

The Impact Of Community Training By The Red Crescent On Improving First Aid Skills

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Abstract

Community-based first aid training programs have received rising importance in developing public health emergency preparedness and response. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been a front-runner in applying mass first aid training to communities worldwide. This study takes into account the impact of Red Crescent community training programs on first aid skill development, knowledge retention, and community preparedness in an emergency.

There was a mixed data analysis gathered from diversified Red Crescent courses from various countries between the years 2020-2024. Pretraining and posttraining measurement, longitudinal follow-up questionnaires, and community impact measures were conducted in the study. Red Crescent training obtained impressive first aid learning gains (average 68%), improvement in skills usage (72%), and self-confidence level gains (81%) among learners. Levels of preparedness in the community were improved by an average of 59% in the trained districts. Red Crescent community training courses effectively enhance first aid capacity and resilience within the community. Standard training technique, complemented with effective culturally modified delivery modes, yields long-term skill acquisition and knowledge acquisition.

Keywords: Red Crescent, first aid training, community readiness, emergency response, health education, capacity building

1. Introduction

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies comprises the largest worldwide humanitarian network operating on behalf of vulnerable communities in 191 countries (IFRC,

2023). Its core mandate involves first aid education, a core pillar of risk reduction and preparedness among communities. The organization's dedication to building capacity at the local community level through widespread training has become more critical in the backdrop of rising natural disasters, health emergencies, and community vulnerabilities (Hassan et al., 2022).

Red Crescent societies' first aid basic courses are today considerably enhanced over the past ten years to become evidence-based, culturally adapted, and community need-determined (Al-Rashid & Mohammed, 2021). These courses aim to provide normal citizens with lifesaving interventions such that there is an organized body of trained responders who will respond in good time during emergencies until professional medical staff comes to the location.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the imperative nature of community-based health intervention and the necessity for mass first aid literacy (Zhao et al., 2020). Red Cross societies across the globe adapted their training techniques to ensure continuity of learning with safety precautions, bearing witness to the resilience and adaptability of community-centered health education.

This systematic review critically assesses the effectiveness of Red Crescent community training courses based on first aid capacity building within knowledge generation, skill retention, use, and overall increased community preparedness. The study identifies recent experiences in various geographic and cultural contexts through best practice as well as areas for further improvement.

1.1 Study Aims

The main objectives of this study are:

- Assessing the effect of Red Crescent first aid course training on trainee skills and knowledge immediately after training
- Assessing retention of first aid skill and knowledge after a long time
- Investigating the effect of training intensity on skill acquisition
- Investigating mass first aid training program impact at the community level
- Establishing determinants to ensure program implementation success
- Providing recommendations to maximize effectiveness and coverage of training

2. Literature Review

2.1 Historical Context and Development

Red Crescent movement participation in first aid training is based on the motivating values adopted by Henry Dunant and reiterated strongly on civilian initiative in humanitarian intervention (Ahmed & Khalil, 2020). Modern first aid courses have evolved from elementary wound dressing courses to holistic emergency response training that involves psychological first aid, disaster preparedness, and community mobilization strategy.

There is recent progress in studies in the scholarly area consistent with the transition of first aid training from medically to multi-dimensionally involving social, cultural, and psychological dimensions (Bergman et al., 2021). The transition reflects greater comprehension of requirements at a community level and recognition that effective first aid training must be contextually suitable and culturally acceptable.

2.2 Training Methodologies and Pedagogical Approaches

Red Crescent training programs today apply a variety of pedagogic strategies that have been developed to be applied for maximum performance and knowledge retention. One such experience by Kim et al. (2022) depicts how participative and experiential training techniques stand out to be

far better than the traditional lecture-type training both in short-term as well as long-term knowledge acquisition as well as retention.

The integration of simulation training has been especially valuable since empirical studies indicate 40-60% increased usage of practical skills following real-world-like situations having been added to training protocols (Martinez & Singh, 2021). Red Cross agencies have now begun to adopt increased scenario-based training based on local emergency trends and cultural differences.

2.3 Impact of the Community and Public Health Outcomes

There have also been several studies documenting the broader public health impact of mass first aid training programs. A study in Jordan discovered that most crowded groups of Red Crescent-trained individuals have 23% lower preventable emergency deaths (Al-Zahra et al., 2023). The same outcomes have been achieved in numerous environments, which suggest that community first aid training does really contribute to the outcomes of emergency intervention.

First aid training multiplier effect has similarly been positively documented to the same extent, where trained members will transfer information and skills to social contacts and family members (Thompson & Al-Rashid, 2022). The resultant organic knowledge transfer further enhances the impact of formal training sessions and assists with community resilience building at large.

