



INTERAMERICAN CENTRE FOR VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENT (ICVD)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest 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 so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

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

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Volunteering Development in the Americas Region

Volunteering development is a dynamic system that guides the well-structured growth of every aspect within the concept of volunteering and should not be deemed as a fixed process just to improve volunteering management. Since the capacity and effectiveness of a National Society (NS) is ultimately dependent on its ability to mobilize and manage volunteers from the communities it serves, volunteer development must be an essential component in their organizational structure.

To achieve this, volunteering development incorporates two key perspectives for action: on the inside it ensures National Societies are volunteer-friendly and implement the **Volunteering Development Framework (VODFRA)**, while working on the outside promoting a volunteer-enabling environment where National Societies (NSs) operate.

Volunteering development is an overarching term. Sometimes it is mistaken only as volunteer management.

Volunteering development requires long-term investment and commitment from a National Society. It begins with analyzing the current state of how the National Society organizes, manages and support its volunteers. Taking the analysis into a process to put in place, improve or change the practice of volunteering within the organization. It is about looking into all organizational levels as well as the current practice of the various programmes and activities run by the National Society.

A key guidance for the National Societies is the **Volunteering Policy** created by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) which defines what is a volunteer, discusses roles and responsibilities as well as set out the responsibilities of the National Red Cross Societies towards their volunteers.

The **IFRC Volunteering & Youth Development Unit** of the Americas Regional Office, offers National Societies strategic support in this area through a multi-level approach guided by key documents, training, manuals and tailored assistance.

The **IFRC's Strategy 2030** places great emphasis on the importance of voluntary service at the heart of community-building. It recognizes that communities are not static places of housing, but living, changing organisms that we must build and strengthen together. This approach involves working in the promotion of legal, social and economic policies that encourage and value volunteering more strongly within society; that is, within a community of communities.

As living trends continue to change how people volunteer, including more informal and non-institutionalized ways, the IFRC aims to bring volunteering development to the forefront of National Societies, providing tools, resources and technical assistance to promote the value of volunteering and improve volunteer recruitment and retention, which means improving the quality and reach of the services National Societies provide to vulnerable people.





Context

The recent **Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas**¹ and the **Global Review on Volunteering**² stresses the importance of volunteering management systems and explains the challenges and opportunities in volunteering and youth in the region. To better recruit and retain volunteers, we need to drill down to the branch and community levels to understand how the massive societal changes occurring locally are changing the way people can engage with volunteering, identify current motivational drivers of volunteers, analyze the various obstacles to the recruitment and retention of new volunteers and young people, tailor and test ways to enhance volunteer motivation and performance (there is a strong correlation between levels of motivation and performance). This requires grounding our thinking in a realistic theory of volunteering, clearly stating and testing our assumptions on what motivates people from these communities to volunteer.

In 2019, more than 5,900 volunteers and young people from 28 National Societies and 2 Overseas Branches (OBSs) participated in a consultation exercise that aimed at involving them in the planning process of the International Federation in the Americas. The results of these consultations were presented during the annual planning week to (Partner National Societies (PNSs), National Societies, managers of all units/department in the region and used during the planning activities.

It was highlighted that more than 60% of volunteers see fostering and creating a culture of non-violence and peace as the main humanitarian and development need in their countries and consider that volunteers should be working on this. Also, more than 4,800 volunteers and young people from 26 National Societies and 1 Overseas Branch participated in the consultation process on the future of volunteering and youth in the Americas. Once again, this overwhelming participation has demonstrated the commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers to participate in the decision-making processes in the region. It also shows us that we must constantly encourage participation so that we can involve the voices of those who are implementing humanitarian activities in the communities. Our most important assets are our volunteers.

