



Voluntary service

Volunteer management
cycle



International Federation
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Voluntary service

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The volunteer management cycle

The cycle of volunteer management illustrates a system that supports the goals and objectives of a National Society. It organizes voluntary effort in order to accomplish the mission of the Movement. The cycle moves through the various components of volunteer management, with each component playing an integral role. Communication and evaluation are ongoing aspects of volunteer management and are therefore included in this report. It includes the comments of volunteers and paid staff who, after all, are the experts in the field and who have been generous enough to share their thoughts and experiences.



Manager of volunteers

Eighty seven percent of National Societies clearly expressed the need for policy development on volunteer recruitment, management, reward and utilization. Two respondents felt that such a policy was needed only at the branch or community level. Several National Societies are currently developing volunteer management policies. However, there was some confusion distinguishing between strategy and policy. Some in fact felt that a strategy or plan (for example, recruiting or interviewing volunteers) was interchangeable with a policy or a course of action to guide present and future decisions. Two National Societies are establishing policy through the development of a volunteer management system. The question concerning volunteer managerial duties being undertaken by a volunteer or a paid staff was not addressed in the questionnaire. However, aspects for volunteer management in developing regions are often shared by several volunteers or assumed by a single volunteer. For example, a Youth Committee may be charged with recruitment of other young people. An Awards Committee is responsible for recognition of volunteers.

The following definition of a manager of volunteers is a helpful beginning:

The coordinator of volunteers is centrally based and has an overall responsibility for all volunteers within the area concerned but is not normally involved in the management of specific programmes. The recruitment and support of volunteers able to manage local programmes is an important function of the coordinator of volunteers.

Grass Roots Local Volunteer Action, Australian Red Cross Society, 1990

A dynamic approach to volunteer management in rapidly changing environments demands that there be built-in flexibility to consider the beneficial aspects of a volunteer assuming the role of manager under any given circumstances. Depending on the situation – budget, availability of qualified persons, the job description – it maybe necessary or in fact advantageous, to consider the pros and cons of volunteer in any given management capacity. Concerns related to ensuring that matters of policy are adhered to, that professional standards of service are not compromised, that recruiting and training requirements of sufficiently qualified persons can be met-all may determine whether the manager is a volunteer or a paid staff position. Other considerations that might be examined in deciding for a volunteer in the manager's role are the following:

- Are volunteers demonstrating a desire and ability for opportunity to assume greater leadership?
- Could the use of a volunteer in this capacity free up qualified paid staff leadership to expand the delivery of related or other programs or services?
- Does a particularly well qualified volunteer have special connections with the community being served which might in turn allow for expansion of the Society's role?

Some of the post communist regions, such as Czechoslovakia, regard the task of redefining and nurturing relations between volunteers and paid staff as demanding a special sensitivity in shaping the strategy for volunteer management.

The manager (or coordinator) of volunteers provides an external link between the community and the organization and an internal link between volunteers and paid staff. The manager administers the volunteer program. This position is emerging in importance as the expectations of volunteers grow with many community colleges and universities offering certificate and degree programs in volunteer administration. In North America and Europe, conferences, seminars and professional associations are providing support and education for volunteer managers. As a recent example, The First European Workshop on Volunteer Action, organized by Volonteurope,* held September 1992 in the Netherlands afforded opportunity for international participants (including Sweden, Russia,

Italy, Estonia, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium) to share and learn. This position can be guided by an advisory committee who ensures that the volunteer program is developed and maintained. Responsibilities include recruiting, interviewing, selecting, placing, orienting, training, supervising, evaluating, recognizing and transitioning volunteers. The manager should have an excellent understanding and appreciation of the Movement, its mission and culture. The manager should also be experienced in human resources management, know how to work effectively with individuals and groups (volunteers and paid staff), be trained in program development and evaluation as well as demonstrating familiarity with basic marketing principles.

The volunteer manager plays a critical role within the National Society, ensuring the supply and retention of skilled volunteers. As an effective communicator the manager works in liaison with and through others to achieve mutual goals.

Communication

I received the outline to review four days before the committee meeting. The director attended the meeting to answer any of our concerns. I think the Committee made an informed decision because we had all our facts. I feel good about my participation.

We never got the whole picture. I felt we were being railroaded. If there are problems, then the Committee has to hear about them. Can't staff understand we're in this together?

People communicate in order to send messages to others. The message can be verbal, sign language or body language. A sender transmits the message to a receiver. Communication must be clear, timely and consistent. Modern technology has developed teleconferencing, videotaping and computer linkages to improve communication. While these are becoming essential communication tools, person to person interaction remains the critical aspect of communication. The growing awareness for sensitive communication is also at the forefront when planning consultations, campaigns and training. Communication is only successful when there is mutual understanding. The content, structure and order of dialogue varies among cultures. Differences also exist in values, perceptions, attitudes and roles. What is acceptable in one culture may be inappropriate in another. For example, cultural differences or rules can determine whether there is eye contact or physical contact between the sender and the receiver. To interact successfully with others, it is important to examine and practice effective listening and communication skills.

Insensitivity, particularly on the part of paid staff can be a significant barrier to effective communication with volunteers. Other barriers to positive interaction include paid staff circumventing established internal procedures and policies for the sake of expediency, avoiding difficult issues or withholding or manipulating vital information. These tactics may serve the purpose in the short run at the expense of personal and organizational integrity and can result in a breakdown of communication between volunteers and paid staff.

Direct communication systems include meetings and workshops. Reports, records, manuals, minutes, newsletters and surveys all transmit information. However, active volunteers must sense their participation in these systems is valued and integral to their success. Board members must communicate to other active volunteers a willingness to involve them in all aspects of decision making. Successes and concerns should be shared openly and objectively, either at meetings or through other forms of communications.

Indirect methods or informal channels of communication are well established in every organization and include corridor consultations, shared coffee breaks, social events or office gossip. Effective communication with volunteers entails a willingness to be flexible in the management of paid staff time. An open door policy enables the volunteer manager to listen to volunteer concerns as they are presented. Intuition and active listening skills allow one to “hear” what may be deeper concerns.

Symbols transmit emotional messages. For example, the red cross symbolizes hope and caring; the skull and crossbones represents danger, and death. Use symbols to communicate only when they are acceptable and understood by all.

