



# ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERING AND YOUTH IN THE AMERICAS

**2022**

.....

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year through our 192 member National Societies.

Together, we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do it with impartiality in terms of nationality, race, gender, beliefs, social class and political opinions.

The strength of the movement lies in our network of volunteers, community experience, independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development and in response to disasters. We persuade decision makers to act in the interest of vulnerable people at all times. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

.....

**© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Americas Regional Office, 2022**

Any part of this publication may be quoted, copied, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without the prior permission of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provided the source is clearly indicated. . Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the Secretariat of the International Federation at [secretariat@ifrc.org](mailto:secretariat@ifrc.org)

Produced and written by *the Volunteering and Youth Development Regional Coordination, Regional Office for America*: Andrés Morales, Itza Rojas Tujab, Kelly Marín, Francesca Ligi, Mario Arguedas, Carmen Gamboa, Ignacio Larrondo, Luciana Escobar.



Document translated by: Maripaz Acevedo Halabi, Elizabeth Céspedes Viquez, Krissia, Thamara González Vides, Carolina Guzmán Chinchilla. Students of *the Latin American University Of Science And Technology*.



Translation revised and edited by: Claudio Alejandro Heredia, Bárbara Rodríguez Berman, Paula Alejandra Castellanos, Candela Victoria Villafañes, Camila Iliana Vega, Mariángeles Ledesma, Dalma Antonella Palacios, Melina Belén Ceballos, Rocío Agustina Cayata, Romina Ayelén Camacho, from the *Catholic University of Salta*.



Interamerican Centre for Volunteering Development (ICVD)  
Regional Volunteering & Youth Development Coordination  
*Regional Office for America*  
[www.icvdredcross.org](http://www.icvdredcross.org)



# GLOSSARY

- **ECLAC:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **FDRS:** Federation-wide databank and reporting system.
- **INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION:** International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- **NS:** National Societies.
- **OIT:** International Labour Organization.
- **UNOCHA:** United Nations Office.
- **PSK:** Policy, Strategy and Knowledge.
- **UN:** The United Nations (UN).
- **V&Y:** Regional Coordination of Volunteering and Youth Development.



# CONTENT

Preface	1
Introduction	2
Purpose	3
Methodology	4
<b>1. Context</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. Main challenges in the region	6
1.2. SARS2-COVID-19 Pandemic Context	9
1.3. Volunteering in the Region	13
<b>2. Summary of recommendations from previous</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3. Results of baseline studies (period 2016 - 2021)</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1. General information on the management of volunteers in National Societies	30
3.1.1 Focal point for volunteering and youth	30
3.1.2 Volunteer and youth databases and information management	34
3.1.3 Identified Needs and Challenges	36
3.2. Volunteering programs and activities	37
3.2.1 Main activities in the Region	37
3.2.2 International cooperation activities within the Movement	40
3.3. Volunteer and Youth Guidelines and policies	41
3.3.1. National Societies including volunteerism and youth development in their strategic plans	41
3.3.2. Volunteering and youth policies	42
3.3.3. Strategies for volunteering and youth	44
3.3.4. Volunteer Development Framework	45
3.3.5. Funding for youth volunteer and development	45
3.3.6. Participation of volunteers and young people in decision-making processes	46
3.3.7. Strategies for community engagement and participation in National Society programs	47



3.4. Volunteering and youth development, Empowerment, and Protection	48
3.4.1. Training for volunteers and young people	48
3.4.2. Opportunities for Volunteers and the Youth	50
3.4.3. Volunteering Development platform (VODPLA)	53
3.4.4. Safety and Security	53
3.5. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Volunteering	56
3.6. Overseas Territories Facts	59
<b>4. The Volunteering and Youth Development Regional Coordination- Americas Regional Office of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>5. Results of 2019 Volunteering and Youth consultation process</b>	<b>67</b>
5.1. Volunteering	69
5.2. Youth	74
Closing Remarks	79
Bibliography	84
APPENDIX: Table of participation of the National Society in surveys conducted by year and area	85
Fundamental Principles	86
Graphics index	87



# PREFACE

Since their work during the Battle of Solferino in 1859, volunteers have been the heart, mind, engine and soul of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Volunteers are at all areas of work and management at the Red Cross: in local, national and international government boards, in all programs (including volunteering and operations). Through their commitment and passion, they are essential to achieving our mission and are an example in and for their communities. In the Americas region, 35 Red Cross National Societies provide voluntary and selfless assistance to more than 38 million people.

Hundreds of thousands of volunteers in the Americas are giving their time and skills to the Red Cross to work to improve the quality of life of people who face the effects of poverty, inequality, forced displacement, violence, the effects of climate change and conflicts. In many contexts, Red Cross volunteers are among those affected by these scenarios.

Our network of volunteers is our most valuable strength: their direct link with the communities, their knowledge of the terrain, their neutral and impartial actions are crucial in emergencies; their actions are decisive in building more resilient and inclusive communities and in gaining the trust of all parties in a conflict or dispute. Volunteering is a source of hope and inspiration for a more peaceful and humane world, as it brings together people from different backgrounds under our Seven Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values.

For all these reasons and to remain relevant in the humanitarian context, it is important to invest in volunteering and youth development on an ongoing basis. That is why the Regional Office for the Americas of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has made it a priority. Thanks to the contribution of National Societies, this Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas, the second version of this type of study, will help us define our future strategies in this field to improve the network of volunteers and reach all those who need humanitarian assistance. The IFRC is committed to doing this so that no one is left behind.

---

**Martha Keays**

*Regional Director for the Americas*

*International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*



# INTRODUCTION

Voluntary service is one of the 7 Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Movement and it is related directly to the Principle of Humanity, consequently being a way of putting the latter principle into practice. In order for the Red Cross to carry out its work, it must inspire a sense of humanitarian commitment and bring out the best in people so they cultivate a highly developed spirit of service <sup>1</sup>.

The present Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas 2022 aims to acknowledge and celebrate this spirit of service and provide evidence-based input to National Societies to strengthen their volunteer management and growth. Despite advances in global development, one in every 70 people worldwide is being affected by a crisis and is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection <sup>2</sup>. Attracting, motivating and retaining volunteers, protecting, promoting and recognizing them, is essential to reach those in need and to build more resilient and inclusive communities in a world that is constantly changing.

Similarly to the first edition of this analysis in 2016, the Regional Coordination of Volunteering and Youth Development (V&Y), which is part of the PSK Unit of the Regional Office for America, has continued working for the consolidation of strategies and actions that facilitate the volunteering and youth development in the National Societies (NSs) of the American continent. This guarantees a solid base of motivated and qualified volunteers who can meet in a better way the needs of the most vulnerable populations, which is the ultimate goal of the Red Cross. The Regional Coordination of V&Y supports National Societies so that they can provide favorable environments, both inside and outside the organization, that encourage and facilitate the work and involvement of volunteers and young people and also promote volunteering and youth leadership in all sectors of the civil society.

This analysis seeks to promote a better understanding of the current situation, monitor progress in recent years and adjust or rethink strategies to develop and strengthen volunteering in the region. From 2013 to date, the Regional Coordination of V&Y has conducted annual baseline studies in order to collect information that allows to establish an updated framework for action at the juncture of the National Societies. These studies have shed light on the diagnosis of volunteering and youth in the Americas and are the basis for the formulation of future action strategies.

This study is conducted to recognize the progress made, while providing a guide of the Red Cross action in volunteering and youth matters, monitoring the changes since 2016 when the last study was published, to date.

For the first version of the Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas (published in 2016), data of baseline studies from 2013 to 2015 was used. In the present analysis, data collected between 2016 and 2021 is considered.

---

<sup>1</sup> IFRC (1979): "The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross. COMMENTARY by Jean Pictet"

<sup>2</sup> UN (2018): <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO2019.pdf>





# PURPOSE

Volunteers provide value to National Societies in many ways, but this additional value is often unrecognized. Most people think of volunteering as a cheap alternative to paid staff, but volunteers can offer greater value, quality and opportunities. Volunteering should not be seen as an alternative to paid staff, nor should staff be seen as an alternative to volunteers. They are complementary: one enhances the value and power of the other<sup>3</sup>.

The present Analysis, based on the annual Baseline Studies of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas, seeks to recognize and celebrate this value as the fundamental core of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. With the participation and commitment of National Societies in the region, this document presents data on volunteering and youth development and is intended to be a useful tool for National Societies. By comparing data across the Region, this document serves as a guide to strengthen the actions of the Red Cross through volunteering and youth development on the continent using evidence to achieve progress.



<sup>3</sup> IFRC (2005):

[http://www.cruzroja.es/pls/portal30/docs/PAGE/6\\_VL\\_2006/BIBLIOTECA/POLITICA/DOCUMENTOS\\_POLITICOS/02\\_IFRC\\_VOLPOLICYIMPLEMENTATION\\_2002\\_ENG.PDF](http://www.cruzroja.es/pls/portal30/docs/PAGE/6_VL_2006/BIBLIOTECA/POLITICA/DOCUMENTOS_POLITICOS/02_IFRC_VOLPOLICYIMPLEMENTATION_2002_ENG.PDF)



# METHODOLOGY

This study involves the use of both primary and secondary sources. The analysis is based on data collected from the volunteering and youth Baseline Studies conducted annually since 2016. During these years, a survey was sent to all National Society volunteering and youth focal points in the Americas region. SurveyMonkey software was used to complete the survey. The questions do not vary in content from one year to the other; however, additional questions were added to the volunteering and youth surveys that started in 2017, and in 2020 a new section was added to the volunteer survey related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main difficulty faced by this analysis is that not all the National Societies responded consecutively during those years (see annex with the information on the participation of each National Society by year). This leads to the inability of accurately comparing the evolution or regression on a yearly basis; instead, the data reported per year are shown in order to avoid comparison biases.

It is important to underline that, at certain times, the data from the volunteering and youth surveys are included in the same paragraph because young people are considered part of the development and management of volunteering. Some aspects of the impact of volunteering are difficult to measure; hence, apart from the closed questions, open ones were suggested. These questions seek to understand the particular context of each National Society.

Nevertheless, the responses assist the Regional Coordination of V&Y in its work and provide important information on the current state of volunteering in the region. A special section is dedicated to the overseas Red Cross branches which have participated for the first time in this study as they are geographically and culturally close to the region.

In addition to the analysis of the data collected (Chapter 3), the document outlines the main humanitarian challenges in the region and how volunteering is helping to address them (Chapter 1), as well as a summary of previous global and regional studies conducted by the IFRC (Chapter 2).

Both primary data (from the volunteering and youth baseline studies) and secondary data (reports, issue papers, previous research and analysis by the International Federation and other relevant organizations), complement each other to form a more comprehensive assessment of the volunteering and youth development scenario in the region.





# CHAPTER CONTEXT



# 1

According to the World Data Bank <sup>4</sup>, there are about 1.008 million people living in the Americas region (493 million in North America, 515 million in Latin America and the Caribbean). The majority of the population lives in urban or suburban areas, making the continent the most urbanized in the world <sup>5</sup>. The three largest population centers in the Region are: Mexico City (Mexico), New York (USA) and São Paulo (Brazil); but "people's vulnerability to crises is not just about where they live, but also how they live. Poverty, inequality, population growth, urbanization and climate change can erode people's resilience and make them more susceptible to shocks." <sup>6</sup>. The region presents all kinds of threats such as climate change, violence in its different expressions, among other social problems.

<sup>4</sup> The World Data Bank (2019): <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>

<sup>5</sup> OCHA (2018): [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/WHDT2018\\_web\\_final\\_spread.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/WHDT2018_web_final_spread.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> UN (2018): <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO2019.pdf>



## 1.1. Main challenges in the region

This growing and uncontrolled urbanization led to an unfortunate record, categorizing the Americas as one of the most unequal regions in the world with more than 46% of people working in the informal labor market <sup>7</sup>. The United Nations (UN) states that, in the year 2000 the world population living in urban slums represented 28% of people, and by 2014 it had been reduced to 23% (-8.0 was the reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean) due to multiple efforts by national governments, stakeholders and local governments. However, by 2018 this situation was reversed by 1%, and for Latin America and the Caribbean by -0.1<sup>8</sup>.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in its publication "Social Panorama of Latin America, 2020" shows that, in 2019, the number of people living in poverty reached 187 million (30.5% of the population), 70 million of which live in extreme poverty (11.3% of the population, 0.9 percentage points higher than 2008)<sup>9</sup>.

Among the groups that are most affected by these inequalities are children and youth. The United Nations 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report states that "Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most unequal and urbanized regions in the world. (...) About 80% of the region's population lives in cities, and the region's youth no longer need to travel to know what poverty looks like"<sup>10</sup>. Unfortunately, statistics <sup>11</sup> show that more than 7 million children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition and the mortality rate of the same population is 1 child every 3 minutes.

In addition to inequality and urbanization, the main challenges the region is facing are widespread violence, massive population migration and the consequences of climate change. The UN Global Humanitarian Overview 2019 shows that the rate of violence and insecurity in Central America is approximately 9 and 13 times higher than in other regions of the world<sup>12</sup>. In 2017, around 3,000 women were murdered in 23 different countries in the Caribbean and Latin America<sup>13</sup>. Violence has a significant impact on the health and well-being of individuals and families in the region.



<sup>7</sup> CEPALSTAT (2015): <http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/portada.html?idioma=spanish>

<sup>8</sup> UN (2020): [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020\\_Spanish.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020_Spanish.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> CEPAL (2020): <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/46687-panorama-social-america-latina-2020>

<sup>10</sup> UN Volunteers (2018): <https://www.unv.org/publications/swvr2018>

<sup>11</sup> CEPAL (2015): <http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/portada.html?idioma=spanish>

<sup>12</sup> UN (2018): ibidem

<sup>13</sup> CEPAL (2018): <https://www.cepal.org/es/comunicados/cepal-al-menos-2795-mujeres-fueron-victimas-feminicidio-23-paises-america-latina-caribe>

Deaths are also recorded among migrants; in its World Disasters Report 2018 "Leaving No One Behind", the International Federation reports that, in 2017, 664 migrants died in the region<sup>14</sup>. In addition, the percentage of migrants has increased to 63% in 2018<sup>15</sup> (in 2017, the UN counts 9,508,189 million people migrating in the region<sup>16</sup>), and this could lead to more widespread violence due to racism, massive urbanization and inequalities. One of the main causes of migration is the crisis related to climate change and catastrophes, which in 2017 alone, with 98 natural disasters, has led to 4.5 million displaced people, affecting more than 16 million people in the region<sup>17</sup>.

In the main conclusions of the 2018 Social Panorama of Latin America,<sup>18</sup> ECLAC lists the following challenges for the region, which remain valid today: i) Poverty eradication continues to be a central challenge for Latin American countries. Even though the region achieved significant progress between the last decade and the middle of the present decade, several regressions have been registered since 2015, particularly regarding extreme poverty. ii) Special attention should be paid to the factors that lead to poverty disproportionately affecting children, adolescents and youths, population in rural areas, and indigenous and Afro-descendant people. iii) Income inequality was appreciably reduced between 2002 and 2017, but at a slower pace in recent years. The contribution of the gross wage bill to GDP increased, but has been declining since 2014. iv) Labor income, pensions and transfers to the poorest households play a key role in reducing poverty and income inequality. Social protection is fundamental to prevent distributive deterioration and avoid further setbacks in these indicators. v) Social investment maintained its importance in total public expenditure and grew at a higher rate than GDP between 2015 and 2016. Its contribution has been key in the progress recorded during the period; however, major challenges persist in terms of social policies funding. In a less favorable context, efforts must be made to strengthen it. (vi) Between 2002 and 2016, there were significant improvements in social inclusion indicators related to education, health and basic infrastructure, but with important gaps in access and service quality. vii) Significant challenges regarding labor market insertion persist: unemployment, low income, high levels of informality and lack of job protection. viii) Structural inclusion gaps affect rural population, women, young people, and indigenous and Afro-descendant people. Faced with a context of changes in the work environment, scenarios of economic uncertainty and a cycle of weak growth in the region, it is imperative to reinforce social and labor policies to address poverty, inequality and deficits in social and labor inclusion. x) In this context, gender inequalities must be explicitly addressed in order to prevent their deepening and to make progress towards their eradication. xi) Universal and intersectoral policies that are sensitive to differences and oriented towards increased coverage and quality of social services, social protection and decent work are essential. xii) These policies must be linked to the challenges that the changes needed in the productive structure present, in order to achieve sustainable development with equality.

---

<sup>14</sup> IFRC (2018): <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/world-disaster-report-2018/>

<sup>15</sup> UN (2018): *ibidem*

<sup>16</sup> UN (2018): <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publications/statistical-yearbook/>

<sup>17</sup> OCHA (2018): *ibidem*

<sup>18</sup> CEPAL (2018). <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/44395-panorama-social-america-latina-2018>



Imparcialidad





## 1.2 SARS2-COVID-19 Pandemic Context



The year 2020 began with the different challenges for the region in the economic, political, social and environmental matters described above, and it is from the declaration of a pandemic disease caused by the SARS2-COVID-19 virus that a series of threats, mainly health-related, were unleashed in the world population. Governments took measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus in each country, identifying home isolation and other restrictions on commercial and social interaction as the main measure. As a result, millions of people were directly affected in two important ways: a) health and b) household economy. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, defines the triple challenge of epidemiological containment, economic recovery and mitigation of social costs and, in this context, the closing of the year 2020 with the certainty of an emergency that generates new realities<sup>19</sup>.

ECLAC's Social Panorama of Latin America 2020 estimates that the GDP of Latin America and the Caribbean will decrease by 7.7%, and the unemployment rate will increase by 2.6 percentage points<sup>20</sup>. This makes it evident that the pandemic has contributed to accentuate and increase social inequality, poverty and extreme poverty, violence and regional problems in the countries that are unable to provide assistance and assurance to their entire population. Indebtedness for economic reactivation and the possibility of acquiring vaccination doses to fight the disease increases existing social and political tensions.



The most vulnerable groups are those who suffer the greatest and most direct consequence of the pandemic, one of the main reasons being that the poorest quintiles do not have protection and subsistence mechanisms against the effects of confinement. Moreover, there is a tendency towards informal jobs that do not provide the basic social guarantees to face any crisis related to health or unemployment, apart from living under deplorable housing conditions that increase the possibility of infection. About 90% of the cases of COVID-19 were concentrated in urban areas, which also contemplates the affectation of the one billion inhabitants of informal settlements and slums around the world<sup>21</sup>. Confinement and social distancing became a privileged position for some groups and, to comprehensively address this global problem, nations need to strike a balance between health care decisions and a complex context such as the one presented<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> CEPAL (2020): ibidem

<sup>20</sup> CEPAL (2020): ibidem

<sup>21</sup> UN (2020) : ibidem

<sup>22</sup> CEPAL (2020) : [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/46484/1/S2000718\\_es.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/46484/1/S2000718_es.pdf)

However, this pandemic and its effects have impacted globally and have brought a sequence of changes and transformations to develop new life, consumption, interaction, education and employment styles. Groups and countries with high levels of inequality, poverty, drawbacks in health and education systems, as well as lack of access to basic services, have been prone to facing the pandemic from their possibilities, and resorting again to external indebtedness to cover economic support or health care. The American continent has been one of the most affected by the virus, as well as one with the highest percentages of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

An essential variable to mention in this section is the role of technology and telecommunications because the pandemic also highlighted the access to what is now essential: technology and digital education. This is why the economic sectors of the countries have had to adapt, and with them, the public sector, which had to increase or initiate technological change internally to continue operating.

The World Economic Forum<sup>23</sup> analyzes the situation of young people in the pandemic era, who are known as pandemials. These young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are facing a time of lost opportunities because in one decade, they have been through two global crises and are dealing with mental, health, education and economic effects. As mentioned above, the digital era is opening up very quickly and forcefully providing new forms of employment and lifestyles for a certain young population and, in contrast, a large number of young people have fewer job and educational opportunities. According to the perception survey conducted in 2020, the results were: unequal, uneven and hopeless growth. In short, in these fractured realities, the effects of climate change, highly damaged education systems, employment problems and marked social conflicts should be paid particular attention.

The social programs and projects of the National Societies in the context of the pandemic were developed through their auxiliary role and service to society, seeking to provide necessary care for the population. However, their collaborators and volunteers found it necessary to adopt measures proposed by governments and other organizations to reduce the possibility of contagion and continue with the assistance to the communities in response to the emergency.

Being the backbone of the Movement, the volunteering teams sought to keep the operation active; however, the risky conditions made it necessary to reduce or avoid the participation of some people in order to avoid contagion and negative consequences. Organizational challenges also present opportunities to bolster actions, diversify the ways of volunteering and highlight the importance of safety, security and management in general for a solid volunteer development. The International Forum for Volunteer Development (IFVD<sup>24</sup>) notes that many volunteer programs have had to change their activities to support COVID-19-related efforts such as hygiene awareness campaigns and government food distribution. The experience during the pandemic reveals the complexity, diversity and key role of the volunteers who take part in challenging conditions, especially the ones who come from communities.

---

<sup>23</sup> World Economic Forum (2021): The Global Risks Report 2021. 16th edition.

<sup>24</sup> International Forum for Volunteering in Development (2020): COVID-19 and volunteering for Development. Impacts, innovations and implications.

Challenges remain as in previous years, where issues of poverty and inequality, employability, social protection and public policy, social spending and the economy will become more evident. We will find more indebted households and countries, marked perceptions of security and vulnerability, as well as historical problems and tensions that need to be reviewed in a new context. Social dynamics are constantly changing, which is why the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement remain at the forefront of humanitarian work.







First Aid training in the school and community environment - **Argentine Red Cross**

## 1.3. Volunteering in the Region

In such a complex context, volunteer work is fundamental to build and restore inclusive and resilient communities. The 2018 United Nations State of the World's Volunteerism Report <sup>25</sup> states that the Region of the Americas has around 30 million volunteers (20.7 million in North America and 9.4 million in Latin America and the Caribbean), with more than 70% of women doing the informal volunteering work in the region.

