



Serving a Vulnerable Population: Corporate Culture of the  
Palestine Red Crescent Society Guided by Its Principles

By

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## Declaration

I certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of Master is the result of my own research, and this thesis has not been submitted for higher degree to any other university or institute of learning

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## **Abstract**

This paper assesses the current culture of PRCS and the extent which this culture is coherent with its principles and values using culture theory. The data for this research comes from A study of PRCS Headquarters, including 82 full time employees and 14 volunteers at PRCS, who were asked to respond to a closed-ended, self-administered questionnaire in data collection.

The Likert scale instrument was used to measure the Shared Value in PRCS culture. The chi-square and significance of the created relationship were calculated to determine the correlation.

Overall, the results showed that PRCS is largely achieving the dissemination and sensitization of the international movement's principles and humanitarian values amongst its employees and volunteers. Results supported the study hypothesis that PRCS culture has been affected in the last two years by the growing vulnerability of the population and its need to respond to that vulnerability. This manifested itself in the variability of the respondents' orientation to PRCS principles, which tends to be focused externally (on the functions of the organization, other than focused internally (on the interpersonal dimension of the organization)).

Moreover, correlation analysis showed that degree of sensitization to PRCS principles is hierarchical. The extent of an individual's orientation to the principles was affected by post and position where department directors, unit chiefs and program directors were found to be more oriented to the principles than departmental unit employees, service providers and volunteers whose orientation was largely task oriented.

Communication patterns were found to be the main contributor to disturbances in orientation levels, particularly in relation to interdepartmental practices.

On intradepartmental practices, disturbed communication practices at the hierarchical level reflected a distorted orientation of junior staff, mainly with the respect to internal process. This orientation has negative impact on interpersonal relationships, as individuals tend to integrate it into their assumptions and beliefs, which are not necessarily coherent with those of PRCS culture.

## الملخص التنفيذي

ضمن محاولة استراتيجية جمعية الهلال الأحمر الفلسطيني لخدمة المجمعات الأقل حظاً في المجتمع الفلسطيني، أجريت هذه الدراسة البحثية بهدف الوقوف على الثقافة الداخلية للجمعية، بالإضافة إلى دراسة مدى انسجام هذه الثقافة مع مبادئ الجمعية الإنسانية.

استهدفت الدراسة جميع العاملين والمتطوعين في مقر الإدارة العامة للجمعية بمشاركة 82 موظف و14 متطوع، من خلال الإجابة على استمارة تحتوي على أسئلة مغلقة حول القيم التي تعكسها مبادئ الجمعية بهدف قياس مدى إدراك العاملين والمتطوعين لهذه المبادئ وانعكاسها على ممارساتهم باستخدام مقياس ليكرت، إضافة إلى احتساب مدى ومستوى العلاقة بين المتغيرات المختلفة وتحليلها.

بالرغم من التوافق العام لثقافة الجمعية الحالية مع مبادئها الإنسانية إلا أن نتائج الدراسة دعمت فرضية الدراسة، والتي عكست تأثير ثقافة الجمعية سلباً بسبب التغيرات البيئية (الانتفاضة وما نتج عنها من احتياجات) التي حصلت ما بين عامي 2000-2002، وانعكاس ذلك على الجمعية من توسع في خدماتها وحجمها بما تشمل القوى البشرية في فترة تعتبر محدودة وقصيرة.

أهم النتائج التي عكستها الدراسة هي أن مستوى الإدراك والممارسة لقيم ومبادئ الجمعية ذات العلاقة في البرامج والخدمات المقدمة للمجتمع المحلي أعلى من تلك التي لها علاقة بالأنظمة وسياسات الجمعية الداخلية. كذلك فقد عكس تحليل النتائج والعلاقة بين متغيرات مختلفة بأن مستوى الإدراك متأثر بالهرم الوظيفي والإداري، ذلك أن مدراء الدوائر والوحدات بالإضافة إلى مدراء البرامج قد عكسوا مستوى إدراك للمبادئ أعلى من موظفي الدوائر والوحدات إضافة إلى مقدمي الخدمات والمتطوعين.

