

Federation Volunteering Policy

Approved by General Assembly, October 1999

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to:

1.1.1 reinforce the importance of volunteering to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

1.1.2 establish basic values and attitudes of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies towards volunteering.

1.1.3 set out the responsibilities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies towards their volunteers.

1.1.4 set out the rights and responsibilities of people who volunteer for a Red Cross or Red Crescent Society.

2. Definition:

Volunteering in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is an activity that:

2.1.1 is motivated by the free will of the person volunteering, and not by a desire for material or financial gain or by external social, economic or political pressure;

2.1.2 is intended to benefit vulnerable people and their communities in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent;

2.1.3 is organised by recognised representatives of a national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society.

A Red Cross or Red Crescent Volunteer is a person who carries out volunteering activities for a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society, occasionally or regularly.

A Red Cross or Red Crescent Member is a person who has formally agreed to the conditions of membership as required under the National Society's constitution or rules, and is usually entitled to elect representatives on governing bodies, and to stand for election.

Red Cross or Red Crescent Volunteers may or may not be *Members* of their National Society. This policy refers to *Red Cross or Red Crescent Volunteers*.

3. Scope:

This policy applies to all recognised National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies who are members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

4. Basic Principles:

Volunteering is a means for an individual or group to put into practice the Movement's Fundamental Principle of Voluntary Service.

The member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Federation and the Federation Secretariat:

4.1.1 are committed to promoting volunteering as a significant and positive contribution to improving the lives of vulnerable people, and to strengthening communities and civil society;

4.1.2 recognise and value volunteering as a means of creating and supporting a network of people who are available to work for a National Society in an emergency;

4.1.3 value all volunteers primarily for their individual contributions, enthusiasm and commitment, as well as for the experience and skills they can bring;

4.1.4 are aware of and value informal volunteering in communities, outside the formal organisation of National Society programmes and activities.

5. Statement:

5.1 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies shall:

5.1.1 provide a code of conduct approved by the national governing body that sets out the rights and responsibilities of both the National Society and its volunteers;

5.1.2 recruit volunteers for specific, explicitly described roles or tasks;

5.1.3 recruit volunteers on the basis of their commitment and potential;

5.1.4 actively seek to recruit volunteers irrespective of their race, ethnicity, sex, religious belief, disability, age;

5.1.5 ensure that there is appropriate participation of men and women in National Society volunteer programs for effective and gender-sensitive delivery of services and activities;

5.1.6 provide appropriate training that will enable a volunteer to meet his or her responsibilities towards the Movement, the specific task or role they were recruited to carry out, and for any emergency response activity they may be asked to carry out;

5.1.7 provide appropriate equipment for the task or role they are asked to carry out;

5.1.8 reward and recognise volunteers whenever possible and appropriate, and provide appropriate personal development opportunities;

5.1.9 ensure that volunteers' views and ideas are actively sought and acted upon at all stages of programme design, development, implementation and evaluation;

5.1.10 reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers in the course of carrying out

approved volunteering tasks;

5.1.11 provide appropriate insurance protection for volunteers;

5.1.12 ensure that volunteering work does not substitute for, and lead to loss of, paid employment;

5.1.13 ensure that, when people need to be paid to perform a task or work, they are recognised as employees, contract workers or casual labour. As such, they should be covered and protected by any relevant employment legislation applicable, such as minimum wages, contract protection and other legal rights and responsibilities;

5.1.14 provide appropriate training and development opportunities for existing and potential governance volunteers;

5.1.15 seek to promote co-operation and partnerships with organisations in civil society and public and private sectors that encourage volunteering.

5.2 All Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers are expected to:

5.2.1 act in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and promote their dissemination;

5.2.2 respect the Regulations on the use of the emblem and to prevent its misuse;

5.2.3 strive and work for the highest standards of quality;

5.2.4 sign, and behave in accordance with, the National Society's code of conduct for volunteers, rules and/or the Federation's code of Ethics and Fundamentals of Voluntary Services;

5.2.5 be available in an emergency, as agreed with the National Society, and according to their skills and abilities;

5.2.6 respond to the needs of beneficiaries and strengthen their capacity for self-help and active volunteering;

5.3 All volunteers are entitled to:

5.3.1 choose to become a Member of their National Society, as defined by the statutes;

5.3.2 have appropriate training or personal development to be able to undertake their agreed tasks or role;

5.3.3 have appropriate equipment provided to be able to undertake their agreed tasks or role;

5.3.4 accept or refuse any task or role in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Fundamentals of Voluntary Service.

5.4.1 support National Societies in their work with volunteers;

5.4.2 identify and support research projects that will help to strengthen National Society activities that promote volunteering and share this information systematically.

5.4.3 seek to promote co-operation and partnerships with organisations in civil society and public and private sectors that encourage volunteering.

6. Reference

Volunteering affects most aspects of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' activities; in particular, program development, implementation and evaluation, and local, national and international governance. This policy should be considered in conjunction with all other Federation policies and with specific reference to policies on Gender, Youth, Disaster Preparedness and Social Welfare.