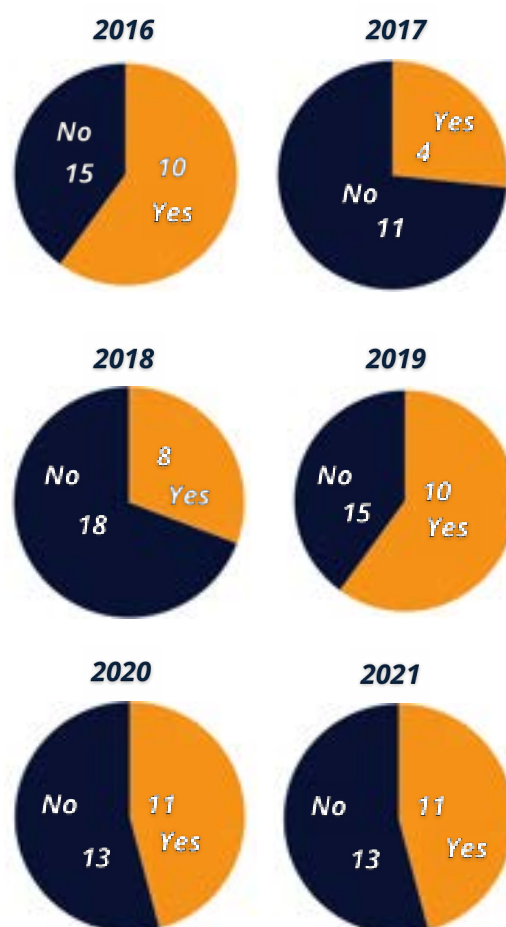
In Latin America, volunteering has specific characteristics and it is rooted in the communities' tradition and culture, facing serious problems such as poverty and extreme poverty. Volunteer work is a source of goods and services, and capital stock driven by the Humanitarian Spirit generally found in the communities' religion and mutual support. In addition, volunteering plays a key role in the development of communities as a driving force through the creation of capital stock based on trust, network building, active citizenship and ethical principles.

Volunteer work is an important factor in the fields of poverty, sustainable development, health, disasters and crisis prevention and response, social inclusion and discrimination. It is multifaceted on its importance to communities and it enriches society, brings people together as a community and plays an essential role in creating more tolerant individuals towards the global community.

Despite the number of volunteers in the continent, the report <sup>26</sup> shows that informal volunteering outnumbers formal volunteering in almost every area of action. 61.3% of North American volunteers and 67.5% of Latin American and Caribbean volunteers are not part of any formal organization or institution. These new phenomena make it difficult to calculate the actual number of people that volunteer across the region.

Many countries have developed national guidelines, policies or laws on volunteering. In the last 6 years, according to the National Societies that completed the surveys, approximately 30% of the Region of the Americas countries have a national volunteering policy (or they are in the process of adopting one).

**Figure 1. Is there a National Volunteering Policy in the country?**



<sup>25</sup> UN Volunteers (2018): ibidem

<sup>26</sup> UN Volunteers (2018): ibidem

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the largest humanitarian volunteer organization in the world with more than 12 million people participating in the movement globally. Therefore, the International Federation and National Societies need to rethink volunteering according to these new challenges. The International Federation's Global Innovation Team highlights how new, creative and innovative ways of volunteering continue to grow, including electronic volunteering, online campaigning, direct action, qualified volunteering, swarm volunteering, self-organized volunteering and combinations of these, indicating how and why people who volunteer are changing dramatically. "Brand loyalty" towards a humanitarian organization will be less significant. In some countries, people volunteer for shorter periods of time and want more influence and quicker access to make an impact.

This requires volunteer-involving organizations to demonstrate greater speed, flexibility and diversity of opportunities for participation. "Volunteer recruitment and management must be proactive in adapting to the volunteers' skills and interests"<sup>27</sup>.

The International Federation Databank and Reporting System (FDRS) provides data that proves the Red Cross impact regionally and globally. The 2022 FDRS "Everyone Counts"<sup>28</sup>. Report shows that, in 2020, National Societies in the Americas reached more than 51 million people through their services thanks to more than 500,000 volunteers and 44,000 paid staff. However, this is only a partial picture of the work done by National Societies, as collecting data on volunteering remains a challenging task.

The FDRS states that the magnitude of the work done by the Red Cross cannot be proven without data. Without complete data on how many lives were saved or reached, it is not possible to highlight all the work done. The absence of data prevents us from knowing what resources are available, limiting our ability to respond to emergencies and our auxiliary role. Our reputation is negatively affected in the eyes of the public and governments when we fail to show an appropriate responsibility.

Lack of transparency can lead our partners and donors to lose confidence in our work; that is why it is crucial to have appropriate, reliable and convenient data. In a highly competitive humanitarian environment with scarce resources and more recurrent crises, we must highlight our added value and credibility as a Federation. In this context, the lack of reliable data affects our ability to attract new volunteers and fulfil our mandate of reaching the most vulnerable people. Therefore, we cannot afford the luxury of apathy and lack of participation in data collection.

As mentioned above, the Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas 2022 aims to provide an overview of the volunteering situation and youth development in the National Societies of the region, investigating the challenges that the organization is experiencing in this field and establishing a starting point to build strategies at regional and national levels.

---

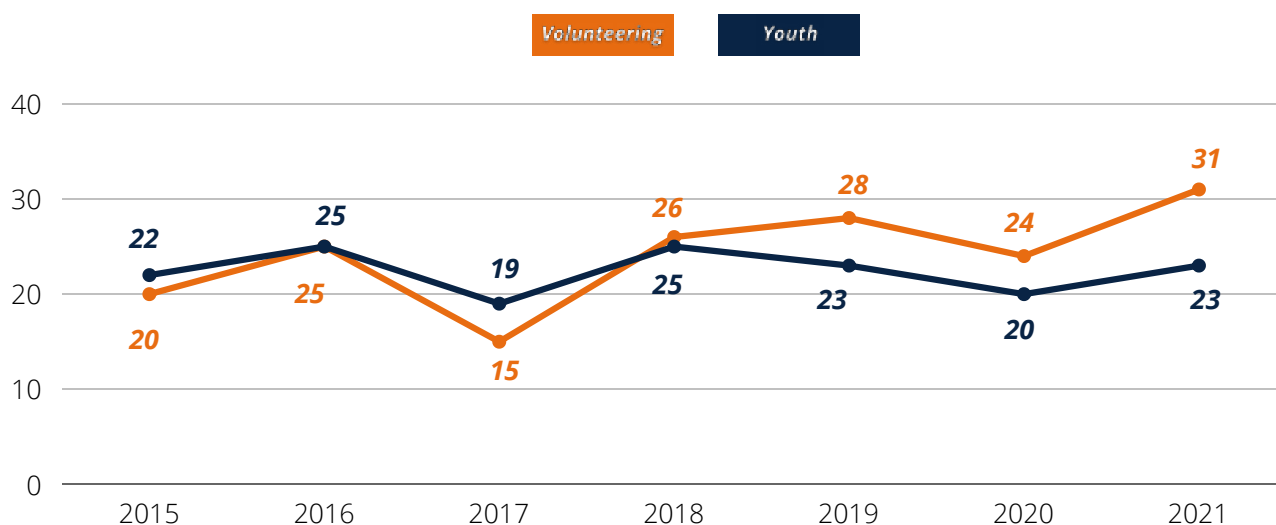
<sup>27</sup> IFRC (2018): <https://future-rcrc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ENStrategic-session-development-of-S2030.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> IFRC (2022): <https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/noiso/Everyone%20Counts%20Report%202022%20SP.pdf>



In addition, updated data serves as an accountability mechanism for the community, beneficiaries and other interested parties to guarantee the integrity and credibility of National Societies. In the last five years, about 65-70% of the 35 National Societies of the Americas responded to the annual Volunteering and Youth Baseline Surveys that were carried out in the Americas region of the International Federation. The data collected is essential to define a regional strategy for volunteering and youth, adapted to the specific needs of the region and to each National Society.

**Figure 2. Number of National Societies that participated in the consultation processes between 2016-2021**



For a list of NSs participants per year, please refer to the Annex at the end of this document









# 2

# CHAPTER

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM  
PREVIOUS STUDIES



This **chapter** provides a summary of the recommendations and findings of previous IFRC studies on volunteering and the state of youth development globally and regionally. Since 1993 to the present day, the findings and recommendations of these studies continue to be relevant to understand and address the challenges presented by the volunteer world. Although these recommendations are made from a global perspective, they are equally relevant to our region.



***The Future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean (2007):***

In 2007, some progress was achieved in the development of volunteering in the region. However, the study highlights the difficulty of National Societies to develop an effective volunteering management system. Regarding the economic crisis, the number of volunteers continued to decline, especially in the Caribbean National Societies. The causes are the lack of projects and activities relevant to local communities, the lack of funds, the poor participation of volunteers in decision-making processes and, as in 1993, and the competition with other non-governmental organizations.

***Challenges of human development:*** the future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean (1993). From 1993, thanks to the first survey of volunteer development at a regional level, National Societies declared that there was a crisis occurring in volunteer service. The main reasons highlighted by the National Societies were: a decrease in the number of volunteers, a lack of qualified volunteers to develop specific programs, and a low capacity of the National Society to retain and train these volunteers.

The causes of this crisis were divided into two factors: internal and external. Participation in decision-making processes, volunteer recruitment and management, structural changes were, and still are, the internal factor. On the other hand, the economic crisis, migration and humanitarian competition with other non-governmental organizations affected National Societies from the outside.



***Analysis of volunteering in Latin America and the Caribbean (2009):*** This study shows the progress in the creation and implementation of volunteering policies and strategies carried out by National Societies between 1993 and 2007. One of the main challenges faced by National Societies is the involvement of the local population, both as volunteers and as beneficiaries in the action plan.



***Online workshop "Volunteerism Development in the Americas (2016)":*** In 2016, 18 Spanish-speaking National Societies attended the workshop, highlighting the main challenge of retaining their volunteers. Different possibilities were presented to face this problem, such as the diversification of volunteering in a changing world, mixed volunteer programs with flexible schedules, growth opportunities for volunteers, and the importance of including volunteers in the decision-making process and the recognition of their work.



***The future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean: the challenges of social risk and cohesion management (2009):*** This study carries out a thorough analysis of the management of Red Cross National Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean. It addresses the challenges of globalization (economic, political, social and environmental) faced by these two sub-regions. Furthermore, the perception of a "volunteering crisis" due to human and financial resources continues and the National Society structures have to adapt quickly to face this crisis. On the other hand, advances in protection and volunteering policies are implemented by National Societies.





**International Federation global review on volunteering (2016):** The International Federation's Global Volunteering Review is based on the voices and perspectives of nearly 600 volunteer managers, delegates and volunteers from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as external experts in 158 countries, to explore the challenges of promoting and supporting volunteering in the context of local and global change. The findings presented were the following:

- *Recent economic crises.*
- *Changes in the communities in which volunteers work and from which volunteers are taken, especially due to increased displacement of people.*
- *Emphasis on cost-effective service delivery, associated reporting and accountability in aid spending.*
- *Recent and sustained conflict and violence in the global South.*

What the review shows is that, rather than suggesting the need to be more rigid in what counts as volunteering, a key starting point should be more insightful conversations between the different parties who host, organize and support volunteers involved in development.

**FDRS key data for the Americas Region 2017:** The FDRS collects data from Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies around the world on what they are doing and what resources they are working with. In the Houston Commitment of the Inter-American Conference of the Red Cross, the report presents data on volunteers (524,000), paid staff (43,000), people who donate blood (3,125,000), number of local branches (3,900), total income and total expenses of the NSs, number of people reached through RC activities (15,497,000).





***Analysis of volunteering and youth in the Americas in 2016:*** The 2016 Analysis compiles data from all National Societies in the Region of the Americas from 2013 to 2016, information collected through the baseline studies carried out annually, and it is aimed at presenting the status of volunteering development in the region. Unfortunately, the lack of planning in volunteer management has led to a stagnation in the number of volunteers in the best or worst scenario, according to a more pessimistic analysis.

This reduction or stagnation in the volunteer corps is a wake-up call to National Societies and leads to reflection on better strategies to engage and retain volunteers. However, the challenge is not to involve as many volunteers as possible, but to ensure a qualified volunteer corps for the performance of humanitarian activities. Participation in decision-making processes, retention through motivation, recognition and development opportunities, and protection are the main challenges National Societies must face to continue being leaders in the humanitarian field.



***The International Federation's Regional Strategies on Volunteering and Youth in the Americas:*** Seek to reinforce the organizational development of National Societies to better understand and respond to the needs of their volunteers. In fact, volunteers should be at the heart of Red Cross programs and actions as they are always the first responders during a humanitarian crisis. The implementation of volunteer diversification within a National Society aims to find new ways to strengthen the organization and respond to the needs of the communities by creating enabling environments where volunteers can share, develop skills and find the motivation to continue their work within the Red Cross.





**International Federation FDRS "Everyone Counts," April 2022 issue:** This report explores key data from 190 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In particular, the March issue investigated the following issues:

- *What did National Societies achieve in 2020?*
- *How many volunteers does the National Society have and is this number increasing or decreasing?*
- *What factors, such as the size or development of a country, best explain the differences between National Societies on key indicators?*
- *Is there such a thing as a typical disaster timeline? If a major disaster strikes a country, how does the number of volunteers change in subsequent years?*

By 2020, the Americas region had around 500,000 volunteers (mostly aged between 18 and 59 years old) in 3,946 local branches, reaching more than 2.3 million people in disaster response and early recovery actions and long-term services and programs. However, it should be clarified that, individual factors may affect the accuracy of the data. Since baseline studies have begun to be carried out in the Americas region, more updated information is available. This will be analysed in the next chapter.









# 3

# CHAPTER

RESULTS OF BASELINE STUDIES  
(PERIOD 2016 - 2021)

The 2018 Report<sup>29</sup> from the FDRS (Federation-wide data bank and reporting system) "Everyone Counts" lists about 524,000 volunteers in the region in 2016, according to data from 35 National Societies. Nevertheless, according to the baseline study for the evaluation of volunteer management in the National Societies of the Americas 2020 complemented by information from the same FDRS and previous data, the approximate number of volunteers in the region for 2020 was **378,463** and the youth report indicates that there were 79,489 young people, a number that differs significantly from 2019 (**618,492** volunteers).

Costa Rica Red Cross



This significant difference, which indicates a change in the growth trend of recent years, may have roots in the context of the year 2020, framed in a global health crisis due to the virus COVID-19, as well as the multiple global impacts within the Movement which have affected the implementation of activities based on the programs and projects of the National Societies and other participants. During this analysis, a designated space will be devoted to addressing this context in section 5 of chapter 3.

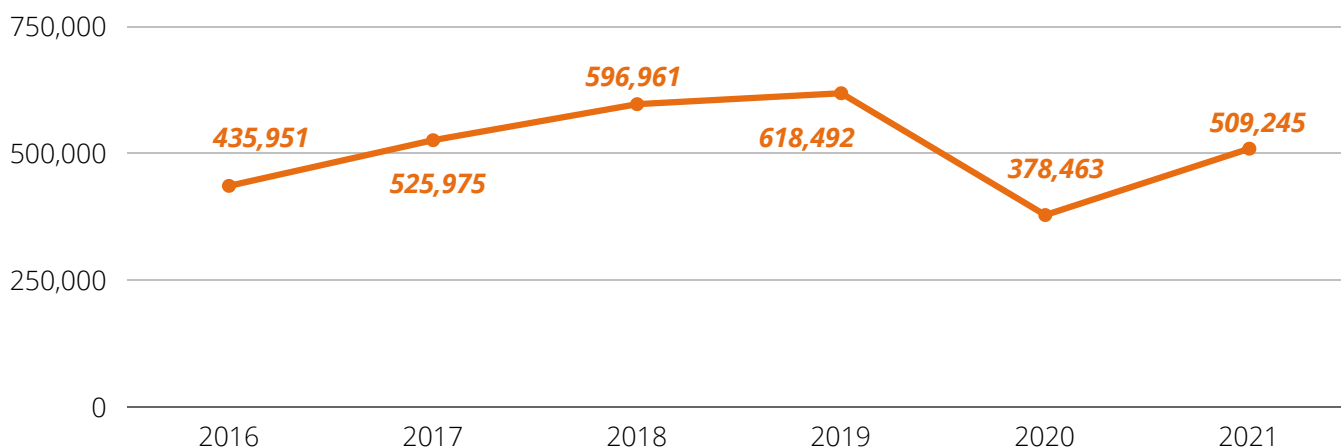
In addition to the above mentioned, this analysis considers that the difference between the global data of the FDRS and the baseline studies at the regional level can have many explanations, some of which suggest that the people who report to regional and global level can be different due to possible rotations. This causes them to have possible gaps of information, partial information, countries with incomplete reporting of data during the baseline studies, not having updated databases at the national level and problems of retention of volunteers, to name a few. However, having some partial data is a starting point for a clearer vision of volunteerism and youth development in the region that must be carried out in collaboration with all National Societies.

In the last five years, according to the regional baseline studies carried out on an annual basis, there has been an increase in the number of volunteers in the region, except in the year 2020. The analysis of the variation of this number, caused by the above-mentioned reasons, is essential:



Venezuela Red Cross

## Volunteering



**Figure 3. Number of Volunteers in the Region in the period from 2016 to 2021**



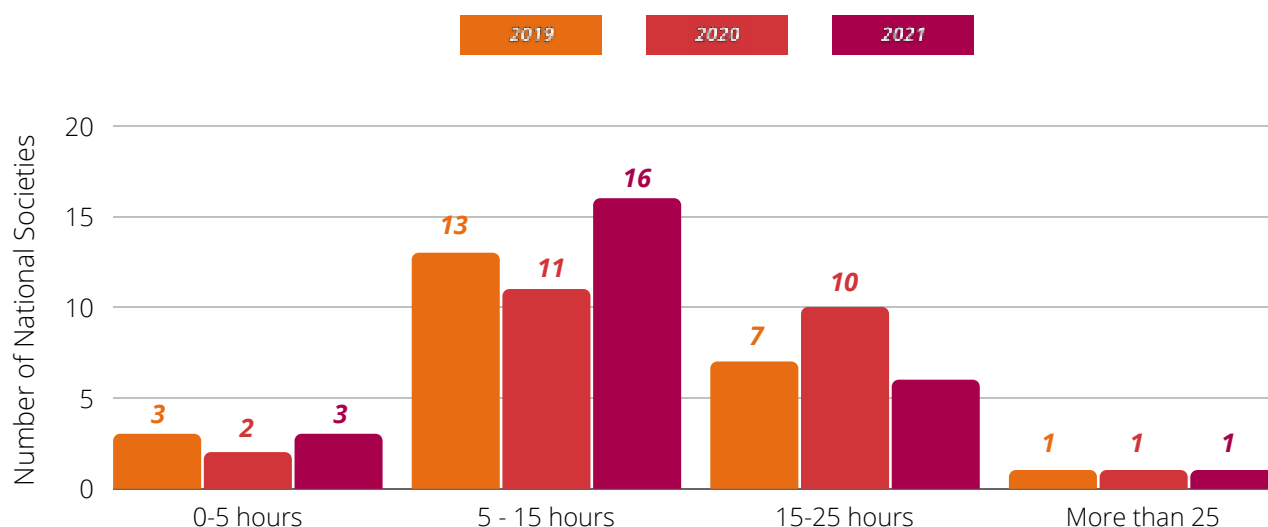
Through this analysis, the International Federation's Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development in the Region of the Americas also wishes to highlight the added value of having adequate data on volunteering in order to recognize and promote the impact of National Societies on communities, within and outside the International Red Cross Movement.

Volunteers (including young people) have been the backbone of the International Movement since its foundation in 1863. In our complex and changing world, they remain at the heart of all the activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, contributing to the success of the organization and helping millions of vulnerable people around the world. Data from baseline studies show that from 2019 to 2021 volunteers dedicated from 5 to 15 hours to the activities. More than 50% of the National Societies that participated in the study reported this number of hours.

Chilean Red Cross







**Figure 4. Average volunteer hours dedicated to humanitarian service in each National Society**

As stated in the Volunteering Policy <sup>30</sup> of the International Federation, National Societies, acknowledge the importance of having a great diversity of volunteers and promote their recruitment regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age. A commitment has been made to eliminate the possibility of all types of impediments, either physical, economic, social or cultural in nature, and to recruit volunteers based on their abilities. In addition, National Societies work with Governments, the private sector, and other partners to promote a favorable environment for the development of volunteerism.

Nearly half of the volunteers in the International Movement are young.

This number needs to be emphasized to support the idea that in order to design actions that contribute to the development of volunteering within the National Societies, an identification of the needs of the youth population is required. "The International Federation recognizes the meaningful participation of young people as a strategic vehicle for transforming institutional cultures that has a direct and positive impact on the operational capacity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to fulfil our humanitarian mission. Therefore, adequate investments in meaningful youth participation are inevitable to transfer experiences, renewal of leadership and overall progress <sup>31</sup>".



<sup>30</sup> IFRC (2011): <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Governance/Policies/volunteering-policy-en.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> IFRC (2017): <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/youth-policy-2/>

In terms of gender, the total 2021 data from the 24 participating National Societies indicate that the majority of people reported are women (more than 50% reported in the data). Protection, gender and inclusion measures are a necessary basis for further fostering leadership as well as equitable and inclusive participation with intergenerational and intersectoral dialogues as part of the Movement's values.

This chapter includes the interpretation of data from surveys carried out with the participation of the Volunteer and Youth Focal Points of the National Societies of America, from 2016 to 2021. For practical purposes, when we speak of "focal points" we refer to the national volunteer directors, national volunteer coordinators, heads of the volunteer department or similar depending on each NS.

This analysis is the second version of this type of study; the first version was carried out in 2016 and showed the information of baseline studies from 2013 to 2015.

