

Background: Principles and operational values

According to the Finnish Red Cross current strategy, the vision for the Finnish Red Cross is: "WE ARE A BRAVE AND RELIABLE HELPER AT HOME AND ABROAD."

All Red Cross and Red Crescent movement national societies share a set of fundamental principles:

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 human life and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all people.

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.

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.

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.

Voluntary service

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

Unity

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

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.

In addition to these principles, the Finnish Red Cross has defined four operational values. We are an open, service-minded, effective and cooperative organization.

Assignment 1: Developing the Finnish Red Cross Friend Visitor activities.

Loneliness is seen as one of the most significant problems in the Finnish society. Loneliness and the need for a friend and community exist in all age groups. An increasing number of elderly people continue to live at home longer. Loneliness is also connected to the experience of social exclusion and deprivation. Immigrants may need support in creating contacts in their new place of residence. In order to enable wellbeing and safe living in Finland, the Finnish Red Cross has organized Friend Visitor activities for decades.

We will need more volunteer friends to visit elderly people, be friends with young people, meet people living in institutions and prisons and to organize activities for people who have moved to Finland. We will take both women and men into account as people who need a friend and as actors. Our aim is to find an even wider range of ways to serve as a friend. Versatile friend visitor activities include, among others: regular visits by a friend, one-time help, recreation or peer groups and self-help. Versatile friend visitor activities will provide support to a growing number of people. Friend visitors are an important part of FRC's assistance capacity.

- **Discuss the ethical aspects of organisations using voluntary work**
- **Looking at market and other research, what would be potential new target groups that FRC should reach when recruiting new volunteers for Friend Visitor activities.**
- **Create a marketing and communications plan, taking into account ethical considerations, for the Finnish Red Cross Friend Visitor activities.**

Assignment 2: Evaluating and developing the Finnish Red Cross Youth activities.

Most of the Finnish Red Cross volunteers are middle-aged or older. The number of youth volunteers has increased, but the number of volunteers below the age of 29 remains rather low. Social media and new communication methods are in use but have not been able to reach masses of new volunteers. For example the concept of “digital volunteer work” has not yet been defined, but the need for innovation has been recognized.

In its current strategy, FRC has set an ambitious goal to double the number of volunteers and also the number of youth volunteers. In FRC Youth policy the organization strives to build up a new generation of helpers by getting youth volunteers active in disaster preparedness, first aid groups and fundraising.

Currently, Finnish RC provides support and activities for children and youth ranging from first aid activities, voluntary youth groups, camps and youth exchanges to school co-operation projects for international activities. This is done with the help of 1700 active volunteers, 200 youth leaders and 16 staff members.

- Youth groups (13-29 years old) are voluntary groups lead by trained youth leaders. Their activities are based around the needs of the local community, Red Cross principles and different themed campaigns (like Day Against Racism, AIDS day and Road Safety Campaign). Members from youth groups also take part in different international projects and camps. Outreach youth work is also one form of groups' activity.
- Camp activities are organised mainly during summer time. Camps are usually themed around Red Cross activities and are aimed mainly for children. Camps are organised by local branches and youth leaders with a support of the districts.
- Emergency Shelters for Youth: The Finnish RC has five emergency shelters for the young and two Youth Centres. The emergency shelters offer a temporary place for the night and someone to talk to for young people aged under 18 who need counselling and emergency accommodation.

One recent development in Europe is the increasing number of refugees. The discussion in Finland currently is the integration into society and work life. This has led to new challenges also for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Finnish Red Cross. How can the FCR develop their voluntary youth activities to be part of solving this problem?

- **Looking outside current youth activities, what could the Finnish Red Cross learn from other organizations, new trends and other sectors?**
- **How could the Finnish Red Cross reach our goals outlined in their current strategy, by using new methods of communication, new approaches and research?**

- **What motivates young people, what would be the most effective communication methods and how to keep new young members and volunteers active in the organization?**
- **How can the Finnish Red Cross encourage young people with immigrant background to aid in solving these issues?**