



MOTHERS' CLUB POLICY

WARDENS OF MANKIND AND NATURE
(WOMAN)

www.redcrossghana.org

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THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Contents

The Mothers' Club Policy	4
Introduction	5
Statement	6
Mothers' Club Leadership	11
Funding Sources	12

THE MOTHERS' CLUB POLICY

The Ghana Red Cross Society (GRCS) Mothers' Club Policy presents a set of principles, guidelines, and measures designed to address the needs and rights of the Red Cross Mothers' Club volunteer. The main purpose of this policy is to ensure Mothers' Club members have access to opportunities, resources, and support that enable them to contribute positively to the work of the National Society. This policy focuses on empowering the Mothers' Club members to promote their well-being and to be able to offer experienced humanitarian service to growing girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, first-time young mothers, and the aged in general.

This Policy seeks to streamline the Red Cross Mothers' Clubs whose main orientation will be to protect life and health and to ensure respect for human beings, with special focus on mother, newborn and child health to be the best "nurse" of choice for the aged husband or sister, and the girl child.

Despite the immense contribution of the MC members, the GRCS as an institution has not been able to secure a sustainable means of sustaining the work and interests of the clubs. Club members are usually motivated on an irregular basis. They on a few occasions benefit from some little cash incentives, especially when there are externally funded projects that come along with some incentives for the volunteers. Such incentives at times turn out to be disincentives when the GRCS as an institution cannot continue fund such motivation from their own resources after the external partner's funding comes to an end.

This policy emphasizes internally generated funds. Through income generation activities, Red Cross Mothers' Clubs not only enhance women's economic independence but also foster community resilience and humanitarian initiatives. This dual approach contributes significantly to sustainable development and improves the quality of life for families and communities.

This policy draws attention on the need for skills development, mentorship, community engagement, advocacy, networking, and visibility, to promote women's leadership that will contribute to building a generation of confident and capable female leaders in their communities.

Several reports were received in the past where Red Cross female volunteers who were part of the Hajj Pilgrimage played an essential role in providing support to elderly and frail women during Hajj pilgrimages in Mecca. Such old ladies travelling with no relatives were so old that no one would want to come into physical contact with them in case there was an emergency. The assistance of the Red Cross female pilgrims was crucial in ensuring that these old and weak pilgrims had a safe and fulfilling experience. This policy seeks to formalize this role and encourage more Red Cross female volunteers on Hajj to commit to providing volunteer services as part of the pilgrimage.

INTRODUCTION

During our active years, we achieved remarkable outcomes, including 0% maternal mortality, zero stillbirths, and no infant deaths in our catchment areas. In the Upper East Region, one of the country's most impoverished and vulnerable regions, we ensured that every pregnant woman in our communities received support throughout their nine months of pregnancy, even accompanying them to health facilities for childbirth. We maintained a strict zero-tolerance policy for home deliveries in our communities. We are deeply grateful to the Swiss Red Cross, UNICEF, and the Ghana Health Service for their invaluable assistance in achieving these milestones.

However, when our partners withdrew, we found it challenging to sustain our efforts and manage our members effectively without external support. Our capacity to maintain oversight and acquire necessary resources dwindled, and we eventually faced setbacks. This experience taught us that, alongside our vital health initiatives, we should have pursued income-generating activities to build financial reserves to support our union and its activities. In our dedication to saving lives and improving health, we neglected to strengthen our independence.

There remains significant work to be done for young girls, young mothers, elderly men, and society as a whole. We are addressing issues related to sexual and reproductive health, maternal, neonatal, and child health, as well as the persistent prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in certain areas. We want to resume regular home visits and health awareness events during market days and other community gatherings, ensuring that community members are well-informed about safe maternal, neonatal, and child health practices. We also seek to support Ghana Health Service personnel in outreach programs, immunizations, and disease control initiatives.

