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*THE BLOG*

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My Red Cross Journey As a Youth Volunteer

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[Picture Profile](http://www.indianredcross.org/picture-gallery.htm)4] **Mumbai stampede**



On 29 September 2017, a stampede broke out at the Elphinstone station in Mumbai, India.  23 people were killed and 39 others were injured in the stampede.

5] **Cyclone Ockhi**



Ockhi was the most intense tropical cyclone in the Arabian Sea since Cyclone Megh in 2015.  More than 245 fatalities were caused by Ockhi, including 218 in India and 27 in Sri Lanka and it left at least 551 people, mainly fishermen, missing.

6] **Kamala Mills fire**



The Kamala Mills Fire was a fire accident at the Kamala Mills Compound in Lower Parel area of Mumbai which resulted in the deaths of 14 people on 28 December 2017

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## Programmes and Activities :



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The Indian Red Cross's programmes are grouped into four main core areas: Promoting humanitarian principles and values; Disaster response; Disaster preparedness; and Health and Care in the Community.

Red Cross promotes the **Humanitarian values** , which encourage respect for other human beings and a willingness to work together to find solutions to problems. From the seven fundamental principles, the movement aims to influence the behaviour of all the people.

**Disaster response** continues to represent the largest portion of IRCS work, with assistance to millions of people annually ranging from refugees to victims of natural disasters.

The sharp increase in the number of natural disasters countrywide in recent years has prompted the Red Cross to devote more attention to **Disaster preparedness** activities. These aim to make Red Cross Societies and communities more aware of the risks they face, how to reduce their vulnerability, and how to cope when disaster strikes.

Too many people die as a result of no access to even the most basic health services and elementary health education. **Health and community care** has become a cornerstone of humanitarian assistance, and accounts for a large part of Red Cross spending. Through these programmes, the Red Cross aims to enable communities to reduce their vulnerability to disease, and prepare for and respond to public health crises.

Guiding and supporting the development of its Societies is one of the Red Cross's fundamental tasks and runs through these four core areas and others. **Capacity building**programmes and activities include : management and volunteer training, improving branch structures, planning, fund-raising and gender equality. creating the opportunity for Red Cross Societies to network .

Other **Major activities** includes : hospital services, blood bank, HIV/AIDS programmes, home for disabled servicemen ,vocational training centers, tracing activities, maternity , child and family welfare, nursing, junior red cross activities, preparedness and prevention of communicable & infectious diseases, relief operations in fire, railway & other accidents and events .

### Promoting Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values

The International Committees of the Red Cross and National Societies have a consistent and inspirational approach to promoting humanitarian values and the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

The aim is to influence the behaviour of the people we work with, through a better understanding of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values. The three main target groups are those working within Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, public and private authorities and members of the communities where we work.

#### The main priorities are:

### Developing a better understanding internally

New initiatives are being taken to ensure that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and staff understand and act on the basis of the Fundamental Principles in their work with vulnerable people in times of peace, disaster or armed conflict. Training includes : the legal and ideological basis of the Red Cross Red Crescent, decision-making processes, mandates, as well as communications and relations with others.

### Influencing behaviour in the community.

The values that the Movement has formally stated to be of importance for promotion are :

* the protection of life, health and human dignity
* respect for the human being
* non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, disability, class or political opinions
* mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace among people
* service by volunteers

### Disaster Relief

The Indian sub continent is highly prone to droughts, floods and other natural calamities. Among the states as many as 22 states are said to be multi-disaster-prone regions.

Among all the disasters that occur in India , floods are the most devastating. Over 40 million hectare of land has been identified as flood prone. An average of 18.6 million hectare of land is flooded annually. The Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin, which carry 60 % of the nation's total river flow causes floods.

Another killer is the earthquake -the most dangerous and disastrous.About 57% of the total area in India is vulnerable to seismic activity of varying intensities. Generally areas located in the Himalayan and sub Himalayan region and Andaman and Nicobar islands are vulnerable to earthquakes.

Drought is an eternal feature of Indian livelihood. 18% of the country's total area is drought prone. Approximately half of the Indian population is affected by drought annually. 68% of the total cultivated area is estimated to be drought prone.

India has the gift of having long coastline, running to about 8040 km. This is exposed to tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea in the ratio of 4:1. The Indian Ocean is one among the six key cyclone-prone regions of the world. The coromandel coastal line is more prone - about 80% of the total cyclones generated in the region hit here.

Indian Red Cross with the assistance of the Federation and other National Societies reach humanitarian services to the victims of calamities.

