



## PERCO<sup>1</sup> Guidelines on integration of migrants

Adopted at the Annual General Meeting in Geneva on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2013

*National Societies have identified the integration of migrants as essential for their dignity and wellbeing. Guided by the IFRC Policy on Migration (2009), this PERCO note makes recommendations to National Societies to assist in their strategic programming in this area. It also draws on global best policies and practices and provides guidance that is indispensable and valid for all Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.*

### Background

The IFRC Policy on Migration prioritises the promotion of social inclusion and integration. In engaging in the area of migration, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies seek – individually and together with the International Federation and the ICRC – to address the humanitarian concerns of migrants in need throughout their journey. They strive to provide assistance and protection to them, uphold their rights and dignity, empower them in their search for opportunities and sustainable solutions, as well as promote social inclusion and interaction between migrants and their new communities.

An IFRC Migration Fact Sheet<sup>2</sup> states that:

*“Migrants may continue to face a myriad of problems upon arrival in the country of destination. The widespread prevalence of discrimination, exclusion and violence increases the vulnerability of migrants and calls for more intensified and innovative action. As these challenges are often based upon ignorance and fear of the unknown it is essential to involve both migrant and local communities in order to foster dialogue, mutual understanding and respect for diversity, thus encouraging social inclusion.”*

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<sup>1</sup> PERCO, the *Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants* is a network of migration experts from National Red Cross Societies of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This PERCO document was developed by the PERCO Working Group on Integration.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/89794/Migration%20Fact%20Sheet%2031st%20IC.pdf>

## Our approach to integration

*There is a substantial body of literature relating to the definition of integration. The following definition has been developed specifically for the Movement and for the purposes of this document.*

Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation and respect by all migrants and residents of a given state.

**For migrants,** integration means the process of adjusting to a new society, acquiring access to work, education, and housing, influencing democratic processes and participating in civil society, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with that society.

**For the host society,** integration means opening up institutions, being an inclusive society, respecting diverse and flexible identities, and granting equal opportunities to migrants.

While the relationship between migrants and the host society is unequal, this definition excludes processes of integration based on force or that attempt to impose unitary identities on populations.

This advisory note focuses primarily on first generation migrants. Social issues relating to migrants' children or so-called "second generation migrants" should be considered as part of general social policies on social inclusion.

Resolution 3, adopted at the 31st International Conference in 2011 entitled "*Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion*", calls for governments to ensure that migrants, irrespective of their legal status, have access to the support that they need and that they are treated at all times with respect and dignity. It encourages cooperation between public authorities and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to pursue the following practical actions:

- Access to all migrants: ensuring that relevant laws and regulations are in place to enable effective and safe access to all migrants, irrespective of their legal status;
- Better border procedures: improved border procedures including adequate safeguards for the safety, well-being and dignity of migrants, and their access to international protection;
- Enhanced partnerships: strengthened collaboration between relevant actors to fortify humanitarian assistance and the protection provided to vulnerable migrants, and
- Fighting xenophobia: enhanced cooperation between governments and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in undertaking practical actions to promote diversity, non-violence and social inclusion.

Support in establishing community linkages is part of National Societies' overall engagement in promoting the social inclusion and integration of migrants. Isolation and the lack of community linkages increase their vulnerability. The links of migrants with their families and communities at home are often weakened and sometimes entirely lost.

While many migrants successfully integrate in their host communities, many also find themselves vulnerable and in need of support. Newly arriving at their destination, migrants may have little command of the language, and scarce knowledge of social welfare benefits, medical services, housing, education, labour market information, let alone local customs and practices. This note provides guidance to National Societies in establishing programmes to support the integration of

migrants, based on the IFRC's Policy on Migration<sup>3</sup>. Such guidance has to be cognisant of the substantially varying national rules and regulations. Government policies on integration may limit the scope of action that National Societies can take, and the guidance in this note will have to be adapted according to the local context.

## Guiding principles

Any action to support the integration of migrants should be underpinned by the following guiding principles which are intended to guide National Societies in the development of their integration strategies.

1. Adopt the IFRC's Migration Principles. In their integration activities, National Red Cross societies should respond to the IFRC's 10 migration principles, in particular Nos. 3 and 4:

### Support the Aspirations of Migrants

*"Migrants have a legitimate claim to hope and opportunities to achieve their potential. They are also an important social, economic and cultural factor. Their skills, experience, and resilience can be a valuable contribution to their host communities. National Societies will consider migrants' own needs and interests, and support their social inclusion, integration, and their aspirations."*

### Recognize the Rights of Migrants

*"National Societies provide assistance and protection to migrants, irrespective of their legal status. Yet, the degree to which migrants are able to enjoy their rights is an important factor in assessing their vulnerability. By working with migrants to ensure that their rights are respected – including the right to the determination of their legal status – National Societies will also promote their social inclusion and their aspirations."*

2. Support migrants within their host communities. The integration of migrants into their host societies is essential if they are to achieve their potential, and the recognition of their rights is implicit in achieving integration. National Societies should provide support to migrants in achieving effective integration in the host communities in a manner which does not exclude or alienate existing communities.
3. Act to encourage the host society to be inclusive. For the host society, integration means providing access - and removing barriers to access - to institutions, being an inclusive society, respecting diverse and flexible identities, and granting equal opportunities to migrants. National Societies also have a role to play in ensuring that their host community is inclusive. This can be achieved through dialogue and concrete projects in partnership with national and local authorities, as well as other partners.
4. Encourage the contribution of migrants to the host society. Host communities can benefit from non-material values that come with migration, such as migrants' skills, experience and resilience, as well as cultural diversity. Moreover, many countries depend on migrants as part of their labour force. In turn, countries of origin may benefit from remittances transferred home

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for commentary on the IFRC's 10 Migration Principles as they relate to integration.

by migrants. Yet, in spite of these benefits of migration, migrants often face suspicion, or even hostility and xenophobia.

By underlining the benefits that migrants bring to host communities and countries of origin, National Societies can help overcome barriers of exclusion and discrimination and reduce the potential for community tensions.