Not all National Societies have participated in the studies consecutively, so the data collected reflect the information received from the number of NSs participants in those years. Management, programs, guidelines and policies, opportunities and protection are the main points discussed in the following pages through a comparative analysis between volunteering and youth in the region.

Costa Rican Red Cross









## 3.1. General information on the management of volunteers in National Societies

"Since the beginning of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, voluntary action has been a fundamental pillar. On the battlefield of Solferino, Henry Dunant carried out a task that today would be known as volunteer management: he recruited people from a local community to meet local needs"<sup>32</sup>.

Volunteer management refers to the "systematic and logical process of doing a coordinated work with volunteers to achieve the goals of an organization"<sup>33</sup>. In the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, volunteer management is the human resources process that recruits and motivates volunteers to carry out defined tasks to respond to the needs of communities.

We must clarify that "volunteer management" is part of the "volunteer development" in an integral way. For more information on this topic refer to the Volunteer Development Framework available at: [www.volunteeringredcross.org](http://www.volunteeringredcross.org)

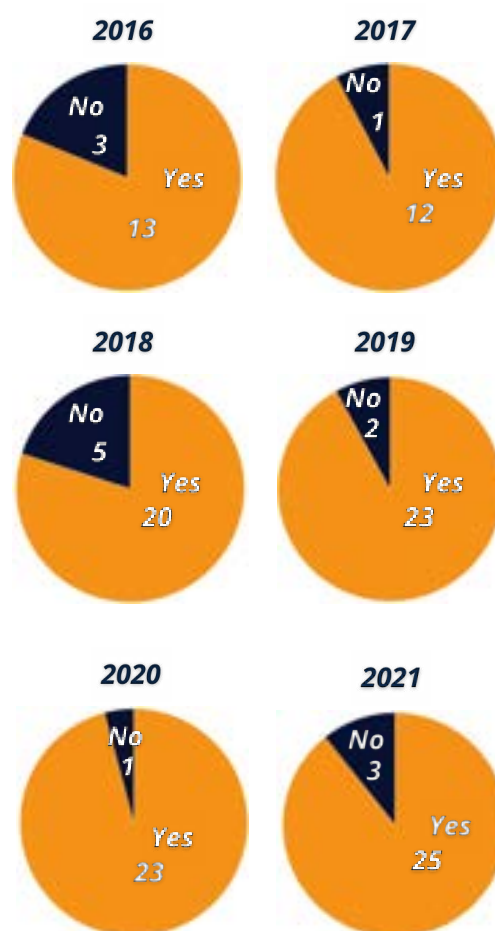
### 3.1.1 Focal point for volunteering and youth

The role of a volunteer and youth coordinator consists on providing support to an organization to run smoothly and is the point of contact between volunteers and the organization. The volunteer and youth coordination role is also responsible for ensuring that the people who give their time to the organization have all the necessary tools and information to perform their tasks in the best way. Hence the importance of having structures both at the national level and at the branch level and in general to have such a structure in order to support the development of volunteering at all levels.

Coordination at the national level is essential for the development of volunteering. The International Federation's Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development in the region of the Americas strongly encourages and supports National Societies (NSs)

in this process. As we can see in the image below, over the last few years, NSs are investing more in these fields.

**Figure 5. Does this National Society have a Volunteer focal point?**

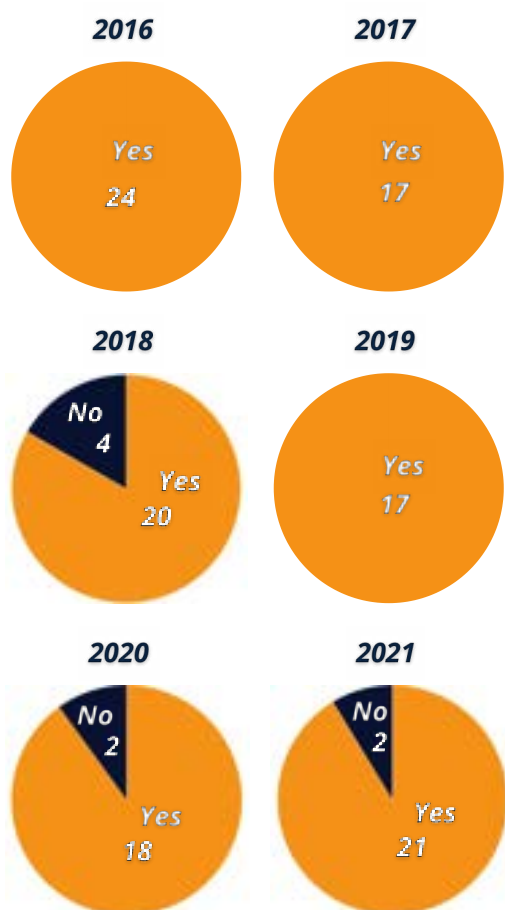


<sup>32</sup> IFRC (2005): ibidem

Mc Curley, Lynch and Jackson (2012): The Complete Volunteer

<sup>33</sup> Management Handbook

**Figure 6. Does this National Society have a Youth focal point?**



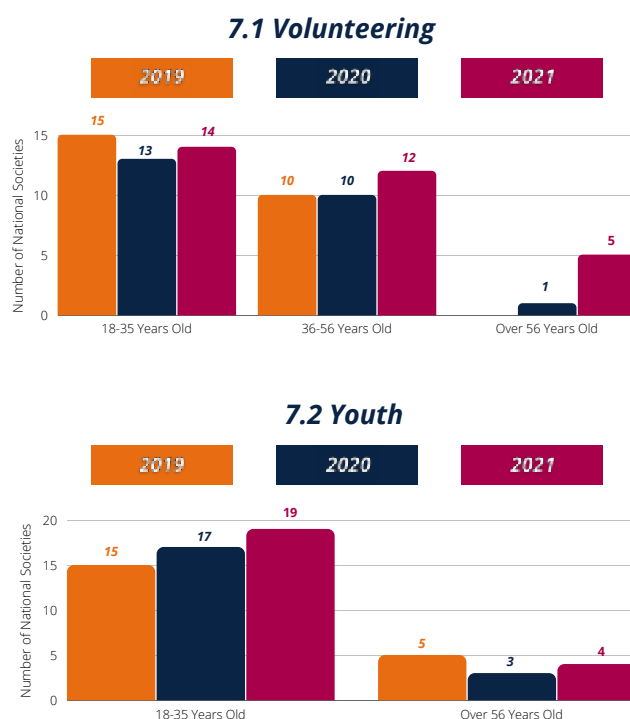
Volunteer management requires a lot of dedication. However, the volunteer coordinator position is not always a paid, full-time job. In 2011, the International Labor Organization stated that "data generated by the Johns Hopkins Non-Profit Comparative Sector Project in 37 countries, even with a conservative estimate, these volunteers make a contribution of \$ 400 billion to the global economy. (...) The value of time contributions, i.e. voluntary work, is approximately twice the value of money contributions"<sup>34</sup>.

A full-time, paid national volunteer coordinator with the resources to develop volunteering will generate a great return on investment from the value of the volunteer's work. In 2021, it was identified that of the 31 NSs participating in the study:

- 68% of the focal points had a paid role.
- 32% had a voluntary role. The other 8% did not respond.
- 56% reported having exclusivity in their functions.
- 44% perform other tasks in addition to volunteering within their NS.

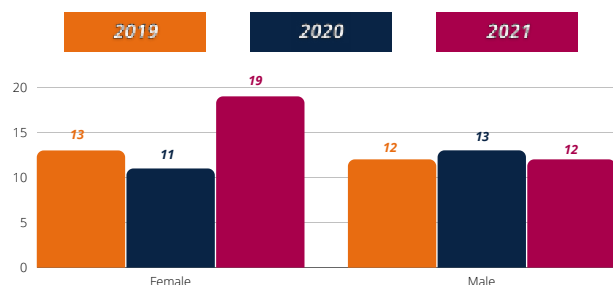
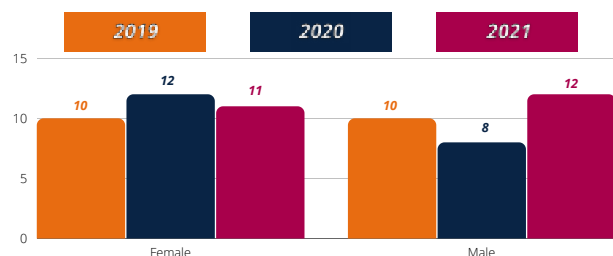
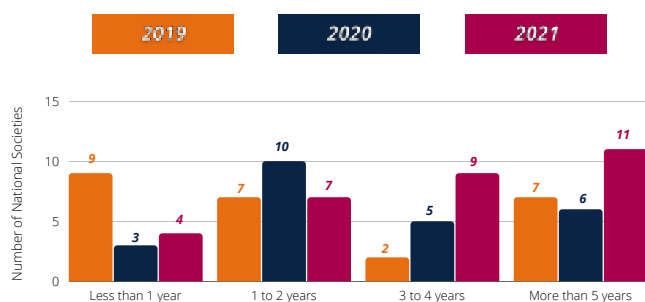
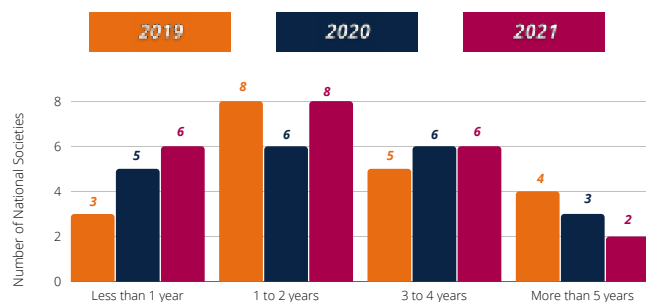
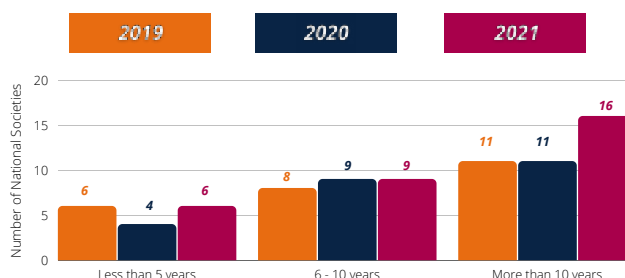
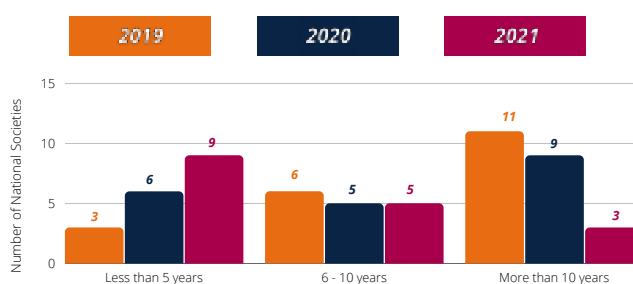
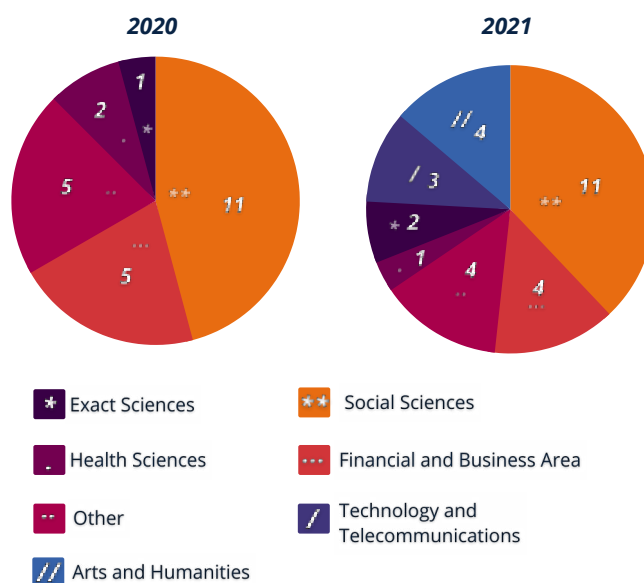
The following graphs from 2019 to 2021 show other characteristics of the profile of the national volunteer and youth focal points of the National Societies participating in those years.

**Figure 7. Age Range of Focal Points across National Societies**



<sup>34</sup> ILO (2011): [https://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS\\_162119](https://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS_162119)



**Figure 8. Gender Focal Points****8.1 Volunteering****8.2 Youth****Figure 9. Time performing as Focal Point****9.1 Volunteering****9.2 Youth****Figure 10. Years of Experience of the Focal Point within their NS****10.1 Volunteering****10.2 Youth****Figure 11. Professional Areas of Volunteer Focal Points**

It can be observed that more volunteer and youth focal points are from those in the 18 and 35 age groups. Taking into account that the number and representation of participating National Societies varied from year to year, in the case of the volunteer focal points in 2020, more men than women responded whilst in 2021 it was more women than men. In terms of youth focal points, 2020 saw more women respondents than men and while in 2021 this was reversed.

In 2020, an additional question was added about the type of vocational training available to each focal point, particularly in the volunteering area. For 2021, data indicates that more than 37% of respondents had pursued their studies in the social science field. The opportunity to have this data on the professional background of each focal point in the Americas will allow us to consider the possibility of providing support to each person to significantly enhance their contribution.

When it comes to the level of experience within the movement with the focal points of volunteering, in 2019 the number of those who reported having between 0 to 1 year of being in the role was very similar to those who reported having 1 to 2 years of experience. This differs from 2020, where it is found that those who have 1 and 2 years of experience in the role represent a majority compared to the rest. In 2021, most respondents report being in their role for over 5 years. On the other hand, most of the participating focal points state that they have belonged to their National Society for more than 10 years. This indicates that the experience they have regarding their training standard level, as well as their permanence in the movement, is extensive.

Regarding the youth focal points, in 2019 most of the focal points participating in the study indicated that they had between 1 and 2 years in their role. In 2020 most focal points had between 1 and 4 years in their role. In 2021, focal points reported being in their role between 1 and 2 years. And in terms of their experience within the movement, the youth focal points resemble those of volunteering, since they have an experience of more than 10 years; this is a fact which suggests that they are people who started volunteering at a very early age within their National Societies. This last idea can be expanded by understanding a long cycle of participation and a sense of belonging, which allows these same young leaders to be projected into the future, formed and consolidated in other areas of the movement.

Each focal point plays a fundamental role in strengthening volunteerism in each National Society, and they are key people in the development and implementation of strategies, plans and initiatives in the area. The commitment of a constant accompaniment in what is required by the focal points, will represent part of the healthy development chain in the region. Constant monitoring of the progress and needs of the region is recommended, both by consultations with the volunteers and the hired personnel of the National Society.



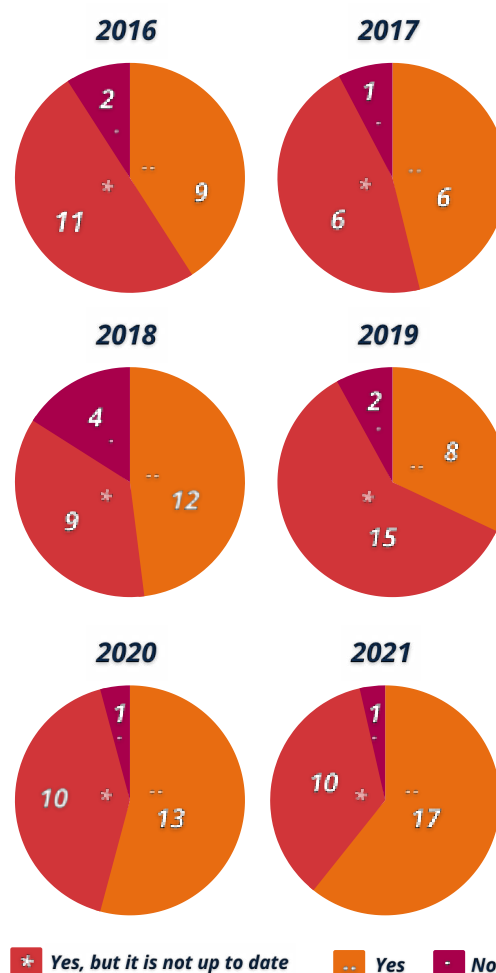


## 3.1.2 Volunteer and youth databases and information management

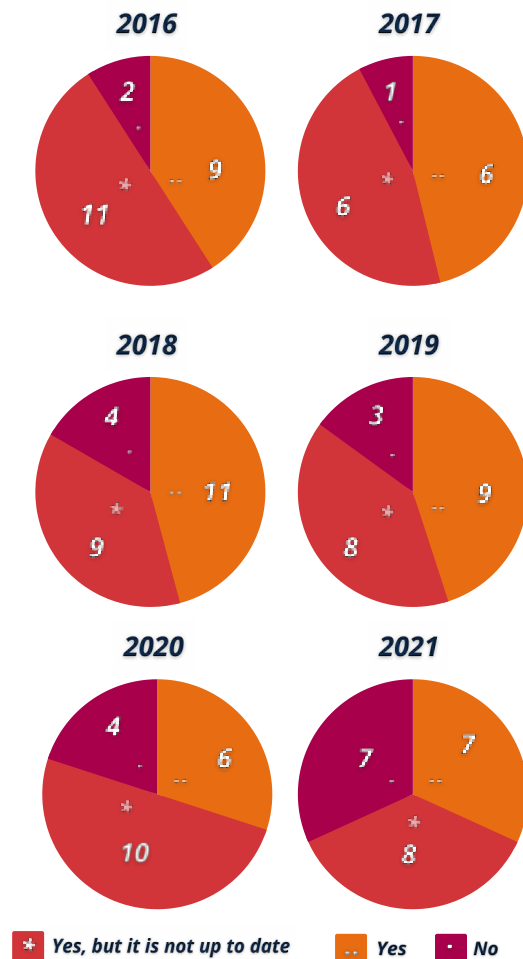
The management of volunteer information can be simplified using an integrated management and tracking system. Among the benefits we can find:

- Understanding the needs and interests of volunteers to adapt management and implement some retention actions.
- Establishing direct communication is important in case of urgent and emergency needs and can reduce intervention time.
- Through needs and interest assessment and clear communication, volunteer engagement and participation increase.
- With a proper management system, it will be easier to match the availability of volunteers and the tasks required, improving the impact of the action in the field.
- Maximize response time at all levels: to people interested in volunteering, volunteer opportunities and update active volunteer data in real-time.
- Increasing a culture based on evidence and information, hand in hand with multilevel communication, coherence and consistency in historical data.

**Figure 12. Does the National Society have an up-to-date database of its volunteers?**



**Figure 13. Does the Youth Program have an up-to-date database of its young volunteers?**



As the data shows, the main challenge for NSs is to implement the database and keep it up to date. The National Volunteer Coordinator / Manager and the Youth Coordinator / Manager,

together with the Human Resources Unit, should monitor the database and work with local affiliates to map the situation within the National Society on an ongoing basis.

One of the main questions regarding the implementation of databases is about the type of system they should use. The 2021 Baseline Study shows that 11 out of 31 NSs use an advanced information management system, including the Resource Management System (RSM), other online software purchased by the NS. On the other hand, 5 NSs still resort to data analysis systems such as Microsoft Excel. In this diversity of systems used at the regional level, the exchange of data among NSs is not always possible. In 2020, 15 out of 24 participants indicated greater openness to share databases.

Joint actions have been carried out between the National Societies of the region and the Federation for the development of opportunities around the subject, with the vision that information from volunteering is essential for optimal management. There is still a need to expand further on issues of digital transformation for the management of volunteer information, and the exchange of experiences between National Societies represents an opportunity for the type of software to be selected. Within this scenario, the factor of data security must be considered as part of the protection of the integrity of volunteers.

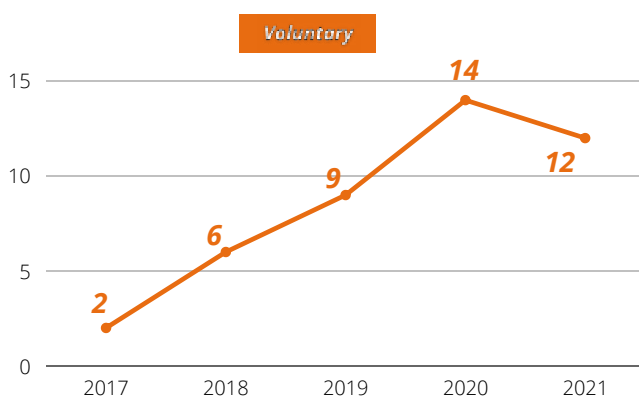




### 3.1.3 Identified Needs and Challenges

In relation to the evaluation of the needs and interests of volunteers, from 2017 the baseline study included a question regarding the conduction of national surveys to address the subject, and it can be observed that, despite not being able to relate the data historically, there is an increase in NSs implementing this action every year:

**Figure 14. National Societies that conducted a survey of satisfaction or identification of volunteer needs**



Conducting a survey on the needs and interests of volunteers can be the starting point for solving the major challenges that National Societies face in the field of volunteer development.

In this sense, the baseline study seeks to identify the main challenges considered by the focal points regarding Volunteer and Youth Management. Prioritization is categorized as follows:

- Lack of sufficient funds for the development of projects and programs based on existing needs.
- The lack of an adequate volunteer recognition system.
- The lack of participation of young people in the decision-making processes of the National Society.
- The decrease or stagnation in the number of volunteers and young people.
- Lack of training for volunteers.
- Diversification of volunteer programs.

The multiplicity of volunteering programs evidenced the need for the creation of spaces to encourage volunteering by generating a different and attractive proposal in the communities. It is also a requirement to address the challenges that the community must face. Emergency and chronic and structural crisis situations must be addressed in an innovative and relevant way, with social and environmental well-being at the center. The following section addresses in detail the programs and activities of the region.



## 3.2. Volunteering programs and activities

Based on the challenges and humanitarian needs in each country, National Societies define the type of volunteering and youth programs required to meet those needs. Globally, "in 2016, National Societies' health services directly reached 171 million people, while water, sanitation and hygiene promotion activities reached 11 million people, and disaster risk reduction programs reached 28 million people"<sup>35</sup>.