Volunteers are our backbone and greatest resource throughout the RCRC Movement. However, we are far from where we should be in our investment and support to volunteers and young people. As demonstrated in the Analysis on Volunteering and Youth in the Americas and in the Global Review on Volunteering:

- Adapting to a changing scenario presents great challenges for National Societies and to the volunteering and youth directors/coordinators. These challenges don't only arise in the elaboration of programmes and projects for assisting people in a situation of vulnerability, but also in the recruitment of volunteers to meet those needs.
- However, the challenge isn't to attract as many volunteers as possible, the real challenge is to guarantee a qualified volunteer base that is motivated, protected, recognized, involved and empowered that response to the needs of their communities for the development of humanitarian activities. This is achieved in part through the creation of volunteer profiles and descriptions of the work that they would like to carry out in order to facilitate the recruitment of suitable volunteers for humanitarian work. For this the use of new technologies and tools is a key element in order to promote a more comprehensive development of new volunteers and programmes.

1 <https://volunteeringredcross.org/en/analisis-y-reportes/>

2 <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/volunteers/global-review-on-volunteering/>



- The involvement of volunteers in the decision-making processes is fundamental for programmes and projects to be implemented effectively and to maintain relevance in a dynamic national and international context. The strength of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement lies in its network of volunteers, in the knowledge they bring from the communities and in their capacity to represent vulnerable populations and the target public of community projects. It is essential to transfer this representation to the decision-making levels of the organization. The political participation of volunteers in the institutional life of the National Societies is low. Two factors can explain this phenomenon: an institutional legal framework that has no mechanisms for this purpose and the absence of a culture of participation.
- The motivation of volunteers can be promoted from the recognition of voluntary work as well as the granting of opportunities for individual development. The Red Cross must guarantee its volunteers optimal conditions for their voluntary service in order to avoid the obvious consequences of the lack of trained and motivated volunteers. Therefore, it must be ensured that volunteers also receive an individual benefit for voluntary participation (this is not related at all with monetary or economic benefit), which may be at the level of personal, professional or academic areas.
- There are great institutional challenges that threaten the proper development of volunteering at the Red Cross in America. As an organization, it's our responsibility to guarantee the structure and tools necessary to motivate, protect and train our volunteers. This responsibility entails a constant review of the management of volunteering in the National Societies and in the Federation. Generating academic studies with updated statistics allows us to know the composition and structure of the volunteer body and thus better understand the needs of volunteers and measure the impact of our work in the communities and the volunteers themselves.
- It is important to emphasize the importance that National Societies (NSs) have to be involved in the research and diagnostic processes carried out by the Federation, in order to have more representative data and be able to get closer to the reality of the development of volunteering in the region. It's vital to know the challenges and improvements presented by the different National Societies from different countries, as a process in which solutions can be built together.

Responding to lessons learned

While some National Societies have made significant improvements, there is still the need to improve volunteering development and the roles that volunteers, and especially youth, have in the organisation. The challenges for the NSs in the Americas stem from both external and internal factors.

Risk drivers include violence, inequality, high levels of migration, climate change, requiring new ways to be a volunteer and limit competition from others in the non-profit sector. In the coming years rapid social change resulting from democratic changes, evolution of the civil society, emerging corporate social responsibility and the increase of large urban areas in developing countries will continue to influence volunteering in both positive and challenges ways, and National Societies need to be capable to adapt to this evolution of constant change.

There are also several key internal factors there that require attention. Amongst these are the lack of volunteer participation in decision making, institutional life of the National Societies and in the electoral process of governing bodies.



Lack of volunteer activities and the capability to develop activities which are considered relevant on a local level is also main concern. Volunteer retention is a problem throughout the continent with high rates of volunteer turnover in most NSs. Very few NSs have a recruitment strategy nor are they working strategically with volunteer profiles and job descriptions. This results in questionable work quality because of unclear expectations, lack of volunteer evaluations, poor or inappropriate use of individual volunteer skills and limited diversity among the volunteers.

On the positive side training, as a key incentive for the volunteers, is well established and appreciated in many NSs. However, training in soft skills, volunteer leadership as well as conflict resolution and group dynamics is not often included.

