

Strengthening the application of the Fundamental Principles within the RCRC Movement

CONCEPT NOTE AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The present toolkit is designed to support National Societies in promoting greater experience-sharing on the application of the Fundamental Principles. This can be done through peer-to-peer discussions, for example in regional meetings/workshops (see **Part I – Promoting experience-sharing on Fundamental Principles within the Movement**, using material and experience from the regional workshops on Fundamental Principles carried out in 2014-2015) or through training sessions at national level (see **Part II – Training on Fundamental Principles within National Societies**, providing a few tips to adapt this toolkit to your context and to specific target audiences).

The content of the toolkit itself is detailed in **Part III – Content of the toolkit**.

PART I – PROMOTING EXPERIENCE-SHARING ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

❖ Introduction and background

“I’ve been with the Red Cross for 20 years, but it is the first time I’m given the opportunity to have a focused discussion with my peers on challenges and good practices in applying the Fundamental Principles”

Participant, regional workshop on Fundamental Principle, Dakar, 2015

The importance of peer-to-peer exchange and sharing of good practices on Fundamental Principles came up as one of the main conclusions of the joint ICRC-International Federation’s Movement-wide initiative “Reaffirming the Fundamental Principles” carried out in 2013-2015, as reported in the Background Report prepared for the 32nd International Conference ([Doc. 32IC/15/7](#)). This initiative – consisting notably in a series of regional workshops bringing together 127 National Societies (NS) – aimed at fostering dialogue and reflection across the Movement on challenges and good practices in applying the Principles, with the view to strengthen their application.

This conclusion was reiterated during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Principles in Vienna on 7-8 October 2015 and during the plenary commission on Fundamental Principles (FP) at the 32nd International Conference itself (report available [here](#) and in the Additional Resources folder of the toolkit). This appetite for more experience-sharing across the Movement is well captured in the quote above, which was echoed on multiple occasions by participants in the regional workshops.

Consequently, the ICRC has developed the present toolkit to encourage and support NS who would be willing to promote greater experience-sharing and peer-to-peer exchange in their region, to run workshops on Fundamental Principles in existing regional or sub-regional Movement meetings. The training material can also be adapted to be used in workshops or training sessions within your NS (see Part II).

❖ Rational and objectives

The rational of this approach is to encourage more frequent and systematic peer-to-peer exchange on the FP in a cost-efficient manner and without creating new fora in a Movement already crowded with meetings and workshops of all sort.

If your NS is interested in promoting experience-sharing on FPs within your region, it is suggested that:

- You propose to add a session dedicated to FPs in existing sub-regional or regional meetings.
- Depending on the interest of National Societies in your region and on the available time, such session can be limited to one-and-a-half to two hours or extend to half-a-day.
- It can address Fundamental Principles in a very general manner or focus on challenges related to one principle or topic particularly relevant to your region.

The overall purpose is that such experience-sharing be relevant to you and to your peers, without adding an additional heavy organizational and financial burden. The present toolkit, based on material developed for the regional workshops in 2014-15, aims to support you in this respect, including in the organization and running of the peer-to-peer session.

Objectives of the Fundamental Principles peer-to-peer sessions/workshops:

- To promote experience-sharing and reflection on *challenges* to the application of the FP and existing *good practices* in overcoming these challenges.
- To encourage *collective thinking* on regionally relevant topics related to the FPs and inspire creative and context-specific solutions to overcome challenges.
- To ensure that the Principles remain alive and relevant, and to strengthen their application in the long run.

It is hoped that such sessions can become, in the long term, a *regular feature of your sub-regional or regional meetings* and be systematically added to the agenda of the meetings so that peer-to-peer exchange on Fundamental Principles become a regular occurrence of the Movement's life.

❖ Proposed methodology

Determine objectives of the workshop

As the overall objective of the workshop is to encourage experience-sharing among peers on challenges and good practices in applying the Principles, the organizer of the session should not shy away from having a very **general discussion on the 7 FP**. Exercises and case-studies are proposed in the toolkit to kick-start and steer the discussion.

If relevant in a given region, objectives of the workshop can be more specific and **look into topics** that raise particularly thorny challenges to the application of the Principles for NSs in the region. Examples:

- Balancing the role of auxiliary with the principle of independence.
- Fundamental Principles in the context of migration.
- Neutrality and responding to humanitarian needs resulting from gang/criminal violence.
- Fundamental Principles and external partnerships in contexts of UN peace operations.
- Etc.

Duration

At minimum, peer-to-peer sessions should last 1 ½ to 2 hours, which makes it relatively easy to add them to already very busy meetings' agendas.

If time allows and if there is interest among your NS colleagues, workshops could last half a day or even a full day, enabling participants to have much more thorough and substantial exchanges.

- ✓ *For that purpose, examples of agendas used during the 2014-2015 regional workshops are included in the toolkit, to give examples of how such workshops can be structured.*

Introduction of the workshop


- Provide a very brief background to the **rational** of the peer-to-peer exchange session (using information given in the "Introduction and background" part of the present note).
- Introduce the **objectives** of the session as you have determined them.
- Explain that the discussion will be held under the **Chatham House rule of non-attribution**: participants can use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker and participants can be revealed. This rule of confidentiality is critical to create a trustful atmosphere where participants feel free to openly share their experience.
- Provide a brief, general **introduction to the 7 FPs** to ensure that everybody starts on an equal footing: one shouldn't assume that all participants are deeply familiar with the Principles!
 - ✓ *PowerPoint presentations are available in the toolkit.*
 - ✓ *A puzzle exercise, also available in the toolkit, can be used in addition to the presentations for participants to assess their knowledge of the Principles and relate them to humanitarian values and personal skills needed for their application → ideal for breakout groups (5 to 8 people)*
- If relevant, provide a brief **introduction to the specific topic** you will be discussing.
 - ✓ *Example of introductory notes and guiding questions, used during the 2014-2015 regional workshops, are included in the toolkit.*

Case studies and ethical dilemmas

In order to kick-start the discussion and ensure an interactive and dynamic format, it is recommended to use case-studies and/or ethical dilemmas. Depending on the number of participants and on the time available, these exercises can be done in breakout groups or in plenary.