### 3.2.1 Main activities in the Region

Baseline studies show that, for the period 2016-2021, the most developed volunteer programs in the Region have been:

1. Regarding volunteer and youth activities:
  - a) Youth programs.
  - b) First aid programs: rescue and lifeguard.
  - c) Social-community volunteering.
  - d) Youth leadership activities.
  - e) Promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace.

These programs not only reflect the needs of the communities, but also the structures of National Societies and their auxiliary role in their respective countries. Despite the experience that the National Societies have in these fields, there are great changes taking place in the volunteering world to which the organization needs to adjust to. This main idea is reinforced in the category of challenges in volunteering management, which refers to the importance of the diversification of programs. This perspective conveys 3 main challenges identified by the volunteering focal points in recent years. In 2021, diversification of volunteer programs was identified by over 30% of respondents as one of its main challenges.

In the same vein, the monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent programs are essential to remain relevant in the humanitarian field. For example, according to the IFRC Volunteer Alliance:

"We know that people who want to volunteer are changing. People want flexible volunteering opportunities, sometimes short-term and easily accessible remotely. People's growing digital access is also changing the way we can reach out to new volunteering communities and engage with people who may not have been involved with us before. Technology makes the world a smaller place, allowing us to connect with people and communities around the world. We want to explore how digital technologies enable people to make a difference locally and globally by offering their time and skills as volunteers"<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> IFRC (2018): ibidem

<sup>36</sup> IFRC: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/volunteeringalliance-new-forms-of-volunteering/>



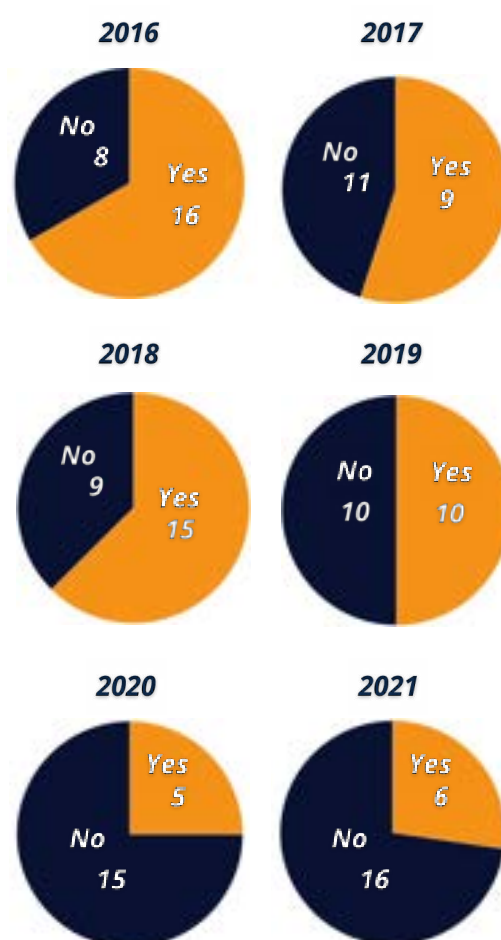
**A focus on Youth Activities, the YABC (Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change) initiative in the Region.** Youth as agents of behavioral change (YABC) is the IFRC's flagship initiative on promoting a culture of non-violence and peace (NVC + P). Created in 2008, this program seeks to educate young people so they can assume an ethical leadership role in their community. This is done by activating a process of self-transformation among participants that results in positive and lasting changes in mentality and attitudes, including behavior designed to bring about changes in others in harmony with Fundamental Principles. In the past 6 years, many National Societies have participated in and organized training activities and YABC activities.

In 2018, the Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development, in partnership with the Costa Rican Red Cross and the Italian Red Cross, organized the first YABC training of educators in the region of the Americas. 30 volunteers from 11 National Societies from the region participated and worked together towards the goal of developing participants' understanding of the YABC peer educator training process and how to manage it to create a powerful learning experience that triggers an individual dynamic of lasting positive change towards a leadership ethic for a culture of nonviolence and peace.

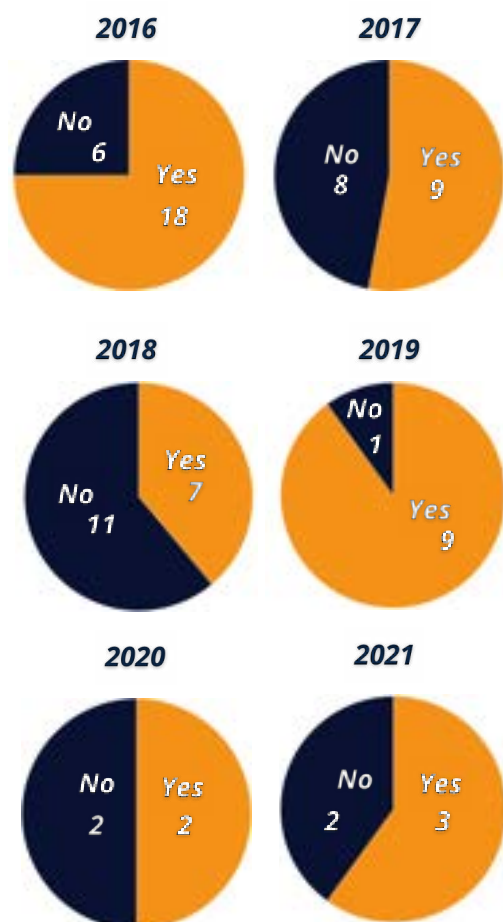
In addition, the participants' knowledge and ability to effectively train others in the YABC toolkit's effective and experiential learning approach and materials, as well as in peer education, facilitation and communication techniques, in order to ensure established quality

standards to have a greater impact on the planning and evaluation of a peer educator training course. Since then, YABC training has been held in Colombia, Antigua & Barbuda, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina, Ecuador and Mexico.

**Figure 15. National Societies with staff and volunteers trained in the YABC youth program**



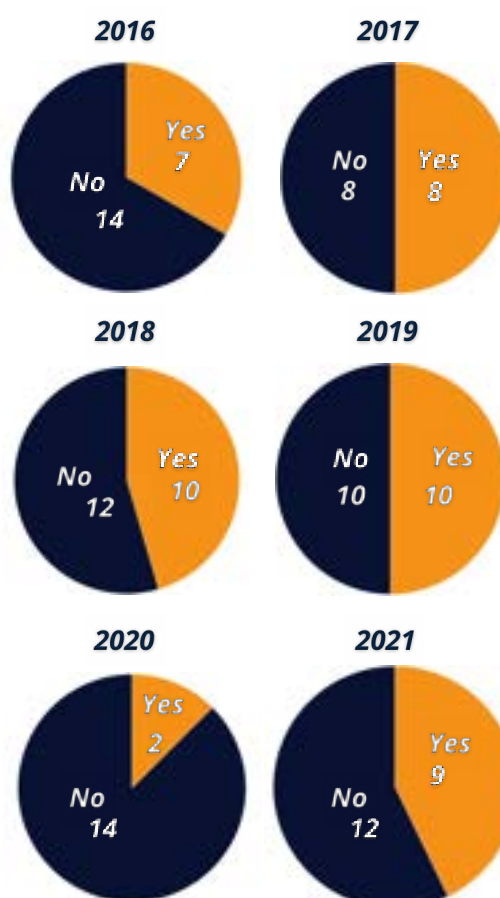
**Figure 16. National Societies replicating activities based on this initiative (YABC) at the branch level**



**Promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace.** The International Federation has defined a culture of non-violence in its strategy for the prevention, mitigation, and response to the violence that “respects human beings, their well-being and dignity and honors diversity, non-discrimination, inclusion, mutual understanding, and dialogue, willingness to serve, cooperation and lasting peace. It is a culture where individuals, institutions and societies refrain from harming other groups, communities, or themselves. There is a commitment to positive and constructive solutions to problems, tensions, and the source of violence; violence is never an option”<sup>37</sup>.

Promoting a culture of non-violence and peace is not just about the absence of war. It is not an end or a goal, but a process. It is about creating an environment conducive to dialogue and finding solutions to problems and tensions without fear of violence through a process in which all are valued and able to participate. Going even further, the promotion of a NVC + P has to do with the prevention and minimization, as far as possible, of sources of violence<sup>38</sup>.

**Figure 17. Is there an educational, dissemination, and/or training program for children, teenagers, and young adults that promotes and reinforces the commitment of young people to the Red Cross?**



<sup>37</sup> IFRC (2010): <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/strategy-2020.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> IFRC (2011): [https://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53475/1205900-Advocacy%20report%20on%20Promotion%20of%20culture%20of%20peace-EN-LR%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53475/1205900-Advocacy%20report%20on%20Promotion%20of%20culture%20of%20peace-EN-LR%20(2).pdf)

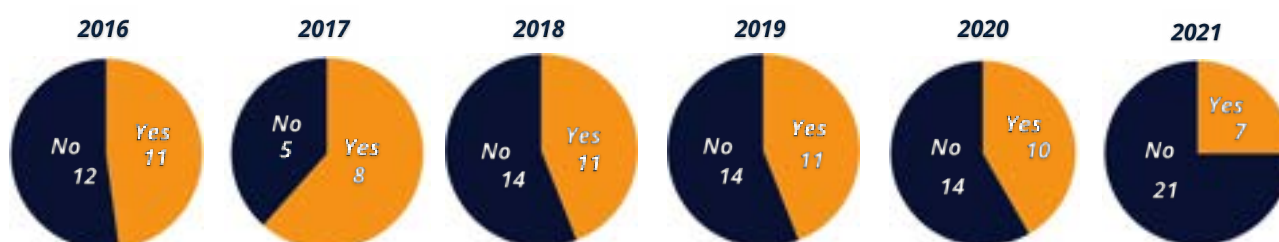


## 3.2.2 International cooperation activities within the Movement

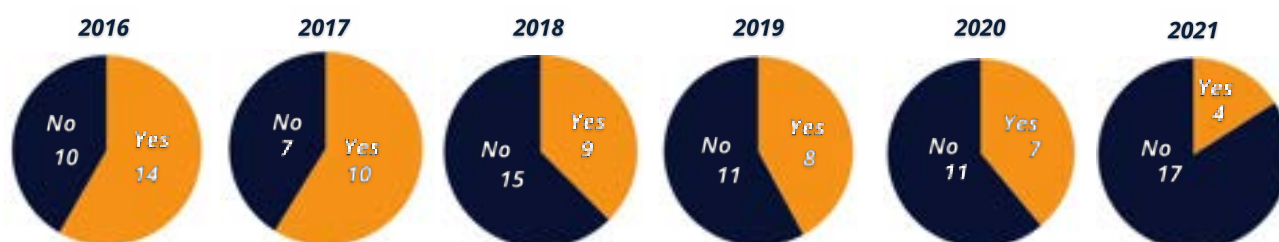
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross, and Red Crescent Societies and National Societies. These three agents work together to achieve the Movement's mission. For this reason, cooperation between the different actors of the Movement will further develop volunteer management systems.

In particular, it is crucial to learn, share experiences and work together with other National Societies. Within the Movement, NSs cooperate bilaterally or multilaterally when more than two National Societies implement activities in a country. Some National Societies involve their volunteers (including youths) in international activities, not necessarily linked to other volunteer or youth units.

**Figure 18. Have there been exchanges with other National Societies in the area of volunteering (programs or internships)?**



**Figure 19. Have there been exchanges with other National Societies in the area of volunteering (programs or internships)?**



**A focus on youth activities at the international level: participation in Red Cross youth networks.** According to the guidelines of the International Federation's RRCC Youth Network:



"The Youth networks of the movement are formed at the regional and subregional levels; they function and are structured horizontally with a varied degree of institutionalized formality. Youth networks within the IFRCare established and maintained for the primary benefit of National Societies' youth actions targeting vulnerable groups in local communities. Youth networks are led by young leaders who adopt equality approaches to share, coordinate and establish partnerships in order to achieve the common goals of generation of knowledge, collection of experiences, and recording of lessons learned and best practices from individuals and National Societies. Youth networks should be shared between young leaders and the National Society leadership"<sup>39</sup>.

The region of the Americas has three subregional Red Cross youth networks: the Caribbean youth network (including overseas branches), the Central American youth network and the South American youth network, each with a network coordinator chosen by the members of each subregional youth network.

Participation in the initiatives of the subregional network should be promoted and strengthened, as it benefits the activities of National Societies. By 2021, only 14 out of 23 National Societies participating in the youth baseline survey reported participating in the Youth Network for their subregion.



Mexican Red Cross National Headquarters

## 3.3. Volunteer and Youth Guidelines and policies

Clear guidelines and policies support the development of the National Society: without a defined framework for the development of new structures and procedures, the work of the National Society may lack coherence and direction. The purpose of these documents is to set the standard in working with and for volunteers (including the youth) and in the development of volunteering and youth structures to help vulnerable people in their country.

### 3.3.1. National Societies including volunteerism and youth development in their strategic plans

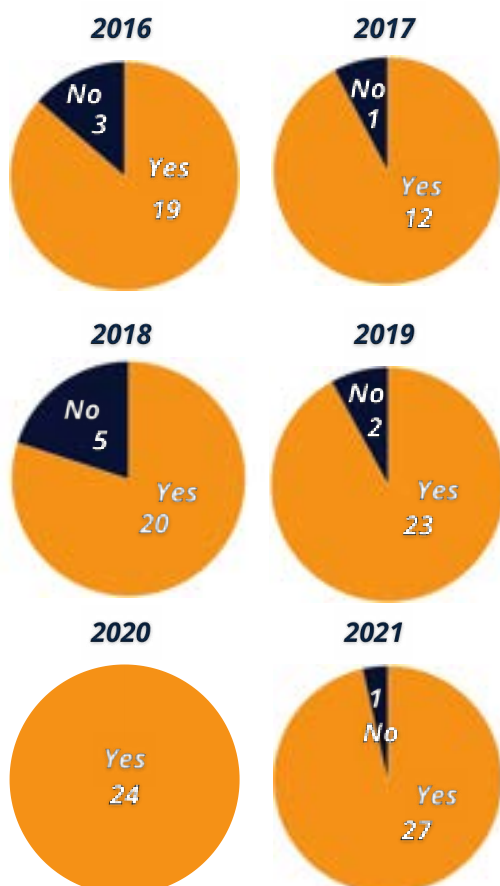
A strategic plan is a very important tool for organizational development: having a mission and objectives is only a part of the job, having a correct direction is equally important. A strategic plan guides National Societies to move towards the mission and objectives of the Red Cross Movement.

In addition, a strategic plan helps National Societies understand their abilities, challenges, and resources. Understanding these areas helps analyze strengths and seize opportunities. Based on the Fundamental Principle of Voluntary Service and for the reasons mentioned above, it is very important to include volunteering and youth development in the strategic plan of the National Society.

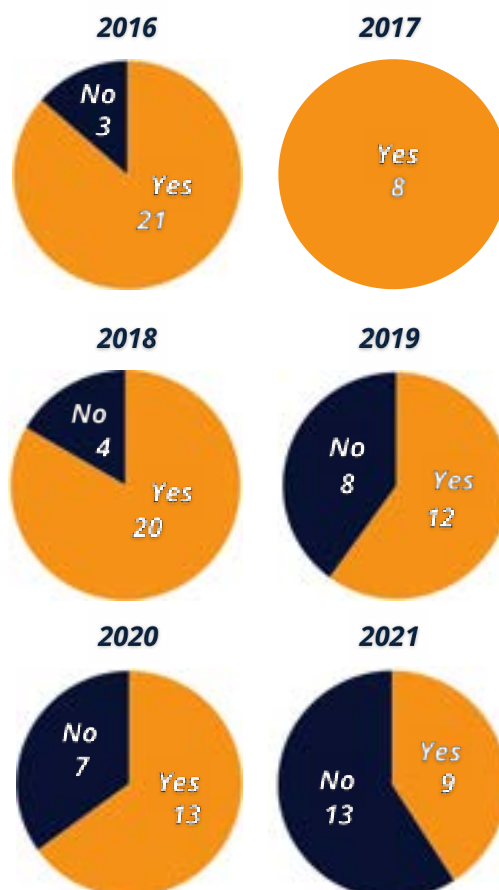
<sup>39</sup> IFRC (2013): <https://rcrceyn.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/guidelines-for-rrc-youth-networking-en.pdf>



**Figure 20. National Societies that contemplate the volunteering development within their strategic plan**



**Figure 21. National Societies that have a strategy for involving young people in programs and projects**



In the Region, most National Societies include both volunteering and youth development in their strategic plans; however, this does not imply that they have an adequate policy or strategy on volunteering and youth development. Therefore, the analysis should consider both the number of National Societies that have a strategy as well as the content and implementation.

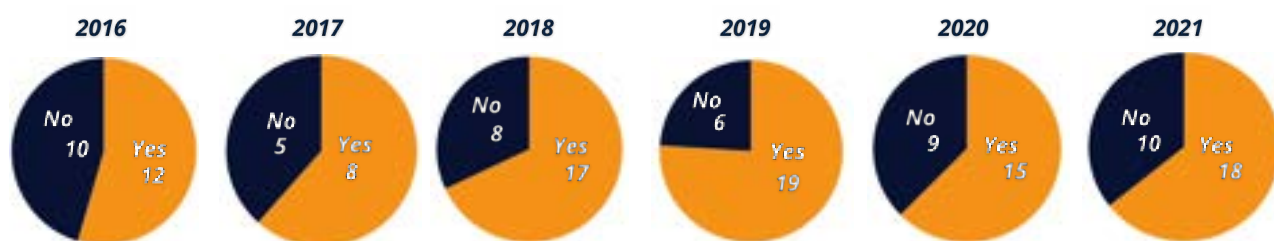
### 3.3.2. Volunteering and youth policies

"A volunteering or youth policy must set out the principles, definitions and standards that the National Society should respect if the aim is to achieve its vision of volunteering or youth. It should complement the strategy of a National Society and support the development of existing and future programs " <sup>40</sup>.

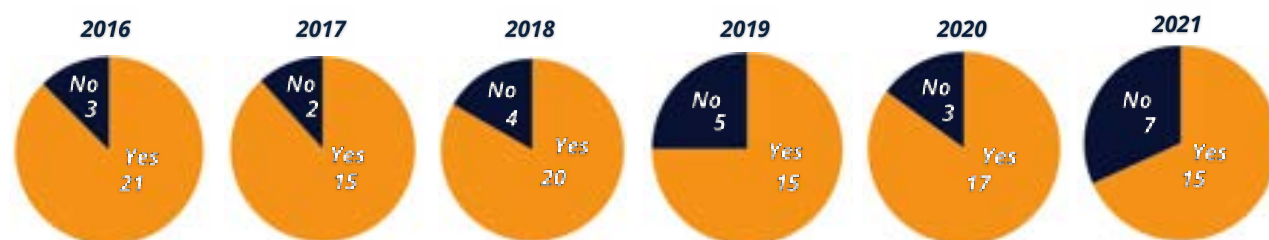
The International Federation's Voluntary Service Policy (2011) and the International Federation's Youth Policy (2017) aim to define international regulations for volunteering and youth, to establish the importance of volunteering and youth development at the international and national levels, as well as to guide National Societies in defining, implementing and reviewing their own policies. The role of the IFRC Secretariat is to assist National Societies in this process.

The data show that, in recent years, National Societies have increased their investment in the development of these policies, mainly in the field of youth. This process is directly related to the definition of an implementation strategy for volunteering and youth development and, more generally, to volunteering and youth management development within the National Society.

**Figure 22. Number of NSs with a Volunteer Policy**



**Figure 23. Number of NSs with a Youth Policy**



One observation for the reading of the data on youth policies is that both National Societies that do have a youth policy without discriminating if it uses the IFRC's and the ones that have a policy adapted to their local context, are considered.

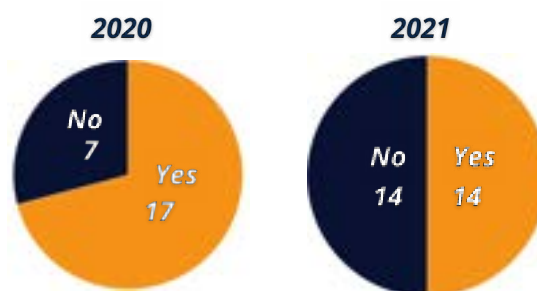
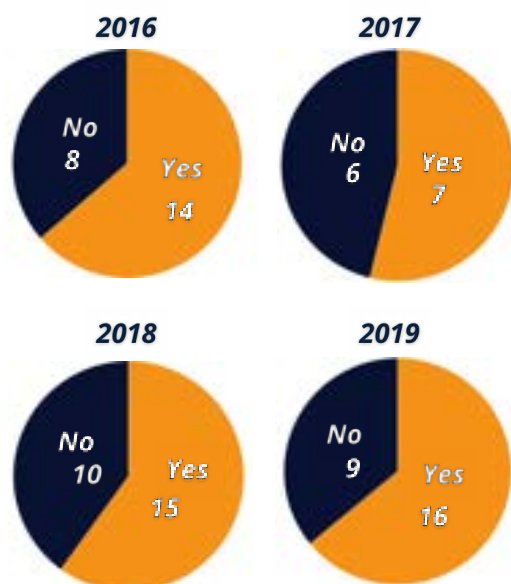




### 3.3.3. Strategies for volunteering and youth

The strategy on volunteering and youth development is the definite tool that the National Society has to strengthen the meaningful and active participation of volunteers (including young people) in humanitarian volunteer work at the levels of governance, management, services and program delivery, to better fulfil its humanitarian mandate. A strategy is a plan of action, while a policy is a principle of action. Transforming a policy into a strategy is not a simple exercise but must be done to achieve effectiveness, manage events and problems, seize opportunities, make the most of resources and address threats.

