ICRC INNOVATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

INNOVATION BROCHURE

ICRC

INTRODUCTION

The ICRC has from its inception been innovative and over 10,000 people who work for the ICRC regularly generate new ideas to make us more efficient, productive and better at meeting the needs of our beneficiaries.

However, until now turning innovative ideas into reality has meant moving against the tide. Promising and innovative projects are often not given the space, the time or resources they need, and often those that do succeed are not scaled up.

The innovation initiative was set up in Jan 2015 expressly to support this energy for change, to harvest and scale up innovations, and to fast-track ideas through to tested solutions in months rather than years. It is also about creating space and removing internal obstacles, so that ideas and people are supported and that innovation becomes part of the normal process of the ICRC.

It is clear that many fundamental changes taking place in the environment require that the ICRC also changes, not just by adapting its action, but by finding new and innovative ways to address these realities. Some of the challenges it faces include - an increasing threat to its acceptance and access in situations of conflict , new expectations from our beneficiaries and stakeholders, changes in the nature and conduct of conflict, new technologies in the hands of beneficiaries, an increasingly diversified humanitarian space etc.

Principles and Approach to Innovation

The ICRC does not view Innovation as a project, but rather as a process that should take place throughout the organisation, whereby new ideas, approaches and methodologies to delivering its mandate can be explored, tested and perfected.

Needs based

Innovation will be dedicated to areas where we can improve our impact on beneficiaries and therefore driven by their needs (not innovation for innovation's sake).
Active measures to include beneficiary voices as the 'client' of innovation will be made. An element of disruption in our own working norms should therefore be acknowledged as part of the initiative. In the same spirit, do no harm principles will be taken into account for all innovation.

Approach and Incubation Spaces

The process of innovation will involve testing proof of concepts (PoCs) in a space that pushes us to explore many potential options, allows us to seek diverse views, engage with external partners and allows 'frequent and fast' failure.

Addressing cultural and structural issues to support Innovation

In order to support innovation the ICRC will need to be a collective effort to create an intentional space for innovation, at all levels of leadership in the organisation. Innovative ideas will emerge from both a top-down manner and in a bottom- up manner from the field. These are both legitimate and necessary.

Open Innovation - Linking with the external world

The ability of ICRC to experiment, acquire expertise and resources will determine the strength, diversity and success of its innovation. To this end ICRC will seek to develop strategic partnerships to support innovation to reflect its global footprint. The GPHI2 process will be central to this.

Facilitating Innovation

The Innovation Initiative will work to promote and facilitate innovation based on active engagement with individuals, units, and delegations, to try and foster links with external partners and to build networks and spaces where people can collaborate to innovate.

The Four Pillars of the Innovation Initiative

1. Catalysis and Aspiration - To build an internal narrative around innovation on the need, leadership support and process for innovation at all levels within the ICRC. This will be done online and offline through building a network of innovators across the organization.

2. Exploring, Testing, Validation and Replication - Ideas for innovative pilots can be supported through a central fund managed by the Innovative Initiative, that will also try and facilitate external expertise as required. All tests need to be done in the field and innovators are expected to self-assess and provide materials for validation and scaling up successful tests.

3. Open Innovation – Developing links with external expertise and resources and collaborative working for specific projects as well as strategic alliance on areas for innovation.

4. Identifying - The right model for innovation in the ICRC needs to be found. Finding the structures and processes to enable innovation to continuously take place as part of the normal functioning of the ICRC is crucial.

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATION PROPOSED OR UNDERWAY AT THE ICRC

The following are a set of pilots that are in different stages of being tested by the ICRC in the field. They do not include innovations that spontaneously take place in different delegations. The intention is that these tests when completed, assessed and validated would be scaled up to other locations. All of these tests have required external expertise and support and ICRC will seek additional support for them to be scaled up

Telemedicine

A telemedicine capability would allow medical specialists to give advice specifically targeted to each patient and at the level of support required by local health providers. It does this through linking specialist doctors with local medical providers through an online network. This has important life-saving implications. To be tested in Somalia

SMS based Dialogue with communities

This is a test of SMS based system to collect information from remote or inaccessible locations in near real time on the needs of affected populations. This test was planned for Liberia and the current Ebola epidemic has raised new challenges and potentials for this test.

Virtual Reality Tool

This is a new 'Gaming' inspired tool to simulate military battlefield planning, and use it to train and test military and police forces in International Humanitarian Law in actual situations they face in battle

Mapping of Key Humanitarian concerns in areas of little access

This is a pilot to test new software for conducting surveys on different humanitarian concerns over time, and mapping and displaying this information geographically. One potential use is to collect near real time information on the price of bread available to people in different parts of the city during conflict

Beneficiary registration at Speed and Scale

Using a variety of newly developed mobile solutions these tests would enable the ICRC to cut down the time taken to register beneficiaries, and plan complicated distributions. These tools potentially decrease the time taken to collect information to prepare large scale distributions by several weeks. A variety of available tools are being tested. These tools are being tested in Mali and the Central Africa Republic, using barcode technology

Tracking the needs of Migrants

This addresses the need to collect information on the needs of numbers of people on the move so as to enable the planning of assistance to people when and where they need it. The current test will take place in Central America, but can be used in many areas where displaced populations are on the move

Mapping for Forensics

The needs to collect and map information on sites used for burial during a conflict is essential to ensure that proper forensic information can be enables after the conflict. The ICRC is examining the potential uses of appropriate software for this purpose.

Use of Mobile Cash delivery systems

The use of mobile cash delivery systems has been used by the ICRC in several locations including Kenya and Somalia. The need now is to scale up this simple, and accurate way of targeting beneficiaries and giving them the freedom to make choice in expenditure to other locations

Management of structural issues in prisons

In order to support the prison authorities the ICRC is working on developing systems to collect, consolidate and analyse data related to public health that would enable authorities to determine gaps, and priorities, and allocate resources

Ensuring Sustainable humanitarian response

The ICRC is working in several delegations to ensure that its humanitarian response is green and sustainable from the use of energy to the disposal of waste etc. It is currently testing the development of the «zero emission medical store» (cooling, lighting and refrigeration)