German Red Cross
National Headquarters

German
Red
Cross

Findings from the GRC-refugee assistance 2015/16 in Germany

Cooperation with civil society actors

9 | Resource
management
Research Writings

Research Writings

The purpose of the Research Writings is to continuously publish the results of scientific research of the German Red Cross. The Division for Research on Civil Protection at GRC National Headquarters launched an investigation of research requirements in 2012 spanning the entire organisation and involving all regional branches. During this process, three essential topic areas were identified as desirable research focuses: Resilience, societal development, and resource management. Since 2019, documentation of operational situations has been published in Volume 7.[1]

The Research Writings address these topics and offer impetuses for the continued strategic development of the organisation.

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[1]   The colours are reflected in the respective cover picture.

Research Publication Series – Cooperation with civil society actors

Findings from the GRC-refugee assistance 2015/16 in Germany

Volume 9 of the research publication series deals with the GRC refugee missions in Germany in 2015/16 and sheds light on the collaborative framework with civil society actors that arose in the process.

This section presents selected results of the WAKE research project, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). As part of the project, workshops, a nationwide internal GRC survey and interviews were conducted. Experiences gathered from collaborative efforts with civil society actors, the use of support tools in refugee relief and the handling of different experience and knowledge will be addressed. The results offer some insight into the needs and structural possibilities for change underpinning the GRC, which are to be rendered usable for future situations.

Research Publication Series – Cooperation with civil society actors

Findings from the GRC-refugee assistance 2015/16 in Germany

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This publication is also available for download at www.drk-forschung.de.

Content

1 | About the Division for Research on Civil Protection

The Division for Research on Civil Protection at the German Red Cross (GRC) National-al Headquarters deals with observations and analyses of social development processes in connection with experience gathered from missions all over Germany. It participates in various research projects with the aim of optimising concepts in disaster manage-ment and plays the central role – as an intermediary – between science and the active stakeholders in civil protection. Based on the needs of the association, which are iden-tified as part of an ongoing process, the GRC analyses processes of change in society within a scientific context with relevance for the tasks of the GRC in its mission to en-sure civil protection.

The research results of the GRC are continuously published in the research publication series. They serve the association's strategic development and are available as a PDF for free download.

For further information, please visit: **https://www.drk.de/en/research/**

2 | Introduction to the contents

German civil protection relies to a significant extent on well-trained and experienced volunteers. Classic voluntary work in aid organisations, which is characterised by official membership and normally many years of training, is increasingly being supplemented by so-called new forms of involvement. The GRC has been grappling with this change for several years. Within the framework of various research projects, the following characteristics that best describe the different types of engagement were, therefore, identified:

Name	Description	Vocational training	Support service
"Classic" voluntary work	Integrated into the association's structure, with planning and preparation behind every deployment	Well-trained in disaster management, regular participation in training exercises	Deployment to the hazard area usually possible
Pre-registered, event-related volunteers	Volunteers who have registered in advance with an appropriate office – along with stating their skills and knowledge – and who can be called up in a crisis; no membership of a disaster management organisation	Specific vocational training in civil protection cannot be assumed; however, in most cases, there is a short briefing on the corresponding activity	Generally, no deployment in the hazard area per se; nevertheless, this is possible after briefing by professional task forces.
Unaffiliated volunteers	Volunteers who become active on an event-related basis, who organise themselves (with the help of social media) and generally have no vocational training in civil protection; no membership of a civil protection organisation	Specific vocational training in civil protection cannot be assumed	As a rule, no deployment in the hazard area per se; nevertheless, this is possible after briefing by professional task forces

Name	Description	Vocational training	Support service
Self-help and neighbourly help	Spontaneous (self-)help by those affected in the immediate vicinity before the emergency services arrive or in tandem with their work	Specific vocational training in civil protection cannot be assumed	Are often on hand as first responders and thus also find themselves in the hazard area
Digital Volunteers	Volunteers who fulfil their engagement digitally and on a location-independent basis via the Internet; either active individually, as an exclusive team or as part of an Open Community or Open Crowd	Specific vocational training in civil protection cannot be assumed	No physical support services on-site

Figure 1: Forms of engagement in civil protection (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, 2021: 13)

In addition to the definition and analysis of different forms of engagement, other changes and trends in engagement were also identified. This revealed that citizens possess a great interest in helping and supporting their fellow human beings in crisis and disaster situations – even on a spontaneous basis. In addition, it transpired that more people like to do their work independently, for a limited period of time or on a project basis, and do not want to commit themselves to an organisation dedicated to disaster management. Many people no longer seem ready to undergo lengthy training (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, 2015). This was also evident, for example, during the Elbe floods in 2013, where large sections of the population that were directly (and indirectly) affected got involved – mostly in a self-organised way. The group of unaffiliated volunteers was particularly active; however, smaller, pre-existing associations also supported as a group on-site. The unaffiliated volunteers mostly took on simple physical tasks, such as filling sandbags. They were deployed both during the acute phase and in the subsequent clean-up phase (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, 2016).

The refugee mission a few years later also demonstrated that the population's involvement was by no means a one-off or sporadic occurrence, but also took place across the board over a prolonged period. Various civil protection organisations were active in implementing refugee relief, as well as providing accommodation and care for those seeking protection. However, the commitment of civil society actors was also particularly visible:

Civil society actors in refugee relief

Within society, "civil society" denotes an area that sits between the state, the economy and the private sector:

Civil society encompasses the entirety of engagement attributable to a country's citizens, e.g. in clubs and associations, as well as diverse forms of initiatives and other social movements. This includes all activities that are not profit-oriented and not dependent on party-political interests (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit, undated).

