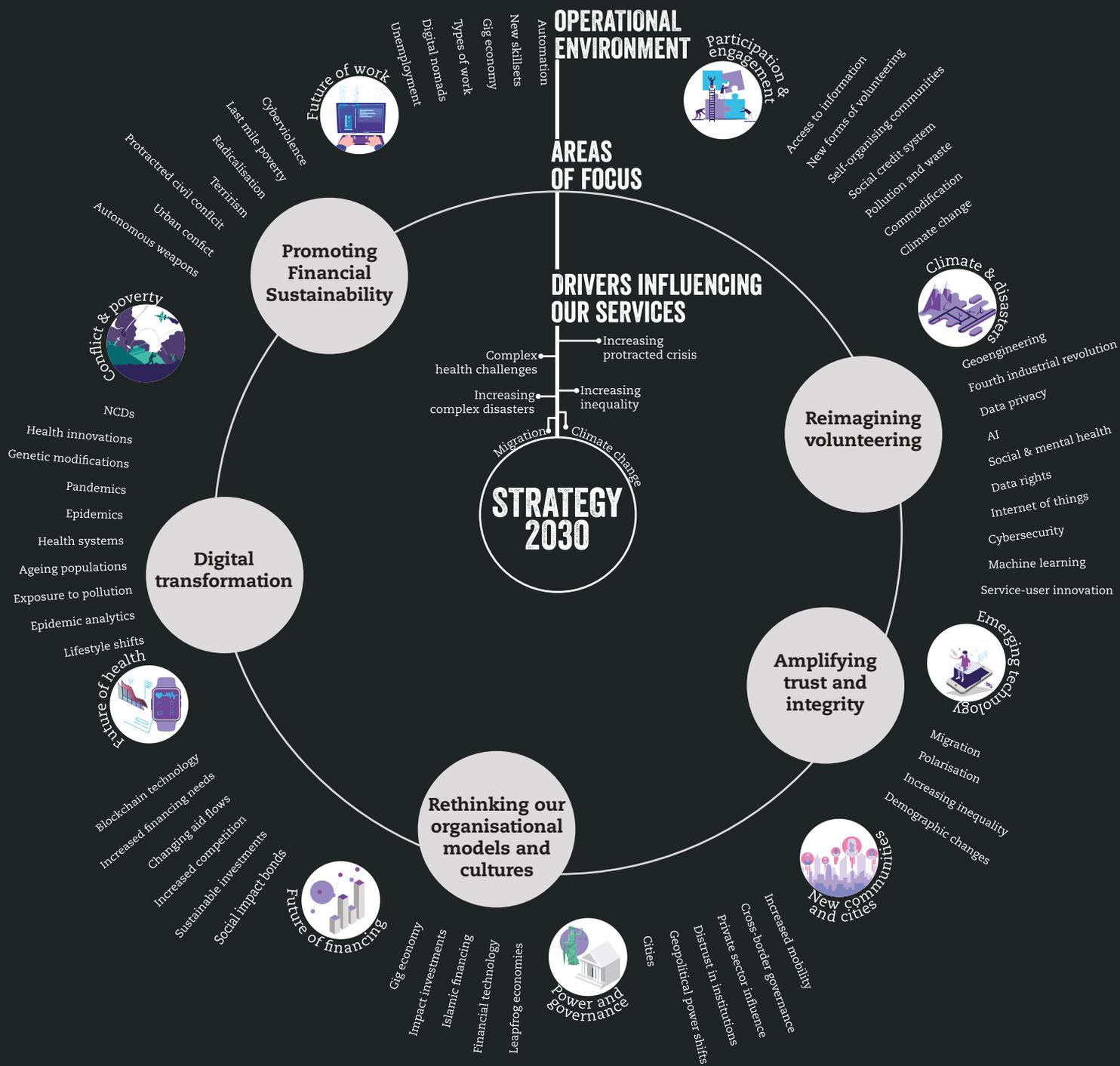


# Strategy 2030 Update Report – Visions for the Organization



# How we work

A number of clear areas of focus are beginning to emerge for Strategy 2030. Whilst there is still some distance to go before the consultations are completed in mid-2019, there are early insights representing both tensions and opportunities. They draw strongly from the [nine themes presented to the Board in June](#).

The following topics represent the most common issues raised in the consultations so far. They will be further developed as the consultation process goes on, until the Strategy is presented to the Board in early 2019.

## Organizational Model and Culture

The consultations have led to calls for greater agility in the Red Cross Red Crescent, including the Secretariat, and an ability to experiment with new approaches, technologies and partners. There appears to be a recognition that addressing vulnerability increasingly requires the Red Cross Red Crescent to be quick and opportunistic, seizing windows of opportunity where they appear. There is a clear concern across the Red Cross Red Crescent that the network is too bureaucratic, top-down and hierarchical, with policies, procedures and processes that inhibit opportunism, creativity and innovation. This ranges from extensive sign off and control processes to an over centralisation of decision making.

Connected to this is our willingness to partner and in particular to connect with new actors and non-traditional partners. Many see the Red Cross Red Crescent as internally focussed and not open to collaboration. Others note that the scale of the challenges ahead will require new thinking and new alignments that will involve different concepts of operating than the current ones.