5. Promote the participation of migrants in decision-making. Public authorities, other institutions, and the general public may have assumptions about migrants that differ from what the migrants themselves see as their interests, needs and capabilities. Equally, migrants can have misperceptions or misunderstandings regarding the laws, customs and conditions in their host country. National Societies can reduce these gaps by promoting the participation of migrants in decisions that have an impact on their lives.

To the extent possible, National Societies shall actively engage migrants in participatory processes within their host communities. This will help ensure a response to their needs and aspirations that is mutually acceptable and beneficial.

6. Involve migrants in National Red Cross societies. Linguistic and cultural barriers can prevent migrants from representing their own needs, interests and aspirations effectively. By adopting policies to ensure the diversity of their staff and volunteers, National Societies can help to overcome such barriers and to support social inclusion.

To the extent possible, National Societies shall integrate members of migrant communities as staff and volunteers into their ranks.

7. Ensure that national societies do not duplicate or replace existing programmes. Given the limited resources available to National Societies, and the independent mandate of the Red Cross, integration programmes should not duplicate or seek to replace programmes provided either by Government agencies or other voluntary organisations. It is of upmost importance that National Societies retain their integrity and independence in all integration activities. National Societies should identify gaps in the provision of services to migrants which they have the ability to fill and act as an auxiliary to the government in the field of integration. Examples of services provided by some National Societies are given below.

## Issues to be considered by National Societies establishing migrant integration services

### i. **When does integration begin?**

When determining the type of services to be established, National Societies will have to consider when the process of integration can begin. Many governments will only focus on activities for migrants who have obtained a permit to reside in the country, but it could also be argued that migrants are in need of support from the moment of arrival. It is important to keep in

**Example:** In 2005 the UK the government published an integration strategy which specified that "integration can only begin in its *fullest sense* when an asylum seeker becomes a refugee". However, the British Red Cross continued to provide services that supported the integration of asylum seekers, and continued to advocate for a broader definition of integration that **included them**"

mind that all Red Cross integration programmes focus on migrants' needs first and foremost, rather than on migrants' legal-administrative status.

**ii. To what extent should migrant integration be mandatory?**

Some governments operate with mandatory integration schemes for migrants. For the Red Cross, it is important to ensure that migrant participation in all our integration activities are based on a genuine interest in what we do and a personal wish to participate. Nobody should therefore feel obliged to participate in Red Cross integration activities. In cases where migrants are remunerated or rewarded by other actors (such as local municipalities) for participation in Red Cross integration programmes, it is important that the National Society carefully considers any responsibility relating to such schemes (such as monitoring individual attendance etc.) and fully respects basic rights and confidentiality. In particular, information should only be shared with the authorities if prior permission has been granted by the migrant.

**Example:** A local branch of the Norwegian Red Cross offers informal language training for newly arrived refugees and other migrants in the community. The refugees are also involved in a mandatory state-run integration programme. For the Red Cross, the language training is a supplement to the services (Norwegian language classes, job-training etc.) provided by the state. The branch office, however, has a partnership agreement with the local authorities and also receives funding for the language training groups. As a result, the local authorities ask the Red Cross to register attendance of participants and send this information to the municipal caseworker.

As such, Red Cross activity becomes an integral part of the mandatory governmental programme and participants are remunerated by the government for attending regularly. It is important that participants in language training groups understand that participation in Red Cross activity is voluntary and that the Red Cross will never oblige a person to participate in our schemes. Furthermore, the Red Cross does not take any responsibility for providing authorities with attendance sheets. If participants want attendance to be registered, the Red Cross can confirm this on a separate sheet which the participant him/herself hands over to the municipality. This practice is important, as it draws a clear distinction between Red Cross activity and state-run schemes.

**iii. How can the host society become more inclusive?**

Integration is a two-way process, engaging both migrants and the host society. National Societies should explore how, in addition to supporting migrants, they can help the host society to become inclusive, respecting diverse and flexible identities, and granting equal opportunities to migrants. Changing societal attitudes may be a longer-term and more complex process than the provision of immediate support to migrants, but xenophobia or intolerance towards migrants may cause severe problems for migrants and

**Example:** In The Netherlands, the 1001 Strengths programme actively involves migrant women and pairs them with local elderly individuals to encourage social interaction that promotes intercultural dialogue and social inclusion. Meetings and activities are organised to inform the women about what the Red Cross can do both for themselves and for others around them, and even more about what they could do as Red Cross volunteers. Over 1,500 women have been reached and more than 600 women encouraged to become actively involved in volunteer work.

should, therefore, be considered as important as the provision of direct support to migrants.

**iv. Should National Societies collaborate with government?**

It is clear that Government agencies cannot and should not bear the sole responsibility for integration of migrants. Integration is the responsibility of both migrants and society as a whole. National Societies have a role as an auxiliary to the authorities, and can play an important part in providing services as support, especially at times and places where the authorities are not present. In some cases National Societies may take a role as service providers, contracted by national or local authorities to provide services on their behalf. In acting as service providers, National Societies will have to exercise caution that they do not undertake activities which might impinge on the fundamental principles of the Red Cross.

**Example:** In Iceland, “Helping migrants to find work: the One-stop shop project.” Two IRC branches have signed an agreement with their local municipalities to provide counselling regarding work, residence permits, social assistance, tax information, access to all relevant and necessary information for migrants.

**v. Different migrants – different needs?**

Migrants’ integration “needs” may vary greatly, largely due to personal circumstances, but also due to factors such as their legal status in the country and their migration history. When considering what integration programmes to implement, it is important to assess critically the actual needs amongst different migrants in the national and local context. This can be done by looking closely at existing services provided by the government and other organizations. It is important not to make quick assumptions as to which groups have the greatest need. Refugees are often vulnerable as they may have experienced greater loss and trauma than other migrant groups. However, this is also a group which often receives “integration support” in many countries. Consequently, the need for supplementary Red Cross integration schemes aimed at economic migrants or family migrants may in fact be greater than programmes aimed exclusively at refugees. Integration programmes initiated by the Red Cross should aim to supplement existing services as well as “fill the gaps” and reach out to groups and individuals who have unmet needs. Although the focus should be on needs and vulnerabilities rather than legal-administrative status, one must acknowledge that the legal-administrative status often determines what official schemes and services are available to the individual migrant.