2.4 Challenges and Barriers

Despite assertions of effectiveness, first aid training programs are confronted with a series of continuous challenges. Language issues, cultural sensitivity, and financial constraints stood out as major program effectiveness challenges (Ibrahim & Hassan, 2021). Also, sustaining consistent training delivery across diverse geographic areas without undermining standardization remains a continuous challenge to scalability.

Bridging gender-based participation gaps has been highlighted by recent studies, particularly in closed cultures where women are not admitted to open training sessions (Fatima & Al-Mansouri, 2023). Red Crescent societies discovered how to innovate in bridging such gaps, such as gender-segregated training sessions and culture-sensitive curricula.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This research employed the mixed-methods design with quantitative assessment of training efficacy and qualitative assessment of community effects. The research utilized pre- and post-training assessments, longitudinal follow-up assessments, and community-level effects on various Red Crescent training programs from 2020 to 2024.



Fig1.: Flowchart of Community Training by the Red Crescent

3.2 Participant Recruitment and Participant Characteristics

The research compared data of 15,847 Red Crescent first aid training scheme trainees from 12 countries of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. The trainees between 16 and 65 years of age were segregated by gender into 58% females and 42% males.

3.3 Training Programs Included

Comparison was drawn on five various categories of training programs:

1. Basic First Aid Certificate (16 hours): The fundamental first aid procedures like wound dressing, CPR, and emergency procedures
2. Community First Aid (24 hours): Extensive training involving psychological first aid and disaster reaction
3. Advanced Community Response (40 hours): Extensive training for community leaders and volunteers
4. Youth First Aid Programs (12 hours): Exclusive training for young adults and youth
5. Occupational First Aid (20 hours): Special training for a particular workplace

3.4 Methods of Assessment

3.4.1 Test of Knowledge

Sufficient standardized written test was conducted by the participants at pre-training (baseline), post-training completion (immediate post-test), and 6-monthly frequencies until two years (follow-up tests). The test contained 50 multiple-choice questions in the areas of theoretical knowledge, situational judgment, and protocol recognition.

3.4.2 Test of Practical Skills

Practical skills were assessed through benchmark scenarios and assessment rubrics. Performance of participants by trained test examiners was rated on key skill areas like CPR skill, wound care, patient positioning, and emergency communication procedures.

3.4.3 Confidence and Self-Efficacy Measures

Self-efficacy questionnaires, which were specifically designed to assess first aid skill confidence in the performance of first aid in a variety of emergency situations, were filled out by participants. The questionnaire used a 7-point Likert scale and contained 25 items covering all of the dimensions of emergency response confidence.

3.5 Data Analysis

Statistical processing was carried out with the SPSS version 28.0, where descriptive statistics, paired t-tests for pre-post comparison, ANOVA for between-group comparison, and regression for prediction were employed. Qualitative information gathered through interview and focus groups were processed by thematic analysis methods.³

4. Results

4.1 Participant Demographics and Baseline Characteristics

The study population was represented by a variety of demographic details of the large catchment of Red Crescent courses. Table 1 presents detailed demographics of all the participants.

4.2 Training Program Outcomes

4.2.1 Knowledge and Memory Gain

Uniform and maintained knowledge gains in first aid were experienced in all training courses. Table 2 presents detailed knowledge assessment results at different time points.

Findings were of appreciable gains in knowledge for all programs with mean score gain of 68-107% at immediate post-training. Retention of knowledge was strong at 24-month follow-up with the scores maintaining 65-81% of immediate post-training gain.

4.2.2 Performance of Practical Skills

Measurements of practical skills showed significant gains in practice skills. Table 3 shows performance scores in key skill areas.

All categories of skills showed large effect sizes (Cohen's $d > 0.8$), indicating large practical change. CPR skill showed the largest improvement, as indicated by high priority being attached to this essential skill in all training plans.

4.3 Confidence and Self-Efficacy Measures

There was significant improvement in confidence and self-efficacy in applying first aid among participants. Table 4 shows ratings of confidence in different emergency situations.

More confidence was notable in all settings, with the respondents showing considerably more self-efficacy in performing well during emergency situations.

4.4 Community-level Impact Evaluation

4.4.1 Community Preparedness Indicators

Increased community staff numbers with Red Crescent training showed increased indicators of preparedness. Findings at the community level are shown in Table 5.

4.4.2 Effectiveness and Outcomes during Emergency Response

Analysis of recorded actual emergency events in trained and control communities revealed glaring differences in response efficacy and outcome.

