# BRANCH DEVELOPMENT
# CASE-COLLECTION

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## CASE-COLLECTION

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**ANNEXES**

# INTRODUCTION

Approximately 160,000 branches form the base of IFRC's 192 member National Societies. Branch Members and volunteers often come from the communities they are helping, speak the same language, understand unique cultural norms, and are present before, during, and after a crisis, and therefore are well placed to understand patterns of inclusion or exclusion and to adapt activities accordingly. Because of their proximity to communities, branches are best positioned to collect and respond to people's views on their needs, priorities, vulnerabilities and capacities and to facilitate community engagement.

It is for these reasons that the delivery of services by branches to prevent and alleviate the suffering of people vulnerable to and affected by disasters, conflicts, and health and social problems embodies the power of our Movement. They are the most local units and the source of the massive grass roots network the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

IFRC Strategy 2030 highlights the opportunities for National Societies and their branches to become more open spaces for facilitating humanitarian action. Spaces where Members, volunteers and young people can, in addition to being involved with core Red Cross services, be supported to design and make change in the world. Where they can self-mobilise, quickly move to action and make an impact. This requires addressing some of the hierarchies and the formality upon which many branches and National Societies operate. In other words, developing branches is about transforming the overall business model of the National Society, how it manages, how it operates, and how it serves and a collection of strong branches forms a strong National Society and ultimately a distributed network of Red Cross Red Crescent local actors worldwide.

This document is inspired by the voices of these branch representatives, branch development practitioners in National Societies, the IFRC and ICRC. It is a collection of statements and good practices around the topic of branch development and synthesis key elements of branches and their development. Part I focuses on elaborating the diversity of branches we have today, to better understand the difference across our branches and at the same time the commonalities. Part II builds on top of Part I and further elaborates why branches are in need to develop itself, and how they develop itself, reflecting the commonalities and shared principles despite its different context and situation. It is aimed to serve as a case-material for learning and inspiration primary for National Societies and their branches, but also for anybody who is engaged with Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies to better understand the National Societies and its branches.

Stories shared by branches and practitioners about the challenges and successes they have experienced in making branches strong are also presented as videos, quotes and box stories. This document is supplemented by a further detailed case-study from Georgia Red Cross and Mongolia Red Cross Society. A comprehensive Branch Development Framework is expected to be developed following these case-studies.

# PART I
# NATIONAL SOCIETIES AND THEIR BRANCHES

## WHAT IS A BRANCH?
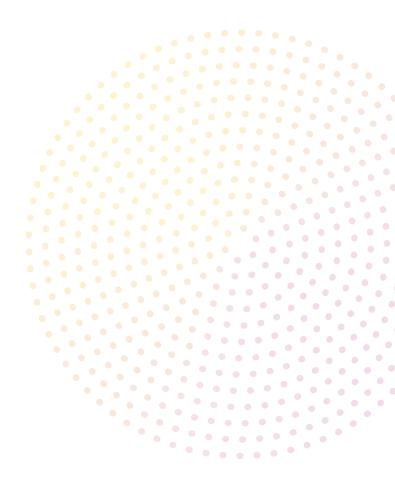
**Branches are described in many different ways. This is because there are multiple perspectives through which to view a branch, such as its type of presence, its relationships, its legal base, its role and its culture.**

One way to describe a branch is to say that it is "an organisational unit, usually defined through National Society statutes, and mostly related to a geographical area". Some sub-branch structures are not legally defined but aim to bring a branch closer to communities. Some branches completely rely on community volunteers to organise activities and deliver services. A less mechanistic and more emotive description of a branch is as "a neutral space in which people from all sections of the community can come together and self-organise, strengthening community coherence and relationships".

There are:

- **Front line branches**, which are the closest level of the National Societies to communities at which the bulk of services are delivered.

  » These are called local units, sub-branches or community branches depending on the context.

- **Intermediary branches** that provide subsidiary services that cannot be delivered at local level, for example specialised disaster response for example, however their primary role is one of support and coordination to front line branches.

  » These are called regional, state, township, district, or provincial branches. In some National Societies these are also known as supporting branches.

Some National Societies have sub-branch structures, which are not formally defined, but designed to bring a branch closer to communities. While branches are considered permanent structures, in some circumstances they can be temporary, linked to a time-bound issue or activity in a specific area.

# The many ways branches are described

There are many different ways that branches are described by branch representatives and branch development practitioners. Some of these descriptions are presented below.

- **A group of humanitarians:** A facilitating entity for Members and volunteers who reflect community voices and are delivering sustainable domestic core services, and offering space to perform, grow and develop themselves.

- **A physical structure:** A place for connection, caring, learning and acceptance. A hub for information and referrals.

- **An online group:** an online issue-based action group. An online forum for connection.

- **A legal entity:** a legal entity with voting members.

- **A business:** a place of work and a revenue generating centre.

- **A presence:** a presence, either physical or online, through branded events, partnerships, offices, shops, and vehicles.

> "
>
> *A branch offers its Members both a social network, supportive of a newcomer to a location, mitigates social isolation for its Members, and acts as the vehicle to bring together people with common interests, and offers the opportunity to 'do good' in the local community.*

> "
>
> *If you want to work with the community it is hard to stay in one city in a big building…So having a branch, you have the ability to adapt to the context, and connect to the people. They know you…it builds trust…we should not describe local branches as the 'smallest' component but as the most 'important'. This is our competitive advantage…because we are there. We are testing and feeling the same as the community and we are them.*

> "
>
> *When we are running our fundraising stall, people thank us for everything we do, they think we are the emergency volunteers responding to fires and the people providing support all over the country. Branches are the face of the organisation in the community.*
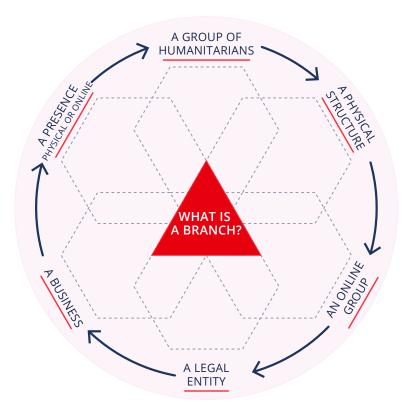
# The history of branches in the Movement

Branches are strongly embedded in the tradition of the Movement. Branches exist in all National Societies and have strong roots in local life. Some branches have been in existence for more than a century and this history has shaped their structures, working practices and cultures. For example, the French Red Cross Paris 3e/10e branch has been responding to local needs since the great Parisian flood of 1910. The Antioquia branch of the Colombia Red Cross traces its origins back to 1915 and to the creation of the Grey Ladies, a volunteering force still in existence today within the National Society. Some branches, such as the Geneva Red Cross Branch, created in 1864, are the founding entities of their National Societies. The collective history of a network of branches can also reveal information about the evolution of the National Society. For example, many branches around the world were created under the umbrella of the British Red Cross. We still see traces of that original influence in many National Societies around the world, in their Royal Charter, their structures, the profile of their Members and their organisational cultures.

■ **Figure 1** *The many different ways branches are described*

# WHAT TYPES OF BRANCHES EXIST?

## Branch type continuum

Branches can be categorised along the typology shown in the Branch Type Continuum (figure 2). The smallest type of branch is a group of volunteers providing basic humanitarian services (e.g., first aid) in their own community, involving costs that could realistically be sustained by themselves in the long term or as long as needed.

At the other end of the spectrum, we find a city or provincial branch that provides a range of services to a larger population, such as the management of a hospital, and may support the work of sub-branches as needed. Other member organisations report the emergence of online branches. These types of branches hold all their meetings online and design activities that involve online communication and advocacy. Online branch members may be spread across a region, a country or may even join the branch from different countries.

> *This is a huge country, probably if you are in a small country maybe it does not make sense but for us you can drive 400 km in just one district. Our country is long. From south to north, if you take a plane it is almost three hours. Driving from one point to another may take 6–8 hours driving in a good road. It may take days if you are driving in a difficult road. In the rainy season it may become difficult. So the catalyst to go down is to make people more close to the Red Cross…It would be difficult to move volunteers 600km across the country. But if you have a structure at a local level you will have volunteers that can assist.*
>
> — Mozambique Red Cross

> *Districts (branches) are our eyes and ears. They should have their engagement at the community level more extensively so that they can know what needs are met and then work towards servicing those communities with unmet needs. As heads of a provincial branch, we have to rely on the districts in determining where needs are. The (provincial) branch then has got to provide the sort of leadership and guidance for the district to be able to channel the services effectively.*
>
> — Malaysian Red Crescent Society

> *In the past, our perspective was that branches were just formed by volunteers who were out there. For the decentralisation plan, we would like to look at the branch as those that are implementing things. We would like to decentralise the activities and human resources into the branches. The National Headquarter would just be a secretariat supporting with technical advice. This is how we picture the branches but it is difficult without equipment. They should have their own structures and equipment, boats, vehicles. All those things. We want our programmes run from there.*
>
> — **Solomon Islands Red Cross**

> *You have to stop competition between National Headquarters and branches. Each level cannot do everything. Emergency programmes could be national. Other programmes may be delivered only locally. This balance can be reached. For whatever event, National Headquarters has to be clear on its role and the branch has to be clear on its role. This helps to create unity.*
>
> — **IFRC, Americas Regional Office**

National Societies in countries with large populations tend to have more branch levels and a greater number of branches at each level than those in smaller countries. For example, the Indonesia Red Cross, which operates in a country of 368 million people, has 34 provincial branches, 492 district branches and thousands of smaller units across its 13,700 islands. On the other hand, Solomon Islands Red Cross which operates in a country with a smaller population (653,000) has seven provincial branches across its 340 islands and is working to establish community-based volunteer units in order to extend its reach.

**Figure 2** *Branch Type Continuum*



Online Branch

First aider(s) | First aid post | Sub-branch | District branches | Provincial / State / City branch

← FRONT LINE BRANCHES —————————— SUPPORT BRANCHES →

# Different Branch Models

A branch 'model' is a representation of certain elements of a branch and reflects the continuum of choices available to branches in each area of activity; how branches operate, relate, manage volunteers, track performance, behave, and create impact.

Models can help describe and explore how branches are organised today and to consider alternative ways of being organised. There are models such as:

- **Operational Model:** Operational model of a branch refers to the structures and processes a branch has in place, or wishes to put in place, to deliver its services.

- **Relational Model:** The mission of branches determines the collaboration with communities, and a range of civil society, private and public sector organisations, and the relationships it establish with these stakeholders impacts the way it acts.

- **Volunteering Model:** Volunteering model of a branch refers to the approaches branches take to facilitate, support, recognise and protect volunteers.

- **Performance Model:** The performance of a branch can be viewed through its ability to deliver services for as long as they are needed.

