Volunteering Policy

Following consultation with members and volunteers, this policy will be presented for adoption by the Governing Board of The Bahamas Red Cross Society (TBRC) in October 2019. If approved, it will remain in effect until its review in October 2021.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to guide volunteering in The Bahamas Red Cross Society (TBRC).

The **Strategy 2030** of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is about change where volunteering is identified as being one of the key elements of transformation. The Strategy 2030 is about changing not just what we do, but how we do it, so that we are even better able to save lives, accompany people and support their resilience. It is about the changes that are shifting the world today and those that lie ahead. It recognises that new approaches are needed to tackle the persistent challenges that continue to burden people around the world alongside the many new emerging challenges. It is also a strategy of hope and trust in the power of humanity to mobilise for good and to drive positive change.

**Strategy 2030** re-imagines volunteering that capitalises on the opportunities of self-organising and networked groups. The Red Cross and Red Crescent will find creative ways to connect volunteers across countries and regions expanding from rigid national volunteer models to a distributed network of volunteers across borders co-creating and driving impact together. This will require a mutually transformative shift from utilising volunteers purely to deliver service, but rather to expand and support people in their own efforts to drive the change they seek in the world.

Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers operate in a range of diverse and complex circumstances in a fast-changing world where social, demographic, economic, and environmental trends as well as technological advancements are altering the shape and functioning of communities and how people volunteer. The International Federation is committed to promoting a culture of volunteering in society in general and to position TBRC as the preferred choice of people seeking to volunteer.
Defining volunteering and volunteers

A Red Cross volunteer is a person who carries out volunteering activities for The Bahamas Red Cross Society (TBRCS), occasionally or regularly and have fulfilled the requirements to do so.

TBRCS volunteers work for a more humane and peaceful world. They do this by delivering services directly to vulnerable people and through seeking to prevent and reduce vulnerability and exclusion where they can. They also govern and lead TBRCS.

Volunteering with the Red Cross Red Crescent is organised by TBRCS and is aimed at furthering its services and activities, always working in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Code of Conduct. It is carried out by people motivated by free will, and not by a desire for material or financial gain, or by external social, economic or political pressure.

Volunteers work throughout the volunteering programmes, activities, positions and opportunities established by TBRCS.

Categories of volunteers

The structure of volunteering is also diverse, adaptable to the circumstances and consistent with the availability, acceptance and competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) of the volunteer person in accordance with the changes in the society, TBRCS understands and fosters the incorporation of non-traditional volunteers to its traditional operational activities, in accordance with the humanitarian needs of the communities.

Since the organization adapts to changes, TBRCS volunteers can opt for the following categories of voluntary service; notwithstanding that interested persons may transcend between categories according to their preferences and compliance with the conditions and competencies required in each:

- **Operational volunteers**: directly related to first aid and emergency medical services, search and rescue, national and international teams of disaster response, specialized aquatic, land or air units, members of specialized disaster response units, service members of support to the response system such as telecommunications, logistics or evaluation of damage and needs analysis, among other categories.

- **Social volunteers**: people working in programmes such as welfare/social services, fundraising and youth services. The Social volunteer category may include among other subcategories: Community Volunteers (disaster risk reduction and promotion of community resilience, volunteers working in conditions of social exclusion for the promotion and defence of the rights of groups in situation or risk of exclusion); Development Volunteers linked to promotion of actions leading to the fulfilment of the Development
objectives Sustainable United Nations 2015-2030; Technical Volunteers who provide their service in specific activities related to their technical competences; Expert or Veteran Volunteers that include people who by their age, health conditions or availability cannot assume operational requirements but that due to their Red Cross trajectory, experience or training they offer diverse support in any of the social volunteer initiatives described or in other category.

- **Volunteers in management and government:** volunteers whose mission involves management, strategic and/or administrative functions in which it is divided the structural system of the National Society, such as the Governing Board, Committees, administration, regional boards and branches.

