

Template for the workshop summary report

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Council of Delegates of the International
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement



**2022 Council of Delegates of the Red Cross and
Red Crescent Movement**

SUMMARY REPORT ON WORKSHOP

[What will it take to build an International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement free from racism, xenophobia, and discrimination?]

Date and time: Thursday, 31 March 2022 09:00–10:30 (CET): English, Arabic, Russian
17:00–18:30 (CET): English, French, Spanish

Chair/facilitator/moderator: David Loquercio, Annika Norlin, Amjad Saleem, Gurvinder Singh

Rapporteur (if there is any):

Speakers/panelists/presenters: Michele Hunt

(A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (one paragraph):

Racism, xenophobia and discrimination are not new phenomena or conversations within the Movement. Past efforts have been made such as various Townhalls with proposed solutions, but none appear to have been followed through with the necessary actions. This workshop represents a moment of stocktaking; to identify and propose actions to address the interpersonal, cultural, and systemic barriers which limit our recognition, responses and action to render the Movement free from racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

(B) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The workshop was framed to understand the barriers within the Movement ranging from individual, cultural, contextual and systemic barriers. Key note speaker Michele Hunt noted “The deep divides based on race, gender, religion, political views or just being different are all rooted in prejudice, discrimination and exclusion, a worldview that embraces supremacy and subordination rather than understanding that we are all inextricably connected and interdependent. She concluded by saying that, “Now, more than ever, the world needs a Red Cross and Red Crescent movement that recognizes diversity and inclusion is a gift. that We (as a Movement) are uniquely positioned to tap into the minds, hearts and imagination of everyone” in our communities to live up to our “vision of what an inclusive Movement would look like, one where No One's Left Behind, No One's Left Out, and No One Feels Unsafe”.

Throughout the workshop, it was recognized that policies alone will not remove people's biases and prejudice. A participant from ICRC, sharing her personal experience noted that fear, retaliation, and lack of safe spaces and validation of different experiences prevent brave and honest conversations. A warning was issued to stop our efforts veering towards ‘performativism’ - celebrating actions which in reality, are too small and too late. A call was made to be “less patient.” and calling on everyone in the Movement, not just marginalized and invisible groups or People of Color (POC) to lead the emotional and educational labour on racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

It is also important to note that several National Societies have already started to address some of these topics in different ways and taking targeted actions to address racism and discrimination. This includes undertaking surveys, monitoring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion metrics, rolling out training and diversifying the recruitment of volunteers. Participants were invited to declare their interest in being part of the work moving forward.

(C) KEY POINTS RAISED

The following barriers to discussing these issues were raised:

1. Fear of retaliation, Lack of Safe Spaces and insufficient validation of different experiences. 2. Weak Accountability mechanism for staff, volunteers and communities to raise grievances. 3. Internalized, Interpersonal Racism, Discrimination, and xenophobia. 4. Not living up to our Mandate and Fundamental Principles. 5. Institutional Barriers (at Branch/NS/Delegation/Cluster/Field Office levels). 6. Structural and Movement Wide Barriers (at the institutional as well as staff level). 7. A Leadership that is not reflective of the communities we serve. 8. Lack of Informed action that is based on evidence and is sustained.

In addition it was recognized that policies alone will not remove people's biases and prejudice. There needs to be action at all levels to create a safe and brave space for conversation on sensitive issues. This includes addressing individual awareness through education and understanding the lived experiences of people. A deeper understanding of how to understand, interpret and live up to Fundamental Principles was also put forward as a starting premise for such conversations, citing their use in the past to limit such conversations. It was expressed that our mandate and Principles do not make us immune to racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Nor do they make us immune to furthering paternalistic and neo-colonial aid.

There was also a call to look at our internal power structures from branch representation to funding relationships and engagement with members. Structural challenges such as treatment of national staff, compensation among national and international staff were mentioned.

Lastly, special mention was made for the role of leadership to model the principles of diversity and representation and to go beyond rhetoric.

(D) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants suggested a more deliberate and intentional approach as a Movement. Reflecting on the systemic and organizational level, the key recommendations are as follows;

- Develop training and guidance
- Formulate a core group to continue discussions and development of this topic
- Define Our approach to racism, xenophobia and discrimination grounded in visibility, accountability, and learning
- Build Protected and Celebrated Spaces: that enable dialogue, to learn, to share resources
- Design a System free from Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia that is human-centred and Action Driven.
- Examine power within our institutions and Movement
- Live by Our Fundamental Principles and Core Policies
- Have committed, diverse and accountable leadership
- Demonstrate our commitment and action to communities to address racism, discrimination, xenophobia

Resources to Share

BRC Report <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/international/humanitarian-policy>
Movement Podcast: <https://soundcloud.com/icrc-global/podcast-it-matters-who-is-around-the-table>
Blog Post: <https://rcrcconference.org/blog/what-will-it-take-to-build-an-international-red-cross-and-red-crescent-movement-free-from-racism-xenophobia-and-discrimination/>