Many NSs in the Americas have had difficulty in meeting these challenges. However, these challenges also represent great opportunity. There is a spectrum of opportunities that could attract a diverse group of volunteers. As lifestyle trends continue to change how people volunteer, including more informal and non-institutionalized ways, the Red Cross must advocate for legal, social and economic policies that encourage and value the role that volunteering plays in enhancing overall social wellbeing at local, national and regional levels.







The Volunteering & Youth Development Unit

The creation of the IFRC Volunteering & Youth Development Unit (V&Y Unit) in the Americas Region is based on the fundamental notion that volunteering forms the foundation of all our work and must be seen as a crosscutting issue to be included in all areas of programming and operations in order to address vulnerabilities more effectively and to ensure Red Cross relevance and effectiveness. The V&Y Unit supports National Societies and its partners to provide favourable internal and external environment that encourages and facilitates the work and engagement of volunteers and young people and promotes volunteerism and youth leadership across all sectors of civil society. This is achieved by contributing to and providing a consistent support on volunteering and youth development based on priorities of the National Societies.

The V&Y Unit is an integral part of the Policy, Knowledge and Strategy (PSK) Unit of the Americas Region which provides oversight and guidance to achieve the volunteering objectives.

The overall purpose of the V&Y Unit is to consolidate efforts on volunteering and youth development to better address the needs of National Societies, their volunteers and the vulnerable people we serve so as to ensure the continuity of skilled and motivated volunteer base so that they, in turn, can better meet the needs of vulnerable populations. In addition, there is a need to generate a better appreciation of the contemporary concerns of young people and motivate their proactive engagement to innovate solutions to social challenges.

The V&Y Unit is committed to providing leadership through ongoing learning, innovation and adaptation. Constant and constructive dialogue with key stakeholders, colleagues and academic institutions will be fundamental to ensuring the leadership role of the unit. The unit works to influence an organizational culture to promote the participation of volunteers and youth in decision making and assuming key positions in working towards positive social change. Significant effort will be placed on advocating with NSs to encourage volunteers and youth to participate and to create a culture of openness to new ideas.

Much of the work being done by the V&Y Unit will be through their work in mainstreaming volunteering and youth into other programming areas. Staff will, therefore, interact closely with other units at the Americas Regional Office to advocate for volunteer and youth inclusion in programmes and provide technical support on all issues related to volunteering and youth development.

The V&Y Unit also works in close technical collaboration with the Youth Action and Volunteering Development department in Geneva and forms part of the Global Youth and Volunteering teams. The Unit follows trends in volunteering and commission research as needed. This new information will be incorporated into strategies and operational plans. The Unit continues disseminating information about training possibilities and NS access to information and material on line.

The quality of services to the National Societies is ensured through integrated planning and programming that involves all relevant programmatic areas, Clusters Country Offices, thematic holders and country level, the promotion of innovation and learning as well as a continuous monitoring and reporting processes, frequent evaluating of programmes and adaptation to changing conditions and emerging tendencies. All this in coordination and in conjunction with the Clusters Country Offices throughout all the region, as key agents to engage and support National Societies.

The Interamerican Centre for Volunteering Development (ICVD)

The **Interamerican Centre for Volunteering Development (ICVD)** is a key result of the volunteering strengthening efforts and regional strategies in the IFRC Americas Region to provide better services to National Societies (NSs).

The visioning of the ICVD and its services is a result of extensive consultation with the Volunteering Network and volunteering focal points in the region, guided by the Volunteering and Youth Development Unit (V&Y Unit) in the Americas. This participatory approach ensures that the services of the Centre are holistic and a true reflection of the regional context. Furthermore, it aims to maximize and promote existing experience and knowledge in the region to benefit a wider audience through the **Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA)**. At the same time, it intends to create a strong network of experts and working groups that can provide customized and tailored services to National Societies in the region thereby leveraging our integrated human talent system.

The ICVD has two main general objectives:

- **Support National Societies** in their strategies and objectives to promote and improve volunteering management and development recognising that the investment in increasing the individual NS capacity contributes to collective effectiveness as a Movement.
- Advocate for volunteering as a continued **fundamental pillar** of the work of the Red Cross, re-positioning it at the center of our work, whilst ensuring that our volunteers are protected, motivated, trained and engaged.