Additionally, we are eager to explore new challenges, particularly in the area of climate change. Women and children can play a crucial role in making impactful choices regarding bush burning, cooking methods, water usage, maintaining vegetation, and preventing soil erosion through avoiding practices like sweeping our compounds with the topsoil every morning in our homes.

We are thrilled to learn that the IFRC President is a woman of our generation and therefore automatically a member of the Mothers' Club. This is our moment to rise; we are WOMEN, the Wardens of Mankind and Nature. We must rise again, and this time, we will not fall. As an automatic member of the Mothers' Club, we hope she will amplify our voices to attract partners once more.

DEDICATION

THIS POLICY IS DEDICATED TO OUR EXCELLENCY **KATHRYN ANELDA FORBES**, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES.

STATEMENT

Mothers for the Foetus

Having a healthy pregnancy is one of the best ways to promote a healthy birth. Pre-Pregnancy and prenatal care can help prevent complications and inform women about important steps they can take to protect their infant and ensure a healthy pregnancy.

Capacity Building of Members: We will continue to seek support to train our members to educate and guide expectant mothers in adhering to all pregnancy-related health protocols, which are crucial for ensuring the well-being of both the mother and the developing fetus.

Nutrition, Hydration and Substance Abuse: We will seek to acquire training and update ourselves on proper nutrition during pregnancy, emphasizing the need for a balanced diet rich in essential vitamins and minerals. We will teach women about the importance of hydration and the avoidance of harmful substances, such as alcohol and tobacco, which can adversely affect fetal development.

Regular Health Checks: We will encourage pregnant women to attend regular check-ups, ensuring that healthcare providers can monitor the pregnancy's progress, identify any potential complications early, and provide necessary interventions. In addition to promoting medical check-ups, we will also provide vital health education. We will continue to educate pregnant women about various pregnancy-related health protocols, including the importance of vaccinations, recognizing warning signs, and understanding the stages of labor.

Safe Delivery Practices: We will assist our daughters on safe delivery practices and the significance of seeking immediate medical attention in case of complications. We will strive to continue with our home visits, especially in rural or underserved areas, where access to healthcare services may be limited. During these visits, we will offer personalized support, address any questions or concerns mothers may have, and assist them in navigating the healthcare system.

Mothers for the Pregnant Woman

Information on prenatal care for the pregnant woman, including the significance of regular check-ups, the types of tests and screenings that are necessary, and what to expect at each stage of pregnancy is essential. This knowledge helps women, especially our young daughters to recognize the early signs of complications and encourages them to seek timely medical attention when needed.

Food and Nutrition: We will offer guidance on nutritional needs during pregnancy, emphasizing the importance of a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients to support both maternal and fetal health.

Access to Health Care Services: We shall continue to play a significant role in facilitating access to healthcare services, especially for women in underserved or remote communities. We will solicit support from our partners to help transport women to healthcare facilities, ensuring that transportation barriers do not prevent them from receiving the care they require during antenatal and postnatal periods.

Companionship: Pregnancy can be an emotionally taxing experience, and we volunteers recognize

the importance of social support for expectant mothers. We will seek to resume our warm companionship, encouragement, and a listening ear, helping to alleviate feelings of anxiety or isolation that some women may experience during their pregnancy.

Advocacy: We will resume our advocacy for maternal and child health issues within their communities, raising awareness about the importance of maternal health and the resources available to pregnant women, engaging local leaders and healthcare providers in discussions about improving access to care and reducing barriers that women may face.

Mothers for the Newborn and Child

One of our primary functions is to provide education on essential newborn care. We teach young mothers about the basic needs of their newborns, including:

Feeding: We educate mothers about breastfeeding techniques, the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and how to recognize signs of hunger in infants.

Hygiene: We instruct young mothers on practices like bathing their babies safely, maintaining cleanliness, and understanding when to seek medical attention for signs of infection.

Sleep Safety: We provide guidance on safe sleeping positions and environments to help prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). We educate mothers about the importance of creating a safe sleep space, including proper use of cribs and the dangers of co-sleeping.