Concerns have been raised over the level of independence when working with Movement donors, who often feel their agenda is driven by others who provide financing.

Participants have identified a need for greater sub-regional collaboration, in recognition of the similar challenges and contexts they may face, and of the many challenges they face which are increasingly cross border or regional in nature. Participants proposed models that were more decentralised and had more vibrant networks that did not rely on hubs and spokes or centralised models of collaboration, but more direct peer to peer engagement, a form of 'networked humanitarianism' that is more dynamic and flatter in structure.

There are calls for improved performance on collaboration between Movement actors, particularly during crises. There is, in particular, a desire to see coordination better supported by the Secretariat.

There are concerns from many National Societies with international programmes that their current models of international cooperation are inefficient, duplicative and under realising their potential for impact, and some action is beginning to form to address this.

## **Integrity**

There is a measurable decline among the public in trust in institutions of most kinds: however there has been a marked decline in the trust in NGOs and the Social/Charitable sector, a sector that has traditionally fared relatively well in trust rankings. Greater demands for transparency in accountability, efficiency and impact has put a strong spotlight on the work of the Humanitarian/Development sectors. Digital technologies have enhanced the capacity for institutions to be made transparent (and the expectations of the public that they do so). They also mean that any transgression or failing can in a very short period of time become mainstream or international news. This of course means that a transgression by one of our organizations can rapidly –and negatively – affect the whole network.

The consultations reveal a greater desire for action not only to prevent transgressions but to take strong corrective action on those found guilty. Participants question whether our governance models are fit for purpose in this new world. It is increasingly clear that a modern organization that does not effectively deal with these issues will do so at significant risk of losing public and donor trust. That trust can take many years to recover.

National Society participants, particularly staff and volunteers, call for strong leadership, both from their own National Societies and the Secretariat with clear commitment to integrity and to espousing the principles and values of the organization. Behaviour that is perceived to be contrary to this has a disheartening effect on our people and reduces motivation for engagement. In a context of increased competition, it is a threat to our capacity to attract and retain high end talent and volunteers.

## **Technology**

As an unprecedented digital and technological revolution unfolds around us, there is consistent feedback that we are not engaging with and opening up enough to the potential in these developments.

The opportunities the organization has in relation to (big) data and digital transformation are staggering, but there is insufficient investment in this across the board. The potential for data to transform the way services are delivered, and how we learn about and understand the communities we support is tremendous. To take advantage of it requires interoperability and consistency between National Societies, and substantial upgrading of current capacity, particularly for those National Societies who have only basic technological infrastructure.

The emerging potential around artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, block chain, 3d printing, ‘the internet of things’ and more are transformative. To capitalise on them requires new partnerships, greater investment, and targeted recruitment for skills and capacity to employ these technologies. Further, the organization will need space to experiment and create, as well as efficient pathways to mainstreaming and incorporating new technologies. There are some impressive examples of experimentation

in technology occurring in parts of the Movement, but our ability to embed these into core practice and processes has been slow.

## **Volunteering**

Much has already been written and discussed about challenges related to volunteering, but the issue remains a major concern for National Societies. Many National Societies cannot absorb more volunteers; most are facing retention challenges; others have trouble attracting and utilising highly skilled volunteers; many National Societies have recruitment processes that are complex, protracted and cumbersome and not suited to audiences that demand faster pathways to action and greater control and influence over their impact.

While reduced retention is a characteristic of the humanitarian sector at large<sup>2</sup>, there is no indication that volunteerism is declining in itself, and indeed many studies indicate that there is greater engagement in social and humanitarian causes today than there has been since such things have been measured. However, the nature of engagement is changing, and our Red Cross Red Crescent model that is almost entirely reliant on recruiting volunteers to deliver services which we have designed, it is therefore not always suitable to a wider audience, particularly those who long to make their own impact in a lighter or more agile engagement.

Considering the needs emerging around the future of work and the accompanying digital shifts, some have called for a greater focus on entrepreneurialism, and for the provision of platforms and support to allow people to make the change in the world they want to see. This amounts to a potentially significant reframing of how we understand ‘volunteerism’.

The volunteer base is still massive and there is strength to build upon. In some countries there is an aging population with time available and in some cases extraordinary skills that can be put to the service of humanity, however this will require understanding their needs around engagement. Conversely in other parts of the world there are tremendous opportunities with a youth bulge that is highly socially conscious, and wanting to make a positive impact in the world.

Others have noted the need for us to more clearly communicate our cause if we hope to mobilise people to support it. Movements need a cause. Many have reflected that it is not always clear – not least to the general public – what it is that we stand for. If we intend to continue mobilising a Movement we must be clear, public and strong about what we stand for, which will require greater investment and courage in communications and advocacy.