- **Cultural Model:** Culture refers to the patterns of learned beliefs and behaviours that are shared among groups and includes thoughts, communication styles, ways of interacting, views of roles and relationships, values, practices, and customs. The leaders of a branch play a role in shaping the culture of a branch through their beliefs, assumptions, words, decisions and action and guide the work of branches.

Details of these models are further defined in Annex 1.

## BOX STORY 1 **ENGAGE**

### Georgia Red Cross

Unemployment among youth, ethnic minority youth in particular, is a significant problem in Georgia. Consequently, increasing the engagement of youth is a priority for the National Society. Additionally, because people 65 year and over are in an economically disadvantaged position and have consistently less access than younger adults to household assets and dwelling facilities, such as a flush toilet, a bath or shower, water supply and sewage, GRCS also has a focus on supporting older adults and engaging older adults as volunteers and Members.

*"I am 88 years old. I do not even remember when I started receiving service of the Sagarejo branch Day Care Centre for older adults, but I feel like I spent my whole life here and made best friends. I became so actively involved that I even changed my status of service recipient and have become a volunteer leader. However, when my husband got sick, I stopped volunteering and took care of him. Because of this, I found myself in complete isolation. I was not used to such a life, I was afraid. I totally missed communication with other people. After his death, I found myself completely alone, I could no longer see the future, though I am an optimistic person by nature and did my best to get involved in the daily life of the Sagarejo branch. I moved from complete isolation to the phase of active life. I started organizing cultural events, including poetry evenings in the branch; I know a lot of poems by heart and I still learn them. I found my place in this small cosy room, where you can spend interesting hours during the day. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the Sagarejo branch volunteers, I was visiting lonely older people because they needed people's empathy and support to improve their ability to live. This home visiting service worked well for all, I was glad that I was not alone at home, and we were making them feel happy. I hope that everything will return to normal and I will continue my work in the Red Cross."*

— Nazi Azariashvili
Volunteer, Sagarejo Branch,
Georgia Red Cross Society

*"Early on I was often asked why you want to volunteer if you are not getting paid?". I would say I am in the Red Cross to raise awareness and achieve positive change, this is better than getting paid! The Red Cross gave me most important skills of life; patience, how to communicate with others, support and gardening with the older generation, sharing stories between generations. Now no one asks "why are you volunteering?" because they see how much RC does in our country. Sagarejo is a small town, there is a lack of information. Before when people saw me taking care of others, and I was not an employee, they would ask "why are you doing this?". It was tough for the whole country moving from the Soviet system into a new country. People's mentality was not focused on helping others but on surviving the changes. It was not seen as cool to volunteer. This has been changing and I think the RC has been doing a tremendous job to change that mentality and raise awareness about the importance of volunteering."*

— Keti Meipariani
Volunteer,  Sagarejo Branch,
Georgia Red Cross Society

# UNIQUENESS AND SIMILARITY

**There is much diversity across branches. This diversity arises from a branch's context, legal base, people, networks, and organisational culture. There are also similarities.**

Uniqueness and similarity are always present, simultaneously. Which you see in relation to branches depends on how you focus. Comparing branches is important for making general statements about the differences and similarities between branches and to understand the reasons why these variations exist. Identifying similarities helps us to identify general principles that may apply to all or to groupings of branches.

Starting with diversity. Diversity across branches arises from a branch's:

- **Context** – including geography, population size, historical forces, socio-political, cultural and economic variables, and the wider system of the national society.

- **Legal base** – whether a branch is legally recognised, and its level of autonomy. Whether it generates and manages financial resources.

- **People** – volunteers, youth, members, and employees, who enact their work through their differentiated skills, knowledge, behaviours, experience and relationships.

- **Networks** – whether these networks are local, national or international.

- **Organisational culture** – the culture of a branch refers to shared assumptions, that have been learned by the branch as it has solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new people as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

- Branches are dynamic and evolving systems, and any changes in these variables will influence the activities and 'personality' of the branch.

> **"**
>
> *When we look at a cup, it may be the case that one cup is made from glass and another one is made from porcelain. But even though they are made from different materials, they are both able to contain water. The purpose of each one of these cups, as well as the benefit that they yield, is the same. So, I feel that, as a nation develops, every National Society should take its own national conditions into consideration. However, at the same time, it should consider the seven Fundamental Principles in its work, as well as the overall aims and goals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It means that the road and methods might be slightly different, but the objective is the same.*
>
> — Shanghai branch,
> Red Cross Society of China

> **"**
>
> *We have changed the branch development process three times since we started 4.5 years ago. We have to personalise it based on each branch, what can be done. We have not found the right formula. This works for this branch and not this branch. We have not found our clear way yet.*
>
> — Lebanese Red Cross

And now to potential similarities:

- All branches are guided by a common identity including the history and mission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its fundamental principles. All branches can play a role in promoting the principles and ideals of the Movement and in ensuring respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of the distinctive emblems recognised by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

- All branches can maintain their relevance through a diverse network of volunteers and partners, a branch culture that promotes diversity and inclusion in opportunity, representation and decision making, principled leadership and good decision making, accountability, and an ability to adapt and scale up, or scale down, activities as the needs of communities change.

- Finally, striving for the sustainability of essential services is a central concern for all types of branches.

# WHAT DO LOCAL BRANCHES DO?

A branch has diverse functions. These may include but are not limited to the functions listed below. Stories from branches around the world associated to each function are provided in this section.

- **Engaging communities, volunteers, youth, Members, and sometimes employees**

    » Engages, trains, mentors, recognises and protects volunteers, youth, Members, and employees, and provides a space in which they can perform, grow and develop.

- **Assessing needs and designing services**

    » Identifies needs within communities and ways to respond to these through structured activities and ongoing services, including advocacy, preparedness, responding to and reducing individual and collective vulnerabilities. It is the first point of contact during crisis.

- **Organising structures and processes**

    » Organises structures and processes to ensure its people are supported to assess, design and deliver services. It provides the interface between the community and the National Society, giving voice to issues most important to communities.

> *We have a community needs assessment, we established it three years ago, something very scientific. We use a statistical software system, household surveys, then once we have our results and we double check with stakeholders to check if the results are reflective of their challenges. We have done it seven times. With one of our branches, it was done three times. The first time it went badly, second time more interesting and then the third time…it was done in a village where there was 45% of drug consumption but this was a taboo for the municipality and when we do the report we presented to all local stakeholders. They were against what we were saying. Then we said to ourselves why are we hiding behind our finger? After heated debate they agreed yes, we do have that issue. And for the first time ever, a local organisation with expertise in drug issues was allowed to do an awareness session in the village. The role of the branch was to coordinate. The branch facilitated the bridge to the community. The branch realised for the first time that we identified the need, but we did not need any a budget to work on the issue with the community, we just needed to reach out to another organisation with the resources and the expertise. The budget for the needs assessment was very small.*

> — Lebanese Red Cross

- **Mobilising resources**

  » Mobilises financial and in-kind support primarily from local sources. It provides access to regional, national or international resources for emergencies when local resources do not suffice.

- **Communicating internally and externally and promoting the RC**

  » Communicates internally and externally and promotes the fundamental principles and values of the Movement. It builds relationships with local institutions, including local authorities, to raise resources and coordinate action.

- **Learning and adapting approaches**

  » Learns by reflecting and reviewing its work and adapts its approaches based on this learning.

> "
>
> *It is important for fundraising to show what you are doing for the community. You cannot ask without giving back.*
>
> — Members of the Romsy-Lancefield branch, Australian Red Cross
>
> *Resource mobilisation very much depends on the support the branch can get from the community. If they can have very clear visibility in the community which means some sustainable activities that they are doing for the communities, then I think a much better and warmer support that can be harnessed from the communities. If we are going to do fundraising and do not translate these into services for communities, they (community members) will ask why do we need to support the Red Cross? The branch has to come up with something dynamic and clear visibility and clear objectives in their service provision.*
>
> — Sarawak District Branch, Malaysian Red Crescent

# Videos

Engage: **Mozambique**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjNuMj1CLA4

What is a Branch: **Philippines**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlKQ8WuStow

What is a Branch-A community Collective: **Australia**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsxfzmnD5NM

## BOX STORY 2  **COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE**

### Uganda Red Cross Society – preparing for election related violence in urban areas

In the Uganda riots of September 2009, the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) was caught up in a significant crisis. Two Red Cross ambulances were attacked by angry mobs and volunteers found themselves in a volatile situation. This was a challenging incident for the National Society since it appeared that the organisation may have been perceived by some as part of the government. Learning from that experience, the National Society launched a dissemination, communication programme and preparedness for political violence. At the heart of the operation were branch action teams.

The URCS began its preparations for the February 2011 Ugandan presidential and parliamentary elections a year in advance and focussed its activities on 35 potential 'hotspots' where political activity might turn violent. At branch level, volunteers were engaged to support networking and communications with local leaders, policemen and women and hospital employees. Branch volunteers shared information about the purpose of the URCS including its auxiliary role to government in emergency response, the fundamental principles and the importance of protecting the emblem. Communities and individuals likely to be caught up in the political demonstrations were targeted with communications and first aid training. Messages were recorded and aired over 200 times on national and local radio.

As well as explaining Red Cross activities and the use of the emblem, it was important to distinguish the role of the URCS from the role of the government. At times of political volatility, the fundamental principle of independence from government is of utmost importance. At the same time, the National Society needed its auxiliary role to co-ordinate with and work alongside the government, as well as the police, hospital administrators and community leaders of different political persuasions.

The campaign enabled safe access for URCS and the National Society was able to work largely unimpeded by attacks or confusion about its role. During the elections, volunteers responded to 581 incidents, providing first aid and referring 173 patients to hospital. Volunteers also provided psychosocial support to patients, families and survivors of violence. The preparations paid off in another, unexpected, way. A few weeks later, the political opposition called for 'Walk to Work' demonstrations. These protests became violent, with protesters clashing with riot police across the country. Branch volunteers were again mobilised to help communities caught up in the violence. Over 300 of the 480 injured needed hospitalisation, 44 of these with critical gunshot wounds. Red Cross volunteers guided patients through hospital facilities, ensuring impartial access to healthcare. In some cases, wounded individuals and their families who were too frightened to directly access medical assistance, and trusting that the Red Cross would act with impartiality, sought out Red Cross volunteers to transport the wounded to hospital. There was an important challenge, however that the National Society still needed to work on, over enthusiastic volunteers, eager to save lives, were found to have endangered their own safety and security during these operations.

# PART II
# BRANCH DEVELOPMENT

## WHY DO BRANCHES DEVELOP THEMSELVES?

Branches develop themselves for different reasons, but ultimately, as described in Strategy 2030, it is:

**To enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.**

Because of their proximity to communities, branches are well positioned to collect and respond to people's views on their needs, priorities, vulnerabilities and capacities and to facilitate community engagement. Branch Members and volunteers often come from the communities they are helping, speak the same language, understand unique cultural norms, and are present before, during, and after a crisis, and therefore are well placed to understand patterns of inclusion or exclusion and to adapt accordingly. It is for these reasons that the delivery of services by branches to prevent and alleviate the suffering of people vulnerable to and affected by disasters, conflicts, and health and social problems embodies the power of our Movement.

