



CENTRE FOR THE
COOPERATION IN
THE MEDITERRANEAN



Report

3rd Mediterranean Youth Meeting of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Cairo – Egypt
10 – 12 June 2023



INTRODUCTION

The 3rd Mediterranean Youth Meeting of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, hosted with great success by the Egyptian Red Crescent, took place from 10th to 12th June 2023 in Cairo (Egypt).

The meeting brought together 24 Youth Delegates coming from 18 Mediterranean National Societies and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to discuss, learn, and share experiences to tackle the humanitarian challenges in the region.

Since the last Youth Meeting in 2019 in Sarajevo, the RCRC Movement has faced many humanitarian challenges, such as COVID-19, conflicts, complex crises in the Mediterranean region, climate change effects, migration, and mental health.

The youth delegations built on the humanitarian challenges that were addressed in the Sarajevo Youth Declaration. Furthermore, the youth leaders engaged on a consultation process prior to the event, within the subregional Youth Networks (the European Youth Network and the MENA Youth Network) to define the priorities to be addressed during the Mediterranean Youth Meeting.

18 Mediterranean National Societies participated in the Youth Meeting:

Albanian Red Cross, the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatian Red Cross, the Cyprus Red Cross Society, Egyptian Red Cross; French Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Lebanese Red Cross, Libyan Red Crescent, Red Cross of Monaco, Red Cross of Montenegro, Moroccan Red Crescent, the Palestine Red Crescent Society, Portuguese Red Cross, Red Cross of Serbia, Slovenian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross.



As a result of the above-mentioned process, the agenda was designed as follows:

Day 1

- Gender and Diversity: mainstreaming the approach in Youth activities.
- Youth Volunteering: strengthening the engagement and adapting to changing realities
- The role of Youth in the Red Cross and Red Crescent approach toward people on the move
- Youth advocacy on climate action

Day 2

- Self-care and peer support

The outcomes of each session have been summarized into the 2023 Cairo Youth Declaration, in which the youth leaders reinforced and expanded their commitments to take action to reduce the impact of the current challenges, looking to foster resilient communities and also within the Movement to ensure the youth voice and presence is not isolated to consultation.

Drafting Committee

The Drafting Committee was set in order to collect the outcomes of every session and draft the final document.

Together with facilitators and notetakers, the Committee was enriched with the kind participation of Ahmed Abdellatif (Egyptian Red Crescent), Edoardo Italia (Italian Red Cross), Melissa Al Maakar (Lebanese Red Cross), Veselin Pajovic (Red Cross of Montenegro), and Lucia Chocarro Martinez (Spanish Red Cross).





Opening Ceremony 10th June

The Chief Executive Officer of the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC), Dr Ramy Elnazer, and Dr Amal Emam, National Manager of Youth and Volunteering Development at the ERC Egyptian Red Crescent, opened the ceremony, welcoming all the youth delegations and participants to the 3rd RCRC Mediterranean Youth meeting with an inspirational speech



Youth components of the Mediterranean RCRC Movement, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Mrs. Miriana Bader, Asia Pacific Youth Commissioner; the European Youth Network, Mrs. Lucia Chocarro, chair; and the Mena Youth Network, Mrs. Melissa Al Maakar, chair, provided an overview of the work and main challenges of youth in the region





Gender and Diversity: mainstreaming the approach in Youth activities

11th of June

Speakers

Mrs. Lucía Chocarro Martinez,
Spanish Red Cross Youth
Mrs. Sofia Lopes,
Portuguese Red Cross Youth
Mrs. Esra Burgeia,
Libyan Red Crescent

Notetaker

Mr. Antonis Christodoulou,
The Cyprus Red Cross Society

Objectives

- Promote reflections, identify challenges, learn, and share knowledge on the gender and diversity approach.
- How to apply the gender and diversity approach in youth programs within Mediterranean diversity

Part 1.

What is gender and Diversity? Clarify the main concepts. Where are we?

Gender is the social and cultural set of characteristics and psychological norms assigned to each sex. Sex is the characteristics a person is born with that defines whether they are male or female.

Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of that person's gender. There are many types of violence: physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual. Sexual orientation is emotional, romantic, sexual, and affective towards other people.

Part 2.

From theory to practice: How are the National Societies implementing the gender and diversity approach in different fields of work: emergency, education, and institutional?

Gender and diversity as an approach, not only an area of activity. The action can be divided into three types: institutional, raise awareness, and emergency.



The Portuguese Red Cross shared their experience in working on raise awareness.