### Disaster Response

Poverty and war. Flooding and drought. Earthquakes and environmental disasters. Billion people were affected by disasters in the past. The impact is high; leaving people traumatised by the death of family and friends, their lives devastated by the loss of homes, possessions and stocks of food.

Disasters are becoming more complex, with increasingly long-term consequences as they strike countries with economic problems or political instability, and weaken already fragile public services such as health, water and sanitation. Recurrent crises, such as floods year after year, give people and their crops no time to recover.

Disasters disproportionately affect the poor: over 90 per cent of the total of disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries, where the economic losses they cause hit far harder than in industrialised nations and can wipe out years of economic development.

As a result, the impact of disasters has increased dramatically in the last few decades in terms of the number of people affected and the length of time they are affected for. This trend is expected to keep rising in coming years.

Bringing emergency relief to refugees and victims of poverty and disasters has been a key activity of the Red Cross and its member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the last several years.

The emergency phase of a relief operation aims to provide life-saving assistance; shelter, water, food and basic health care are the immediate needs; along with a sense of humanity and a sign that someone cares. Subsequent needs include reconstruction and rehabilitation. These needs can continue for several years, particularly in the case of refugees and victims of socio-economic collapse. IRCS approaches to disaster response on these lines and works to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance provided to beneficiaries. The Indian Red Cross Society has been equipping itself with its manpower and physical infrastructures for a nation-wide Disaster Preparedness/Disaster Response (DP/DR) programme. .The urgent and serious need for substantial disaster preparedness measures in India had been recommended by a number of agencies (including DFID and the UK Disasters Emergency Committee) after major disaster response operations for the 1998 Super Cyclone in Orissa, the 2000 floods in Assam and the massive earthquake in Gujarat in 2001,Tsunami in 2004,Floods and earthquake in 2005.It is proved that the amount spent in prevention pays richly and saves a lot in relief.

### Disaster Preparedness

The Indian Red Cross Society (with Federation support) initiated a nation-wide Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) training programme in 1999 after a series of awareness raising workshops between 1996 and 1998. In 2000, the National Society convened a national strategic planning workshop attended by 19 State Branches from which a strategic plan for DP/DR ( 2004-2007 ) was formulated and its activities are still continuing.

The vision of the programme is institutional strengthening, training and knowledge sharing through the establishment of a Disaster Management structure, programmes for strengthening and expanding community based disaster preparedness (CBDP) in disaster affected areas.

#### Other activities:

**Blood Bank:**  
The Indian Red Cross is a pioneer in the field of blood services and one of the largest voluntary blood banks in India since 1962. IRCS regularly conducts motivational campaigns to organize Voluntary Blood Donation Camps. It has more than 100 blood banks all over the country under different states and district branches.

**HIV / AIDS:**  
The IRCS is very active in the prevention Of HIV / AIDS. It trains youth to disseminate information about the prevention of HIV / AIDS through Youth Peer Education Programme. It also has programmes and projects for children of HIV positive mothers, to provided comprehensive care.

**Hospital Services:**  
IRCS provides service for sick and wounded men of the defence forces. Trained IRCS Lady Welfare Officers run welfare services for these people in military Hospitals. The officers run and maintain amenity stores and libraries as well as diversionary therapy programmes such as teaching handicrafts to convalescing patients encouraging ailing soldiers to participate in recreational activities and to give Psychological support for their disability and sickness.

**Home for Disabled Servicemen:**  
IRCS runs home in Bangalore for servicemen since 1946. The centre is provided with an operation theatre, Physiotherapy Department, recreation room, Library and diversionary therapy all free of cost.

**Vocational Training Centre (V.T.C.):**  
The IRCS provides opportunities to increase vocational skills and the earning opportunities of low-income groups and to raise the status of women socially and economically by making them available opportunities for learning and leadership. The VTCs were started in areas which are dominated by backward classes and tribal population. IRCS in respect for gender equality and to augment the participation of women in economic development process started 2 vocational Training Centres, one each at Salt Lake , Calcutta ( West Bengal ) and at Arakkonam (Tamil Nadu) in the years 1989 and 1993. These centres besides providing training to the needy women also have developed as nucleus points for promoting Women/ child development activities. These centres also serve as garment production centres for use by the society in its relief operations it helps in supplementing family income, enabling mothers to spend more liberally on the welfare and upbringing of their children, give economic independence and improve the status of women in the community, enhance their decision-making role and Improve the quality of life for the family and the communities in which they live.

**Tracing Activities:**  
IRCS helps people trace or send massage to missing loved who have been separated ones through forced, unseen and inevitable circumstances when all other means of locating them have not yielded results. It also reunites families who have been separated under similar circumstances.

