looked after by her 16 year old brother.

## 10. Flexible predictable multi-annual funding schemes: the way we invest must change

African National Societies are eager to look beyond the dependency model and take control of their own development. More than ever, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recognize the recurring and growing risks and opportunities facing Africa – particularly in the areas of food security, climate change, health, urbanization and growing populations of youth, and highlight how investing in the capacities and actions of volunteer networks can positively contribute to addressing these development and humanitarian challenges.

But aid dependency undermines local incentives for resource mobilization by offering easier routes to finance. It reduces the need for institutions to worry about local accountability as their financial power comes from abroad. It stifles local initiative and ownership in favour of international donor priorities.

Today, we see a will to go past the donor-recipient paradigm, and it is coming from African institutions themselves. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement embraces this change, and looks forward to an African success story, owned by National Societies through effective leadership. Africa is one of the fastest growing economic regions in the world, driven by a range of political, social and economic reforms, entrepreneurship and private sector investment. This changing environment provides new opportunities for domestic and regional partnerships that will shape the future role and relevance of the Red Cross Red Crescent in Africa.

Overall, African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies offer a unique and valuable proposition to investors in humanitarian access and community reach. Across the continent, a multitude of Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers are hard at work in their own community. They strive daily to serve their communities, and in doing so, strengthen their National Societies. African National Societies seek to propose locally-owned projects aimed at expanding their network of volunteers, broadening their appeal, and consolidating their attractiveness for potential investors.

And African Red Cross Red Crescent leaders see a shift in emphasis – from international aid designed for specific services to investment into the capacities to grow humanitarian and development action nationally and regionally – through investing in people, in systems, in home-grown innovations and in technology. Such investments will strengthen the national institutions and partnerships that can sustain locally owned and relevant Red Cross Red Crescent work in the years to come<sup>1</sup>.

Focusing beyond immediate action on long-term gains and sustainability is critical. Strengthening resilience does not happen overnight and requires long-term engagement and investment. In order to best encourage long-term planning for strengthening community resilience, medium and longer-term funding needs to be made available to National Societies, branches, and communities.

**Long-term planning requires flexible funding** that can be used for response, early action, and capacity-building as deemed most appropriate according to a commu-

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1. PAC Investing in Africa report, October 2012.



nity's plan. The short-term response and long-term risk reduction dichotomy for funding, planning, and responding is not conducive to strengthening resilience. The enabling actions for community resilience use complementarities between emergency response and risk reduction initiatives to work towards community development objectives in a sustainable way.

**Emergency efforts should aim to strengthen capacities for resisting the next shock with no regrets.** Risk reduction efforts should aim to strengthen capacities by engaging with change through preparedness and mitigation. This overall twin track approach to development requires multi year financing that can flexibly be used for crisis response, early recovery, and/or risk reduction, as deemed most appropriate given the evolving nature and circumstances of the emergency.

Approaches should be adjusted and adapted as necessary to align with long term plans developed at the community level and in collaboration with National Societies and their partners.

**Rather than short or long-term financing operating in isolation, it is critical to have flexible and predictable multi-annual funding that addresses community needs in a holistic manner, to strengthen resilience over the long term.**

The Kenyans for Kenya fundraising initiative is an excellent example of a new flexible source of funding which addresses emergency needs while allowing for long term planning and programmes as situations evolve.

The Burundi example of mobilizing volunteers, the Rwanda example of model villages, and other innovative partnerships indicate how the size and source of funding is not as important as how efficiently it is utilized to address identified priorities of community-based plans.



*An integrated organic farm in Bugiri village in Uganda. The Red Cross helps communities increase their yields through training in soil management techniques, efficient water usage, crop rotation, kitchen gardening, beekeeping, fish farming and pig rearing.*



## Opportunities for investment

**National Society strategy based on community plans** – Investment must be driven by long term National Society strategy which is based on locally developed community resilience plans. Such plans should be used by National Societies to build relationships with partners and encourage donors to align with national and local priorities. They should also help National Societies to seek appropriate funding and generate locally mobilized resources that will best enable them to address the priorities of long term programmes without relying on restricted short-term project funds.