**vi. How can Red Cross Societies be an arena for integration?**

Migrants not only have a right to be support, but they equally have a right to provide assistance. National Societies should seek to integrate migrants within the organisation by ensuring an appropriate diversity of both staff and volunteers. This might include a programme of awareness-raising within National Societies to foster a welcoming culture to migrants both as staff and volunteers.



## Integration projects for migrants

This section provides examples of integration projects for migrants, while the following section deals with projects aimed at the host society. It should be emphasised, however, that most programmes break down barriers and provide benefits for both migrants and host communities.

The following examples of National Society integration practices are a selection from the Red Cross EU office's mapping exercise cross-referenced with country reports.<sup>4</sup>

### i. HOUSING

Finding appropriate housing may be one of the greatest challenges facing migrants and will be an immediate and urgent need for many newly-arrived migrants.

#### **Austria**

The '*Integration flats for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status*' project. The ARC runs the 'Integration flats for refugees (including vulnerable migrants) and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status'. Beneficiaries are either isolated vulnerable women with children or vulnerable families. It is difficult to access affordable flats on the real estate market for these target groups, especially large families. The ARS rents flats and acts as guarantee for owners, beneficiaries gain also support from staff and volunteers on the issues of housing. After a maximum support period of three years, beneficiaries are expected to find a flat on their own (either in the communal or private housing sector). That's why the project aims to empower refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection to manage their own housing situation so that they can become self-sufficient.

### ii. LANGUAGE TRAINING

The majority of migrants require training in the language of their host country. Language training activities provided by the Red Cross can be a valuable supplement to more formalized programmes. For particularly vulnerable groups, such as illiterate migrants or migrants with little or no formal education, such informal and supportive language-learning environments can be particularly important.

#### **Austria**

##### **The 'Learning Houses' project**

The ARC started in 2010 the 'Learning Houses' (Aktion Lernhäuser) project targeting 30 to 35 children aged between 6 and 15 years, with and without migratory background, from diverse countries of origin, from asylum seeking families or from families with stable residence permits.

Many children, especially with migratory background, face challenges with the German language; the consequence is poor school achievements. The Aktion Lernhäuser aims to give cost-free studying and homework assistance for children with need for assistance in German language and other subjects. Through relevant and intensive support in learning and with

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<sup>4</sup> For further information about any of the examples given in this Advisory Note please contact the IFRC offices.



some organised leisure activities, this project seeks to foster integration with a better education leading to better working opportunities.

There is ongoing media coverage of the project through cooperation with a national newspaper.

### **Norway**

The Norwegian Red Cross organizes language training groups across the country with almost 2000 participants. Volunteers organize sub-groups according to participants' skill level. The focus is on improving participant's spoken language skills – something which many migrants feel is lacking in the more formalized language programmes. Together, volunteers and participants explore the language by activities such as reading the newspaper, listening to a short radio programme, making short presentations or just discussing different topics. In some cases, participants can also bring "homework" and get help with grammar issues or writing. The activity has proven very popular and engaging for participants and volunteers' alike.

### **iii. EDUCATION**

Education provides the essential basic building block for the integration of migrants, and particularly for children. This is, naturally, primarily the responsibility of the State through its national education system, but National Societies could play a valuable role in developing innovative, non-traditional education targeted specifically at migrants.

### **Austria**

The New View (LLP Grundtvig) project on developing new teaching methods

The ARC Research Institute has conducted the 'New View' project funded by a European programme (DG Education and Culture). The 'New View' project is addressed to teachers and trainers providing health and social vocational trainings to adults, most of whom are migrants. Participants differ in gender, age and situations and educational background and also in cultural socialisation and language knowledge. Teachers are often over-challenged with these differential situations. This target group raises appropriate teaching and evaluation methods.

Teachers worked together with experts on finding new teaching methods and ways to solve particular problems that arise during the course. The new methods have to be tested in classes, documented and then redefined with experts. Managers of education centres have to keep them informed about the progress since it will take long institutional changes. A Toolkit 'Diversity and Didactics' has been set up which provides useful methods and materials for teaching to mixed groups. It should be broadly disseminated through the country and will be available in English, German, Danish and Hungarian.

### **Belgium**

#### ***Supporting integration of asylum seekers' children***

Since 2007, the BRC (French Community) is running an awareness project (funded by the European Refugee Fund) aiming at identifying the root causes of problems faced by asylum seekers' children in schools. The BRC wanted to foster the involvement of volunteers through their support to children accommodated in reception centres. The BRC has drafted a

booklet to explain how the educational system is working in Belgium in order to involve the asylum seeker in the scholarship of their children and enable them to deal with the teachers and the schools authorities. This booklet has been translated in seven languages (English, French, Arabic, Russian, Serbian-Croatian, Farsi and Albanese). The BRC trains social workers in reception centres to assist Roma parents with adequate support in order to facilitate access to education.

### **Sweden**

#### ***Homework support for all***

In over 250 branches, the Swedish Red Cross offers homework support to migrants, irrespective of their legal status, and to Swedes alike. This activity is run by volunteers who are often retired teachers. The assistance provided covers all levels of education, including university or adult migrants studying Swedish in language schools, depending on the knowledge and capacities of the volunteers.

## **iv. EMPLOYMENT**

For most migrants, obtaining employment is a high priority in order to provide for themselves and their families. While access to social welfare and housing will ensure that migrants are not destitute, National Societies can help to equip migrants with the knowledge to access training and employment opportunities.

### **Denmark**

The DRC has developed a media-training module for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the framework of the Want 2 Work programme (funded under EQUAL). This training programme allows asylum seekers and refugees to acquire a background in journalism and in drafting articles for the 'New Times newspaper'. Asylum seekers also acquire training in workshop animation so that they can take part in a third RC programme called 'Positive images'.

#### ***The 'Want2work' programme***

##### ***Voluntary work placement for Asylum Seekers in Danish Companies***

The 'Want2work' project in partnership with the Confederation of Danish Industries, the Danish Food and Allied Workers Union, the Association for Integration of New Danes in the Labour Market and the DRC Asylum Department and is about voluntary work placements of asylum seekers in Danish companies. The DRC plays the role of mediator between the company and the asylum seeker. The company offers an information package on asylum seekers living conditions and situation in Denmark. Once the company is interested by an internship, an interview is scheduled with the asylum seeker and the DRC.