To continue doing so, to strive to address the underlying causes of crises and understand the changing nature of vulnerability in the communities they serve, National Societies and branches need to continuously invest in its own development to be able to better respond to the needs.

**Videos**

What initiative have been taken for Branch Development: **Egypt**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML7jNPGYQ8M

# HOW DO BRANCHES DEVELOP THEMSELVES?

## Distributed Networks – Let's connect!

**Our large, independent and local network of branches is one of our greatest strengths.**

Branch to branch learning is highly effective, often more effective than traditional training approaches. The rapid transition to digital work across many National Societies has demonstrated the potential to establish a highly connected branch network, with amplified Member to Member, volunteer to volunteer, youth to youth, employee to employee collaboration enabled through new technology. Connecting a branch within and between National Societies, and with other actors extends the value of our branch network by:

- sharing knowledge,
- solving problems,
- creating new ideas,
- detecting and making use of new opportunities,
- accessing flows of resources. *

> *When a branch feels isolated and devoid of new ideas, it withers and dies. When a branch can reach out for help, feel connected to something bigger than itself, it has the opportunity to grow.*

> *The main thing that helped us was knowledge and experience among branches. Because the branches themselves could see the development progress presented by other branches, by their colleagues at local level.*
>
> *When one branch is the older brother of a younger brother in another country brings benefits to both branches. One branch receives the possibility to be supported. Another branch receives the knowledge and practice how to support.*
>
> — Georgia Red Cross

There are many ways volunteers, youth, Members and employees connect with others. These connections are presented in the table below under four categories.

> " *Burundi Red Cross' volunteer model, its structure and vision for branches, provides a valuable example that we will take home with us.*
>
> — Seychelles Red Cross

Valuing, encouraging, and nurturing these formal and informal connections are important to the success of a branch. Reducing bureaucracy where possible or appropriate, encouraging self-organisation, and direct peer to peer engagement locally, nationally and internationally, enables creativity, innovation and adaptability.

> " *I communicate frequently with my colleagues on a casual basis and picking all the ideas. On an official level we have not gone into that because we have communicate protocols we need to adhere to.*
>
> — Malaysian Red Crescent

**Table 1** *The many ways branches connect with others*

| TYPE OF CONNECTIONS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Associations | Membership in groups | Participation in events | | |
| Social relations | Role-based relations e.g., branch volunteer and the volunteer coordinator | Family relations | | |
| Interactions | Talking with someone, video conferencing | Sending an email or text message to someone | Collaborating on an activity, discussion boards, online forums | Having coffee or lunch with someone |
| Flows | Information | Funds | Goods | Services |

# Videos

Internal Communications: **Ukraine**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-F1_-HITEc

Additionally, a branch that is digitally connected may develop greater flexibility (as witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic) and can better access the knowledge, communities, capabilities and resource opportunities that are available virtually.

However, not all connections are positive. For example, increasing dependence on technology brings new risks, including potentially unforeseen cyber and digital threats that need to be addressed. Educating volunteers and employees and partnerships that can help accelerate digital learning and capacities will reduce this risk. Furthermore, accessing and relying too heavily on international resourcing that may steer the branch's focus away from its local constituencies and branch development towards short term projects and programmes that diminish its sustainability.

> *Why are strong branches strong? Because of the leadership of the branch. The strong branch has local authority support, has possibility to be self-developed, good community and volunteers. And another branch is weak. The leader of the branch is nice person but haven't got the skills…to be a businessman. And these two leaders met during the forum, shared information, peer to peer support. And the weak branch step by step self-developed. This is the best way how the branch can be developed, when the commitment comes from branch and not from headquarters. It is important to open people's horizons. They (local branches) often living in a close environment. They are living with the needs and close to vulnerable people. Lack of information and knowledge push branches to stay on the same level.*
>
> — Ukraine Red Cross

# Diversity and Inclusion – Everyone is welcome!

**The Movement is firmly rooted in the right, agency and action of people to drive change for themselves, for their communities, and for the world. In this way the work of branches is based on the powerful spirit of volunteerism. Volunteers and Members are the sensors, activators, promoters and advocates of a branch.**

The way people volunteer continues to evolve. To re-imagine their work with and through volunteers and Members, in particular with young people, branches are striving for diversity and promoting the inclusion of all those who recognise themselves in the values of the Movement.

Some of the ways in which branches are developing diversity and inclusion include:

- **Ensuring diverse representation (age, gender, ethnicity etc) among volunteers and members**

  » Ensuring that their volunteers and Members are representative of the diversity of their communities by fostering engagement with groups that might be under-represented in decision making.

> **"**
> *The Pakistan Red Crescent conducted a needs assessment of transgender people and found that this group was extremely marginalised. The National Society and its branches partnered with community volunteers to support transgender people who were involved in sex work. They found a high level of communal living and social support within transgender communities. The National Society partnered with transgender people to conduct positive awareness campaigns in schools.*

> **"**
> *We accept volunteers from migrant communities now. If we need access to the communities where we serve and ownership, we need volunteers from migrant communities. We have migrant hubs and swerving hubs for migrants. We recruit volunteers from these communities where they are trained and equipped. Sometimes there are also the only channel to the community.*

- **Facilitating processes where communities and all individuals can exercise their voice and their agency safely.**

- **Paying attention to diversity during community consultations**

  » In some cases minority voices may be silent and services may be needed even when these individuals do not feel able to ask for them.

- **Connecting with the younger generation of change agents.** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

  » Adapting the branch systems and cultures to be more effective at engaging young people, including supporting their participation in leadership and decision making.

- **Fostering and promoting the fundamental principles**

  » But also recognising that times are shifting and, in addition to these principles, there are others that are central to its work including environmental sustainability and equality.

> *As more young people joined the branch, it became more and more fun and we developed a better understanding about the major issues in our community. Mostly the issues that young volunteers are interested in are related to the imbalance in the development between cities and rural areas. It was really a joy for me to connect with older adults. The branch has a cosy and friendly environment. I was able to raise funds for community activities. We fundraised for hygiene and health kits. We went door to door and spoke with families about the importance of everyday hygiene for health.*

## Videos

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Organising: **Australia**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9q8xcIIyN4

Youth Engagement: **Australia**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOoVh-82vsQ

# Leadership and Governance – Model the way, encourage the heart

**Leadership in a branch involves showing the way and empowering others to pursue it. It can also involve creating an enabling environment for individuals to find the way themselves. The primary responsibility for branch development lies with the leadership of each branch.**

The level of diversity within a branch, including in its decision making bodies, directly impacts the ability of the branch to work with those that are most in need of support. The ability of branch leaders to build a culture of trust, safety, and integrity has a bearing on how a branch is experienced and perceived. Additionally, the knowledge and capacities to lead, within the frames established by the Movement, are also important for protecting the humanitarian reputation of each branch and ensuring continued access to vulnerable and conflict affected communities. Table 2 highlights the demands of branch leadership as described by interviewees.

Some of the ways in which National Societies are developing branch leaders include:

- **Inducting leaders into the Movement and explaining their roles in leading and developing their branches.**

- **Articulating the importance of inspiring and empowering**

  » Inspiring and empowering volunteers, Members and employees enables to create and organise activities in partnership with local communities.

- **Encouraging leaders to take ownership of the development of their branch.**

- **Supporting leaders to develop the knowhow required to nurture critical external relationships.**

- **Bringing branch leaders together in safe spaces for sharing their fears, successes, challenges and solutions.**

- **Giving, reflect and learn.**

  » Leaders engaged in challenging experiences (e.g., a disaster response operation) that can develop their skills, knowledge and emotional maturity. However, experience does not guarantee learning. Alongside experience, a programme of personal reflection is key and most of us need assistance (from an elder, a mentor or coach) with this reflective process.

> "
>
> *The commitment of the (branch) leadership is one of the very glaring factors. A lot of committed leaders at the grassroots level that can bring in a lot of support from the community and the corporate sector…. The key factors in here would be the strong and visionary leadership. And doing a lot of good planning.*

> "
>
> *What was lacking in the past was how our branch boards connect to the national board and vice versa, how we connect to their concerns at branch level. Also there was a lack of proper induction for the branch board. In the past we elected them and forget about them. For the last one there was an induction for the branch board to know about their roles and how important their roles are. We still have to empower them. They own the branch…Comes down again to the chair of each branch and how they look at their roles…how they commit their time to support the branches. At some point it comes back to the right person being elected as president who should be leading or pushing and making sure the branch is functioning and not just wait until headquarters is doing all these things. This was the message given to the branch board during the induction. What they want should come from them.*
>
> — Solomon Islands Red Cross

Training has been shown to be a minor element in developing leaders. The key to leadership ability is experience, and first and foremost challenging experiences. Experience can teach lessons that might, over time, produce effective leaders. This approach acknowledges that leaders come with different personalities and styles but that despite these differences they can be equally effective if they are able to meet the demands of their specific context. Potential powerful development experiences for branch leaders include early work experiences, first supervisory role, special projects, taking on greater responsibility, headquarter posting, scaling up a branch for an operation, collaborating with other organisations, good and bad managers, traumatic events, mistakes, difficult subordinates, visits to other branches and to other National Societies, culture shock, and courses and programmes. From this list we see that developmental experiences are often serendipitous but can in some instances be programmed (e.g., headquarter posting, special projects).

Leaders do not require a formal position; rather, leadership is how one experiences oneself and how others experience us as individuals. Furthermore, there is no single "best" style of leadership nor one set of attributes in all situations.

> ❝
>
> *Leadership is key. I have met few willing and inspiring branch presidents. What I see is that they are transparent in what they are doing. They give opportunities to other people in their branch to be a volunteer and a daily worker. Good leadership comes from a sound personality and from exposure to good practices.*

■ **Table 2** *The basic demands of branch leadership described by interviewees and supported by research*[1]

- Setting and communicating direction including strategic thinking, problem solving, taking responsibility.
- Coping with the pressures of leadership, including persevering through adversity, self-confidence, coping with ambiguity, appropriate use of power.
- Securing the support of stakeholders, including negotiations, dealing with conflict, directing and motivating, developing people, dealing with performance issues.
- Setting and living principles and values, including applying the fundamental principles, needing others, and sensitivity to people.
- Growth of self and others, including recognising personal limits and blind spots, and recognising and seizing opportunities.

1   Nohria, Nitin, and Rakesh Khurana, eds. Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice. Harvard Business Press, 2010.

# Accountability – Do the right thing

**The fundamental principles help branches build a foundation of trust. They are critical to a branch's ability to reach marginalised and isolated communities when most others cannot.**

The Federation's Strategy 2030 highlights that to preserve and enhance trust, National Societies must also be transparent and accountable in all they do, with communities, public authorities, partners, donors and each other. The first accountability of a branch is to the communities it serves. This is enabled by its presence and representation. In all interactions with communities, a branch must demonstrate integrity, transparency, humility and honesty. Beyond its accountability to the community, it has its accountability to the National headquarters, donors and public.

