

Promoting Financial Sustainability Through Diversified Funding and Partnerships

The Tension

The majority of Financing in the IFRC network of National Societies comes from Government sources to deliver services and programs.

National Societies have concerns that this hinders the independence of their effort and doesn't allow for investment in strengthening their institutions, there are also concerns that these sources are stagnating. The costs of humanitarian work are increasing and the UN estimates that 2.5 trillion per year is needed to reach the SDGs. There is a poor prognosis for growth in funding from our traditional sources of financing such as Government. This along with a significant increase in the number of actors searching for funding means that new strategies will be required to ensure the financial sustainability of National Societies.

Promoting Financial Sustainability Through Diversified Funding and Partnerships

Some Issues to consider when formulating the Strategic Actions (as identified in the S2030 consultations)

To improve our funding requires a high level of trust in our organisation by the public and donors.

The relevance of our services and programs and the causes we are trying to address in our communities are also key factors.

There is a need for investment in helping National Societies strengthen their approaches to domestic fundraising.

There are a range of alternative financing mechanisms that have very high potential but that the IFRC network is not currently experimenting with or need further development such as impact investment, Bonds, commercial opportunities, private sector partnerships and Islamic financing. New financing models will likely require new partnerships and new ways of working.

The current Resource Mobilisation frameworks and strategies may not be fit for future and may need revising.



Reimagining Volunteering and Youth

The Tension

While volunteer numbers appear to be stagnating or even declining in the Red Cross and Red Crescent, volunteerism in wider society is still hugely popular and in many instances is growing. Volunteering patterns are also changing: Globally, it is estimated that only about 30% of volunteers do so formally through institutions. Which means the majority of citizens volunteering are doing so through grassroots mechanisms, often enabled by digital technologies. Many are self organising, motivated by causes (and less by brands and institutions) and may want to see more direct, faster and greater impact from their work. Retention is also becoming a greater challenge as people's lives are shifting with broader social changes. Our volunteering models may need revising to allow for a greater diversity of volunteers.

Reimagining Volunteering and Youth

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Can we reimagine volunteering? Much of our volunteering model is about recruiting people (through a long complex process) to deliver services that we have already designed, whilst this is an essential part of our work, an increasing number of people also want to drive their own change in the world. Can we also be a platform that helps others make the change in the world they want to see, consistent with our principles and values.

Citizen led volunteering is often flatter, distributed and highly networked. How does a larger, more hierarchical institution such as the RCRC engage with such dynamic, self-organising volunteer approaches?

Technology is playing a greater role in volunteer organising, are we developing these approaches fast enough?

Volunteers and in particular, Movements are often motivated and rally behind causes, are we communicating and clear enough about our 'cause'?

Motivations for volunteering can be complex and multifaceted, how can we widen our approaches to ensure it is more attractive to diverse communities and a wider audience?



Enhancing Trust and Integrity

The Tension

There is a measurable decline amongst 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. Trust in our organisation influences everything from donations to partnerships, access and volunteering. Greater demands for transparency in accountability, efficiency and impact has put a strong spotlight on the work of the humanitarian/development sectors. Any transgressions by one of our organizations can rapidly –and negatively – affect the whole network.

Enhancing Trust and Integrity

Some Issues to consider when formulating the Strategic Actions (as identified in the S2030 consultations)

Greater demands for transparency will involve opening up our financial information, details about our programs and their real impact, and our decision making. What mechanisms and processes will help us do this? What kind of organisational cultures will we need to enable this?

Our capacity to engage in direct, open and honest communication with a wide audience will be more important, including more effective social media management. Do we have the commitment, skills and capacity to do this?

The effectiveness and decisiveness with which we address transgressions will be under increasing scrutiny, are we committed enough to this and do we have the right governance and policy approaches to effectively deal with these issues.

Issue of trust and integrity are also related to where and how we receive funding and who we partner with, and whether the wider practices and policies of these donors/partners are consistent with our principles and values.

Our accountability to the communities we work with is increasingly important, how do we ensure that power, decision making and control is in the hands of communities and that we are answerable to them?

The behaviours and actions of our leaders need to espouse the values and principles we aspire to.



A Digitally Transformed Network

The Tension

As an unprecedented digital and technological revolution unfolds around us, transformative opportunities are emerging in all aspects of our work, including; the potential for data to open up new insights for our programs and communities; for technological advances to drive new approaches in volunteering, disaster response, forecasting and other program areas and; for stronger learning approaches through more dynamic and connected networks. Further advances over the coming decade are likely to significantly disrupt the way our work is undertaken and the kinds of actors who become involved in the sector. Risks will also need to be considered including ethical concerns, hacking and data privacy and protection. Technological advances can also expose communities to new vulnerabilities that will shape some of our programming in the coming years including isolation, bullying, polarisation and cyber attacks and malfeasance.

A Digitally Transformed Network

Some Issues to consider when formulating the Strategic Actions (as identified in the S2030 consultations)

The network may not have the sufficient technical skills and know how on digital and data approaches – this includes training, developing, sourcing and retaining the right skill sets.

Much of the cutting edge work on technology is happening outside the RCRC, more open partnerships with non-traditional actors will be necessary.

The potential value of a network this large that has strong and integrated data and digital approaches connected throughout the network would be transformative

Concerns remain on how we equitably bring our entire network through a digital transformation journey. Many of our NSs live in contexts that are being left worse off in the digital divide – how do we advocate for, and invest our resources into ensuring that our entire network can benefit from these transformations in the same way.

Investment into experimenting with new approaches and building a culture that enables this will yield improvements.

Future Organisational Model and Culture

The Tension

Participants in the consultation have expressed concerns that the organisation can be overly bureaucratic, slow to change and not as efficient as it could be. The fast changing world requires greater focus on foresight (being able to anticipate change) and agility. The capacity to be opportunistic and to pivot quickly will be increasingly important as the pace of change externally continues to quicken and to transform. As technologies and other social changes democratise access to information and enable direct civic action, questions emerge about how a large (and often vertical) structure such as the RCRC can engage with flatter more dynamic external networks, that are rapidly emerging and tackling social, development and humanitarian issues. The size of the network is undoubtedly one of its greater strengths as is the localised nature of our volunteers and branches. Participants in consultations felt that improvements are needed in the way we collaborate internationally, cooperate and resource each other to ensure greater efficiency and impact. The need to be ambidextrous; continuing to build strong local capacity to drive local action, while recognising that many of the greatest threats to humanity are cross border and require more effective regional and global cooperation.

Future Organisational Model and Culture

Some Issues to consider when formulating the Strategic Actions (as identified in the S2030 consultations)

Our network requires not just a more agile model and structure, but a more distributed, networked approach that is exploring completely different models of cooperation and partnership, that is focused on reimagining our collective roles in supporting local action.

New allies and partners will be essential as the sector continues to change and the scope of humanitarian challenges outbalance the capacity of the sector to address them.

The appetite for risk in the organisation will need to be carefully examined, allowing for experimentation with new models and approaches while still ensuring the protection of the organisation and the communities we support.

Building a culture and systems that promote and enable innovation will be important.

Many of the concerns about the way we organise ourselves internationally have consistently been raised for about 100 years. What can we do this time that is different that means we won't still be asking these questions in another 100 years? What is our imperative and will for change?

