

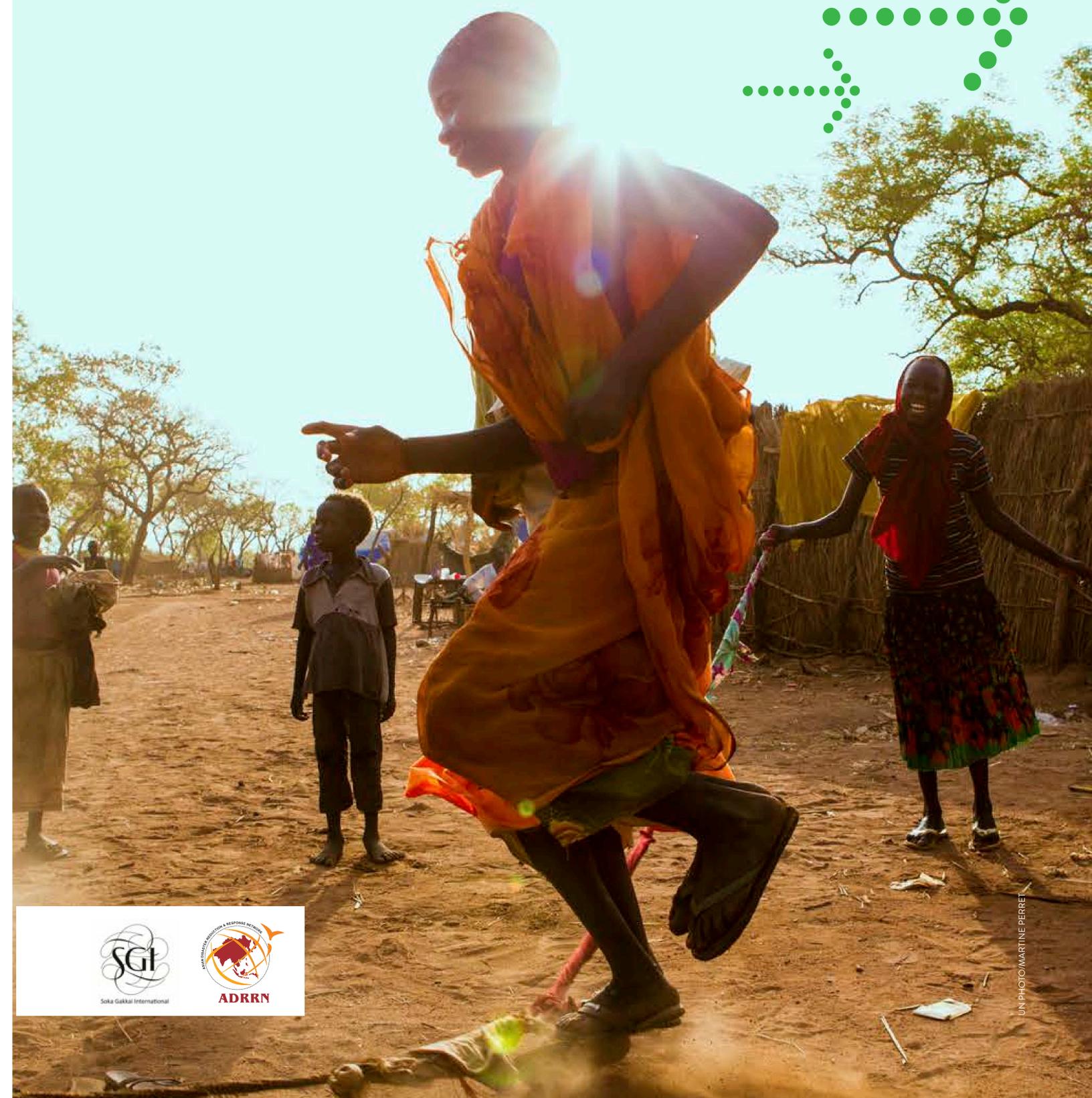
# RESTORING OUR HUMANITY

Our world today faces multiple overwhelming humanitarian crises, including conflicts and disasters. UN agencies, governments and other aid agencies have been unable to mount adequate responses. In order to address the

crises, the commitment and contribution of each individual living on this planet is required. Resolution cannot happen without restoring our collective humanity. Toward the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016,

much valuable input was obtained from the people on the front lines of humanitarian crises: aid workers, disaster victims and refugees. It was reflected in its outcome document titled “Agenda for Humanity.”

