



EUROPEAN YOUTH NETWORK

Doing more, doing better, reaching further.



2021-2023

WORKPLAN

CREATED BY THE
EUROPEAN YOUTH COORDINATION COMMITTEE





THE NETWORK

© Red Cross Red Crescent European Youth Network,
European Youth Coordination Committee 2021-2023, Budapest, 2021

////// Introduction

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has supported communities in need around the world without fear or favour for over 150 years in 192 countries with more than 14 million volunteers worldwide.

Young people form the backbone of strong National Societies while responding to local needs in a local capacity and when playing a crucial role within the Movement. Without this brave and dedicated contribution, many National Societies would not be capable of assisting as many people in need as they currently do. This we do to prevent and alleviate human suffering, thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world as well as the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Especially now, when being faced with highly complex challenges such as the climate crisis and global pandemics, it is all the more important to see young people with all their capacity as key drivers of humanitarian action and development, to enable and educate them to be powerful young leaders, to share responsibility in decision-making and power at all levels and in all bodies. Young people bring vital commitment, insight and flexibility to the organization and it is especially their diverse perspective that needs to be further recognized as valuable expertise without expecting them to (only) bring inspiration to the table.

The IFRC recognizes meaningful youth engagement as a strategic vehicle for transforming institutional cultures that directly and positively impacts the Red Cross Red Crescent operational capacity to deliver on our humanitarian mission. Hence, adequate investments in meaningful youth engagement are inevitable for the transfer of experiences, leadership renewal, and progress overall (IFRC Youth Policy, 2017).

To stimulate the exchange of experiences and ideas, to share a common view on various sorts of vulnerability as well as upcoming challenges and their complex solutions, and to encourage the involvement of youth within the movement, it is important that cross-national structures like Youth Networks can operate within the international structure of the organization.



The Youth Network from Europe and Central Asia Region was established in 1975, and it aims to connect youth from 53 National Societies. The network meets biannually at the European Youth Cooperation Meeting, and in this event, the steering committee, the European Youth Coordination Committee (EYCC), is elected from representatives of all member National Societies. Throughout the period between the meetings, the EYCC action aims to:



**support and strength
knowledge within the
network;**



**strength the advocacy role of
the National Societies and the
network itself;**



**foster cooperation and
enhance capacities.**

The network is built and empowered as much as cooperation and dedication come from all National Societies, as the youth leaders, staff and volunteers keep passing the torch with the mission of the International Movement of the Red Cross Red Crescent Societies. We can achieve this by sharing knowledge, best practices and concrete advocacy with senior leadership. This is a platform that every stakeholder can benefit from through active participation. The existence of the RCRC European Youth Network is backed up by member National Societies through the adoption of various decisions, policies and strategies underlining the importance for the regional network to strengthen youth engagement and development in the Region. Therefore, National Societies' Youth Representatives are encouraged to disseminate information, knowledge and good practices among the Sister Societies as well as promoting engagement of their peers. Their Youth Volunteers are empowered to take an active lead in addressing these needs and to amplify youth's voice within their National Societies.

Regular and close contact with the EYCC is endorsed, this can happen through the subregional networks or directly through the responsible EYCC Focal Point for the subregion. Each National Society can directly impact the work in the Region, its effectiveness and advocacy. For this, they can engage in consultations, decision-making and collaboration on programs, policies and strategies. We very much welcome your initiatives and ideas regarding the thematic priorities and after your contact with us, we will do our very best to support and connect you with relevant stakeholders.

The network liaises with the IFRC Youth Commission to amplify their voice within the IFRC by guiding their work plan and identifying priorities for the Europe and Central Asia region. It's also supported by the Youth and Volunteering Coordinator from the Regional Office for Europe.



////// Financial Note regarding the Network

The European and Central Asian Youth Network led by the democratically elected EYCC cooperates closely with the Youth Commission and operates as a coordinator and contact point within the Region. However, it is not part of the Constitutional Framework of the IFRC and therefore not automatically eligible for funding through the core budget. Therefore, its work relies highly on the willingness of the National Societies as well as the IFRC Secretariat to support activities. Only by doing so, the EYCC can ensure the delivery of qualitatively high benefits for young volunteers on the local, regional or national level. The previous achievements of the EYCC were created with little or no funding. Increased investment in the EYCC work plan is a cost-effective investment in achieving the strategic ambitions for youth and volunteering set out by both National Societies and the IFRC in S2030. The EYCC hopes to work with all National Societies of Europe and Central Asia to involve even more young volunteers in activities and to pursue strategically the capacity building of youth leadership on a regional scale.