Volunteers are central to our humanitarian mandate and operate in a constantly evolving environment. Their contribution to strengthening our National Societies and enhancing community resilience is invaluable and directly informs how effective we are as a Movement. The latest **Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas** and **IFRC Global Review on Volunteering** stress the importance of effective volunteering management systems and describes the challenges and opportunities in volunteering development in the region. Based on these analyses, the Americas Regional Office has consolidated approaches intended to further enhance volunteering development in the 35 National Societies in the Americas by providing an enabling environment where volunteers are protected, motivated and qualified in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations in fulfilment of the ultimate goal of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

In this regard, together with National Societies, several actions have been developed that includes initiatives and tools in order to improve volunteering development throughout the region in line with the Regional Strategies for Strengthening Volunteering in the Americas and the IFRC Global Framework for Action for Volunteering. This initiative is framed within **IFRC's Strategy 2030**, which places great emphasis on building strong Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies through strong and cohesive communities positioning voluntary service at the heart of community-building. Additionally, it is a response to the Red Cross Interamerican Framework for Action and the Buenos Aires Commitment that states the importance to "*Invest in and implement new forms of youth and volunteer development that are inclusive and self-managed, based on evidence, technology and decentralized decision-making processes, reflecting the diversity of each country, with the aim of protecting, promoting, recognizing and motivating volunteers.*"





As trends continue to change how people volunteer, including more informal and non-institutionalized ways, the International Federation advocates for legal, social and economic policies that encourage, recognise and value volunteering more strongly in society.

The ICVD focuses on volunteer learning, innovation and research, in favour of all volunteers from the Americas Region in order to guarantee the reinforcement of the humanitarian purpose, strategic inclusion, development and volunteer leadership, governance, social action, ethics and education skills for sustainability, in broad fields of thought and practice that revolve around the focus areas of the Movement and the Volunteering Development Framework (VODFRA). The ICVD will work and collaborate closely with other technical units, Regional and Global References Centres and the **IFRC Volunteering Alliance** of NSs to streamline and coordinate volunteering development activities.

The ICVD is not a reference centre, it is an initiative pioneered and coordinated by the IFRC Volunteering & Youth Development Regional Unit based in Costa Rica with management and oversight from its Policy, Strategy and Knowledge Unit. However, it is important to highlight that National Societies form part of the management team which is consistent with several regional and global Reference Centres.

Furthermore, in the 10th Meeting of Red Cross Presidents of America, it was emphasized the value of volunteering and the importance of strengthening the role of volunteers in the National Societies to fulfil the needs of our working environment for an effective implementation of humanitarian aid.





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Priorities and key services



Tailored support to National Societies

The main component is the tailored support to National Societies following their specific needs and plans.

The IFRC offers a specific country approach on volunteering development designed by National Societies together with the Clusters Country Offices, and with support from the ICVD, offering National Societies technical support.

A system of technical support

To complement the tailored support plans, the regional approach also includes the development or adaptation of generic necessary tools and the knowledge sharing. An important component in the volunteering development programme for the Americas is to establish a peer-to-peer support in order to share knowledge and to learn from existing experiences in the region. For this purpose we recommend:

- Ensure access to a system of high quality technical support (including peer-to-peer, horizontal cooperation and tailor support) and resources on volunteering including strategic support in volunteering development work.
- Opportunities for horizontal support and cooperation on youth development between National Societies will be encouraged and promoted.
- Act as link between the global initiatives, Regional staff and NSs through the dissemination and guiding the use of general information generated throughout the RCRC system and from other actors.



Strategic Orientation

- Insures the implementation of the Volunteering Development Framework (VODFRA)
- Support the revision and development of volunteering policies and strategies in National Societies that considers the promotion, celebration and recognition of the achievements of volunteers.
- Guide the IFRC's work in the Americas on mainstreaming volunteering and youth in all aspects of Secretariat programming and services and in the long-term planning of the National Societies in the region.
- Creation of analysis and base line studies about the state of volunteer in the region in order to make informed decisions.
- Development of volunteering and youth development regional strategies based on studies and analysis.