Branches who are developing their capacities to be accountable:

- **Takes seriously the obligations to use resources wisely and efficiently.**

  » The branch recognise that supporters place their trust in the branch to use their funds and resources and take seriously the obligations to use these resources wisely and efficiently.

- **Strive to be increasingly transparent, sharing information**

  » About their work, explaining progress, challenges and inviting feedback and ideas for strengthening their services.

- **Strive to be accountable to their volunteers and Members, to other branches and to their headquarters.**

> "
> *The role of the governing board is very important. Because they are elected by branches, they have responsibility to ensure branches are working with regards to governing…we need to do more to ensure that we have flexible and adapted way that leaders are equipped by knowledge and skills. At least have procedures to ensure they are implementing the principles and they also know what accountability they need to show to communities, Members and volunteers.*

> "
> *You have members and volunteers who might have their own interests but once have the induction it changes or shapes their mindset. So we use induction and conversation to influence people to work for the interests of the Red Cross and not for their own interests. You can still see some levels of conflict of interests. But it is very small and those genuine ones most of them are. One area during induction we clearly spell out, to be a Red Cross person you should be this and not that.*
>
> — Solomon Islands Red Cross

# Relationships – Better relationships, better world

**Developing the mechanisms, skills and emotional maturity for successful collaboration requires investment in people and processes.**

**National Societies and their branches are created and sustained through internal and external relationships. The purpose of branches calls for collaboration with their headquarters, communities, other branches, a range of civil society, private and public sector organisations, and in some cases international partners. Branches combine their competencies with those of others to address needs in their communities.**

**Therefore, it is different competencies, or difference, that brings branches together with others. However, working with difference is not simple.**

Branches need to build relationships while considering their own interests and needs. They must build a positive emotional climate that fosters collaboration while also bringing differences to the table. Too much focus on positive relationships can be at the expense of representing their interests, while too strong a focus on interests makes it difficult to build trust. Overlayed with difference is interpersonal power; a feature of all relationships which can be used for harm or good.

So working together is a challenge. The key to successful collaboration is the quality of the relationships and this is characterised by the way difference is explored, recognised, and acknowledged.

Some best practices include:

• **The willingness to engage in task conflict.**

  » This requires a climate where constructive confrontation is possible. Representatives need to feel safe to engage in difference. In such a climate, perspective taking is possible, empathy can be shown and repairing can be done if difference has led to difficult emotions.

> ❝
>
> *Expectations are huge. There are large needs and so the National Society is in this kind of reactive mode to respond to everything. This is more evident at branch level because branches are so influenced by local authorities. Branch goes into a cycle where asked to respond to things that government sees as important, but the branch does not have capacity, so performance poor, then are perceived to not be performing. Branches feel the pressure more, the blame more, because right there. Branches feel more accountable to local authorities than National Headquarter. Add the conflict element…the branches and National Headquarter are affected by the political situation and this impacts all relationships.*

> ❝
>
> *Some of the branches that are well positioned have a stronger voice now and the National Headquarters are listening to them. They give us hints or tips with whom to meet and to start discussions. If the National Headquarters had a stronger voice, they cannot implement the tasks. It is better to have mutual understanding. It is not the point of who is stronger. We are very clear with our mission and priorities but there are different ways to implement and this can be subject for discussion.*

- **Building trust**

  » Trust is not likely to be present at the start of a relationship. It has to be developed over time. Trust can be developed by engaging in relationship and giving individuals an opportunity to fulfil expectations and demonstrate reliable behaviour. Trust allows branches and their internal and external partners to explore differences of opinion and conflicting views on how to undertake specific tasks. This type of constructive conflict helps branches to make more informed decisions.

- **Regular reflection.**

  » Reflective space is important because it allows the branch and its partners to review their dynamics so as to become more aware of how they are experiencing the relationship. Reflections on how a collaborative task was undertaken and how the relationships evolved during the task helps to develop understanding, to explore the reality of the relationship, repair any perceived unfairness, injustice or wrongdoing, and adjust how individuals are working together.
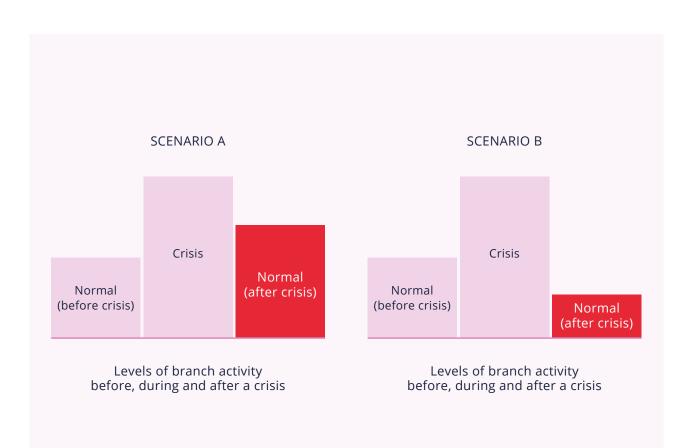
# Scaling-up without harm – Grow wisely

**For most branches, a major crisis (conflict or disaster) is the ultimate test of its ability. It is a moment of truth, when it must be seen to perform. If it does, image and support grows, if not, both may be affected negatively.**

The competencies required to perform well in a crisis are not innate, they are the result of preparation. They come from having the right people, resources, relationships and organisation.

Crisis is the time to grow for a branch as shown in scenario A below. In this scenario the branch has increased its capabilities through the experience of the operation and has been able to increase its normal level of activity post crisis. But if a branch as a result of a crisis becomes weaker and not stronger, as shown in Scenario B, then something has gone wrong.

SCENARIO A

Crisis

Normal
(before crisis)

Normal
(after crisis)

Levels of branch activity
before, during and after a crisis

SCENARIO B

Crisis

Normal
(before crisis)

Normal
(after crisis)

Levels of branch activity
before, during and after a crisis

Both the scaling up of service delivery during a response and the scaling down that follows a response are challenging situations and can cause harm to the long-term sustainability of the branch.

National Societies and their branches are still often perceived as a local platform through which Movement or other global humanitarian partners reach affected or vulnerable people. Whereas this is appropriate in some cases, particularly in situations of humanitarian crisis, it should not be a National Society's primary function.

There are examples of outside support (technical, financial, goods) that has left National Societies and branches with structures and systems that are unsustainable.
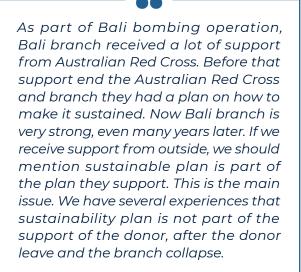
Such situations arise from:

- support that is poorly designed and not integrated into the culture and systems of the National Society and the branch
- changes arising from the support that alienate Members, volunteers and employees or undermine a branch's resource base
- changes in the ways of working that alienate local supporters and partners
- actions by outsiders that harm the image of the branch and impact its reputations for many years

On the other hand, when National Societies and branches actively manage external support, crisis becomes an opportunity for growth.

> *Why does a branch develop itself? To deliver services, in the time of emergency to scale-up with support from international actors...but beyond emergency how to maintain and sustain core services, scale down without affecting what was the branch before, and to strengthen relationships with local authorities.*

> *As part of Bali bombing operation, Bali branch received a lot of support from Australian Red Cross. Before that support end the Australian Red Cross and branch they had a plan on how to make it sustained. Now Bali branch is very strong, even many years later. If we receive support from outside, we should mention sustainable plan is part of the plan they support. This is the main issue. We have several experiences that sustainability plan is not part of the support of the donor, after the donor leave and the branch collapse.*

## Scaling up in sensitive and insecure contexts

The many issues that branches face during "peace" time are present and overlayed with rapid scale-ups in activity, complicated political dynamics, insecurity, and the specificities of foreign aid in conflict contexts. The more complex and widespread the conflict the more challenging branch development becomes. When disaster strikes, alongside conflict, this adds further complexity. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic has required that National Societies and their partners operating in insecure contexts to introduce adapted operational protocols. Because the characteristic of conflict often differs between locations a highly localised approach to supporting branch operational capacity building and development is required.

When a branch performs well in-service delivery during conflict there is greater trust in the branch and more independence from government and/or other parties to the conflict. However, conflict often challenges the independence of branches and their headquarters and the very unity of the National Society. If the country is divided along conflict lines it can be difficult for branches to travel and even communicate with their headquarters. Branches and headquarters may represent different ethnic groups, making communication more difficult. Consequently, branches may find it difficult to provide assistance to groups that are aligned to certain parties to the conflict.

Branch development is not automatically possible or desirable at specific time points in operations. However not prioritising branch development impacts humanitarian access, the safety and security of volunteers and employees and the risk of the branch collapsing once the crisis and international support ends. In such contexts branch development needs to be adapted to the political realities. Focusing on the capacity of branches to respond with acceptance, access and safety and security must be the priority but must also be viewed through a longer-term development lens.

The challenges of carrying out branch development during conflict highlights the critical importance of preparedness 'in times of peace'. Branches, no matter how small in scale, that are well positioned in peace times, well recognised as community responders and respected as principled humanitarians, are much more likely to be accepted by communities and to successfully negotiate access during conflict.

> **"**
>
> *Long term branch development perspectives are important even in conflict. What are those capacities that are operational and developmental? It also depends on the nature of war. Here we can see that mass destruction was the 'protocol' and the National Society really was impacted by this, they lost their infrastructure and now in rental units that are not sustainable.*

When some stabilisation returns, this offers the National Society and its branches the opportunity to plan beyond the day-to-day response. Stabilisation often means a reduction in international presence and financing. This ushers in new challenges for National Societies and their branches including a scaling down of conflict related activities and the need to identify what capacity and activities should be sustained for recovery and beyond. It may also mean changing relationships between headquarters and branches. As international support drops, the role that headquarters played in directing and coordinating international assistance will be diminished and a focus on supporting branches to realign their capacities and services, including transferring responsibilities back to government where appropriate, through targeted development interventions will become more central. If this is not prioritised branches exhausted from the response and with diminishing resources may spiral into decline. Another element is managing the changing nature of volunteering. Volunteers who have been involved in acute response activities need to be supported to transition to less acute activities.