The DRC organizes also workshops on general orientation about asylum seekers, refugees and the Danish asylum system, an introduction to asylum seekers backgrounds, as well as a presentation of the life in the Danish asylum centres. The presentation can be adapted to topics of special concern for the employees and the company. The mentors can be invited, free of charge, to participate in a one-day course in intercultural communication and

mentoring. The aim is to give employers and managers tools for handling integration issues on the labour market. The course deals with the most typical questions, problems and prejudices that work places experience. When the internship is finished, the DRC contact person evaluates the process. Conditions for offering new internships are discussed.

***The Want 2 work Learning under extreme conditions workshop***

The workshop arranged by 'Want2work' and the DRC Asylum Department was attended by teachers, consultants, psychiatrists from the DRC, teachers and consultants from municipal language schools for refugees and migrants. The 'Want2work' programme has gained a lot of experience in developing and holding vocational courses adjusted to the labour market. One major lesson learnt was how to motivate and retain participants, since a long waiting time in reception centres entails a lack of motivation for vocational training. In addition, some participants experienced, to varying degrees, traumatic situations. Therefore, taking into account these realities, the 'Want2work' team set up a workshop whose aim was to discuss the learning processes for people living in extreme and stressful conditions, focusing in particular on the psychosocial situation of asylum seekers.

***The SoSu Want2work project***

In September 2002, the DRC Culture House set up a pilot 'Want2work' project for women asylum seekers. The SoSu (Social- og sundheds) (Care workers) project stimulated the development of innovative teaching methods and made significant contributions to the mainstreaming of gender equality within the organisation. The pilot SoSu model has been used as a basis for two other courses thus demonstrated that it can be a useful tool for people developing 'Want2work' projects for both women and men asylum seekers in the field of vocational trainings as well. The aim was to provide a "hands- on" guide for people wishing to develop other 'Want2work courses'.

**Germany**

***Facilitating entry into the labour market, the 'Passage' project,***

The Bremen branches of the GRC run the 'Passage project' which tries to counterbalance the labour market disadvantages and the societal exclusion of young migrants. The project aims at a sustained increase in the number of migrant young people in vocational training and in gainful employment. The project follows on the experiences gained in the adaptation of tested methods of vocational orientation, with emphasis on the particular needs of migrants. It includes: techniques of interdisciplinary diagnostic, intensive case management, supplemental trainings and accompanied in-company internships. These methods are supplemented by other accepted methods applied in 'help for young people' and integral preventative activities.

**Spain**

The SRC with six entities (NGO Accem, the Spanish Commission to Help Refugees-CEAR-, 4 reception centres based in Valencia, Sevilla, and Madrid) are gathered around the Ariadna Community initiative/Network present in different regional offices. This network provides asylum seekers access to training, generates employment opportunities, advices on the recognition of qualifications and diplomas, and promotes the social visibility of this group.

The aim is to elude labour market discrimination. A first objective is to inform the beneficiaries about the socio-economic situation. Then the network provides them with the necessary tools for their social and cultural development and enables them to place themselves in a favourable position in the labour market.

Workshops are organized to develop social and labour skills, provide job placement and help self-employment initiatives. Awareness campaigns directed to companies and public are running to enhance access to employment.

Aside from these actions, a specific website provides information on paperwork, job searching and hiring process to general public.

### **Sweden**

#### ***Supporting migrants in job placement: the 'Professional friend' project (Yrkeskompis)***

The SRC runs the 'professional friends' project, targeting all newly arrived migrants with permanent permission to stay. An estimate of 2/3 of job opportunities is conveyed through personal and professional networks and not through public employment services. This project aims to provide each migrant with a Swedish RC volunteer mentor with the same professional background to give access to the mentor's networks, facilitate access to the job market and develop migrant's social and professional networks. The support provided by SRC staff and volunteers lasts for a six months period. The SRC runs 33 similar activities in the country as ordinary activities.

#### ***The 'Mentoring Focused on Profession' project***

The SRC runs the 'Mentoring Focused on Profession' project targeting migrants who have a permission to stay for maximum 5 years and who have refugee's status and others with protection needs and their families. The SRC recruits mentors and migrants job seekers through advertisement, oral spreading, internet, posters etc. All participants are interviewed following a template and then matched from a professional point of view. The SRC supplies trainings for the mentors. Researchers are involved in the evaluation process and the SRC has gained extensive experience on this programme and is willing to share it. The project aims to a mutual exchange between individuals where the adept receives increased possibilities to establishment and participation in the society and the mentor gets new perspectives and knowledge of the world. The SRC has creating a specific website, an internal forum and a facebook page.

### **Switzerland**

#### ***The "Swiss primitives" project and 'the Big hunger restaurant'***

In one canton, the SRC is running "the Big hunger restaurant". This project targets migrants who have been granted a form of temporary protection and a status (such as subsidiary or humanitarian protection status). The project is nevertheless open to refugees (but refugees prefer to work directly as it pays better). The SRC has noticed that beneficiaries of a 'weak' legal status (valid for a year and need to be renewed) encounter difficulties in finding jobs or getting access to proper training on the labour market or in the official training services.

It is a cook, together with trainers (who is formerly experienced running social restaurants) has settled and run the project. RC volunteer asylum seekers first helped in restoring the restaurant, acquiring useful repairing skills. Since January 2011, the restaurant allows six migrants with a 'rather short- termed legal status' to acquire a one-year professional training in catering (learning cooking skills, hygiene norms and process) and to be paid. This project is co- funded by the SRC and by integration services. The government services would like to extend to other migrant job- seekers the possibility to obtain trainings in this restaurant. This could be a way of ensuring financial sustainability through reinforced public funding. The 'Big Hunger' restaurant is running in a rural town in Switzerland and is now quite successful. Besides, the restaurant has found its clients and a marketing company helped the SRC in its marketing strategy.