- **Spontaneous volunteers:** people who carry out voluntary activities without being linked to the organization formally, for short periods of time, in addition to operational or social initiatives or programmes in progress but that are of reduced risk.

The Volunteering Development Department/Office develops and implements the requirements for volunteering within the National Society according to its statutes or volunteering regulations of each volunteer programme or activity as necessary.

**Protecting and supporting volunteers**

TBRCS have well-functioning management systems and practices to supervise, support and encourage volunteers. These are adapted to the specific context of the work and responsive to new trends in volunteering that may go beyond the established structures of TBRCS including, for example, informal, on-line, and corporate or other institutional forms of volunteering.

TBRCS ensures that their volunteers are properly prepared to carry out their work, through providing them with relevant and timely information, training and equipment, feedback on their performance, as well as appropriately assessed safety and security measures. TBRCS insures their volunteers against accidents and provides them with appropriate psychosocial support when required. TBRCS ensures that each volunteer knows exactly what is involved in the task to be performed. Tasks should be reviewed regularly.

In certain circumstances, volunteers may themselves be vulnerable and TBRCS ensure that their needs for assistance and protection are given due attention.

TBRCS provide volunteers with access to accredited learning and personal development opportunities to help them to better undertake their agreed tasks or roles, as well as to motivate them to grow their skills and capacity and undertake future roles within the Red Cross Red Crescent.

TBRCS reimburse volunteers only for pre-approved expenditure related to their volunteering tasks. Volunteers are not entitled to receive regular payments for
carrying out their duties. When there is the need or opportunity for a volunteer with the TBRCS to carry out paid work as casual or contracted labour, the TBRCS recognises this change in status and ensures that the employment complies with the relevant laws of the country.

**Recognise volunteers and their achievements**

TBRCS recognise that volunteers have a significant stake in the organisation. They take formal and informal opportunities to appreciate, individually and collectively, the work of volunteers and its impact.

TBRCS encourage volunteers to participate in its decision-making and in designing and improving the work in which they are involved. A volunteer has the right to become a member of the National Society, i.e. someone who has formally agreed to the conditions of membership as required under the National Society’s statutes.

**Promote volunteers and volunteering**

TBRCS recognise the value of a diverse volunteer workforce, and actively recruit volunteers, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or age. They remove physical, economic, social and cultural barriers to participation, and recruit volunteers based on their potential.

TBRCS also work with the government, the corporate sector and other partners to promote an enabling environment for volunteering in national life.

**Agree volunteer rights and responsibilities**

TBRCS provide volunteers with written guidance and rules that sets out the rights and responsibilities of both the National Society and its volunteers. All TBRCS volunteers are expected to act, at all times, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and are expected to respect the regulations on the use of the emblem and prevent its misuse. They should make themselves available to the TBRCS in case of emergency, according to their skills and abilities, as agreed with the TBRCS. TBRCS volunteers sign and behave in accordance with Red Cross Code of Conduct for volunteers, rules and/or the Red Cross code ethics and fundamentals of voluntary services. They also respond to the needs of beneficiaries and strengthen their capacity for self-help and active volunteering.

In working with vulnerable people, volunteers are expected to strive for the highest standards of quality in the services that they deliver. They fulfil their duties without discrimination, responding to the needs of vulnerable people in a compassionate and respectful manner. They respect the confidentiality of those whom they assist.

TBRCS implements the Volunteering Development Framework as a guide to improve the volunteering systems at all levels and supports branches and sub-branches in their work with the management and development of volunteers through functioning volunteering structures. Also, TBRCS identify and support research projects that will help to strengthen sub-branch and branch activities that promote volunteering and share this information systematically. Furthermore, TBRCS seek to
promote cooperation and partnerships with organizations in the civil society, public and private sector that encourage corporate volunteering.

**Impact of the policy**

The impact of the successful implementation of this policy is expected to be a growth in the TBRCS share of volunteering as measured by the increased humanitarian impact of number of people that receive services by TBRCS.