> *This conflict is impacting the development of branches. Right now, the headquarters and branch relationship are day to day operations but not strategic. It is challenging for headquarters to visit the branches, and some are not accessible. The conflict is quite complex. You see branch leadership changing because of the pressure.*
>
> *There is a conflict. We have the sole mandate to be present. So, a large responsibility for the branch. How we are working in a difficult context to strengthen the branch. They are the true model of being auxiliary to the government and working 24/7 under the eyes of everyone there. So, we need to show that leadership is strong. We are still in the process of developing the branch's capacity. They are moving from 20 volunteers to more than 250 volunteers in 1.5 years. This is an indicator that the branch is working effectively with the community. We have used the number of volunteers as one of the indicators to show that working in the right direction. We started on different levels. Developed the capacity of the staff, volunteer management. we worked with branch manager to strengthen volunteer friendly spaces.*

# Innovation and digitalisation – Try new things

**The changes of the 21st century are complex and inter-related. We are seeing far greater leaps in education, technology, complexity, volatility, connectivity and networks than ever before.**

**The Covid-19 pandemic has been a stark reminder of the importance of local branches and established that a branch's ability to innovate and adapt is central to its relevance and effectiveness.**

Branches that were able to adapt to a different operational reality during the Covid-19 crisis, through the diversity and skills of their volunteers, the strength of their partnerships and their ability to adopt to new technologies, played significant roles in mitigating the crisis in their communities.

Branches who are developing their innovation and digitalisation in COVID time are:

- **Leveraging digital connection**

  » The rapid transition to digital technologies driven by the pandemic has impacted many branches. Effective integration of technology has been critical for National Societies and their branches to communicate, plan and implement activities under pandemic travel restrictions. Many branches have adapted to remote work using virtual technology to communicate internally, with their headquarters, partners, the people they serve, to access information and training and to support the delivery of services. Some National Societies have used digital technologies to do business as usual (e.g., board meetings) whilst others have experimented with new ideas (e.g., delivering training for volunteers online or launching apps to attract new volunteers).

  Access to computing devices and the internet is however uneven across National Societies and branches. Some branches have no access to a computing device, some branch Members and Volunteer have high speed internet at home, and many are somewhere in the middle. These differences in access are referred to as the digital divide and are often due to socio-economic, geographic and demographic factors. Even in high access countries, how much branches transition to digital technology will also be dependent on the profile of their people.

- **Ensuring security when going digital**

  » Digitalisation is accompanied by risks and branches must actively engage in discussions on cybersecurity issues. Educating volunteers and employees and joining networks and partnerships that can help accelerate digital learning and capacities will support the process.

- **Starting small and improving along the way**

  » Testing ideas, learning by doing and improving it along the way and scaling it up, was some key factor to allow creativity and adapt to changing context. To do this, culture of accepting imperfection, learning and adjusting from experience was essential.

There have also been some unexpected benefits from moving to online meetings. National Societies reported cost savings related to meeting online rather than face to face, greater participation of branches in decision making, and better attendance in general meetings and board meetings.

> **"**
>
> *Branches felt more valued by being connected to National Headquarter via zoom meetings. Now also more flexibility for board members who cannot participate physically can join meetings on zoom.*

Covid-19 continues to be an opportunity for branches to move forward in their innovation and digitalisation journey. Branches can continue to leverage the communication, coordination, and collective learning benefits available through digital connection for the benefit of their ongoing pandemic and non-pandemic activities. However, digitalisation is accompanied by risks and branches must actively engage in discussions on cybersecurity issues. Educating volunteers and employees and joining networks and partnerships that can help accelerate digital learning and capacities will support the process.

> *The pandemic has already pushed us a great step forward to mobilise technology. We use a lot of social media in running our activities. Again, from the pandemic, travel restrictions, so a lot of our meetings are using technology. So, I believe that technology can be a very important instrument that we should consider mobilising into the future to have greater impact.*
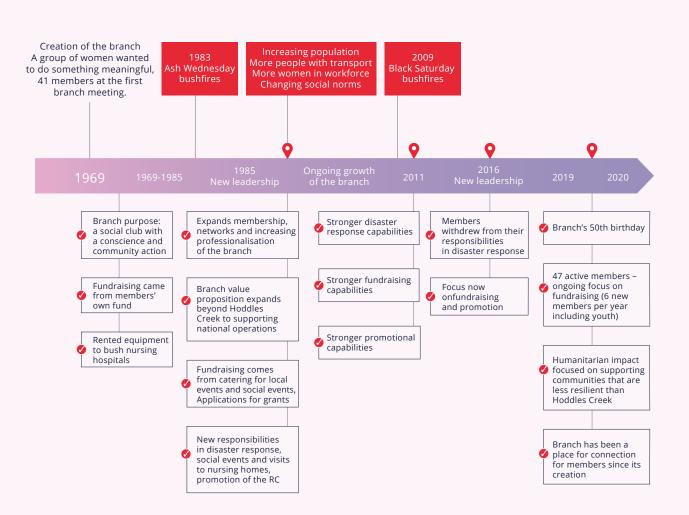
**Hoddles Creek Branch**, in the State of Victoria, Australia, was created in 1969 and for 51 years has been contributing to social connection and to the resilience of its local community and communities around the world. At its creation the branch defined its purpose as a social club with a conscience. In its early years the branch rented equipment to 'bush' hospitals and organised social events for its 41 female Members. Over time the branch's fundraising operations grew and the branch began contributing financially to national and international activities. The branch's local activities also expanded into disaster preparedness and response and the promotion of the Red Cross.

The current Chair, Jennifer Seebrook, says that "the branch has been able to sustain itself and remain relevant for more than 50 years because of its focus on social connection and belonging, a strong community spirit, and keeping branch activities simple. Activities have always been a reflection of what its members are able and willing to contribute".

Since Hoddles Creek community needs are mostly met by the government's strong social safety nets, the branch now focuses on promoting the Red Cross, and mobilising resources for communities, in other parts of Australia or overseas, communities that are less fortunate than Hoddles Creek.

■ **Figure 2** *Hoddles Creek branch Development journey map*

HODDLES CREEK BRANCH DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

# Sustainability - Stay relevant
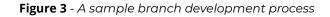
**Staying relevant can be challenging for a local branch. The way services are delivered, how these are resourced, how the branch is organised, and how it is perceived impacts the relevance and the longer-term sustainability of a branch.**
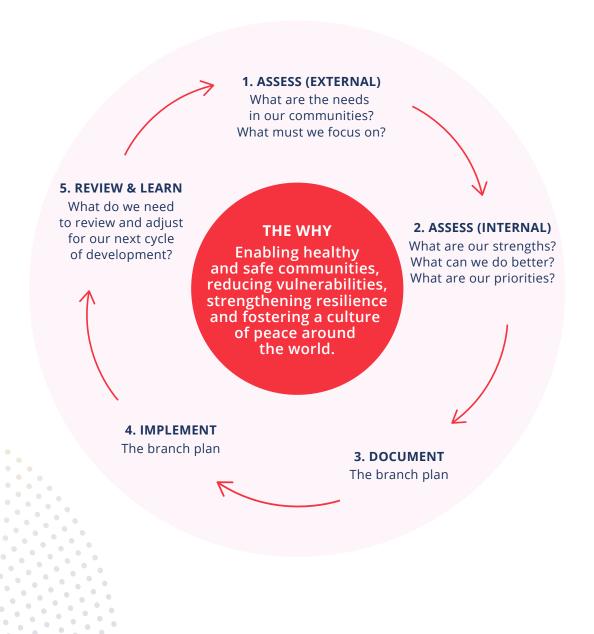
Lessons on sustainability from branches around the world include:

- Design services that are relevant and visible and that will attract community participation and resources.

- Design services that the branch can sustain using local resourcing.

- Focus on simple services that reduce the need to access external inputs.

- Do not change your services frequently, otherwise resource mobilizing and organizing resources will become more difficult.

- Keep processes simple so that you can focus on action and not administration.

- Using donor project funding only for one-off activities.

> *We are not working on what we call charity, but we are working more on sustainable development projects. Where communities can become more resilient and we are there to support that.*

> *Recruiting volunteers that are not part of the branch is something very unsustainable.*

> *If you are a service delivery organisation you have to start with the service level and design things that make that work, rather than starting with the top down, starting with strategies and policies. You have to start with the reality of making that work in a sustainable way from the bottom-up.*

# A SAMPLE BRANCH DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This section describes a sample branch development process. It is presented in a linear format but branch development is not a linear process; it is complex and messy. There are many potential triggers for branch development and the process will evolve in unexpected ways. The only thing we can be sure of is that you cannot plan for its many surprises and unexpected challenges.

**Figure 3** - *A sample branch development process*



**1. ASSESS (EXTERNAL)**
What are the needs
in our communities?
What must we focus on?

**2. ASSESS (INTERNAL)**
What are our strengths?
What can we do better?
What are our priorities?

**3. DOCUMENT**
The branch plan

**4. IMPLEMENT**
The branch plan

**5. REVIEW & LEARN**
What do we need
to review and adjust
for our next cycle
of development?

**THE WHY**
Enabling healthy
and safe communities,
reducing vulnerabilities,
strengthening resilience
and fostering a culture
of peace around
the world.

## STEP 1    What are the needs of our communities?

Involves analysing the needs of the communities that the branch serves. This information may already be available to the branch or the branch may have to undertake a needs assessment, or update an existing assessment.

**Videos**

Strong Branch: **Ukraine**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QR0YhMIZ1I

> *Branch development for me means developing with a changing community and changing needs. I have seen a lot of change in mindset. We had over 5–10 years were in a same space. There was a culture of waiting for permission and we flicked that on its head and taking that permission culture away and tried to create an enabling culture. I have seen them develop that mindset to run ideas to us rather than saying can we do this.*
>
> — Australian Red Cross

## STEP 2    What are the branch's capacities? Development areas?

Involves undertaking an analysis of the branch's capacities and areas for development and based on this determining where the branch can have the most impact in addressing local needs.

The Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA), which is a self-assessment tool developed for National Society branches to identify and assess their strengths, limitations and challenges in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities, can be used as the first step in a branch development process. In some cases, branches use the Safer Access Framework (SAF) as a relevant approach to work on access specifically, given that access is needed for the branch to be able to deliver services.

**Videos**

BOCA: **South Sudan**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx_gS-yd8pA

> *We only started using Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) eight years into this Branch Development journey, and we could have done it earlier. Because BOCA gives you broad understanding of branch capacities. This baseline would have been useful earlier. In Dusheti Branch for example we started BOCA in 2019 and after this session many participants told us <now we understood the meaning of the branch development and we see the ways how to move our branch forward>. This was one of our mistakes.*

## STEP 3  What must we include in our plan of action?

Once the branch has undertaken an external and internal assessment it can develop a plan of action that outlines how it will achieve its priorities. The plan will cover both the activities that the branch intends to implement in communities as well as any internal work that is required to develop the competencies of the branch.

At the National Headquarters level, some National Societies consolidate the outcomes from the branches' capacity assessment, conduct a national wide analysis and include collective priorities in its national plans such as Strategic Plans or National Society Development plans.

## STEP 4  Let's implement our plan!

This is the implementation of the plan. The plan may need to be adjusted to adapt to changing conditions as they emerge, with the branch switching between pre-planned actions and adaptive responses along the way.