- Working with gender and inclusion mainly on advocacy and awareness-raising;
- Focusing on capacitating teams nationally and locally and activities for the youth community;
- Delivering two apps, *PLAY4EQUALITY* (role-play game) and *PLAY WITH YOUR FUTURE* (online game in English);
- Setting spaces free of any expression of violence against women to promote reflection, information, awareness, and prevention, and support people safely in dealing with harassment or abuse situations.

The Libyan Red Crescent exposed its approach to an emergency.



- Working on Gender Based Violence and psychological support
- Training of volunteers and staff on the policy of Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Spanish Red Cross showed their institutional work on gender and diversity



- Strategic positioning to prioritize gender equality;
- A national volunteer leader in gender and diversity who directs the projects and campaigns.



Part 3.

Looking ahead: Wrap up all the shared commitments & key actions and highlight at least two of them, which have been decided jointly for the Mediterranean region among all participants, and the steps to follow.

Youth leaders defined the **next steps** to follow and set the **priorities**:

- Training volunteers and staff specifically on how to deal with gender inequalities and differences among them.
- Delivering online activities in order to create a safe environment for others and share messages.
- Working on making RC/RC Movement a safe place for everyone

Key actions or elements to be considered in our responses:

- Equal representation of females and males in national societies.
- Raise awareness for volunteers and professionals and for communities about gender, inequalities, and differences.
- Seeking government collaboration to improve and assist us in breaking “taboos” and speaking freely and sharing our opinion.
- BE AWARE of cultural differences of different countries while implementing all the activities on this topic



Evaluation

Over 80% of the participants rated the session positively. Some participants expressed the need to enhance the definition of concepts, expand practical initiatives beyond LGBTQ issues, and promote a further follow-up of MENA national societies on sensitive topics.

■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent





Youth Volunteering: strengthening the engagement and adapting to changing realities

11th of June

Facilitation

Mr. Rindra Rakatomalala,
Red Cross of Monaco

Notetaker

Mrs. Hajar Ghouddan,
Moroccan Red Crescent

Speakers

Dr Amal Emam, National Manager of Youth and Volunteering Development
Egyptian Red Crescent

Mr. Ferran Cobertera, *Spanish Red Cross*

Objectives

- Promote a reflection and exchange on innovative measures, and strategies to engage with young volunteers.
- Identify concrete actions to keep promoting the exchange and sharing of adaptation measures among Youth

Part 1.

Overview of the main global trends in volunteering in terms of recruiting, retaining, and engagement, including the alternative forms based on flexibility. As Red Cross Red Crescent Youth, are we close to this scenario?

Recruiting

- Emphasis on digital platforms and social media campaigns to reach and engage youth.
- Collaboration with educational institutions, community organizations, and youth networks for recruitment.
- Tailoring volunteer opportunities to align with the interests and passions of young people.

Retaining

- Providing ongoing support, training, and mentorship to youth volunteers.
- Creating inclusive and diverse volunteer environments that foster a sense of belonging.
- Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of youth volunteers through awards, certificates, or public recognition.

Engagement

- Offering flexible volunteering options, such as virtual volunteering, micro-volunteering, and episodic volunteering.
- Encouraging youth involvement in decision-making processes and project design.
- Providing opportunities for skill development, leadership, and personal growth.



Part 2.

Alternative ways of volunteering. Role of Youth to deal with the current challenges in young volunteering. Identify Youth action to make us more flexible and tackle the selected challenge by the participants:

Reflections:

- Reflect on the impact of youth volunteering in addressing social issues and fostering personal development.
- Discuss the significance of youth engagement in decision-making processes.
- Highlight the benefits of diverse and inclusive volunteer environments.

Challenges

- Address the challenges faced in recruiting and retaining youth volunteers *underage*.
- Discuss potential barriers, such as time constraints, lack of awareness, or limited resources.
- Identify specific challenges that Red Cross Red Crescent Youth has encountered or is currently addressing.
- Filling the gap between the youth and the leaders.

Strategies:

- Outline strategies to enhance youth volunteer recruitment, retention, and engagement.
- Provide examples of effective practices, such as targeted marketing campaigns or mentorship programs.
- Mention initiatives implemented by Red Cross Red Crescent Youth to address these strategies.

Lessons Learned:

- Share key insights and lessons learned from past experiences with youth volunteering.
- Discuss the importance of adapting strategies to the evolving needs and preferences of young volunteers.
- Highlight any specific lessons Red Cross Red Crescent Youth has learned and how they have been applied.



Part 3.

Wrap up the main next steps & key elements/actions to keep exchanging measures in strengthening young volunteering that have been agreed upon among all participants

Youth volunteering is a dynamic field, continually evolving to meet the changing expectations and preferences of young volunteers.

