

III.

Women as Participants

While Henry Dunant was convinced that women were naturally endowed with the benevolence and moral courage needed to steer the world out of danger, women were not found everywhere in the Movement's earliest annals: The first Red Cross Conference, convened in 1863, marked the "birth of the Red Cross," according to Pierre Boissier. It was a birth that no women attended (6). Now, well over a century later, women have still not ascended to the highest levels of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's power structure.

In 1965, only 23 percent of the delegates to the International Conference of the Red Cross - the Movement's supreme deliberative body - were women. Over 20 years later at the XXVth Conference in 1986, female participation had decreased to 18 percent.

Nine women, or 20 percent of the total, were delegates to the April 1989 meeting of the League's Executive Council. The average rate of female participation on the executive bodies of National Societies is currently 24.6 percent. (7)

The Secretary General and the President of the League have always been male. Among National Societies, only 17.2 percent of all Secretaries General and Presidents are female.

A. NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The Henry Dunant Institute's questionnaire on women's role in the Red Cross/Red Crescent gathered gender-disaggregated data on National Society mem-

bership and several categories of leadership. The results of this investigation revealed dramatic variation among National Societies. In some Societies, men dominated the ranks of membership and management. Other National Societies reported a desperate search for more male members. Nonetheless, data from 103 Societies yielded a stark profile:

Women in the Red Cross/Red Crescent comprise:

- one-half of all members;

- one-third of all managers;

- one-fourth of all members of executive bodies;

- one-sixth of all presidents and secretaries general.

1. Women as Members

Estimates of women as members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent should be interpreted cautiously given that National Societies do not have uniform standards for defining membership. In some Societies, volunteers are counted as members, while in others a financial contribution is required. Since women are more likely to volunteer their time than their money, some National Societies underestimate female participation if only fee-paying members are tabulated. The comparatively low female membership rates in the Middle East/North Africa were explained, at least in part, by women's comparative lack of access to income in the region.

Women totalled almost half of all Red Cross and Red Crescent members worldwide, based on data from 94 National Societies. However, in a number of Societies, gender disaggregation revealed skewed membership totals. In 18 Societies, women made up less than a quarter of the total membership. At the other extreme, 11 Societies reported that men comprised less than a quarter of the total. These Societies

tended to be very concerned about their membership profiles, and in some cases were aggressively seeking to recruit the underrepresented gender.

A.1. <u>National Society Membership: Percentage Female Averaged by Geographic Region)</u>				
Region	Average Rate	Number of Responses	N/A	Totals
Americas	61.2 percent	19	1	20
Europe	53.2 percent	22	5	27
Asia/Pacific	48.9 percent	17	1	18
Africa	43.1 percent	26	1	27
Middle East/ North Africa	30.1 percent	10	1	11
Global Average	47.3 percent	94	9	103

2. Women as Managers

National Societies were asked to estimate the percentages of men and women "employed in managerial positions." Several questionnaire respondents cautioned that "managerial positions" was an expansive category that did not pick up gradations within the managerial ranks. Specifically, the statistics did not capture the phenomenon in which women tend to cluster in entry- and mid-level managerial positions and rarely reach the upper echelons.

Overall, women comprised almost 35 percent of the managerial staff, based on data from 91 National Societies.

**A.2. National Society Managers: Percentage Female
(Averaged by Geographic Region)**

Region	Average Rate	Number of Responses	N/A	Totals
Americas	46.7 percent	18	2	20
Asia/Pacific	42.2 percent	16	2	18
Europe	36.9 percent	24	3	27
Africa	29.6 percent	23	4	27
Middle East/ North Africa	18.0 percent	10	1	11
Global Average	34.7 percent	91	12	103

3. Women on Executive Committees

National Societies were asked to indicate how many women and how many men served on their executive committees. Unlike managerial staff, executive committee members are elected to their positions. Data provided by 100 National Societies indicated an average female participation rate of 24.6 percent. Only 14 National Societies reported executive committees with at least 50 percent female members. In fact, a majority of Societies (61 of 100) listed female participation rates of 25 percent and below.