In some cases, the National Headquarterssupport branches by facilitating peer-support or link to information and knowledge to enable branches to implement its plans.

### Videos

Branch Planning and Budgeting: **Mongolia**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiVleZR7faA

BOCA: **Indonesia**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7wB1NjW3M4

## STEP 5  What have we achieved and learned? What do we need to change?

This involves reviewing the status of the branch's work against its plan, what has been achieved, what has been learned and what needs to be adjusted or adapted for the next cycle of development.

Branch development can occur through small incremental changes, for example improving your branch's election or volunteer induction processes, or through more significant changes, such as diversifying your volunteer base or scaling up your team, resources, systems and processes to lead a large disaster response operation.

# Alternatives to branch development

## Other branch level interventions – establishing, amalgamating, recessing, closing

Sometimes branch development is not the appropriate frame, for example when a group is forming a branch or a decision has been made to amalgamate, recess or close a branch

Support to branches in formation is important for ensuring appropriate processes are in place to design and deliver relevant services, to effectively communicate with local actors including local government, and to ensure that any pre-branch Members and volunteers are kept abreast of any changes in operational and communication protocols.

A decision may also be taken to amalgamate branches. This may arise from the desire to merge resources and operations to strengthen RC impact and/or reduce competition in a particular area, or as a result of changes in government administrative boundaries. In such cases applying good change management approaches will be essential to manage the interests and expectations of the various internal and external stakeholders.

In some instances, branches decide that temporarily ceasing operations is required. Here again good communications with all key stakeholders will be important to ensure that there are no misunderstandings and so as to facilitate the resumption of operations when this takes place. From time to time it is necessary to close a branch. This is usually a last resort – after all other possible options or solutions have been exhausted. In this case the intermediary branch or headquarters needs to ensure all stakeholders are appropriately consulted on the appropriate process for closing.

From time to time it is necessary to close a branch. This is usually a last resort – after all other possible options or solutions have been exhausted. In this case the intermediary branch or headquarters needs to ensure all stakeholders are appropriately consulted on the appropriate process for closing.

> 66
>
> *Developing a branch is not the only solution, sometimes you need to close or merge or start again from ashes!*

> 66
>
> *We need to ensure National Society have all the necessary information to start and also close branch, the latter also needs to be done very sensitively. In Kiribati they used a declaration they got signed by the first lady of the country for a new branch. In Tonga the island chief were also present and signed a local declaration. So there are also local protocols and how these fit into the RC protocols.*

## Australian Red Cross – Closing branches with heart
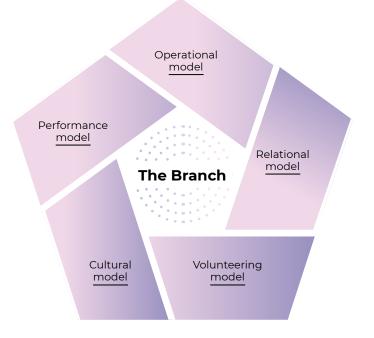
Australian Red Cross' membership numbers have remained stable over the last decade, however many new members have joined as individual members. In contrast branch membership has declined. In the state of Victoria branches have struggled to attract younger members and find themselves with an ageing membership. In some locations branch members have reached an age where they cannot dedicate as much time to the Red Cross and are unable to keep up with the governance requirements of a branch but are still interested in contributing to the Red Cross in less formal ways.

In order to address this situation Australian Red Cross has introduced a new Red Cross unit called Friends of Red Cross. These units can continue to organise activities without having to satisfy the normal governance requirements including holding office bearer roles. This is a good example of a National Society adapting its branch model to meet changing membership needs. Alongside this work, Australian Red Cross is working with other branches to regenerate their membership. Moving from a culture of seeking permission to a culture of enabling branches to implement their ideas, reducing bureaucratic processes, and partnering with other organisations are part of the strategy for regeneration.

# ANNEX 1: WHAT TYPES OF BRANCH MODELS ARE THERE?

**The ideas presented in this section are an adaptation of organisational management models. The models reflect the continuum of choices available to branches in each area of activity.**

Operational
model

Performance
model

Relational
model

**The Branch**

Cultural
model

Volunteering
model

A branch 'model' is a representation of certain elements of a branch. Models can help us to describe and explore how branches are organised today and to consider alternative ways of being organised.

This section presents a number of sample, but not exclusive, models on how branches around the world operate, relate, manage volunteers, track performance, behave (branch culture), and create impact.

Each model are broken down in to specific elements. Viewers may use these elements and the presented axes to explore how branches are organised today and to consider alternative ways of being organised.
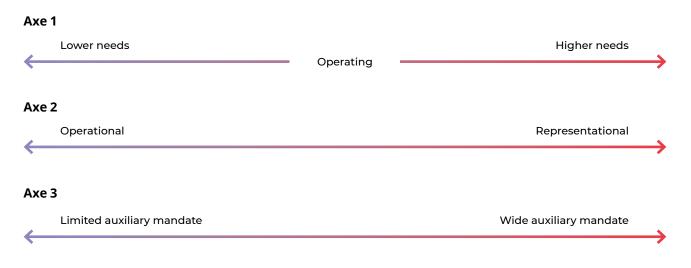
How a branch is led and managed today may not be how it will need to be managed tomorrow. Branches adapt depending on their evolving internal and external context. Strong branches reflect on their internal and external context regularly to ensure that their branch model is the most relevant for their current context.

The challenge for branches is managing the tensions within each dimension and determining how to most appropriately shape the work of the branch.
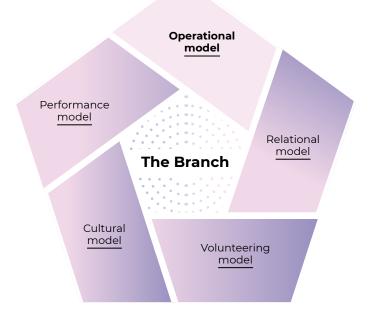
# How to use

Taking three axes from the "Operational Model" and "Relational Model" as examples; a branch operating in a lower-need area (Axe 1), may choose to create impact by raising funds in the community in order to contribute to work in higher-need areas in other parts of its country or the world. In this scenario the branch chooses a more representational branch model (Axe 2), with a narrower auxiliary role (Axe 3) but establishes strong local relationships with individuals and organisations who are interested in financially contributing to the humanitarian work of the Red Cross in other locations.

Alternatively, if a branch is in a disaster-prone area (higher needs) it may determine that it must be proactive in supporting its community to prepare for the next shock, and therefore chooses a more operational role. This branch invests in training its volunteers as first responders and works closely with local authorities to develop a wider auxiliary role.

**Axe 1**

Lower needs      ⟵━━━━━━━━━━ Operating ━━━━━━━━━━⟶      Higher needs

**Axe 2**

Operational      ⟵━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━⟶      Representational

**Axe 3**

Limited auxiliary mandate      ⟵━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━⟶      Wide auxiliary mandate

# Operational Model: What structure and processes do branches have in place to respond to community needs?



Here the operating model of a branch refers to the structures and processes[2] a branch has in place, or wishes to put in place, to deliver its services.

The axes listed below are just a few examples of what branches consider when exploring their operational model.

## Voices that inform action

One dimension that determines a branch's operating model relates to which voices inform branch action.

Community led action                                                                 Donor led action

⟵──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────⟶

- Community-led action: Sometimes community members can find it difficult to make their voices heard. In such situations, branches may create processes for communities to speak out about the issues that affect them and make their voices heard to influence decision-makers. Prioritising community voices is a recognition by the branch that community members are experts on the challenges that affect them and the solutions available to them. This approach is represented on the left of the above dimension diagram.

- An alternative approach is 'Donor-led' action: Donors are important stakeholders, and their policy positions and conditioned funding often inform the direction of branch action.

- It is essential for the branch to be guided by the needs of local communities rather than to be solely directed by donors. Some branches find it difficult to manage the tensions created by these different stakeholder voices. Others are able to strike the right balance, ensuring that community voices guide their actions whilst being responsive to donor needs.

*"For us it (branch development) was about clarifying the role of the branch, developing a consensus on the role, having branches to do its own needs assessments and shifting from donor-based activities to activities based on needs assessment. It is still too early to talk about major changes, and it will take 10 years. Need a long-term view! Shift of mind. Shift of culture."*
*Lebanese Red Cross*

2   Note: The term 'structure' refers to how groups within a branch are constructed and how tasks are distributed across these groups. The term 'process' refers to a collection of linked tasks which result in the delivery of services to communities.

## Level and nature of needs

Another dimension relates to the level of needs the branches face

- In a **low-need context** a branch may determine that its actions are best focused on small scale social support activities and the promotion of the fundamental principles and fundraising.
- In a **high-need context** there will be more focus on developing preparedness and response capacities. In some instances branches need to balance local needs assessment with the programmatic priorities of the National Society.

*"What is a strong branch, in my mind it is very philosophical, because every branch can be strong in its own way. Everything depends on the context where this branch has an authority and everything depends on needs."*

## Stability and Agility

Additionally, the way branches are structured whether to have stability or invest in agility[3] will have an impact on how the branches response and operate.

Lower needs                                                                 Higher needs

Operating

- The working practices such as how volunteers are supported impacts the "stability" of the branch. And the working practices that facilitate quick responses, such as onboarding spontaneous volunteers or giving more autonomy of decision making to volunteers in an emergency impacts the "agility" of the branch. Some branches opt for simpler structures and processes in order to be more agile.

- Many branches have had to adapt within short time frames to the Covid-19 threat in their communities and quick responses have been essential. On the other hand, decision speed can compromise the quality of decision making, including for example the safety of volunteers, whilst reduced administrative control can impact efficiency and accountability.

*"In a place where branches are strong and volunteers are motivated, where there is a real spirit of the Red Cross, we see a local fast action. Some of the bigger National Societies working internationally have large bureaucracies. The National Societies as an institution does not need to be a bureaucratic monster. It can adapt. If you have local branches that are empowered to act...of course it will also differ between countries. Culture is key. In a country like Sweden and Denmark, volunteering is in the blood of the people. If they are not involved in the Red Cross they will be involved in other local organisations. If you respond to local needs that is the definition of being agile." Danish Red Cross*

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3   Stability refers to those working practices that support consistency in the way the branch operates. Agility refers to working practices that facilitate quick responses.

## Autonomy and Control

Finally, the level of autonomy and the control[4] the branches face has implications on how it can independently think, act and develop local solutions.

