

Volunteer 2005

Plan for the Federation Secretariat's work to support the development of volunteering in National Societies, 2001-2005



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Preface

The five year secretariat plan Volunteer 2005 has been produced after consultation with National Society, delegate and external experts on volunteering. Its principal aim is to provide a framework within which National Societies can develop and exchange knowledge on volunteering and volunteer management, thus contributing to their own development as well as that of others. The implementation of the Plan will be supported by the secretariat Organizational Development Department.

This document sets out the analysis and reasoning behind this approach to supporting National Society volunteering development, as well as the general activities that will take place within the framework of the Plan. For obvious reasons, it is not possible to set out a concrete list of activities spread over a five year period; yearly secretariat workplans will elaborate these in more detail. In publishing the general Plan we hope to increase National Societies understanding of the issues facing the Movement in this critical area, and gain support for the knowledge sharing approach taken.



Didier Cherpitel
Secretary General

1. Aim

The aim of the Federation is **to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity** (*Strategy 2010*). In line with this and relevant Federation decisions on volunteering (see Appendix 1), the aim of this plan is to put into place and run a support system for five years that helps individual National Societies to greatly improve their ability to organise volunteers in programmes that serve vulnerable people.

2. What is volunteering?

Federation Volunteering Policy defines Red Cross or Red Crescent *Volunteering* as an **activity** that is done from free will, benefits vulnerable people and is organised by a National Society. A *volunteer* is a person engaged in such an activity.

Volunteers are found in many different roles in a National Society and at all levels. They are active in **policy-making and monitoring** (for example: board members and delegates to General Assemblies), **management and administration** (planning, accounting, office work and membership drives), **organising and delivering services/programmes** (service volunteers, team leaders and trainers), **fund-raising** (collecting money, organising bazaars), **advocacy** (campaigning and dissemination) and **giving advice and solving problems** (expert or advisory volunteers). Of all these, volunteers serving vulnerable people in their own communities are the main work force of a National Society.

3. Volunteering must be strengthened

Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteering must be strengthened. This is true for most National Societies, but for different reasons. Below is a list of the most common reasons:

External reasons

- **Bigger and changing needs:** To deal with the *growing* needs in society National Societies have to organise more volunteers. To deal with *changing* needs they have to adjust existing programmes (even closing some down) and/or start new ones. None of this can be accomplished without strong leadership and management of volunteers.
- **Higher stakeholder expectations:** Governments, companies and the general public giving money and other resources to our Movement are today more demanding regarding the quality of our volunteer services. This is also true for the vulnerable and even the volunteers themselves.
- **Increased competition:** The number of non-profits competing with the Red Cross Red Crescent is growing fast all over the world. The vast majority of them are small, highly focused, community based organisations often using systematic volunteer management successfully to attract and involve volunteers.
- **Volunteering is changing:** Most National Society volunteer structures are traditional and have not changed for many years. Outside the Movement however, volunteering has changed a lot. The single most important reason for that is the development of systematic volunteer management. Because of this and demographic changes, increased education, changes in the labour market and so on, today's volunteers are different from those twenty years ago. They have higher demands on the tasks, the leadership, the support and the rewards they get.

Internal reasons

- **Strategy 2010:** The success of *Strategy 2010* is totally dependant on National Societies' ability to develop volunteering and strengthen local volunteer and programme management.
- **New mission statement:** "To improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity" means mobilizing donors, members and others, but most of all it means mobilizing and organising volunteers.
- **Difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteers:** *Learning from the Nineties* concluded that the Movement had "difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers" and noted "a significant decrease in their numbers."
- **Lack of knowledge:** Most parts of the Movement have not benefited from the rapid development of volunteer management knowledge outside the Movement. As a result many leaders, volunteers, managers and staff in National Societies and the Federation lack updated knowledge on volunteering and how to combine staff and volunteers.
- **Federation Volunteering Policy:** In 1999 the General Assembly adopted the *Federation Volunteering Policy*. Based on it all National Societies should develop, approve and implement their own Volunteering Policies.
- **Federation Pledge:** In the General Assembly *Pledge on volunteering* to the 27th International Conference (see Appendix 1) all National Societies promised "to review the current situation of volunteers and identify areas where change is needed to improve services to beneficiaries, the status of volunteers and their role in the organisation".