By aligning with global trends in recruiting, retaining, and engaging youth volunteers, including alternative forms that prioritize flexibility, Red Cross Red Crescent Youth can enhance its impact and create meaningful experiences for volunteers and communities.

Red Cross Red Crescent Youth can continue to thrive as a leader in youth volunteering by reflecting on challenges, implementing effective strategies, and applying lessons learned.

Evaluation

Opinions about the workshop have been largely positive. Less than 20% of the participants haven't considered it as "good" or "excellent." On the one hand, the dynamic allowed the group to enjoy the experience the most. Nonetheless, some sought even more innovative ideas.

■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent





The role of Youth in the Red Cross and Red Crescent approach toward people in the move 11th of June

Speakers

Mrs. Hannah Gregor
French Red Cross
Mrs. Simona Scandura
Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean

Notetaker

Mrs. Jouman Bader,
The Palestine Red Crescent Society

Objectives

- Enable young people to have a better understanding of the meaning of terms such as asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants and of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement framework in this regard;
- Stimulate reflections on why people can decide to leave their homes and what it is like to arrive somewhere new away from their family.;
- Enable young people to explore the positive contributions people on the move can bring to our communities and reflect on which type of specific actions can be conducive to more inclusive and welcoming communities;
- Promote a reflection on what is the role of RCRC youth in migration taking into consideration that migration is considered a key issue in the Mediterranean area;
- Identify at least one joint commitment in migration as the youth of the Mediterranean.





What can we do as Red Cross Red Crescent Youth of the Mediterranean basin? How could we empathize with migrant people of our communities?

Key Discussion Points

1. Understanding the Meaning of Terms:

- Definitions: Provide concise explanations of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants.
- Legal Distinctions: Discuss the legal framework surrounding these terms, including international conventions and protocols.

2. Factors Driving Migration

- Push Factors: Examine the factors that force people to leave their homes, such as conflict, violence, persecution, and lack of economic opportunities.
- Pull Factors: Explore the factors that attract migrants to new destinations, such as job prospects, safety, and better living conditions.

3. Challenges Faced by Migrants

- Emotional Impact: Reflect on the psychological effects of leaving one's home and family behind.
- Practical Difficulties: Discuss the challenges faced in adapting to a new culture, language barriers, and accessing essential services.

4. Recognizing the Contributions of Migrants

- Cultural Enrichment: Acknowledge the diverse perspectives, traditions, and cultural practices that migrants bring to host communities.
- Economic Contributions: Highlight the positive impact of migrant labour and entrepreneurship on local economies.

5. Building Inclusive and Welcoming Communities:

- Education and Awareness: Promote educational initiatives to combat stereotypes and prejudices, fostering understanding and respect.
 - Community Engagement: Encourage participants to propose specific actions to promote inclusion, such as language classes, mentorship programs, or cultural exchange events.
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The role of Red Cross Red Crescent Youth Youth

- **Advocacy**
Discuss the importance of advocating for migrant rights and dignified treatment.
- **Support Services**
Explore potential roles for RCRC youth in providing practical support, such as language assistance, psychosocial support, or healthcare services.
- **Partnerships**
Explore opportunities for collaboration with other organisations, institutions, and community stakeholders to maximize impact.

Evaluation

Chiefly, participants appreciated every aspect of it. Over 80% of them had a positive opinion of the seminar, and 30% of them considered it excellent. It was the presentations that especially encouraged the group.

■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent





Youth advocacy on climate action 11th of June

Speakers

Mrs. Fleur Monasso
Mrs. Rana El Hajj
RCRC Climate Centre

Notetaker

Mrs. Vanessa Benak Cvijanovic
Slovenian Red Cross

Objective

Youth is more empowered to scale youth led climate action and to develop messages to take to main conference to influence the leadership of NSs to be more ambitious with regards to climate action.

Part 1.

Youth-led strategy on climate action: Awareness, Action, Advocacy *Main reflections, Enabling conditions & key elements and actions*

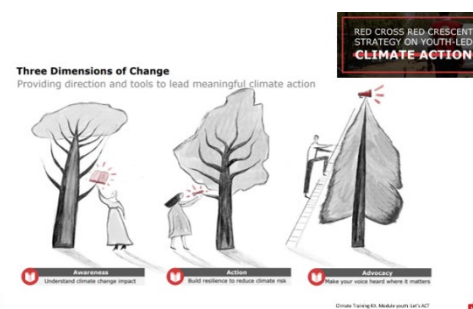
Climate Centre reported scenarios over the Mediterranean. Both the optimistic and the pessimistic scenarios foreseen the temperatures raising. Warming is happening all across the region.