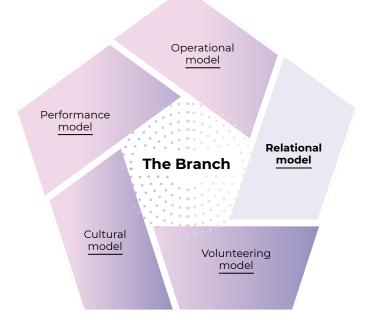Local autonomy decentralised                                    National control centralised

Empowerment – Unity

- Branches and their National Societies are often challenged when trying to manage the tensions between autonomy and control, freedom and constraint, empowerment and accountability, and top-down-direction and bottom-up creativity.
- In contexts where branches have far-reaching autonomy, National Societies are challenged to achieve national unity.
- On the one hand autonomy can support responsiveness to local issues and sustainability. At the same time, it can challenge national identity and performance.
- Spending time addressing relational tensions is important for the internal coherence of the Society. Reinterpreting or modifying statutes can also help to resolve some of the tensions.

*"The trigger was a big management change and newly elected President. The new leadership wanted to make big change for the National Society. Public attitudes towards the organisation were quite negative. People believed Red Cross belonged to the government. We didn't do much community work. This is why we changed our statutes to reduce the political influence at all levels. Financial management, volunteer management has improved, we have policies and guidelines and branches are more disciplined and we respect their autonomy." Mongolia Red Cross*

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4   Autonomy refers to the right or ability of a branch to govern itself. Control refers to the rules, structures and processes imposed by the branch and the wider National Society, that must be adhered to, for example, rules on how to organise branch board elections. Autonomy encourages individual curiosity, independent thinking, action and the freedom to develop local solutions to local needs, whilst controls are important for efficiency, accountability and National Society unity.

# Relational Model: What relationships do branches have with their stakeholders?



Branches are created and sustained through internal and external relationships. The mission of branches calls for collaboration with communities, and a range of civil society, private and public sector organisations.

The axes identified below are but a few examples of what branches consider when exploring their relational approaches.

## Transparency and Accountability

How a branch communicates with people and how it shares information, determines what kind of relationship its builds with its stakeholders.

Less transparent, less accountable ← → More transparent, more accountable

- Strong accountability to communities is achieved through branch volunteers and Members sharing honest, timely and accessible information with communities about who they are and what they are doing. It is also achieved through finding ways to engage community members in guiding service design and delivery and setting up systems for responding and acting on feedback, questions and complaints.

- Furthermore, financial supporters place their trust in the branch to use their funds and expect a branch to demonstrate that these are used wisely and efficiently. A branch that does not achieve expected standards, or fails to perform, will lose the trust of communities and supporters. A branch that regularly shares information, explains progress and challenges, and invites feedback and ideas, will provide stronger accountability and nurture trust with all its stakeholders. This could also be said in its relationship with the National headquarters. When branches are accountable and sharing information, it generates more communication, understanding and support.

*"The role of the governing board is very important. Because they are elected by the branches, they have the full responsibility to ensure that branches are working with regards to governing well. I believe that we need to do more to ensure that we*

*have flexible and adapted way that all leaders are equipped by the knowledge and skills. At least we have procedures in place to ensure they are implementing the fundamental principles and they also know what accountability they need to show." Egyptian Red Crescent*

## Auxiliary Role

As an auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Societies play an important role as a bridge between communities and authorities. The mandate given through its Auxiliary role influences what kind of relationship it builds with its local government.

Limited auxiliary mandate          Wide auxiliary mandate

⟵⟶

- The auxiliary role is a part of the legal foundation of every recognised National Society and is included in the domestic law of the country. The auxiliary role can include opportunities for dialogue at all levels, service provision, technical counsel, guarantees for independence, and opportunities to influence priorities to meet needs. Branches determine how to best leverage the National Society's auxiliary role in their local context. Some branches in high need contexts may negotiate a robust and wide auxiliary role, whilst branches in lower need contexts may have a more limited auxiliary role.

*"We have the main role to coordinate humanitarian action. This is a government decree. Our vision is to provide services everywhere. We have good leadership who are very strong on the fundamental principles and the importance of protecting the emblem. Our branches have been in the frontline. The war separated communities, but we are well-recognised community responders, we were highly respected before the conflict through our branches, and this has ensured we can negotiate access." Syrian Arab Red Crescent*

*"The National Society helped ICRC and the UN get in there and negotiated with the parties to get aid into sensitive areas." Cooperation Coordinator, ICRC, Syria*

## Interpersonal Power

Interpersonal power[5] can be harmful or beneficial.

"Power to" empower          "Power over" dominate

⟵⟶

- The ability of an individual or group within a branch to influence others or to constrain their choices is described in this relational dimension as "Power over". This is a feature of all relationships and can be based on force, expertise, access to information, or a specific leadership role.

  On the other side of the dimension, the ability to act or empowering others to act, is described as "Power to".

  Being in a powerful or a powerless position in a branch impacts on the way individuals perceive others, how they make judgments, and how they behave. Branch leaders and branch supporters must strive to be conscious of the power they hold, to know when to exercise 'power over' or 'power to', and to always use power in line with the principles and values of the Red Cross.

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5  Interpersonal power refers to the ability to act or to influence or control the behaviour of others

*"I have been growing through my volunteering and then growing into (branch) leadership role. When you become a leader you realise that you need to take responsibility when you take some challenge. Having responsibility and making decisions but you need to be a team leader with the help of your team to overcome challenges."*

## Networking

Each branch is part of a global network of branches spread across 192 member National Societies. In some context branches are connected to one another within the country and with information available globally, others have a centralised managed approach.
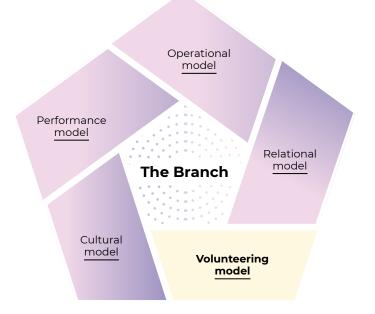
Distributed network                                                        Restircted network

←                                                             →

- Branches share a common mission, common principles and ideals, and common challenges. Facilitating branch to branch communications within National Societies and across national borders makes available to branches the vast resources (knowledge, ideas, funds, goods and services) that exist across the globe for problem solving, innovation, learning and partnership. This is the described as distributed network. As we have witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic, a branch that is digitally connected can better access the knowledge, communities, capabilities and resource opportunities that are available virtually.
- The other side of the dimension is a restricted network, where communication between branches is managed centrally. This approach supports control and top-down direction.

*"The main thing that helped us was knowledge and experience among branches. Because the branches themselves could see the development progress presented by other branches. By colleagues at local level."*

*"We are disconnected from the Movement...I don't see any real connection between our branches and the international Movement. We could share stories across branches in our country and with branches in other National Societies. Stories promote diversity of thinking and could inspire our branches to go outside their comfort zone. Why can't we do that? Is that something we can do? As a person who likes to listen to stories, I would love to hear stories from overseas, it creates a deeper connection, empathy and understanding of our collective endeavour."*

# Volunteering Model: How do branches facilitate, support, recognise and protect volunteers?



Community-based initiatives have more legitimacy and currency with communities when local volunteers are engaged. Additionally, volunteering in and of itself can also support development, particularly through enhancing individual and community resilience and capacity by building social capital, supporting personal development, social cohesion and connectivity.

Some branches rely on a volunteering model that is almost entirely reliant on recruiting volunteers to deliver services which the National Society has designed. Other branches have chosen a model where individuals can make a difference in a lighter or more agile way.

The axes identified below are but a few examples of what branches consider when exploring their volunteering models.

## Self-organising

Some branches rely on a volunteering model that is almost entirely reliant on recruiting volunteers to deliver services which the National Society has designed. Other branches have chosen a model where individuals can make a difference in a lighter or more agile way.

Self-organized                                                              Control

- In many parts of the world, how people want to volunteer is changing. People want flexible volunteering opportunities, short-term engagements, and more ease of access remotely.

*"Through our social media platforms and newsletters, we encourage people, we say <look after those around you. If you know of vulnerable people in your area we encourage you to look after them."*

- In this spirit, more and more National Societies and their branches are exploring and creating a more open (self-organised) models of volunteering. This means providing the resources, tools, skills, and spaces where people can self-organise, and create and implement the change they want to see in their street, community or the world.

*"In Ethiopia community/neighbourhood-based volunteerism called the Self Development Programme, enables small communities or areas to come together and offer each other help. In France the "Redtouch" platform is short-term project volunteer platform with financial and technical support for volunteers implementing non-Red Cross activities. In Mexico the National Society is using Biker sub-culture to promote road safety. The Netherlands Red Cross Ready2Help is an online, ad hoc volunteering platform where 100.000+ volunteers are registered and mobilised through their mobile phones in times of crisis."*

*"Young people don't align so much to the traditional old branch power models. They say that to solve the problem you have to be at the centre of the problem. Branches are declining here; young people are not interested in that model… but we do need to do something to keep connection to communities. We are working with young people who have lived experience of a problem and supporting them to work on that problem. This model has potential for success."*

- Some branches do not feel ready to implement novel approaches highlighting that in their context volunteering is a relatively new activity which still requires oversight. Furthermore, some National Societies are finding it difficult to balance a self-organising approach whilst ensuring the protection of volunteers.

*"At this stage we are still guiding the volunteers, we are not ready for this (self-organising) stage yet. Volunteering is not very old concept for Mongolia…young generation who are now volunteering are more active. Volunteering has started by the Red Cross here. Also Red Cross volunteers work in hard conditions. They could have some dangerous places. They do work with harsh conditions, like homeless dogs, extreme cold, unsafe infrastructure, where could slip and fall. So we do need to guide the volunteer because of safety regards." —Mongolia Red Cross*

Some view the traditional branch as an antiquated model for facilitating humanitarian action, or at best an option that needs to exist alongside other models of humanitarian engagement, such as online social action and social support groups, e-volunteering and the promotion of pro-social behaviours outside an organisational framework. Indeed, for those who are geographically distant, or have less time availability, or with mobility limitations, or with a preference for individual volunteering, access to the internet opens up a world of social action opportunities as well as a means to enhance one's online identity. These new models present an increasing challenge to the notion that volunteering is necessarily mediated by an organisation and are contributing to the decline of branches in some contexts.

*"We are stuck on what branches were rather than what they can be. The lens has to be ways of participating rather than structures…we must look at issues-based engagement rather than institutional. Young people don't need to be associated with an organisation. People already have a digital identity on social media…they want to affirm that identity. These people see themselves as a youth justice person not a Red Cross person. Branches can still be creative places for connecting to people, but they need to be more issues based." —Australian Red Cross*

## Level of diversity

Branches can ensure that volunteers, youth and Members are representative of the diversity of their communities by fostering engagement with groups that might be under-represented in decision making.

Diverse/inclusive                                                                          Homogenous/inclusive

- Connecting with the younger generation of change agents requires adapting branch ways of doing to better meet needs and interests of young people, including supporting their participation in leadership and decision making.
- Diversity is not only about age and gender. It also reflects the ethnicity.

## Level of connectedness

People's increasing digital access is changing the way in which we can reach new communities of volunteers and engage with people who may not have engaged with us before.