Some forms of effective communication cannot be taught but rather, are absorbed by those willing to model skills. **Negotiating**, where both sender and receiver give and take, is an example of effective communication. Winning is not the desired outcome; moving ahead in a spirit of goodwill is.

The First Nation's People of Canada have many cultural traditions which facilitate communication. One of these traditions is the talking stick, used at gatherings to promote sharing by all. The group forms a circle and the carved talking stick is passed from one to another. When one receives the stick, he shares with the group his thoughts and feelings.

Debriefing provides another opportunity for people of all ages to “wrap up” the day's activities. Debriefing also provides a bridge for a volunteer to discuss with the volunteer manager issues relating to voluntary service. The volunteer may need to work through a difficult or frustrating experience while delivering a program. Often the volunteer finds his own solutions by dialoguing with an encouraging, non judgemental manager. Debriefing provides insights into the motivation and feelings of a volunteer. It is important to conclude a debriefing session on a positive note.

I felt like such a failure. I lost control of the group. They just weren't interested. But after I talked it over, I realized it happens to everyone. I left with some really good ideas on how to improve my performance next time. I feel much better.

Feedback takes debriefing a step further. Feedback is holding up the mirror to see how one is perceived by others. The primary purpose of feedback is to cause the receiver to think, learn and grow. It promotes self-awareness... what we do and how we do it. It facilitates change and more effective communication. Feedback needs to be given by the volunteer manager or by the team in a supportive way and includes both positive and negative input. The focus is on the behavior not the person, it is observations rather than inference, description rather than judgement, being specific rather than generalizing, sharing ideas and information rather than giving advice, the amount of information the person can use at the time, and behavior the person can do something about. (adapted from *The Trainer's Handbook*. Inskipp,F.)

I had no idea that I was dominating throughout so much of the training program. And when others told me I had done most of the talking, I wondered what they were talking about. Then they reminded me of the several times I had interrupted, not allowing others to participate. That one story I told was really unnecessary. I realized everyone has to have a chance to share. Next meeting, I'll be sensitive to that.

National Societies have internal and external communication goals. Internal goals must be formulated in relation to the activities found within the Society and with consideration to overall strategic goals. When planning external communication activities, the target audience must be researched before formulating plans. This is particularly necessary when drafting recruitment strategies for special populations. Communication is a major contributor to the successful recruitment and management of volunteers. A comprehensive plan maximizes efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

Recruiting for success

Trends and strategies

The greatest challenge ahead for the Movement will be to ensure the *recruitment, preparation* and *evaluation* of committed volunteers. Volunteers bring abilities, insight, awareness; a community presence to the task and a willingness to share the workload. Red Cross/Red Crescent helps volunteers realize their own aspirations, provides opportunities and delivers the benefits to the community. Experience tells us that volunteers are our most effective networkers and promoters. A volunteer may play an *indirect* role (for example, as a board or committee member), a *direct* role as a service provider (for example, as a first aid instructor), contribute to *general support* (for example, as a clinic organizer) or as a *member-at-large*. National Societies revealed that volunteers are increasingly providing a source for potential paid staff. The primary goal of any recruitment plan is to ensure the supply of volunteers but the Movement is unique in its important secondary goal the creation of a potential source of volunteers for emergency response mobilization.

National Societies are employing the traditional means of recruitment. *Indirect* means or one way communication techniques include posters, brochures, media appeals, public speaking and organizational newsletters. *Direct* means of recruitment involve personal contact. *Delegated* means include volunteer bureaus, service clubs, schools and other institutions sharing the responsibilities for recruitment with the sponsoring organization.

Recent trends in recruitment programs in some regions include the profit sector's commitment to working in partnership with not-for-profit organizations. Especially in North America, corporations and unions are adding a cross-over aspect to recruitment. Companies are encouraging, not demanding, their employees to dedicate a portion of their worktime in voluntary service to the cause of their choice. This collaborative effort results in a positive public image for the company and provides the not-for-profit organization with skilled volunteers. Most people never volunteer simply because they were not asked. When an employer or a union supports voluntary action, it provides impetus and energy for the employee to become involved.

However, some Eastern European countries are struggling with a legacy of the state compelling employees to participate in public services. This negative reality of forced involvement may take years to overcome. The current situation explains National Societies requests for resource materials and training on recruitment.

Another tactic for recruiting suitable volunteers involves asking an experienced volunteer who is leaving a role to find a suitable replacement.

How do we find volunteers? By developing a recruitment plan and providing the resources to implement that plan.

The plan

1. What is the task?
2. How many volunteers do we need?
3. What is the volunteer role?
4. What abilities are needed?
5. What training is required?
6. How do we recruit?
7. Who is responsible?
8. What is the timeline?
9. Who evaluates how we did?

Since volunteers are our best recruiters, the optimal recruitment strategy is developed and implemented by a volunteer recruitment team with the support of the volunteer manager. This model, apart from its practical implications, has the added benefit of providing a greater sense of ownership for unpaid staff. Recruitment objectives may be achieved through the efforts of shortterm volunteers as opposed to long-term volunteers.

Short-term volunteers are not necessarily initially connected to the organization or its cause, but rather, tend to volunteer with a variety of groups – all for a limited time. They want a defined job of short duration and are motivated by individual achievement or professional gain. Short-term volunteers can be brought in for specific projects or task forces with benefits experienced by the individual and the organization.

Long-term volunteers are connected to an organization and tend to stay for long periods of time. They are motivated by affiliation and achievement and identify with the goals and accomplishments of the group. Frequently, they grow within the organizational culture and assume positions of authority and leadership.

Board or committee volunteers

The *chair of the board* or committee plays a pivotal role in recruiting members. A plan outlining the committee's objectives needs to be established. Concrete plans should include the development of a complete job description for each committee member with specific prerequisite skills and qualifications. Meeting with a prospective member to describe the committee's mission and the role it plays within the Society ensures an informed, committed recruit. It also provides an opportunity for two-way communication, where the recruit can investigate the invitation. *Nominating committees* and *board members* also serve as agents for recruitment. Prospective board members must have a commitment to the Movement's mission and be prepared to think of the whole rather than the parts. They must participate without monopolizing the process. A committee member's ability to share with others the responsibilities and the decision making greatly facilitates the mandate of the committee. There are people who enjoy leadership roles and others who would rather be involved in service or program delivery. However, it is critical to include service or program delivery volunteers at the board or committee level to insure the relevancy of the decision making process.