YOUTH TAKES THE LEAD

//////// EUROPEAN YOUTH COORDINATION COMMITTEE

In the 24th European Youth Coordinating Meeting (EYCC) held online in April 2021, the network elected the EYCC 2021-2023. This is a team of seven volunteers engaged in doing their best and in supporting the aims of the network. Each member has different experiences and needs but similar motivations: to work towards a more inclusive RCRC; to advocate and promote youth-led initiatives in Europe and the Central Asia region.

The team has started its work since the 24th EYCM and is committed to taking forward the identified key priorities and other inherent responsibilities, as per [Terms of Reference](#) and [Rules of Procedure](#). It is also important that the EYCC communicates often, early and directly with the network regarding the tasks, responsibilities, needs and capacity.

//////// Members and focal points in the committee



Rui Cancela
Portuguese Red Cross
Chair



Eva Croon
German Red Cross
Vice-chair



Balazs Beda
Hungarian Red Cross
Mental health



Emilia Kitsiou
Cyprus Red Cross
Humanitarian education



Iva Vrebac
Croatian Red Cross
Migration



Preziosa Ventriglia
Italian Red Cross
Inclusion & diversity



Stef Smits
Netherlands Red Cross
Climate crisis



////// Words on the pandemic

While the outbreak of the pandemic has been very hard on all of us, it has particularly affected young people disproportionately. (ILO, March 2020). The closure of schools, universities and other educational institutions has greatly restricted our daily lives. We have also been affected by the pandemic in our volunteering and in providing support to those in need in many ways. RCRC volunteers worried about being stigmatized by friends and family for contracting the virus, being isolated in quarantine, or losing colleagues or someone they cared for. (IFRC Operations Update 23 - 16 months update, 2021). The consequences of the pandemic will be felt by young people for a very long time, for example in their work opportunities, income, educational outcomes or mental health. These are interconnected and can exacerbate one another over time. Young people from marginalised backgrounds are more severely affected in nearly all areas. These combined impacts may affect young people's lives well beyond the end of the pandemic and in any "return to normal". We as young people in the RCRC need to fearlessly step forward and #leadthenewnormal. (UN Youth Envoy, June 2020) Many examples from courageous RCRC volunteers showed us how to do so in the last year. It is young volunteers who contribute selflessly at a local, national or international level and skyrocket the Fundamental Principles in their communities. National Societies have many examples of the selfless and continuous efforts of youth-led action to cultivate humanity and kindness, address discrimination and stigma and combating dangerous narratives about youth and their stereotypes. Within the RCRC, it is imperative to provide young leaders and young volunteers with structured and equitable opportunities to envisage and co-create adequate and decent pathways into their future.

We as youth leaders of the European and Central Asian network need to ask ourselves how we want to stay relevant in the largest humanitarian network worldwide. How do we want and need to set up our strategy in this difficult time to reach our members and RCRC friends? What issues are particularly relevant now for youth? How do we want to advocate for these issues close to our hearts? How can we be a strong and reliable part of the movement?

At the last EYCM in April 2021, we received an initial response to this from the network. The following work plan provides an answer to which topics will be the ones that set the direction for the European Youth Network over the next two years. With our five thematic and five operational priorities, we particularly need to focus on the impact and challenges that the pandemic left us with.

PRIORITIES OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH NETWORK

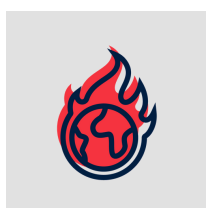
Overview

During the 24th RCRC European Youth Coordination Meeting, held online in April 2021, the RCRC EYN identified Mental Health and Well-being, Climate Crisis, Humanitarian Education, Migration and Inclusion & Diversity as the main thematic priorities for the network to develop its work during the next two years. At the same time, the network also identified operational priorities that were important to keep attention to. Because the EYCC is composed of volunteers and for us to manage existing capacity, we have decided to direct our efforts to the previously mentioned thematic priorities, such as Innovation in Volunteering; Youth Engagement and Empowerment; Strengthening the Network; Youth Advocacy; Safety, Security and Protection. We will do as much as possible to include these priorities when planning and implementing five thematic priorities.