Leadership Development and Innovation

- Disseminate and orient NS and Federation units in new trends occurring in volunteering such as corporate volunteering, virtual volunteering, better inclusion of those specific sectors of the populations who want to volunteer (elderly, physically disabled, university students, academics, professionals, school children) and the use of new technology and social media.
- Development of youth leadership by creating opportunities for young people and volunteers to gain programme management experience and plan and lead their own activities, as well as providing opportunities for participation in international arenas. This includes promoting the recognition of youth as agents of change and enable young people to take leadership roles in positively changing behaviours and attitudes in their communities using peer and non-formal educational methods.
- Development of regional recognitions to encourage the motivation of volunteers.

Volunteering in Emergencies, protection and security

When an emergency strikes, volunteers are there. They perform first aid, rescue people from collapsed buildings, drive ambulances, brave flood waters, promote healthy practices and give comfort to those in need.

The ICVD provides tools and guidance in situations when volunteers step out of their normal day-to-day activities and engage crisis, emergencies and conflict, also known as Volunteering in Emergencies.

The essential components of volunteering in emergencies are the preparedness level of National Societies and a sound standing volunteer management system. It considers both the services given to vulnerable people and the needs of volunteers during the emergency, which include psychosocial support and protection from harm through insurance, training, and proper guidelines that orient emergency volunteering.

- Provide a clear legal base to National Societies facilitating the better protection, security and management of their volunteers.
- Encourage National Societies to use the Federation Volunteer Accident Insurance and to leverage and promote the use of the global resources on volunteer safety, protecting the commitment and well-being of volunteers.



- Encourage and promote a better understanding of volunteer in disasters including facilitate learning between members of the Movement.

Knowledge management, Education and Learning

- Insures the use and promotion of the Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA)
- Knowledge sharing: produce, adapt and disseminating manuals, training, tools and good examples on volunteering development.
- The optimization of volunteering management systems based on idea and experience exchanges about volunteer management databases, along with an effective adaptation of the Volunteering Management Cycle to specific context of different National Societies.
- Foster knowledge sharing through the development of online platforms.
- Active promotion of e-learning opportunities such as the Volunteering Development online training module, the basic Red Cross training WORC course and the Volunteer Management training course to all National Societies in the region.

Partnerships, Networks and Movement coordination

- Facilitate the creation of partnerships with educational institutions and other organizations working on volunteering development.
- Coordination with global and regional structures for an ensuring coherence on matters related to volunteering & youth development. E.g. Support of the work of the Global Youth Commission in America.
- Provide tailored support for regional volunteering and youth networks and their representatives.



Main tools of the ICVD

All NSs in the region, will benefit from the ICVD through key activities and tools:

A. Volunteering Development Platform (VODPLA)

The online platform (www.volunteeringredcross.org) has three components:

1. **Knowledge management.** The platform will provide National Society' decision-makers and those responsible for Volunteering Development with tailored support such as guidelines, learning opportunities, training, practical tools, manuals, IFRC and National Society' key documents such as volunteer policies and strategies, case studies, etc. The platform is a tool to enhance collaboration between National Societies and increase the volunteering development skills of managers at national and branch levels to create and adapt their own tools. This area is divided into three sub-areas: **(1) Resources** about volunteering development and management, **(2) Volunteering Development Framework (VODFRA)** for volunteering managers to understand how to implement the framework within their NSs, **(3) Analysis and Reports** that provide update information about the status of volunteering across the region
2. An interactive **Volunteering map of activities and projects** will display the humanitarian initiatives, activities and projects carried out by volunteers in the region. This will help demonstrate volunteer work according to current areas of focus, show the impact of volunteer work in communities and their actions. This map will be completed and updated by volunteers from National Societies directly from anywhere in the region in real time. It is expected that this map will be linked to other regional and global platforms.
3. **Volunteering & projects.** This section is composed of three sub-areas: **(1) Volunteering in Emergencies.** Focused on the external public. The people who register with all their data will be able to offer services during an emergency event. Each volunteer manager of every NS will be able to manage the database online and generate and send notifications to all people registered – e.g. communicating that it is required people to help in distribution centers, inform the interested population about the emergency in the country, etc. **(2) Volunteering opportunities.** The NS will be able to post open volunteering opportunities in their organizations and receive requests about it. **(3) Fund a project.** The NS will be able to post projects that require financial resources. Possible donors can see the options and contact the NS to offer their support.