Orientation of board members is fundamental to ensuring common understanding. Board members should have a *volunteer manual* that is specific to their needs. New member orientation is best given by experienced board members. Ongoing committee development training should be planned and facilitated by those members with the requisite skills. The board membership ideally reflects the community at large, includes program users and deliverers and has an equal balance, male and female, as well as representation of youth and community groups, where possible.

Youth and young adults (ages 15-25)

Of necessity, young people may be short-term or long-term volunteers in the present but long-term volunteers in the future. They should be recruited by their peers who can communicate their own experiences in the Movement. Schools and colleges in some countries are including community service courses in their curricula. A sense of belonging, learning good citizenship and responsiveness to the needs of the community are all strong inducements for young people to volunteer. One study (*Youth Views on Voluntary Service Learning* from the Chicago Area Youth Poll, Popowski, Karen J.) found that respect, recognition and reward were offered as primary motivators for making volunteering more popular among teenagers. Students saw the value of experiential learning. They considered job readiness, civic contributions, increased self esteem and social opportunities as advantages. Other studies show a sense of belonging and friendship as strong motivators. Disadvantages included time conflicts, too much work, or fears that the experience might not be helpful to the student or the recipient.

Recruitment campaigns should include a variety of activities, combining altruism with personal growth, and contributing strong social action to alleviate human suffering.

When a National Society has a strong elementary youth program, such as The Republic of Korea Red Cross, there is a natural progression through middle school, high school, junior college and university. Where there is a National Society policy of integration for young people into existing programs and services, without a specific youth program, the above recommendations, while useful, require more time and energy to promote. Opportunities for young people range from service deliverer to direct involvement in policy making as well as participation in international youth conferences and exchange programs.

Older volunteers (over the age of 56 and including retirees and pre-retirees)

Older people command special respect in many communities and can serve as advisors and mentors for young people. They provide effective inter-generational communication. Older persons are growing in number, providing a skilled, disciplined, educated and experienced source of volunteers. They are a group not well served by generalities. Some are caregivers to their grandchildren and consequently have limited time and financial resources, while for others either situational or self-imposed isolation is a deterrent to participation. The American Red Cross Society's 1989 research finding published in *Volunteer Recruitment Strategies* revealed that older persons, although having been more likely to volunteer for the Movement in the past, today represent those willing to give the least amount of time. Findings relating to the development of recruitment materials for older persons were that promotional materials must present older persons as vital, healthy and active. They should convey opportunities for older people to meet others through volunteering; that warmth and caring are a part of volunteering and that the activities are challenging.

A direct ask, preferably older person to older person, has the best results. Recruitment materials should be placed where older people congregate community meeting places, seniors centres, libraries. Some corporations sponsor retiree preparation classes which provide excellent opportunities for recruitment.

Culturally diverse volunteers

An environment hospitable to all begins with diversity and sensitivity training for existing volunteers and paid staff, where attitudes and values can be examined.

I appreciated taking the time to reflect on different cultures in a way I never have.

Ethnocentrism can become the basis for bigotry and discrimination and is self limiting for any organization. The fundamental principles require that National Societies make concerted efforts to become culturally representative of minorities on a parity with the representation of their ethnic group in the population. Even within a given community, groups or clans can have very different values and beliefs. To this end, some National Societies are forming special task forces and committees to articulate and create an inclusive organizational culture where multi cultural volunteers feel, not only accepted, but also welcomed. Red Cross/Red Crescent delivers programs and services to culturally diverse groups which are best facilitated by a cross cultural volunteer. This may entail a bilingual, bicultural volunteer familiar with and respectful of the community. Resource materials should be in the language of origin. Multi cultural leadership and participation in all levels of operation enriches and empowers the mission of the Movement.

Special populations

We are beginning to understand and value the contributions of individuals with special needs the physically, mentally and emotionally disabled. Recruitment plans should include assessment for functionally involving challenged individuals. Often these plans are made in cooperation with community organizations which have a mandate of community integration or work placement for disabled people. Ensuring the comfort of the physically disabled is essential. *Transportation, access to the building and to the facilities, can make the difference between an exciting volunteer experience or an intolerable one.* Disabled people contribute in many meaningful ways to the life of an organization.

Job description

A formal job description acts as an agreement or contract between the volunteer and the Society. It protects volunteer rights as well as the organization. It is the *training, supervising* and *evaluating* foundation. An added benefit is its self-screening aspect. The potential volunteer can determine his or her own suitability.

A job description includes:

Organization

Job title

Purpose of the work

Duties and responsibilities

Skills required

Special considerations (e.g. requires a vehicle)

Time requirements per week/length of assignment/training dates

Relationship: person responsible to

Benefits: training provided/certificate awarded

Reimbursement policy

Closing date for applications

Contact name for additional information and registration form

A recruitment program should be ongoing with annual review and revision of the job description. *Recruitment materials* should be current, relevant, culturally sensitive and representative of the community at large.

When a person expresses interest in a position, a registration form can be made available and returned upon its completion. The following can be adapted to meet local needs

A registration form includes:

Name

Address

Telephone numbers: work and home (if applicable)

Date of birth

Education and special training

Place of employment

Life experience (family, work etc.)

Special skills (e.g. languages, leadership, public speaking)

Other volunteer experience

Areas of particular interest

Availability (days/nights/hours per week)

Available transportation

Where he/she heard about the job position

Two references (not relatives)

To be returned to:

Closing date:

Competition in the not-for-profit marketplace for volunteers is increasing. Volunteers are more expectant in terms of what the organization can offer. Through the development of a comprehensive recruitment plan, we can ensure the supply of committed volunteers.

The following is a summary of the rights, responsibilities and benefits of a volunteer.

Rights	Responsibilities	Benefits
To be given a suitable assignment	To understand principles / history / culture of the Movement	Receipt of written materials on the Movement
To receive orientation and education about the Movement	To adhere to the code of ethics	The opportunity to help others
To receive preservice inservice and transition training	To be willing to learn and participate in training	Professional growth opportunities
To be kept informed about what is happening in the Society	To understand the functions of paid staff and maintain good working relationships with them	Confidential personal records and references
To be treated as a co-worker	To carry out duties with dignity and integrity	Recognition
To have regular evaluation of performance	To accept the direction of the volunteer manager	The opportunity to use existing skills
To be given opportunity for promotion / experiences	To know his/her limits	Support and guidance
To have a confidential personnel file	To respect confidence	Fellowship / social contacts
To be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses *	To give and receive constructive feedback	
	To work as a team member	
	To document and submit reports of unusual incidents	

The following is a summary of the manager of volunteers rights and responsibilities as they relate to volunteer management.