Thematic priorities



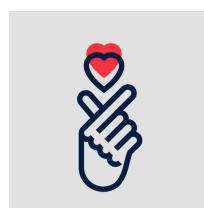
Mental health & well-being



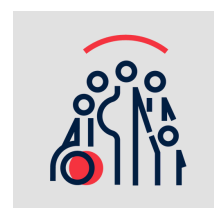
Climate crisis



Migration

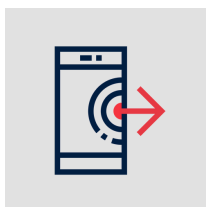


Humanitarian education



Inclusion & diversity

Operational priorities



Innovation in volunteering



Youth engagement and empowerment



Strengthening the network



Youth advocacy



Safety, security, protection

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Overview

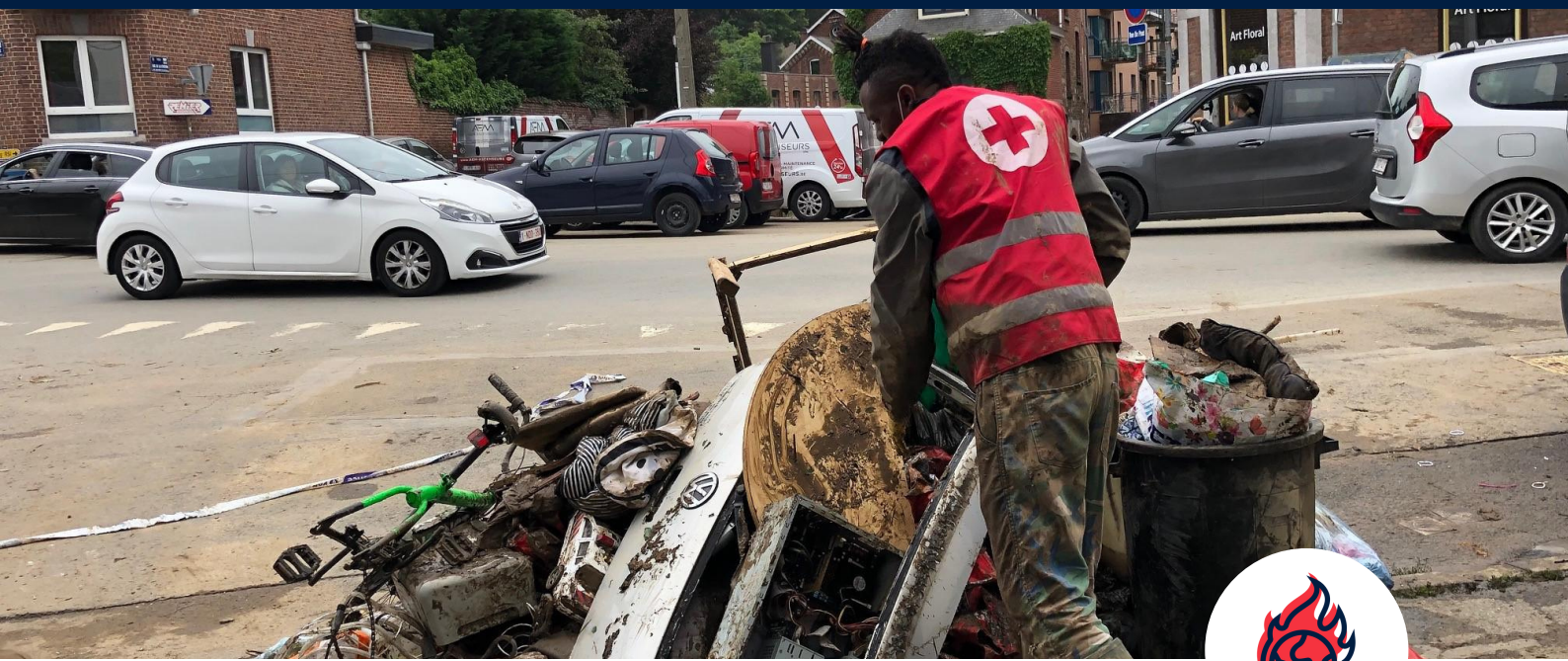
The Covid19 pandemic was not only a physical health crisis, it was significantly a mental health crisis. This period highlighted the RCRC staff and volunteers capacity to deal with adverse circumstances and at the same time their need for ongoing support. It brought close attention to those responding to humanitarian challenges, especially frontline workers. Therefore, it is the duty and obligation of each National Society to care for the well-being of not only those in need but also their members as described in the adopted RCRC Policy on Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs,.

