

## **European Network for the Development of Volunteering Minutes from the meeting in Athens 18-20 May 2006**

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*To exchange knowledge, share understanding and strengthen relationships between National Societies on issues specifically related to the development of volunteering in the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and to contribute to the development of the Federation's volunteering policy globally.*

### **Introduction**

The meeting was opened by Hellenic Red Cross.

Welcome by Olga Antoniou from Hellenic Red Cross

Welcome by Marita Salo, chair of WENDOV

A brief presentation of the minutes from the last meeting in Copenhagen 13-15 October 2005.

### **Reflection from the last meeting.**

Ingrid Naustdal from Norwegian Red Cross reflected on the use of experiences from the last meeting by presenting the challenges of developing volunteering in larger cities in Norway.

The Norwegian Red Cross has identified several challenges and discovered changing conditions in the cities. Hence, they decided to get involved in 7 “big” cities in Norway (40 000 – 500 000 people). These cities are in a sense comparable in many ways, though there are differences that need to be recognized. There is no major difference in the setup of branch structure between cities. The “big city project” has developed several local projects to meet the challenges identified. This with the aim of using the experiences of the Oslo work in the other cities without investing too much in staff. *Annex: See Norwegian Red Cross presentation.*

After the presentation, the comments from the participants were that from the last meeting they particularly appreciated

- the various methods of knowledge sharing that was used at the meeting was appreciated,
- Christer Leopold’s models about different models and approaches,
- the involvement of new members in the network.

The participants felt that it could be good to have a brief paper that could show a baseline data about each National Society. What is the Federation collecting? There is statistic gathered by the Federation, but the recent example is the report by the Reference Centre that produced a report with statistics about 12 National Societies. This report was mandated by the meeting in Berlin

The name of the network is not appropriate considering the increased membership. Few general remarks about networks were made by the participants. There is an ongoing discussion in EU about the role and status of the networks. How would the network like to work between meetings? What role does the network want to assume in Europe in

relation to legislations? How does the network relate to different networks to avoid overlap, but also to have joint meetings and achieve synergy?

### **The global volunteer development program – Volunteer PLUS**

Stefan Agerhem from Swedish Red Cross, also member of the Volunteer PLUS team presented the recent developments in the Federation with a brief summary of the decisions at the General Assembly held in Seoul and the main content of the programme Volunteer PLUS. *Annex: See presentation*

The current team of the Volunteer PLUS consists of Jean-Francois Goulay (Federation-Secretariat), Ferran Cobertera Hidalgo (Spanish Red Cross), Maryanne Burton (British Red Cross), Virginia Laino (Federation – Asia Pacific) and Stefan Agerhem (Swedish Red Cross).

A presentation was also made about the activities of the Asia Pacific Volunteering Development Delegate – Virginia Laino. ([virginia.laino@ifrc.org](mailto:virginia.laino@ifrc.org)). *Annex: See presentation*

### **Current challenges in the National Societies**

The participants were encouraged to write down some of the challenges in you NS regarding volunteering. Based on the result, the participants were divided into groups and to discuss four topics. The groups presented “best practice”.

#### **Recruitment**

The group concluded that a change of mind has to happen if new people successfully will be included. The recruitment process should maximum take two months.

Think different! In Norway, the number of volunteers in Oslo has increased with more than 300 % during the last years. Though, the problem is to find activities for the volunteers.

#### **IT solutions**

The idea is to provide volunteers in branches with simple tools. Currently there is a great amount of money invested by National Societies in IT. The focus must be to find a cost efficient system. In the group, the national societies use different platforms/software.

Issues raised in the discussion; How do we use the database? What can we use the information for? Who gets access to what data?

Norway has an interesting setup using Navision providing web-based accounting for the branches. The experiences from the branches could be used when thinking about volunteering.

### **Volunteer Management Systems**

The model discussed and presented was the Hellenic Red Cross model. The system has a social worker (paid) and placement supervisor working together. The volunteers are allocated to various institutions. The volunteers are organized into groups and each is lead by a group leader. The group meets once a month for regular follow up. All the

volunteers should experience the group leadership. Therefore, a volunteer can only be a group leader for maximum 2 years.

### **Strategy and policy implementation**

The various organizational set-ups require different approaches. One National Society felt that they were strategy oriented and not results oriented. For successful implementation it is crucial to establish a follow up and evaluation system. An agreement and handbook with branches/districts facilitate strategy and policy implementation.

### **Study Visit to Hellenic Red Cross Multifunctional Centre of Social Support and Integration of Refugees in Athens**

The centre is Hellenic RC Social Welfare program ran by paid staff and volunteers. During the visit volunteers and staff from the centre introduced the services and the volunteer management and training system in the centre.

### **Conclusion from day 1**

The participants found that:

- The meeting at the refugee centre was interesting and valuable to meet volunteers. It was felt that these activity visits are learning opportunities and that field trips should be maintained. The added value of that meeting was to meet the volunteer with experience of being a refugee.
- When having working groups, specific topics need to be identified and discussed. Ideally, to facilitate coming into the discussions faster would give a better outcome. Maybe if case studies could be used, like the Sri Lanka model (Federation case), could help. Maximum one –two pages. Some felt that they were not really satisfied with the outcome of the group work and would welcome for example discussions around topics breaking new ground. The cases could be an outcome of the network, which also could be shared in the reference center.
- The good things with the discussion are that we can bring home experience to our National Societies.
- The Federation presentation gave a good update and introduction to the global volunteer development activities.