**This exhibition reflects those discussions and encourages viewers to think about what they can do at the individual, community, and even global levels.**

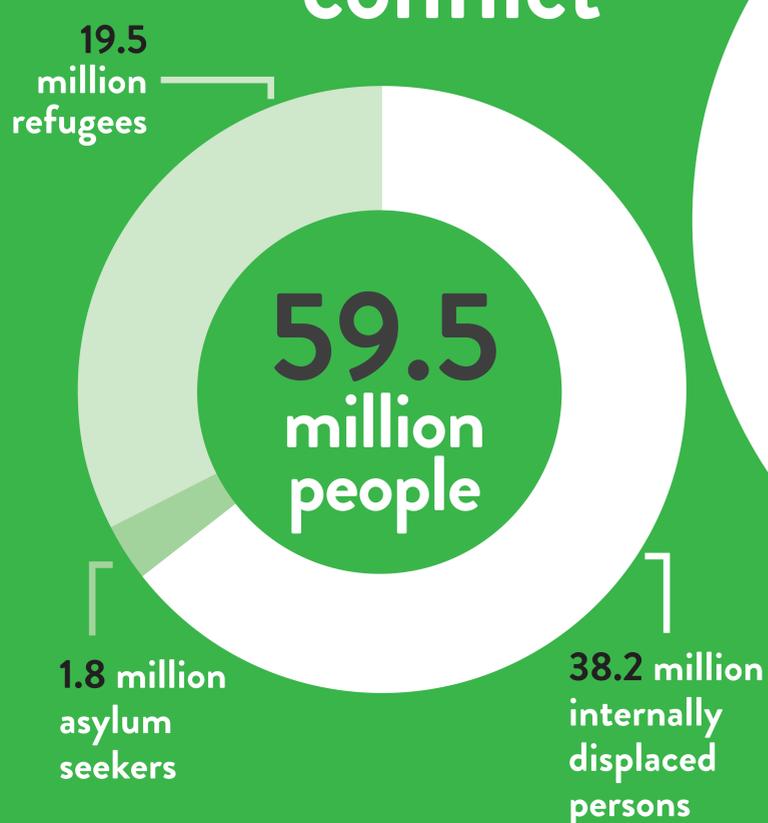


## Multiple crises

# CONFLICT

Affected by  
disasters

Displaced by  
violence +  
conflict



102 million people

as of 2014



ACT/PAUL JEFFREY

The World Bank estimates that 1.5 billion people live in countries trapped in repeated cycles of violent conflict. The economic impact of such violent conflict is also growing, with estimates that conflicts annually cost \$14.3 trillion, some 13 percent of the world's GDP.



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Multiple crises

# NATURAL HAZARDS AND DISASTERS

26.4  
million

people per year became newly  
displaced by sudden-  
onset disasters

In each of the past seven years, an estimated average of 26.4 million people have become newly displaced by sudden-onset disasters, such as floods and cyclones. Other people have left their homes due to the slow onset of climate change, including a rise in the sea level and the number of droughts. The various impacts of climate change are predicted to exacerbate this trend dramatically, with experts estimating that a 4°C warming could lead to a rise in sea levels, displacing millions of people from their homes.

Experts are increasingly certain that temperature variations will result in ever more intense and frequent extreme weather events, as well as changes in the patterns of disease.

*These events will likely lead to an alteration in ecosystems, disruption of food production and water supply, damage to infrastructure and to settlements, and a rise in morbidity and mortality rates.*

According to The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), there is no such thing as “natural disasters,” only natural hazards. Disasters often follow natural hazards.

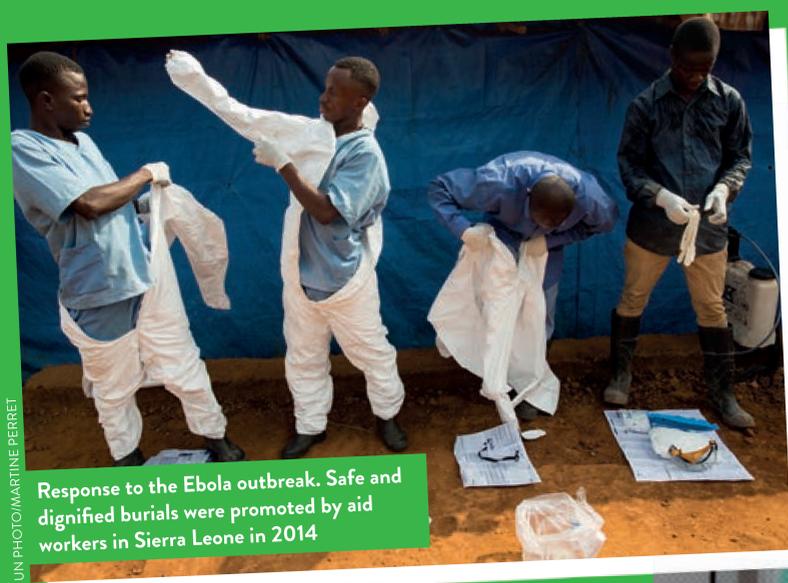
Source: Synthesis document

Flood in Haiti, 2014



## Multiple crises

# NEW TYPES OF HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



UN PHOTO/MARTINE PERRÉ

Response to the Ebola outbreak. Safe and dignified burials were promoted by aid workers in Sierra Leone in 2014



The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan in 2011

UN PHOTO/AE/ALAN WEBB

Over the past 65 years, some 335 new infectious diseases have appeared among humans, causing local outbreaks, wider epidemics, or even pandemics that have caused many deaths, as well as serious social and economic disruption across national borders.