A.3. Executive Committee Membership: Percentage Female (Averaged by Geographic Region)

Region	Average Rate	Number of Responses	N/A	Totals
Americas	33.4 percent	20	0	20
Europe	30.7 percent	26	1	27
Asia/Pacific	24.7 percent	17	1	18
Africa	20.3 percent	27	0	27
Middle East/ North Africa	13.7 percent	10	1	11
Global Average	24.6 percent	100	3	103

4. Women as Presidents and Secretaries General

Based on data from the 148 recognized National Societies (as of July 1989), women held 17.2 percent of all president and secretary general positions.

A.4. Presidents and Secretaries General: Percentage Female (Averaged by Geographic Region)

Americas	22.2 percent	(14 of 63 positions)
Africa	19.8 percent	(16 of 81 positions)
Asia/Pacific	17.0 percent	(8 of 47 positions)
Europe	15.3 percent	(9 of 59 positions)
Middle East/ North Africa	11.8 percent	(4 of 34 positions)
Global Average	17.2 percent	(51 of 284 positions)

5. National Society "Satisfaction" with Female Participation

The questionnaire asked, "Is the Executive Committee/National Board of your Society satisfied with the current level of female participation?" Of the 85 responses to this question, 34 Societies (43 percent) registered some dissatisfaction with their current levels of female participation, and 51 Societies (57 percent) expressed satisfaction.

It should be noted that this is probably a "conservative" estimate of National Society dissatisfaction with female participation. Several questionnaires noted that while individual staff members were concerned with gender imbalances, the executive committee had not yet officially acted upon the issue. Hence, official "satisfaction" or "dissatisfaction" could not be determined. One respondent stated that the executive committee was satisfied with the status quo simply because it was an all-male body!

A.5. National Society "Satisfaction" with Female Participation					
Region	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	N/A	Totals	
Europe	4 (19%)	17 (81%)	6	27	
Americas	7 (35%)	13 (65%)	0	20	
Asia/Pacific	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	5	18	
Africa	15 (58%)	11 (42%)	1	27	
Middle East/ North Africa	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	1	11	
Global Averages	39 (43%)	51 (57%)	13	103	

National Societies identified a number of factors influencing their executive committee's level of "satisfaction" with female participation. Predictably, those Societies with high female participation rates tended to register "satisfaction," and those with low rates expressed "dissatisfaction." However, some Societies with lower rates of female participation nonetheless registered "satisfaction." Some of these Societies claimed that such imbalances were inevitable given prevailing socio-cultural conditions. For example, the Red Crescent of the Yemen Arab Republic explained that "we feel the importance of the women, but the educational level and customs and culture still make it difficult for women to have access to high positions."

A number of Societies elaborated on why they were "satisfied" with their female participation. Some addressed the quality - as opposed to quantity - of women's involvement. For example, the Chilean Red Cross expressed satisfaction and noted that women "work voluntarily, in a responsible manner and have more time for humanitarian action." The Red Cross of Vanuatu concurred: "The Executive Committee is satisfied because women do have favor with a lot of the work done and are much more dedicated to the work." The Red Cross of Thailand extolled its female staff: "Thai women play a vital role in the success of the Thai Red Cross Society at all levels... Whether in border camps for refugees, at relief work sites for disaster victims in hospitals, or at fund-raising bazaars, women are at the forefront of Thai Red Cross activities."

Despite these favorable descriptions of women's contributions to the Red Cross/Red Crescent's humanitarian mission, 39 (43 percent) of the 90 responding National Societies expressed some dissatisfaction with their level of female participation. The most commonly cited problem was insufficient female membership overall, noted by 17 Societies. Ten Societies cited shortages of women specifically in managerial and decision-making positions.