Civil society actors in refugee relief in 2015/16 in Germany included:

- Ad hoc aid networks formed and organised primarily through social media
- Established associations (sports clubs, hobby clubs etc.)
- Neighbourhood initiatives
- Church congregations or other religious communities
- Other organisations and associations – such as refugee councils

In many places, the format for collaboration between the GRC and civil society actors during the refugee mission in 2015/16 was born out of necessity and was rarely documented in the aftermath. This makes it difficult to identify successful forms of collaboration, to render them sustainable and thus useful for tomorrow's challenges and other similar assignments. Structured networking also represents a cornerstone of the GRC strategy behind the "complex system of relief", which envisages networking with external agencies, in addition to the internal GRC networking of resources (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, 2020). This is due to the fact that, with civil society actors, it can be assumed that they will continue to intervene and provide support in crisis and disaster situations going forward. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at this type of collaboration and integration.

This research publication series therefore takes a look at the mode of collaboration pursued by the German Red Cross with civil society actors by using the example of refugee relief in 2015/16. It is based on the results collected in the research project "Migration-related Knowledge Management for the Civil Protection of the Future" (WAKE).

3 | The WAKE research project

As part of the research project WAKE, the Division for Research on Civil Protection at the GRC National Headquarters examines the 2015/16 refugee mission in Germany. In this context, the measures implemented with regard to networking and collaboration with civil society actors were systematically documented, evaluated and generalised in order to make them usable for subsequent deployment situations.

The project is set to run from October 2018 to September 2021 and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as part of the programme entitled "Research for Civil Security 2012-2017" (topic area: Civil Security – Migration Issues). The coordinator behind the joint project is the Disaster Research Centre at the Freie Universität Berlin. In addition to the GRC, project participants include Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe (JUH), Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) and Cologne University of Applied Sciences (THK). The project participants deal with different thematic focal points. Other associated partners include the Austrian Red Cross (ARC) and the internal Red Cross European Network on Development of Volunteers (ENDOV).

Various methods were utilised to reconstruct and analyse the GRC refugee mission. In addition to research and document analysis, interviews were conducted during the first half of the project with people from the GRC and the ARC who were active in refugee relief. Within the framework of a joint workshop held with the project participants, various topic areas were identified and elaborated on in greater detail in subsequent workshops. Red Cross members from different branches and areas also participated in these workshops.

On the basis of the findings gathered, a survey on the topic of "Collaboration with associations, initiatives and unaffiliated volunteers during refugee relief in 2015/16" was prepared in the spring of 2020 and distributed internally throughout the GRC among regional associations and communities. The response comprised 305 valid questionnaires and the survey is therefore not deemed representative of the GRC as a whole; nevertheless, it reveals indications and trends and thus helps to map the experiences of the GRC with civil society actors in refugee missions in 2015/16. In order to enable the classification of statements, the respondents' backgrounds should be briefly discussed at this point: The majority were volunteers during the refugee mission, taking on various positions and functions. Moreover, most of them had previously been active in the GRC. Furthermore, the majority stated that they had been involved in refugee relief for a longer period of time – typically half a year or even longer. The respondents were therefore able to draw on a diverse and long-standing wealth of experience.

In the second half of the project, the findings gleaned from interviews, workshops and the survey were discussed, verified and expanded upon during individual and group discussions with Red Cross members from various sectors and branches using the digital sphere. The results generated in this way were published in this volume 9 "The GRC-refugee assistance 2015/16 in Germany" of the research publication series. In addition, handouts were developed on the topics of knowledge management and collaboration with civil society actors.

At a glance...
- As part of the WAKE project, the 2015/16 GRC refugee mission was studied in order to generate real utility from the experience which was gained for future missions.
- One focus was on the systematic evaluation, documentation and generalisation of the networking and forms of collaboration pursued by the GRC with civil society actors.
- Different methods were deployed within the scope of WAKE, such as document analyses, workshops and a nationwide survey within the association. The project findings were published in volume 9 of the research publication series.

4 | Identified findings and needs

Selected project results are presented in this chapter. They originate from the various methods explained in Chapter 3, in particular, the workshops, the GRC internal survey and the individual and group discussions. First, we will take a closer look at the collaboration with civil society actors in the GRC refugee mission in 2015/16 in order to gain an impression of how it was organised, as well as of the challenges involved. This will be followed by an analysis of the statements made on the support tools in use and the handling of experiential knowledge. The chapter will conclude with an evaluation of the assessments made pertaining to structural changes that were initiated during (or in the aftermath of) the refugee situation in the various GRC organisations and sectors.

4.1. Collaboration with civil society actors

In the following, different aspects of collaboration with civil society actors are highlighted. The survey differentiated between the following actors:
- Unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives
- Neighbourhood[2]
- Newly established associations[3]
- Established associations[4]
- Church congregations
- Other religious communities
- Digital Volunteers
- Pre-registered volunteers

As part of the survey, participants were asked to indicate whether their respective collaboration with civil society actors was newly created or pre-existing at the time of the refugee mission in 2015/16.

In Figure 2, long-standing forms of collaboration with various civil society actors are shown in red. Respondents reported that they had previously collaborated with established associations (30%) as well as with pre-registered volunteers (20%). In comparison, the blue bar shows that collaboration with these two actors was only new for roughly 10% of the respondents in each case. This clearly shows that during the refugee mis-

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[2] Residents from the same district as a newly opened (emergency) shelter for refugees.

[3] Associations that were founded during (and with reference to) the refugee situation in 2015/16.

[4] Associations that existed before the refugee relief in 2015/16 and may also have other focus areas (e.g. sports).

With which actors had there been collaboration before and with whom was it new? (Multiple answers possible)

Actor	Already taken place in the past	Collaboration was new
Established associations	30%	10%
Pre-registered volunteers	20%	11%
Church congregations	16%	14%
Unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives	11%	43%
Neighbourhood	9%	20%
Other religious communities	4%	10%
Newly established associations	1%	20%
Digital volunteers	0%	4%

■ A form of collaboration with these actors had already taken place in the past
■ The collaboration with these actors was new

Figure 2: Forms of collaboration with civil society actors[5]

sion in 2015/16, in many places it was possible to draw on existing contacts and experience with established associations and pre-registered volunteers.

