



Volunteer Management Cycle

Americas Regional Office

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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 189 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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Introduction

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The **Volunteer Management Cycle** shows a system that supports National Societies in reaching their goals and objectives in terms of volunteer management and is the main element in the “how” we manage volunteers in the Red Cross. In addition, it organizes the efforts of volunteers to fulfill the mission of the Movement.

The volunteer management cycle is an integral part of the **Volunteer Development Framework** (VODFRA) and is within the “HOW” element. For more information about VODFRA, please review the respective document.

The Cycle moves through several volunteer management components, while each component plays an integral role. Communication and evaluation are permanent and continuous aspects of volunteer management and are therefore included in this document.

The cycle is managed at the level of the branches and the volunteer manager of each branch is responsible for this management. At the national level, the Volunteer Coordination provides the respective support.

This document has been developed to be a theoretical and practical guide to be used by volunteer managers at branch (local) level.

Further, each element of the Cycle is explained, and these must be adapted to each reality in each National Society and each branch according to their humanitarian needs. So, questions are presented to serve as guides for the generation of solutions.

This document has been updated and prepared by the **Volunteering and Youth Development Regional Unit** of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the Americas region, based on previous documentation on the subject¹ and experiences carried out with different National Societies.

1 Particularly the document called “The Voluntary Service - Volunteer Management Cycle” IFRC 2004 and 2006



The Volunteer Management Cycle



STAGE I: Imagine

At this stage we imagine, analyze and see the kind of humanitarian needs that exist in the communities and the volunteers that we will need to meet those needs. Without strong branches, we will not be able to achieve the Red Cross mission. Branches are the “home” of volunteers and the first response to the needs of communities.

The biggest challenge facing all National Societies is to ensure the incorporation, preparation, and evaluation of committed volunteers. Volunteers bring with them skills, knowledge, awareness, a presence of the community in the task and the willingness to share in the workload. The Red Cross helps volunteers realize their own aspirations, gives opportunities and delivers benefits to the community. Experience tells us that volunteers are our most effective promoters and network members. A volunteer can play an indirect role (for example, as a member of the board or committee), a direct role as the service provider (for example, as a first aid instructor), to contribute general support (for example, as an organizer of a clinic) or as a member in general.

The primary objective of any plan for the incorporation of volunteers is to ensure its permanent flow.

National Societies employ traditional methods of attracting volunteers. Indirect methods or one-way communication techniques such as advertisements, brochures, media appeals, public speeches and organizational newsletters Direct methods of attracting volunteers require personal contact; and delegated methods include volunteer offices, social service clubs, schools and other institutions that share responsibility for incorporation with the sponsoring organization.

Recent trends in volunteer incorporation programs in some regions include the private sector’s commitment to work together with non-profit organizations. Especially in North America, corporations and unions add a cross element to incorporation. Companies encourage, but don’t require, their employees to dedicate a portion of their work time to volunteer service in the cause they choose. This collaboration results in a positive public image for the company and provides trained volunteers to the non-profit organization. Most people never offer because they never asked. When an employer or a union supports voluntary action, it gives momentum and energy in favor of employee participation. It is part of the challenges as a National Society, to promote corporate volunteering.

Another tactic for adequate incorporation of volunteers is to ask an experienced volunteer to leave their duties, to find a suitable replacement.

How do we find volunteers? Developing an incorporation plan and providing resources for its implementation.

The plan

1. What is the humanitarian need of the community?
2. How many volunteers do we need to meet this need?
3. What is the role of the volunteer?
4. What capabilities are needed?
5. What training is required?
6. How do we incorporate volunteers?
7. Who will take over?
8. What is our schedule?
9. Who evaluates the work?

Since volunteers are the ones who best help us to incorporate new volunteers, the optimal strategy for this is developed and implemented by a team of ad hoc volunteers, with the support of the volunteer manager. This model, apart from its practical implications, has the additional benefit of providing a greater sense of belonging for unpaid staff. The goals of incorporation can be achieved through the efforts of short-term volunteers rather than long-term volunteers.

Short-term volunteers aren't necessarily linked to the organization or its cause at first but tend to offer themselves to a variety of groups - all for a limited time. They want a defined and short-term job and are motivated by individual achievement or professional gain. Short-term volunteers can be linked to specific projects or with special teams that benefit the individual and the organization.