When it comes to issues of education, economic aspects, access to medical service or security, youth are especially affected by the pandemic. This puts an extra strain on young people. However, we must highlight their capability to support others in stressful situations. Youth involvement in mental health and psychosocial action is not only crucial for their individual resilience but also provides them with a confident mindset about mental health challenges at a community level on a daily basis.

Actions

1. Representing youth on mental health matters at the IFRC Regional Office and at the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support.
2. Increasing youth involvement in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and fostering collaborations on PFA training.
3. Implementing the annual June for Mental Health initiative to raise awareness on mental health and well-being among youth.
4. Designing a mental health self-support guide for staff and volunteers.
5. Disseminating psychoeducational materials on social media and within the network.
6. Providing regional support for the Mental Health Manifesto of the Youth Commission.
7. Fostering knowledge management and collaborations on mental health initiatives within the region.

CLIMATE CRISIS



Overview

The Climate Crisis is a humanitarian emergency. Today, one weather- or climate-related disaster occurs every 1-2 days. Today, humanity faces a choice. We can continue to respond and struggle to meet demand as needs grow. Or we can choose to invest to prevent such a future scenario from occurring. The youth play a key role in ensuring that people now and future generations do not suffer the consequences of a worsening climate. With a sense of commitment and having in mind the RCRC strategy on youth-led climate action, youth in the European Youth Network are ready to act and do so at an unprecedented scale. We thought about conducting another handbook of best practices or working on a strategy, but the truth is, we already have substantial strategies and tools that urgently need to be fully implemented. So our strong focus will be on implementing existing material. You can have a look at page 12 of the RCRC Strategy on Youth-Led Climate Action. Four main factors can bring success to this implementation, like sharing knowledge, creating partnerships, funding opportunities and bringing attention to children and young people who are suffering some forms of violence (such as exploitation) in climate crisis activities and/or climate-related disasters.

Actions

1. Disseminating and implementing the RCRC strategy on youth-led climate actions.
2. Using Social media to raise awareness, encourage action and advocate regarding the Climate Crisis.
3. Collaborating with other Youth Networks internationally regarding Climate Crisis.
4. Implementing Y-adapt within National Societies.
5. Implementing the Y-adapt of the IRFC within the National Societies. Organizing, at least two Training of Trainers.
6. Establishing a youth working group regarding the climate crisis, focusing on implementing initiatives and raising awareness regarding the climate crisis.
7. Developing a sustainability meter for National Societies complementary to the project 'Greening the Red'.
8. Developing a self-assessment toolkit to determine the sustainability of yourself (individual).
9. Committing as the EYCC to concrete measures.

MIGRATION



Overview

Increased migration is both a result of, and giving rise to, some of the most significant humanitarian challenges of the 21st century such as fear of persecution, conflict and violence, human rights violations, poverty or lack of economic prospects. This is why it was already addressed as a priority in three previous EYCC work plans. One rather new challenge is climate-related migration, which will only increase in the upcoming future. Therefore, we must look at these challenges interconnected.

As mentioned in the IFRC Strategy on Migration 2018-2022, the RCRC provides specific support to refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and migrants, providing life-saving services and advocating on their needs and rights.

Being a big part of the Movement Youth wants and can contribute to the challenge by getting involved in the activities and alleviating the suffering of people on the move in every stage of their journey.

Actions

1. Taking part in the Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CCM) online campaign about human trafficking.
2. Advocating for the special needs and great capacities of young people within the field of migration at IFRC, esp. in upcoming policies and strategies.
3. Contacting Croatian Red Cross about a toolkit on migration, translating it to English and disseminating that across the network.
4. Establishing a project-based working group with volunteers interested in the field of migration.
5. Creating an update of the Handbook on Youth and Migration (2015) with best practices and especially focusing on migration in times of the pandemic with a special reference to youth.