**Figure 24. Number of National Societies that have a volunteering strategy**



In addition, 12 of the 24 NSs consulted in 2020 were also developing strategies for the development of volunteering at the local level. In 2021, 9 of the 31 responding National Societies reported the development of strategies for local volunteering.

**Figure 25. National Societies that have a strategy for involving young people in programs and projects**



In 2013, the International Federation adopted the International Federation's Youth Engagement Strategy (Y. E. S.) which "reinforces the idea that strong youth engagement is critical to strengthening National Red Cross Societies and community resilience"<sup>41</sup>. Since 2016, the Youth Development Baseline Study includes some questions about the implementation and other activities related to Y. E. S.

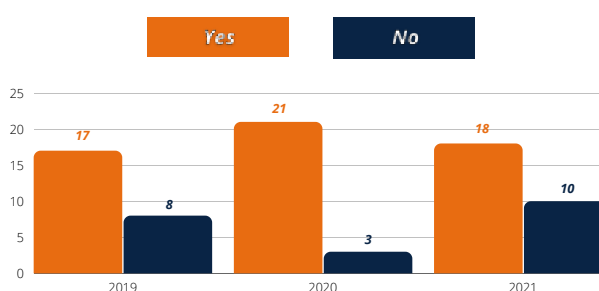
- In 2019, 9 out of 20 participating National Societies implemented Y. E. S. nationally and in 2020, only 8 out of 20 did. In 2021, 9 out of 23.
- Out of the 20 National Societies participating in 2019, 10 were identified to have attended training courses on Y. E. S. By 2020, only 6 of the 20 participants reported training courses on the subject. In 2021, 9 NSs reported participation in Y.E.S training courses.

### 3.3.4. Volunteer Development Framework

In 2019, the Volunteer Development Framework was published (VODFRA). It has four main elements: "because", "how", "what" and "enabling environment" that work as a whole to achieve effective and efficient volunteer development within 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 guideline to assess what is needed and build or develop each element as required. That is why all NSs are urged to implement VODFRA to achieve the development of their volunteer systems at all levels. Since its launch, the NSs of the region have requested technical support in the implementation of the framework at the national level, which shows a commitment to the integral development of volunteering.

Since 2019, a question was incorporated into the baseline study instrument to analyze the implementation process of the NSs and it is observed that, by 2020, 21 of the 24 countries participating in the study will implement the VODFRA.

**Figure 26. National Societies implementing the Volunteer Development Framework (VODFRA)**



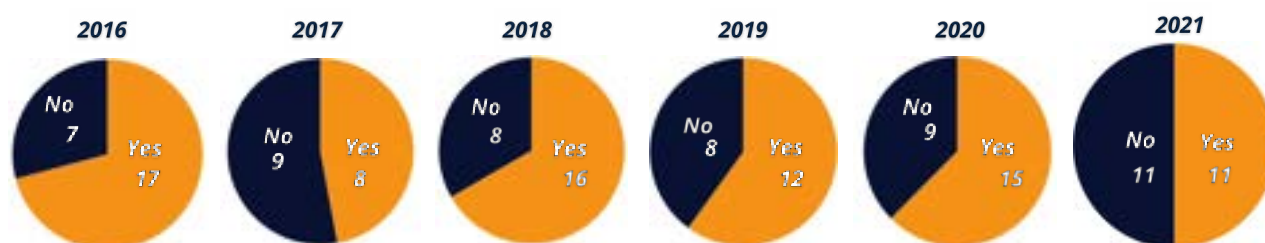
### 3.3.5. Funding for youth volunteer and development

An efficient youth and volunteer development strategy (or plan of action) needs long-term organizational commitment and funding. Voluntary participation in a National Society involves costs and investment in the development of appropriate knowledge, systems and structures. In 2020, 13 of the 24 participating National Societies included an article on volunteering and youth development in their annual budget. In 2021, 12 of 31 National Societies reported the same. When an adequate budget is not allocated (as it is often the case in the area of youth), volunteers should at least be involved in mobilization and fund-raising programs.

<sup>41</sup> IFRC (2013):  
<http://www.medyouthportal.org/Uploads/docs/IFRC%20Youth%20Engagement%20Strategy.pdf>



**Figure 27. National Societies in which the Youth and youth volunteer program are part of resource mobilization and recruitment strategies**

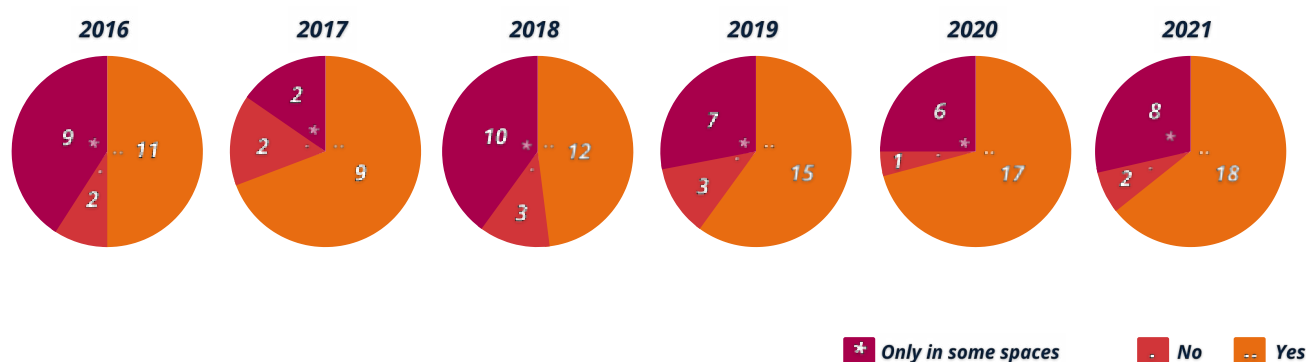


### 3.3.6. Participation of volunteers and young people in decision-making processes

The IFRC's Volunteering Policy states that "National Societies encourage volunteers to participate in decision-making and in designing and improving the work in which they participate" <sup>42</sup>, while the IFRC's Youth Policy states that "To harness the positive contributions of young people, the National Societies must create empowering and stimulating environments that allow young people to participate in decision-making and follow-up action"<sup>43</sup>.

Volunteers (including young people) know the beneficiaries and the communities directly and very closely, and they are also part of the communities they serve. They need to be consulted in the design of the volunteer program and included in decision-making processes at local and national levels. Participatory processes are part of the recognition of their contribution, retention, and identification or appropriation with the decisions taken by the NSs. In recent decades, organizational management and leadership models have been adapting to the way in which different generations are collectively linked to achieving common goals with the vision of forming agile teams, capable of facing changes from a focus on the development of knowledge and skills.

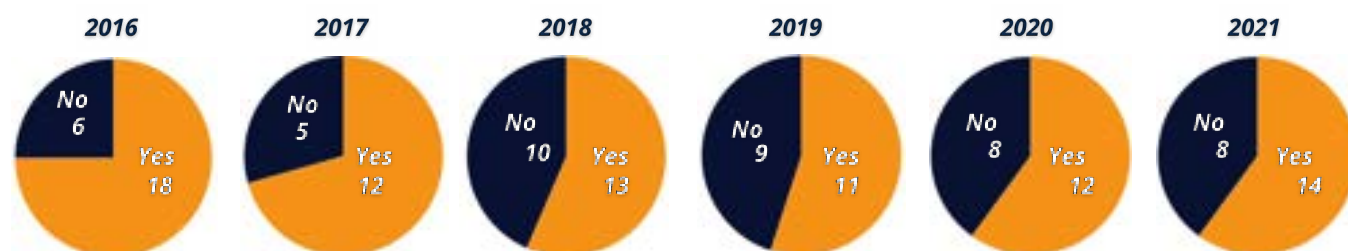
**Figure 28. Is there representation of the volunteer corps at the different decision-making levels of the structure of the National Society?**



<sup>42</sup> IFRC (2011): ibidem

<sup>43</sup> IFRC (2017): ibidem

**Figure 29. Number of National Societies in which the Youth program is represented on the board or executive committee**



The participation of volunteers does not only imply that the National Societies allow them to participate in decision-making processes, but also that there is awareness and information at all levels of the capacity and spaces they have. To ensure optimal performance in decision-making, empowerment and leadership, training must be contemplated through different initiatives and programs that promote it and provide the necessary tools for informed and sustainable participation.

### 3.3.7. Strategies for community engagement and participation in National Society programs

The IFRC's Volunteer Policy states that "the capacity and effectiveness of a National Society is directly related to its ability to mobilize, manage and train volunteers from all the communities it serves"<sup>44</sup>. In addition, engaging people from vulnerable groups as volunteers can be an important way to reduce the vulnerability of communities. Through this approach, the main goal of a National Society is the participation of volunteers rather than the results of the program itself.

The participation of communities in all program areas, such as women, elderly people and people with disabilities <sup>45</sup>, is the foundation for building more resilient and inclusive communities. Over the last years, only a few National Societies have claimed to have mechanisms to attract people from vulnerable groups to work as volunteers:

- 11 National Societies out of 31 in 2021.
- 16 National Societies out of 24 in 2020.
- 11 National Societies out of 20 in 2019.
- 13 National Societies out of 24 in 2018.
- 9 National Societies out of 17 in 2017.
- 14 National Societies out of the 22 of 2016.

Furthermore, through the Y. E. S. strategy, the International Federation states that "young beneficiaries participate in the planning, design, delivery and review of Red Cross programs and services. The movement supports young beneficiaries of each age category with opportunities to advance in their personal and professional development so that they can achieve their aspirations and give back to their communities" . The <sup>46</sup>National Societies that feature specific strategies for recruiting young people from affected communities in their Youth Programs are:

<sup>44</sup> IFRC (2011): ibidem

<sup>45</sup> IFRC (2018): ibidem

<sup>46</sup> IFRC (2013): ibidem



- 9 National Societies out of 23 in 2021.
- 6 National Societies out of 20 in 2020.
- 11 National Societies out of 20 in 2019.
- 13 National Societies out of 24 in 2018.
- 9 National Societies out of 17 in 2017.
- 16 National Societies out of 24 in 2016.

### 3.4. Volunteering and youth development, Empowerment, and Protection

The IFRC's Volunteering Policy states that "Volunteerism is the essential foundation for making and sustaining strong National Societies. Both the reach and the effectiveness of a National Society are directly related to its ability to mobilize, manage and train volunteers from all the communities it serves.

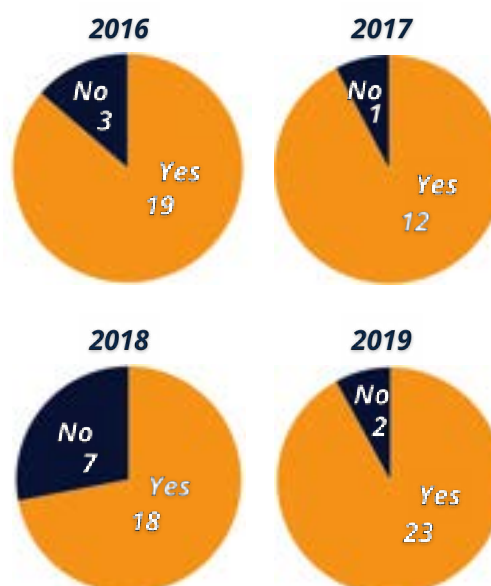
The National Societies have to ensure that their volunteers are properly prepared to carry out their work by providing them with relevant and timely information, training and equipment, feedback on their performance, as well as adequately evaluated safety measures. Besides, they have to insure their volunteers in case of accidents and provide adequate psychosocial support when required"<sup>47</sup>. An efficient youth and volunteer management system takes into account the well-being of volunteers and provides them with facilities, tools and opportunities for their personal, professional and volunteer development.

#### 3.4.1. Training for volunteers and young people

Accredited training and learning help volunteers of all ages to better take on their agreed tasks and roles, motivate them to develop their skills and abilities and help them to take on future roles within the Red Cross and Red Crescent while developing personal and professional skills. The National Societies have many possibilities to provide and organize such training. Below, a non-exhaustive list of training provided by the National Societies in the region is shown.

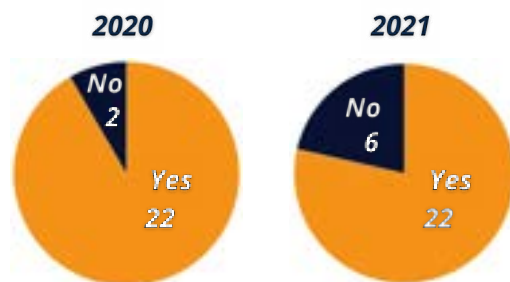
**Introductory training or induction.** It is an introduction for new volunteers with the aim of allowing them to carry out their activities and understand their role within the organization.

**Figure 30. National Societies with established induction processes for volunteers**



<sup>47</sup> IFRC (2011): ibidem

Figure 30 continued ...



**Training for personal, professional, and volunteer development.** It is related to activities that improve awareness and identity, which also develop talents and potential, building human capital with integral development so that they can perform their tasks in a better way.

Most National Societies offer this opportunity to their volunteers:

- 24 National Societies out of 31 in 2021.
- 21 National Societies out of 24 in 2020.
- 22 National Societies out of 25 in 2019.
- 21 National Societies out of 25 in 2018.
- 11 National Societies out of 13 in 2017.
- 20 National Societies out of 22 in 2016.

**PMER Training.** It refers to training in planning, monitoring, evaluation and suitable drafting of reports for the project cycle management. This type of training supports volunteers in the creation and implementation of the Program while providing them with professional skills they can use in the job market. In 2018, only 9 out of 25 National Societies participating in the study extended this training to their volunteers; in 2019, 18 out of 25 NSs reported data about providing project training. By 2020, in which 24 National Societies participated, 11 reported having training in this area.

**Movement Learning Platform<sup>48</sup>** It is an online learning platform for the National Societies' volunteers and staff, as well as partners and general public. It offers free learning opportunities to support the personal and professional development of volunteers and staff. In 2020, 23 National Societies used the Learning platform; some of them even declared the need to disseminate and improve the use of this tool among their volunteers. In 2021, 80% of National Societies reported using the platform.

The IFRC's 2016 Training Needs Analysis, conducted by 1790 volunteers from the region, shows that PMER and Volunteers management are the most selected topics when it comes to training needs in the field of National Society development.

This regional study supports the above mentioned approach. Despite data vary and cannot be fully correlated to define a tendency, it can be inferred that more than half of National Societies do not have training in the project management cycle specifically aimed at volunteers. In addition, it is shown that the gap between professional and personal education and training persists as part of the volunteer development that must be addressed.

**Youth leadership skills training.** Leadership is a positive attitude; it is a way of living, feeling, and thinking, inspiring oneself and others, making everyone fully responsible for their own decisions in life and contributing to a culture of non-violence and peace. By improving youth skills in the areas of volunteer service, non-violent communication, teamwork, and assertiveness and relationship, participants learn to use their individual skills to continue with their own personal and volunteer development.

48 [www.ifrc.org/learning-platform](http://www.ifrc.org/learning-platform)

Since 2015, many National Societies (27 out of 35) have developed some youth leadership-related training and participated in the two “Regional Youth Leadership Skills Development Programs”, held in Solferino in 2017 and 2018, organized by the Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development for the Americas. This regional initiative already has 20 activities led by 11 National Societies and approximately 600 young beneficiaries.

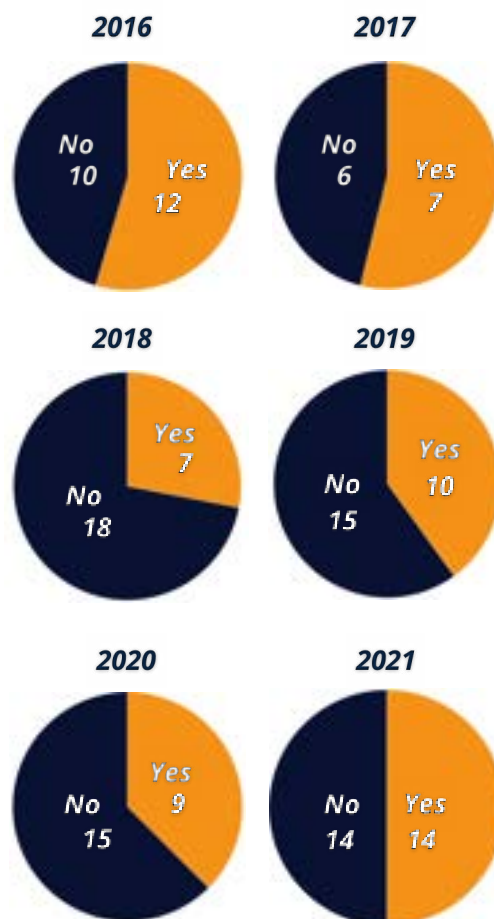
### 3.4.2. Opportunities for Volunteers and the Youth

Attracting and retaining volunteers is one of the major challenges the National Societies are facing today. Assessment and recognition tools, effective communication systems and processes, necessary equipment and promotion of volunteers’ safety and protection are the elements that, with an appropriate training system, can help a National Society to improve the effectiveness in volunteer management.

**Evaluation.** It determines the importance or quality of program results. Proper evaluation of volunteer programs and volunteers themselves, helps the National Societies to reduce uncertainties, to improve effectiveness, and to make decisions regarding the effectiveness of these programs.

Even though evaluation is a crucial element for continuous improvement, it represents a major challenge to the NSs of the region. By 2020, only 9 NSs said they have some mechanism to evaluate the work of their volunteers. In 2021, only 6 of 31 National Societies reported having an evaluation mechanism like this. This situation is a call for rethinking volunteer participation strategies since there are no feedback mechanisms for their volunteer work, nor do the NSs have the tools to know if volunteers are carrying out their work effectively and efficiently.

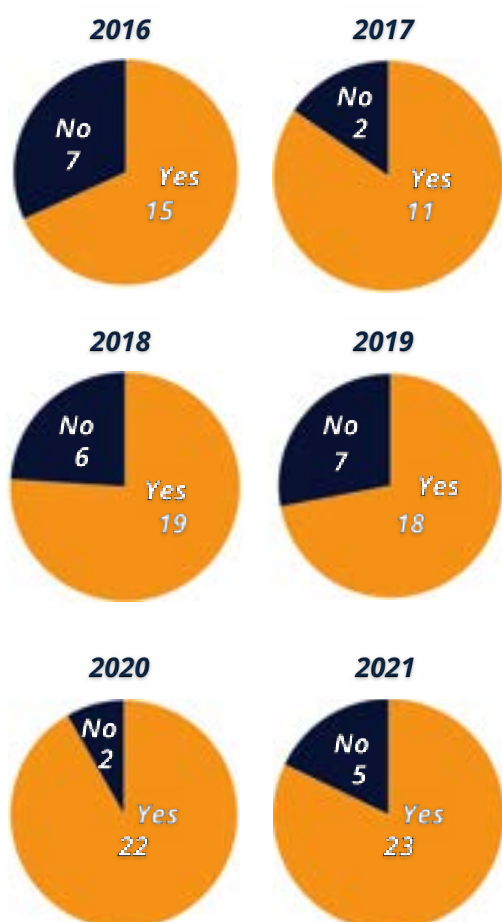
**Figure 31. National Societies with volunteer evaluation mechanisms**





**Recognition.** It is one of the key motivating factors for volunteers (including young people) to remain in the organization. In fact, volunteer retention is closely related to how they are managed and supported. Volunteers stay with the organization when they can relate with it, when they feel satisfied and feel that their work is recognized. "Without volunteers performing some or all of these activities in the National Societies, there would be no National Society"<sup>49</sup>. Recognizing their roles and values is fundamental to their development and retention.

**Figure 32. National Societies with volunteer recognition schemes**



Ensuring well-being, that includes rest and relief in case of emergency care, the culmination of processes in which they participate, and their respective celebration of achievements, psychosocial support, and continuous processes improvement based on lessons learned, also represents actions in response to the value given to people and their work.

**An example of recognition action.** During the International Volunteer Day (December 5), the Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development together with the regional NSs organized a virtual ceremony to celebrate the actions of the Red Cross volunteers in the Americas region. The purpose of this ceremony is to recognize the selfless work of volunteers, in order to motivate them to continue doing their volunteer service day by day and continue to be the transformative power of the Red Cross Movement in the communities they serve. Volunteers are the most important resource to ensure an effective and rapid response to disasters and humanitarian crises, and to guarantee the promotion and strengthening of resilience, prevention and development within communities.

In 2018, with the participation of 12 National Societies for both the category of "Outstanding Volunteer in each National Society" and "Outstanding Group Project in each National Society", the virtual ceremony linked the Red Cross volunteers and staff from all over the continent by sharing experiences and motivational thoughts about their daily commitment. In addition, the National Societies organized physical meetings at their headquarters to participate in the virtual ceremony, and participants had the opportunity to show their actions and programs throughout the region.

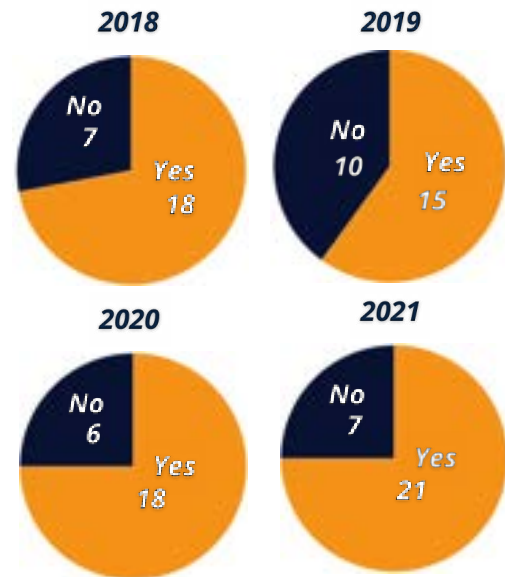
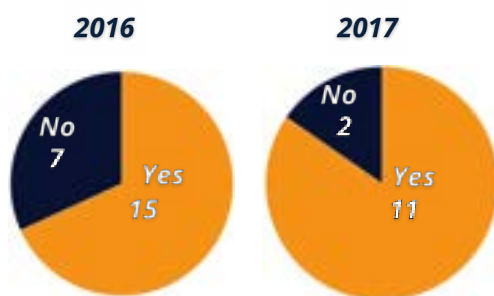
<sup>49</sup> IFRC (2005): ibidem

By 2020, recognitions of the different categories were held in several National Societies of the region. The International Federation also held a live virtual global event for 24 hours straight, in which the National Societies from around the world were invited to nominate and present their winners. The Americas region had a strong presence and participation in the event during the different segments, several NSs were represented by the outstanding volunteers and their focal points.