Some "dissatisfied" Societies also emphasized the quality - actual or potential - of female participation. In their view, increased female participation was essential in order to achieve the Movement's basic objectives. Because of perceptions of women's important roles in the family and in the community, Societies expressed the need to increasingly involve women. According to the Burkinabe Red Cross: "We are conscious of the fact that, as the number of women in our Society increases, public awareness about humanitarian action will also increase. The humanitarian mission will become better known and upheld." The Mauritanian Red Crescent stated:

Mauritanian women have an important role to play in development, but this is totally ignored and not yet integrated into our system. The number of women in the Mauritanian Red Crescent should double, even quadruple, but the role of the Mauritanian Red Crescent in the social system is not yet well understood. Women working with the Society have only just started to sensitize the public throughout the country - along with the Officers of the Society - in order to make the Society better known and to attract more male and female members.

For some National Societies, women's availability was emphasized. The Nicaraguan Red Cross explained that "young men in our country are affected by governmental laws and have tasks specific to men (i.e, armed service). Given these obligations, our National Society must engage a greater number of female members."

The Algerian Red Crescent, registering dissatisfaction, explained that increasing female participation has only now become a priority. Previously, the Society was "centering its efforts on the many problems faced within a newly independent country: Developing and structuring the regional committees, dealing with refugees, disasters, etc." Now, the

Algerian Red Crescent, like so many other National Societies, requested policy guidance on how to increase and improve its female participation.

B. LEAGUE SECRETARIAT

An analysis of the League Secretariat's staff composition was conducted during 1989. Out of the 150 employees at the Secretariat, women numbered two-thirds. Despite this female majority overall, no women held senior decision-making positions. Only one of the 21 Secretariat employees at the highest Grade levels (13 through 18) was female. At these Grade levels, the average number of years employed at the League among men was 8.7 years, and for the one woman, 42 years. (8)

Mid-level positions at the Secretariat (Grades 9-12) were held by 31 men (55 percent) and 25 women (45 percent). At these Grade levels, the average length of employment at the Secretariat for men was 5.2 years. For women, the average was 17.2 years. These numbers suggest that a career "bottle neck" exists for women at this level, especially in light of the lack of women in senior management.

The majority of women employed at the Secretariat - 73 women (or 71 percent of the total) - occupied positions at Grade 8 and below. Women held eighty-eight percent of all positions at this level, which includes secretarial and administrative assistant positions.

A total of 542 League- and National Society-sponsored delegates served in the field during the three-year period from June 1986 through June 1989. Of this total, women numbered 161, or roughly one-third. Almost two-thirds of these female delegates were nurses. The majority of these nurses served on delegate teams, and did not hold leadership positions. In short, female delegates in non-nursing

fields were extremely rare. During the three-year period, 89 percent of all Heads of Delegation were male.

Rising concern among some Secretariat staff over the absence of women in the organization's managerial structures led to the formation of an Equal Opportunities Group in January, 1988. This group's stated aims were to:

Create a greater awareness on equality issues in the League Secretariat and the Red Cross Movement;

Assess the situation of women in the League Secretariat and recommend activities promoting a more equal participation of women in decision-making positions as well as more men among support staff;

Encourage studies on the situation of women in the Movement in accordance with the resolution on women in development.

In addition to holding periodic informational meetings, the Group designed a questionnaire on "The Secretariat and Equal Opportunities" and distributed it to all staff. The results were made available in September 1989 (9). Seventy-eight percent of the respondents claimed that women "with the same qualifications, experience, and availability as men" did not have equal opportunities to reach top management posts. A number of the respondents noted that the Secretariat lacked a systematized and depersonalized performance review system. Many claimed that competence and ability were not necessarily the main criteria for professional advancement. Promotional decisions were viewed as based on personal and social factors, and that "men tend to promote other men." Eighty-nine percent of all respondents urged policy reforms in order to redress the perceived lack of equal opportunities.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the Equality Group proposed nine policy recommendations. These recommendations included the need to increase female managerial staff, initiate recruitment efforts targetted to women, and establish standardized performance review and career planning policies for all employees. In presenting the questionnaire results to the Secretary General, the Equality Group emphasized that "a positive change in women's participation at all levels is necessary for the dignity of the Movement that we serve."

C. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

In 1987, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began an evaluation of the situation of its female staff. This evaluation, conducted by a member of the Assembly and two employees, involved interviews with nearly 80 Geneva-based personnel, the distribution of a questionnaire to all expatriate staff, consultation with other organizations, archival research, and the compilation of gender-disaggregated statistics on employment applications, hiring, positions, salaries, and promotions.

The results of this study, made public in 1989 (10), revealed that women were under-represented in the organization's decision-making structures. For example (11):

- The Assembly - ICRC's supreme governing body
- was comprised of 18 men and 5 women;

- The Executive Board included 6 men and 1 woman;

- The Directorate was comprised of 6 men (all of whom with male deputies);

All senior managers in the Departments of Operations, Operational Support, Human Resources, and Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement were male.

Thirty men and one woman were currently serving as Head of Delegations.

The ICRC's Collective Work Agreement states that male and female employees of the ICRC have equal rights and are "guaranteed equality of opportunity and of salary." Nonetheless, one of the most striking results of the ICRC's study was that a majority (71 percent of the 172 questionnaire respondents) believed that, given equal qualifications and availability, women did not have "the same chance as men to reach higher positions."

As an outcome of the study, 25 policy recommendations were proposed in order to serve the "humanitarian cause in a spirit of equality and increased efficiency." The first of these recommendations urged increased female participation in "guiding the activities of the ICRC in its internal management, at the level of all its governing bodies as well as in professional posts at headquarters and in the field." (12) Other recommendations included increasing female representation in delegate and staff selection procedures, improving career planning and training opportunities for women, adopting a "flexible policy" on part-time work, and developing a mechanism to deal with complaints of sexual discrimination.

These recommendations were submitted to and approved by the ICRC Assembly in May, 1988. The Deputy Head of the Human Resources Department has been assigned the task of studying and implementing the recommendations in collaboration with all relevant departments, as well as preparing one- and two-year progress reports for presentation to the Assembly.

There is a misconception that women are not able to serve in all countries due to cultural difficulties. However, the situation described in one case shows something different.

I remember when I was a delegate in Faya Largeau, near the border between Chad and Libya. This was in the middle of the desert, in a culturally conservative region. When I arrived there were only men in the delegation. We needed replacements in mid-summer. Headquarters asked if women could be sent. I inquired with the local authorities, and they had no objections. It would have been impossible for local women, but they said expatriate women would be fine. And so women were sent. I have a feeling that the objections we initially had (to women coming) were more in our imagination than reality. The real need is to inform all delegates thoroughly of the conditions beforehand.

Jean-Louis Cayla, Member
Division of Principles and Relations
with the Movement, ICRC

D. CONSTRAINTS ON PARTICIPATION

What gender-based differentials are particularly relevant in Red Cross/Crescent staffing and programming? One of the most commonly cited obstacles to increased female participation was women's workload. Women were said to be so consumed by household and family responsibilities on top of their economic tasks that their time for Red Cross/Red Crescent involvement was severely constrained. One East African Red Cross member noted that "young girls/women participate frequently in Red Cross activities, but once they marry, housekeeping absorbs them almost entirely outside of their professional activities." According to a member of the Gambian Red Cross:

A thorough study on the role that women play in their communities should be conducted since the housework is somewhat overloaded - preparing the house, taking care of the children, cooking, and going out into the fields to cultivate food for the family's survival. The role of the husband within the home is minimal--especially in the Gambian context. The role of the husband should be updated and further clarified for him to be more responsible.

