



One Year On



SRI LANKA RED CROSS SOCIETY



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

In December 2010, **Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC)** training was conducted in Vavuniya through the **Red Cross Post Conflict Recovery programme (RC PCRP)**. Inspired by this training was the **Volunteers in Action (VIA)** programme which sought to use **YABC** as a means of providing young people with the opportunity to inspire positive change in their communities.



The 'heart to mind' approach

- Taking the experiential approach to learning promoted through YABC, the peer educators have invigorated standard trainings from Red Cross dissemination to disaster management. The combination of non-cognitive and cognitive training methodology facilitates a deeper understanding of the material and promotes behavioural change.

Promoting social Cohesion and emotional wellbeing

- Through each training peer educators also stress the importance of promoting the emotional wellbeing of both the individual and the group as a means of increasing a community's resilience. Highlighting the fact that this wellbeing can be achieved through the inclusion of isolated groups and by practicing simple therapeutic exercises that reduce stress.

Changing ourselves

- Understanding that peer educators have to lead by example, they are mentored through the VIA program. Their facilitation skills are developed and new concepts and ideas are shared which challenge their own thinking and behaviour. This provides them with a range of tools to draw on as they seek to become agents of change in their own communities

Creating platforms for intercultural dialogue in a post conflict setting

- This ethnically diverse group of young people have spent the past year working together. This has given them the opportunity to forge friendships in spite of language barriers and to learn from and about each other.



• What's been done?

2011

February

Volunteers in Action

Influence the development of a proposal titled 'Volunteers in Action' (VIA) for the Post Conflict Recovery Programme's software component which uses the YABC toolkit to revamp trainings and mentor youth.

March

Red Cross Dissemination

The first activity under the VIA programme was three Red Cross dissemination trainings for the volunteers of Killinochchi branch. Incorporated with the traditional training material were activities on the seven fundamental principles taken from the draft YABC toolkit. Peer educators facilitated these sessions which encouraged participatory learning and increased participants understanding of these principles.

August

Athletics Coaching Camp

The VIA programme began its first activities in the community with an athletics coaching camp on international youth day. Youth volunteers in Killinochchi and Mullaitivu underwent one day coaching camp in their respective districts that culminated in a sports festival. National coaches conducted the training.

September

Basic Disaster Management

This training was the first of its kind as it aimed to be holistic in its approach conducted for the volunteers of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu branches. The objective being that participants would leave with the knowledge that the resilience of a community is dependent on physical, social, psychological and economic factors and that disaster management interventions should therefore be designed by viewing the community in its entirety with all its complexities

October

Toolkit Translation

Sections on the seven fundamental principles and related activities in the draft YABC toolkit were translated from French to English.

November

Red Cross Dissemination

RC dissemination training - this was the second training of its kind conducted through the VIA programme for the volunteers of Mullaitivu branch, which sought to bring the head to heart or non-cognitive to cognitive approach to learning that is promoted by YABC, in order to revitalise this standard Red Cross training.

December

Psychosocial Support Training

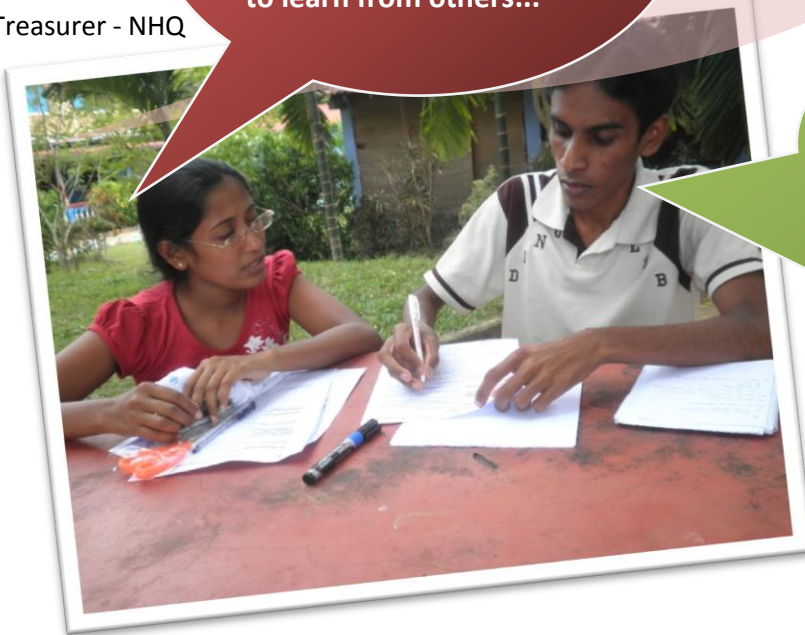
This training was conducted for the volunteers of Mullaitivu and Killinochchi branches. It was a practical training designed so participants could acquire supportive communication skills to use in their interaction with beneficiaries. This was combined with evening 'stress reliever' sessions, which incorporated the concepts of mindfulness and acceptance & commitment therapy. It provided participants with a range of simple therapeutic tools which they could use in their own lives as well.

Since December 2010, trainings of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has focused on providing its YABC peer educators with a platform to put their learning into practice through co-facilitating trainings delivered by the VIA programme. In this way the programme has worked with eleven of the 22 peer educators.

Disni Diyagama

National Youth Treasurer - NHQ

"...Also we meet time to time and exchange our experiences, ideas and thoughts and were able to learn from others..."



Duminda Sanjeewa

Volunteer - Anuradhapura Branch

"...we learned so many things together. Learned to respect each other, to understand each other. We are prompted to think about the feelings of marginalized people in the society..."

"...YABC tool kit is an interesting tool which can be successfully used for any type of program in any where for any kind of people to deliver the message efficiently and effectively..."



M.S. Zacky

Volunteer – Ampara Branch



A. Thesawan

Volunteer – Vavuniya Branch

"...I learnt a lot of new things and shared with the youth and the volunteers of the branch during my work..."



• What's next?

Building a pool of at least five YABC trainers for Sri Lanka

Increasing awareness on YABC amongst all programme staff

Working with those peer educators the programme has not worked with so far

Further developing the skills of the peer educators that gained experience through 2011 by helping them to identify creative platforms for promoting social cohesion in their respective districts

Working with volunteers Island wide to promote YABC

Continue to promote YABC as a cross cutting theme in all programme areas