Rights	Responsibilities
To receive orientation and education about the Movement	To provide preservice, inservice and transition training
To expect that the volunteer will complete assignments	To ensure that the expectations are known at the outset
To plan and facilitate training	To set and maintain standards
To evaluate the volunteers performance	To give and receive constructive feedback
To redirect any volunteer determined unsuitable	To allocate resources responsibly
	To respect volunteers commitment and contribution

* Reimbursement policies are approved by the board and by the administration. It costs time and money to volunteer. Out of pocket expenses include travel, meals and resource materials required in the performance of duties. Some volunteers consider expenses incurred in service as an additional contribution and will not accept reimbursement. But an organization ensures that volunteers from all income levels are welcome when it offers to pay expenses.

Interviewing and placing

Marvin was a city bus driver, husband and father of two. His formal education ended prematurely due to family circumstances. During the interview, it became apparent he was interested in disadvantaged young people and had taken several public speaking courses. He had tremendous self confidence and a genuine affection for people. I accepted him as a trainee for the most demanding program we operated and he became an outstanding, highly evaluated instructor. Marvin is now a fulltime university student studying to become a teacher of troubled youth. What a feeling it is to have played a small part in someone's self realisation.

(a manager of volunteers)

An *interview* with a potential volunteer should ideally be scheduled within two weeks of the completed registration form. An interview determines the suitability of the candidate. To protect the organization, its recipients, those who will be working with the volunteer and the volunteer himself, it is essential that thorough screening takes place.

The interview should be conducted by an experienced, sensitive individual who understands volunteers and the organization and who is clear about who needs what. The ability to recognize the potential of a recruit requires active listening skills. To understand his/her needs and wants and ensuring their congruency with the organization's mission is paramount.

My church is losing members. When I volunteer for Red Cross at the senior's centre, I can ask people to join.

(violates the principle of impartiality)

Questioning a recruit about previous volunteer experience and how satisfying the experience was, can provide clues about the candidate's suitability.

Volunteers bring rich gifts in terms of life experience. Special talents and interests which may or may not relate to the available job often can be utilized within other options. If the objective is to match the right volunteer to the right job as opposed to merely filling the job, it will prove much more satisfactory in the long run. The purpose of interviewing is to match the volunteer to the position, to the team and to the service recipients. Volunteers need to know that they will be making a worthwhile contribution and that their skills will be used in the best possible way. Always remain within the interviewing guidelines of your country.

Volunteer records

Once the interview is completed, the references are checked and documented. The prospective volunteer's dependability, willingness to work as a team member and suitability are determined. Frequently, if the Society is contracted by government to deliver a service, a criminal record search is required. The volunteer registration form, the interviewer's name, date of interview, interview outline and summary, reference documentation, and completed criminal record check along with the placement of the volunteer are entered in the volunteer's file.

Volunteer manual

Two National Societies are currently developing volunteer manuals. National Societies might consider that resource materials intended to educate volunteers and paid staff about the history and culture of the Movement perform the same function as a volunteer manual. However, a volunteer manual ideally considers historical data as only one component in a broad spectrum of communication pertinent to volunteer training.

Because I am a new volunteer, I appreciate getting this information so quickly. It has given me a better idea of the Red Cross and all its activities.

Preservice Training and **Orientation** for the new volunteer begins with a volunteer manual. A manual provides a ready reference regarding the National Society's mandate, its policies and procedures and provides a sense of purpose to the entire volunteer program. The manual should include enough information to get started but not so much as to overwhelm. It can be used as a recruitment tool and also for motivation and maintenance of volunteers. Clearly defined lines of communication are included, helping to avoid miscommunication between volunteers and staff. Risk management and liability issues are reduced when the guidelines are clear. Because of the complexity of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, it is important to limit the content to the essentials.

I'd like more detail on programs, especially the mandated ones, less on history.

An *introductory* section containing information about the fundamental principles, activities and practices as well as the significance and role of voluntary service is a helpful beginning. The *next section* could include the organizational structure and general information-names, titles, telephone numbers. The *final section* is program or service specific the rights, roles and responsibilities of volunteers and paid staff, avenues of volunteer service, Code of Ethics and reimbursement and benefits policies for volunteers. A table of contents and colour coding the sections makes the information accessible to the reader. The task of developing a volunteer manual can be delegated to a working group composed of experienced and new volunteers and paid staff.

A manual for board members should include an annual report, current budget and financial reports, the responsibilities of the board, job descriptions of senior staff and standing committees and their terms of reference. A board calendar and minutes of recent meetings are also useful for the new board or committee member.

Questions were answered sufficiently but it would be very interesting to explore further.

The volunteer manual should be seen as the initial step in training but both the process and the outcome will strengthen the volunteer base and the organization.

Training and development

Training has three objectives; *firstly* to advance the mission of the Movement, *secondly*, to meet the learning requirements of the program or service and *thirdly*, to meet the learning needs of the volunteers.

The traditional responsibility of the Movement to respond in times of disaster and armed conflict calls for specialized training of volunteers and paid staff. *The Strategic Work Plan For The Nineties. Update 1992*, published by the Federation, states the goals and objectives for program development in these and other areas. This section focuses on the training needs of volunteers at the *regional or community* levels.

Research shows that organizations with active orientation and training programs are those organizations with increasing volunteer numbers.

A recent article, (*Volunteers as Customers: A Service Perspective*, Saltzman, M., Sullivan, N.) proposes the not-for-profit organization being in the business of designing, managing, communicating and delivering a quality volunteer experience. The volunteer is viewed as the customer, the service purchased is the volunteer experience, paid for in the currency of donated time and energy. If we concur with this thesis, then training is critical to effective volunteer management.