تستخلص الباحثة بأن تشوش وفجوات الإتصال والتواصل بين مختلف الفئات يشكل السبب الرئيسي لاختلاف مستويات الإدراك الذي يؤثر سلباً على التوافق الثقافي الداخلي للجمعية خاصة ضمن الفئة التي لاتقع في المستوى الأعلى في الهرم الوظيفي، وبالذات فيما يتعلق بالقضايا الداخلية للمؤسسة، كالعلاقات ألبين شخصية على سبيل المثال، الأمر الذي يدفعهم إلى تكوين افتراضاتهم المنبثقة عن ثقافتهم الفردية التي تبين عند الممارسة أنها لا تتسجم مع ثقافة ومبادئ الجمعية.

## Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| DPR:  | Disaster Preparedness Services                                   |
| EMS:  | Emergency Medical Services                                       |
| EMTS: | Emergency Medical Technicians School                             |
| HQ:   | Headquarter  |
| ICRC: | International Committee of the Red Cross                         |
| IFRC: | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| IDL:  | International Humanitarian Law                                   |
| MH:   | Mental Health  |
| MOH:  | Ministry of Health   |
| NGO:  | Non-Governmental Organization                                    |
| PHCD: | Primary Health Care Department                                   |
| PHC:  | The Palestinian Health Council                                   |
| PLO:  | Palestine Liberation Organization                                |
| PNA:  | Palestinian National Authority                                   |
| PRCS: | The Palestine Red Crescent Society                               |
| RHB:  | Rehabilitation   |
| SHC:  | Secondary Health Care  |
| SW:   | Social Welfare Services  |
| VCA:  | Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment                            |
| Y&V:  | Youth and Volunteers   |



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# Chapter One

## 1.1 Introduction

Organizations today face a rapidly changing world and many of their practices have to be adapted in light of this myriad of change. Both for-profit and non-profit organizations are facing changes like never before, with driving forces such as a rapidly expanding market place (globalization), increasing competition, diversity among consumers, and the availability of new forms of technology. In addition to customer focus, clear long-term strategy and skill in implementing strategy are considered the base of any success (Scholes1991).

Major differences in how organizations carry out the various steps and associated activities in the strategic planning process are a matter of the size of the organization and how these organizations carry out their planning activities. Non-profit organizations tend to focus on matters of broad development, fundraising and volunteer management.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is a humanitarian national society established in December 1968 and mandated by the Palestine National Council to provide a range of health, social, cultural and other humanitarian services to the Palestinian people and others in need in both Palestine and the diaspora. It is one of the largest Palestinian not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations(NGOs).

The PRCS is managed by two bodies (Governors & Executive body) that facilitate and run its activities. Initially, the PRCS was mandated to take the role of a de facto ministry of health for the Palestinians. Political changes and their outcomes forced PRCS to continuously modify its role throughout the years, and this has resulted in ongoing expansion and growth of the Society.

Like any national organization that is aware of environmental changes and the consequent need for adaptation, making internal changes for long-term development became a requirement for the survival of PRCS (Schein, 1992). In

1994 PRCS faced a major modifications and challenges as a well-functioning national society with the reallocation of its Headquarters (HQ) to Palestine.

Secondly, in 2000 PRCS was forced to adapt to the demands imposed by the Second Intifada (uprising against occupation) that began in September 2000. This resulted in a shift in prioreties and rapid expansion of the various programs emergency response plans. PRCS's focus became one of adaptation to the demands of the community it served and changes in its enviroment. This led to unprecedented growth in the Society, including resource acquisition, systems growth and greater human resources.

## **1.2 Background and Significance of the Study**

The seven humanitarian principles (Humanity, Impartiality, Unity, Neutrality, Independence, Universality and Voluntary Service) have been adopted by PRCS since its founding in 1968, and are considered the guiding values of the Society's mission. This necessitates a specific set of values and beliefs to be manifested in the culture and fostered both externally and internally by the Society.

At the external level, delivering effective, professional and quality services to groups who are known to be the most vulnerable has been the primary concern of the Society. Within a framework of empowerment, special attention is directed towards incorporating and reflecting the Society's humanitarian values at all levels of programs and activities.

Internally, it has been the PRCS's tradition that leaders and managers promote among all personnel (volunteers and employees) a work environment that ensures sincere commitment and self-discipline toward the adopted values that are to be reflected in their work at all levels. This reinforces and enhances the values and promotes a harmonious coherent culture.

While the culture describes what the organization is about (interpersonal relationships within the Society, dealing with community, programs and