The amount of money raised is not as important as how it is utilized to motivate and empower volunteers, their communities, and partners to achieve locally-appropriate resilience results.

While donors will continue to remain accountable to their funding sources, a community resilience based approach requires ultimate accountability to and from community-level stakeholders who develop and implement their action plans. Donors with agendas or funding restrictions that cannot accommodate this transition should be lobbied and encouraged to modify their approach.

**Pooling and sharing** – Earmarking of funds may serve donor purposes of reducing risks and transaction costs and improving donor profiles in desired areas. This shall not undermine National Societies long term plans and interests.

Although most currently pooled funds continue to perpetuate a silo approach to programming, lessons can be learned from mechanisms like the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium and the Global Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Through these mechanisms, donors are encouraged to contribute to themes under a pooled fund. These funds can be granted to National Societies, governments, and their partners with collegial roles pre-defined based on co-developed plans. The mechanism allows for flexible, synthesized actions which can be adapted for regular and extreme events.

**Evidence of relevance** – Accountability on community action plans for strengthening resilience requires impact measurement and evidence based evaluation related to appropriate benchmarks. Early action activities and risk reduction measures shall be evalu-

ated against long-term benchmarks that reflect realized community progress towards resilience goals.

Research is required to determine how to set these benchmarks. Cost-benefit analysis could be used to provide evidence of the relevance of financing activities aimed at strengthening community resilience.

Results can then be communicated to stakeholders to encourage the adoption of more flexible funding approaches that allow for greater investment in community resilience.

## Conclusions

This report highlights examples about the role of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies as respected long-term partners investing in eastern Africa's sustainable development. It calls for investment that best strengthens community resilience through National Society volunteers and partnerships.

This strengthening begins with planning at the community level: empowering local communities to identify what they want to achieve, how they can realize those goals and aspirations, and how to mitigate and overcome challenges that arise. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers currently lead the development of community action plans, however such plans have yet to become the basis for decision-making at higher levels which coordinate action and funding.

National Societies should advocate for these community plans to inform national decision makers and influence their policies for the benefit of communities. Once endorsed and used for planning purposes, National Societies can prepare in advance how to best support communities and pro-actively agree on roles and responsibilities with government departments and other potential partners, as well as identify and secure appropriate funding arrangements.

Rather than relying on short-term appeals with rigid donor restrictions, more flexible funding mechanisms can be pursued to facilitate programming that can address both immediate needs as well as longer term resilience building. In order to positively impact people's lives, projects must be implemented at a sufficient scale and over a long enough time period to have lasting benefits.

A new approach to programming and funding will be required, including a shift in traditional operations that will allow for humanitarian and development sectors to come together to identify and address the root causes of vulnerability and to build resilience going forward.

Strengthening resilience must involve initiatives that combine reducing the risk of future emergencies as well as taking early action to save lives and livelihoods during crises.

Examples provided in the previous sections demonstrate how the Red Cross Red Crescent is addressing this through its east African National Societies, and supporting enabling actions with corresponding opportunities for replication and scaling up.

The question is not whether volunteers need to do more. Rather, it is how they can do better, with support that complements their role, and actions which address the needs and plans identified by communities.

Further operational research and cost benefit analysis are needed to continue identifying new activities and different ways for volunteers to continue

supporting communities on their road to resilience. While we save lives, we must do everything we can to invest in strengthening the resilience of vulnerable people and their communities, and to contribute to eradicating the underlying causes of vulnerability.