Concerning collaboration with church congregations, the respondents reported almost equal shares of both existing (16%) and new forms of collaboration (14%). The answers show a different tendency with regard to unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives, the neighbourhood, other religious communities, newly founded associations and digital volunteers; here, the new forms of collaboration outweigh the existing ones. This becomes particularly clear when involving collaboration with unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives: for 43% of the respondents, this was new, while only 11% said they had worked in such a form of collaboration before. The unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives therefore played a special role in the refugee response in 2015/16. The fact that new forms of collaboration between these actors and the GRC took place was due to the willingness of many people from civil society to help in an ad-hoc way in response to the arrival of the high

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[5] Given that some questions in the survey also allowed for multiple answers, i.e. a person could tick several answers, the sum of the answers exceeds 100% for these questions. These questions are marked accordingly in the following text with "Multiple answers possible".
   The entries from the survey are given as whole percentages, rounded in accordance with standard commercial practice.

number of refugees. This is also true for the categories of neighbourhood, other religious communities and newly founded associations, although these actors were mentioned less frequently in percentage terms compared to unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives. Digital volunteers were mentioned sporadically – only 4% stated that a form of collaboration had been established with this actor. One possible explanation is that digital volunteers operate exclusively online and are not immediately "visible" in deployment, meaning that they are less likely to be noticed or are likely to be forgotten.

The data described thus shows that collaboration with civil society actors was a new experience in many instances, especially with unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives, the neighbourhood and religious communities.

When asked how collaboration with civil society actors was established at that time, 40% of those approaches to establishing contact described here made reference to the respective actors approaching the GRC, for example, actively contacting the respective local and district associations or contacting local shelters. The GRC took the initiative in 27% of cases, for example in the form of appeals in the press. 21% of the collaborative forms were the result of mutual initiative, as can be seen in Figure 3. Furthermore, cooperation came about through third parties (11%), for example by the mayor establishing contact.

The role of collaboration with (local) civil society actors during a situation and how networking can take place was also discussed in the workshops: Civil society actors usually knew both the specific circumstances in play in the vicinity and structures particularly well and could thus better assess existing needs, for example. This could be particular-

How did the form of collaboration come about?
(Multiple answers possible)

The actors approached the GRC in a targeted manner	40%
The GRC specifically approached certain actors	27%
The collaboration came about by way of mutual initiative	21%
Establishing contact with these actors was carried out by third parties	11%

Figure 3: Establishing contact with civil society actors

ly helpful in regions where the GRC is not strongly represented and may not know the existing structures. Self-organised entities formed by migrants and refugee networks, which have a high degree of specific knowledge about asylum regulations, cultural specifics and regional conditions, are already well-networked among themselves, but have hardly any links to civil protection organisations or structures. According to GRC experts, these interfaces are particularly important when ensuring successful collaboration. It could also be helpful to set up a superordinate function for networking, for example, a volunteer coordination office.

The extent to which such a function already existed before the refugee mission was therefore also part of the survey. The results are shown in Figure 4. A total of 45% of respondents stated that there had been a central function for the involvement of civil society actors, for example, in the form of a volunteer service office. Of these, roughly half (22%) reported that such a function had already existed before the 2015/16 refugee mission, while the other half (23%) stated that it had only been established as the situation unfolded.

In addition, just under a third (29%) stated that such a central coordination function did not exist at their place of deployment. A further 19% of respondents were not aware of
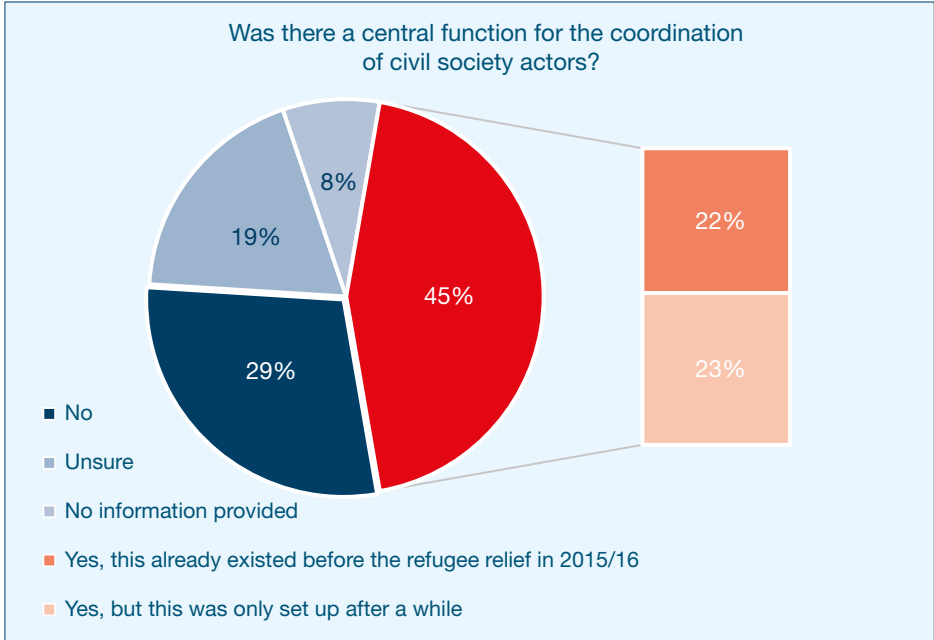

Was there a central function for the coordination of civil society actors?

8%
19%
45%
29%
22%
23%

- ■ No
- ■ Unsure
- ■ No information provided
- ■ Yes, this already existed before the refugee relief in 2015/16
- ■ Yes, but this was only set up after a while

Figure 4: Information on a central coordination function

any information on this. It seems that there was still a lack of explicit volunteer coordinators or information about them across the board.