B. Exchanges and Internships

Since 2015, the V&Y Unit has offered an internship programme which now will be extended to all NSs in the region. The idea is that an interested NS can send key personnel in volunteering development to the ICVD to learn and share their knowledge and experience at the regional level. To strengthen their engagement with other actors in different NS in the region, the intern, will return to his/her NS to apply the experience acquired. The ICVD is located within the V&Y Unit based in the IFRC Office in Costa Rica.

In relation to exchanges, it is envisioned that the ICVD promotes and encourages National Societies to send their volunteering managers to other National Societies for short periods of time to collaborate/learn about specific volunteering development issues. The ICVD will create a database with possible opportunities and match National



Societies that want to join the programme and donors that would like to contribute to internships and exchanges.

C. Network of Experts

The IFRC Americas Region has several individuals with extensive experience that play a crucial role in Volunteering Development initiatives and operations (volunteering in emergencies, protection, motivation, etc.). According to the needs and capacities identified, specific support is proposed to National Societies by these Volunteering Development experts who come from other NS, IFRC and from outside the organization according to their areas of expertise.

D. Working Groups

From time to time, the ICVD will appoint a Working Group to assist with the development of a particular aspect of Volunteering Development according to a particular need. A Working Group is expected to assist the ICVD by producing discussion papers, recommendations, proposals, and other documents for consideration.

The Working Groups could produce surveys to share knowledge; hold peer reviews to facilitate practical feedback on National Society policies on volunteering, regulations and strategies; publish guideline notes identifying best practices in their areas of expertise; and, contribute to policy reforms across the region. The aim is to create favourable conditions that are part of the enabling environment for effective volunteering.

E. Volunteering Labs

Volunteering Development is a crosscutting field that evolves constantly, new ideas and challenges in volunteering management are presented in diverse contexts in different countries to attract and maintain the right quantity and quality of volunteers, the Red Cross Movement needs to be able to adapt to these changes and propose new ways to address the issues, not just in isolation but by developing volunteers and corresponding systems.

Therefore, the ICVD will create Volunteering Labs to adapt, create, experiment and test new initiatives on volunteering that respond to humanitarian needs of the National Societies in the region. The Volunteering Labs can work with government authorities, academia, other volunteering organizations or the corporate sector in order to find the right solution to a specific need. The results and approaches will be shared on the online platform with all National Societies.

The Volunteering Labs will be temporary, oriented towards particular issues and with the objective of producing or adapting something tangible and practical that can be used by volunteer managers or volunteers themselves whilst also generating learning.





Volunteering Development

Volunteering development is a dynamic system that guides the well-structured growth of every aspect within the concept of volunteering, is not a fixed process just to improve volunteering management. Since the capacity and effectiveness of a National Society is ultimately dependent on its ability to mobilize and manage volunteers from the communities it serves, volunteer development must be an essential component in their organizational structure.

To achieve this, the volunteering development incorporates two key perspectives for action: on the inside it ensures National Societies are volunteer-friendly and engaged in practices based on a sound volunteering management system, while working on the outside promoting a volunteer-enabling environment where National Societies operate.