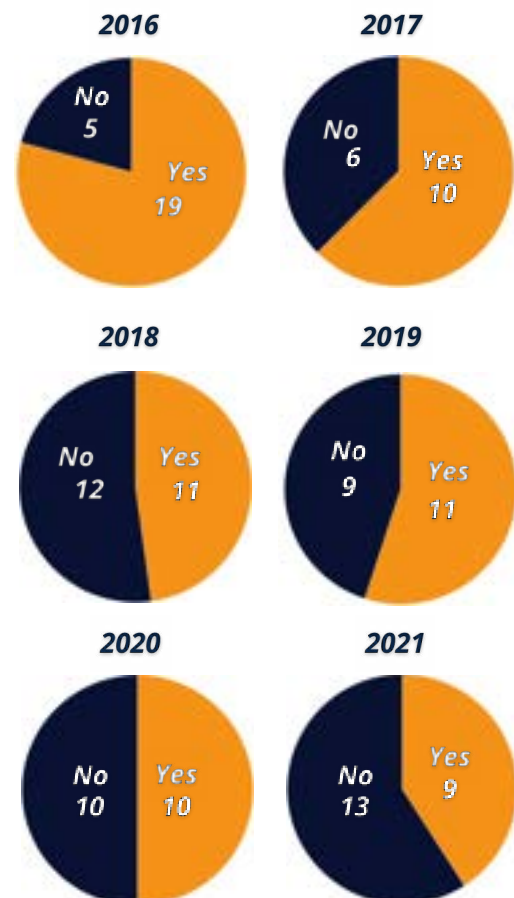
#### ***Social networks and communication channels***

are important means to stay in touch with volunteers and stakeholders, as well as to provide information about the activities being carried out by the National Societies, particularly among the new generations and in the fast-paced technological advancement. Most National Societies have a communication department and use social media to communicate, inform and engage their volunteers and the online community; however, not all of them necessarily have specific volunteer and social media sites or networks.

**Figure 33. National Societies with website or social network for volunteers**



**Figure 34. National Societies with a youth website or social network**



### 3.4.3. Volunteering Development platform (VODPLA)

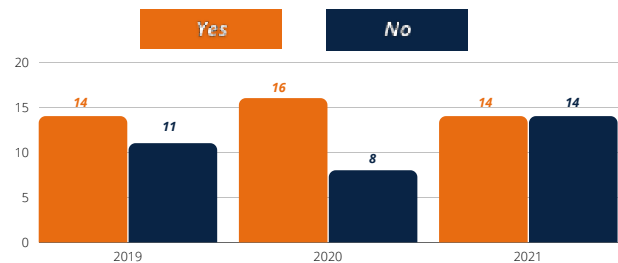
In 2019, thanks to the efforts of different National Societies together with the Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development of the International Federation in the Americas, the Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA) was launched as a collaborative tool for volunteering in the region, which was born from a collective request to have their own volunteering space. This platform has several sections<sup>50</sup>, including:

- Volunteer opportunities, where each NS can post their opportunities.
- Resources on volunteering, such as documents published by the movement or concerned organizations.
- Analysis and reports containing data from studies carried out by the Federation.
- Volunteering in action, a section with an interactive map that shows more than 800 initiatives from the region and new ones are added every week.

In the data consulted for the 2019 to 2021 surveys, a question referring to the use of the VODPLA platform was included. There will be a progressive increase from year to year in the use of the platform.



**Figure 35. National Societies' use of the Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA)**



### 3.4.4. Safety and Security

Volunteers play a key role in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people, and for this reason, they must have a legal and protective framework to carry out this vital work. Every year, volunteers are injured in the course of their humanitarian duties and some tragically lose their lives. "In 2017, at least 36 volunteers died and at least twice that number were injured while on duty with their National Societies"<sup>51</sup>.

Protecting volunteers is the responsibility of all National Societies and the International Federation, and also a right of volunteers. Safety and security should include adequate training, medical and accident insurance, adequate equipment, support, and efficient communication about the existing safety systems to all volunteers.

**Code of Conduct.** This code defines the duties and responsibilities of volunteers and NSs. The code of conduct reflects the National Societies' commitment to its volunteers and clarifies their rights and responsibilities. The latest consultations show that the National Societies that have adopted a Code of Conduct are 20 out of 25 participants in 2019 and 23 out of 24 in 2020. In 2021, it was 24 out of 31 participants.

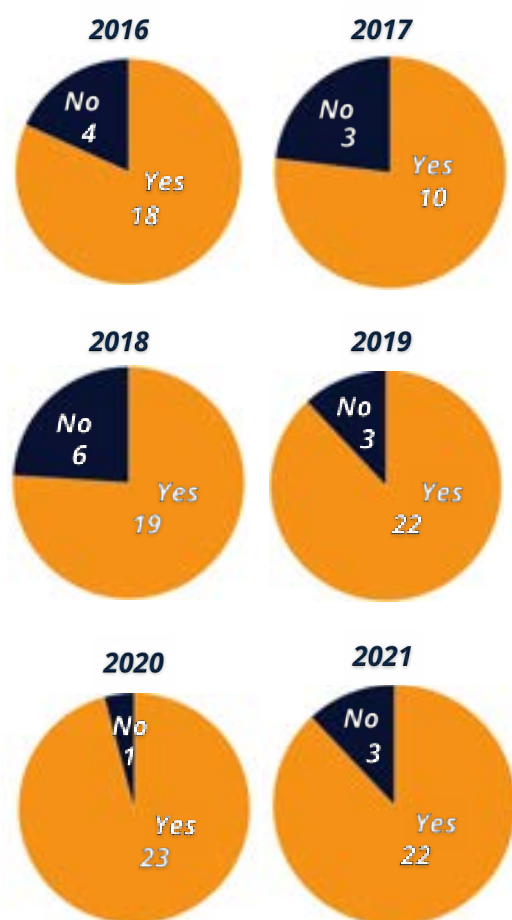
<sup>50</sup> IFRC: Volunteer Development Platform  
<https://volunteeringredcross.org/>

<sup>51</sup> IFRC (2018): Volunteer Insurance Evaluation



**Safety training.** This is a fundamental process before volunteers take up their duties. The National Society should organize this training as part of the safety and security strategy for its volunteers. This type of training helps to explain to volunteers the risks related to their actions, their responsibilities, and how to prevent and respond to the dangers that may arise in the course of their work. The training actions shown below include those related to the use of the Federation's "Stay Safe" course as well as local National Society tools.

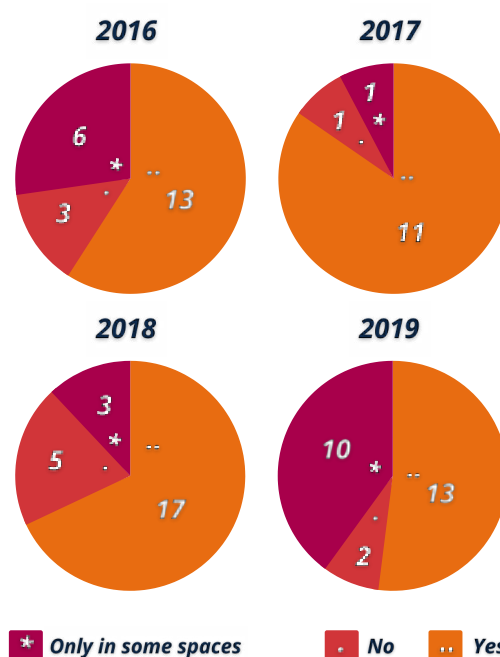
**Figure 36. National Societies with ongoing safety volunteer training.**

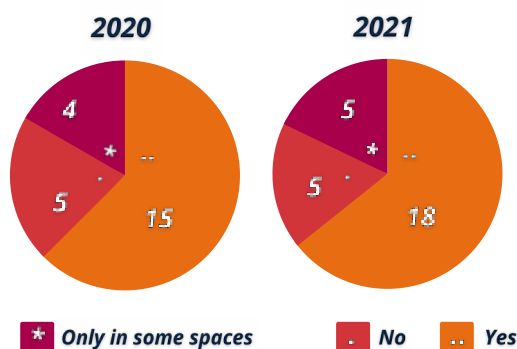


In order to assist the National Societies in this task, the IFRC has developed guidelines and online training processes to promote safety among the NSs and their volunteers. In 2020, 20 of the 24 National Societies stated that they used the IFRC "Stay Safe" training course for their volunteers. In 2021, 22 National Societies of 31 reported using this course.

**Insurance.** Insurance protects the volunteers, the National Societies, and the people working within the Movement. It is important for a NS to have appropriate insurance policies because its volunteers are at risk of suffering an accident in the course of their work. The issue of insurance coverage is very important within the National Societies, because although it is necessary to have coverage for all their volunteers, in the region there exist several challenges to fully comply with this. These challenges are linked to outdated volunteer information, the procedures to obtain coverage, and the necessary funds <sup>52</sup>to guarantee such policies for their volunteers.

**Figure 37. National Societies with volunteer insurance**





The International Federation has established a volunteer insurance scheme to assist National Societies. This scheme is called the "International Federation Global Voluntary Insurance Scheme"<sup>53</sup> and is intended for those National Societies that do not have insurance policies and are responsible for covering volunteers who carry out activities on behalf of their National Society. The number of NSs that have used this plan in recent years is:

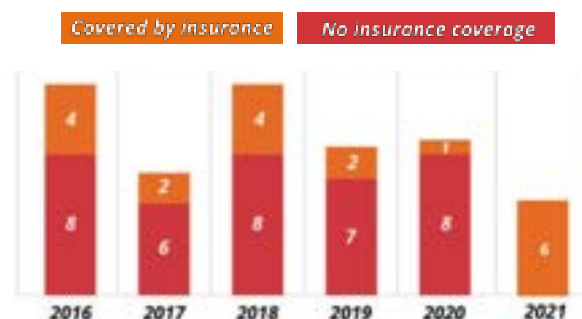
- 13 National Societies out of 31 in 2021.
- 11 National Societies out of 24 in 2020.
- 12 National Societies out of 25 in 2019.
- 12 National Societies out of 20 in 2018.
- 7 National Societies out of 12 in 2017.
- 10 National Societies out of 19 in 2016.

In 2020, out of the 19 NSs that indicated having insurance, either for all their volunteers or only for some, 7 of them stated that the insurance was permanent, 5 had insurance per activity and 7 had both modalities. In 2021, 23 indicated having insurance. Of these 7 were permanent, 9 were by activity, and 4 indicated having both.

#### **Connection with incidents involving volunteers.**

As baseline studies show, most NSs have reported accidents suffered or caused by volunteers (mainly due to the poor condition of the equipment used). As mentioned above, volunteers sometimes do not have insurance coverage, which represents a difficult situation for the National Society, which must deal with the consequences for its volunteers and beneficiaries.

**Figure 38. National Societies that have experienced security incidents**



**Adequate equipment.** This helps volunteers to carry out their work by providing them with protection and tools to respond to the needs of the communities. Concerning the equipment, the tools used and the volunteer training programs are taken into account. Over the past three years, most National Societies have reported providing adequate equipment to their volunteers:

- 26 National Societies out of 31 in 2021.
- 23 National Societies out of 24 in 2020.
- 18 National Societies out of 25 in 2019.
- 18 National Societies out of 25 in 2018.
- 9 National Societies out of 13 in 2017.
- 13 National Societies out of 22 in 2016.

**Psychosocial Support.** It is essential to protect the mental health of volunteers, so spaces where they can express their stress and concerns must be created. The work performed by volunteers can lead to exposure to physiological trauma. The suffering of the people in the affected communities may exceed volunteers' capabilities and preparation, who may feel that their work is useless. In addition, working conditions can cause stress and exhaustion. For this reason, the National Societies must guarantee professional support to their volunteers in order to protect them and ensure the success of their programs. The number of NSs that provide psychological support for their volunteers are:

<sup>53</sup> For more information, contact the Regional Coordination of Volunteer and Youth Development-IFRC Americas Regional Office

- 25 National Societies out of 31 in 2021.
- 22 National Societies out of 24 in 2020.
- 23 National Societies out of 25 in 2019.
- 18 National Societies out of 25 in 2018.
- 9 National Societies out of 13 in 2017.
- 18 National Societies out of 22 in 2016.

### 3.5 The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Volunteering

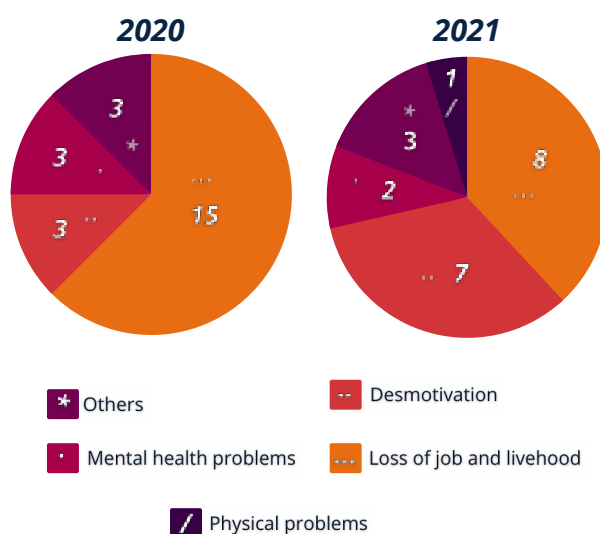
In the context chapter, the global scenario was presented as a world where the COVID-19 pandemic has shown a facet with unexpected challenges, acceleration of technological processes, as well as setbacks in social advances. Difficult scenarios are foreseen for the economic and social recovery process, with chronic and accentuated consequences for vulnerable populations. In this context, the Movement has provided extensive assistance, while continuing to respond to other emergency situations.

Many programs and projects had to be cancelled or paused due to health restrictions adopted by countries, while other initiatives emerged as measures in response to the crisis. Both staff and volunteers, along with other allies, were forced to make decisions, always under the humanitarian mandate and principles. Nevertheless, more than 120 major actions in 29 countries have taken place between March and August 2020 according to the monitoring carried out by the Regional Coordination of Volunteering and Youth Development of the Region<sup>54</sup>.

The study from the year 2020 investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on volunteer management from the perspective of focal points. A full section with questions related to the topic was added and is presented below. The 24 National Societies that participated in the study responded to all the questions in this section, but not all of them indicated the number of affectations. The count of 15 NSs reported approximate numbers; the total amount raised to more than 2,500 affected volunteers.

The main impact reported by the National Societies has been job loss and, as a result, loss of livelihoods of their volunteers; this represents that, out of the 24 NSs participating in the consultation, 62% referred to it as the main consequence.<sup>55</sup> In 2021, most National Societies also reported job loss as the main impact of the pandemic. This shows that the impact indicated by ECLAC on household economy, health and employment has also been experienced by volunteers of the movement in the region. The pandemic has left a gap in the economy of the countries that is difficult to face. The search for the immediate reactivation of the economy through the creation of jobs has been challenging after the private sector resorted to measures such as job layoffs or other formal (and informal) actions to reduce expenses.

**Figure 39. Main impacts on volunteering reported by the National Societies**



**Impact of volunteer participation in organized activities.** Out of the 24 National Societies participating in the year 2020 baseline study, 23 reported having had an impact on the volunteer's participation in different activities due to health risk and social dynamics.

<sup>54</sup> IFRC (2020): Humanitarian Actions carried out by National Societies of The Americas in Response of COVID-19 Pandemic.

<sup>55</sup> CEPAL (2020) : ibidem



**Impact on National Societies programs and projects.** Referring to what has been mentioned above, the program and project activities were also downsized or suspended. 20 National Societies reported having this impact on their operations in 2020.

The social structure around the world has had to modify its dynamics to pave the way towards new ways of “being, doing, and learning” in society. The sectors had to adapt their operations and activities to sanitary measures implemented by each country. The following are the measures adopted by the 23 National Societies to continue providing services to the communities and vulnerable groups of the region, while considering the security and safety of everyone in 2020.

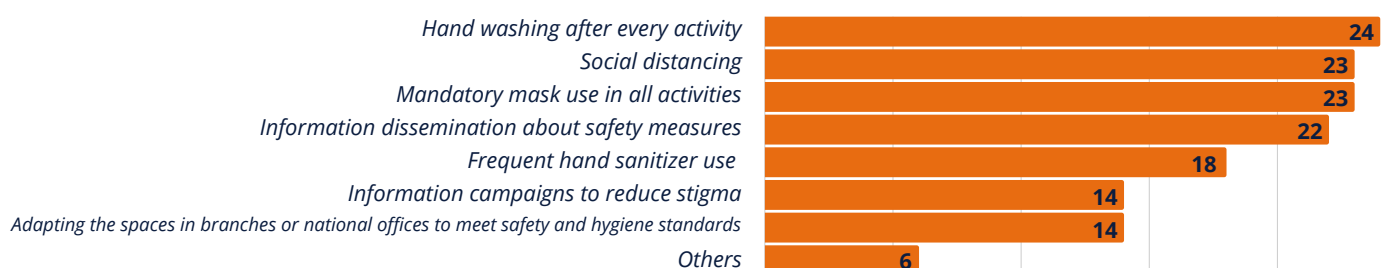
It can be observed that the 23 National Societies that participated in the process have taken basic sanitary measures such as hand washing, physical distancing and the mandatory use of masks. However, both the educational approach to reduce stigmatization and adaptation of workspaces were the least implemented.

**Solidarity funds as an option in the event of a disaster.** This was a measure proposed as part of the Red Cross’ duty of care towards volunteering, and it was born from a global survey that revealed that many National Societies did not have an adequate insurance coverage. This fund, which is managed individually by each National Company, provides financial

compensation for those who do not have insurance to cover the consequences in event of illness or death <sup>56</sup>. Data on insurance coverage in the Americas region can be found in previous sections of this document. The 2020 study considered that this measure should be included in the consultation with the National Societies and indicates that, by the end of 2020, only 7 of the 24 that responded resorted to their own solidarity funds. By 2021, 23 of 31 National Societies reported having Solidarity Funds for their volunteers.

**Virtualization of activities.** This was one of the measures that were necessary to implement in the world, and that increased the use of new technologies exponentially. Many of the local, national and global activities had to be reconsidered to be carried out virtually, which meant that meetings, gatherings, workshops and trainings, and even the promotion of a category on virtual volunteering, had to be carried out through different free or paid platforms. Adapting and providing equipment also includes having platforms to maintain communication between volunteers and beneficiaries.

**Figure 40. Sanitary measures implemented by National Societies**



<sup>56</sup> IFRC (2020): Guidance Duty of Care for Volunteers.

From this perspective, the need for investment in resources on digital literacy in the NSs becomes essential to maintain the operation and diversify the forms of response to humanitarian needs. The International Volunteer Development Forum <sup>57</sup> mentions that the query carried out during the pandemic revealed about 80% of organizations and volunteers in the sample adopting measures to continue providing voluntary service to communities through different tools, such as WhatsApp.

**Figure 41. Platforms or media used by the National Societies to communicate with volunteers during the pandemic**



(Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams)

**Priority actions for volunteering.** Finally in 2020, the National Societies were asked about the actions they consider to be priorities in the context of the pandemic and in face of a gradual process of recovery. More than 40 different approaches were proposed by the 24 National Societies, which were organized in 6 major categories. All of them are directly related to the promotion of volunteer development and institutional processes to ensure an enabling environment to provide a quality and sustainable humanitarian service.

**Figure 42. Priorities for volunteer care during and after the pandemic according to National Societies**



During a crisis with chronic repercussions that highlight inequality and structural problems in each society, climate emergency crises continue to occur in the region affected by violence and migration processes. The work of volunteers represents an invaluable and demanding figure that requires strengthening and development through training and other development initiatives.

Based on the World Economic Forum<sup>58</sup> and the International Volunteering Development Forum's analysis of the context and future scenarios<sup>59</sup>, one of the most significant impacts is mental health, which has an echo in the 2020 baseline study, where the 24 NS's identified mental health and well-being as a priority during and after the pandemic. Livelihoods for both volunteers and people in communities, represent another intrinsic priority in collective well-being. Integral welfare depends on keeping volunteers safe and secure, so measures such as the Solidarity Fund are part of a comprehensive response aligned with the priorities identified by the focal points.

<sup>57</sup> International Forum for Volunteering in Development (2020): Ibidem

<sup>58</sup> World Economic Forum: Ibidem.

<sup>59</sup> International Forum for Volunteering in Development (2020): Ibidem.

In section 3.3.7 it was mentioned that by 2020, only 9 of 24 NSs indicated to have actions to attract volunteers from vulnerable groups; In 2021, only 11 out of 31 National Societies indicated so. It is recommended to increase these actions, especially based on the analysis of the International Forum for the Development of Volunteering which clearly points out the great contribution provided by volunteers from the communities. Emphasis is placed on the bridge that these people build between the community and organizations due to the confidence of being part of the local environment, as long as possible biases that could arise are taken into account.

Finally, the diversification of volunteer activities is imminent in the middle of the global crisis; traditional activities must continue to adapt to new lifestyles and seek to reduce social and digital gaps. The recognition and support that are given to the proposals that arise from volunteering will allow a <sup>60</sup>solid organizational growth. The call for action is always in force, and that is where volunteering in emergencies and rehabilitation in the face of disasters and affectations strengthens the leading role it deserves within the Movement and in societies.