HUMANITARIAN EDUCATION



Overview

Realizing, conceptualizing and finding the means to tackle important humanitarian and social issues is of great importance to transform young people into informed and active citizens and volunteers. In this way, humanitarian education activities enable young people to envision and get engaged in pursuing a more humanitarian world and promoting a culture of non-violence and peace. They enable youth to combat discrimination, racism, xenophobia, social exclusion, ableism and antisemitism and thus be ready to advocate for important humanitarian issues in their communities. Through humanitarian education, young people can break down stereotypes, change their mindsets and behaviours and transform themselves to contribute to our fundamental principles for a better and more inclusive world. We aim to encourage and motivate you to expand your activities in this field and help you to incorporate new ideas and actions for stronger and more resilient youth sections and young volunteers.

Actions

1. Implementing YABC Programme in Europe and Central Asia.
2. Facilitate a global conference on Humanitarian Education (physically or virtually).
3. Collect best practices of humanitarian education activities of National Societies and create a platform, where YFP can see activities of other NSs, collaborate and get inspired to integrate new activities in their NSs.
4. Support the Network to the development of strong relationships with schools by creating exchange possibilities for staff and volunteers working with schools.
5. Support the Network in advocating for funding possibilities for humanitarian education activities.
6. Join the RCRC Global Humanitarian Education Network and contribute through EYN participation and active engagement in their work.
7. Support the network in advocating for the integration of humanitarian education into the formal curricula of RCRC EYN countries.
8. Support the expansion of the existing IFRC humanitarian education activities, by providing feedback and follow-up on new ideas.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY



Overview

To be relevant as the largest humanitarian network, we must put gender and inclusion at the centre of what we do. Otherwise, we risk contributing to vulnerabilities or exacerbating power imbalances and cycles of violence. Activities in this area go hand in hand with humanitarian education, so we embrace diversity not just for the sake of fairness, but as a core part of finding better solutions to humanitarian and development challenges. We as young people in particular can make a significant difference by institutionalizing diversity as our strength and seeking to make the RCRC, especially the European Youth Network, a wholly inclusive, even more diverse, accessible, and also representative of the colourful communities we work with and in.

Actions

1. Consult youth focal points regarding the main Protection, Gender and Inclusion needs in the region.
2. Organize an event at the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women on the 25th of November to combat Violence against Women and Girls within the RCRC.
3. Collect best practices of inclusion measures from National Societies and create a handbook.
4. Establish a project-based working group with volunteers interested in the field of inclusion.
5. Advocate for the special needs and great capacities of diverse young people who are committing their time within the RCRC.
6. Organise training and workshops with IFRC Inclusion, Protection and Engagement (IPE) unit.
7. Celebrate a digital pride week in June 2022 with activities in the field of inclusion and diversity.
8. Expand the humanitarian education programmes to include and highlight diversity.
9. Promote inclusion, participation, and diversity in opportunities, representation and decision-making, both within the organisations of our network as well as in society at large.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF ACTION

Thematic working groups

To achieve the overall aims of the network and the specific plans developed for each thematic priority we have conducted collaboration meetings with relevant stakeholders, learnt about existing documents, programmes and initiatives, so we could create relevant and efficient actions, as we have described above.

To involve the network and mobilise existing knowledge and experience, we plan to conduct project-based working groups that tackle a specific theme at a specific time. We are choosing this way of work instead of long-lasting working groups to have more concrete and focused actions. By doing this we can create innovative ways for volunteers to engage, adapt to upcoming situations and not demanding volunteers to compromise in a long-lasting way, as nowadays life conditions can change rapidly.

Actions towards sustainability

For us, as the EYCC, it is important to commit to actions that bring sustainability to our planet and our organization. Therefore, we decided that we will lead by example, and will pay careful attention to the following actions, implement them, and spread them across the network.



Prioritising train travel over flying



Aiming to neutralise carbon emission when flying



Offering vegetarian or locally-produced meals at events.



Using climate-friendly conference materials.

Sub-regional networks and their EYCC focal points

German-speaking Sub-regional Network / DACHL

Eva Croon

French-speaking Sub-regional Network

Emilia Kitsiou

Russian-speaking Sub-regional Network

Iva Vrebac

Nordic Sub-regional Network

Eva Croon

Western European Network

Stef Smits

South European Network

Rui Cancela

Central European Sub-regional Network

Balazs Beda

CCM

Preziosa Ventriglia

REACH US OUT!



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