Learning objectives must be *measurable, relevant* and *controllable*. A trainer, together with the participants, identifies the needs and then designs, facilitates and evaluates the training. Adult learners participate because they want to learn and they expect relevant content and effective learning models. They must see a purpose for the training and be given freedom to share experiences and knowledge. Guided learning produces the best results. Trainees impart knowledge to the trainer and to learning partners; the trainer not only imparts knowledge and skills to the participants but also learns from them. In the words of an experienced trainer, "If, as a trainer, you go into a session feeling there is only one expert, that is indeed what you will end up with one expert! On the other hand, if you begin by understanding there are thirty-one experts, you will end up with thirty-one experts." Training is a crosspollination experience.

I thought the exercises and the activities were fun. They made getting to know people less stressful.

Maslow organized the five basic psychological needs of people in a hierarchical manner. People's needs at lower levels must be met before those at higher levels can be pursued. The first basic need of learners is *physiological* which is met by ensuring their physical comfort. Build the training time into manageable pieces with adequate breaks. Check that the room, comfort and arrangement of chairs, light and heat are satisfactory. The second need is the *physical* and *emotional safety*. Do the learners feel the location of training is a safe one? Do the learners feel a connection with the group? And do they feel encouraged to express opinions and contribute their experiences? The *social needs* of participants is the third need. The trainer establishes a climate where exchange and interaction are encouraged aspects of training. The experiences and knowledge of experienced volunteers when shared with others validates the experience and creates an environment where *esteem*, the fourth need starts. The fifth need, *self actualization*, is experienced when the other needs have been met. The person feels motivated to achieve in the best possible way and senses an emerging partnership with the trainer and the learning partners.

A trainer picks up clues from the learners. Who is feeling a sense of low self esteem? ("Everyone here knows more than I do.") Who has a fear of personal safety? ("The people who hang around outside scare me when I leave the building.") Who is feeling socially isolated? ("I wish I could join in more

easily at coffee time.”) The trainer is a change agent and the training agenda becomes the vehicle ... the way we get from here to there. It only serves a useful purpose if it pauses and reverses occasionally, refuels, using the energy of the participants.

So far, great! Learning is invited. Speaking is encouraged.

Preservice Training begins with the volunteer manager’s first contact with the prospective volunteer. While conducting the interview, the manager is communicating information about the organization, its mission and purpose, its structure and the policies that affect its operation. The volunteer manual provides additional, pertinent information.

In the beginning, I believed in the value of the program, but as the sessions go by, I am beginning to see even more how valuable this organization is and will be to me and the others.

Adults come with expectations. Begin by finding out what those expectations are. Check for congruency with the training model. It is not possible to meet all needs so be clear with the group what can and what cannot be achieved. Set the goals of training together with the participants.

If the training model is an established one, ensure that the resource materials are current and relevant. Too often materials exist in perpetuity and consequently contain outdated research and methodology. Community professionals and experienced volunteers are often willing to sit on review committees and may offer innovative suggestions for improvement. Always include experienced volunteers in the development and delivery of training designs.

Methods to increase knowledge include lectures, readings, conferences, observations, interviews, panel discussions, films and videos. Place the emphasis where it is needed. Material presented in different ways emphasizes key training points. In the words of an ancient Chinese proverb:

*I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand.*

Methods to increase skills include role-playing, simulation situations, teaming experienced volunteers with new recruits and on-the-job practice. Give sincere, positive reinforcement whenever possible and always relate the activity to the learning objective.

Bringing in the student panel was enlightening. Gave insight into students’ reality and perceptions.

Regular participant evaluation and frequent skill competency checks reveal gaps in learning. Flexible schedules take into consideration the need to review thoroughly and to augment knowledge as necessary.

Timing is good. Starts on time and I feel enough time is allowed for adequate coverage of a topic.

Inservice Training builds on the base by providing new information and opportunity to develop teamwork. Regular monthly meetings, where volunteers can share their experiences and encourage one another; input sessions, where plans are formulated, or, occasions to attend seminars and conferences ensure self-renewal and positive group motivation. Annual *volunteer surveys* determine strengths and weaknesses in the management cycle.

Sometimes the meeting is over before I know it!

Transition Training gives the experienced volunteer help in moving on to new opportunities within the Society. The volunteer may sense a need to seek fresh adventures and ask for guidance. Similarly, the mentoring manager, sensitive to non verbal signals from the volunteer, may initiate dialogue to clarify the volunteer’s needs and wants. A tendency to keep the same volunteer delivering the same service may serve the Society while doing the individual an injustice. Managers are advocates for volunteer potential and that advocacy may involve job enhancement or redirection.

I discussed the opportunities for career pathing with the volunteer manager. I felt the environment to be extremely open and safe.

Volunteer training and development	
Preservice	Orientation Training
Inservice	Support Delivery Support
Transition	Support

Support and retention

The participatory role of volunteers in the planning process provides new perspective and impetus. Providing a venue where volunteers can influence the organization's planning and decision making can positively impact their desire to remain involved. Increasingly, front-line volunteers are identifying and formulating creative responses to community needs. There are two distinct aspects of volunteer management that determine the number of active volunteers. Broadly defined, these include firstly, the **recruitment and placement** of volunteers and secondly, the **support and retention** of volunteers. It is one achievement to attract volunteers but quite another to keep them. Competition in the not-for-profit marketplace for volunteers is growing with volunteers choosing from a myriad of available opportunities. Monetary incentives are not normally incorporated in voluntary service. Instead, benefits are provided in support and recognition. Retention of volunteers is inextricably linked to their support and recognition.

National Societies report that among the reasons attributed to volunteers leaving are changes in personal circumstances (health, family situation, relocation, employment concerns), dissatisfaction with tasks, lack of meaningful programs, lack of participation in decision making, breakdown in relations among volunteers/volunteers and paid staff, length of training, questionable quality of leadership, discomfort with change or volunteer fatigue.

My family life began to suffer. My partner asked why I didn't go out and earn some real money.

I guess age has caught up with me. I just couldn't manage the bus ride any longer.

These are *external* factors contributing to volunteers leaving. There is a natural cycle to voluntary service which is anticipated and acknowledged. When personal circumstances preclude a volunteer's continued involvement, it may precipitate a crisis in the life of the volunteer. The older volunteer may express a sense of feeling useless and powerless. In the case of a new mother, the volunteer contribution might reflect time constraints defined by child rearing responsibilities. Whatever the presenting reason given for leaving, debriefing can provide an opportunity to validate the person's contribution. A certificate of long service or special commendation may make the leave taking less painful. If a dedicated volunteer leaves for other reasons – full-time employment, further education, relocation or another volunteer opportunity – a letter of recommendation will foster good-will on every front.