### **National Society Presentations**

Three presentations were made by National Societies:

- Bulgarian Red Cross
- Armenian Red Cross
- French Red Cross

Dimitur Zafirov (Bulgarian Red Cross), Isabelle Weiss (French Red Cross) and Mariana Harutyunyan (Armenian Red Cross), described the current situation in their countries regarding the national context as well as current system and practice of their National Societies. Annex: See presentations

### **The Reference Centre on Volunteering**

The latest update about the Reference Centre was presented by Ferran Cobertera Hidalgo (Spanish Red Cross), Maryanne Burton (British Red Cross). The main issue is that the centre needs to be moved from the FedNet due to problem with accessibility and future development of the centre. New possible features like pod casts and e-learning were introduced.

The meeting welcomed the positive direction taken by the Reference Centre. The group the team should continue look into the matter of making the Reference center available on internet and further explore the e-learning on volunteer management.

### **Terms of reference for the Network**

The chairlady Marita Salo introduced the discussion about the Terms of Reference of the network. The main discussions focus on:

- membership and name of the network
- modus of operandi of the network
- relations between the network and the reference center and cooperation with other external partners (like Federation OD department)

**Membership** – discussion about the definitions member, participants and representatives. The network should be open to all 51 National Societies. Question whether the national Society or the individuals are members of the network. In the case the national society is the member, should the individual be called representative? The discussion tended to focus on individuals as members. Resource persons should be invited when necessary.

**Modus of operandi** – how do we prepare the meetings better and what happens between the meetings? One idea is to have a simple update on each National Society, e.g. the Icelandic model. Would like to have focused discussions and greater input to the meeting before and having a specific learning focus. The group agreed on the additional text added to the section in the ToR.

**The reference centre** – the groups felt that they needed easier access to the reference centre. It should also be developed to function as a mean of communication between the meetings. Ideally, there should be a event calendar for conferences and meetings. The roles and relation between the network and the reference centre should be defined in the ToR.

The meeting concluded that there will be an open discussion initiated on email to finalize the draft ToR till the next meeting.

### **Appreciating our Networks diversity**

Smaro Markou, Systemic Consultant and Trainer introduced the workshop. The aim of the workshop was to explore how to actualize the maximum of each others experience to create best practices and tools for the local work. Gain a new perspective based on the different backgrounds, history culture, and ways of living, education and tradition. Based

on the above, the Systemic Appreciative methodology was used when elaborating on the issue above and co-creating answers.

Systemic Appreciative Approach – the idea is to focus on what works well. The time invested was documented and will be distributed after the workshops by the Hellenic Red Cross.

During the workshop, the participants:

- Worked in pairs, preparing for a presentation of the other colleague in plenum,
- In pairs interviewed each other to identify, the cultural positive attributes of the own country, national society and other participants in the network,
- In pairs discussed one experience of volunteering development valuable to be shared with other participants and individually prepare a short case/story to be distributed after the meeting
- In four groups dreamed and through a vision/image together visualized the actual future of the network.

### **Presentations by the Hellenic Red Cross**

Four presentations were made by the Hellenic Red Cross about

- Day care center for the elderly (K.A.P.I.)
- Elpida”association
- Nursing volunteers’ activities
- Volunteer samaritans corps

### **Chair and vice chair**

*Terms of Reference:*

*Both Chair and Vice chair will hold office for one year.*

*The Chair will then stand down and be succeeded by the Vice Chair. The group will then elect a Vice Chair to replace him/her and thus the maximum term of office will be for two years, one year in each post.*

Marita Salo (Finnish Red Cross) had chaired the Network for a year. Vice chair Lena Andren (Swedish Red Cross) was not able to take over the position of a chair. So both chair positions were opened for election.

Erika Hintermayer (Austrian Red Cross) took over the chair from Marita Salo and Eckhard Otte (German Red Cross) took the position of the vice chair.

### **Name of the Network**

During the meeting two suggestions for the new name of the network were made:

- ENDOV – European Network for Development of Volunteering
- EVEN – European Volunteering Exchange Network

**ENDOV – European Network for Development of Volunteering** was decided as a name for the Network.

### **Next meetings**

Dates for the next meeting were set. Next meeting will be hosted by the Netherlands Red Cross. Hosting of the October Meeting in 2007 was left open, one option could be to have the meeting in May 2007 in Geneva if agreed with the Swiss Red Cross and the Federation Secretariat.

19 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2006	Netherlands
10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> May 2007	Austria
18 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	
May 2008	Norway

### **Suggested topics and preparation for next meetings**

Volunteering and IT:

- development of the databases, volunteer management systems and the use of IT, e-learning, IT services for volunteers, on-line recruitment

Recruitment

Volunteer managers / volunteer managers training

Motivation of volunteers – motivating volunteers

Volunteer exchange

Diversity, migrants, human trafficking and volunteering

- the role of volunteers, how to involve migrants in the volunteer work

Coping with crises

How to measure results in the volunteer work

Retention and exit of volunteers

Volunteers close to the market sector

Community involvement and volunteering: how to start new activities

Quality management in the volunteer work

**Participants:**

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