



Volunteering Development Framework (VODFRA) Americas Regional Office

A product of the Volunteering & Youth Development Unit

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 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The **Volunteer Development Framework (VODFRA)** is the totality of: the reason for doing volunteering at the Red Cross (the humanitarian purpose and the objectives), how volunteering is managed (through the Volunteer Management Cycle, retention and protection) and what volunteers do at the Red Cross (activities, operations and programmes). To this, a fourth element is added: the enabling environment, which makes it possible to carry out all of the above.

The **VODFRA** has been created by the Volunteering and Youth Development Unit of the Americas Regional Office of the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) together with the work carried out in different National Societies of the region, in order to establish the bases for the development and management of volunteering in the Americas. It gathers and gives coherence in a logical framework to the different tools, experiences and initiatives in the field of volunteering development that have been elaborated by the IFRC and the National Societies in Americas.

The management of volunteers is an essential issue for National Societies, and is increasingly seen as the central axis in the strategic plans, a clear recognition that it is considered an important and fundamental area. However, much remains to be done to improve and establish effective systems for the development and management of volunteers in a practical way at the national level and in the branches.

Volunteering development takes time and demands commitment.

For a National Society, the work of volunteering development is an investment and a long-term commitment. It begins with the analysis of the current situation of how it manages and supports its volunteers; and proceeds with the process of establishing, improving or modifying the management

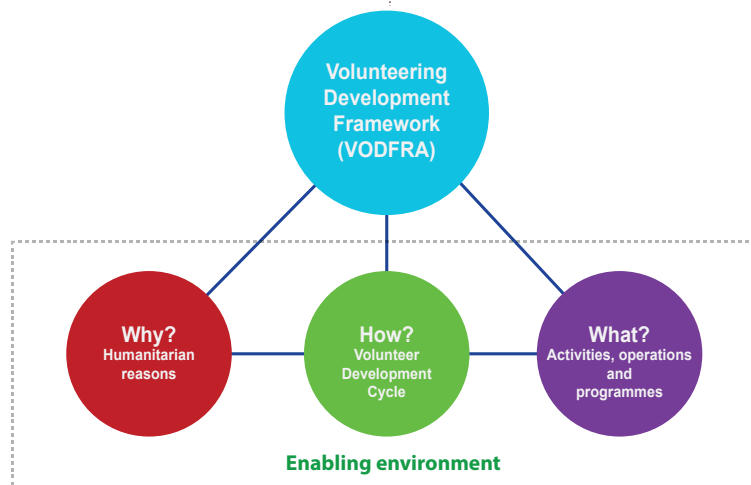
practice of the volunteers. It involves examining all levels of the organization and the current practice of the various programmes and activities carried out by the National Society.

It is also critical to promote enabling environments for volunteers by raising awareness of the importance of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, which are the backbone of effective humanitarian assistance provided to millions of vulnerable people.

Volunteers are our power, they define us and, thanks to them, we are an exceptional humanitarian force in the world. As a Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, one of our core tasks is to support our volunteers and provide them with the tools and resources they need to respond to the enormous demands and expectations that we, and our stakeholders, have for them.

In this sense, and taking into account the Americas Regional Strategies for the Strengthening of Volunteering and Youth, the **VODFRA** serves to frame all these efforts and structures the development of volunteering in the region to ensure a solid base of motivated and qualified volunteers who can prevent and alleviate human suffering, which is the ultimate goal of the Red Cross Movement.

VODFRA has four main elements: “**Why**”, “**How**”, “**What**” and “**Enabling environment**”. These elements work as a whole to achieve a development of volunteering that is effective and efficient within the National Societies, particularly at the branch level. Within each of the elements, there are different areas, tools or actions that must be taken into account to complete the VODFRA. This means that each National Society can see each element as a block to evaluate what is needed and build or develop each element as required.



Why?

Red Cross volunteering must be based on the characteristics and humanitarian needs of the communities in which we work to mobilize the power of humanity. Each National Society establishes the most appropriate method to take into consideration the characteristics of its own volunteers in the construction of humanitarian assistance in each country based on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.

Within the “**Why?**” we find:

- Humanitarian reasons and values
- The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross
- Analysis of Volunteering in the National Society
- The National Society’s Volunteering Satisfaction and Impact studies

How?

The Volunteer Management Cycle shows a system that supports National Societies in reaching their goals and objectives in terms of volunteering and is the main element in the “how” we manage volunteers in the Red Cross. Organize the volunteer effort to fulfil the mission of the Movement. The cycle moves through several management components, while each component plays an integral role. It is important to highlight that, although it is true that the cycle is the main element for the management of volunteers at the branch level, other elements related to the protection and support of volunteers are also incorporated.

Within the “**How?**” we find:

- Volunteer management cycle
 - Imagine
 - Plan
 - Recruit
 - Screen
 - Place
 - Train
 - Motivate
 - Support
 - Recognize
 - Assess
 - Transition
- Definition of volunteering programmes and volunteer profiles
- Volunteering in emergencies
- Involvement of volunteers in decision making
- Diversification of volunteering
- Volunteer wellbeing - Psychosocial support
- Retention
- Responsibilities and rights of volunteers and the National Society

What?

Volunteer programmes, operations and activities carried out in the Red Cross encompass all the actions carried out by volunteers in National Societies. For example, first aid volunteer programmes, volunteer ladies, youth programme, virtual volunteers, emergency preparedness, social volunteers, etc. Activities such as YABC, social assistance, health, fight against non-communicable diseases, healthy living community, etc. All this has a humanitarian objective based on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.



Our objective is to have programmes, operations and voluntary actions of quality, with competent volunteers and focused on actions that contribute in the construction of resilience, community development and that fulfils our humanitarian mission.

Within the “**What?**” we find:

- Volunteer activities
- Volunteer programmes
- Operations

Enabling environment

To implement the three different elements of WHY, HOW and WHAT, the National Society should have a well-organized system to plan, support, manage and implement those elements. Therefore, it is also crucial to create enabling environments for all the above elements to be carried out. For example: national and branch structures for the management of volunteers, policies and strategies, legal aspects of volunteering, cooperation with other partners, etc.

Within the “**Enabling Environment**” we find:

- Volunteer structures established at the national and branch levels (a coordinator/director of volunteering development at national level and a person in charge of volunteering management at local/branch level, or a committee or group in charge of this task, etc.)
- Volunteer policy established and approved

- Data management (database, information management)
- Communication with all volunteers in the NS
- Legal aspects of volunteering
- Volunteer strategies (concrete actions for development)
- Promotion of volunteering
- Volunteer protection and safety (medical and accident insurance, equipment, adequate training for the right job, etc.)
- Working relationships between volunteers and paid staff defined
- Institutional and operational volunteers
- Cooperation within and outside the Movement

All the above elements are developed in different documents and training available through the Volunteer and Youth Development Unit of the Americas Regional Office and, likewise, the National Societies of the region have experiences, tools and documents that serve to learn from their good practices to adapt them according to each reality in other countries.

Furthermore, the Volunteering and Youth Development Unit of the Americas Region offers specific training on how to implement the VODFRA (and all its elements) for all National Societies in the Americas region. For more details, please see the contact section below.



For more information

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