As consequence of it, humans and ecosystems are suffering changes that will increase the risk of extreme weather, wildfires, heatwaves, crisis in the coastal and marine ecosystems, furthermore impacting food production and security, water quality and availability.

Youth-led Climate Action

Three dimensions of change:

- **Awareness:** understanding of the climate change impact;
- **Action:** building resilience to reduce the climate change;
- **Advocacy:** making the youth voice heard where it



Young people are the strongest advocates for change. Youth is one of the key-actors for change within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.



Part 2.

Peer to peer exchange. Wrap-up the most inspiring actions shared by the National Societies (done or like to be doing):

Croatian Red Cross

Green Frame for Greener Everyday Life

The handbook is looking to inspire greener practices in household and offices advices how to make home or office greener.



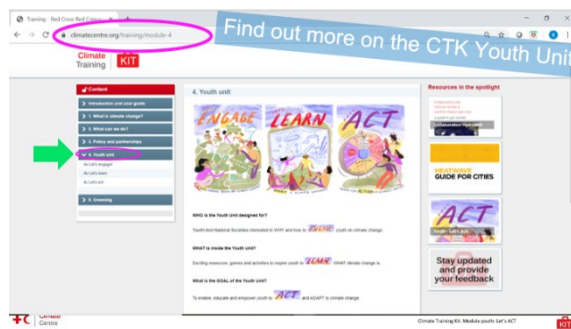
Italian red Cross

Time to Adapt

This table game (escape room) aims to raise awareness and foster education on climate change adaptation



Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre *Y-ADAPT*



Y-Adapt or Youth Adapt is an interactive, games-based curriculum. It educates, engages and inspires youth to act in their communities to adapt to climate change.

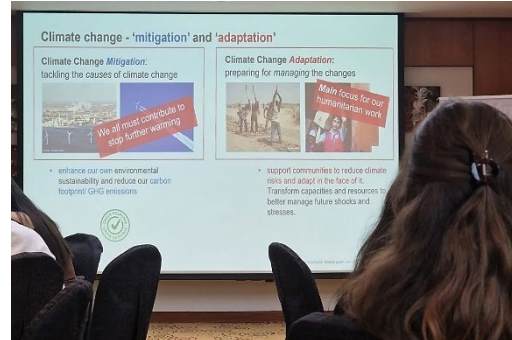


Part 3.

Messaging to grow climate ambition and action: wrap-up the main ideas for action for Mediterranean youth groups and NSs that come up

Two types of Climate change actions 'mitigation' and 'adaptation'

- **Mitigation:** Tackling the causes of climate change. We all must contribute to stop further warming. Enhance our own environmental sustainability and reduce our carbon footprint.
- **Adaptation:** Preparing for managing the changes that are happening around us.



Main focus for our humanitarian work is to support communities to reduce climate risks, adapt and face of it, transform capacities and resources to better manage future shocks and stresses

Part 4.

Youth advocacy messaging to mobilize more ambition and action across NSs in the region. Main messages to share with leadership in the main Conference.

1. To green the Red Cross Red Crescent is needed. Youth has ideas, actions! From Youth to the movement.
2. Budget for Youth, especially for the Climate Action – making the impact for the change.
3. Youth involved – it is our present and future. Our actions impact other actions. Start by ourselves, we are the actors of change.
4. Climate Change is not just a problem for future generations, we have to treat Climate Change as a priority, all the topics are connected of our other fields of working.
5. Get active now – local actions can reach further and have a global impact.
6. Call for National Societies to show more action, more ambition.





Evaluation

In general, the workshop has been positively evaluated. Approximately 50% of the answers have qualified it as “excellent”. The results show there is scope for improvement in some aspects. Specifically, participants have expressed their interest in making this activity more dynamic and interactive, innovating in methodology.

■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent





Self-Care and peer support 12th of June

Facilitation

Mrs. Ea Suzanne Akasha
IFRC Psychosocial Centre

Notetaker

Mr. Alexandros Georgios Pichliavas
Hellenic Red Cross

Objective

To familiarize participants with:

- Common personal, interpersonal, organizational and work-related challenges for volunteers in the area of selfcare;
- The practice and theoretical background of the buddy system and introduce to other types of peer support;
- Exercises from the Well-being Guide that helps balance the nervous system and decreases arousal when needed and that can be used by individuals and groups of volunteers;
- The cognitive challenges of understanding and practicing care for others rather than selfcare;
- Psychological first aid practices when discussing the needs for selfcare with peers.