#### **V. RECEPTION/ASYLUM CENTRES**

Refugees and asylum seekers in reception and asylum centres are faced with very distinct problems, such as isolation and uncertainty. If they have not yet been approved to remain in the host country it might be argued that it is inappropriate to attempt to support their integration. However, it might equally be suggested that it is better to begin the integration process as early as possible so that those who are approved can be better prepared for the process of integration as rapidly as possible through the acquisition of life skills.

##### **Finland**

###### ***Integrating reception centres in rural settings***

The FRC Häme district/Ruovesi Reception Center for asylum seekers runs the 'YES' project (funded under European Refugee Fund). The 'YES' project targets asylum seekers waiting for a decision in reception centres and migrants with residence permit living in reception centres and waiting for a residence in a municipality. Specific vulnerable cases are also taken into account.

The reception centre is located in a rural district in a small community with long distances and poor opportunities for migrants. Generally, municipalities are reluctant to receive refugees and asylum seekers who have been granted residence permit. Moreover, negative atmosphere, restricted political views and racist acts have increased in the society. The project aims thus to develop a 4-step programme for better integration, by increasing employment, intensifying settlement in rural areas and creating a model which could be used in other similar reception centres. The project aims also to prevent marginalization, improve cultural exchange and interaction by using the individual's own resources to facilitate active citizenship at an early stage. Trainings and other activities are organized to empower migrants to take an active role in their lives and encourage them to learn language and other skills.

##### **Norway**

###### ***The Activities in Asylum Centres activities***

The NRC activities in asylum centres are ongoing since the mid-1990s. There has been an increased activity since 2008 when there was a steep increase in asylum arrivals. The NRC targets asylum seekers in reception centres across the country. At the moment, the NRC is running those activities in cooperation with 64 asylum centres throughout the country. The

project aims to activate asylum seekers to build closer ties between them and the local communities. National guidelines for these activities have been developed and seem to be very useful tools for RC local branches. In a near future, the NRC hopes to develop a similar initiative with unaccompanied minors. This support to integration aims to contribute to the general well-being of asylum seekers and to foster closer contact with their neighbourhood.

**vi. REUNIFIED FAMILIES**

Family reunification, while it can bring great joy, can also cause some difficulties particularly when family members have been separated for some time. The family member who has lived in the host country for some time may be required to provide funding for the travel costs for his/her family members, as well as housing. There may also be pressures to organise schooling and to arrange social welfare for his/her family. National Societies could develop programmes which would provide real support for this complex process.

**Austria**

***The 'Start-up aid for the integration of re-unified families entitled to asylum – Family Meeting' project***

The ARC runs this project targeting approximately 50 re-unified families (about 200 persons) entitled to asylum under the Austrian Asylum Act. There is no such integration project in Austria that takes into account the special needs of this target group and which provides services.

When families have been separated for many years, they need to become familiar with each other again. The family member who already lives in Austria is very often overstrained by many things to organize such as looking for a flat, a Kindergarten and/or school, language courses and a job. The ARC integration counsellor offers professional aid and supports in a very flexible and individual way family members. He/she acts as an entry point into the Austrian society.

**vii. SUPPORT TO MIGRANT WOMEN**

Many countries offer a considerable range of services to the (potential) wage-earner, but less support to partners (usually wives) with young children, who might become isolated at home, lacking the linguistic skills and knowledge of the country to integrate within their community. National Societies could make a real contribution to the welfare of migrant women by developing programmes specifically to meet their needs.

**Norway**

***Stella Women's Café***

The focus of the "Stella" project is to create an inclusive arena for all women, including in particular minority ethnic women, to facilitate increased participation and inclusion into Norwegian society and the labour market. Stella offers one-to-one counseling, courses and workshops as well as an internet café. Volunteers primarily conduct the activities, and the centre is run in a way conducive to this. The participants take part in deciding the content and running of programs. They also have the opportunity to participate directly in the centre, by volunteering. In this way Stella use volunteering as a tool to promote participation,

capacity building and extend participants' networks. Stella is open 5 days a week, with activities and courses in both daytime and in the evenings. In the daytime, Stella consists of an information and counseling unit, as well as a café, an internet café and a daily schedule of courses and activities. In the evenings, Stella offers workshops, physical exercise and theme-based presentations.

#### **Iceland**

##### ***The International friends- Women project-Children project***

The IRC branch of Reykjavik branch runs the International friends – Women project. – The concept is to bring together an Icelandic woman and migrant woman to form a pair. This pair establishes a relationship based on equality, meets one to two times a month and keeps the relationship going for 6-9 months. The aim is to foster integration with an individual support which opens the doors more easily. This assistance breaks down social isolation and gives support in her daily life. This project gives the opportunity to the volunteer to gain new knowledge from foreign culture that brings new perspective in Icelandic community. This project is thus built on a two way process.

A similar project has been developed for children with a foreign background (not only refugees).

#### **viii. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PROJECTS**

Some projects are multi-dimensional, and cannot therefore be categorised under the previous classifications.

#### **Norway**

##### ***Participating in the integration process of newly arrived refugees and combating negative attitudes towards migrants.***

The NRC in collaboration with municipalities runs the 'Refugee Guide' project. The NRC targets newly settled refugees in Norway (in some cases also other migrants who are in need of a social network). Many newly settled refugees feel lonely and isolated when arriving in Norway. Furthermore, refugees need information about Norwegian society and various public services that are available to them. By pairing refugees up with resourceful volunteer's individuals the RC, it further enhances their integration process. In some locations the 'Refugee Guide' is an integral part of the introduction programme offered to all new refugees by the authorities. The expectations are to make it easier for refugees and migrants to adjust their lives in Norway by decreasing participants' sense of loneliness and isolation in the first phase on their stay, to give a broader access to new social networks and to combat negative attitudes towards migrants in general.

#### **Southern Africa**

##### ***The Ubuntu initiative***

Ubuntu is a multidimensional concept which represents the core values of African culture: respect for all human beings, for human dignity and for human life, collectivity and sharing, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, and interdependence. The Red Cross' Ubuntu Initiative for southern Africa is a five-year flagship programme which aims to address the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants and work with migrants and host communities towards respect

for diversity and social inclusion. The initiative is being carried out by National Societies in Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe as well as the regional offices of the IFRC and the ICRC.