Areas of activity

The tasks during the refugee relief efforts in 2015/16 were as varied as the civil society actors themselves. Figure 5 presents the areas of activity in descending order of frequency as mentioned.

Areas of activity involving civil society actors (multiple answers possible)	
Social care (e.g. playing with children, sewing groups, bicycle workshop, joint excursions)	59 %
Translation activities	54 %
Distribution of hygiene products and other items for daily use	51 %
Work in the clothing store	48 %
Serving food	46 %
Acceptance and handling of donated items	42 %
Support for refugees when going to the authorities/doctors	39 %
Assisting with the registration of refugees on their arrival	32 %
Health care/health assistance for refugees	29 %
Psychosocial care	15 %
Administrative activities	13 %

Figure 5: Areas of activity of civil society actors

Based on the areas of activity mentioned, it becomes clear that civil society actors were rarely active in those areas that required specific knowledge, such as medical and psychosocial expertise. There also seems to have been limited opportunities for their involvement in the administrative sector. Instead, civil society actors, in particular, often provided support for activities that required no briefing or only a short briefing, such as coordinating and distributing food or clothes. In addition, translation services played an essential role, enabling civil society actors to contribute language skills that were not widely available within the GRC.

The possibilities of providing support are therefore particularly dependent on the individual knowledge and qualifications of those involved. While some activities can be learned and performed on an ad-hoc basis and in a short period, others require experience or prior training. The survey made it clear that the qualifications of unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives, as well as association members, were not ascertained in all instances or

only on a partial basis. When asked whether existing qualifications could be integrated into the deployment, the majority (almost two thirds) answered in the affirmative.

Evaluation of collaborative efforts

In the course of the survey, findings were also collected on the quality of collaboration. Therefore, respondents were asked to name the most important actor for them. Due to the large number of actors mentioned, the following list represents an excerpt of those mentioned most frequently: (1) Neighbourhood, (2) Unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives, (3) Pre-registered volunteers, (4) Established, as well as newly founded associations, (5) Church congregations and other religious communities. In addition, some interviewees responded that all civil society actors had been important and that they could not prioritise them. This allows the conclusion to be drawn that not only individual civil society actors, but a wide range thereof, were perceived as important.
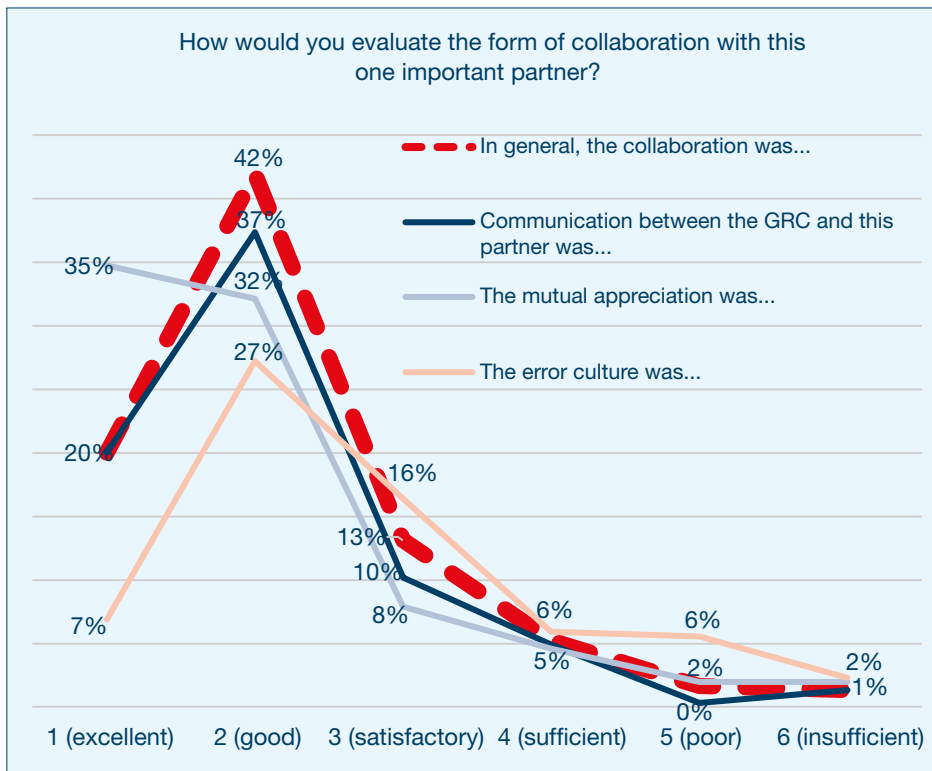

Figure 6: Evaluation of collaborative efforts

Furthermore, respondents were asked to rate the form of collaboration with the most important actor using a school grading system with regard to the following categories: communication, mutual appreciation and trust, a shared error culture, similarity in the assessment of situations, a clear distribution of responsibilities and areas of activity, the compatibility of different ways of working as practised by the GRC and its partner, the conflict management system and the collaboration in general.

In Figure 6, not all of the assessment categories listed above are shown in order to preserve a good level of clarity. The four categories depicted were chosen because they either exemplify the average rating or stand out due to minor deviations.

The survey data consistently reveals that the form of collaboration was predominantly perceived as positive. The significant majority of respondents rated the form of collaboration as "good", i.e. awarding it the German school grade of 2. The second most frequent grade was "excellent", especially with regard to the category "mutual appreciation and trust". The grades of "satisfactory" and worse were awarded in decreasing numbers. The respondents were most critical with regard to the category of "shared error culture", which received the least number of ratings as "excellent".

Even though the form of collaboration with civil society actors was predominantly rated as successful and important in the survey, it also presented some challenges. These were discussed in more detail during a workshop.

One challenge – especially at the beginning of the deployment – was the oversupply that characterised support from civil society actors in many places. Due to a lack of time and staff resources, it was not always possible to consider, mediate and coordinate all offers of help that were addressed to the GRC. This led, in part, to resentment and a lack of understanding and some actors withdrew their offers of assistance out of disappointment. The situation was also rendered more difficult by the fact that the GRC could not deploy individuals or groups even when support was needed because they lacked certain qualifications or, even if they already had them, these had to be checked first.