It is the organization's internal factors that can and must be addressed.

The Program, after all those years was simply dropped. There was no consultation whatsoever. I'm not interested in anything else around here ... not that anyone's asked !.

The volunteer's needs and wants are not satisfied because a particular activity is discontinued and there is no effort to replace or move the volunteer to a suitable alternative within the organization.

I was handed the course outline and told to go to it. Nobody gave me any help or even took my telephone calls when I needed more information.

Inadequate training and lack of support for the volunteer results in disenchantment and ultimately, disengagement from the organization.

When I started to volunteer here, it was one hour a week. I managed that. But now, it's three afternoons a week and I'm exhausted ! It's never enough ! Not only that, they want me on a committee and that means weekends !

Excessive commitment or unrealistic expectations of a volunteers time and resources takes the pleasure out of giving and shows a lack of respect for the volunteer on the part of the organization.

The training was great ! I got so enthusiastic, I could hardly wait to start... but there was nothing for me to do once I was finished. I'll go where they can use me.

Poor planning can result in recruiting too many volunteers for too few positions. The effective utilization of volunteers is the responsibility of the organization.

The National Society develops its organizational culture over time and consequently controls the significance placed on voluntary service. The management of volunteers and the affirmation of their efforts dramatically affect retention.

The volunteer's needs and wants may not be satisfied because a particular activity is not offered or is discontinued. Transition training can be useful in redirecting (and retaining) a volunteer.

Although I gave my heart and soul to that program and it will always be special to me, I understand the reasons for closing it down. Times change. I think I'm really needed to help organize this new AIDS initiative. I know a lot about how a good program works.

The investment in time and energy in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers is significant. But the work does not end there.

All people have basic needs of *security*, *achievement* and *approval*. For volunteers to maintain and expand their involvement these basic needs must be met.

A volunteer needs to feel that

My needs are compatible with the national society's mission.

My contribution is making a difference.

My available time and energy are considered.

I am involved in planning.

I am supported in carrying out my responsibilities.

My skills are growing.

I am part of a team.

I have a pleasant place to work.

People know me and call me by name.

My expenses are reimbursed.

In addition, the following needs must be met

I feel the society is committed to involving people of all ages.

I know where the money we have raised is going.

People take the time to explain why things are done the way they are.

It is a safe place to test my ideas.

I can act my age.

Retention means making it as easy as possible for people to volunteer. Provisions for childcare and flexible training schedules are among considerations that will assume increasing importance for volunteer retention in the future.

Volunteer recognition

National Societies questionnaires uniformly stressed the importance of recognizing significant contributions of volunteers. Recognition tends to be expressed through established Red Cross/Red Crescent traditions-awards, training, reimbursement of expenses, special functions. Although respondents did not isolate other forms of recognition, it is understood that many of these are employed as a matter of course. One National Society respondent drew attention to the fact that in some instances volunteers resist public recognition for their contribution. Recognition is acknowledged as one of several possible motivators (others include achievement, challenging work, increased responsibility, growth and development), potentially affecting job satisfaction and performance.

National Societies have historical recognition systems in place. These include certificates, pins and awards commensurate with service. Traditional methods are time honoured, estimable and significant in the ways in which they recognize commitment to the goals of the Movement.

However, creativity and innovation are important when seeking additional ways of praising voluntary effort. Practical, not just theoretical, *training* affords the first opportunity to validate a volunteer's abilities and potential. By communicating to the volunteer that the volunteer experience is just as valuable as paid experience, by attitude and by recording and evaluating the effort, we show affirmative action. Other forms of appreciation include the *receiving of quantity and quality reports each year for the volunteer's personnel file*. Similarly, recognition might involve *selection* for attendance at conferences, seminars or courses at the Society's expense. *Promotion*, with an appropriate title and new responsibilities, communicates affirmative action. From time to time, experienced, skilled volunteers are placed in paid staff positions. Volunteers also contribute consultancy expertise which may or may not include honoraria. *Reimbursement* policies acknowledge the costs incurred by volunteers in their service. *Purposive awards*, where there is opportunity to be of service while awarding personal satisfaction, include site visitations, opportunities to market the Society in the community and participation in governance roles.

Personal forms of communicating appreciation include introductions to influential people within the Society, letters of commendation from board members for special achievements, sharing of information and soliciting suggestions. Celebrations afford a wonderful opportunity for saying "thank you". Sensitivity to the needs of others can be communicated in many simple ways a birthday card, a chat, a welcoming smile, a pleasant place to work, a few words of praise, a thankyou.

Corporations and unions understand and expect recognition for their involvement. Plaques and citations, photographs of presentations, letters of appreciation, recognition included in resource materials, inclusion in the annual report all are meaningful ways of demonstrating appreciation.

Young people's recognition needs include records of preservice training and inservice delivery of programs, notation of experience for resumes, letters to others of influence, tailoring of service needs with their available time, opportunities for sharing experiences with other youth, board or working group membership, credit for a school course and letters of commendation or reference.

In a world where financial gain can be the yardstick by which we measure success, it befits us always to uphold the gifts of time and energy freely given.

Evaluation

Program evaluation

Only two National Societies' respondents stated that they did not have an evaluation process in place for programs and services. Six National Societies reported that evaluation tended to be informal and verbal, while for several other Societies, evaluation took the form of site visits with follow-up written reports. Only one National Society stated that assessment forms were in place and that formal evaluation was undertaken annually. Nationally mandated programs, as opposed to community based initiatives, were more likely to complete evaluation studies. The process of evaluation appeared to be, for the main, facilitated by paid staff with summary reports submitted to volunteer advisors, committees, boards and councils for ratification. No respondents commented on evaluation costs in terms of financial or volunteer/paid staff resources.

Evaluation provides the volunteer manager with a format for systematic collection of information. It determines the extent to which the basic purpose was accomplished, measures the merits of the structure, methods of operation and allocation of resources. It assesses planning and defines recommendations for future improvement. Periodic evaluation of the program ensures quality assurance standards are being met. It is important to identify the reasons for evaluating an activity. Who will conduct it? How will reporting be carried out? How committed is the organization to making the necessary adjustments? How will volunteers be involved?