## **Integration projects aimed at the host society**

Integration is a two-way process - for the host society, integration means opening up institutions, being an inclusive society, respecting diverse and flexible identities, and granting equal opportunities to migrants. The following are examples of projects which raise awareness of the needs of migrants among host nation citizens, promote tolerance and respect for diversity, reduce xenophobia and promote positive images of migrants.

### **Australia**

#### ***Harmony Awards***

Harmony Day is celebrated around Australia on 21 March each year. It celebrates the cultural diversity of a country where nearly a quarter of the current population was born overseas and more than two million Australians speak a language other than English at home. Harmony Day was founded in 1999 and since then organisations, including the Australian Red Cross, have staged more than 25,000 events in support of the day. The Australian Red Cross plays an active role in marking the occasion by hosting the Red Cross Harmony Awards, a competition which encourages schools, youth organisations and community groups to enter projects with the aim of promoting tolerance and the message that everyone belongs. Entries have included community gardens, indigenous literary projects, road side clean ups and refugee week projects.

### **Belgium**

#### **The awareness project to foster integration and challenging prejudices: two comic books ‘Chemins d’exil’ and ‘Hors Jeu’ and animated film ‘Chico’**

The BRC (French Community) has developed two comic books and an animated film to promote integration of asylum seekers and migrants in their schools and in host society. The tools depict different situations faced by asylum seekers and the migratory trail. The comic books project and the animated film both aim to provoke debates in schools and bring other realities. The pedagogical tools have been disseminated since 2005 in the neighbourhoods of the reception centres. Specific trainings have been set up for students and teachers.

#### ***Awareness tools to inform and educate young people about the reality of the asylum procedure and life in reception centres.***

The BRC (Flemish Community) produced a set of educational posters to inform and sensitize young people about the asylum procedure in Belgium. These tools were used to raise awareness and were often combined with other awareness activities. The posters were used as a role-play activity during some visits in reception centres. The visitors were themselves in the role of asylum seekers who had to go through the asylum procedure.

The posters and a board game depicted the distribution of refugees in several parts of the world. In addition to these tools, the BRC also produced a short documentary film showing daily life in an asylum reception centre in Belgium. The aim was to inform and educate young people about the lives of asylum seekers in reception centres, including the long waiting for a decision on their asylum applications.

### **Denmark**

#### ***The New Times project***



The DRC runs the 'New Times' Project. Fifteen years ago, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants started to publish, on a regular basis, a leaflet with articles written by asylum seekers and refugees themselves. The DRC developed this leaflet into a small newspaper and published it on a regular basis (governmental funding). The DRC delivers the newspaper in its reception centres, in cafés, schools, to ministries and journalists who sometimes include these articles into the 'mainstream' Medias. The newspaper provides information on asylum seekers, asylum procedure, the migration trails and journeys and information on the Danish society provided by asylum seekers and refugees. The newspaper is therefore a genuine bi-directional integration tool for migrants and the citizens working as an empowerment and awareness-raising tool.

### **Ecuador**

#### ***Campaign "Act! Reject discrimination and celebrate diversity"***

The Ecuadorian Red Cross organized a campaign called "Act! Reject discrimination and celebrate diversity" in the provinces of Loja, Calvas, Catamayo and Paltas. Under the slogan "Diversity is out best option" the Ecuadorian Red Cross initiated this campaign to promote a culture of non-violence and respect for diversity. It is worth noting that migrant Red Cross volunteers from many different nationalities were proactively involved in this initiative.

### **Finland**

#### ***Enhancing the integration of resettled refugees***

Due to the tough political and public climate towards multicultural and refugees issues, the FRC decided to run for three years the 'SPIRIT' project in order to enhance the integration of resettled refugees in Finland. The project aims to raise awareness on community level on the reception of asylum seekers, refugees and resettled refugees. The idea behind it is to influence the openness of municipalities to the reception of refugees. Some of the objectives are to change negative attitudes towards refugees, to dispel fears of diversity and to increase tolerance and respect. The authorities together with the FRC organize trainings for both decision-makers and local authorities in that regard. Some workshops are also organized in schools and in RC local branches to increase volunteers' knowledge and willingness to be part of the refugee resettlement programme. The final result is to increase cooperation between local NGOs and authorities and to clarify their respective mandates.

### **Finland**

#### ***Volunteers in refugee resettlement - Branch Pilot 2011***

During 2011, the FRC ran a pilot project in three different FRC districts aimed at training volunteers to contribute to the integration of resettled refugees. As said above many municipalities are reluctant to resettle refugees. One of the reasons mentioned is insufficient financial resources, resulting in the lack of adequate service provision.

The project aims to assist municipalities through RC voluntary work in the resettlement and integration of refugees into municipalities. It also aims to increase awareness on refugee issues at local and political levels. Refugees, already integrated in Finland, are encouraged to participate in volunteering. Newly resettled refugees get peer support from refugees who have lived longer in the country and who may introduce them to Finnish culture and customs. Attitudes and the perception about refugees may change as the local population is provided with correct information about refugee issues, and is actively engaged in RC activities together with refugees. The branches of FRC districts of South-East Finland, Savo-Carelia and the Swedish speaking district of Ostrobothnia participated in the Pilot.

## **Finland**

### **VAPAA-project 2013**

To build on the experiences of the above mentioned PILOT-project 2013 the FRC launched an ERF funded project called VAPAA, The main objective of the project is to support the resettled refugees' integration through volunteering. The project's working methods include organizing activities which help the refugees expand their social networks and increase their feeling of belonging. Another objective is to increase the volunteers' awareness and know-how and to strengthen cooperation with authorities and other NGOs. The project is implemented in 10 resettling municipalities.

The most important value and goal of supporting the newcomers' integration is to increase their feeling of acceptance as equal members of the community, and to help create a feeling of belonging. Through its activities, the Finnish Red Cross gives everyone the opportunity to fulfill their potential and to be of support and help to others. This, in turn, provides building blocks for a new identity. The refugees have passed two levels of first aid courses and are integrated in the Red Cross branch's first aid group together with other local residents. The local Red Cross branch practices first aid skills with the group regularly to maintain the ability to provide assistance to the authorities and professionals in searching for missing persons, evacuating people or any other scenarios requiring first aid skills. In addition, many young refugees have taken the Finnish Red Cross basic course to form part of the Red Cross friendship service, and they now take the residents of the local nursing home out on walks. Volunteer activities are also a big boost for career plans, as many of the young people involved are now dreaming of one day working in the field of nursing.