Women do not have extensive familial and care-taking responsibilities in Africa only. Jane Smith, Deputy Secretary General of the New Zealand Red Cross (retired), reviewed the situation of women in 11 Red Cross Societies in the Asia/Pacific region and concluded that "women with families are hampered if they do not have adequate help with domestic tasks and reliable child-care facilities." A recent global estimate suggests that women's domestic responsibilities may require as many as 60 hours of labor per week (13). According to another estimate, the average woman in the United States spends 11.5 years of her working life on "all forms of care-giving" while the average man spends six months. (14)

Because of their multifaceted roles, some of the most active Red Cross and Red Crescent members are unmarried young women or older women whose child-rearing and family responsibilities have subsided. While global statistical data has not been compiled, the large number of female youth members and the extensive involvement of older women, particularly volunteers in health and social welfare fields, represent a major force. In many Red Cross Societies in the Americas, older women have formed quasi-independent branches, known as "Damas Grises" (Grey Ladies). According to Lilian Lucila Burlando of the Red Cross of Argentina, the Red Cross should make even greater efforts to tap the resources of older women:

Considering the present conditions in our society, Argentine women often do not apply much of their knowledge and energy to the benefit of the community. Many of our women still dedicate themselves exclusively to taking care of the home... Moreover, once the children are brought up, there is a space difficult to fill, very well described by the American terms, "the empty nest syndrome".

Something similar occurs to women who have worked outside the home. When they retire, together with the joy of deserved rest, they have the feeling that they are not needed anymore... Furthermore, our surveys clearly show a greater number of single women than men. This is non-capitalized wealth. Can the Argentine Red Cross represent a place where these persons can be and feel useful? I believe it is possible.

Cultural systems and domestic obligations can restrict not only women's time, but also their mobility. In some National Societies, women face the basic problem of securing transportation to and from work. In cultures where women have not traditionally played visible roles in public life, the public exposure of some Red Cross/Red Crescent activities can pose challenges for women. Dr. Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Medical Coordinator of the CHILD ALIVE Program in Bangladesh, described his experiences in recruiting female volunteers:

Recruiting volunteers is a difficult problem. With the boys there is no problem, but as our main target group is women we need female volunteers. (Three young women were finally recruited and) it has been very difficult to train them. They were not used to leaving the family home and delivering speeches. They were very shy and not at all engaged. It took me a half an hour to get

them to say the word "diarrhoea". It was not only necessary to teach them about diarrhoea, immunization and nutrition, but also how to walk in the streets and avoid problems with boys who could discourage them for not behaving in the traditional way... Now they are able to deliver fantastic speeches and convince the community. (15)

Some relief and development activities are considered culturally inappropriate for local women but acceptable for expatriate women. A female delegate from Sweden who worked at an emergency feeding center in rural Sudan explained that the center faced extreme difficulties in recruiting local women. The lack of privacy, distance from any town, and close proximity of Sudanese military personnel rendered the work unfit for "respectable" Sudanese women. The Swedish delegate explained that she was placed in a separate cultural category, almost a third gender, and was respected by Sudanese men. Terestia Ladrillo, a League delegate in Pakistan concurred:

Expatriate women are desperately needed in Mianwali (Pakistan, area with large Afghan refugee population). As long as they respect the local culture, Afghans will respect expatriate women for being professionals. Expatriate women can make tremendous inroads in developing relationships with Afghan women... Sometimes I think I view dentistry more as a tool to develop relationships... I remember one time when an Afghan woman came in for dental treatment and then began sobbing. It turned out it wasn't her teeth, but a pregnancy problem. She just wanted to talk and talk. As a woman, you know how these women must feel...

There are some indications that volunteerism in general, one of the cornerstones of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, is struggling against contemporary socioeconomic trends. Global economic

recession and the increasing numbers of women in the paid labor force, female-headed households, and women under the poverty line have deterred many would-be volunteers. Volunteerism has traditionally been associated with women given that women have been used to working without pay in their own homes. However, many of today's women, particularly the younger generation, have new priorities and expectations. As Sami Akila of the Egyptian Red Crescent observed:

Due to economic changes, people are more reluctant to volunteer. This is a major issue that is always discussed at international conferences. The Egyptian Red Crescent still manages to recruit volunteers, but the situation has definitely changed. Some volunteers used to actually pay money to volunteer! Not anymore. I could not even get my daughters to volunteer. They wanted to work!