The process of evaluation includes the following steps

1. Formulating the questions
2. Collecting the data
3. Analyzing the data
4. Modifying the plans, operations, program

Evaluation goals can be based on improving service, gathering information for future planning, recognizing achievement and ensuring volunteer and paid staff accountability. Evaluation discloses how successful the plans were and measures the degree to which the actions achieved the objectives. It plots progress and identifies areas of concern or achievement and measures paid staff time with volunteer gains. **Summative** evaluation assesses a program after it has concluded. **Formative** evaluation is conducted before and during the program for purposes of improving the progress. The findings chart the course. **Informal** means of evaluating include records and statistics, feedback from volunteers, service recipients and paid staff, and the observation of activities. **Formal** means of evaluating include the analysis of completed questionnaires from volunteers and paid staff and longitudinal studies. Planning of budgets and volunteer requirements are determined by the information gathered.

Some National Societies have worked with evaluation consultants who volunteer their time and expertise or share costs with the organization. This external perspective, while a more lengthy and intensive process, can provide an unbiased, in-depth report. Evaluation of a program, when included in a funding submission, strengthens the proposal. Any audit of operations, whether by formal or informal means, should include full board support and participation of appropriate volunteers and paid staff. Evaluation results are documented in writing and include suggested solutions to concerns.

Evaluation of volunteer performance

Volunteers can *self-evaluate* their performance by means of questionnaires. Each person rates his or her skills and determines those areas of strength and those needing improvement. The volunteer also has an opportunity to communicate his or her willingness to serve in other capacities within the organization. The areas of service should also be evaluated. How does the volunteer see the program

working? What suggestions are there for improvement? And how are training, support and communication rated? Volunteer self-evaluations are most helpful in determining needs for inservice training or improvement in program design. *Peer evaluations*, where one volunteer is paired with another, is a non threatening form of interpersonal evaluation. As with any assessment, a standard form should be prepared for use and the results shared only between the two volunteers or between the volunteer and the volunteer manager. The volunteer must know the measurement standards being used by paid staff, have access to the results and opportunity to discuss the findings. *Feedback* also provides a means for assessing performance.

Clients or program recipients/participants evaluate performance through the completion of *program evaluation* forms. Any evaluation process needs to be introduced sensitively and gradually. It should be not be viewed as a threatening report card but as an essential tool for improving all aspects of voluntary service.

A group of us helped to design the evaluation form. Then, I paired up with another program volunteer. I observed her and she observed me delivering the program. It was really helpful for me to get some constructive suggestions to improve my work and I also appreciated the nice things she had to say. The more skilled we are, the better the product.

Termination of a volunteer

Interviewing and screening, together with preservice orientation and training, are designed with the purpose of determining the skills and appropriateness of the prospective volunteer. They provide built-in checks and balances. One of the primary objectives of feedback is to determine ineffective aspects in the volunteer's service, to seek positive solutions and to develop a timeline for improvement.' When a volunteer accepts a position, the individual agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of service within the National Society.

However, despite these cautionary measures, misplacements do occur and must be dealt with as fairly and as non-judgementally as possible. When a volunteer consciously determines to deviate from the principles, policies or procedures of the National Society, it is unacceptable behaviour and can adversely affect the external profile and internal morale. If the required change in conduct is not possible, then the National Society, through the volunteer manager, can request termination.

Ground rules for termination interviews include

Confidentiality

Concrete examples and explanation of unacceptable performance

Objective, non judgemental statements to ensure volunteer retains dignity

Allowance for ample opportunity to discuss feelings from the volunteer's perspective

Preservation of framework of dialogue

Availability of follow up support

It is a most stressful event for both the volunteer and the volunteer manager. It is especially important for the manager to demonstrate a sensitivity for the volunteer's feelings, which may include special factors (economic, family, health, social) in the decision. The volunteer may or may not acknowledge emotions affecting self image. They may be reflected in frustration or anger directed toward the organization. Sometimes, a volunteer-senses he/she is miscast and is looking for a "way-out". The volunteer manager also experiences mixed feelings. Self appraisal is a natural response. Did I place the volunteer in the best place possible? Did I offer adequate support? Was the training adequate for the task? Are there alternative solutions to the situation? Have I consulted with someone who will provide me with support? Have I provided the volunteer with alternatives and support following the interview? What have I learned from this experience ?

Training in terminating a volunteer is helpful when available, but it often tends to focus on liability issues for the organization rather than the emotional aspects. Role playing the interview with a trusted colleague can build confidence for a difficult aspect of volunteer management.

Documentation of feedback sessions where solutions and a timeline were discussed and mutually agreed to and the request to terminate are all held in the confidential file of the volunteer.

Volunteer and paid staff relationships

Two thirds of National Societies reporting stated that volunteer and paid staff relationships can be challenging. In poorer communities, there may be resentment over the financial gain for paid staff. In other National Societies, there are too few paid staff for conflict to be an issue. But disturbing phrases “conflict of interest”, “volunteers block serious business”, “staff can’t make demands on volunteers”, “staff treated as servants and volunteers not appreciated”, “volunteers if not controlled can cause problems”, and “need to make clear the difference between operations and policy” indicate a need for greater role clarification and the development of improved communication systems. On a more positive note, National Societies recognized the importance of joint planning, matching the views of volunteer and paid staff, maintaining a balance of responsibility and the keystone element, building a “spirit of oneness”.

Volunteers and paid staff ideally become a team when each person involved is committed to the goals and activities they helped plan, carry out and evaluate. Organizational climate defines the atmosphere in any work environment and is determined by the style of leadership employed by boards and leaders. In her article, *Staff/Volunteer Relationship “Perceptions”* Gretchen E. Stringer states *these relationships are based on differing perceptions of time, authority and power*. From the volunteer’s perspective, time is a gift. From the paid staff’s perspective, time is structured and organized. The expectations placed upon a volunteer to complete a task may be unrealistic. The volunteer feels his available time is not considered. The paid staff feels the pressure of seeing the job done. For the volunteer, authority is represented by the board but the first line of communication is through the volunteer manager, in some instances, a paid staff role. For the staff, job security is a strong motivator and if a situation arises that is difficult or confrontative, there is greater willingness to make adjustments. The volunteer has far greater flexibility since he or she can decide to stay or leave. Hierarchical lines of authority for paid staff include the responsibilities of hiring and terminating employees. It should always be clear that volunteers do not replace or displace the work of paid staff. Volunteers enhance existing services, assist in the development of new programs, add a community focus to the National Society and work with paid staff in a team approach.