Long-term volunteers are affiliated with the organization and tend to stay for long periods of time. They are motivated with affiliation and with the achievement and identification with the objectives and scope of the group. They frequently grow within the organizational culture and assume positions of authority and leadership.





STAGE II: Planning

At this stage, the analysis is carried out on the need to incorporate already linked or new volunteers, which the Red Cross requires to carry out specific activities, services, projects or programs that aim to fulfill the humanitarian mission.

In the Planning Stage its recommended to consider the following aspects:

- What is the activity to be carried out and what do I want to achieve with it?
- How many are the beneficiaries, where are they located, what are their needs and capacities?
- How many volunteers are needed and for what?
- What is the role of the volunteer in the activity or service?
- What skills, abilities, abilities do volunteers need to have?
- What training is required?
- How do we incorporate volunteers?
- Who will be responsible for supervising and guiding them?
- What is the schedule?
- Who evaluates the work?
- Where will the voluntary action take place?
- How long are volunteers required?
- Budget / financial, technical, logistic resources available?

The participation of volunteers in the planning process opens up new perspectives and gives new impetus. Offering the volunteer, the possibility that he can influence the organization's planning and decision-making means creating a positive impact on his desire to remain involved. More frequently, volunteers who work in the field identify and formulate creative responses to the needs of the community. There are two different aspects of volunteer management that determine the number of active volunteers.

Broadly speaking, these include first, the incorporation and placement of the volunteer, and second, their support and permanence. It is an achievement to have attracted the volunteer, but it requires another achievement: that you want to stay. Competition among nonprofit organizations is on the rise and candidates can choose from endless opportunities. Normally the voluntary service does not include any monetary incentive. However, there are benefits such as support and recognition.

STAGE III: Incorporate or recruitment

Incorporating or recruiting includes two phases.

1. The Call

Of the planned activity, service, project or program, with the established profile of the required volunteer.

Direct Media: Examples

- Through the public relations and human resources offices of companies and industries.
- Through visits to communities, schools or professional associations.
- Program in educational centers that include tours inside the center.
- Associations or interest groups (retirees, youth groups, etc.).
- Announcements at the Red Cross headquarters (National, Branches).
- The web page of the National Society.

Indirect Media: Examples

- Announcements through the media: radio, television and written press.
- Distribution of brochures, flyers, etc.
- Organizational bulletins
- Massive campaigns in educational centers, companies and universities.
- Websites of other related organizations.

2. Incorporation (steps)

- a) Basic induction to those admitted (on Red Cross and the activity, service or project)
- b) Informative meeting with applicants
- c) Individual interviews
- d) Selection of applicants (according to the # and profile required). At this time the necessary references are requested (see next stage)
- e) The signing of the commitment between the volunteer and the SN (adherence to Principles, statutes, regulations, code of conduct, and compliance with technical responsibilities)
- f) Registration and card
- g) Location of the volunteer in the program and/or service area. (see Location / Place stage)



STAGE IV: Admission

Admission to a National Society has to be open to a broad population base, it has to attract its members from among all ethnic, social and other groups in the country, in order to ensure better efficiency in its management. In any case, a principle for admission is non-discrimination in the admission of volunteers.

At this stage, the National Society performs and establishes the respective criteria to be admitted as a volunteer.

While it's true, the Red Cross is open for anyone to volunteer, this doesn't mean that anyone should be accepted. Each person who enters must commit to comply with the Fundamental Principles, Code of Conduct and different regulations of the institution. In other words, the Red Cross must reserve the right to admission. But this must be done with objectively verifiable elements and not become discriminatory processes.

It is from this stage, where we begin to admit volunteers according to the required profile.

The National Society must select the best channels to perform this admission task.

For example, in some National Societies they request some of the following requirements from people who wish to volunteer and are adapted to country context situations:

- Sign the acceptance and knowledge of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.
- Accept and sign the responsibilities, obligations, and rights acquired by volunteering according to a specific profile.
- Accept and sign the Code of Conduct and know the disciplinary elements of the National Society.
- Submit the criminal or police data sheet (this in the countries where it is allowed and corresponds to a real country, however, it should be considered that, if someone had a past with problems with justice, is in a process of reintegration social and already served his sentence, you can't discriminate against that person just for having had problems in his past).
- Letters of recommendation (they can be requested by the volunteers themselves to support their admission and their absence should not be a cause of exclusion if the other requirements are met).
- Recommendations given by other active volunteers of the branch where the person wishes to enter (this must be objective and not become a discriminatory process and the absence of them should not be a cause of exclusion if the other requirements are met).
- That the applicant has completed the respective online training and shows their certificates.
- Presentation of the resume (CV).
- That the aspiring volunteer complies with the due process of admission.