1. Women in Management

The constraints facing female managers encompass sociocultural, political, economic, and even psychological factors that extend far beyond the organization itself. In attempting to explain why so few women occupy senior decision-making positions, a number of different variables are frequently cited. Some theorists argue that traditional feminine traits - such as emotionality, relatedness and sensitivity - are not valued in the "modern workplace," and that women feel ambivalent about asserting themselves in male-oriented occupational structures. Recent research on women in management in India concluded that these women found it "difficult to exert authority because of feelings of insecurity and self-doubt and psychological fragmentation of roles." (16) Similarly, a British study concluded:

Women are socialized to serve and to receive validation from others rather than from a strong sense of self. This means that women doubt their competence and their strengths and therefore do not put themselves forward for management positions. (17)

In other words, the feminine attributes that have been lauded as ideal for Red Cross/Red Crescent work - concern for others, sensitivity and self-sacrifice - may be appropriate for tending to disaster victims or applying first-aid, but they may not assist women in the competition for top management. Furthermore, all organizations have "institutional cultures" Given women's longstanding absence - or minority status - in the upper echelons, they sometimes have trouble comfortably integrating into social and professional structures erected by men. The Social Welfare Department of the Hellenic Red Cross, after interviewing male and female managers, concluded:

The managers believe that men's participation in the Board of Directors is higher, and this consists of an "institution" which can also be observed in other governmental or private organizations in our country... The woman directors are equally capable and effective in their task since they have the necessary qualifications. The only obstacles in their competition with their male colleagues are their family obligations and the prejudice about women's position in general... What is worthy to mention is something said by one of our head officers: "The prejudices create a feeling of insecurity which drives us to stress and over-effort in our struggling to cover the gaps between us and our male colleagues."

The Red Cross/Red Crescent is not the only organization in which female managers are scarce or non-existent. Men far outnumber women in the global managerial labor market from which the Movement

draws its personnel. This inequality was illustrated in the pool of applicants for a recent senior position vacancy at the League Secretariat: Only seven of the 172 applicants were women. These numbers suggest that just a mere mention that "both men and women are encouraged to apply" in a vacancy announcement will not address the root of the issue (although there are those who feel it might help). If more female applicants are to be sought for managerial positions, then in-house female staff must be trained, given increased promotional opportunities, or qualified female applicants from outside the Movement must be actively recruited.

E. POLICY OPTIONS

1. Training

One of the most prevalent reasons cited for the lack of women in decision-making positions is lack of training, as one delegate observed:

The most important need is training: Training in unconventional fields, and especially management and decision-making. Women need to be trained in how to manage meetings, to give their points of view, to manage themselves. The Red Cross needs to give women the basic elements with which to express themselves. Once you build up women's self-confidence, then you've broken 95 percent of the barriers.

I have noticed that poor, disadvantaged women make marvelous leaders. They're able to handle politics in a really sophisticated way. With training and organization they can do wonders. I guess it's because they have nothing to lose.

Mirta Dobson
League Delegate, Colombia

Given the sociocultural, political and economic gender-based inequalities in the cultures in which Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations operate, how can the League's General Assembly Resolutions on "Women in Development" actually be fulfilled? The promotion of increased educational and training opportunities for female staff was recognized in the Plan of Action on Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent Development as one important step:

The League Secretariat and National Societies will develop and promote specific training programs to improve their staff's managerial and decision-making skills. While both men and women will benefit from this training, upgrading the managerial skills of female staff will be considered a special priority.

The questionnaire on Women in the Red Cross/Red Crescent asked respondents to indicate what specific training opportunities would be "beneficial" for female staff. Managerial and leadership training emerged as the top training priority for women among National Societies.