Many of these “new” diseases are actually new versions of existing illnesses that are resistant to existing antibiotics. We cannot deny the possibility of an incurable disease spreading throughout the world in the future.

In recent years, natural hazards have often been compounded by interactions with industrial infrastructure, including chemical factories and even nuclear power plants. Our world is not yet prepared to respond to such disasters—and their humanitarian impacts.

## Toward a fundamental change

This requires a fundamental change in the humanitarian enterprise, **from one driven by the impulses of charity to one drawing on the imperative of solidarity.**

Vulnerability has become increasingly globalized and contagious. Risks faced by people living in one part of the world are now intertwined with those in every other part of the planet.

**“If one of us is vulnerable, ultimately we are all vulnerable.”**

Synthesis document

.....

**We have to bear in mind that disasters can happen anytime, anywhere.**

## Multiple crises

# THE “REAL” CRISIS

There is another type of crisis people are confronting in today’s world. This is the crisis of **helplessness** and **powerlessness** that afflicts so many people.

When people feel threatened, one impulse may be to withdraw into the comfort of cultural familiarity or national identity, rather than reaching out in solidarity. This is another, less visible face to the humanitarian challenge.

To make matters worse, in contrast to globalization at various levels, some people are consumed by anxiety and cling to their national or ethnic identity. Such a mentality prevents the society

as a whole from tackling humanitarian crises appropriately, and even causes new crises to occur.



If we stop addressing humanitarian problems, they will stay as they are or become even worse. We can label such a mentality of powerlessness the “real” crisis.

.....

## We stand at a critical point.



# WHS

## CONSULTATIONS

Humanitarian action should be driven by people's voices and choices. To enable protection and assistance based on the expressed needs of the affected people, humanitarians at all levels must engage in dialogue and include those affected in decision-making.

Through such dialogue three major agreements on humanitarian affairs have been made since 2015.

## AGENDA FOR HUMANITY

This five-point plan outlines the changes that are needed to alleviate suffering, reduce risk and lessen vulnerability on a global scale. Humanity—people's safety, dignity and the right to thrive—is placed at the heart of global decision-making.

1. DIGNITY



2. SAFETY



3. RESILIENCE



4. PARTNERSHIPS



5. FINANCE



## SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly following the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR).

4 priorities

Priorities 1 : Understanding disaster risk

Priorities 2 : Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

Priorities 3 : Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

Priorities 4 : Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to

“Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

## NEW YORK DECLARATION FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

The declaration, launched at the UN Summit in September 2016, contains bold commitments both to address the issues we face now and to prepare the world for future challenges. The next step is to adopt a global compact on refugees in 2018.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Diverse factors are often interrelated, even within a single crisis. Humanitarian aid is only an emergency response. It is crucial to tackle the root causes.

A remarkable effort in this context is the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The Agenda articulates 17 goals and 169 targets that global society should achieve by 2030. Together, these are known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Through the SDGs, states have pledged to “leave no one behind” and to work together to achieve a “world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive.” Some of the targets are specifically related to disasters and conflicts.

For promoting SDGs, Earth Charter International and SGI have created a mobile app called “Maping.” You can post photos and comments which depict your own activity for achieving any target of SDGs.