Different working cultures, methodological approaches and the prioritisation of tasks also led to challenges. Red Cross members reported on difficulties experienced by civil society actors in finding their way around the GRC system. In particular, the seemingly hierarchical structures in place in civil protection were a source of incomprehension, as many of the civil society initiatives had flat to no hierarchies and also, in some cases, did not even name clear remits and points of contact. The, at times, differing opportunities for participation, as well as varying demands and requirements, led to the creation of inconsistent objectives, which, in turn, led to friction in certain places. There were also disagreements because the recognition and appreciation of the work which was carried out were different: According to one GRC member, civil society actors received par-

ticularly high praise and recognition for their involvement, while the collaborative efforts of Red Cross volunteers were sometimes taken for granted. On the other hand, there were also reports from civil society actors who would have liked their involvement to have been more appreciated.

The GRC workers interviewed reported that most of the issues were able to be solved through subsequent discussion. Only in individual cases did the form of collaboration with certain civil society actors have to be terminated.

At a glance...
- During the refugee mission, the GRC cooperated in various fields of activity with civil society actors whose participation was considered to be important. In certain cases, they were able to draw on existing points of contact and experience. On the other hand, the GRC often collaborated with unaffiliated volunteers and initatives for the first time.
- In most cases, the forms of collaboration ensued on the initiative of the civil society actor.
- Central functions for the coordination and integration of civil society actors were not available across the board and some were only created in the course of the deployment.
- The form of collaboration with the various civil society actors was perceived by respondents as both positive and appreciative.

4.2. Dealing with support tools and experiential knowledge

In the following, answers to questions regarding the use of support tools in collaboration with civil society actors are analysed. The term "support tools" in this context comprises different formats, methods and strategies. Within the GRC, written support tools such as guidelines, checklists or recommendations for action are widely used. In the run-up to the survey, GRC officials reported during a workshop that support tools could provide guidance and serve as a source of security when undertaking action in an acute and otherwise unclear deployment. The biggest challenge is to keep the information up-to-date and accurate in terms of content and the law. In addition, every deployment is unique and proven concepts cannot always be transferred in their entirety (and sometimes even only to a very limited extent) to other or new situations. The use of checklists and guidelines can also lead to a situation where only the points which are noted are handled and other important aspects that are not noted in writing are forgotten. This renders the often necessary task of improvisation more difficult. Nevertheless, support

tools captured in written form would have proven helpful during the deployment, which is why the survey identified the relevant benefits and needs in order to be able to draw conclusions for the future production of support tools.

Use of support tools

The answers to the question as to which support tools could be used to engage external actors are shown in Figure 7. The majority of respondents indicated that they had used one or more of the following tools in their refugee relief efforts: Recommendations for action, checklists, guidelines and manuals. The fact that recommendations for action and checklists were used in the majority of cases may be due to the nature of these support tools. They are mostly brief and may have been perceived as more useful in the situation at hand. Guidelines and manuals often contain a wealth of information, making it difficult to source useful advice. It can be assumed that during a dynamic refugee mission, there may not have been time for this, which is why these were named less often in the survey.

According to a small proportion (approximately 3%) of respondents, support tools were available but could not be used. The reasons stated included insufficient clarity, a lack of transferability to the current situation and a degree of irrelevance, e.g. because the involvement of external actors on the ground was not desired: The low number of mentions here indicates that (written) support tools in the GRC, if available, can also be used and thus be considered helpful.
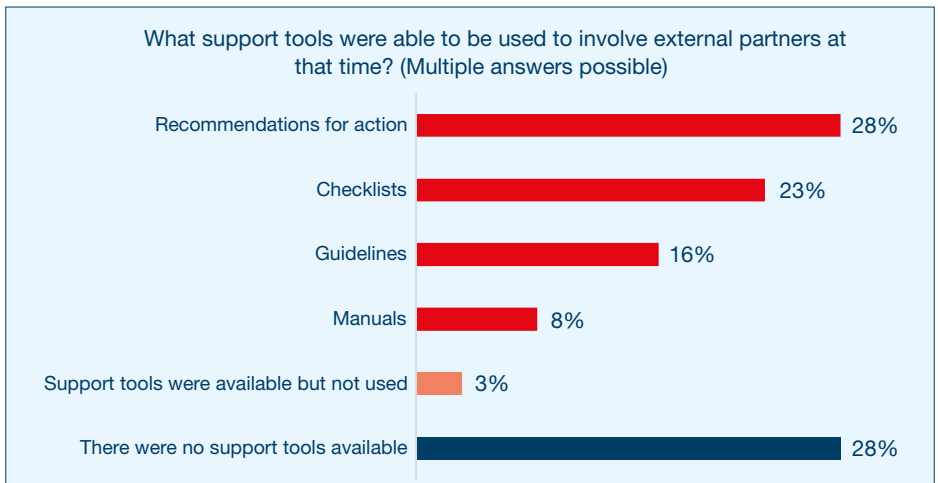

What support tools were able to be used to involve external partners at that time? (Multiple answers possible)

Recommendations for action	28%
Checklists	23%
Guidelines	16%
Manuals	8%
Support tools were available but not used	3%
There were no support tools available	28%

Figure 7: Resources available during the refugee mission in 2015/16

In contrast, roughly a quarter of respondents said that no tools had been available. Exactly why such a contrast exists between available and unavailable support tools could not be clarified conclusively here. It is possible that certain support tools were more transferable at some locations than others due to site-specific conditions. It is also possible that useful support tools were not known everywhere and could therefore neither be tested nor used.