4.5 Determinants of Effectiveness of Training

4.5.1 Demographic and Contextual Predictors

Multiple regression analysis indicated that certain predictors were substantially related to training effectiveness. Standardized regression coefficients for significant predictors are provided in Table 7.

Training duration was the strongest predictor of change for all the outcomes, followed by quality of teachers and practice opportunity. Cultural adaptation of training materials was also strongly positively related to all the outcomes.

Table 1: Participant Demographics and Baseline Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Groups		
16-25 years	4,231	26.7
26-35 years	5,678	35.8
36-45 years	3,456	21.8
46-55 years	1,789	11.3
56-65 years	693	4.4
Gender		
Female	9,191	58.0
Male	6,656	42.0
Education Level		
Primary Education	2,847	18.0
Secondary Education	6,819	43.0
Higher Education	5,234	33.0

Professional Degree	947	6.0
Employment Status		
Student	3,486	22.0
Employed	8,923	56.3
Unemployed	2,214	14.0
Retired	634	4.0
Self-employed	590	3.7
Previous First Aid Experience		
No prior experience	11,087	70.0
Basic knowledge	3,644	23.0
Some formal training	950	6.0
Extensive experience	166	1.0

Table 2: First Aid Knowledge Scores by Training Program and Assessment Period

Training Program	Pre-Training Mean (SD)	Post-Training Mean (SD)	6-Month Follow-up Mean (SD)	12-Month Follow-up Mean (SD)	24-Month Follow-up Mean (SD)
Basic First Aid (n=6,234)	34.2 (8.7)	78.6 (6.2)*	72.1 (7.8)*	68.4 (9.1)*	65.2 (10.3)*
Community First Aid (n=4,567)	36.8 (9.2)	82.4 (5.8)*	76.9 (7.2)*	73.1 (8.6)*	70.8 (9.4)*
Advanced Community Response (n=2,189)	42.1 (10.4)	87.3 (4.9)*	83.2 (6.1)*	80.7 (7.3)*	78.9 (8.2)*
Youth First Aid (n=1,923)	29.7 (9.8)	74.2 (7.4)*	67.8 (9.2)*	63.5 (10.7)*	59.8 (11.9)*
Workplace First Aid (n=934)	38.9 (8.6)	81.7 (5.7)*	77.3 (6.9)*	74.6 (8.1)*	72.1 (9.3)*

*p < 0.001 compared to pre-training scores

Table 3: Practical Skills Assessment Scores (Maximum Score = 100)

Skill Domain	Pre-Training Mean (SD)	Post-Training Mean (SD)	6-Month Follow-up Mean (SD)	12-Month Follow-up Mean (SD)	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
CPR Technique	23.4 (12.6)	78.9 (8.2)*	72.1 (11.4)*	69.3 (12.8)*	5.12

Wound Management	31.2 (14.8)	82.6 (7.9)*	76.8 (10.3)*	73.4 (11.7)*	4.23
Emergency Assessment	28.7 (13.2)	79.4 (9.1)*	73.2 (11.6)*	70.8 (12.9)*	4.45
Patient Positioning	35.8 (15.1)	84.2 (6.8)*	78.9 (9.4)*	75.6 (10.8)*	3.87
Emergency Communication	41.3 (16.4)	86.7 (5.9)*	81.2 (8.7)*	78.9 (9.6)*	3.54
Shock Management	26.9 (13.7)	77.8 (8.6)*	71.4 (11.2)*	68.1 (12.5)*	4.68

*p < 0.001 compared to pre-training scores

Table 4: First Aid Confidence Scores by Emergency Scenario (Scale: 1-7)

Emergency Scenario	Pre-Training Mean (SD)	Post-Training Mean (SD)	12-Month Follow-up Mean (SD)	Percentage Increase
Cardiac Arrest Response	1.8 (0.9)	5.4 (1.2)*	4.9 (1.4)*	200%
Severe Bleeding Control	2.3 (1.1)	5.8 (1.0)*	5.3 (1.2)*	152%
Choking Emergency	2.1 (1.0)	5.6 (1.1)*	5.1 (1.3)*	167%
Burn Treatment	2.5 (1.2)	5.7 (1.0)*	5.2 (1.2)*	128%
Fracture Management	2.0 (1.0)	5.2 (1.2)*	4.7 (1.3)*	160%
Unconscious Person Care	1.9 (0.9)	5.3 (1.1)*	4.8 (1.3)*	179%
Emergency Scene Safety	2.7 (1.3)	6.1 (0.9)*	5.7 (1.1)*	126%
Psychological First Aid	2.2 (1.1)	5.0 (1.3)*	4.6 (1.4)*	127%

*p < 0.001 compared to pre-training scores

Table 5: Community Preparedness Indicators Before and After Training Implementation

Indicator	Baseline Communities (n=45)	Post-Training Communities (n=45)	Improvement (%)	p-value
First Aid Kit Availability (% households)	23.4	67.8	190.2	< 0.001
Emergency Contact Knowledge (% residents)	34.2	78.9	130.7	< 0.001

CPR Knowledge (% residents)	12.7	52.3	311.8	< 0.001
Emergency Response Confidence (mean score)	2.1	5.4	157.1	< 0.001
Community Emergency Plans (% communities)	15.6	73.3	369.9	< 0.001
Volunteer Emergency Responders (per 1000)	3.2	18.7	484.4	< 0.001
Emergency Response Time (minutes)	12.4	7.8	37.1	< 0.001

Table 6: Emergency Response Outcomes in Trained vs. Untrained Communities

Outcome Measure	Untrained Communities (n=35)	Trained Communities (n=35)	Relative Improvement	Statistical Significance
Bystander Response Rate (%)	34.2	78.6	129.8%	p < 0.001
Appropriate First Aid Application (%)	23.7	71.4	201.3%	p < 0.001
Emergency Services Contact Speed (min)	8.3	4.1	50.6%	p < 0.001
Preventable Complications (per 100 incidents)	18.4	7.2	60.9%	p < 0.001
Patient Comfort Measures Applied (%)	29.1	83.7	187.6%	p < 0.001
Psychological Support Provided (%)	15.3	67.9	343.8%	p < 0.001

Table 7: Predictors of Training Effectiveness (Multiple Regression Analysis)

Predictor Variable	Knowledge Improvement β	Skills Improvement β	Confidence Improvement β	p-value
Age (years)	-0.034	-0.087*	-0.056*	0.023
Education Level	0.156***	0.123***	0.098**	< 0.001
Previous Experience	0.089**	0.134***	0.067*	0.008
Training Duration (hours)	0.234***	0.287***	0.198***	< 0.001

Instructor Quality Rating	0.198***	0.245***	0.189***	< 0.001
Practice Opportunities	0.167***	0.312***	0.224***	< 0.001
Cultural Adaptation Score	0.145***	0.112**	0.178***	< 0.001
Community Support Level	0.078*	0.095**	0.156***	0.012

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

Implications of the results of this in-depth analysis are that it provides sound evidence for the impact of Red Crescent community training schemes to improve first aid capability at individual and community levels. The widespread large knowledge gains recorded in all training courses with mean gains of 68-107% demonstrate the capacity of well-designed training courses to yield high learning impacts.

24-month follow-up maintenance of knowledge and skills with retention of 65-81% of short-term post-training gains indicates Red Crescent training courses yield strong learning that exceeds the life of the training event. This finding is all the more significant in the face of reported first aid training knowledge decay issues detailed in previous literature (Roberts & Williams, 2020).

5.2 Community Impact and Public Health Implications

The community-level effects reported in this research are robust and perhaps the most notable, illustrating that training at the individual level translates to quantifiable improvements in emergency response capacity and community preparedness. The 190% increase in first aid kit availability at the household level and 485% increase in volunteer emergency responders per 1000 residents indicate that Red Crescent training programs have a multiplier effect that stimulates greater community involvement with emergency preparedness.

The 61% decrease in preventable complications in trained populations is direct evidence of the public health value of mass first aid training. The outcome is in agreement with previous research that suggests first aid training in the community has the ability to significantly reduce morbidity and mortality in situations of emergency (Chen et al., 2021).

5.3 Training Design and Pedagogical Impact

The strong positive correlation between training length and performance on all measures indicates the benefit of investing in long training programs rather than short awareness sessions. The very strong effect of practical experience on skill development ($\beta = 0.312$) once again indicates the importance of experiential learning approaches now at the center of Red Crescent training practice.

The significant, beneficial effect of cultural adaptation on all outcome measures highlights the worth of contextually congruent training design. This finding supports the Red Crescent movement policy of culturally responsive program implementation and suggests that standardized curriculum needs to be offset by local adaptation to maximize effectiveness.

5.4 Demographic Considerations and Accessibility

The reverse correlation between age and training efficacy, while statistically significant, represented proportionally small effect sizes, which means that Red Crescent training programs are generally effective irrespective of some fluctuation in learning achievement. The positive effect of level of education on all outcomes indicates that access programs to groups with no formal education may require further pedagogical adaptations.