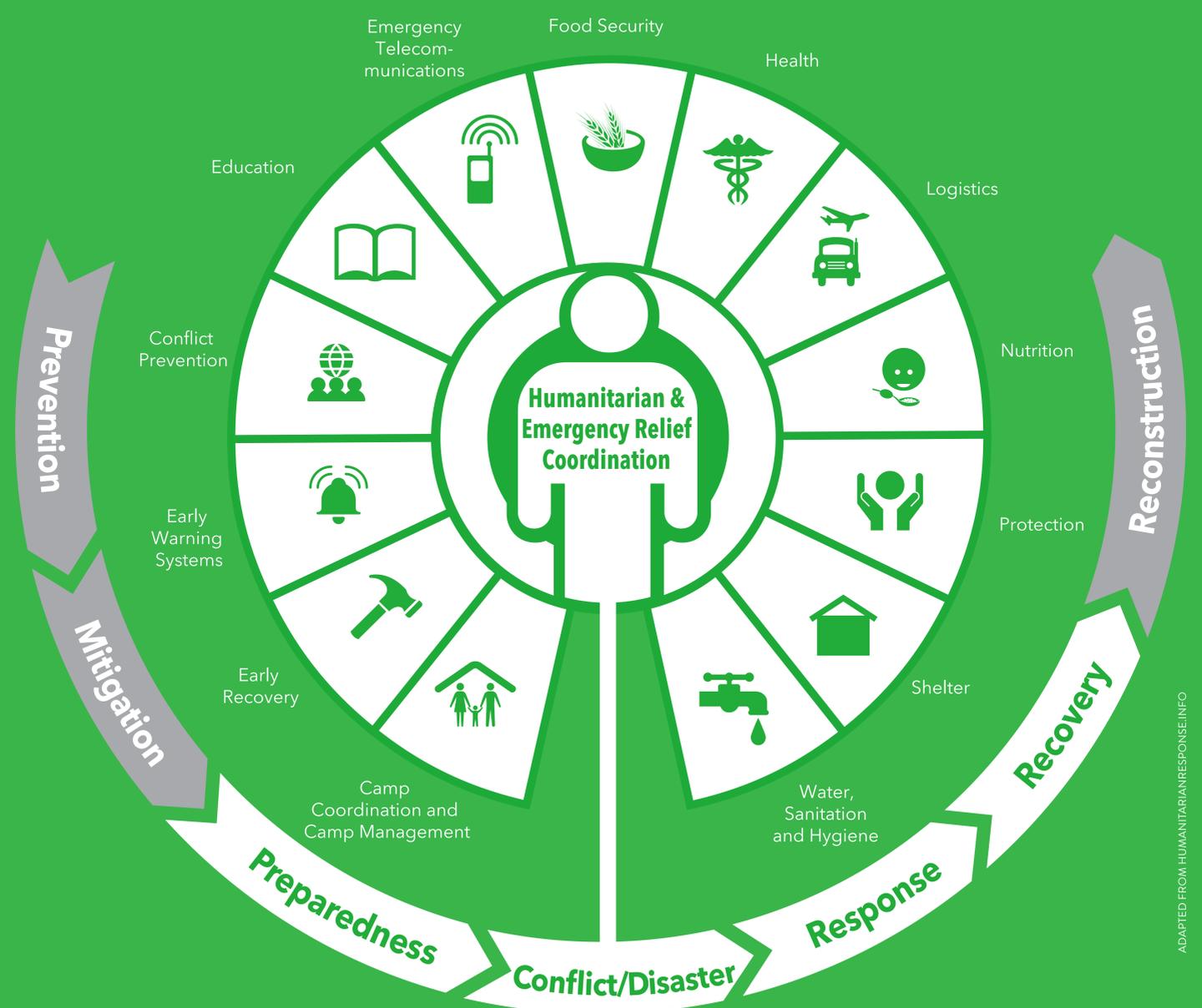


**Diverse sectors including the private sector and civil society are key players. Their vigilance and support will help achieve the goals.**

Activists with humanity

# BASIC FRAMEWORK OF HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

The number and diversity of activists involved in humanitarian action are growing. Global power dynamics are also changing.



Collaboration among: • UN Agencies • Governments • NGOs • Red Cross & Crescent movements • Private sector • Citizens

The four fundamental principles of humanitarian action

HUMANITY

NEUTRALITY

IMPARTIALITY

INDEPENDENCE

Many grassroots activists are involved, contributing to resolving humanitarian problems. They are profiled on the following panels.

## Activists with humanity

# WOMEN

**“Women are among the first responders in disasters and while in conflict areas they ensure their families can access basic services, stay in school, and remain safe.”**

Synthesis document

Leymah Gbowee mobilized women across ethnic and religious dividing lines to bring an end to the war in Liberia. The women continued their tireless protesting, two months of it outside the building in Ghana where the government and rebel factions were supposedly negotiating peace. She instructed the women to link arms and encircle the building, and not let the men out until a deal had been reached.

After the war, she launched a new project promoting a conversation about the relationship between the security sector and women in local communities, as a means of stopping the conflict. She says, “What the impact of conflict shows is a reflection of the interactions between the genders in peacetime.”



*Leymah Gbowee,  
Nobel Peace  
Prize Laureate*

### UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security

In October 2000, this groundbreaking resolution was adopted, highlighting the great untapped potential women can bring to processes of mediation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

**“1325 belongs to humanity: it is owned by us all — it is for the benefit of all ... When women are marginalized, there is little chance for our world to get peace in the real sense!”**

Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, who greatly contributed to the resolution’s adoption in 2000, as President of the UN Security Council



UN PHOTO/  
ERIC KANALSTEIN

In observance of International Women’s Day, a peaceful march against gender-based violence in Liberia in 2007

Source: SGI Quarterly “Women Building Peace”, January 2011

Activists with humanity

# FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOs)

*“Faith is not simply a patience that passively suffers until the storm is past. Rather, it is a spirit that bears things—with resignations, yes, but, above all, with blazing, serene hope.”*

Corazon Aquino, former President of the Philippines

## RESPONSE TO THE EBOLA OUTBREAK



As the outbreak spread in 2014, draconian measures were undertaken by governments and other aid agencies that went contrary to cultural values and religious practices. This resulted in denial of the disease and also hostility towards those who were seeking to contain it. Many of those with Ebola chose to remain with their families, and burials were undertaken in secret. As a consequence, the disease continued to spread.

Once they became involved, faith leaders played a transformational role. They used religious

references to interpret biomedical advice on the control and prevention of Ebola, which were delivered by the faith leaders with compassion and in a way that provided hope and encouragement.

Through faith leaders accompanying the burials and conducting modified religious practices, the affected communities began to comply with the

urgent need for medically safe yet dignified rituals.

By preaching acceptance of Ebola, as well as that of the workers and survivors, faith leaders helped rid the community of stigma and prejudice, and the rate at which the disease was spreading began to lessen.