**The Red Cross Red Crescent is known for its humanitarian work around the world, but has for a long time been equally involved in development activities. In reality, the distinction between these two spheres is an artificial one for those affected by crises.**

**We are calling for a serious shift in mindset and for all concerned to work together to bring about long-term and sustainable change in the lives of vulnerable people. This requires moving beyond placing labels on organizations and looking at what we can – concretely and to scale – contribute not only to disaster response, but to risk reduction, public health, sustainable development and the protection of human rights.**

**We look forward to taking this journey together with our key partners and stakeholders. The way we invest must change.**



Members of Abisunganye cooperative in the Bugesera district of Rwanda clear trees and bushes to prepare the land for cultivation. The Rwanda Red Cross Society implements several land cultivation projects in an effort to improve food security in the densely populated country.

# The way forward

## How to invest for greater and sustainable impacts to strengthen community resilience through National Societies' volunteers and partnerships

Integrating emergency and risk reduction initiatives at the community level to strengthen community resilience requires a shift in the approach of the Red Cross Red Crescent, governments, donors and other external stakeholders. Recommendations for such changes include:

### 1) **Emphasis on National Societies' accountability to communities and the development of long term plans**

The Red Cross Red Crescent listens to people's aspirations. Resulting community plans need to become the foundation for all levels of planning for best enabling community capacities. These plans should be used as the basis for engagement on policy and planning dialogue with government and donors while seeking long-term flexible funding.

### 2) **Develop volunteer roles that best strengthen resilience according to community plans – capacity building of volunteers, communities and National Societies**

Volunteers are models of commitment to their communities and are a unique asset to their National Societies. There is significant evidence of their contributions to the strengthening of resilience of their communities, and the complementary role they play to governments and other stakeholders in promoting community resilience as surge capacity. Volunteers can further assist in resilience efforts by facilitating integrated and focused actions that span sectors and promote holistic community development approaches.

### 3) **Broker long-term partnerships through evidence of sustainable impacts in community resilience and provide new opportunities to engage with change**

The Red Cross Red Crescent must do more to support public - private partnerships and encourage the active involvement of the private sector in humanitarian and development programming. The success of the Kenyan for Kenya initiative

demonstrates how effective such partnerships and the power of a mobilized public can be. These partnerships enable creative collaborations to utilize new technologies. The rapid mobile phone based survey (RAMP) is one of the great examples showing how partnership between technology developers and IFRC improves humanitarian preparedness and programme response. Long term strategic partnerships should continue to be explored that can contribute to community and national strengthening resilience plans. Soliciting new partners requires developing and sharing evidence that long-term involvement yields positive and sustainable outcomes. And short term activities need to be designed to contribute to long term objectives.

### 4) **Advocate nationally and internationally to address the root causes of community vulnerability through a twin track approach**

Red Cross Red Crescent works to strengthen community voices to advocate for their own needs. National Societies and IFRC should advocate for better aid effectiveness and engage in greater policy dialogue with governments to address the root causes of community vulnerability.

Advocacy with donors should encourage long term resilience planning with flexible funding mechanisms that allow for improved aid effectiveness and ultimate accountability to communities.

### 5) **Conduct further cost benefit and policy analysis to gather evidence to improve long term planning**

Analysis needs to be further conducted of the benefits provided by volunteers and partnerships in strengthening community resilience, to continue to demonstrate how cost effective they are in contributing to achieving development objectives and to show they are the best programming choices to do this (cost effectiveness and cost benefits).

Comparison of progress according to developed cost benefit benchmarks can indicate good practices and conditions for replication and scaling-up of initiatives that most cost-effectively address community resilience priorities. These comparisons will inform better long-term planning, volunteer and partnership development.



# The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

This report considers the extent to which Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer action is strengthening community resilience in East Africa, focusing specifically on the unique role of volunteers, and emphasizing the role of National Societies as respected long-term partners in sustainable development.

Based on lessons learned from implementation, this report is structured around the ten enabling actions that strengthen community resilience. It aims to demonstrate how increased investment in National Societies' volunteers and partnerships further empowers locally-led solutions for greater sustainable impacts on community resilience.

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