**Maternity and Child Welfare:**  
Maternity and Child Welfare schemes of National Headquarters were started in 1954 to extend Maternal and Child Development activities for the Weaker Section of the Community. The welfare activities are being continued through various Hospitals, Sub Centres and Bal Vikas Kendras.

**Family Welfare:**  
These are run by different states and district branches. All Red Cross MCW hospitals and centers, as well as family welfare clinics, carry out family welfare work. They motivate eligible couples to adopt small family norms and provide them with contraceptives and other family planning devices. Many of these centers are equipped to meet motivational and clinical arrangements

**Nursing:**  
The Red Cross MCW units teach home nursing skills to auxiliary nurses, midwives and housewives.

INDIAN RED CROSS PROJECTS: IRCS has lots of projects to its credit regarding Disaster preparedness, Disaster Management, HIV/AIDS, Tracing Activities and Maternity & Child Welfare etc.

#### IndianRed Cross Society Strategic Development Plan (2004-2007)

Whether people live in huge cities or isolated villages, whatever language they speak, they all want to have the best for their children and families and to live in peace and harmony, with economic and physical security, personal dignity and in a supportive community. But too many people are at risk from situations that threaten their capacity to live with a minimum of socio-economic security and human dignity – they are vulnerable. Indian Red Cross works together with other National Societies all over the world “to improvev the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.” The first part of this mission statement, “to improve the lives of vulnerable people”, captures these objectives while adding a dimension of capacity building, sustainability and dignity. Indian Red Cross works through “mobilizing the power of humanity” to provide support and solidarity. Indian Red Cross is open to all individuals, who can find in the Red Cross "space" in which to come together to exercise their responsibility to assist others and find solutions to community problems. The mobilization of beneficiaries, volunteers and donors is the manifestation of that responsibility. By working in this way – “mobilizing the power of humanity” – the Indian Red Cross empowers people, promotes cooperation and lasting peace. The vision of Indian Red Cross is to become “a leading humanitarian organization serving vulnerable people by the end of 2007” To fulfil this vision requires several development activities. Many of them have been identified during the process of developing this National Development Plan. Three strategic directions, four objectives and seventeen actions have been defined.

Three cross cutting strategic directions have been considered when developing this National Development Plan.

* Focus on disaster prone states
* Focusing on core programs
* Focus on branch development

#### Strategic objectives

**Objective 1:**  
Enhance the capacity of Indian Red Cross to deliver its humanitarian message both within and outside the society, and to advocate tolerance and coexistence in the communities.

**Action 1:1**  
Systematically organize, train and share knowledge among Red Cross members, volunteers, governance and management about Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement history and structure, Fundamental Principles and International Humanitarian Law.

**Action 1:2**  
Raise the awareness and strengthen the knowledge, understanding and respect of the public authorities and others to the Fundamental Principles, the Emblem and International Humanitarian Law.

**Objective 2:**  
Increase the capacity in disaster preparedness and disaster response in disaster prone branches and National Headquarters and reduce the vulnerability of communities in key disaster prone areas

**Action 2:1**  
Develop Disaster Management policy, strategy, plans and protocols.

**Action 2:2**  
Develop effective and sustainable disaster management mechanisms guided by sphere standards.

**Action 2:3**  
Enhancing community capacities and creating awareness

**Action 2:4**  
Improved advocacy, coordination, collaboration and integration

**Objective 3:**  
Increase the capacity in health and care in branches and National Headquarters and improve the health of vulnerable people and communities

**Action 3:1**  
Develop health policy, strategy, plans and protocols and design and develop health and care programs

**Action 3:2**  
Strengthen preventionfocused volunteer based community health care

**Action 3:3**  
Enhance the Indian Red Cross emergency health capacity

**Action 3:4**  
Help and support the vulnerable to handle HIV/AIDS epidemic and respond to public health crisis with particular focus on HIV Aids

**Objective 4:**  
Raise the capacity of the branches and that of National Headquarters in mobilizing, organizing and managing local resources in order to improve the situation of the vulnerable Under each strategic objective, one or several actions, which need to be taken to achieve it, are identified and explained. This is followed by a listing of expected results and of concrete implementation measures.

**Action 4:1**  
Develop a national branch development policy and strategy and increase the capacity of the national headquarters and state branches to provide development support to the branches

**Action 4:2**  
Promote the integrity of the Indian Red Cross ensuring respect and compliance with the Fundamental Principles by reviewing, amending and establishing the constitution organizational structure, rules, policies and procedure in according with the need of the organization and in coherence with the policies of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement.