Faith leaders became key members of the community, allowing them to form meaningful relationships and networks based on trust and respect. Also, their role in community leadership enabled them to shape opinion and behavior.

Source: Keeping the Faith - The Role of Faith Leaders in the Ebola Response



Sanitation education for Ebola response project in Liberia in 2014

actalliance

## Activists with humanity

# DISPLACED PEOPLE

Displaced people are often considered to be a threat or a burden in a host society. In reality, however, the great majority of displaced people have a strong desire to become a contributing part of their host society, feel strong empathy with newly displaced people, and proactively engage in supporting others in need.

“Political refugees and disaster refugees are the same in having lost too much. We may be the ones who can best understand the affected people’s feelings.”

A refugee in Japan originally from Myanmar

When a severe earthquake and tsunami hit northeastern Japan in 2011, some refugees rushed to the devastated area in order to help the affected people. This outpouring of support was something most Japanese people had never expected.

## Once a Refugee, Now a Helping Hand

Three people who fled the war in the Balkans, and are currently helping refugees and migrants crossing into Croatia.



UNHCR/MARK HENLEY



UNHCR/MARK HENLEY



UNHCR/MARK HENLEY

*“I feel that I am here to help these people who flee today. Today, both Serbs and Croats live again together, like before the war. I wish the same will happen to the people who are fleeing now.”*

Zoran Markovic,  
Police Commander

*“Many people still remember the war here and because of that they have more empathy and they want to help.”*

Lana Mayer, German teacher

*“It brings images back of me, my family and when we had to flee Vukovar. It is very emotional, but it gives me strength to help the refugees. My entire life is now devoted to helping people.”*

Zorica Grgic,  
Head of Croatian Red Cross

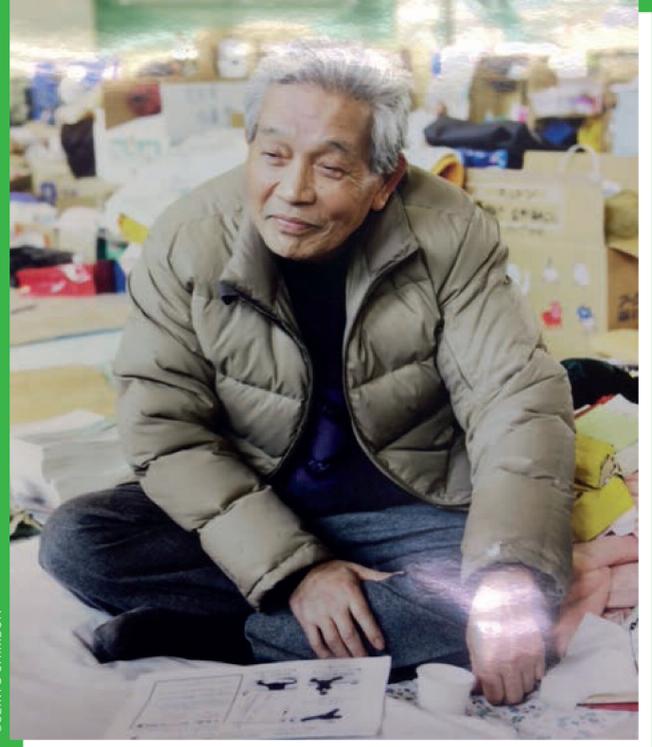
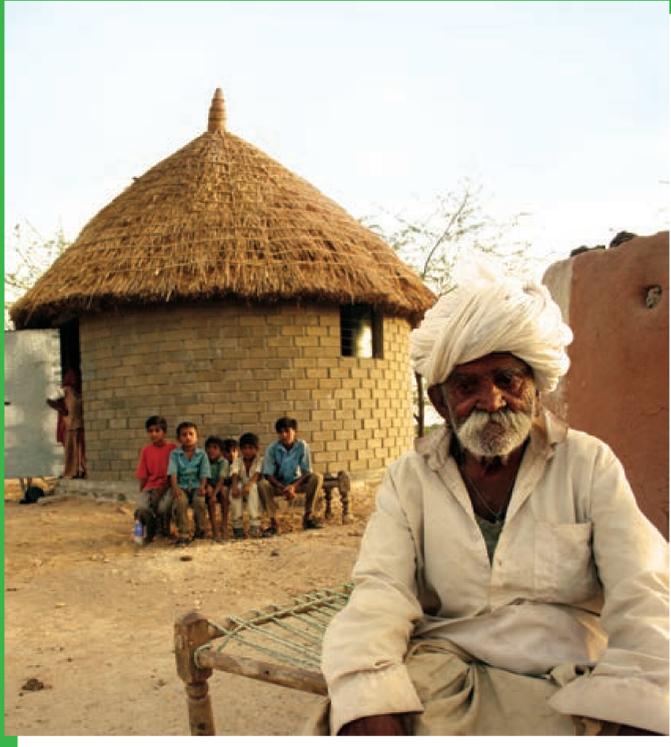
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## We must remember that they are our fellow human beings.