Key Discussion Points

During the session, youth delegates reflected on youth peer-to-peer support and key elements to foster mental health among youth.

The youth delegates identified the following risks to volunteer and staff mental health across the following thematic areas:

1. Personal Risks

Balancing volunteering with personal and professional life is a relevant stress factor for most volunteers and staff. The situations volunteers and staff are exposed to during humanitarian work lead them to carry emotional baggage back to their personal lives. Burnout risk has been identified as high.

Volunteers and staff are frustrated in dealing with bureaucracy, not being heard by the Organization, and suffering a lack of opportunities.

2. Work-Related Risks

Volunteers feel they do not know their limits, leading to burnout and stress. The disappointment of lack of recognition (especially moral) is frustrating staff and volunteers.

Fresh volunteers may suffer overwork or power abuse because of a lack of knowledge about the organization and workflow of their National Societies. Staff identified that the lack of a conflict resolution mechanism/process can lead to a toxic work environment.



3. Interpersonal Risks

Delegates highlighted that the conflict between volunteers and staff may lead to judgmental and revengeful behaviours toward the volunteers.

Both volunteers and staff emphasized that internal political struggles reduce the organization's efficiency, create a demotivating work environment, and raise awareness of the need for a comprehensive conflict resolution mechanism, like the Buddy System.

Evaluation

All in all, the workshop 5 was a complete success. 100% of the participants qualified it positively, and over 80% considered it “excellent” in every aspect. Overall, participants have strongly expressed their gratitude towards the session, praising its brilliant and insightful approach.

■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent





Final document adoption and closing session 12th of June

Following the works in plenary sessions and workshops, the appointed notetaker provided the Drafting Committee with the key points and recommendations. The Meeting's final document was presented, discussed, and adopted.



The event closed its works with the Cairo Youth Declaration reading, and the closing remarks of Mrs. Natia Loladze, IFRC Vice President for Europe, Mr. Bolaji Akpan Anani, IFRC Vice President for Africa, and Dr. Ramy Elnazer, CEO of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society.

The closing of the event was also attended by other senior leaders of the Movement, including Dr. Younis AlKhateeb, President of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, Mrs. Mercedes Babe, chair of the Standing Commission and Dr. Hossam Elsharkawi, IFRC MENA Regional Director.



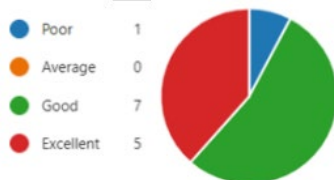
As part of the closure, a space was dedicated to intergenerational dialogue in which youth had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss with the leaders, topics such as gender and diversity in the Movement, climate change and environment and the role of youth and their networks in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as the movement's support to youth as future leaders. This space hosted a very enriching debate, in which the opinions and ideas of both youth and senior leaders intersected, providing a platform where the voice of youth was heard.



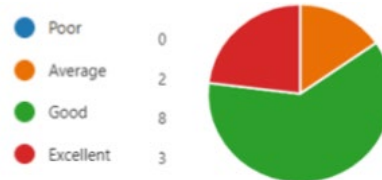
General Evaluation

The general evaluation of the 3rd Red Cross and Red crescent Mediterranean Youth Meeting revealed several key aspects:

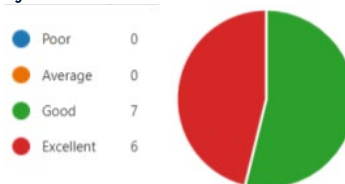
Structure: Do you think that the structure/schema of the Youth Meeting Was adequate? Time destined to each workshop has been well balanced?



Contents: Do you think that the methodologies used during the different workshops were adequate?



Contents: In general, do you think that the contents of the workshops were relevant?



Comments:

- **Time management** and meeting structure were well-balanced and effective, with unanimous agreement among participants;
- **Workshop content** was deemed highly relevant, with nearly 50% rating it as "excellent," and methodologies received positive feedback from over 80% of participants;
- **Areas for improvement** included better balance between sticking to the agenda allowing meaningful discussions, and fostering peer-to-peer exchange;
- **Participants gained valuable insights** from the meeting, particularly in innovative practices related to gender equality, climate change, and self-care tools and networks to undertake in their National Societies. It also emphasizes the need to strengthen the Youth section, leadership accountability, and the personal life-volunteering balance.
- Climate change, migration, and mental health issues emerged as **key areas in which to take action** in the region. Participants especially highlighted the need to improve and enhance relationships between the MENA and European networks.

Overall, the summit was **successful**, and participants valued and emphasized the need for increased meetings, collaboration, funding, and assistance among the national societies in the region.