The extremely high level of women's participation (58%) overall across programs is particularly noteworthy given usual barriers to women's participation in some cultures. This suggests that Red Crescent societies have been successful in developing training approaches that bypass gender-based barriers to involvement.

5.5 Instructor Quality and Training Delivery

The large positive effect of instructor quality ratings on all of the outcome measures ($\beta = 0.189-0.245$) emphasizes the critical importance of investment in instructor training and development. The implication of this finding is that standardization of instructor skills could be as important as standardization of curricula to guarantee consistent outcomes from training.

5.6 Limitations

Several limitations must be considered when interpreting these findings. Some outcomes were measured using self-report assessment, which can create response bias. The follow-up assessments also had some attrition (18% at 24-month follow-up), and this may affect generalizability of long-term retention findings.

The analysis was primarily focused on knowledge and skill outcomes with little measurement of actual emergency response behavior under genuine conditions. Future research must have more comprehensive measures of outcome, including behavioral measures and health outcomes during emergency responses.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Program Design Recommendations

A number of program design recommendations are evident in the wake of the results of this analysis:

6.1.1 Training Duration and Intensity

The strong correlation between training duration and outcomes means that courses are better to prefer lengthy training to brief interventions. A minimum of 20 hours appears necessary to make large and persistent changes in all measures of outcome.

6.1.2 Emphasis on Practical Skills

The improved performance of practical skills training components indicates that programs should plan at least 60% of training sessions for practical exercise and scenario training. Simulation-based training with realistic cases of emergencies should be enhanced in all program categories.

6.1.3 Cultural Adaptation

The positive effect of cultural adaptation indicates that while standardized core competencies are maintained, training content and delivery should be adapted to the local realities of cultures, languages, and community-based emergency patterns.

6.2 Quality Assurance and Standardization

6.2.1 Instructor Development

Thorough instructor training and certification courses appear to be a necessary investment in securing training quality. Red Crescent societies should utilize standardized evaluation methods and routine instructor refresher courses.

6.2.2 Assessment Standardization

Standardized assessment tools need to be created and implemented to ensure consistent measurement of training achievements and provide room for ongoing program improvement through systematic measurement accumulation.

6.3 Community Engagement Strategies

6.3.1 Community Leadership Involvement

Training schemes should aim training of opinion leaders and community leaders who will serve as ongoing champions for first aid preparedness and provide informal reinforcement of training messages.

6.3.2 Refresher and Follow-up Training

There is a need for follow-up and refresher training on a regular basis to refresh skills and address knowledge lapse with time. A refresher course on an annual or bi-annual basis appears most suitable in the context of observed retention trends.

6.4 Program Evaluation and Research

6.4.1 Long-term Outcome Monitoring

Red Crescent societies need to carry out long-term follow-up of trainees in courses in order to evaluate long-term outcome and determinants favoring long-term skill retention.

6.4.2 Community-Level Evaluation

Measurements of outcome need to be included in courses at the community level in order to capture public health impact after initial first aid effect and facilitate advocacy to maintain investment in first aid training.

7. Conclusion

A conclusive evidence for the effectiveness of Red Crescent community first aid training courses in enhancing first aid skills at individual and community levels. The notable enhancement of knowledge, acceptable level of skill acquisition, high levels of confidence, and quantifiable improvement in community readiness are clues that well-constructed first aid training courses are an unbelievably effective public health intervention.

Maintenance of training effects, with high maintenance of skills and knowledge at follow-up at 24 months, indicates that Red Crescent training courses produce long-term improvement in emergency response capacity in the community. Community-level effects, including fewer preventable complications and more efficient emergency response, are strong evidence for the public health value of widespread first aid training.

In the long term, Red Crescent societies must continue to invest in culture-sensitive, inter-agency collaborative training programs and improve the quality assurance systems and enhance the impact assessment at the community level. Additional investment in first aid training within community

preparedness and disaster risk reduction programming is supported based on the evidence revealed in this analysis.

Determinant identification of training effectiveness, including training duration, instructor performance, practice experience, and cultural sensitivity, provides prescriptive recommendations towards program design and optimal implementation. Success using Red Crescent programs across geographies and cultures indicates scalability and degree of adaptability of first aid training at the community level.

These successes also suggest the broader potential for community-focused health education interventions to effect beneficial change in public health outcomes. As populations globally become increasingly vulnerable to increasing threats from natural disasters, health emergencies, and other emergencies, the Red Crescent model of integrated first aid training that is culturally responsive represents a good foundation on which to construct community resilience and save lives.

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