

Plan 2009-2010



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Volunteering Development

Executive summary

This plan reflects two years of a four year effort that begun in 2008 on taking volunteering development forward in the International Federation. When designing the plan, the focus is set with the focus on 2011 and the International Year of Volunteers 2001+10 (2011).

The key target group for this programme is National Societies. The volunteering development programme will **provide National Societies with tools and resources to provide a favourable internal and external environment that encourages and facilitates the work of volunteers**, as well as promotes volunteerism across all sectors of civil society. Focus will be on enhancing volunteer systems, special focus will be on volunteering in emergency situations. The overall aim is to achieve a higher rate of retention and engagement of volunteers.

In 2009–2010, the programme will focus on:

- Efficiently **managing knowledge on volunteering development** that contributes to greater outcome of resources and enhanced impact.
- **Expanding strategic partnerships** at a global and zone level (formal alliances) with ICRC, National Societies, corporations, organizations, institutions, centres of excellence and universities, to bring together resources for effective volunteering development.
- **Spearheading development initiatives such as volunteering in emergencies** to reinforce the value of the International Federation as a leading humanitarian organization exploring new areas.
- Being a **visible leader and advocate in the field of volunteerism** in our relations with governments, and international and grassroots organisations.
- **Integrating volunteering development** into core programmes.
- To establish a strong virtual global team at the Geneva and zone offices as well as at country level **advising on volunteering development**.

The 2009-2010 budget for the Volunteering Development plan is included in the Organizational Development Support plan 2009-2010 budget. [Click here to go directly to the summary budget of the plan.](#)

Context

The General Assembly of the International Federation decided in 2007 to request the Governing Board to initiate and support a revision process of the International Federation volunteering policy to be reported at the General Assembly in 2011. This revision will influence the coming years' work and provide a base for volunteering development at local as well as global levels. The General Assembly also recognized that National Societies have since 1999 shown a growing interest and increased efforts to better manage and support their valuable volunteers. National Societies have committed themselves through decisions at international and regional conferences to improve the capacity to manage and support volunteers, although these decisions have been implemented to varying degree.

About half of the National Societies have a national volunteer policy, while slightly fewer have a volunteer development plan. Many more have dedicated human resources for volunteer management and development at the national level.

Achieving the aims of the International Federation will not be possible without the continued dedication and commitment of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, staff and leaders throughout the world, as well as the resources required to support them in their work. However, although volunteers give their time freely, with no desire for gain, volunteerism is not for free.

What is volunteering development?

The management of volunteers is an essential issue for National Societies and it is increasingly being included in strategic plans, a recognition of the fact that it is seen as an important area. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to improve and establish good volunteer management systems.

Volunteering development has two perspectives:

- **Inside National Societies:** to ensure that it is volunteer friendly and uses a sound volunteer management system
- **Outside National Societies:** to ensure that the environment which it operates in is volunteering enabling.

For a National Society, a **volunteering development effort is a long term investment and commitment**. It begins with analyzing the current state of how it manages and supports its volunteers. Taking the analysis into a process to put in place, improve or change the practice of volunteer management. It is about looking into all organizational levels as well as the current practice of the various programmes and activities run by the society. It is also vital to advocate for volunteering enabling environments through heightening awareness on the importance of national support and funding for volunteering efforts by National Societies through their governments.

Secretariat programme in 2009–2010

Organizational development/Volunteering development

a) The purpose and components

When implemented, the volunteering development programme will have provided National Societies with tools and resources to provide a favourable internal and external environment that encourages and facilitates the work of volunteers, as well as promotes volunteerism across all sectors of society.

*The goal is that by end of 2011;
National Societies demonstrate improvement in volunteering aspects in programmes and emergency operations that lead to better services provided to vulnerable people as well as higher rate of retention and satisfaction of volunteers.*

Volunteering and volunteering development is a cross cutting area that concerns many functions in the International Federation as well as partner organizations. Most of the activities in the volunteering development plan for 2009–2010 rely on the great involvement and contribution from internal as well as external resources, e.g.