STAGE V: Placement

After having passed the basic induction and the respective selection. Applicants are registered in the database and their respective insurance will be provided. From this moment on they are considered volunteers with all their rights and obligations.

At this stage, the volunteers select in which volunteer program they want to be and from there begin their specialized training.



STAGE VI: Training

It is essential that volunteers receive adequate and sufficient theoretical and practical training on the issues and functions to be developed with the communities or beneficiaries.

The National Society and in particular its volunteer leaders and/or the officials in charge of coordinating the programs, projects, services or activities, must guarantee the quality of that training.

Likewise, the availability of materials, equipment, instruments, etc., necessary for the development of activities and services.

For their part, volunteers have the obligation to attend and participate in all training sessions, perform satisfactorily the tasks, tests or exercises assigned by their instructors, take care and properly use the assigned materials and equipment.

This ensures that the activity or service can be provided with quality and that volunteers contribute efficiently to the achievement of the objectives planned by the National Society.

The training should be evaluated, to determine the degree of knowledge and skills acquired by the volunteers and if they are sufficiently prepared to assume the responsibilities. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to express their opinion and make suggestions on the quality and usefulness of the training received.

Aspects to consider:

- Basic institutional training: Extends and deepens the information given in the induction on the Red Cross.
- The specific training on the activity or service to be performed: Provides the knowledge and skills necessary for the volunteer to adequately fulfill the assigned activity or service.
- Training on the context, the environment: Provides the volunteer with key information on the culture, customs and situation of the community or the beneficiaries.
- It is important to consider whether your activity or service will be carried out in a normal situation, or during or after a disaster. Report on other aspects such as security, geographical conditions, weather, resources available at the site of the activity, etc.

Training and development

The training has three objectives: first, to advance the mission of the Movement, second, to offer the essential knowledge to carry out a program or service and third, to satisfy the learning needs of the volunteers. The traditional responsibility of the Movement to respond in times of disaster and armed conflict requires specialized training for volunteers and paid staff.

Research shows that organizations with updated training and guidance programs have seen an increase in the number of volunteers. In an article, (Volunteers as Customer: A Service Perspective), Saltzman, M., and Sullivan, N. propose that non-profit organizations be conceived as economic agents in charge of the design, management, communication and delivery of experience of Quality for volunteers. The volunteer is considered as the client, the service purchased is the experience of the volunteer, paid in the currency of time and energy donated. If we agree with this thesis, training is essential for effective volunteer management. This is also necessary to understand the new forms of volunteering. In the classic model, the volunteer was a servant (or servant?) Of the Red Cross. The volunteer entered to serve the institution.

In a new paradigm, we can or should see a symbiotic process instead of clientele. In the process, the volunteer serves the mission of the Red Cross and the Red Cross becomes a quality space for the person to voluntarily fulfill their own personal mission of solidarity delivery in a better way, with more quality and with better resources, thus having more impact than if you did it individually. From this point of view, it is the Red Cross that serves the interests of the volunteer, providing a platform to develop their altruistic work and that contributes to achieving the objectives of the Red Cross humanitarian movement.

Learning objectives must be measurable, relevant and verifiable. A trainer, along with the participants, identifies the needs and then designs, facilitates and evaluates the training. Adult learners participate because they want to learn and expect relevant content and effective learning models. They must see some purpose in training and have the freedom to share experiences and knowledge.

Guided learning produces the best results. Those who receive the training impart their knowledge to the trainer and their peers in learning; The trainer imparts his knowledge and skills to the participants while learning from them.

Pre-service training begins from the first contact between the volunteer manager and the volunteer candidate. During the interview, the manager communicates information about the organization, its mission, and purpose, its structure and policies. The volunteer manual provides additional relevant information.