## Activists with humanity

# LOCAL COMMUNITY

The resources and outreach that aid agencies can provide in an emergency have limitations. The resilience of the local community can make all the difference.



## HOUSE-BUILDING INNOVATION

Barmer is an arid region in the western part of India, but it is increasingly threatened by rain and flooding due to changing climate patterns. Sustainable Environment & Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) worked with communities to improve their awareness of traditional house-building techniques that could insulate them against extreme heat and dust. Incorporating water-resistant features in traditional adobe architecture has made them resistant to floods as well. Communities are now much more resilient to changing environmental conditions, without having to alter their lifestyles significantly.

.....  
***“Part of the learning process involves getting the community together on common issues—to deliberate, reflect and identify solutions together.”*** Leader of SEEDS

## NEIGHBORS HELPING ONE ANOTHER

Kimio Ohashi was serving as the president of a neighborhood association in Sendai City. On a day-to-day basis, through close communications with neighbors, he knew the whereabouts of the residents. In March 2011, his town was hit by a severe earthquake and tsunami. Riding his bicycle, he called on neighbors and urged them to evacuate; Kimio succeeded in helping a number of people get to safer ground. At the school where he spent the first night, he encouraged the children staying there, some whom he knew from his daily activities in the neighborhood association. After moving to newly constructed public housing, Kimio took the initiative to set up an information-sharing meeting, and was appointed once more as president of the association for housing residents. Today, he continues to build positive personal relationships with them.

.....  
***Close relationships within a local community can help bring out our humanity.***

Activists with humanity

# CHILDREN & YOUTH

Young men and women around the world already play major roles in humanitarian action: as first responders, volunteers, caregivers to their families, even as breadwinners. They can be **agents of change**, able to contribute to preparedness and response.

They can help others in need in a **unique, energetic, and passionate way.**



Lesbos, Greece, 2015

Many young volunteers have helped provide services to refugees and migrants arriving in Europe.



Lebanon, 2015

Nejmeh, 14 years old, teaches the children in a Syrian refugee camp, conveying what she learned only a couple of years ago.



Japan, 2011

Youth members of a brass band from Soka Gakkai Japan organized concerts in a shelter to encourage evacuees.



In 2011, the Children's Charter for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted through consultations with more than 600 children in 21 countries.

## Activists with humanity

# NEW TECHNOLOGY

# USERS

Technology is rapidly developing in today's world. At times, it can be abused to promote violence or crime. On the other hand, technology can help people awaken their humanity and challenge adversity.



Sisi ni Amani team members reach out to the community in Baba Dogo, an informal settlement in Kenya

© PRIMOZ KOVACIC

## MOBILIZING FOR PEACE IN KENYA

Before and during Kenya's 2007–8 post-election violence, mobile phones were used by those promoting violence to spread rumors, hate speech, fear-mongering and calls for revenge attacks and for the organization of weapons distribution.

Sisi ni Amani Kenya, or SNA-K (“We Are Peace Kenya” in Swahili), analyzed how information had influenced behavior towards violence and, in response, built an SMS platform promoting peace to which community members could subscribe and enter

important demographic information, such as their location, language preference, age and gender. SNA-K's team of local peace activists was then able to target messages to thousands of subscribers, relevant to their demographics.

Throughout the 2013 election period, SNA-K sent more than 680,000 messages to quell rumors, as well as mitigate tensions and violence. 92 percent believed that the messages had a positive impact on preventing violence in their area.

.....

**“The messages made me relax even in the midst of the violence that was happening ... I knew things would be OK in the end after reading the message.”** Comment in survey conducted after the 2013 election

It starts from one individual, one community

# PUT PEOPLE AT THE CENTER

## Support Local Coping Capacities

“Humanitarian action should be as local as possible and as international as necessary.”

Participant in a WHS regional consultation. This phrase remains in “Agenda for Humanity.”



A youth activist in the ASEAN Youth Leadership Association in the Philippines engages in local awareness raising.



In reconstruction, employment is one of the critical issues. Engagement of local women provides multiple advantages in Nepal.