The toolkit includes two examples of exercises used during the 2014-2015 regional workshops:

- ✓ *Case studies on Fundamental Principles: short scenario-based exercises accompanied by questions that participants have to answer → ideal for breakout groups (5 to 8 people) followed by reporting back in plenary.*
- ✓ *Ethical dilemmas: very short dilemmas related to the application of the Principles, to which the participants have to reply by "acceptable" or "not acceptable" → ideal in plenary session, when time and number of participants is limited.*

 **Remember:** the purpose of the workshop should be to encourage participants to reflect on and discuss their own experience. The proposed exercises are therefore kept deliberately short and simple. Organizers of the 2014-15 workshops had initially developed longer and more elaborate case studies but quickly realized that, although well appreciated by participants, these exercises detracted participants from their own experience who focused instead on finding the "right" solution to the case studies. Learning from this experience, some simpler exercises were developed (included in this toolkit), which proved much more conducive to elicit the participants' experience. Should you feel

the need to use more developed case studies, examples used during the 2014-2015 workshops are available on demand with the ICRC (see “Contact and support below”).

PART II – TRAINING ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WITHIN NATIONAL SOCIETIES

During the regional consultations, many NS leaders were interested in the material used in order to conduct training sessions/discussions on the Fundamental Principles with their own staff and volunteers. The material available in this toolkit can be easily adapted to that purpose and made even more context-specific as you will certainly be able to add debates and dilemmas experienced by your NS. It is suggested that you develop some examples relevant to local challenges, for instance on the use of social media by volunteers and staff – an issue that gave rise to heated discussions during the 2014-15 workshops – or on the positioning of the NS on politically-sensitive issues relevant in your context (e.g. management of the migration file, detention, deportation, etc.).

PART III – CONTENT OF THE TOOLKIT

The material included in the toolkit (PowerPoint presentations, exercises, etc.) were adapted to each of the regional consultations taking place in 2014-15. They can be used as such, but will be even more accurate if you adapt them to your specific needs and context.

The toolkit is organized in folders, as follows:

- 1. Examples of workshop agendas** (half a day or more).
- 2. Presentation material:** Includes two PowerPoint presentations and two examples of introductory notes used in the 2014-15 workshop to introduce specific subjects.
 - A. *General Introduction to the FP (PowerPoint)*: provides a brief introduction to the 7 Fundamental Principles, without entering into the detail of each single Principle (including notes to help the presenter).
 - B. *The 7 Fundamental Principles (PowerPoint)*: introduces in more details each Fundamental Principle (including notes to help the presenter). This presentation is optional and should be used only if felt necessary and if time allows.
 - C. *Introductory note on “FPs and Movement Coordination” (Word doc)*.
 - D. *Introductory note on “FPs and external partnerships” (Word doc)*.
- 3. Examples of exercises:** This part includes two types of exercises. The first exercise (A) can be used during the introductory part, if time allows, to familiarize the participants to the Principles. The last two exercises (B and C) should be used to encourage participants to discuss concrete challenges to the application of the Principles and to reflect on their own experience. These two exercises include elements of answer and guiding questions to support the facilitator.
 - A. *Puzzle exercise*
 - B. *Case studies exercise*
 - C. *Ethical dilemma exercise*
- 4. Additional resources:**
 - *The Fundamental Principles in action: A unique ethical, operational and institutional framework* – Background Report on Fundamental Principles for the 32nd International Conference, December 2015, which provides a synthesis of the Movement-wide initiative

on Fundamental Principles (incl. the 2014-2015 regional workshops) and highlights some of the main findings.

- *Report of the work of Commission A: The Fundamental Principles in action* – Report of the plenary commission on the Principles at the 32nd International Conference.
- *Reports of the 2014-2015 Regional Workshops*.
- *The 1979 Commentary of the Fundamental Principles by Jean Pictet*: a 60-page long in-depth analysis of the Fundamental Principles, which remain a seminal work for whoever wants to learn more about the rationale and *raison d'être* of the RCRC Fundamental Principles. The introduction is a highly recommended reading.
- *Fundamental Principles in Action* – Examples of good practices related to the application of the Fundamental Principles, shared by National Societies during the 2014-2015 regional workshops.
- *To go further...* – Non-exhaustive list of suggested readings on Fundamental and humanitarian principles

👉 Although not included in this tool kit, due to its sheer size, you might find useful to consult a recent joint publication of the ICRC and the International Federation for background information on the Principles: “**The Fundamental Principles of the International RCRC Movement – Ethics and Tools for Humanitarian Action**” (2015), available on ICRC’s [e-Shop](#). A shorter leaflet on the Fundamental Principles can also be downloaded or ordered [here](#).

👉 Further material on Fundamental Principles (quiz, the 360 Experience Game, promotional videos, etc.) can also be found on [this website](#), developed by the International Federation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Principles.

CONTACT AND SUPPORT

Should you require additional support, you can contact the Division for Cooperation and Coordination within the Movement at ICRC headquarters in Geneva at gva_movement_services@icrc.org or the Division for Policy, Strategy and Knowledge at IFRC Secretariat in Geneva at principles.values@ifrc.org.

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