### 3.6. Overseas Territories Facts

The Americas region has 6 Overseas Territories (OSBs): Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. As they are all located in the British Overseas Territories, they are officially part of the British Red Cross, but have a close relationship with the National Societies and International Federation offices in the Region due to their contexts, cultures, and similarities with the countries in the Americas.

For the first time in 2018, the Anguilla Red Cross (25 volunteers), the British Virgin Islands Red Cross (35 volunteers) and the Cayman Islands Red Cross (250 volunteers) participated in the baseline study on volunteering and Youth development. In 2019 only Anguilla (25 volunteers) and Montserrat (10 volunteers) participated in the Volunteering study, and in the case of the former (Anguilla), it also participated in the Youth study. No overseas territories data were reported for the year 2020. In 2021, only the Cayman island Red Cross participated. The results for 2018 to 2021 are presented below:

#### A. General information on National Societies volunteer's management.

*i. In 2018, all three OSBs have a focal point for Volunteering and only the Cayman Islands do not have a Youth focal point. The two Youth focal points of these NSs perform their work without remuneration, as does the Volunteer focal point of the Anguilla Red Cross. In 2019, Anguilla became a paid focal point, and Montserrat reported having a volunteer focal point with a volunteering position and both OSBs report that these people have other functions besides volunteer development.*

*ii. In reference to the volunteer database, in 2018 the databases of both the Anguilla Red Cross and the British Virgin Islands Red Cross are outdated. Likewise, the British Virgin Islands NS does not have a database of its young volunteers. For 2019, the situation of Anguilla did not change, it kept its database outdated and, in the case of Montserrat, they do have an updated database. In 2021, the Cayman islands reported having an updated database system.*

<sup>60</sup> IFRC(2011): Volunteering in emergencies. Protect, promote, recognize.



## **B. Volunteering programs and activities.**

i. The main activities carried out by these OSBs are first aid and emergency response, community volunteering and youth work. For the youth programs, the main activities are based on community services, sex education and sports activities. The three OSBs that participated in 2018 do not develop the YABC Initiative of the International Federation; however, the Cayman Islands Red Cross has a program to promote the activities of the Red Cross among children and students.

ii. Only Cayman Islands Red Cross volunteers have been involved in international activities. The youth volunteers from the three OSBs analyzed in 2018 have not participated in international activities with other National Societies, and only the British Virgin Islands Red Cross actively participates in the Caribbean Youth Network.

iii. Recruitment, retention and funding of volunteers and youth are the main challenges of the three OSBs in 2018. In 2019, the challenge was also related to the retention, coupled with the need for recruitment, training, and recognition of volunteers, by creating greater diversification in programs.

## **C. Guidelines and policies on Volunteering and Youth.**

i. All four OSBs that participated in 2018 and 2019 respectively, include volunteering development in their national strategic plans, while only the Anguilla Red Cross and the Cayman Islands Red Cross also include youth development.

ii. All four OSBs have a volunteering policy, and by 2019 both the Cayman Islands and Anguilla had a proper youth policy in place.

iii. Both the Anguilla Red Cross and the Cayman Islands Red Cross Societies have a strategy for the development of volunteering. And regarding youth, only Anguilla reported in 2019 having a strategy for development in the area, as well as the implementation of the strategy of the International Federation Y. E. S.

iv. Funds for volunteering and youth development are part of the strategy and budget of these OSBs.

v. While volunteers are involved in decision-making processes, young volunteers are not considered in these processes.

vi. There are no strategies to engage the community and increase participation in most OSB programs. In 2019, Montserrat was the only one that reported to have strategies in this regard.

## **D. Opportunities for volunteers and youth in National Societies.**

i. Volunteers and youth training:

- Anguilla Red Cross, Cayman Islands Red Cross and Montserrat Red Cross have adequate induction processes.
- In 2018, all three OSBs, including Anguilla, offered personal and professional development training courses to their volunteers. In 2019, Montserrat reported this type of training in addition to providing project management training; however, for that year, Anguilla indicated not having that training. In addition, the British Virgin Islands Red Cross has a program on youth leadership.

- Similarly, in 2018 the Red Cross learning platform was used only by the Anguilla Red Cross, but for 2019 they did not report its use. In the case of Montserrat, they did use it.

ii. Opportunities for volunteers and young volunteers:

- In 2018, the three OSBs had evaluation mechanisms in place. The following year, the case of Anguilla changed, and together with Montserrat, they reported not having evaluation mechanisms for volunteers.
- Only the Cayman Islands Red Cross had a recognition system for its volunteers in 2018, a situation that changed in 2019 when Anguilla and Montserrat reported having recognition systems in place.
- In 2018 and 2019, the OSBs participating in the study indicated they did have a social network for their volunteers, but it was only until 2019 that Anguilla reported having a specific social network for its young volunteers.

iii. Safety and security for volunteers and young volunteers:

- The four OSBs participating in the study in both years have a Code of Conduct.
- Only the Cayman Islands Red Cross has safety training for its volunteers.
- All four OSBs report having insurance for their volunteers. In 2018, the Anguilla Red Cross in 2018 does not apply it to all its volunteers, but the following year the situation changed, and now all have insurance.
- Adequate equipment is available for the British Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands Red Cross and in 2019; both Montserrat and Anguilla also reported providing it.

- Psychological support for volunteers is available in all four participating OSBs.

Cayman Islands Red Cross



# 4

# CHAPTER

THE VOLUNTEERING AND YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT REGIONAL COORDINATION-  
AMERICAS REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED  
CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES





During the last years, the Regional Coordination has developed several tools and activities to provide better support to the National Societies on the management and development of Volunteering and Youth. The Volunteer Development Framework (VODFRA) <sup>61</sup>, the Youth Leadership Skills Development Program and the Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA) <sup>62</sup>, are just some of the examples of the work carried out by the Regional Coordination together with the National Societies (NSs).



Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross

The Regional Coordination of Volunteering and Youth Development consolidation is based on the fundamental notion that volunteering is the foundation of the Movement's work, and must be considered alongside other aspects to be included in the areas of programming and operations to address vulnerabilities more effectively and ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the Red Cross. The Regional Coordination supports the NSs in developing a favorable internal and external environment that encourages and facilitates the work and participation of volunteers and youth. It also promotes the development of volunteerism and youth leadership in all sectors of civil society. These processes are achieved through the contribution and ongoing support in the areas of volunteerism and youth development, based on National Society priorities.

The overall purpose of the Regional Coordination is to consolidate volunteering and youth development efforts to better assist the National Society's needs, their volunteers, and the vulnerable people they support, to ensure the continuity of a trained and motivated volunteer base, who can better collaborate with vulnerable populations. In addition, there is a need of generating a better perception of the contemporary concerns of youth to motivate their proactive engagement in innovating solutions to social challenges.

The Regional Coordination is committed to provide leadership through continuous learning, innovation, and adaptation. Constant and constructive dialogue with key stakeholders, colleagues, and academic institutions will be fundamental in ensuring the leadership role of the Regional Coordination. Additionally, it works to influence the organizational culture to promote volunteer and youth participation in decision-making and key positions in working towards positive social change. There must be a significant effort to advocate with the NSs to encourage volunteers and youth to participate and create a culture of embracing new ideas.

<sup>61</sup> <https://volunteeringredcross.org/desarrollo/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://volunteeringredcross.org/>

The Regional Coordination follows volunteer trends and manages research processes as needed. The results of these processes will be incorporated into regional strategies and operational plans and continue to disseminate training opportunities and NSs access to information and materials through online processes.

The quality of services provided to the National Societies is ensured through integrated planning and programming, involving all relevant programmatic areas, thematic headlines, and at the country level, by promoting innovation and learning, as well as a continuous process of monitoring and reporting, frequent evaluations programs and overall adaptation on changing conditions and emergent trends. All this is held in coordination and linkage with National Societies in the entire region.

However, the Regional Coordination should adjust the implementation of activities according to the needs and suggestions made by the NSs in the annual Youth and Volunteering Development baseline studies.

Surveys show that in the field of volunteering and youth development, the National Societies need the support of the Regional Coordination as follows:

- Support and training in fundraising for volunteering and youth programs and activities.
- Technical assistance in training for the development of volunteering, as well as document elaboration.

- Peer exchange support and international cooperation activities on volunteering and youth.

These requests suggest maintaining the connection between the Regional Coordination and the focal points of the Region's National Societies, emphasizing the importance of periodic follow-up, monitoring the development processes of each one, and providing the required support.

At the same time, an important milestone should be added to the development of regional volunteering in 2020 and to further promote these actions altogether with the National Societies of the region; that is the inauguration of the ***Interamerican Center for Volunteering Development (ICVD)***. The vision of the ICVD and its services is the result of extensive consultation with the Volunteer Network and the ***volunteer focal points*** in the region, guided by the Regional Coordination of Volunteering and Youth Development in the Americas. This participatory approach ensures that the Center's services are holistic and a true reflection of the regional context. In addition, it aims to maximize and promote existing expertise and knowledge in the region to benefit a wider audience through the ***Volunteer Development Platform (VODPLA)***. At the same time, it intends to create a strong network of experts and working groups that can provide customized services to National Societies in the region, thus leveraging our integrated system of human talent.

The ICVD has two main objectives on a general level:



Panamanian Red Cross

- Support the National Societies in their strategies and objectives to promote and improve volunteer management and development, recognizing that investment in increasing individual NS capacity contributes to collective effectiveness as a Movement.
- Advocate for volunteering as an ongoing fundamental pillar of Red Cross work, repositioning it at the heart of our work while ensuring that our volunteers are protected, motivated, empowered, and engaged.



The ICVD focuses on volunteer learning, innovation, and research, supporting all volunteers in the Americas Region to ensure the strengthening of humanitarian purpose, strategic inclusion, volunteer development and leadership, governance, social action, ethics, and educational skills for sustainability, in broad fields of thought and practice that revolve around the Movement's focus areas and the **Volunteer Development Framework**. The ICVD works and collaborates closely with other technical units, regional and global reference centers, and the International Federation's NS **Volunteering Alliance** to streamline and coordinate volunteer development activities.

The **ICVD** is a pioneering initiative led by the **International Federation's Regional Coordination of Volunteering and Youth Development** based in Costa Rica. However, it is important to highlight that **National Societies** are part of the management team that is consistent with several regional and global Reference Centers.

Mexican Red Cross National Headquarters









# 5 CHAPTER

RESULTS OF 2019 VOLUNTEERING  
AND YOUTH CONSULTATION  
PROCESS



More than 4,800 volunteers from 26 National Societies and 1 Overseas Branch participated in the consultation process about the future of volunteering and youth in the Americas in 2019. Once again, this overwhelming participation demonstrated the volunteer's commitment and enthusiasm to participate in regional decision-making processes.



It also shows that participation must be constantly encouraged to consider the voices of those who are the face of humanitarian work in American communities and the most important stakeholders: our volunteers. During this consultation process, volunteers have their vision of a future model of volunteerism for the Red Cross in the Americas. This consultation process included the following questions:

- What kind of volunteering structure, approaches, and principles would ensure that the Red Cross is relevant to our communities?
- What are some practical steps the Red Cross can take to achieve the type of youth leadership envisioned?
- How is a 2030s America's youth leader?

Findings were presented during the two plenary sessions about youth development and volunteering during the Inter-American Conference in Buenos Aires.

Mexican Red Cross National Headquarters





## 5.1. Volunteering

The summary of the consultation process responses for the volunteering development field is presented below.

### Year 2030: Red Cross Volunteering in the Americas

Volunteering is a central cornerstone and a fundamental part of the Red Cross, being the focus of the Movement's efforts. This implies reformulating that, as a Red Cross without impact at the community level is not relevant, neither is a Red Cross without a sustainable, broad, skilled, motivated, and protected volunteer base. Volunteering is the crucial core to developing a strong National Society.

The movement has a humanitarian volunteer development principle and objective in the communities, which represents a crucial difference as an organization. These aspects must be permanently and continuously strengthened as we are a Volunteer Movement, and we work every day for a strong humanitarian mission under the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.

The responses received from thousands of Red Cross volunteers in the Americas indicate a very positive outlook for the future when they state that volunteering will continue to increase its impact on society and thus cover all fields of action of the National Societies. These are some of the reflections on this subject:

- It will be strong and highly skilled volunteering, to support in any situation and committed to the Fundamental Principles, not only with the institution but also with themselves and their communities to give the best possible service based on the love for humanity and with vital roles for the society's development.
- It will be the basis for the integration of society towards a sustainable development, strengthening human values through organized solidarity first within the community itself and through this example achieving transformation at increasingly higher levels, nationally, internationally, and globally.
- It is expected that Red Cross volunteers will have higher recognition from their National Societies (NSs) and society in general, by having better strategies to spread awareness of the great work they do.
- Volunteering should focus on a proactive position and manage a leadership with greater participation in decision-making in all fields.
- It will be in constant change, and since it is a fundamental cornerstone; it should be stronger and more important as part of its activities, and the NSs should have permanent and well-trained facilities for the structural development of volunteering with clear and effective strategies.
- Volunteers will be interested in learning beyond their National Society which will want to interact and help other humanitarian causes responding to different contexts and cultures, thus making volunteer exchanges essential to enrich their knowledge and motivation.
- The volunteer's profile should be known and their academic, professional, and work background should be used to contribute to the National Society's objective work, to achieve its humanitarian objectives.



Salvadoran Red Cross, Tepecoyo Sectional

At the same time, several volunteers who participated in the consultation shared their concerns and challenges for the future, which, if not addressed in time, could lead to a decline if volunteers are unmotivated and far from the humanitarian principles and objectives. These points allow us to analyze the actions to be taken in the following years:



- The safety and protection of volunteers are fundamental, and the NSs must work directly and permanently on this issue. The contexts of extreme violence in the region expose volunteers to constant dangerous situations. It has been stated that the NS authorities should provide more support in this area. Due to this context and to guarantee their safety, volunteers currently and in the future prefer not to go to certain work areas. We must primarily ensure that volunteers are protected at any moment, with the necessary training, insurance, equipment, and preparation.
- Promotion of volunteering and cooperation: communities have limited information about the work of the Red Cross, and in many places, we are increasingly linked as part of the government.
- As time goes by, volunteers become depleted, and if there is no responsible volunteer management by the year 2030, the Red Cross will have a significant decrease in the number of volunteers.
- Even if the NSs fully invest on this area, it must be considered that people who volunteer may have less time to provide humanitarian assistance because of the need to work for their resources and subsistence in society.
- It is important to consider that some volunteers will intermittently give their time and motivation will be a challenge because of any difficulties in the organizational climate in which they are working, they will quickly decide to withdraw to avoid facing unnecessary stressful or exhausting situations. It means that they will further analyze the place where they will spend their time under the question: Why should I be in a place where I am not appreciated or respected? It would be better to go somewhere else. This implies giving special attention to promoting their participation in the decision-making structures and their functioning.
- The National Society's governing authorities must have a clear objective on this point and be aware that support by itself is insufficient, so they must allocate the necessary resources and attention. Otherwise, there is a possibility that volunteers lose interest and migrate to other organizations to volunteer their time.
- If the actual tendency continues in most National Societies branches, volunteering will decrease since, nowadays, many people are looking for financial or in-kind remuneration for performing some activity. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a real culture of volunteering where practices that go against the principles of being and doing volunteering are eliminated.

Within the responses, there is a tendency to expect that people's trust in the institution will be restored, recalling the Fundamental Principles to keep the confidence, putting aside political interests within the National Societies and focusing on volunteering as the core of humanitarian action.

Similarly, it is expected that in 2030, volunteers will be better trained, taking into consideration competencies in the development of humanitarian work with high integrity standards in the provision of volunteer service and empowered in each National Society, understanding that they are the means to fulfill the Movement's mandates.

Likewise, the use of new technologies will be fundamental for the integration of new volunteers. For example, the use of social networks will help to massively recruit volunteers specialized in all areas of the organization more effectively and diversely. In the same way, training through technological tools will allow the development of skilled, committed volunteers, who will have the tools and strategies to teach and train others from their National Society.

### **2030 Red Cross volunteering: providers of services or agents of change?**

All the people who participated in the consultation have a strong positive vision regarding their performance in the next decade because most of them believe that volunteers will continue to provide services, but they should focus on being agents of change in their communities. Through the different volunteer services established and focused on solving the needs of their community, they will be able to become agents of change.

Considering that volunteering should be key in decision-making and not just "following instructions", it is necessary to implement tools for their constant preparation in a variety of specialties, as well as the development of soft skills, with constructive evaluations to improve their participation in the community and at the National Society level. In this sense, several responses received are focused on the following:

- To visualize themselves not only as providers of service but also as agents of change; to be people with the initiative to act from prevention, ensuring support to the neediest communities, creating community resilience to develop preparedness for any humanitarian eventuality or disaster that may compromise people's lives and health.
- Volunteering should contribute to establishing preventive services and programs that improve the quality of life of its community members.



American Red Cross



- Vision on volunteering has to be further expanded to stop considering volunteers as providers of services, and start seeing them as agents of change in society, through a mentality and strategies shift that begins at home and is expanded out into society.
- To train agents of change, it is necessary to identify how to develop programs that respond to current and future humanitarian challenges, such as climate change, mobility, and, more broadly, sustainable development goals.
- A future vision consists in training the population to know what to do in case of an emergency and thus, to think of Red Cross volunteering as a leader in emergency preparedness, disaster, and community resilience.

It also highlights the factor of volunteer motivation to be agents of change, because if there is no recognition or spaces that promote the integral development of volunteers, they could interpret a wrong message, considering that their services within the Movement only represent a labor force, instead of being part of a change that can benefit the National Societies. For this reason, demonstrating the value of volunteering within the Movement is an action that will reduce volunteer attrition in the branches. The strengthening of this factor is fundamental, remembering that volunteering is the main core of the Red Cross as they are the ones who provide support to the National Societies in the successful implementation of their programs, assisting vulnerable people.

The 2030 volunteer vision should be based on providing the necessary tools (soft and technical skills), so all people who join volunteering can identify themselves as agents of change. In the same way, volunteers should be involved in decision-making in all areas of the National Society to strengthen the culture of healthy, solid, and sustainable volunteering.



American Red Cross  
Puerto Rico Chapter

## Core community issues: volunteering perspective

There were different responses in this survey. Many volunteers expressed the importance of conducting a context analysis to determine the needs of the different communities to be able to work with them, as a prevention, during (immediate response), and after situations. In addition, the Red Cross Movement's work, principles, and objectives should be promoted to raise awareness and acceptance in the community, as well as the need to create campaigns for more community members to want to volunteer with the institution.

Additionally, volunteers believe that the capacity of the branches must increase to face humanitarian needs and therefore be able to provide effective and efficient assistance to the communities. Currently, it is not possible to cover all the needs, which means that the focus should be on responding to the real challenges in specific areas of the communities and providing quality services. Moreover, it is essential to be at the forefront through courses and training for volunteers since providing a quality service at an optimum time will depend on the installed capacity that has been developed.



Mexican Red Cross National Headquarters

## Retention and recruitment of volunteering towards 2030

Considering that retention is part of the effects of the actions undertaken for the volunteering development, the strategies to retain volunteers should be oriented to make the programs and projects attractive according to two particular aspects:

- The humanitarian needs of the communities.
- *The volunteering interests.*

In addition to offering simultaneously adequate theoretical and practical training, it is essential to create events and spaces for participation where volunteers can express and propose both activities and projects for the communities, empowering volunteers as agents of change.

Additionally, it is necessary to incorporate updated and relevant forms of recognition for current and future volunteers in order to convey the message that their work is valued, respected, and fundamental for the organization. As well as seeking better conditions for them to fully develop their work, this refers to adequate facilities, training and quality equipment, safety, and constant protection.



Uruguay Red Cross

Another element to consider is focusing on the volunteers' needs and providing them support in the initiatives they propose. Most of them want to become leaders, and it is necessary to motivate them with guidance and focused support to ensure that the work they do will be effective and have a greater impact. They should be motivated through innovative projects, programs, and activities that make them feel that their contribution is significant for the development of their communities and for the most vulnerable people while adapting times and modalities required for volunteer service to the current and future social and economic contexts.

New volunteers should be attracted by social networks and the media as allies in the promotion of volunteer work. In the same way, there should be an effective communication on how we contribute to society through humanitarian activities in the countries. One approach is to establish contact days with the community, for example, with school visits that allow children and adolescents to learn about the work of volunteers within the Red Cross. Once people are interested in joining the volunteer program, induction programs should be attractive and short with comprehensive training, and if possible, without any cost for the person. Finally, to ensure a smooth process, follow-up and support programs are necessary to reinforce motivation, monitor progress, and generate a sense of belonging to the institution.

## 5.2 Youth

The results of the responses to the consultation process for the youth development area are presented below.

### Red Cross Youth 2030

Youth participants envision a path of opportunities in the next 10 years, guided towards leadership and active participation. Many challenges are identified with a positive attitude facing the future, positioning participants as the main actors in decision-making in an environment of innovation in the use of information and communication technologies within the Red Cross Movement. In addition, there has been a considerable increase in the number of volunteers, which has always represented a challenge for the Movement.

The responses received from thousands of Red Cross youth in the Americas indicate an encouraging outlook for youth development. This consultative process identified areas in which youth should be involved:

- Leadership.
- Active participation.
- To be the main active members.
- Culture of Peace.
- Technology and innovation.

Several of the responses received on this point focus on the following:



American Red Cross Puerto Rico Chapter



**Leadership**

- With a great sense of empowerment within the leadership of the national and international society.
- Active and committed members in decision-making.
- Highly collaborative teamwork is expected in which each contribution is considered significant and respected for the development of inclusive leadership.
- Leadership formation through continuous training, working, and accomplishing the principles and doctrines of the Movement.
- Highly prepared youth with essential tools to strengthen the demonstrated capacities to have the necessary skills for developing at a social and institutional level.