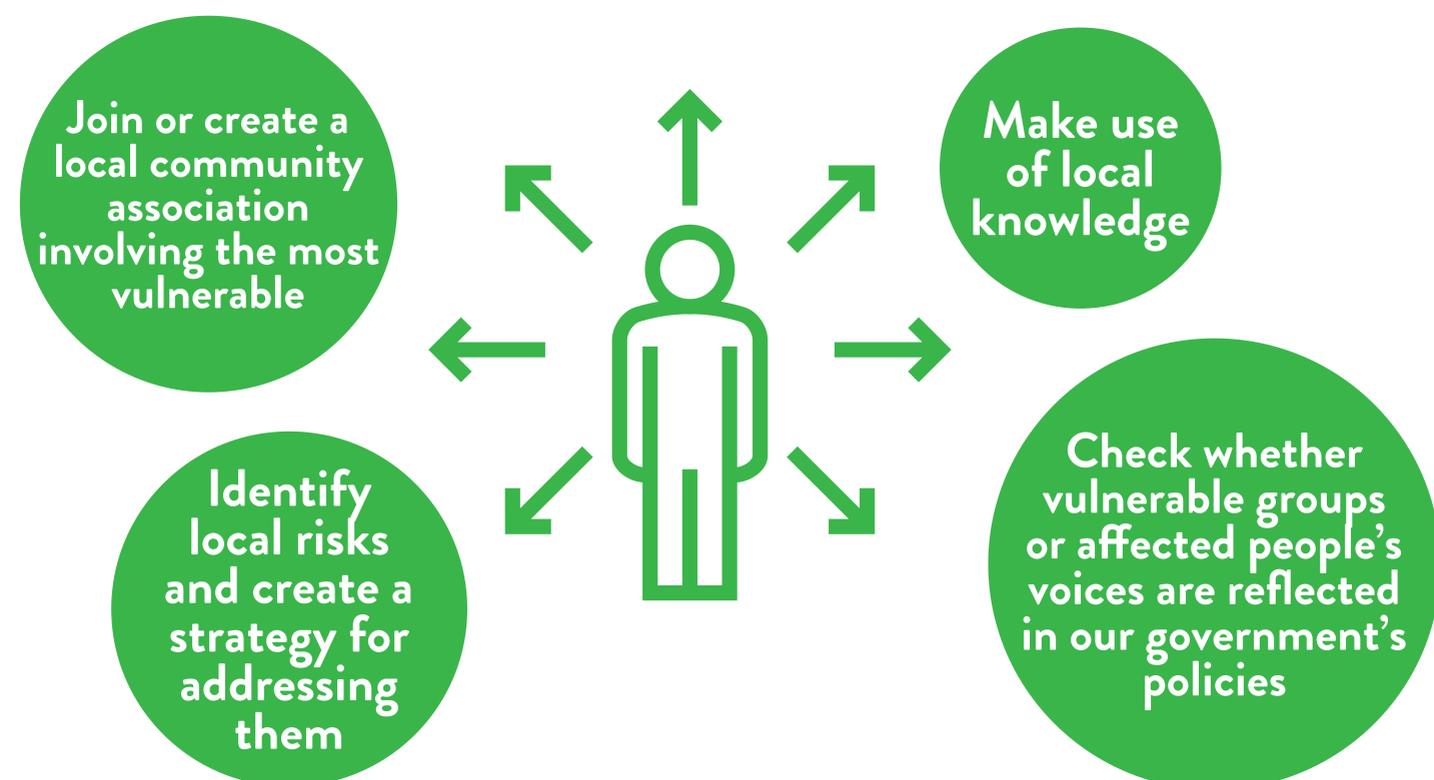
Putting people at the center requires a shift in power. This means that affected people must have greater access to information and greater involvement in decision-making, and be empowered to hold humanitarian activists, including governments, accountable for meeting their needs and upholding their safety, rights, and dignity.

It is best to support local coping strategies and community structures, increase self-reliance, and build on local capacities. To do this, humanitarian action must be designed in partnership with communities, in culturally appropriate ways, and be grounded in local knowledge.

**“Responses to humanitarian crises must have a bedrock focus on the dignity of each individual.”**

Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International

### *As individuals, we can ...*



It starts from one individual, one community

# PREPARATION & PREVENTION

Technology cannot prevent major natural hazards, but it can help reduce their impact. Early warning systems have dramatically reduced deaths around the world.

Integration of emergency preparedness in education curricula is effective for fostering a culture of prevention and rapid response.



## MIRACLE IN KAMAISHI (northeastern Japan)

When a violent earthquake struck in 2011, children who had been educated in the traditional practice of every person fleeing to higher ground independently did so without hesitation, knowing that their family members would do so also. The survival rates for children where this traditional wisdom had been transmitted to the younger generations were much higher than in other communities.

## DISASTER EDUCATION IN MYANMAR

In 1970, Cyclone Bhola killed nearly half a million people in Bangladesh and India. Since then, disaster education has been promoted throughout the region. When Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar in 2008, experts estimate that the damage would have been even greater without education.



*As individuals, we can ...*

Confirm  
the location of  
evacuation  
centers and  
practice getting  
to them

Attend  
evacuation  
drills and  
relevant  
seminars

Keep preserved  
food, water and  
other emergency  
supplies  
in a secure place  
in the home



It starts from one individual, one community

# INFORMATION AS AID

“Information as Aid” has emerged as an important priority in recent emergencies. Refugees’ smartphones are vital during evacuation. Information can function as a crucial source of empowerment and resilient recovery.



SEEDS/SARIKA GULATI

An interview for a community radio program conducted by girls from a marginalized community (India, 2013)



ISHINOMAKI HIBI SHIMBUN

A “Wall Paper” serving as a source of information on relief supplies (Japan, 2011)

## INFORMATION SHARING IN THE COMMUNITY

Along the southern coasts of India, community-level village knowledge centers have been set up that provide short message service (SMS) information on weather and wave patterns to fishermen, cautioning them on any possible natural threats. In Myanmar and Pakistan, where access to the most vulnerable communities is limited by poor connectivity, mobile-knowledge resource centers mounted on lorries and boats reach out to local communities, especially children, providing learning opportunities on disaster risk reduction.

