

World First Aid Day – 12 September 2015

WFAD Concept note / Geneva / 22 June 2015

Introduction

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been the world's leading first aid trainer and provider for more than 150 years. In 2012, **more than 14 million people** were trained worldwide by 77 National Societies.

While the marketplace has changed, our belief that performing first aid is an act of humanity – not just a series of techniques – has not.

World First Aid Day (WFAD), **Saturday 12 September**, is a time to promote first aid knowledge and skills around the globe, to bring about the change we know is needed to enhance, expand and improve first aid training worldwide as an act of humanitarian empowerment and as a key component of a wider resilience approach.

At the Global Community Resilience Forum in Cali, Colombia in November 2014, the IFRC announced the [One Billion Coalition for Resilience](#), a new initiative to increase community and civic action on resilience. Within the next 10 years, the goal is to engage at least one person in every household around the world – in high-, middle- and low- income countries – to take active steps towards enhancing individual and community resilience. An essential component of this initiative will be around promoting first aid skills building.

2015 theme

This year, the main theme is “**First aid and ageing population**”. The idea is to build a positive image of ageing and recognize older people as an important resource for society. We also want to encourage older people self-empowerment, strengthening their resilience and capacity to be autonomous, while promoting their inclusion in society as actors and not only as beneficiaries. Indeed, we believe that older people can be transformed from being “cared for” into “people providing quality integrated care”.

Last year's theme highlighted the need for “**First aid heroes**” in daily emergencies and disasters. The message was that neither a cape nor superpowers are needed to be a hero: “First aid saves lives. Everyone, everywhere can be a hero”.

This same message and slogan “**Be a hero. Save lives. First aid is for everyone, everywhere.**” remains relevant to this year theme. Older people can be heroes and support their peers, their grandchildren and other people in several ways. Therefore, the visual identity, slogan and theme are a continuation from last year's WFAD campaign, with a focus on older people.

Overview

Between 2000 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will double from about 11 per cent to 22 per cent. The absolute number of people aged 60 years and above is expected to increase from 605 million to 2 billion over the same period.

Low- and middle-income countries will experience the most rapid and dramatic demographic change. It took more than 100 years for France's population aged 65 or older to double from 7 per cent to 14 per cent. In comparison, it will take countries like Brazil and China less than 25 years to reach the same stage.¹

The ongoing demographic change confronts society with complex challenges and raises questions concerning the active role of older people within the social system, their quality of life and their well-being, their autonomy as well as the interdependence and communication between the generations. From a social point of view, in some countries, older people are increasingly being excluded.

Older people are more susceptible to falling and also at an increased risk of developing health problems such as, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Being able to take preventive measures, recognize early signs and provide the necessary first aid treatment can reduce suffering and save lives.

As many countries are facing economic crises, the involvement of the state in the provision of health care is reducing while the costs are going up. In 2013, in the USA, the direct medical costs of older people falls, adjusted for inflation, was United States dollars 34 billion. With the population ageing, both the number of falls and the costs to treat fall injuries are likely to increase.²

In emergency situations, older people can be especially vulnerable: when communities are displaced by natural disasters or armed conflict, older people may be unable to flee or travel long distances and may be left behind.

However, while ageing might bring new humanitarian challenges, it also brings opportunities along. People over 60 – like rest of population – enhance their own quality of life, as well as the lives of others, by participating in social, cultural and civic life. They have innumerable skills, knowledge and experiences to share with the community and younger generations. Engaging them and promoting a sense of belonging, participation and usefulness in their communities can have a considerable effect on their physical and mental health. It helps with cognitive abilities, depression, and anxiety or confusion, as well as with their aches and pains, mobility, and balance problems.

Goal and Objectives

Through WFAD, we aim to:

- recognize older people as an important resource for society,
- build a positive image of ageing within society,
- strength social inclusion of older people,
- make older people aware about how to prevent accidents,
- empower older people with life-saving skills – to be first aid heroes.

Key Top line Messages

¹ WHO. Facts about ageing. 30 September 2014. Available at: <http://www.who.int/ageing/about/facts/en/>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/fallcost.html>