E.1. In What Areas would Training for Female Staff
Be Beneficial?
(Questionnaire Responses of National Societies)

Subject	Number of Societies Cited
Managerial/Leadership Training	32
Social Welfare	14
Accounting/Financial Management	12
Health Topics	12
Nursing Skills	9
Community Development	7
Income generation projects	6
International Humanitarian Law and Red Cross/Crescent principles	6
Communication Skills	5
Vocational Training	4
Personnel Administration/Appraisal	4
Fundraising/Grants Writing	4
Disaster relief	4
Computer Skills	3

It should be noted that among the questionnaire respondents, 52 National Societies reported that some form of managerial training is already offered to staff (male and female), and 44 reported no such training. Of those Societies in which managerial training is offered, questionnaire data indicated wide regional variation in the gender-breakdown of training beneficiaries. (Given limitations in data, only rough gender-disaggregated estimates are provided below.)

Managerial Trainees: Estimated Gender-Breakdowns

Region	Trainees
Americas:	Majority female
Europe:	Large majority male
Africa:	Large majority male
Asia/Pacific:	Equal male/female
Middle East/North Africa:	(Insufficient statistics)

The League Secretariat has announced that it will consider gender as a relevant criterion in the selection of participants in League-sponsored training opportunities, and that it will assist National Societies in identifying funding sources to enable female staff to participate in relevant training seminars sponsored by outside institutions. Managerial training may soon be available within the Movement: The Swedish Red Cross has announced plans to establish a Red Cross training institute. While the institute will offer courses to both men and women, Gudrun Goransson, President of the Swedish Red Cross, stated that "we want to establish different courses in management and leadership training for women...both for our volunteers and for our staff members."

2. Women in Development Coordinators

A second frequently-proposed policy option designed to increase women's participation in the Red Cross/Red Crescent is the recruitment of "women in development" or "women's desk" coordinators. The specific mandates of these positions would vary among National Societies, depending on local priorities.

The questionnaire on women in the Red Cross/Red Crescent gathered feedback from National Societies on the proposition of creating "women in development coordinator" positions. Of the 103 responding Societies, 41 supported the proposition, 37 were against, and 25 were noncommittal. A large majority of European Societies rejected the proposal, while the concept received wide support in all other geographic regions.

E.2. <u>Should "Women in Development Coordinators" be Instituted?</u> (Responses of National Societies)				
Regions	Yes	No	N/A	Totals
Africa	13	8	6	27
Middle East/ North Africa	7	3	1	11
Asia/Pacific	8	5	5	18
Americas	9	8	3	20
Europe	4	13	10	27
TOTALS	41	37	25	103

This strategy was greeted enthusiastically by many of those interviewed. A member of the Liberian Red Cross stated that a women in development coordinator would "serve as a motivation for women joining the Society. They would feel more relaxed in exchanging ideas and asking questions more freely than they would with men. It could develop some psychological effects on them by knowing that special attention is given to them by the Red Cross Society." Another member of the Liberian Red Cross concurred: "The League should support specific women's programs wi-

thin National Societies and see what a difference it makes when women are in control of a whole program or project!"

However, some National Societies were sceptical. According to one Society, "We believe that the Red Cross has to be neutral and impartial and assist all people according to the humanitarian principle. If the League and National Societies respect the Red Cross principles and philosophy, it won't be necessary to create a special structure for women."

Given the magnitude of the challenges facing the Red Cross/Red Crescent with respect to the role of women as participants and beneficiaries, the establishment of a network of women in development coordinators can be viewed as an important first policy initiative. In some regions, special women's coordinators are essential in light of gender-based segregation. In other Societies, the establishment of women's coordinators was perceived as a puzzling strategy given the preponderance of women in their own organizational structures. However, the primary justification for establishing a network of coordinators is to insure that the Plan of Action on Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent Development is effectively implemented. In the words of Man Moan Kaur, Joint Secretary of the Indian Red Cross:

[The issue of women in development] must be integrated into the present activities of the Red Cross. It is not necessary to have separate programs. You have to integrate it. And then if, for example, in primary health care programs you say that the daughter is as good as the son, or that both have to be educated, then your health center itself can be a nucleus of education and the dissemination of information.

This is not denying the need for a women in development coordinator or promoter or whatever you want to call it. You must have a

catalytic agent. Even when I say you have to integrate the issue into existing programs, even then somebody has to ask, where does it best fit in?