## HANDMADE “WALL PAPERS” IN AN EMERGENCY

“If we can’t make a contribution amid a tragedy like this, our newspaper cannot justify its existence!” (Koichi Omi, *Ishinomaki Hibi Shimbun*) After surviving the severe earthquake and tsunami in 2011, Koichi Omi decided to create “Wall Papers” using pens and rolls of paper. Some issues were posted at evacuation shelters and convenience stores every day for more than a month, and they served as a precious source of information regarding relief supplies, available services, and support provided by volunteer workers.

*As individuals, we can ...*



It starts from one individual, one community

# DIVERSE ACTIVISTS' COLLABORATION

Collaboration among diverse activists and community sectors is important in handling humanitarian crises. This effort, however, should not be limited to those who are currently engaged in relevant activities. If a new entity, or a new individual, joins the activists' circle, innovation will be accelerated.

The transition from an emergency relief phase to a development phase should be as seamless as possible, and this can be best realized through the sharing of information and skills among various types of agencies.



## INTERFAITH COLLABORATION FOR EMERGENCIES

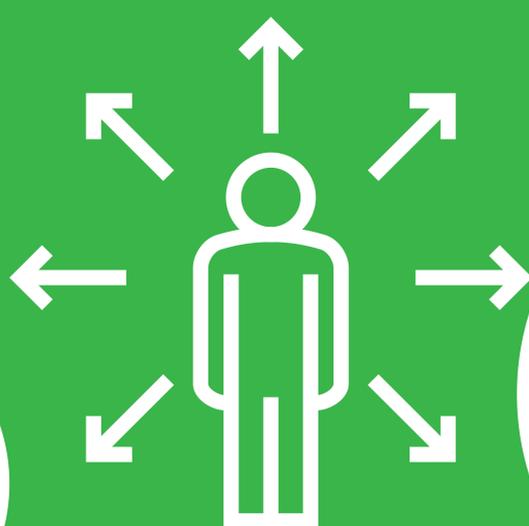
The Humanitarian Forum Indonesia is a network of humanitarian activity organizations comprising five Islamic NGOs, seven Christian NGOs, one Catholic NGO, and one secular NGO. Such diversity enables the forum to smoothly deliver aid to affected communities

embracing different religious faiths. Furthermore, the organization has built a collaborative relationship with local governments and the military. Now the network is assisting local communities to rebuild following natural disasters.

*As individuals, we can ...*

Identify what is lacking in our community's coping strategies and capacities

Push our national and local government to promote collaborative responses with nearby countries and cities



Break down a stereotypical view and innovatively think of resources that can be provided in an emergency from our own workplace, local community association, or family

It starts from one individual, one community

# TACKLING ROOT CAUSES & BEING OPEN TO DIVERSITY

It is crucial to find solutions that address the root cause of people's suffering.

Humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for political solutions in addressing the causes of suffering and bringing about an end to conflicts. Nonetheless, in the absence of political action, humanitarian relief is a lifeline to millions of women, men, and children around the world whose lives have been disrupted by war.

Refugees may face prolonged detention in inhumane conditions, experiencing xenophobia, social exclusion, and family separation.

**“Migrants bring a catalytic element to societies, encourage innovation, and they sometimes have a better work ethic than the native population.”**

William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration



UNHCR/IVOR PRCKETT

Germans opening their doors to refugees arriving in Europe. Two Syrian refugees living with a German couple and their children in their Berlin flat.

**“Recognize displaced people as socioeconomic assets and contributors, rather than ‘responsibilities’.”**

Agenda for Humanity

In addition to relief and support activities, our daily attitudes make a difference in terms of a society's resilience. Tackling the root causes of conflicts will prevent them from reoccurring.

**Being open to diversity will make it easier to accept displaced people.**



# LET'S START FROM OURSELVES



UNHCR/ANDREW MCCONNELL

We all want to live in a world where no person dies who could be saved; no-one goes hungry, is victimized by conflict, or left behind; where no-one is in despair because we lacked motivation, the political will or the financial resources to support them.

What is needed is a renewed affirmation of a global commitment to humanity.

Each individual's actions and awareness can make a difference. Each person, whatever their path in life or their current condition, has the capacity to **illuminate the place where they find themselves right now.**

The way problems manifest is always different, so there's no easy answer. If we approach the challenges in front of us with courage, we will be able to bring forth wisdom from within.

## Co-organizers:

### Asian Disaster Reduction & Response Network (ADRRN)

ADRRN is a network consisting of 34 national NGOs from 16 countries across the Asia-Pacific region. The network members promote DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) activities and engage local communities.

### Soka Gakkai International (SGI)

The SGI is a lay Buddhist organization. The SGI is engaged in the promotion of peace through activities such as DRR that correspond with the compassionate spirit of the Lotus Sutra in the contemporary world.

#### References:

- "Agenda for Humanity" — Outcome document of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants