

British Red Cross PR Campaign Brief: How do you put a Silent Emergency in the spotlight?



Background

The British Red Cross helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. We are part of a global voluntary network, responding to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies. We enable vulnerable people in the UK and abroad to prepare for and withstand emergencies in their own communities. And when the crisis is over, we help them to recover and move on with their lives.

Nine out of ten of the emergencies the Red Cross respond to are 'silent'.

You can read more about our work here:

www.redcross.org.uk / www.facebook.com/BritishRedCross / @BritishRedCross

What is a 'Silent Emergency'?

Social media and 24-hour news mean it is easy to stay informed about the latest events across the world.

However, there are serious emergencies happening every day that never make the headlines. We call them 'silent' emergencies.

Floods, disease outbreaks, landslides, droughts, food shortages – the type of emergency or the numbers affected are not important. What's important is the impact they have upon individuals.

Too often these emergencies are effectively silent: marginalised by donors, the media and humanitarian organisations.

But not by the Red Cross and Red Crescent – we refuse to ignore people in crisis, wherever and whoever they are.

That's why we are calling on the nation to help us break the silence. Together, we can help change the lives of people in crisis.

Objectives

1. Inspire people to engage with silent emergencies, increasing public awareness of the experience of people in crisis and the need for a humanitarian response

2. Enhance understanding and impression of the British Red Cross, through broadening understanding of our work on silent emergencies and demonstrating our relevance to key audiences
3. Increase funding to reach more people in crisis
4. Test innovative new communications and fundraising approaches and understand the role these can play in generating support for silent emergencies

The brief

One of the world's biggest silent emergencies is the 'Lake Chad crisis'. This refers to the crisis across Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon; known as Africa's Lake Chad region. Conflict, displacement, food shortages and disease have combined to create this devastating crisis in one of the world's poorest regions. Since 2009, the north-eastern part of Nigeria has been plagued by conflict, characterised by extreme violence against civilians. In 2013, the fighting spread to neighbouring countries, drawing Cameroon, Chad and Niger into the conflict. There are currently 10.7 million people in need.

The Red Cross is one of the few humanitarian organisations able to access communities in each of the four countries. The crisis is complicated and protracted, underreported and underfunded and for too long has been ignored by the world.

We must wake up to the humanitarian crisis gripping Lake Chad. Millions of people are struggling without the very basics to survive – food, clean water, safety and shelter.

Audience

Global Citizen: More likely to be female, aged 35 – 50, passionate about world issues

Digital Native: More likely to be male, aged 21-35, active online, likes sharing content

Task

Design a PR campaign that reaches the target audience, meets the objectives and inspires the audience to take action.

Consider:

- What is the action we want our audience to take? Is it about more than fundraising?
- What creative ideas and new technologies could be harnessed to enable the silent emergency to seem more relatable?
- How can we play on themes of silence and noise to engage audiences?
- How would you ensure that your activities reached the target audience?
- What key elements do you need to make the campaign a success?
- How would you measure and evaluate whether your campaign had been successful?
- What would the main risks be with a PR campaign like this?

Supporting information

- [Watch](#) this explainer to understand more about the Lake Chad crisis
- [Take](#) some inspiration from our Dutch colleagues Serious Requests campaign