Psychosocial Support and Migration

Annual Forum 2012 of the European RC/RC Network for Psychosocial Support

Resilience and Communication.

“Mind de Gap!”

Paris, 26 - 28 October 2012
The Psychosocial impacts of migration

Among humanitarian actors it is recognized that armed conflicts and natural disasters cause significant psychological and social suffering to affected populations. Emergencies erode protective supports that are normally available, increase the risks of diverse problems and tend to amplify pre-existing problems. Migrants are a particular vulnerable group, they struggle to adapt to life in foreign countries and thousands are making the difficult decision to leave their homes in a bid for a safer, healthier and a more prosperous life. Many of these migrants arrive in their new destinations in a state of distress. Children, especially those separated from their parents, are often extremely traumatised after experiencing conflict, disasters and extreme hardship.

### The Nature and origin of psychosocial problems with specific regard to migrants

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<th>Social problems include</th>
<th>Psychological problems include</th>
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<td><strong>Pre-existing problems</strong></td>
<td>Extreme poverty, belonging to a group that is discriminated against or marginalised; political oppression</td>
<td>Severe mental disorder; depression, alcohol abuse as consequence of social exclusion in countries of origin and destination</td>
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<td><strong>Emergency-induced problems</strong></td>
<td>Family separation with children left behind in countries of origin; disruption of social networks; destruction of livelihoods, community structures, resources and trust when leaving countries of origin, increased gender-based violence along the migratory trail.</td>
<td>Grief, non-pathological distress; alcohol abuse; depression and anxiety disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during the migratory trail (before, during and after migration)</td>
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<td><strong>Humanitarian aid-induced problems</strong></td>
<td>Undermining of community structures or traditional support mechanisms; exclusion due to lack of access to services in countries of destination</td>
<td>Anxiety due to a lack of information about food distribution; aid dependency in countries of destination, lack of access to basic services.</td>
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Migrant at risk

- Women and men (e.g. trafficked, migrant exposed to gender-based violence along the migratory trail, migrant suffering labour exploitation, migrants with not access to healthcare services, migrants social excluded, migrants victims of discrimination, xenophobia and violence);
- Separated or unaccompanied children, trafficked children.
- Elderly migrants
- Refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum seekers and migrants in irregular situations (especially women and children without identification papers);
The Movement recognizes that some migrants and their families are particularly vulnerable and may need psychosocial support. The IFRC’s Policy on Migration adopts an integrated and impartial approach, combining immediate action for migrants in need of longer-term assistance and empowerment, in order to accurately reflect the full extent of the humanitarian concerns related to migration. The Movement is committed to work in responding to migrant’s vulnerabilities, including in the field of psychosocial support, without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status. Psychosocial support activities are offered by National Societies around the world. Projects include targeting refugees and asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, separated and unaccompanied children, victims of human trafficking and irregular migrants among other migrants.
Migration & the IFRC

- **2007**: 30th IC *Together for Humanity* Declaration
- **2009**: IFRC Migration Policy endorsed by the General Assembly
- **2010**: Amman Commitment: *Advocate for humanitarian needs of migrants and internally displaced people*.
- **2011**: 31st IC Resolution *Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion*
- **2012**: World Disaster’s Report: Forced Migration
In its ‘Together for Humanity’ document, the 30th International Conference (2007) provided a framework for our work on migration.

In particular, concern was expressed that migrants, irrespective of their status, often live outside conventional health, social and legal systems and do not have access to processes which guarantee respect for their fundamental rights.

At the 31st International Conference (2011) Resolution 3 on Migration endorsed this further and requires States and components of the Movement, including the secretariat and National Societies, to strengthen our cooperation in addressing the needs of vulnerable migrants.
IC Resolution No.3 “Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social inclusion”

Requests States, in consultation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to ensure that relevant laws and procedures are in place to enable National Societies, in conformity with the Statutes of the Movement and, in particular, the Fundamental Principles, to enjoy effective and safe access to all migrants without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status;
IC Resolution No.3 “Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social inclusion”

Calls upon States, within the framework of applicable international law, to ensure that their national procedures at international borders, especially those that might result in denial of access to international protection, deportation or interdiction of persons, include adequate safeguards to protect the dignity and ensure the safety of all migrants.

States are also called on, in line with such relevant international law and national legislation, to grant to migrants appropriate international protection and to ensure their access to relevant services, such as Restoring Family Links. States and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are invited to consult in the implementation of the aforementioned safeguards, as appropriate;
IC Resolution No.3 “Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social inclusion”

Strongly encourages cooperation between public authorities, at all levels, and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to pursue practical actions in formal and non-formal settings:

- to promote respect for diversity, non-violence and social inclusion of all migrants;
- to enhance cultural awareness between migrant and local communities;
- to promote through formal and non-formal education, humanitarian values and the development of interpersonal skills to live peacefully together; and
- to enhance social cohesion through engagement of local and migrant populations and civil society organisations in voluntary service, community and sport programmes.
IC Resolution No.3 “Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social inclusion”

Encourages States and the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in conformity with the Fundamental Principles and Statutes of the Movement, to continue to collaborate and build partnerships which recognise the role of the Movement in working with migrants and which could include relevant partners from international organisations (such as IOM and UNHCR, UNODC), non-governmental organisations and the private sector.
The aims of Strategy 2020 are mainstreamed into our migration strategic plan

**Strategic aim 1:** Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises

- provision of assistance and protection services to vulnerable migrants
- strengthening migrants’ and host community resilience through economic security, recovery and social inclusion within local communities
Linkages with Strategy 2020

Strategic aim 2: Enable healthy and safe living

- improving equitable access to health care, psychosocial and social services
- being sensitive to addressing environmental issues especially push-pull factors of scarce resources and climate change
Linkages with Strategy 2020

**Strategic aim 3: Promote social inclusion, and a culture of non violence and peace**

- focus on changing the dialogue on migration, promoting social inclusion and addressing reintegration of migrants who choose to return fighting xenophobia, stigmatisation, discrimination and violence (including gender based violence, human trafficking, and smuggling) towards migrants
THANK YOU!

For more information on IFRC Migration work

- IFRC Website: [www.ifrc.org/migration](http://www.ifrc.org/migration)
- Email: migration.unit@ifrc.org
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON IFRC MIGRATION WORK, PLEASE CONTACT:

IFRC MIGRATION UNIT
SUE LE MESURIER, MIGRATION UNIT MANAGER
TEL.: +41 022 730 4369
EMAIL: sue.lemesurier@ifrc.org

THIS PRESENTATION IS PUBLISHED BY
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES
P.O. BOX 372
CH-1211 GENEVA 19
SWITZERLAND

TEL.: +41 22 730 42 22
FAX.: +41 22 733 03 95