- Development of a psychosocial support system for volunteers builds on the knowledge and resources of the Psychosocial support centre in Denmark.
- Planning of the International Year of Volunteers 2011 requires the support of National Societies, UN Volunteers and the communications department at the Geneva office of the Secretariat, zone offices and National Societies.
- Implementation of volunteering in emergencies requires a great involvement of National Societies, the zone and departments of the Secretariat, ICRC and other key stake holders.
- Legislation on volunteering and encouragement of Parliaments and local governments to promote and support volunteer enabling environments requires the involvement of National Societies and global and operational alliances.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS
<p>To support National Societies to provide favourable internal and external environment that encourages and facilitates the work of volunteers and promotes volunteerism across all sectors of civil society.</p>	<p>The National Societies are provided with a consistent and coordinated support by both sister societies and the International Federation Secretariat.</p> <p>The International Federation is spearheading development initiatives in volunteering development. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishment of Guidelines and Resources on enhancing volunteer management in emergencies by Sept. 2009. b. Supporting Peer to Peer Approaches in enhancing volunteer management among 10 Sister National Societies by end 2009.

Programme component: Knowledge sharing, technical support
Outcome: National Societies have access to support and technical resources in their volunteering development and management efforts.

Activities:

- Draft in consultation with National Societies, standard operating procedures and to support the establishment of a peer-to-peer support function in all zones.
- Enhance and make relevant information available on volunteering development through a global information system and regular information sharing. This will include the updating of the volunteer section on FedNet and the International Federation website with increasing contributions by National Societies. This is to be completed by June 2009.
- Capture experiences and knowledge on “community” volunteers and develop concepts and technical resources by Sept 2009.
- Globally publish at least 24 new case studies of good practices produced and published by contribution from the zones and National Societies.
- Globally publish on the International Federation website at least 12 stories related to volunteer’s work and experiences.
- Develop a global volunteer management database resource by September 2009.
- Establish guidelines and resources to support National Societies to address corporate supported volunteering by end 2009.

Programme component: Legislation and frameworks

Outcome: National Societies have proper volunteer enabling legal frameworks for volunteer action, at both internal and external level, that contributes significantly to build up a volunteer friendly organization.

Activities:

- Launch a joint global initiative together with UNV to promote better legislation for volunteerism.
- Encourage National Societies to develop and adopt their own volunteering policies and systems by end 2009.
- Encourage National Societies to join a Volunteer Accident Insurance Scheme using the global volunteer accident insurance as leverage and develop global technical resources on volunteer safety by end June 2009.
- Support the revision process of the International Federations volunteering policy adopted in 1999 to be reported at the General Assembly in 2011 with a progress update in 2009.

Programme component: Volunteering in emergencies

Outcome: By the end of 2011, National Societies, the International Federation and partner organizations have access to a platform and resources to better to manage and support volunteers involved in emergency response.

Activities:

- Develop key guidance on issues related to volunteering in emergencies to be considered in policy and decision making including appropriately addressing costs of volunteers.
- Develop and test a psychosocial support system for volunteers by end 2009.
- Develop and test a standard emergency volunteer management system (cycle) that is linked to the regular volunteer management systems by end 2009.
- Establish resources for volunteer leaders and managers on leadership and management for volunteering in emergencies building on experiences and existing resources by 2010.
- Explore and provide guidance on how to encourage coordination on volunteering issues in emergencies with governments, organizations and National Societies linking to existing frameworks such as International Disaster Response Law and Sphere standards.

Programme component: Celebration and recognition

Outcome: National Societies and the Federation have increased their efforts towards the celebration and recognition of the achievements of volunteers.

Activities:

- Support National Societies to develop their own volunteer awards and profiles and to speak out and tell the stories, identifying and valuing the contribution of volunteers.
- Present the global volunteer award at the International Federation General Assembly in 2009.
- Draft in consultation with National Societies and UNV a Federation plan for the International Year of Volunteers 2001 + 10 to be presented at the General Assembly 2009 and to prepare for the implementation.
- Globally publish at least 6 VIVA (Volunteer Investment Value Audit) by National Societies showing the added value of involving volunteers in service delivery.

Programme component: Global coordination

Outcome: Support to National Societies volunteering development efforts is effectively supported and coordinated by the Federation.

Activities:

- Support the Governing Board Working Group on Volunteering to implement its work plan.
- Support the zone offices to access technical resources for volunteering development.

- Support, coordinate and align the volunteering development efforts of the zone offices with global volunteering development initiatives.
- Support with special focus on the Africa zone offices to increase technical support to African National Societies.
- Support the zonal volunteering development functions to actively contribute to the global and cross-zonal volunteering development, learning and sharing.
- Develop a concept on a Global Resource (Excellence) Centre on Volunteering Development by mid 2009.

b) Profile of target audience and final beneficiaries

The key target group for this programme is National Societies. The aim is to help National Societies to grow strong and have sufficient numbers of volunteers to increase their service delivery. The most important of them are of course the growing number of vulnerable served and the growing number of volunteers serving them. Global guidance and support also have several intermediate target groups like delegates. They will benefit from a better guidance and support to their important work.

