

## World First Aid Day, a teaching opportunity

Salomé Boucif, Global First Aid Reference Center, International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies

### Here's what we're doing:

European First Aid Day, a unique celebration of first aid's importance, was created in 2000 and became World First Aid Day in 2003 at the request of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and given momentum by the IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre (GFARC). An agreement signed in 2019 encourages National Societies to participate in WFAD in collaboration with local resuscitation councils. Similar initiatives like [World Restart A Heart Day](#) (WRAH) and Kids Save Lives have been created since, managed by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) and European Resuscitation Councils (ERC) to promote teaching of cardiopulmonary resuscitation to the general public.

WFAD, 12 September 2020, has become an unmissable event with a different theme every year. Thousands of volunteers and staff are mobilized to raise awareness, inform, and introduce everyone - young and old - to first aid, disaster response, and actions that save lives, free of charge. Unlike other World Health Days, WFAD focuses on the public getting involved beyond spectatorship to learn a seemingly inaccessible first aid action on site. Complementary digital-only campaigns have also emerged in the last 5 years.

WFAD can be organized by anyone and involves the entire Movement. Indeed, the various National Societies (NS), as leading players in the field of first aid and supporters of populations in daily or exceptional situations, must continue to raise general awareness of the importance of first aid. Each year, educators may access the following materials, in English, Arabic, Spanish and French) for the general public:

#### Training, induction, educational messages:

- Prevention poster
- Quiz
- Training manual for key modules
- Contextual game
- [Example](#)

#### Communication kit:

- Profile photo frame for social networks
- Key messages for social networks
- Awareness videos and social media stories



*1WFAD in Mexico, used with permission of the IFRC Global First Aid Center*

These materials are re-used for other activities and trainings throughout the year, a great added value for first aid programmers. On the day itself, teaching methods include scenario-based simulations, mirrored demonstrations, oral presentations, and question-and-answer techniques for games. The reception, acceptance, and appropriation of the message depends on (amongst other things) the perception of the trainer/teacher in

## View from the Field

the country; how well known the National Society is; how much prior knowledge the public have of the field; and how appealing the workshops are, as well as their capacity. Finally, the chain of survival behaviors is a suggested tool during WFAD with a strong emphasis on prevention, preparedness, and active learning to convey realities of providing first aid.

## This is why we're doing it

The WFAD is an opportunity to highlight the leading role of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, as well as other organizations, in providing high quality first aid training all over the world; supporting world “harmonization.” For educators, it is a chance to rethink “short format” trainings. WFAD events are often organized in prominent open areas or in shopping centers to raise awareness and train quickly, allowing us to “approach those who cannot approach us.” For example, in 2017, only 10% of National Societies provided specific first aid training for homeless people and 19% for people with disabilities. WFAD seeks to raise awareness about the role of first aid learning in empowering people in society, instilling a sense of responsibility, and above all encouraging learner-centered education by encouraging accessible and adapted events to multiple target groups. Everyone should be encouraged to participate, particularly those at risk of social exclusion.

This gives rise each year to very diverse events and teaching innovations adapted to the local culture. In [Trinidad and Tobago](#) educators collaborated with people with physical challenges to learn and adapt CPR. Inspiration from other countries can be found here: [WFAD Reports](#). Activities include first aid competitions in Mexico, CPR challenge in China, march of prevention messages in Malawi, and simulating accidents to attract passersby



WFAD in Hong Kong, used with permission from the IFRC, Global First Aid Center

in Croatia ([Триває акція до Всесвітнього дня першої допомоги](#)).

This year, the pandemic shows more than ever that our trainers and project managers need to be highly adaptable and constantly ask themselves the best way to deliver a key message, depending on the parties involved and associated risks. We already know many countries will favor a digital approach for 2020 and will explore the blended-learning, online courses, and the use of applications with the re-worked theme: **“Adapting First Aid practices to the Pandemic.”**

## Questions for readers

- To what extent can short format trainings effectively instill basic first aid knowledge?
- What level of training is needed for WFAD facilitators?
- How can we train audiences that have the potential to encourage prevention, such as parents or schoolteachers?
- How might we best measure behavioral changes?

## Supplemental files

- [Promotional video WRAH](#)