Developmental Milestones: We empower mothers to understand and monitor their child's growth and developmental progress. This includes recognizing the importance of play, interaction, and stimulation for cognitive and emotional development.

Emergency Preparedness: We educate young mothers on how to respond in emergencies, covering basic first aid for infants, recognizing signs of illness, and knowing when to seek urgent medical care. This knowledge can empower mothers to feel more confident and prepared in caring for their newborns.

Immunization and Health Check-ups: We educate mothers about the importance of vaccination schedules and regular health check-ups. We organize community immunization drives and help mothers understand the benefits of ensuring their children are up to date with vaccinations.

Mental Health and Well-being: The transition to motherhood can be overwhelming, especially for young mothers. We will improve our skills to recognize signs of postpartum depression and anxiety. We can then provide emotional support and can connect mothers with mental health resources when needed, promoting overall well-being for both mothers and children.

Mothers against Non-Communicable Diseases

High blood pressure and high blood sugar are the main contributors to diabetes, hypertension, obesity, stroke, cancers, kidney failure, heart attack, nerve disorders, blindness, mental illness, and many other diseases that cause suffering and can lead to death. Our primary goal for fighting the above diseases is to collaborate with families, individuals, and communities to decrease the exposure to high blood pressure and high blood sugar.

Community Engagement: We will organize health education sessions focused on NCD management. Topics may include understanding chronic illnesses, recognizing symptoms, managing medications, and making lifestyle changes.

Nutrition Counseling: We will provide information on balanced diets and nutrition tailored for individuals with specific NCDs, assisting elderly individuals in making healthier food choices that can help manage or prevent complications related to their conditions.

Assessments: We will conduct regular assessments especially for blood sugar and blood pressure levels of each elderly member's health status, identifying their specific needs, challenges, and goals. This personalized approach ensures that care is adapted to the unique requirements of the individual.

Companionship and Emotional Support: Many older adults experience isolation and loneliness, particularly if they live alone or have limited family connections. We will volunteer to help alleviate these feelings through regular visits to check in on elderly individuals, engage in conversation, and participate in activities that the seniors enjoy, such as playing games, reading, or simply sharing stories. We will seek training to provide empathetic listening, offering emotional support to seniors dealing with various issues, such as grief, depression, or anxiety. This emotional connection can significantly impact the well-being of older adults.

We will set up and operate "vitals kiosks" a set equipped with the right equipment and devices to assist in tracking vital signs, such as blood pressure and blood glucose levels, helping seniors monitor their health status and recognize potential issues early.

We will engage in community outreach to promote awareness of NCDs, emphasizing the importance of early detection, lifestyle modifications, and the available support services. We will collaborate with local health authorities to host public health screenings, aiming to identify undiagnosed or poorly managed conditions among the elderly population.

Exercise and Physical Activity: We will encourage physical activity as crucial for maintaining mobility and preventing falls among older adults. We will organize periodic low-impact exercise classes or simple walking groups to promote physical health in a safe and supportive environment.

The Climate Smart Mother

Community Engagement: We plan to play an important role in addressing climate change by focusing on education, community engagement, and practical initiatives. We will organize educational events to raise awareness about climate change, its impacts, and the importance of sustainable practices. Topics can include renewable energy, waste reduction, and sustainable agriculture.

Community Gardens: We will encourage the establishment of community gardens to promote local food production, biodiversity, and ecological awareness. This can also teach members about sustainable gardening and permaculture practices.

Waste Reduction Initiatives: We will seek to implement programs focused on waste reduction, such as recycling, composting, and encouraging the use of reusable products among families in the community.

Local Advocacy: We will support and participate in local and national policies aimed at combating

climate change. This may involve collaborating with other organizations to lobby for sustainable practices and climate-friendly legislation.

Skill Development: We will support initiative that empower mothers and community members with skills to adapt to climate change, such as water conservation techniques, energy efficiency measures, tree planting and sustainable farming practices.