**Active Participation**

- Active participation according to the connection with their interests. Staying in an organization by 2030 will become a challenge, considering that information access will be immediate, and the union among people will be more difficult to maintain. Young people will be more distant from permanent organizations and will be more convened around issues. Organizations that can read and manage these changes will have an advantage over those that are more rigid in adapting.
- More coercive and competent participation to ensure an environment of greater social inclusion.
- Members more active, autonomous, proactive, and with decision-making capacity, with a more realistic vision.
- Youth as active members in the constant development of their communities, opening spaces for the promotion of self-capacities as leaders in mass leadership.
- Youth in pursuit of greater protection of the communities.
- Support and involvement roles should be followed by constant innovation as a key to attracting new volunteers to the National Societies.
- Setting humanitarian work at the forefront and based on the practice of the Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Volunteerism, Unity, and Universality. Those principles should be the cornerstone in their daily work, and always seeking excellence in participation, contributing to an inclusive society, working as a team and in cooperation, which requires constant work to inspire trust and acceptance by all and in this way be able to access the most vulnerable people.
- It will be key participants in decision making and implementation, with a full commitment in the humanitarian field, responding to the needs of the most vulnerable social group.

**Technology and innovation**

- *With more influence within the National Society, aimed at technological and innovative areas or approaches.*

### ***Youth as committed members***

- They will be committed members in the actions carried out in favor of the most vulnerable people, working in activities according to the Red Cross activities.
- Demographic projections indicate that by 2030 a high percentage of the population will be youth, which allows speculating that most of the volunteers will be young people. And they must have the initiative and motivation to be involved with the organization.
- The participation of young people in the social sphere is increasing every day, this is the result of a generation that is going through different challenges and faces the need to respond and work hard to provide a solution to them. These challenges require involvement, participation, and awareness of changing the world, and constant work to build a solution their own and the next generation. They are and will be the present and future in every nation, hence they are the ones called to respond in all cases of participation in their community.
- They will be agents of change for the masses and will carry the message of humanity to places where it is most needed.

### ***Culture of Peace***

- To work actively in the search of the solutions for problems that affect society, implementing values and human sense.
- Participation is decreasing due to different causes, one of them is being affected by context of violence. The 2030 strategy should focus more on young people for them to get closer to the Red Cross.

### **Beyond 2030: Youth and Leadership**

There are multiple ways to describe a leader, the youth who participated in the consultation process define a leader as someone who will influence and raise awareness in others to strengthen the movement. Someone capable of adapting to changes and continuous improvements, a communicator of information, with empathy and patience for the rest of the volunteers who find it more difficult to assimilate the changes, it will be a person who defends Human Rights, and who builds based on inclusion, eliminating discrimination. It will be someone who walks horizontally with all people while providing clear guidance because it will have a capacity trained in leadership trends to manage people.

### **Actions for the development of youth leadership in the Red Cross**

One of the main actions to be considered is the construction of networks and strategic alliances. Training in leadership, management, and outreach are the main trends. Also, the formation of skills and strengthening them with activities, enabling them to put into practice everything they have learned, as well as giving them the recognition they deserve for all the social good actions they carry out daily. To achieve this, it is proposed to consider training and permanent support in the development of skills and overcoming obstacles. In addition, providing members with freedom to express ideas and manage their initiatives, through the creation of programs for and by young people,

minimizing dividing positions and promoting unity. It will be essential to publicly recognize the value they contribute with the support of digital media, for example. It will also be necessary to have a permanent evaluation and feedback and to extend it to training in work and cooperation with internal networks as a team and external networks with their localities. In general terms, this refers to designing actions for the development of young people, both individually and as a group.

### Youth-designed programs: The Americas Region 2030

These programs are projected with innovation, with renewed ideas to integrate everyone in the participation of the projects derived from the programs and work plans, as well as assertive knowledge of youth reality.

They would be developed in a participatory, inclusive, and dynamic environment, with a more didactic approach and aimed at strengthening practical skills, connected to people's daily realities. Several of the responses received in this area focus on the following: modernization, aligned with the existing capacities and realities, with a community approach, dynamic, participative, and didactic, incorporating necessary technologies.



Cruz Roja Hondureña

### Role of the Red Cross in youth initiatives

People who have participated indicate that the movement needs to open its doors to the youth's new initiatives, by generating spaces in which they have to participate in decision making physically or virtually. Enabling them to explore leadership issues and offering seminars, conferences, or workshops that allow young people to identify their needs within the Movement and how to protect them. Some of the responses received in this area focus on the following: promoting knowledge, motivation, and learning for the development of initiatives and proposals, providing tools at the platform level to facilitate courses, promoting the participation of young people in decision-making spaces, generating less controlled virtual and physical spaces, with more economic and technological resources, independence for the development of their community, spaces for peer mentoring and exchanges.

Mexican Red Cross National Headquarters







# VACUNAR

EN MEMORIA DE TODOS LOS  
QUE MUERON CON ESA OPORTUNIDAD

# Closing Remarks

A central idea made from previous studies and still valid is the need to adapt to a changing scenario that presents great challenges for National Societies and volunteer and youth management. These challenges are not only in the development of programs and projects for the care of people in vulnerable situations but also in the recruitment of volunteers to meet these needs.

The challenges of social organizations that involve volunteers in their operations, along with a lack of planning in volunteer management in the National Societies, have led to a stagnation in the number of volunteers or a contraction, according to more pessimistic analyses. This reduction or stagnation in the volunteer body is a wake-up call for National Societies and leads to reflect on strategies for attracting and retaining volunteers. There must be a willingness to innovate, implement, and decide what is best for the organization as a whole to fulfill its ultimate purpose: humanitarian work.

However, the challenge is not to engage as many volunteers as possible, but to ensure a qualified volunteering body for the performance of the humanitarian activities. This can be achieved through the creation of volunteering profiles and job descriptions to facilitate the recruitment of ideal volunteers for this humanitarian task, and that responds to a clear recruitment strategy, with inclusive and attractive insertion processes that consider characteristics of context, culture, gender, age, interests, and all that are necessary for potential volunteers.

With the release of the **Volunteer Development Framework (VODFRA)** in 2019, volunteering development is being established providing coherence within a logical framework. This framework includes the different tools, experiences, and initiatives in volunteering that have been developed by the International Federation and National Societies in the Americas. This guide for the NSs allows them to establish guidelines that are clear and capable of responding to the environment in which they are developed.

In the same way, the National Societies already have available the Volunteering Development Platform (<https://volunteeringredcross.org/>), which is a direct response to the requests, requirements, and needs of the National Societies in the region. This has been achieved thanks to the support of different National Societies who have participated in the review processes and have given their ideas on how to improve this tool. The platform focuses on three main fields:



Honduran Red Cross



- **Knowledge management.** Providing personalized support to the decision-makers of the National Society and volunteer development, with guidelines, learning opportunities, training, practical tools, manuals, key documents from the International Federation and other National Societies, such as volunteering policies and strategies or case studies.
- An **interactive map** of volunteering activities and projects that shows the humanitarian initiatives, activities, and projects carried out by volunteers in the region. This helps to demonstrate volunteer work according to current areas of focus and shows the impact of volunteer work on communities and their actions.
- Supporting the NSs in the management of **volunteers in emergencies**, offering volunteer opportunities in any country to recruit new volunteers, and seeking funding for NS projects.

The effort made to achieve VODFRA, and the Platform will be reflected as soon as the National Societies use the tools to strengthen their volunteer development and management systems at national and local levels. By the first half-year of 2021, more than 800 initiatives were published in VODPLA about undertaken actions by different NSs in the region.

Another important remaining challenge is the involvement of volunteers in decision-making processes, as it is essential for the effective implementation of programs and projects as well as to keep them relevant in a dynamic national and international context. The strength of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement relies on its volunteers, in the knowledge they provide to communities, and in their capacity to represent vulnerable populations and target audiences of community projects.

In this regard, it is fundamental to transfer this representation to the decision-making levels of the organization. The political participation of volunteers in the institutional life of National Societies is low. Two factors may explain this phenomenon: an institutional legal framework that does not have mechanisms for this purpose and the absence of a culture of participation. The creation of spaces for collective construction, with an intergenerational dialogue, permanent training, constant follow-up evaluations are actions that encourage the participation of people in volunteering.



**Bolivian Red Cross**, President of Potosí Branch: eng. Janneth Laguna, President of La Paz Branch: Dr. Reynaldo Ayala, Responsible for Relief and Disaster: eng. Alex Segovia



One of the main concerns from the National Societies, gathered in previous studies and seminars, is the high volunteer turnover in the Red Cross. This situation is experienced by most of the NSs in the Americas and is mostly due to the lack of appropriate structures and volunteer management that promote the constant motivation of volunteers.

From the previous studies, it is possible to identify two determining factors for the retention of volunteers: continuous training and motivation, both areas in which there is a pending debt at the national and regional levels. The motivation of volunteers can be boosted from the recognition of volunteer work as well as from the granting of opportunities for individual development. The Red Cross must guarantee its volunteers optimal conditions for their volunteering service to avoid the obvious consequences of the lack of trained and motivated volunteers. Nowadays, there are new ways of learning and service, where the digital era opens up interesting options that can be explored by the NSs.

Furthermore, it should be guaranteed that they perceive an individual benefit for their voluntary participation, which can be at the personal, professional, academic level or other forms of personal development. There are also tools for volunteer self-training provided by the National Societies and the International Federation. Previous baseline studies and surveys show that not all volunteers are aware of or have access to these tools. Therefore, generating actions to respond to this means providing information about the existing tools and training spaces, and complementing them with the development of innovative local and regional actions that allow developing individual skills to strengthen more the capacity of volunteers considering background, training, and facilities within the movement. Innovating and being at the forefront is part of what has been pointed out in several consultations.

Volunteers can be in situations of high vulnerability during their service for the Red Cross. Annually, there are reported incidents of volunteers being injured or losing their lives in the course of their duties. It is the responsibility of the National Societies and the Federation to minimize risks to volunteers. Several tools have been designed for this purpose, including safety training through the "Stay Safe" courses. However, the Americas region still has a pending debt in terms of training on safety, psychosocial support, insurance, and, in some cases, quality equipment for volunteers. This should be one of the priorities in volunteer management.

In addition, it is important to emphasize that they work in several different environments which require them to be aware of the local security situation to stay safe while minimizing the risks they face and increasing their capacity to always provide humanitarian services.

***In this context, considering the International Federation's policy on voluntary service, the duty of care is not an optional extra; it is an obligation for all National Societies and the International Federation.***

The role of volunteers in emergencies is increasingly complex. In the emergency environment, staff and volunteers are exposed to trauma, loss and devastation, injury, and even death. They may find themselves comforting survivors in the initial stages of shock and grief or providing survivors of violence with their first encounter with someone who can understand and give a human perspective to inhumane actions.

Volunteers can work long hours in challenging emergency environments, often putting their own needs aside. At the end of the day, they often feel inadequate to help beneficiaries dealing with the tragedy they are facing. In addition, as members of the affected communities, volunteers often work close to home and may experience the same loss and grief in their families and communities as the beneficiaries they assist.

In some circumstances, this means that volunteers are also victims, and it must be a priority for the Red Cross to ***"help those who help others first"***. In other words, as it is said in airplanes every day, 'Put your oxygen mask on first, before helping others'.

Regarding this, if a Red Cross volunteer is a victim/beneficiary they should receive the same support that we are providing to the public in general. This includes cash transfer initiatives, livelihood support, shelter, etc.



Cruz Roja Argentina

The Red Cross has built its prestige and public recognition both nationally and internationally, thanks to the work of volunteers who perform acts of solidarity with love and responsibility to help those who need it most. The human resources network that covers the length and extent of countries in all continents of the world is part of the wealth and strength of the Red Cross. Each member of this network provides services based on humanitarian values, keeping alive the spirit of voluntary action. Therefore, it is our most fundamental duty to protect them in all circumstances and we even have a greater obligation and responsibility to them when they are also victims during a disaster, emergency, or crisis.

Peer-to-peer exchanges have proved to be a powerful tool for the promotion of good practices and exchange generated through experience in humanitarian aid. The baseline studies highlighted this practice. And although it has become widespread in recent years, not all National Societies put it into practice. The International Federation must facilitate these knowledge-sharing processes and encourage National Societies in this direction.

There are considerable institutional challenges that threaten the proper development of volunteering in the Red Cross in the Americas. As an organization, the responsibility is to ensure the structure and tools necessary to motivate, protect and train volunteers. This responsibility entails a constant review of the management of volunteering in the NSs and the Federation. Generating academic studies with updated statistics allows us to know the composition and structure of the volunteer corps and, in this way, better understand the needs of volunteers and measure the impact of our work in the communities and volunteers involved.



It is important to emphasize the importance of National Societies being involved in the research and diagnostic processes carried out by the Federation, to have more representative data and be able to get closer to the reality of the development of volunteering in the region. It is fundamentally important to know the challenges and improvements presented by the different National Societies from the different countries, as a process in which solutions can be built together.

National and local volunteer focal points are essential for a healthy volunteer management system and for carrying out each initiative proposed. Their guiding and connecting function should be so essential so that each SN has a stable person and is provided with all the necessary support in its management process. Healthy relationships between hired personnel and volunteers are part of a healthy, safe, and necessary environment for humanitarian service. This analysis is a reminder of the great human and professional capacity that exists in each SN in the region and that cannot fail to be strengthened and valued.

The crisis produced by the pandemic of the COVID-19 in the context of permanent and historical regional challenges may represent the opportunity to implement the changes required to have a healthy volunteer organization, where all people are protected, motivated, trained, and participating in humanitarian actions from a collaborative perspective and understanding each other within the social fabric. Organizations that adapt to change nimbly, without separating from their principle and vision, will be able to maintain and even expand their capacity for social impact during any crisis.

Panamanian Red Cross



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CEPALSTAT. "Main Figures of Latin America and the Caribbean." 2022. <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>.
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. América Latina Ante La Crisis Del Covid-19. 2020.
- Caribbean, Economic Commission for Latin America and the. "ECLAC: At Least 2,795 Women Were Victims of Femicide in 23 Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017." news release, 2018, <https://www.cepal.org/es/comunicados/cepal-al-menos-2795-mujeres-fueron-victimas-feminicidio-23-paises-america-latina-caribe>.
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean: Femicide or Feminicide." 2019. <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/femicide-or-feminicide>.
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Social Panorama of Latin America. Santiago: ECLAC, 2020.
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Statistics. 2015.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Everyone Counts. 2018.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Global Volunteer Insurance Scheme.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Guidance Duty of Care for Volunteers. 2020.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Guidelines for Red Cross and Crescent Youth Networking. 2013.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Humanitarian Actions Carried out by the National Societies of the Americas in Response of Covid-19 Pandemic. 2020.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC Strategy 2020. 2010.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Approach to Promoting a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace. 2011.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. 2030: The Future Red Cross and Red Crescent Solferino Academy, 2018. <https://solferinoacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ENStrategic-session-development-of-S2030.pdf>.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Volunteer Insurance Evaluation. March, 2018.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Volunteering in Emergencies: Protect, Promote, Recognize. 2011.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Volunteering Policy. 2011.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Volunteering Policy Implementation Guide. 2005.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. World Disaster Report 2018: Leaving No One Behind 2018.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Youth Engagement Strategy. 2013.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC. Youth Policy. 2017.
- International Forum for Volunteering in Development. Covid-19 and Volunteering for Development. Impacts, Innovations and Implications. 2020.
- International Labour Organization. Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work. 2011.
- McCurley, Steve, Rick Lynch, and Rob Jackson. The Complete Volunteer Management Handbook. 3. ed. London: Directory of Social Change, 2012.
- Pictet, Jean. "The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross." International Review of the Red Cross 19, no. 210 (June 1979): 130–49. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020860400019872>.



- United Nations. Statistical Yearbook 2018: Sixty-First Issue. United Nations Statistical Yearbook (Ser. S). UN, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.18356/d78978fd-en-fr>.
- United Nations. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals Report. UN, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.18356/214e6642-en>.
- UN OCHA. Global Humanitarian Overview 2019. United Nations, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789214030768>.
- UN OCHA. World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2018. World Humanitarian Data and Trends. UN, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.18356/67e53b6d-en>.
- United Nations Volunteers. "Overview - Volunteerism: The Thread That Binds." In State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2018, by United Nations Volunteers, 8-13. State of the World's Volunteerism Report. UN, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.18356/14b33d1a-en>.
- World Data Bank. "Population, Total." 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.
- World Economic Forum. The Global Risks Report 2021. 16th ed., 2021.



## APPENDIX: Table of participation of the National Society in surveys conducted by year and area.

National Society	Year											
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Volunteering	Youth	Volunteering	Youth	Volunteering	Youth	Volunteering	Youth	Volunteering	Youth	Volunteering	Youth
Antigua and Barbuda	X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X
Argentina	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
The Bahamas		X			X		X		X	X		
Barbados		X			X				X	X	X	X
Belize			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Bolivia		X		X			X	X			X	X
Brazil	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Canada	X				X	X	X	X			X	X
Chile	X	X			X	X					X	
Colombia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Costa Rica	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cuba	X	X					X	X				
Dominica					X	X				X	X	X
Ecuador	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
El Salvador	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
United States	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Granada					X	X	X		X		X	X
Guatemala	X	X		X					X	X		
Guyana		X								X	X	X
Haiti	X	X		X			X	X				
Honduras	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jamaica					X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Mexico	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nicaragua	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Panama	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Paraguay	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	
Peru					X	X		X	X		X	X
Dominican Republic		X		X		X						X
Saint Kitts and Nevis					X	X		X	X		X	X
Saint Lucia		X				X	X	X	X	X		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Suriname	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X
Trinidad and Tobago	X	X			X			X	X		X	X
Uruguay			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Venezuela	X				X	X					X	X
Total	22	24	11	16	26	26	25	20	24	20	31	23





# FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

1

***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.

2

***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.

3

***NEUTRALITY***

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

4

***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.

5

***VOLUNTARY SERVICE***

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

6

***UNITY***

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

7

***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.

# GRAPHICS INDEX

<i>Figure 1. Is there a National Volunteering Policy in the country?</i>	13
<i>Figure 2. Number of National Societies that participated in the consultation processes between 2016-2020</i>	15
<i>Figure 3. Number of Volunteers in the Region in the period from 2016 to 2020</i>	26
<i>Figure 4. Average volunteer hours dedicated to humanitarian service in each National Society</i>	27
<i>Figure 5. Does this National Society have a Volunteer focal point?</i>	30
<i>Figure 6. Does this National Society have a Youth focal point?</i>	31
<i>Figure 7. Age of Focal Points</i>	31
<i>Figure 8. Gender Focal Points</i>	32
<i>Figure 9. Time performing the role</i>	32
<i>Figure 10. Years of Experience of the Focal Point within their NS</i>	32
<i>Figure 11. Professional Areas of Volunteer Focal Points</i>	32
<i>Figure 12. Does the National Society have an up-to-date database of its volunteers?</i>	34
<i>Figure 13. Does the Youth Program have an up-to-date database of its young volunteers?</i>	35
<i>Figure 14. National Societies that conducted a survey of satisfaction or identification of volunteer needs</i>	36
<i>Figure 15. National Societies with staff and volunteers trained in the YABC youth program</i>	38
<i>Figure 16. National Societies replicating activities based on this initiative (YABC) at the branch level</i>	39
<i>Figure 17. Is there an educational, dissemination, and/or training program for children, teenagers, and young adults that promotes and reinforces the commitment of young people to the Red Cross?</i>	39
<i>Figure 18. Have there been exchanges with other National Societies in the area of volunteering (programs or internships)?</i>	40
<i>Figure 19. Have there been exchanges with other National Societies in the area of volunteering (programs or internships)?</i>	40
<i>Figure 20. National Societies that contemplate the volunteering development within their strategic plan</i>	42
<i>Figure 21. National Societies that have a strategy for involving young people in programs and projects</i>	42
<i>Figure 22. Number of NSs with a Volunteer Policy</i>	43
<i>Figure 23. Number of NSs with a Youth Policy</i>	43
<i>Figure 24. Number of National Societies that have a volunteering strategy</i>	44
<i>Figure 25. National Societies that have a strategy for involving young people in programs and projects</i>	44
<i>Figure 26. National Societies implementing the Volunteer Development Framework (VODFRA)</i>	45
<i>Figure 27. National Societies in which the Youth and youth volunteer program is part of resource mobilization and recruitment strategies</i>	46

# GRAPHICS INDEX

<i>Figure 28.</i> Is there representation of the volunteer corps at the different decision-making levels of the structure of the National Society?	46
<i>Figure 29.</i> Number of National Societies in which the Youth program is represented on the board or executive committee	47
<i>Figure 30.</i> National Societies with established induction processes for volunteers	48
<i>Figure 31.</i> National Societies with volunteer evaluation mechanisms	50
<i>Figure 32.</i> National Societies with volunteer recognition schemes	51
<i>Figure 33.</i> National Societies with website or social network for volunteers	52
<i>Figure 34.</i> National Societies with a youth website or social network	52
<i>Figure 35.</i> National Societies' use of the Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA)	53
<i>Figure 36.</i> National Societies with ongoing safety volunteer training	54
<i>Figure 37.</i> National Societies with volunteer insurance	54
<i>Figure 38.</i> National Societies that have experienced security incidents	55
<i>Figure 39.</i> Main impacts on volunteering reported by the National Societies	56
<i>Figure 40.</i> Sanitary measures implemented by National Societies	57
<i>Figure 41.</i> Platforms or media used by the National Societies to communicate with volunteers during the pandemic	58
<i>Figure 42.</i> Priorities for volunteer care during and after the pandemic according to National Societies	58





Follow us:

[www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org) | [twitter.com/ifrc](https://twitter.com/ifrc) | [facebook.com/ifrc](https://facebook.com/ifrc) | [instagram.com/ifrc](https://instagram.com/ifrc) | [youtube.com/user/ifrc](https://youtube.com/user/ifrc) | [tiktok.com/@ifrc](https://tiktok.com/@ifrc)



**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in the communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most complex and hard-to-reach environments in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives and have opportunities to thrive.