

Youth Declaration

We, the youth of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, united in Armenia, affirm the importance of increasing youth participation in Humanitarian Action.

We, the youth of the National Red Cross Societies of Armenia, Austria, Finland, Germany, Georgia, Italy, and Ukraine, representing 183,500 youth volunteers of the Movement, gathered at the International Youth Summer Camp, held in Aghveran (Armenia) from 28th July to 6th August 2017. We exchanged knowledge and experiences on Youth Empowerment, Design for Peace, and Psychosocial Support. In that occasion, we posed ourselves the following question: What can we actively do to build the world in which we want to live in?

Youth Empowerment

We declare that young people have the right to be involved in decision-making processes, encouraging them to be active community members, thus recognizing their full citizenship and favouring their engagement in the democratic process. Young people feel ownership and responsibility, when they are consulted and actively involved in decision-making. There, they are given the opportunity to take leadership roles, gaining skills and practical experience both leading to more effective decision-making in the future. Granting youth control over decisions affecting their lives builds capacity in young people and assures a fresh perspective, filled with creativity, flexibility, and pro-activeness.

We acknowledge the importance of volunteer management in order to increase the effectiveness of our action. To enhance our impact, it is necessary to have a better understanding of ourselves. Particularly important in this respect is the development of communication and cooperation skills.

We recognise that youth empowerment, through dialogue and partnership, assures a greater result, we should all strive for.

Design for Peace.

We commit ourselves to disseminate and live the Seven Fundamental Principles of the Movement enshrined in the Geneva Conventions amongst young people, in a dynamic and engaging way, in order to prevent everyday conflicts: for example social exclusion and violence. We support an open and intercultural society. The 21st century is characterised by forced displacement: the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has exceeded that of the Second World War¹. As a result, it becomes essential to bridge local inhabitants with migrants (also second generations, refugees, and asylum seekers), challenging xenophobia, bias, and stereotypes by enabling dialogue and cultural exchange.

¹ For example: United Nations Development Programme, 'Migration, refugees and displacement' <www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/sustainable-development/development-planning-and-inclusive-sustainable-growth/migration-refugees-and-displacement.html> accessed 8 August 2017.

Psychosocial Support

We recognize the importance of psychosocial support capacities, in every sphere of volunteering, in the interest of the effectiveness and adequacy of our action. We acknowledge the importance of a community-based approach, which enables community members to feel ownership and responsibility, and to participate in decision-making processes, thus facilitating the resilience of the affected population. Traditions, cultures, and social structures have to be granted a particular consideration. As volunteers, we have to assure the emotional safety of the persons we assist, adopting an ethical conduct which has at its basis the provision of doing no harm. Active listening and body language competences are the key to empathy, but we should never overestimate our skills and always bear in mind our personal limits.

We emphasise that psychosocial support is a way to mobilise the power of humanity and a means to maintain the health and well-being of volunteers. We commit ourselves to achieve this mission.

Our Vision

We intend to promote especially amongst young people, inside and outside the Movement, inner change and the development of skills aimed at favouring harmony and positive attitudes within our communities.

We commit ourselves to participate in the construction of a culture of lasting peace, renouncing violence and promoting non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

We are ready to assume the role of agents of behavioural change in our communities, disseminating the Seven Fundamental Principles of our Movement, not only when we are volunteering, but even more in our daily life.

When everyone works together, we can achieve a lot more and be bigger than ourselves.