This is confirmed by statements from workshops and interviews. There, too, it was reported that, during acute phases of a deployment, there was often no time to engage with the appropriate support materials in detail. Furthermore, there is no central platform within the association that is used by all branches to collect brochures, guidelines and similar documents and to allow access to them as the situation is unfolding.

As existing support materials are not always suitable, a workshop was held to discuss which materials could be helpful for similar deployments. Participants expressed a need for support tools that acted as a kind of "guide", e.g. a loose-leaf collection. This must be characterised by generalised wording and easy-to-follow recommendations. In terms of the topics being dealt with, support tools related to inter-organisational collaboration were particularly desired.
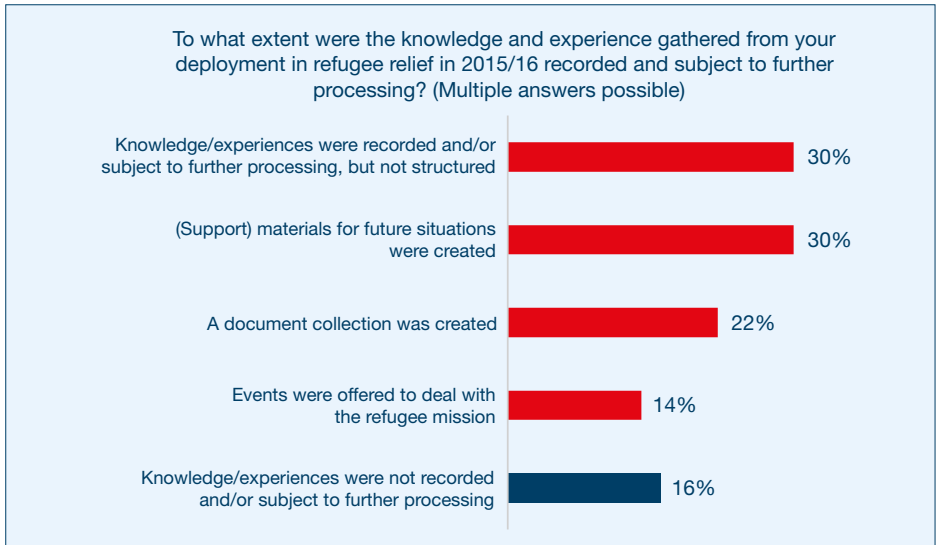
Dealing with experiential knowledge

During the refugee mission in 2015/16, spontaneity, flexibility and improvisation were of great importance. Often, there were no (or only limited) resources and capacity available in order to document experience and knowledge. For this reason, the survey also covered the management of experiential knowledge, i.e. its retention and the corresponding processing. With regard to future situations in particular, it is prudent to learn from mistakes and to continue applying and adapting best practices to ensure that unfolding situations are handled effectively.

Figure 8 reveals that the 2015/16 refugee mission was evaluated in many GRC organisations in different ways and that the lessons learned were made accessible for the future.

The majority of respondents stated that acquired knowledge had been prepared in different forms. Unstructured further processing and the creation of (support) materials for future deployment situations were mentioned most frequently. Document collections or events were organised with somewhat less frequency.

To what extent were the knowledge and experience gathered from your deployment in refugee relief in 2015/16 recorded and subject to further processing? (Multiple answers possible)

Knowledge/experiences were recorded and/or subject to further processing, but not structured	30%
(Support) materials for future situations were created	30%
A document collection was created	22%
Events were offered to deal with the refugee mission	14%
Knowledge/experiences were not recorded and/or subject to further processing	16%

Figure 8: Dealing with knowledge and experience

In addition, a select number of respondents indicated other methods of knowledge processing in a free text field. These include, among others:
- The creation of (support) materials – such as manuals, recommendations for action and concepts – for individual areas
- Regular documentation, e.g. in the so-called mission log
- Adaptation and revision of a translator pool
- Conducting webinars on the topic of integrating unaffiliated volunteers based on experiences from refugee relief
- A lively exchange with former employees
- Creation of a function for the coordination of voluntary work in the field of asylum

Here, too, it can be seen that experiential knowledge was not only recorded in written form, but was also made available for use in a sustainable way through other formats, such as webinars or an informal exchange.

Only 16% of respondents stated that knowledge and experience had not been retained and/or processed further. Here, one person critically observed that individuals in leadership roles in the GRC had difficulties in viewing the experiences and ideas of their colleagues as good and in conserving and rendering them usable for subsequent deployments. The extent to which this assessment is shared by other Red Cross members could not be determined during the survey.

At a glance...

- Within the GRC, a large number of written support tools already exist. For the most part, these were used if they were known and accessible. Brief and practice-oriented support tools were used most frequently.
- In certain instances, however, it was not possible to resort to the use of support tools. This was due, among other things, to the lack of transferability for existing support tools or the fact that they simply did not exist or were not otherwise known.
- Respondents expressed the need for support tools that included general, easy-to-follow recommendations for action and which were dedicated to inter-organisational collaboration.
- A large proportion of respondents said they had evaluated their experiences under deployment and drawn lessons from them. These had been recorded and passed on using various methods.
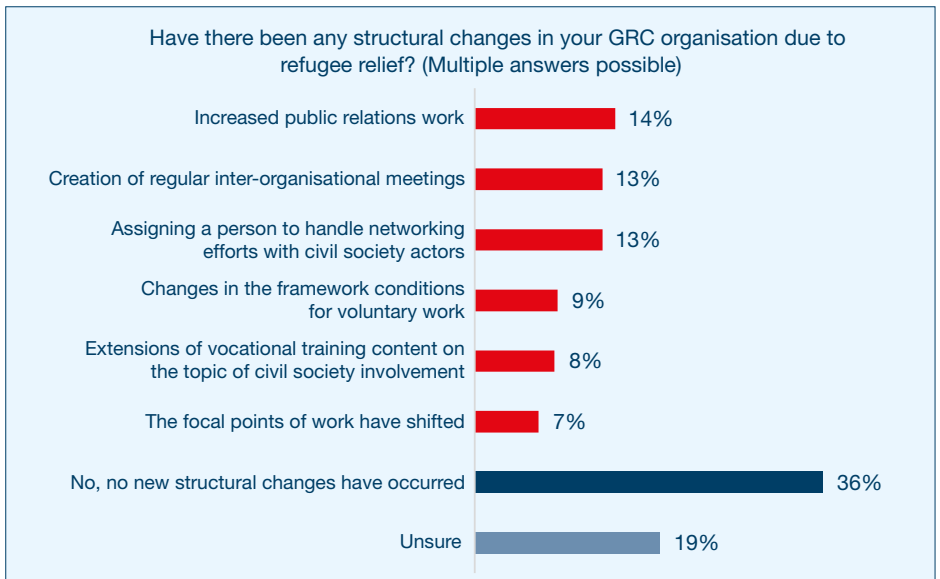
4.3. Structural changes in the GRC