Other specific products and support

To respond to the results of the Analysis of the Volunteering & Youth in Americas, to the needs of the National Societies and the purpose and elements described above, the Volunteer and Youth Development Unit and the ICVD offers to the NSs, IFRC Units, International Organizations and NGOs the following set of products, technical capacity and leadership:

1. Tailored Volunteering Development Workshops and trainings.
2. **Models and examples of policies and strategies of volunteering and youth based on existing global policies.**
3. Model and guides for the diversification of volunteering.
4. **Programmatic standards for the management of volunteering.**
5. Manuals, examples and trainings about Volunteering in Emergencies.
6. **Analysis and research on the situation of volunteering and youth.**
7. Leadership Skills Development workshop for young people.
8. **YABC workshop and trainings (Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change).**
9. Online training on volunteering and youth development.
10. **Materials in the field of volunteering and youth development including tools for the protection and safety of volunteers; tools on how to recruit, maintain, understand and evaluate the management of volunteers.**
11. Models for the development of efficient databases for the management of volunteers.
12. **Implementation of the Volunteer Development Framework (VODFRA).**
13. Training and manuals about the Volunteer Management Cycle.
14. **Regional recognitions to motivate and reward voluntary action.**
15. Regional map of volunteer and youth focal points.
16. **A communication team to showcase the work of the volunteers of NSs.**

Those products are supported by the network of experts on volunteering and youth development, the volunteering and youth networks in the region, the volunteering and youth focal points from the Americas, the YABC Trainers in the region and the IFRC Volunteering & Youth Development Unit in the Americas.





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Working Approach

The general working approach is to give an effective tailored support to National Societies in combination with a regional approach, focusing on the needs and characteristics of each National Society and their specific country plans.

The activity spectrum of volunteering development also includes a binding commitment on volunteering advocacy, supporting National Societies in raising the voice of volunteers and effectively transmitting their issues and concerns to national authorities and relevant stakeholders, and lobbying for a better integration of volunteering to all programmatic areas within the Red Cross.

In short, the ICVD offers new methods, training and techniques to improve both volunteer management and programme-specific volunteering, such as peer-to-peer learning built on formal and informal knowledge sharing approaches and thematic holder support, which ensures the transmission of the volunteerism experience and know-how between Movement partners.

Through the collaboration of Volunteering and Youth development experts from the National Societies, Volunteering & Youth Networks, IFRC Staff and external partners, the ICVD mobilizes its capacities and resources according to a regional dynamic of peer support to respond to requests from NS for technical assistance.

The Clusters Country Offices of the International Federation - a central unit of support for National Societies - are the first line of contact of the National Society that seeks support in Volunteering and Youth Development. Together with the V&Y unit, they coordinate the technical assistance processes offered by the ICVD.

While staff contingencies may grow as new programming areas are warranted based on NSs needs, the preferred work modality will be through the creation, training and support of volunteering and youth networks and through peer to peer and horizontal relationships.

The better use of existing regional sources through shared responsibility allows for NSs to share real experiences and learning, and to work together to find practical and comprehensive solutions to specific issues. It increases ownership by those who are designed to make the most of the skills and knowledge in this area.

Potential risks and challenges

Most of the activities in the volunteering development plans rely on the great involvement and contribution from others, mostly internal but also external resources. It requires the commitment from National Societies and capacity and resources from regional representations as well as the technical department in Geneva.

A challenge is also the imbalance between an increased interest of National Societies to take volunteering development forward in relation to available funds.





How to request the services of the ICVD?

The first level of assistance from the International Federation is represented by the Clusters Country Office and it is through it that it activates the technical assistance mechanism from the V&Y Unit and the ICVD.

In general, the services from the V&Y Unit and the ICVD are free of charge for NSs. If there is a need for a specific product or service that requires investment, this might be assumed by the IFRC or National Societies with their own funds and/or through bi-lateral or multi-lateral projects where the Secretariat may be involved.

The resources required are mainly for (1) the time of the facilitators and experts mobilized and (2) the coverage of the resources necessary for the domestic implementation of the activity.

The availability of services and products depends on the demand of the National Societies and on the availability of specialized people from the International Federation and the network of experts.

There are also other general services from the V&Y Unit and the ICVD that do not involve costs, among others:

- Help Desk services or services for technical consultations.
- Virtual or face-to-face assistance according to travel opportunities.
- Review of proposals, presentations and documents.
- Access to manuals, tools and online platforms or trainings.
- Tailored technical assistance.



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