Resilience Building: We will champion Red Cross resilience-building initiatives that focus on mitigating the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, particularly women and children.

Partnerships: We will form partnerships with environmental organizations to amplify their impact. We will collaborate on projects related to reforestation, wildlife protection, or clean energy initiatives can be effective.

Youth Encouragement: Engaging our children in environmental activities, such as tree-planting days or clean-up campaigns, to instill a sense of responsibility toward the planet.

Mothers for Economic Viability

Skills Training: We will provide training programs that teach women valuable skills, such as sewing, baking, crafts, and other income-generating activities. These skills empower women to create and market their products, fostering self-sufficiency.

Microfinance Initiatives: We will facilitate access to microloans or savings groups, enabling women to start or expand their small businesses. This financial support helps them generate income and improve their household economic stability.

Cooperatives: We will group ourselves to form cooperatives, through which we can pool resources and collaborate on larger projects, such as collective farming or handicrafts. This not only enhances our economic prospects but also strengthens community bonds.

Community Development Projects: The income generated through our activities will be reinvested in community development projects, such as health and education initiatives, benefiting the broader community.

Disaster Response and Resilience: Economic empowerment will enable us to contribute to humanitarian efforts during crises. With better financial stability, we can more effectively support our families and communities during emergencies, participating in relief efforts and recovery.

Advocacy and Awareness: Through our income generating activities, most of us will be economically empowered and respected in society. We as empowered women can become advocates for social issues, including health, nutrition, and disaster preparedness, thereby promoting resilience within our communities and addressing humanitarian needs.

Mothers in Leadership

Showcasing Success Stories: The GRCS Mothers' Club member is overwhelmingly inspired by the present presidency of the IFRC occupied by a woman of their age, automatically a club member. We will highlight successful women leaders within the Red Cross and beyond to inspire others by demonstrating that leadership is attainable and impactful, encouraging more women to step forward.

The current president Ms. Kate Forbes shall be the focal point of all inspirations to women.

Community Engagement: By offering community education, public speaking events, and economic empowerment programmes, we will seek to empower women with the skills necessary to lead effectively within their communities.

Peer Mentoring: We will establish mentorship programs that connect experienced female leaders with aspiring women allows for knowledge sharing, encouragement, and personal growth, fostering confidence in leadership endeavors of our members, especially the younger ones.

Engagement in Projects: We will attract stakeholders who would want to involve women in planning, organizing, and executing community projects that helps them gain practical experience in leadership roles, enhancing their competence and visibility.

Voice and Representation: We will provide a platform for women to voice their opinions and advocate for issues affecting their communities, empowering them to take leadership stances on social matters affecting women.

Building Connections: We will facilitate networking among women from various backgrounds, fostering collaboration and support, which can lead to leadership roles in both local and broader contexts.

Mothers against Gender-based Violence

We will incorporate the issue of gender-based violence, its forms, and its impact on individuals and communities during our regular meeting. By educating members and the broader community, we empower women to recognize abusive behaviors and understand their rights.

Creating Safe Spaces: We will endeavour to serve as safe havens for women to share their experiences, seek advice, and find solidarity among their peers. Providing a supportive environment encourages open discussions about GBV, helping women process their experiences and feel less isolated.

Empowerment Programs: We will endeavour to help women gain financial independence, which we deem as crucial in reducing vulnerability to GBV, as it enables women to make choices that improve their circumstances and enhance their self-sufficiency.

Advocacy and Policy Change: We will advocate for stronger laws and policies to combat GBV at local, national, and international levels. By working with local authorities and community leaders, they can push for more resources, better protection for survivors, and public awareness campaigns that confront societal attitudes towards violence against women.

Collaboration with Support Services: We will weigh case by case, the appropriateness against our Principles to partner with local shelters, healthcare providers, counseling services, and law enforcement agencies to create comprehensive support systems for survivors of GBV. These partnerships ensure that women have access to the necessary resources, such as legal aid, medical care, and psychological support.