Other target groups are partner organizations and governments. In particular this is relating to establishing volunteer-friendly environments in countries. The International Federation is working with partners such as United Nations Volunteers to encourage and support National Societies to work for the establishment and adoption of legal frameworks that promote volunteerism.

c) Potential risks and challenges

One challenge is to make available technical staff and volunteers to participate in the peer-to-peer system. However, the strategy is to begin with the most interested and increasingly expand the group. Inherently, some societies would face financial difficulties to implement desired activities. Language and connectivity is another obstacle when sharing information and experiences within regions as well as cross regionally.

Role of the Secretariat

a) Technical programme support

Societies should get access to knowledge, experiences and support. The support to societies is mainly given by delegates in the field. Country and regional OD delegates are technically coordinated by zone OD coordinators in each of the seven zones, and they in their turn are technically coordinated and supported by the OD department in Geneva.

Many societies have made good progress in volunteering development. Encouraging one society to help and support another through knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer support is an important component of the global volunteering development. This would in the long perspective decrease the need to get technical support from the International Federation.

The global programme supports volunteering development initiatives at zone level; connecting, training and supporting people and National Societies with the same goals and challenges. Good participation by National Societies and the International Federation offices at all levels is essential. Ensuring this facilitates sound use of resources, resource mobilization and knowledge sharing.

Successful sharing of experiences and knowledge sharing depends on regular input from staff and volunteers in National Societies and the International Federation. FedNet is the key portal for information on volunteering development and should be made available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The role of the global volunteering development team is to facilitate and ensure that the system is available and functioning. To capture experiences and knowledge needs to be facilitated by zone, regional and country offices of the International Federation.

b) Partnership development and coordination

Establishing strategic partnerships (formal alliances) between the IFRC, Geneva and for example the ICRC, National Societies, corporations, organizations, institutions, universities, brings together assets for effective volunteering development.

The success of a volunteer-friendly environment, which grows out of local culture and conditions, largely depends on joint efforts and commitments from all sectors of civil society. The partnership between the International Federation and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has greatly contributed to the revalidation of volunteering and concerted efforts to foster an environment that enables and optimizes the full potential of volunteering. Progress in this field has been positive but more work is needed. This partnership-building work has involved the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Increasingly, in recent years volunteering development has begun to work closer with different internal and external stakeholders. The development initiative “Volunteering in emergencies” has been a good example where volunteering development has been drawn closer to programmes, in this case disaster management. The future promotion of the concept of “community” volunteers will bring volunteering development closer to health programmes.

c) Representation and advocacy

The International Federation is representing the National Societies in international forums e.g. in relation with the UNV in the preparation for the International Year of Volunteering.

d) Other areas

This document include those activities related to membership services such as the follow-up and implementation of the decisions by the Governing Board like the Volunteering Policy revision process and technical support to the working group on volunteering.

Promoting gender equity and diversity

Promoting gender equity and diversity amongst the volunteers is a fundamental part of the International Federation’s Volunteering Policy, hence therefore also integrated in the activities of the volunteering plan.

Greater effort is needed to address volunteer diversity and recruitment in all societies. The public needs to know that the Red Cross Red Crescent need volunteers, what they need them for, and that they are open to everyone. In recent years, there has been increased awareness of diversity and creativity in volunteer recruitment. Modern technology, the corporate workforce, local volunteering traditions and marginalized populations remain a largely untapped resource.

Some societies have a limited capacity to absorb newcomers. Their openness to diverse groups varies. A lack of financial resources and recruitment strategies, weak or distant branch structures and, sometimes, stringent requirements for people wishing to become volunteers limit volunteer recruitment and diversity. In Africa, widespread poverty means that many volunteers are young and unemployed, and financial incentives becomes an issue.

Quality, accountability and learning

A major component of the programme is about capturing, refining, developing and sharing knowledge on good practices in volunteering development as well as establishing good standards and best practices in the International Federation and its member societies.

The planning has built on the outcome of the recent year’s global consultative meetings as well as the global progress report on volunteering development 1999–2007. The Governing Board’s working group on volunteering will ensure a cross thematic involvement and reporting to the commissions and advisory bodies (health, youth, and disaster management). On a regular basis, the progress of this programme is reported to the Governing Board as well as at the General Assembly as a standard item on the agenda.

How we work

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

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