## **Germany**

The GRC is currently working on a framework to combat racism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism. The GRC conducts mainly seminars and workshops for member organisations on 'how to deal with racism, xenophobia and right-wing-extremism' within the organisation and in youth work. There are some initiatives in the field of youth work to counter the stigmatization of migrants and to prevent racism. The GRC is actively engaged in networks against racism, xenophobia and right-wing-extremism as well as in fora to support integration and to prevent any forms of stigmatization against migrants. The GRC is planning to integrate antidiscrimination issues in the migration counselling services.

The GRC supports the general orientation of a diverse society. This awareness-raising procedure in Germany is also known as "intercultural or cross-cultural opening" (Interkulturelle Öffnung). In this context, the GRC is currently dealing with some projects to improve social skills of the workforce training of the employees, to improve the structures of the organisation and to design the services in a way to become attractive and fitting for all target-groups of the National Society. The projects comprise:

- mingling the curricula of all GRC courses with intercultural issues to reduce discrimination issues
- vocational training aiming at improving the managing competence of diversity
- baseline study/survey of the status of intercultural opening in the National Society
- enlarging cross-cultural engagement in voluntary work.

## **Greece**

### ***Organising cultural and recreational activities and promoting diversity in RC multifunctional centre***

The HRC runs the Multifunctional centre and provides cultural and recreational activities targeting asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and the host society. Cultural events, discussions, art exhibitions (showing migrants' works or photos) and concerts are organized to promote diversity and

integration of migrants. In 2009, the HRC managed to record a CD and gathered African and Syrian asylum seekers musicians. These activities are an opportunity for migrants to meet Greek citizens and give another image of asylum seekers through art.

The HRC does organize also leisure activities such as chess, table tennis and free sportive activities. The attendance to sport activities is free of charge, thanks to the collaboration of the local authority.

### **Spain**

#### ***Promoting diversity among young people***

Since 2002, the SRC Youth is implementing the programme “Diversity, our best option” with the main objective to promote the positive aspect of diversity among young people and contribute to building an intercultural society which live in peaceful coexistence with the community. The programme focuses on disseminating values to foster this process. SRC Employees and volunteers are trained to become “intercultural agents” in order to influence positively their own environment, strengthen and multiply the RC action. The SRC Youth has developed activities and material for different ages, with a focus on training people throughout Spain in charge of the education. Educational materials and tools are developed in that regard. The SRC Youth is working on an interactive game for adolescents that will address the prejudices and stereotypes towards migrants.

### **Sweden**

#### ***På Flykt – a forced migration simulation game***

Swedish Red Cross Youth arrange workshops with a forced migration simulation game for school children and others. The game is designed to counter xenophobia by increasing understanding of what it means to be displaced from your homeland. The game is also meant as a starting point for further work on issues related to the topic.

### **United Kingdom**

#### ***Children sensitization campaigns: ‘Look beyond the label’***

Across the UK, volunteers and staff regularly promote positive messages about refugees by visiting school, Scouts and Guide meetings. In 2009, during Refugee Week, three RC staff members and six volunteers (one of whom is also a refugee) presented the BRC ‘anti-discrimination Look beyond the label message’ to 650 young people throughout Manchester and Merseyside. These sessions tackled weighty issues but package them in a fun and exciting learning experience. After watching a moving online video featuring three refugees’ stories, the students were thrown into a quiz. The session, rather than ‘telling’ pupils the facts, encouraged them to work through a series of complex issues independently and came to their own conclusions – with a little guidance where necessary.

### **Multinational**

#### ***Positive Images Campaign***

The Positive Images project aims to promote positive attitudes towards vulnerable migrants, and raise awareness on humanitarian issues relating to migration amongst young people. Established by the British Red Cross in 2009 with the aim of reaching 3 million school children in three years, the project has since been successfully piloted by EU Red Cross National Societies in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Malta, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden.

Positive Images employs a diverse range of methods for engaging young people spanning youth-led activities such as peer education and youth action, empathy-building activities such as role playing and creative activities through the creation of newspapers, quizzes, cartoons, educational resources, street interviews and exhibitions.

One key strength of the project is that at least half of the Positive Images volunteer teams are from migrant backgrounds. As a result, Positive Images enables young people to learn directly from migrants' own experiences, whilst offering volunteers the chance to build their confidence, communication and youth work skills. As one volunteer reflected; "We're out there, teaching young people about migration, changing perceptions. It's very motivating." Positive Images has enabled the Red Cross to reach out to thousands of young people across the EU. At an event run by the Hellenic Red Cross in Athens, young people wrote over 3,000 welcome messages to migrants and a hotline for young people in Austria, which enabled young migrants to act as advisors, received over 9,000 calls in 2009. Feedback from participants also suggests that Positive Images is helping to change perceptions.

### Further sources of information

- IFRC Migration website: [www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/migration/](http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/migration/)
- European website on integration: [www.integration.eu](http://www.integration.eu)
- European Commission Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners: [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID\\_ITEMS=12892](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID_ITEMS=12892)
- European Commission integration practices: <http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/practice/index.cfm>
- The EU Red Cross Integration mapping exercise: <http://www.redcross.eu/en/National-and-EU-activities/Asylum-Migration/Areas-of-work/Integration/>

## APPENDIX

## Commentary on the IFRC's 10 Migration Principles (shown in italics) as they relate to integration

The IFRC's 10 migration principles provide the underpinning for the activities of the Movement in relation to migration. The following commentary analyses the relevance of each principle to integration.

### 1. Focus on the Needs and Vulnerabilities of Migrants

*"The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement strives to adopt an integrated and impartial approach, combining immediate action for migrants in urgent need with longer-term assistance and empowerment. It is therefore important that National Societies be permitted to work with and for all migrants, without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status."*

It is inevitable that legal status will impose practical limitations on the integration services that National Societies can provide. For example, although employment is generally agreed to be an essential part of integration, irregular migrants and asylum seekers are usually not allowed to work, so it would not be practicable to provide employment advice services. It's debatable whether or not it is appropriate to provide integration services to those migrants where official government policy is to enforce removal (e.g. irregular migrants, refused asylum seekers) – which introduces some tension with the principle of working with all migrants regardless of their status.