**Action 4:3**  
Develop and establish a national resource development strategy and policy integrating financial, material as well as member and volunteer development, mobilization and maintenance components

**Action 4:4**  
Improve and upgrade the capacity for information and communication at the district level and at national headquarters

**Action 4:5**  
Improve and upgrade the capacity for financial planning, management and reporting at the national headquarters and design and establish a finance development project for the branches

**Action 4:6**  
Develop and establish a community based volunteer management system including a relief and emergency volunteers.

**Action 4:7**  
A human resource development system and phased training programme for governance, volunteersand staff developed and established,

**Present Thrust Area** : To Assist the National Preparedness and Response Plan to

* Disaster Management Programme
* HIV/AIDS Programme
* Avian Influenza ( Bird Flu )

#### One Year Part Time Post Graduate Diploma Course in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation

The IRCS has embarked on a major task to train a cadre of qualified experts in disaster preparedness and rehabilitation activities by introducing a One Year Part Time Post Graduate Diploma Course in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation from 15th Sept 2006. The PG diploma course is affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha (GGSIP) University, Delhi.

The PG Diploma course is run in cooperation with Partner National Societies (PNSs), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), World Health Organization (WHO) and GGSIP University. Renowned professionals invited from National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Director General Health Services (DGHS) and Director Emergency Medical Relief (EMR), National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Chief of Delhi Hospitals, Delhi Fire Services, World Health Organization (WHO), are also invited to share their experience as guest faculty.

Field visits were organized for students to Delhi Fire Services, IMD, AIIMS, and Central Training Institute, Bahadurgarh. The students also attended the Mock Drill for chemical and fire disasters conducted by NDMA and Fire Drill by the Delhi Fire Service.

The first batch all 27 students completed the course successfully in August 2007.Due to overwhelming response and increased demand, the number of seats increased to 35 for the second batch. This batch started in September 2007 and will be completing their course by the end of August 2008.

The Joint Assessment Committee (JAC), appointed by the GGSIP University inspected the institute on 10th April 2007. The committee consisted of Shri K.L.Johar, former Vice Chancellor, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar, Prof Sushil kumar, IIT, Delhi, and Col Upmanyu, GGSIP University. JAC appreciated the efforts of the IRCS and recommended for the up gradation of the diploma course to Masters course by including I year thesis programme. For up gradation of the diploma course to Masters course, the IRCS is equipped with excellent infrastructure and experienced and dedicated staff with diverse range of expertise and is working closely with Central Government, International Organizations and NGO. In view of this, the University has been approached for start of the same from the current academic session.

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The Indian Red Cross which has in its fraternity 10 million Youth Red Cross (YRC) and Junior Red Cross (JRC) members keeps on organizing various programmes and activities for the youth.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://www.indianredcross.org/images/2008Story-01.jpg | The Pune District Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society conducted 'Humanitarian Values Youth Workshop for Youth Leaders' from December 13th - 16th, 2007 at Bel-Air Sanatorium and Hospital, Panchgani. The workshop was supported by the National Headquarters, IRCS through Maharastra State branch and by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Thirty-nine YRC members along with seven YRC Councilors participated in the workshop. "Pune Disrtict branch was the first to set up Youth Red Cross wing in the year 1975 with just two colleges. Now it has its presence in 60 schools and 23 colleges" said Prof. Kulkarni, District Secretary, Pune branch. He was a principal of a college and had joined the Red Cross as a Councilor. |   He aims at spreading awareness about the Red Cross principles and activities among the youth and is doing so for the past 30 years. He also shared that this workshop on humanitarian values would help in coming up with the Youth Council, which would have eight boys and eight girls as its members and would work on 'Health, Service and Friendship' objective of YRC. The council would be provided financial and technical support by the branch for carrying out its activities.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | The workshop was designed appropriately as it covered all the aspects of the Red Cross like an introduction to the movement, its principles and activities, role of youth red cross as a volunteer and leader and the need to possess humanitarian values. Team building exercise was also organized. The recreational needs of the students were also met, as a debate on the kind of approach they would like to follow in their life, whether Gandhigiri or Rang De Basanti was conducted. Cultural programme witnessed strong participation by the students as songs, skit, jokes, dance and poems formed a part of it. Students were also taken to Mahabaleshwar for sightseeing. | http://www.indianredcross.org/images/2008Story-02.jpg |   Humanitarian values were an integral part of the workshop as the sessions helped the students to understand that 'Is it worthwhile having any values at all and secondly in a highly competitive world should we worry about them'. Humanitarian values are encapsulated in the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement and it is goal four of the global agenda of the International Federation.  Prof. Sheetal Pandir, 25 years of age and a Councilor of Youth Red Cross who attended the workshop shared her experience that Red Cross has played a significant role in her life. She said that 'Red Cross is like a sea of hope, happiness and service. I lost my elder sister to dowry. But in 1995, I happened to attend the JRC camp for the first time and I realized there are lot of problems like disaster, epidemic and poverty, which are bigger than mine. Since then there has been no looking back as I have got the direction and my confidence has been boosted because of Red Cross. I'll continue serving the humanity and wish to do something for the HIV infected patients'.  Aditi Choksey, 19 years of age and a second year student of microbiology was extremely enthusiastic for being able to attend the workshop. She said that "I may not have all the humanitarian values but I'll try to identify them in me and shall follow them in letter and spirit. I'll also work on the principles of the Red Cross and would like to reach the vulnerable people as a volunteer and help them at the time of need".   |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://www.indianredcross.org/images/2008Story-03.jpg | Navendu Mandal, 18 years of age and a student of First year B.Com aims to become an MBA professional. He said, " If we want that others should respect us then we should follow the humanitarian values. He also said that "the workshop helped me in making new friends and realizing how important it is to do selfless service as it gives a lot of satisfaction".  The participants made their own small world of friendship in four days of the workshop and hoped that they would share their knowledge with their other friends and would convince them to serve the Red Cros | | | | | |