4. Points of departure for volunteering development work

1. Each National Society is free to develop its own volunteering model according to the local situation and the Federation's Policy on Volunteering.
2. In evaluating volunteering a National Society should not be compared with another National Society, but with the best performers in volunteering in the country.
3. Volunteer development is always part of programme and organizational development and cannot be done separately.
4. Volunteers are recruited to carry out specific tasks. Successful volunteer recruitment is the result of striking a balance between the needs of the beneficiaries, the organization and the volunteers.
5. Volunteering costs money and must be financed; its development is an investment.
6. Volunteer work and development must be included in planning, appeals and budgets.
7. Volunteer management is expert knowledge that must be studied.
8. National Societies should be encouraged to learn from each other and other volunteer organizations and to make full use of external learning opportunities.
9. National Societies in a region should support one another with volunteer knowledge and good examples. Regions should support one another.
10. The Secretariat should identify National Societies that are more advanced in one or several aspects of volunteering and use them as examples.

5. A strategy for the support work

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the leadership in each National Society to introduce proper policy, structure, programmes, knowledge and funding to ensure the development of volunteering in their organisation. It is the duty of the Secretariat and its delegations to promote and support this work. To be able to do this world wide with the limited resources we have, we need a systematic and focused approach that can produce results.

Strategy

The development of volunteering must be done individually in each National Society. This will be the result of matching external and internal knowledge, hard work and serious investment in structures and organization.

The Secretariat will:

- promote and support a structure that ensures the introduction, development and exchange of knowledge to facilitate this work,
- ensure a favourable environment within the Movement for the development of volunteering,
- work to promote a favourable external environment for the development of volunteering, and
- work with the Movement to ensure necessary investments for the development of volunteering.

6. A structure for the support work

Volunteer Expert Networks

In each region the Secretariat will encourage the National Societies to organise a **Volunteer Expert Network** (VEN). These networks should be run by the participants themselves according to their needs. Each should have an elected chair and meet twice a year. National Societies are free to participate or not. Where possible, they should finance their own VEN and participation.

The purpose of the VENs is to enable those managers in the National Society Headquarters who are directly responsible for the development of Volunteering and Volunteer Programmes, to meet regularly to share knowledge and experience and to support one another with the aim of promoting good volunteer systems and management in each National Society.

Volunteer Development Regions

With the purpose of supporting volunteer development, the countries of the world are divided into “regions”. These Volunteer Development Regions are based on factors such as similarities in economic development, volunteer development and traditions, cultural similarities and traditions in RC/RC co-operation. The assumption is that volunteering within each region will be similar enough for each National Society to benefit from the co-operation.

The following Volunteer Development Regions are proposed:

- Australasia and Pacific Islands
- Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- North America
- South Asia
- South East and East Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Western Europe (region and VEN was established in late 2000)

Focal points

Each region will have a “Focal point” for volunteering. This is a person or small group of people working together to promote the development of volunteering in the region. The work includes promoting the VEN, promoting the learning process and supporting the development of volunteering theories and methods. The Focal point will co-operate and network with researchers, experts and consultants in the region and when necessary finance a few selected development projects. The Focal point will also develop his/her expertise on volunteering in the region, but also learn from developments in other regions.

In regions where National Societies themselves can finance this development work, the VEN chair will be the focal point. In all other regions the Secretariat will introduce a specially recruited staff member (probably from the region) to do this job.

Pilot National Societies

In each region there should be one or several pilot National Societies. These pilots will develop quality statistics on volunteering and in depth knowledge on volunteering and will serve as a reference for volunteer development in the region.

7. Secretariat and donor support to the structure

Secretariat support to VENs and focal points

The Secretariat with the OD Department as a co-ordinator will support the VENs and Focal points in the following ways:

- If necessary, help regions to form and run a VEN.
- Yearly co-ordination meeting for all Focal points.
- Coach and support all Focal points.
- Publish relevant publications and tools and develop training modules according to needs expressed by the VENs.
- Finance and monitor a few selected development projects in order to gain important, new knowledge of volunteering.
- Facilitate exchange visits for learning.
- Organise joint participation in selected Volunteer Conferences and other major learning opportunities.
- Monitor compliance with Federation Volunteering Policy
- Promote National Societies' annual celebrations of volunteers on the *International Volunteer Day* on December 5.

Consortium of donor National Societies

The Secretariat will invite donor National Societies to form a "Consortium for the development of Red Cross /Red Crescent volunteering" to work together for five years to give ideological, practical and economical support to the work outlined in this plan.

Coalition of volunteer organizations

As part of its volunteering advocacy work, the Secretariat will form together with UN Volunteers and others a Coalition to influence and support governments in promoting volunteering by improving the legal, fiscal and political bases for volunteering in the country. National Societies are invited to take part in and benefit from this work.