- **Foster social inclusion through first aid training and volunteering as a necessity for healthy ageing.** By 2050, one out of five people worldwide will be older than 60 year old. Many older people are already among the Red Cross Red Crescent first aid educators and providers, training more than 14 million people yearly in lifesaving skills. Providing basic first aid training to older persons can not only improve their mental and emotional well-being but also the health of others.
- **Falls are a major cause of injury among older people.** The numbers of falls increase both in frequency and magnitude with age. Approximately one every three older people fall each year. Many serious injuries can be prevented if environments are made safe.
- Being trained in first aid is not only knowing about what to do in case of an accident but also being aware about causes of accidents and dangers. First aid training is an effective way to raise awareness amongst the ageing population about safety issues and prevention.
- **First aid saves lives.** Older persons are particularly susceptible to extreme weather-related illnesses. Being able to spot early warning signs and taking preventable action can potentially be the difference between life and death in these situations.
- **Most older people remain in their own homes and in the communities they have lived in.** Consequently, it is essential that family, peers and community members are equipped with first aid skills, a vital step in the chain of survival for when older people suffer a medical emergency.
- **More than 50 per cent of injury-related hospitalizations are among people over 65 years of age.**³ More older people trained in first aid means they can provide effective and take swift action to reduce serious injuries and improve the chances of survival until professional help arrives.
- **Older people are active and can provide first aid** to their grand-children and other people in the community.

Communications Package

In the coming weeks, we will update the WFAD toolkit prepared in 2014 and available on FedNet: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/wfad2015>, to include new:

- key messages
- first aid training for older people resource packs
- web banners
- infographics
- social media tips and guidelines
- My Story – we have an active first aid tag on the site (<http://ifrc.tumblr.com/tagged/first-aid>) which may be useful to collect volunteer and beneficiary stories around first aid.

We encourage National Societies to use existing material of [the toolkit](#) (including [the animation](#)) and check the new ones we will upload by the end of July.

³ WHO, [Global Report on Falls Prevention in Older Age](#), 2007.

Top tips and suggested activities

Below are a few **top tips** for promoting first aid as part of a wider community resiliency approach:

1. Communicating specifically:

- Address issues of ageing and prevention in a positive way: The message is more likely to be heard and appreciated if it outlines the potential of older people, the behaviours to be promoted and reinforced.
- Insist on the strategies to be applied to prevent and mitigate health risks related to ageing and share information that is easily applicable.

2. Collaborating with partners and donors:

Partnering with existing donors is a great way to raise awareness of your local first aid initiatives. Call on their expertise to be part of a panel discussion. Ask them to help co-host group trainings in exchange for brand exposure.

3. Using existing media relationships:

Identify those who you think will be interested in the topic and what is being done in-country to raise awareness and use of first aid. Encourage them to write about the need for first aid and your country's training rate. Invite them to your events or to a training class.

4. Volunteer and first aid trainer appreciation:

Thanking volunteers and trainers (possibly older people) as a way to raise awareness about older people as local heroes in the community. Consider focusing your first aid initiatives around their dedication, telling stories of first aid being provided effectively by older people.

5. Building a local advocacy campaign:

National Societies will encourage active ageing, and will highlight to our governments the strong evidence that it reduces the vulnerability of older people. We will advocate for the inclusion of older people in economic, social and cultural life, and for life-long learning.

Using the communications toolkit, National Societies will be encouraged to organize activities and events promoting first aid as part of a community resilience approach.

Suggestions for National Society engagement:

- **Group first aid training events** organized with a partner organization or donor, group trainings and assemblies.
- Establish **self-help groups** that empower older people and encourage mutual support.
- **Local heroes event** recognizing and awarding older volunteers and/or those in the community who have saved a life using first aid and can motivate others to become trained in first aid.
- **Interactive map** online or at an event to showcase most dangerous places in a house.
- **Engaging a celebrity (NS specific or global)** for support at local events, social media video messages and awareness raising. Ex: hero costume "selfie" on Twitter/Instagram.

Timeline

Pre- Launch:

- Material development – June/July

Launch:

- World First Aid Day, 12 September, 2015

Continued Activation:

- Through the One billion coalition initiative

Reports

Reports from National Societies of their activities on WFAD are essential for the IFRC to document and profile our leading role in first aid. Posted reports can also help National Societies to exchange good practices and ideas. In order to help us compile the report on WFAD 2015, please **download and complete the [report form on FedNet](#)** with your feedback and photographs of activities and send these to the Global First Aid Reference Centre **by 30th October 2015** Please do not forget to send us a message indicating your participation in WFAD 2015 at the following address: first.aid@ifrc.org.

At your disposal

[Global First Aid Reference Centre](#): the IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre aims to develop first aid training in accordance with the Movement's recommendations and inter-national scientific guidelines. The GFARC also focuses on supporting National Societies delivering first aid training in their individual countries and facilitate network-wide information sharing, ensuring quality management of first aid and supporting first aid harmonization within the Movement. first.aid@ifrc.org.

National Society First Aid Material:

We will collect material from other successful National Society first aid campaigns and will make it available on FedNet, including video messages, posters and interactive tools for download.