<sup>2</sup> Global Review on Volunteering. Hazeldine, S. and Dr. Matt Baillie-Smith 2015

## Drivers influencing our services

Some insight from the consultations is beginning to emerge about the major thematic issues that people want to see addressed. At the top of these lists are

- *Climate change*
- *Migration*
- *Growing inequalities*
- *Increasing conflict*
- *Demographic changes*

These are major drivers that will impact the types of services we deliver. Climate change is likely to drive more frequent and severe natural disasters. Greater investment in strengthening our responses and anticipatory approaches, and in supporting the resilience of communities, will therefore be needed.

Migration has dominated many of the discussions. With climate change threatening to displace many hundreds of millions of people, an unprecedented youth bulge emerging across Africa and Asia, growing levels of inequality and conflicts appearing to be unresolvable, participants are concerned that a system that is currently stressed under the weight of current levels of migration will buckle if these scenarios play out. Furthermore, there is a great social dialogue underpinning this debate about global mobility, citizenship and national borders. This is a challenge for which current policy makers seem to have few solutions. There will likely be a large role for the Red Cross Red Crescent to play in the coming decade both in providing services on the ground, and also in the advocacy, policy and communications efforts required to reduce vulnerabilities of those on the move.

The growing level of inequality and those with no access to key services such as health is another key issue for participants, including urban poverty and the challenges being faced by socially isolated elderly people. Conflict remains a major concern, as does the network's capacity not only to respond (with both humanitarian and development responses) but also to play some role in supporting the mechanisms that could bring a resolution to the very long, protracted nature of the conflicts. Education values are an important aspect of prevention.

## Financing

Virtually all consultations involving staff and leadership have revealed a concern over our future financing. There is a significant tension for the network here. Increased competition from a large number of emerging actors, in an environment where the costs of crises are increasing, is set against a backdrop of stagnating government and other forms of traditional financing. This is stressed further by governments coping with aging populations or youth bulges, stagnating or low growth economies, challenges of increased

migration and populist risings that inhibit capacity to assign additional financing to social and humanitarian needs. Indeed this is a trend that has emerged already and the prognosis is for further complexity in these matters.

The financing environment is shifting externally, with direct giving, peer to peer support, remittances, crowd sourcing, social impact investment, private sector engagement and Islamic financing all presenting tremendous potential and opportunity. All are also being transformed or enabled by rapid advances in technologies. Many of these financing sources are so large (totalling in the trillions of dollars) that they dwarf current investments from traditional donors.

Because of these challenges, there has been little experimentation to date in this space. This presents a real opportunity for progress for the network. However this is not just a matter of new forms of fundraising approaches: many of these mechanisms require the revision of entire operational and policy models and will require significant shifts in practice.

## **The Imperative for Change**

The question many ask is, ‘what will be different this time?’ A review of previous strategies and related thought pieces reveals that many of these concerns and challenges have been raised before, and accompanied with strong calls for action. Indeed, it is possible to track these reflections as far back as 100 years. However, the pace and scope of change unfolding in the world today, powered by a radical digital revolution which runs through all aspects of social, economic and political life, is unprecedented, meaning that the organization of today is at a critical juncture. Data indicates struggles with volunteers, trust, engagement, financing, relevance and capacity to meet human need: all of these issues require serious attention.

Participants are querying whether this time there is a genuine will and imperative for change. Will the action taken be minor, incremental and peripheral, or is there courage for radical revision. There have been mixed views on this in the consultation, and indeed there appear to be some examples of National Societies embracing change and driving deep reflection and change to their models, approaches, and ways of thinking. There are examples of impressive and courageous experimentation, and equally there are examples of inaction. There are challenges around ensuring the collaboration which is required to shift a network which is this diverse and this large.

# Conclusion

The Phase 2 consultations to date have suggested that the following principles may be important guides for shaping the Red Cross Red Crescent including the Secretariat, over the coming years:

- 1. Agile and Innovative:** The ability to understand changing trends and adapt rapidly to them, enabled by reduced bureaucracy and a culture of experimenting with new approaches, technologies, models and systems. The desire to do things differently, to be allowed to fail, learn and move on, and be less risk averse.
- 2. Distributed and Networked:** A highly connected network, (enabled in part through new technologies), less centralization and top-down power, greater peer-to-peer and regional collaboration, more dynamic information management, and decision-making closer to the 'ground'. Focused on local needs and local solutions.
- 3. Open and Connected:** Forming strong alliances outside the Movement to achieve objectives, including an organizational willingness to explore radical new partnerships and alignments with non-traditional actors.
- 4. A Platform for Change:** A place where volunteers and young people can, in addition to being involved with our services, also be supported to design and make change in the world. Where they can move quickly to action, self-mobilise and make an impact. To have flexible approaches that suit a variety of engagement needs.
- 5. Skilled and Empowered:** recruitment of staff with talent for new technologies and approaches, and investment in their professional development, working cultures that are more flexible and open and can retain high-end talent.
- 6. Principled:** An organization that is transparent, accountable and ethical, acts with integrity and stands for important causes. Services reflecting critical local needs and driven locally in sincere partnership with communities.

These insights reflect only a small portion of what has been said by the members of the network who have participated in the Strategy 2030 consultations so far. Greater insight and depth will be available in the coming months as more National Societies take part. Some of these updated and more comprehensive results will then be presented at the Governing Board.