Locally                                          Nationally                                          Internationally

Volunteers connected

Digital volunteer base                                                              Face-to-face volunteer base

- Effective integration of technology has been critical for National Societies and their branches to communicate, plan and implement activities under pandemic travel restrictions. There have also been some unexpected benefits from moving to online meetings. National Societies report cost savings related to meeting online rather than face to face, greater participation of branches in decision making, and better attendance in meetings.

*"Technology in our branch did not exist for many years. We had old PC that did not work well. With the help of donors, we managed to have a laptop, internet. Face to face has been priority for our branch but now with the pandemic we are starting to communicate virtually and so this is new for us."*

## Volunteering or 'cheap labour for hire'

Volunteer action has been part of the Movement for over 150 years. However, the persistent practice of employing volunteers as low-paid casual labour in some parts of the world is undermining community volunteering and brings into question claims that volunteering has a positive impact on development.

Volunteers                                                                                      "Cheap labour"

- We cannot assume that volunteering as such will necessarily make a positive contribution; if volunteers are used as a form of 'cheap labour' for service delivery, or volunteers from some communities are excluded or unable to participate, then volunteering will exacerbate inequalities.
- The move toward professionalisation is generating a growing dilemma for the IFRC. On the one hand we publicise our local presence and capabilities, embodied in our volunteers, on the other National Societies face enormous pressures to deliver results as if they were a large corporation.
- Measuring up to standards and demonstrating accountability is not always consistent with the realities of locally-led volunteer action and the more organic and fluid ways in which this action emerges. In many humanitarian operations, in order to deliver results, the majority of our volunteers are paid.

*"We don't like to admit it, but all volunteers are paid to do what they do in this operation."*

*"Here if no per diem people don't want to volunteer. Just participating in a workshop requires a per diem and leaders receive more than other participants…this creates imbalance. What they did in that National Society is to develop a volunteering policy. They specified what it means to be a volunteer…and you cannot be chosen for work roles if you don't do your volunteering for the RC…We are part of the problem; we use volunteers while not doing volunteer work. They are loading and unloading materials for a full day. This should be paid work. There needs to be a common policy between partners."*

## Protection

Furthermore, the engagement of local volunteers in the context of crisis cannot obviate the need for appropriate protection and support to ensure their safety.
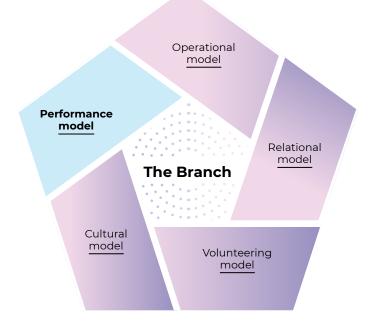
Strong safety culture          Weak safety culture

⟵————————————————————————————⟶

- Listening to the voices of volunteer managers and volunteers is critical to ensuring that volunteering is a positive and safe experience for all. This is an area of concern for National Societies, and many are developing or strengthening their systems and processes to strengthen the protection of volunteers. They are also working with their partners to ensure these organisations contribute to the protection of volunteers.

*"Volunteers sometimes do their jobs in very poor condition…the whole area is in dire conditions, it is a hard geography, can only access some places by water and it is expensive to move from one location to another. Volunteers have to work with uniforms in terrible conditions or no uniform at all, bad shoes, no cell phones, no computer, no volunteer ID…They have a table but no chairs. The volunteers often using their own resources. If they do a mission, they need to report to headquarters 24 hours in advance, to the security focal point… But as they don't have a computer or phone, so they end up paying for internet point to send the message. For such a context you need a longer-term strategy."*

# Performance Model: How do branches track their performance?



The performance of a branch can be viewed through its ability to deliver services for as long as they are needed.

The axes identified below are but a few examples of what branches consider when exploring their performance models.

## Sustainability

It is the services which justify the existence of the branch and, as such, are likely to provide the branch with the local importance and legitimacy to attract the local resources to sustain itself, even in resource-poor environments.

Long-term services ⟵⟶ Short-term projects

Diversified local resources ⟵⟶ Dependence on one supporter, poorly aligned support

- Some branches manage to sustain important community services with limited or no funds, drawing solely on people (Members and volunteers) and other community resources (for example vehicles, venues and radio or television airtime).

- "We just want our branches to really work at community level to keep these little country towns and communities strong. We are encouraging our branches to look at their skills and apply those skills to something relevant. We are asking them to identify what the needs are in their communities…we ask them to learn and explore, connect with other groups to see what else is going on. This is important for the sustainability of our branches."

- External actors may support branches through political, technical and financial support. When this external support is wisely designed it can deepen the capacities, relevance and reach of the branch and lead to sustained humanitarian action.

- However, National Societies and their branches are still perceived by some as a local platform through which Movement or other global humanitarian partners reach affected or vulnerable people. Whereas this is appropriate in some cases, particularly in situations of humanitarian crisis, it should not be a National Society's primary function. When external support is poorly designed the sustainability of the branch may be impacted. Implementing short-term projects without a clear long-term strategy, creates unrealistic expectations of the branch in local populations and can draw on limited resources from other areas of the branch's work.

*"Projects come and go, emergencies come and go. If they come without proper structure, external support is temporary and at the end they go and everything is gone and branch remains as they were and in some cases in worse state. We should link the development of National Society to the local structure…we as a Movement we develop good tools but what I see is lacking is the implementation, good policies but when it comes to implementation, we forget the policy and do something different. Evaluation and evaluation and when we read these reports we find the same findings for many years. So if I may ask you, what is the problem?"*

## Service delivery approach

Additionally, the way service are delivered have an implications on how a branch performs.

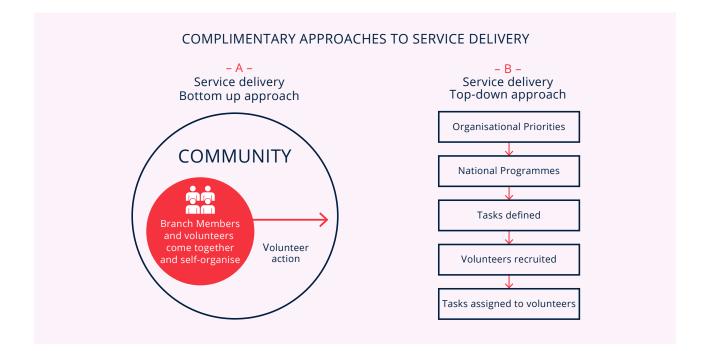Top-down                                                                 Bottom-up

- In many branches, Members represent the core base of active humanitarians. These Members play an active role in listening to communities, developing an understanding of needs and proposing and organising locally sustainable services and set a bottom-up approach to decision making and service delivery (as shown in model A below)

  On the otherhand, the focus on delivery of top-down nationally designed projects and services (as shown in model B below), such as emergency response, can sometimes be at the expense of supporting self-organising action at branch level (as shown in model A below). The top-down approach can also involve volunteers coming from other communities to perform a time-bound task and then returning to their own community, sometimes without the knowledge of the local branch, and therefore not contributing to developing a sustainable capacity in the beneficiary community.

  A lack of balance between these two performance models can lead to issues with sleeping branches, disgruntled Members and branch volunteers, poor territorial coverage, reduced capacity to meet localised needs, and poorer acceptance and access in times of crisis.

## COMPLIMENTARY APPROACHES TO SERVICE DELIVERY

**– A –**
Service delivery
Bottom up approach

**– B –**
Service delivery
Top-down approach

COMMUNITY

Branch Members and volunteers come together and self-organise

Volunteer action

Organisational Priorities

National Programmes

Tasks defined

Volunteers recruited

Tasks assigned to volunteers

## Access

The ability of a branch to access communities or populations in need impacts a branch's performance.

Full access

Impeded access

- Access without constraints is essential to establish services or operations, to move goods and volunteers where they are needed, to implement distributions, provide health services and carry out other activities.
- Access is also essential for communities and affected populations to be able to fully benefit from the assistance and services made available.

# Cultural Model: What values and behaviours guide the work of branches?



Culture refers to the patterns of learned beliefs and behaviours that are shared among groups and includes thoughts, communication styles, ways of interacting, views of roles and relationships, values, practices, and customs.

The leaders of a branch play a role in shaping the culture of a branch through their beliefs, assumptions, words, decisions and actions.
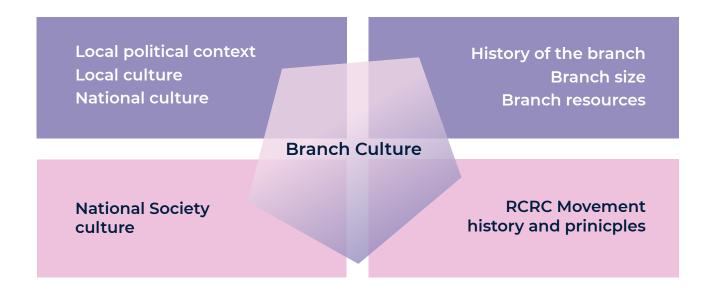
Branch culture can be seen as:

- **The result of problem solving over time.**

  » Branch culture develops over time as members deal with internal and external problems related to people or tasks.

- **A consensus of views.**

  » It emerges as a consensus among members about the branch and how it functions.

- **Acquired through socialisation.**

  » It is acquired by new members to the branch through experience and a process of socialisation.

- **Multi-layered - it occurs at different levels.**

  » From easily observable artefacts (stories of success and failure, spoken and written words, behaviours, rituals and ceremonies, rewards and punishment), to values, and basic beliefs and assumptions (unconsciously held ways of perceiving, thinking and feeling).

*"I have always been impressed by the branches. Branches have values in the right place."*

Beliefs, values and behaviours are influenced by the context in which the branch has evolved, as shown in the diagram below. As the diagram shows, the culture of the branch I informed by its local context, but at the same time, National and global culture of Red Cross Red Crescent also influences the branch culture.

**Local political context**
**Local culture**
**National culture**

**History of the branch**
**Branch size**
**Branch resources**

**Branch Culture**

**National Society culture**

**RCRC Movement history and prinicples**

# ANNEX 2: CONTRIBUTION TO THE CASE-COLLECTION

## Gender, Organisation

*Female*
**46** ● ● ● ● ◗

*Male*
**37** ● ● ● ◖

*National Society*
**56** ● ● ● ● ● ◖

*IFRC*
**11** ● ◖

*ICRC*
**11** ● ●

*External*
**6** ◖

## Organisational level

*Branch*
**24** ● ● ◗

*Headquarters*
**33** ● ● ● ◖

*Country*
**15** ● ◗

*Regional*
**5** ◔

*Global*
**6** ◖

## Region

*Africa*
**10** ●

*Americas*
**6** ◖

*Asia Pacific*
**17** ● ◗

*Europe*
**34** ● ● ● ◖

*Middle East*
**9** ●

*some have duplicated role both at the Branch level and at the National Headquarter level. "Country" "Regional, "Global" stands for those who are delegate or staff of IFRC, ICRC and PNS International Department