Developing Federation competence

All federation managers, staff and delegates should be systematically trained in relevant volunteer issues. For example, volunteering knowledge should be included in BTC, FACT, Middle Management training and Finance training.

Future issues in volunteering

The Secretariat will actively follow international research and development work in the area of volunteering and monitor international trends.

Develop reliable statistics

The Secretariat will work to ensure reliable statistics on the number of members, board members and volunteers in National Societies as well as on the total number of volunteer hours.

8. Expected results at the end of 2005

These are the expected results of this plan at the end of 2005:

Support systems

- Federation Secretariat and delegations are giving National Societies strong, consistent, regionally sensitive support regarding volunteering and volunteer management.
- Major donor societies are giving supported National Societies strong, consistent, regionally sensitive support regarding volunteering and volunteer management.

Regions

- The VENs are in place and have been working for at least three years.
- Two to three examples of well working and regionally suitable volunteering models have been identified and disseminated in each region.
- One or several pilot National Societies with quality volunteer statistics and in depth knowledge on volunteering serve as reference in each region.

National societies

- A majority of National Societies have introduced systematic volunteer management at the local level or are actively working to do so.
- A majority of National Societies are engaged in seeking, developing and sharing knowledge on volunteering and systematic volunteer management.
- The twenty biggest National Societies in members and volunteers have a reliable system for membership and volunteer statistics and other National Societies are on the way to introduce such systems.

Volunteer programmes

- After introduction of systematic volunteer management a volunteer based service or programme is expected to
 - deliver a good and reliable service to its beneficiaries,
 - maintain stable quality standards,
 - be cost-effective,
 - be sustainable,
 - have measurable performance criteria.

Volunteers

- In those places where National Societies have introduced properly supported and financed systematic volunteer management:
 - there are enough qualified volunteers to run the programmes,
 - volunteers are satisfied with their tasks and their support

Appendix:

Volunteering in current Federation documents

Strategy 2010: Mobilizing the power of humanity

"The diverse global network of people is a valuable asset of the Red Cross/Red Crescent; volunteers are responsible for much local service delivery and pay an important part in strengthening civil society. The recruitment, training and, especially, retention of **volunteers** are issues of particular importance that National Societies must address. ... The International Federation will find ways of encouraging volunteers' engagement in addition to the traditional membership model."

Policy on Volunteering

The main points in the 1999 Federation *Policy on Volunteering* are:

- Reinforces the importance of volunteering in the International RC/RC Movement.
- Definition of *volunteering*, *volunteer* and *member*.
- Defines what the National Societies shall do
- Defines what the Secretariat shall do
- States what volunteers are expected to do and what they are entitled to.

According to the policy the Federation Secretariat shall:

- “ 5.4.1 support National Societies in their work with volunteers;
- 5.4.2 identify and support research projects that will help to strengthen National Society activities that promote volunteering and share this information systematically.
- 5.4.3 seek to promote cooperation and partnerships with organisations in civil society and public and private sectors that encourage volunteering.”

Pledge on volunteering to the 27th International Conference

In a special *Pledge on volunteering* to the 27th International Conference of The Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva the Federation promised:

- “to review the current situation of volunteers and identify areas where change is needed to improve services to beneficiaries, the status of volunteers and their role in the organisation;
- to develop clear policies, guidelines and best management practices for volunteers which focus on human resources development;

- to ensure equal opportunities for men and women of all ages as volunteers in service delivery and National Society leadership, to bring about greater involvement of marginalised groups, and to provide the required support by paid staff;
- to cooperate with governments to broaden the existing legal, fiscal and political bases for volunteering, and to mobilize increased public support;
- to expand cooperation with other volunteer organizations at all levels, and to play a significant role in the International Year of Volunteers in 2001.”

Follow up to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

“Final goal 3.3 Increase National Society capacities and effective partnerships with States, and co-operation with relevant humanitarian and development organisations:

13. States ...will: ...

- (b) recognise the growing importance of volunteers as providers of practical and emotional support to vulnerable people in the community... States consequently review, and where necessary, introduce or update legislation so as to facilitate the efficient work of relevant voluntary organisations. ...

14. National Societies ... will:

- (a) take new initiatives to ensure a well-balanced participation by people from all sectors of society in their organisation and programmes....

15. The International Federation will:

- (a) continue its research, in co-operation with National Societies, on specific aspects of voluntarism, in order to develop updated policy and guidelines.”

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



RED CROSS RED CRESCENT

the *power* of humanity



The *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.