Community Mobilization: Through community outreach and awareness campaigns, We will mobilize community members to take a stand against GBV. We will engage men and boys as allies in these

initiatives fosters a collective responsibility to challenge and change harmful gender norms and behaviors.

Monitoring and Reporting: We will encourage our membership and society to monitor incidents of GBV and report them. By creating a culture of accountability, we will help ensure that cases of violence are addressed and that victims receive the support they need.

Mothers in Mecca

The presence of Red Cross female member during Hajj is invaluable for elderly and frail women pilgrims. With their skills in first aid, emotional support, mobility support and basic health knowledge, they offer physical, emotional, and logistical support, they help these old women navigate the demanding pilgrimage with dignity and safety. The compassionate assistance of the female Red Cross pilgrim reinforces the spirit of community and care that is central to the Hajj experience, ensuring that all participants can fulfill their religious duties.

Mobility Support: We shall formalize our role to help elderly women navigate the crowded streets of Mecca, providing physical support as they walk, use canes, or push wheelchairs. This includes assisting with transportation to and from religious sites, such as the Haram, and ensuring they remain safe in busy areas.

Regular Check-ups: We shall formalize our role to monitor the health of elderly pilgrims, checking for signs of fatigue, dehydration, or other medical issues. We will provide access to medical care if required, ensuring prompt attention to any health concerns.

Companionship: Many elderly pilgrims may feel anxious or lonely during Hajj due to the overwhelming environment. We shall formalize our role to provide companionship, offering reassurance and emotional support throughout the pilgrimage.

Guidance on Rituals: We shall formalize our role to assist elderly women in understanding and navigating the rituals of Hajj, ensuring they feel informed and secure about their participation in the rites. This includes explaining procedures and offering reminders during key moments of the pilgrimage.

Providing Essentials: We shall formalize our role to help ensure that elderly women have access to necessary supplies such as water, food, medications, and personal items, as well as helping them find rest areas during the pilgrimage.

Crowd Management: We shall formalize our role to assist elderly pilgrims in managing the challenges of large crowds, helping them stay together with their groups and preventing them from getting lost in the busy environment of Mecca.

MOTHERS' CLUB LEADERSHIP

FUNDING SOURCES

Locally Generated Funds

The involvement of Mothers' Clubs in income generation is a crucial aspect of humanitarian work, as it not only serves to empower young individuals but also enhances the sustainability and impact of humanitarian initiatives. By actively engaging women in income-generating activities, humanitarian organizations can foster economic independence, build resilience within communities, and create a pathway for long-term development. This collaborative approach not only benefits the women themselves but also plays a vital role in addressing the wellbeing of homes, elderly men, the sick, humanitarian needs and promoting positive change within wider vulnerable populations. Engaging women in income generation shall explore avenues in environmental, health, agricultural, climate, home care services, food and nutrition, health screening, sports, entertainment events etc. Specifics targeted include but not limited to: raising tree nurseries for sale to fund climate change initiatives, clean-up exercises, home-based care services for a fee, screening for diabetes and hypertension for a fee, production and sale of fruit salads and vegetable salads, agro-production of fruits and vegetable, commercial first aid training, commercial first aid services, health walks etc.

Movement Partner Funds

The GRCS shall tap into the funding opportunities availed by the IFRC and ICRC for women's activities and systems/structures that support the youth and their development. These shall include but not limited to the Capacity building Fund, and the Empress Shoken Fund. The National Society will seek bilateral relationships with Partner National Societies to fund specific women's development initiatives and activities. The women inspired by the current president of the IFRC being a woman will forge a special relationship with the president to make meaning of a woman of Mothers' Club status leading the organization.

Multilateral Organization Funds

The GRCS as an institution will apply for the fund and support/guarantee for individual youth to also apply. The outcome of the funded projects will enhance the viability and visibility of the National Society and for the Red Cross Youth in Ghana.