With regard to the use of empirical values, the project discussed the extent to which structural changes, i.e. more far-reaching adjustments, have taken place within GRC organisations. Structural changes may include many different aspects and can be perceived differently by people: For example, while one person is only marginally aware of a structural change, this may have a greater impact on another person's work in the GRC. The answers to the question as to whether there have been structural changes in the respective GRC organisation as a result of refugee relief were, therefore, correspondingly diverse (Figure 9). Just under 20% of respondents said that they were not aware of such changes and 36% reported that there had been no structural changes in their branch in the course of the refugee mission. One person wrote in this regard that the disaster services were already well-aligned with future requirements and there was therefore no need for more far-reaching changes.

Other respondents stated that there had been one or more structural changes in their branch.

Leading reports included intensified public relations work, the creation of regular inter-organisational meetings and the assignment of an individual for networking with civil society actors. In the free text field, respondents described further specific changes, e.g.:

- The establishment of a function for the coordination of voluntary helpers, as well as a volunteer service office.

Figure 9: Structural changes in the GRC branches

- The expansion of available personnel – both in terms of their number and scope of qualification, e.g. the creation of new positions in refugee counselling and the provision of further support for (and the development of) voluntary refugee relief
- Comprehensive and intensive cross-organisational exchange and networking with local actors, such as volunteers or authorities, e.g. in the form of regular meetings
- The continuous integration of knowledge gained from the experience of working with refugees into training and further education concepts
- The creation of a new GRC division or corporation (Ltd.) related to refugee aid

Furthermore, one of the survey respondents stated that the collaboration between full-time and voluntary staff had improved due to the intensive process of exchange during the refugee mission.

The wishes of respondents

The solid evaluation of collaborative efforts with civil society actors (see chapter 4.1) and previously implemented adjustments in the GRC organisations may be the reasons why only 14% of respondents explicitly wished for changes regarding the parameters of collaboration with civil society actors. 26% saw no need for action here. However, 60% said they could not make an assessment thereof or failed to provide any information. This

makes it difficult to analyse this question in a fruitful way, which is why the individual answers are given greater consideration in the following. The requests for change which are mentioned are manifold and can be assigned to different areas.

The **wish for more effective coordinatio**n of civil society actors was expressed with particular frequency. Among other things, a point of contact with clearly formulated areas of responsibility was proposed. According to the recommendation, this function should exist in every district branch and be run by an individual working full-time. In this regard, stronger support from the district associations was desired. Other respondents, however, said that greater centralisation would be conducive to involving and coordinating civil society actors. Here, based on the regional TEAM structures[6], a TEAM Germany was proposed. The responses indicate that skills and resources for volunteer coordination were not available in all places. Furthermore, the respondents expressed the wish for clear responsibilities and agreements in order to be able to better schedule the available support professionals. In addition, all legal and insurance-related concerns regarding the involvement of external individuals would have to be clarified. In addition, IT facilities should be available to record actors, as well as unaffiliated volunteers, and thus facilitate their coordination more easily in the situation on the ground. In general, there should be – according to the prevailing wish – a structural procedure stretching from registration and integration to monitoring and supervision and up to release from the deployment.

Further wishes were expressed in terms of how networking and collaboration should be organised. On balance, there was a **desire among respondents for more intensive networking**, both among themselves and with actors external to the GRC, such as other aid organisations. In order for these to be available in a crisis, networking should already take place and be maintained in times without crisis. This includes being more open with each other and getting rid of a "competitive mindset". In order to ensure a successful collaboration, regular meetings or a constant process of exchange with known and new actors would be desirable, if necessary, at city and local level. In this way, previous missions could be reviewed or future situations prepared for.

Some respondents expressed a **desire for the open communication of needs**, which they consider essential for good collaboration with civil society actors. For this, the GRC must know exactly what it needs from external actors in order to be able to obtain it. Subsequently, this need could be brought to the attention of external actors by way of effec-

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[6]   The TEAM structures are intended to enable the longer-term commitment of new and previously unaffiliated volunteers to the GRC structures. The concept envisages that interested citizens register in advance on a platform provided for this purpose, so that they can be contacted and integrated into the assistance operation in the event of a crisis or disaster situation. The registration process captures information on qualifications, skills and time capacities, which should enable a more targeted engagement (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, 2021).

tive public relations. One respondent hoped that targeted public relations work would al-
so create more acceptance and respect for the work of the GRC.

However, in order to improve collaborative efforts with civil society actors further, changes
in GRC operational remits were also addressed. The **desire for (low-threshold) training
and further education** on this topic was expressed. One respondent also envisaged po-
tential here to establish this on a cross-network basis. However, who should participate
was not specified. In addition, some respondents wished for instructions and checklists
on how to involve civil society actors, e.g. in the context of disaster services training. A
guideline on how to deal with unaffiliated volunteers and a guideline on networking with
other associations were explicitly requested. This request shows that support tools are
not widespread throughout the association due to the fact that guidelines and recom-
mendations for action on these topics already exist in some cases and may need to be
revised or updated here.