### 2. Include Migrants in Humanitarian Programming

*"National Societies can opt for different approaches in assisting and protecting migrants. Some focus on migrants through special, targeted programmes or projects; others include migrants in their general humanitarian action, addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of the population in its diversity. Both approaches require sustained efforts by National Societies to guarantee impartiality and non-discrimination, taking into account the humanitarian needs of the host population."*

It is essential that all National Societies remember this principle when delivering humanitarian action. Effective integration of migrants is not just about providing services to assist with integration, but also ensuring that the Red Cross's services are available to all – migrants and non-migrants alike and irrespective of legal status.

### 3. Support the Aspirations of Migrants

*"Migrants have a legitimate claim to hope and opportunities to achieve their potential. They are also an important social, economic and cultural factor. Their skills, experience, and resilience can be a valuable contribution to their host communities. National Societies will consider migrants' own needs and interests, and support their social inclusion, integration, and their aspirations."*

This principle is the most closely aligned to the provision of integration services, and is the only one to mention integration explicitly; it follows that National Societies providing integration services should place this principle at the centre of their integration work.

### 4. Recognize the Rights of Migrants

*"National Societies provide assistance and protection to migrants, irrespective of their legal status. Yet, the degree to which migrants are able to enjoy their rights is an important factor in assessing their vulnerability. By working with migrants to ensure that their rights are respected – including the right to the determination of their legal status – National Societies will also promote their social inclusion and their aspirations."*

Supporting social inclusion, and the aspirations of migrants chimes with principle 3 (above). However, this principle shares some of the dilemmas of the first principle – in so far as there are very significant legal differences and entitlements between migrants arising from their status. Integration services such as help seeking employment will be impossible to provide to those who have been prohibited from working; similarly it will be difficult to support integration in cases where government policy is to enforce removal.

### **5. Link Assistance, Protection and Humanitarian Advocacy for Migrants**

*“Assistance to migrants goes hand in hand with efforts to protect them against abuse, exploitation, and the denial of rights. In making these efforts National Societies will respect the migrants’ own interest, and the imperative of doing them no harm. To enable migrants to overcome abuses and pressures, National Societies can provide legal advice, refer them to other relevant and competent organisations or entities, or undertake discreet or public forms of humanitarian advocacy.”*

This principle works very well with the provision of integration services – particularly work that tackles negative images, discrimination and prejudice. Furthermore, effective integration services should protect recently arrived migrants from abuse and exploitation by empowering and enabling them – helping them to overcome linguistic, bureaucratic and administrative barriers, which may make it harder for them to access essential services and employment.

### **6. Build Partnerships for Migrants**

*“The humanitarian challenges of migration reach across borders, regions, and cultures. There is a Movement-wide responsibility for capacity-building, mutual support and coordination. Regional cooperation among National Societies is equally essential. In working with external partners on migration, a common and principled approach of the Movement is indispensable.”*

Approaches to, and definitions of integration vary greatly between nations and organizations. PERCO, and the integration working group itself are clear examples of mutual support and co-ordination. There is also a very specific need for cross-border co-operation on the European level, where different national societies are facing similar challenges with respect to immigrant integration (e.g. hostile popular perceptions, and a negative media and policy environment).

### **7. Work Along the Migratory Trails**

*“The Movement is in a unique position to help bridge the gaps of assistance and protection for migrants. National Societies in countries along the migratory trails will work together to optimise their humanitarian action, including the restoration of family links. This requires a focus on situations and conditions in which migrants all along their journey are especially susceptible to risks. National Societies may sensitize potential migrants about risks of migration, but must not seek to encourage, prevent or dissuade migration.”*

Integration work along migratory trails may well be necessary where migrants are unable to reach their preferred destination countries. In such situations integration services will face additional challenges, as migrants may not be planning for a long-term future in the country of arrival. In such cases National Societies providing integration services may need to pay particular care not to be seen as dissuading migration, at the same time as encouraging migrants to think seriously about integration if their plans for onward migration are impracticable.

### **8. Assist Migrants in Return**

*“Return to the place of origin is not the necessary end or solution of migration. Migrants may prefer to stay*

*where they are, for an extended period or permanently. While providing counselling and informing migrants about their options, National Societies cannot and shall not decide what solution is the best, and must at all times maintain their impartiality, neutrality and independence. When migrants do return they face particular challenges; to assist and protect them, cooperation and agreement between National Societies in countries of destination and return is essential.”*

Providing advice on return may seem incompatible with integration, but it should be remembered that many migrants may need support with integrating in their country of origin, and National Societies might give some thought to the possibility of returning migrants who may need advice and assistance re-establishing themselves.

### **9. Respond to the Displacement of Populations**

*“Armed conflicts and violence, natural or man-made disasters, but also development or relocation schemes can force populations to leave their homes, leading to accelerated and collective, even massive movements. The displaced populations might seek assistance and protection within their own country, or might find refuge across international borders. Displacement of populations and migration of individuals and groups are distinct but often interrelated phenomena; where they are interrelated, National Societies will strive for a coordinated action that covers both, the displaced and the migrants.”*

In general, integration projects are most appropriate for displaced populations traveling across international borders – where there are significant linguistic, cultural and administrative difficulties that they will need advice and support in overcoming. However, this should not preclude the possibility that internally displaced populations may need support with integration into different parts of their own country – where they may encounter hostility from the existing population and/or difficulties accessing employment.

### **10. Alleviate Migratory Pressures on Communities of Origin**

*“Migratory pressures on communities of origin can be related to social and economic distress; they can be linked to environmental degradation as well as natural or man-made hazards; and they can be due to persecution, armed conflict, and violence. By supporting disaster preparedness and building resilience at community level, National Societies contribute to alleviating pressures that can induce people to migrate against their will and desire.”*

As with principle 7 above, this principle is not relevant to integration work as it pertains to tackling the need for migration, rather than providing support to migrants who have already fled and settled in a new country.