Volunteers look to paid staff to share not only successes but also concerns. It facilitates understanding and communication if volunteers are warmly welcomed to observe programs and services, training sessions and learning opportunities. Committees, boards and program volunteers guide the organization but they can only work from the available information. A board is a policy setting group formed to advance the mission of the Movement. Staff work with the board in an advisory capacity but the board makes the final decisions and paid staff carry out those decisions.

Communication builds good working relationships between volunteers and paid staff.

Ensure that the following are in place
Job descriptions for all volunteer and paid staff positions
Volunteer manual outlining roles and responsibilities for volunteers and paid staff
Opportunities for shared organizational priorities, objectives and evaluations
Agreement on realistic work expectations
Appropriate consultation and dialogue between volunteers and paid staff who will be affected by decisions
Proactive, rather than reactive resolution of problems or issues of concern
Creation of an environment that engenders sense of self worth and value in volunteers and paid staff
Adequate time allocation for respectful feedback

Recipients of programs or services also play a role in building effective relationships. Listening, being attentive to their thoughts and suggestions for improvement, fosters the formation of common objectives.

For young people, participation in decision making, feeling a part of the policy making process, is essential for good working relationships with paid staff. Their perspective growth, from egocentrism to idealism to realism is aided when they are given the scope to investigate and to question existing practices within a supportive, democratic environment. Imposing or dictating actions shuts down communication and builds resentments. The establishment of the young person's personal identity can be greatly influenced by involvement in an activity in which he or she is free to learn and grow.

A *synergism*, where the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects, results when there is mutual goodwill and recognition. This is the result when each and every action of the individual, volunteer or paid staff, contributes to the mission of National Societies.

Protection of volunteers

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 are part of the International Humanitarian Law. They give protection as well as duties and responsibilities to Red Cross personnel. For the purposes of this study, however, the issue of protection for volunteers is limited to National Society volunteers working at the national, district and local levels. National Societies reported that protection for volunteers in domestic service varied greatly, from Societies having comprehensive insurance policies to those currently developing policies as well as those which have not considered protection. National Societies currently investigating the development of protection policies cited lack of financial resources as a deterrent to their implementation.

Risk and liability issues are being raised in increasing frequency by managers of volunteers.

Volunteers may be injured by accident or by assault:

When I was out in the mountains on a rescue mission, I fell and broke my leg in three places. I spent three days in hospital. The doctor told me I had to be off work for a week. I can't afford to do that will Red Cross pay my bills ?

Volunteers may lose or damage their property:

Someone ran a red light and crashed into my car. I was on my way to my volunteer job. What happens now ?

Volunteers may lose or damage program/service recipients property:

The Red Cross Volunteer lost the videos that belonged to our club. They were brand new.

Volunteers may injure by accident or assault program/service recipients:

The lady who brings me my lunch every Wednesday managed to spill hot tea all over me and I got third degree burns.

As regards liability, the importance of *volunteer records* cannot be over emphasized. An organization can be asked to prove that they have used reasonable care in screening and training volunteers. Verification of criminal record checks (when required) and references can be requested in the case of litigation. .

In addition, ethical concerns, whether in the field of medicine, the corporate world or non governmental organizations are in need of clarification. A code of ethics can provide a framework for conduct for volunteers.

A growing contract culture within many National Societies where labour intensive services are delivered through volunteer effort requires formal, legal understanding.

A National Society must adopt policy positions with regards to contracts and protection of service/program volunteers and service/program recipients.

A volunteer manager must know

The laws of the land as they pertain to human rights and non discrimination

The extent of liability coverage for volunteers

The code of ethics of the national society

The appropriate person in the national society to contact regarding any legal or ethical concern

How to document the situation as soon as possible, confining the report to facts rather than feelings

The national society's legal counsel and where counsel can be reached

What real or potential risk situation could arise in given circumstances

Traditional volunteer associations in industrialized societies are increasingly developing their own specific legal and ethical policies and guidelines. Litigation is costly in terms of money, time and emotion.

The following quote sums up the issue from the service/program recipients perspective.

One of the things that has been good about voluntary activity is that we haven't had to set rules for ourselves. We were informed, working side-by-side; volunteers and paid staff. We could do the best we could, and society was thankful for that endeavour. But increasingly, the people who receive the benefits of our activities are simply saying to us, "It makes no iota of difference to me whether I receive a service from government, from business, or from the voluntary sector. It is a standard of care, a standard of service, that I demand." And consequently, with the advocacy positions that society is taking, with the ability to move into the courts for redress, the ability to mobilize the community, the question of liability and accountability in the broad sense of the word is becoming important.

(from a speech given by Raynell Andreychuk, at *A New Era for Voluntarism Conference*. Toronto, Ontario)

Liability and risk must be managed by the National Society, which sets internal policies and guidelines to deal with ethical issues and who seeks legal counsel for those situations requiring it. Discussion and further investigation of risk and liability is warranted.

Recommendations

1. The integration of volunteers into all aspects of National Societies' operations including leadership and management roles should be encouraged.
2. It is important that follow-up to this voluntary service study include a management of volunteers training component available to National Societies within regions.
3. It is recommended that National Societies continue and expand their efforts to involve vulnerable groups including women, culturally diverse and special populations.
4. It is recommended that National Societies have direct access to relevant, pertinent and current information for directing volunteer program activities at the local and regional levels and that this function would best be facilitated by the Federation.
5. It is recommended that further study be undertaken to determine the scope and type of evaluation of programs/services/volunteer performance conducted by National Societies and to develop evaluation policies and strategies that can be adapted to their specific needs.
6. National Societies are encouraged to work in collaborative relationships with other voluntary agencies in their regions.
7. The dissemination of International Humanitarian Law and the principles and ideals of the Red Cross/Red Crescent is a key factor in the activities of a National Society and efforts should be made to work with ICRC in designing materials firstly to communicate to the public a positive image of voluntary service and secondly to meet the motivation and training needs of potential volunteers.
8. It is recommended that policies related to the training, preparation and support of volunteers during periods of disturbance be defined and developed.
9. It is recommended that National Societies clarify liability issues as they relate to voluntary service.

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.



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