Despite the issues and challenges mentioned above, collaboration with civil society ac-
tors was elementary for the GRC and also for other aid organisations in order to cope
with the situation. Overall, collaborative efforts were evaluated positively by the GRC
workers based on the experience gained. This also reinforces the optimistic view of fu-
ture forms of collaboration, as Figure 10 shows.

When asked how they viewed collaboration with civil society actors in the future, 13% of
respondents said they were unable to make this assessment. Of the remaining respond-

Figure 10: Future assessment of collaboration with civil society

ents, only a very small proportion (3%) was of the opinion that collaboration with unaffiliated volunteers, initiatives and associations would not be sought in the future. 27% believed that collaboration would still be sought, at least on a selective basis. The majority (50%) of respondents estimated that collaboration was indeed envisaged for future situations.

At a glance...
- As a result of the refugee mission, there were various structural changes in the GRC. These ranged from the establishment of a body to coordinate civil society actors to the revision of vocational training content.
- Various wishes and needs were identified for future forms of collaboration with civil society actors, including better coordination, more intensive networking and enhanced communication, as well as low-threshold training and further education.
- A clear majority stated that they would also strive for (selective) collaboration with civil society actors in future missions.
- A large proportion of respondents said they had evaluated their experiences under deployment and drawn lessons from them. These had been recorded and passed on using various methods.

5 Summary and Outlook

The project's results, which have been listed in this research publication series, represent the diverse range of experiences and insights gained in the exchange with civil society actors during the refugee mission. The different experiences of the respondents underline the complexity of the situation at the time and illustrate the diverse forms of support offered by civil society.

It became clear that collaboration with civil society actors remained a new experience in many places, especially with unaffiliated volunteers and initiatives, neighbourhoods and religious communities. Furthermore, some civil society actors – such as self-coordinated migrant organisations and refugee networks – are well-networked among themselves, but have few links to the structures and organisations in civil protection. New forms of collaboration seem to have come with particular frequency from civil society actors who specifically contacted the GRC.

- It may be useful to seek targeted contact with civil society actors, in particular those with specific expertise, and to generally expand networking efforts of aid organisations.

Civil society actors were more likely to be deployed in areas that did not require specific knowledge. The qualifications of civil society actors were often not recorded due to the tight time frame in the run-up to a deployment.

- Greater consideration of the qualifications or expertise possessed by civil society actors can lead to an easier integration process into operational structures and activities.

With regard to the coordination functions for civil society actors, there were also different types of experience: In some places, such functions already existed while, in others, they were only established in the course of the refugee mission.

- It was explicitly desired and recommended that there be a nationwide expansion of corresponding functions in the project to facilitate the enhanced coordination of civil society actors.

Overall, the collaboration with civil society was assessed positively, so it seems that it had already worked successfully in many cases in the situation at the time. In addition, collaboration will also be sought in future situations (on a selective basis). However, there were also challenges associated with the collaboration. For example, the GRC and civil

society actors originate from different working cultures, adopt different approaches and pursue different objectives.

- It is important to compile findings, i.e. to identify successful practices and draw lessons, because collaboration involving new forms of engagement is also likely in future missions.

Within a deployment, where speed and flexibility are essential, concise support tools – such as checklists or instructions – are more likely to be used than manuals and guidelines, as there is often no time to engage with the corresponding support materials in detail. In addition, good support tools are sometimes readily available, but they are not always accessible to all or there is confusion about where to find them.

- There is a need to develop support tools that cover inter-organisational collaboration. In addition, it is important to create structures that allow easy access to resources, both for GRC staff and volunteers.

The exemplary consideration of refugee relief reveals that the change in voluntary work has a clear impact on practice, the deployment situations and, to a certain extent, on organisational structures. Even though collaboration with civil society actors has gone well in many locations, it also brings with it challenges that have become visible in the WAKE project. However, the interest of the population in supporting each other in times of crisis and emergency is a positive sign of social cohesion. This is a great potential within the civil society, which should be considered and developed further by the GRC and other aid organisations through implementation of adequate structures and processes.

Moreover, the project results reveal what role the handling of experiential knowledge plays within a deployment and afterwards. Disseminating support tools and creating structures for a process of exchange can help to be better prepared for fast-moving and complex situations. The GRC already uses a variety of aspects to store, process and pass on experience and knowledge. Here, it is important to raise awareness of their relevance and build structures to consolidate them.

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7   List of Figures and Tables

8 | For quick readers

- In the framework of the WAKE research project the GRC refugee mission in 2015/16 was subject to review. The focus was on collaboration with civil society actors and the handling of both experience and knowledge. Various methods were used, including an internal GRC survey, the findings of which are presented in the research publication series.
- During the refugee mission, the GRC cooperated with civil society actors in various fields of activity. In some cases, it was possible to draw on existing contacts and experience. In contrast, collaboration with unaffiliated volunteers, in particular, was often new.
- Collaboration with civil society actors was assessed positively for the most part and the respondents will also strive for this in future missions.
- Simultaneously, challenges were reflected upon and needs expressed with regard to future collaboration, including the desire for improved coordination, more intensive networking and enhanced communication, as well as low-threshold training and further education. In some branches, structural changes have already been implemented in this regard, such as the establishment of volunteer coordination offices.
- Within the GRC, a large number of written support tools already exist. During the refugee crisis, short, practical support tools were used, in particular. However, in some cases, participants were unable to access support tools because they were not accessible or transferable to the situation. According to the respondents, support tools are needed that contain general, easy-to-follow recommendations for action, can be interpreted in a situation-specific way and include the aspect of inter-organisational collaboration.
- A large proportion of respondents said they had evaluated their experiences in the deployment and drawn lessons from them. These were recorded and passed on by various methods so that they can be used for future situations. The GRC already uses a variety of aspects to store, process and pass on experience and knowledge. Here, it is important to raise awareness of their relevance and build structures to consolidate them.

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