**Natural disasters set records around the world in 2017 - these were the worst**

### Experts estimate the damage from Hurricane Harvey alone could cost upwards of $100 million.

### 620 people were killed and more than 8,000 were injured by an earthquake on the Iraq-Iran border in November.

### The worst floods in a decade poured over South Asia. 1,400 people were killed in monsoon rains that hit India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

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# 7 DEADLY DISASTERS INDIA FACED IN 2017

**By** [**Jasmine Han**](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/author/jasmine-han)

] **Bihar** **Floods**

Bihar floods affected 19 districts of North Bihar causing death of 514 people. This flood was result of sudden increase in water discharge due to torrential rain in the foothill of the Himalayas in Nepal and adjoining areas in Bihar.

2] **Gorakhpur hospital deaths**

When we think of heroes, we are reminded of Batman, Superman, Spiderman and Wonder Woman, all Marvel and DC Nation heroes. But do we ever think of ourselves as heroes or possible heroes? There are heroes, and they belong to the Red Cross. Red Cross volunteers are everyday heroes that I look up to and a league I am proud to be part of.

My American Red Cross journey started my freshman year. At the time, I was part of several clubs, including service clubs. These clubs were fun, but they never held an area of focus. Luckily, a run in with the American Red Cross vans parked outside of my school’s gym for the blood drive kick started my involvement with the Red Cross. On the day of the blood drive, I went home to research about the Red Cross to learn more about youth involvement. After much research online, I found the Red Cross to be the perfect fit. Youth volunteers would follow the seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, universality, as well as, five lines of services: disaster services, service to the armed forces, health and safety services, blood services, and international services.

I knew that bringing the Red Cross Club to my high school campus was exactly what students at my school need. From that point on, I spent the rest of my freshman year trying to get the club chartered on campus with the approval of my local American Red Cross Chapter (Arcadia).

At our first club rush, I was shocked to find out that around 150 people were interested in the club. Our club is continuing to grow; as of this year, we have around 200 members. With a large club, I am able to delegate larger scaled projects for my club members. Currently, we are placing our club’s fund toward our club’s project which allows us to update the first aid kits at our school.

In the past, we had held canvassing projects focused on preparedness and were able to raise money for the Measles Initiative. We also held Holiday Mail for Heroes (my personal favorite) which gave students the opportunity to make holiday cards to thank the American troops. We brought a CPR and first aid class to our campus so that students can get certified, along with, our own workshop presentations. And of course, we are involved with our school’s blood drive. But the volunteer work does not stop there. My fellow club members and I at my school volunteer at Red Cross related events outside of school on the weekends. These events include kit packaging, responses/relief right after any disaster, and many other falling under the different lines of services.

I have crossed path with so many amazing heroes during my time with the Red Cross. These heroes range from youth coordinators to actual youth volunteers and sponsors of the club. Red Cross volunteers, myself included, place dedication, passion and time into all of our Red Cross related involvement. As time progresses, I truly see how each Red Cross volunteer adds to the definition of a hero.

Can you be a hero at 16 or even younger? Yes, and the only superpower you need is passion. As long as you have the passion and love to volunteer, you can be a hero. American Red Cross gives you the capability to be an everyday hero. My journey with the Red Cross has allowed me to play my role as an everyday hero and meet many other heroes. You can join the league by contacting your local Red Cross chapter.

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[**Jasmine Han**](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/author/jasmine-han)

Student at Chapman University

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