

"It is our humanitarian and social duty towards youth – to ignite in them candles of hope during this long night of war."

Amjad, the poet of Za'atari

A young Syrian refugee in the Za'atari camp (story page 20)

## Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

# IGNITING HOPE



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© IFRC Kiribati "When people lose everything, if they keep their hope and their dignity – that is what keeps them going."

Mr. Elhadj As Sy, Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

#### For and with young people

The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016. By September of the following year, the Compact celebrated the 50th signatory of a committed group that comprises international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), youth networks and the private sector, as well as United Nations bodies and governments themselves.

The enthusiasm with which the Compact has been embraced – and the number of partners who quickly committed to its principles – suggest it is the right idea for the right time.

If there is anything as powerful as an idea whose time has come, it is the collective energy and dynamism of the world's largest-ever generation of young people.

This youth "peak" is coming of age at a time of increasing – and increasingly destructive – natural and humanmade disasters. We cannot see the energy of young people wasted on living with and dealing with crisis. Young people need all our support and investment to realize their own enormous potential.

Since Istanbul, we have seen increasing traction for the view that the humanitarian system needs to work not only for, but closely

with young people. From Jordan to Nigeria, from Haiti to Nepal, and from Germany to Greece, humanitarian actors are encouraging and relying on young people. We see young people stepping up to amplify humanitarian effectiveness, to push for innovation, to understand and serve affected populations, and to rekindle hope in places where it has been overwhelmed.

This initial report, covering the work of the Compact in its first 18 months, presents just a sample of the ways in which young people are adapting to and learning from these early efforts, in engaging with each other and serving populations in need. It also documents some of the innovative programming that puts the rights and needs of young people front and centre stage. The report serves as testimony to the transformation that is taking place in the member organizations of the Compact. This transformation is an imperative for creating the space for meaningful engagement of young people, as well as the space for youth-driven programming.

This report is also a reminder that young people are not homogenous, and a one-size-fits-all humanitarian approach will not do. We need to pay attention not just to their physical essentials for survival, but to the specific developmental and social

needs of young people of different ages, sexes, ethnicities, passions and motivations.

Time and again, we have seen that if we can foster hope and dignity, people can get through situations of tremendous loss and deprivation, sometimes even emerging stronger.

Strategic and effective programming, informed by evidence and by the voice of youth, and driven by young people themselves, can help turn humanitarian situations into possibilities for transformation – of individuals, families and communities.

We cannot lose sight of the opportunities inherent in crises. The lives of millions of young people, and the future we all want, are at stake.

#### Danielle Engel,

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

#### **Marcel Stefanik**

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Coordinators of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

#### **A new Compact**

The World Humanitarian Summit, on 23-24 May 2016 in Istanbul, emphasized the urgent need to safeguard the rights of young people and engage them in humanitarian response efforts. A new Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action was launched, under the leadership of IFRC and UNFPA, as a concrete and deliberate step by the humanitarian community to work with and for young people.

More than 50 humanitarian partners (see complete list, page 68), including governments, UN entities, international and local NGOs, and major youth organizations and networks, have become members of the initiative. By becoming a member of the Compact, the organizations commit to, and are accountable for, transforming humanitarian action for and with young people, to prevent and end conflict, safeguard human rights and the rule of law, and invest in young people now and in the future, leaving no one behind.

This publication is just a sampling of the work being carried out in each of the five action areas.



**ACTION 1** 

#### **Services**

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Promote and increase age- and gender-responsive and inclusive programmes that contribute to the protection, health and development of young women, young men, girls and boys within humanitarian settings.

**ACTION 2** 

### **Participation**

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Support systematic inclusion of engagement and partnership with youth, in all phases of humanitarian action, through sharing of information and involvement in decision-making processes at all levels, including budget allocations.

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Recognize and strengthen young people's capacities and capabilities to be effective humanitarian actors in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and empower and support local youth-led initiatives and organizations in humanitarian response, such as those targeting affected youth, including young refugees and internally displaced persons living in informal urban settlements and slums.

# Data

Ensure the generation and use of age- and sex-disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings.



#### **ACTION 4**

#### Resources

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Increase resources intended to address the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth affected by humanitarian crises, including disasters, conflict and displacement, and identify ways to more accurately track and report on the resources allocated to young people in humanitarian contexts.

**Moving** forward

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**Annex** 

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