Adults arrive with expectations. Start by finding out what those expectations are. Verify that they have congruence with the training program. It is not possible to meet all needs, so be very clear with the group about what can and cannot be achieved. Set the training objectives together with the participants.

If the training program has been used for a long time, ensure that the materials and resources are up to date and relevant. Many times the materials have outdated ideas and methodologies. Community professionals and experienced volunteers are often willing to participate in review committees and may offer innovative suggestions to improve documentation. Also, include volunteers with experience in the development and design of training programs.

Methods to increase knowledge include lectures, readings, meetings, observations, interviews, group discussions, movies, and videos. Emphasize the areas that require it. The material presented in different ways emphasizes the key points of the training.

Methods for increasing skills include role play, mock situations, couples of experienced volunteers and debutants, and work practice. Give sincere and positive reinforcements whenever possible and always relate the activity to the learning objective.

Regular evaluation of the participants' work and frequent control of their competencies reveals certain gaps in learning. Flexible schedules take into account the need to review in detail the knowledge acquired and improve them as required.

Training during Service is built on the basis already acquired by providing new information and the opportunity to develop teamwork. Monthly meetings where volunteers can share their experiences and encourage each other, consultation sessions where plans are formulated, attend seminars and conferences, ensure self-renewal and motivation of the group. Annual volunteer surveys define the strengths and weaknesses of the management cycle.

In the Americas

The work of the Volunteering and Youth Development Unit (V&Y) of the IFRC Americas Regional Office is based on the fundamental notion that volunteerism and youth are the basis of our humanitarian work and as such, they must be seen as crosscutting issues included in all areas of planning inside the National Societies. The unit aims to facilitate the humanitarian work with vulnerable groups through the development of volunteering and youth, thus ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the Red Cross mission in the Americas. Support to the National Societies in order to properly address the challenges to volunteering management product of internal and external factors is facilitated through the identification of national priorities and the joint work with other units of the IFRC Americas Regional Office in order to include volunteering and youth as essential components of the IFRC and NS.



STAGE VII: Motivate to participate

The motivation to participate is the most important and effective strategic weapon to capture, train and above all keep volunteers.

It's at this stage that the volunteers develop their activity or provide the service with the communities or beneficiaries, in accordance with what is established in the planning and applying the knowledge acquired in the training.

Volunteers don't expect to be considered only as executors or workforce of a service or activity, to participate is more than that: It's to be deeply involved, to feel part of the whole process: before, during and after, it is to express their opinions and feelings about what they are doing and about the way it has been organized, is to have the space to make suggestions, etc.

Participation should be guided by:

- valuation of your opinion on your own role in the organization.
- Constant evaluation of the methodology of the projects.
- The proposal for improvements and innovations.
- Encourage the volunteer groups themselves to establish their own communication channels.
- Encourage the promotion of leaders who represent the opinions of the different groups of volunteers.
- Ensure the presence and participation of volunteers in decision making

For participation to have an impact and positive results, the following must be taken into account:

- The creation of spaces for volunteering, in each project or activity.
- establishment of mechanisms for reflection, discussion, and debate.
- The voluntary assignment specific functions regarding their own participation.
- The rotation of responsibilities among volunteers to ensure leadership promotion and participation in the organization.
- The establishment and respect of democratic methods for the election of leaders.

The leaders or managers of the volunteer must continuously monitor the volunteers during the activity or service to ensure that everyone is participating, to advise them, answer questions and supervise the quality of the activity or service they are developing.

For this its recommended to make periodic consultations with the volunteers and beneficiaries - preferably at the end of each day - to give an opportunity to express the degree of satisfaction, limitations or aspects to improve in the next opportunity.

Satisfaction surveys among volunteers and beneficiaries

- Periodic meetings with those responsible for programs and/or projects, with the volunteers and with the beneficiaries
- Published documents and reports available to volunteers, officials, donors, technical partners, authorities.

STAGE VIII: Support

The needs and wishes of the volunteer are not satisfied because a particular activity is interrupted and there is no effort to replace it or orient the volunteer towards another alternative within the organization.

lack of training and support for the volunteer leads to a disappointment and finally to a separation from the organization.

The excess of commitments or unrealistic expectations regarding the time and resources of a volunteer takes away the pleasure of giving and shows a lack of respect for the volunteer by the organization.

Lack of planning can lead to greater incorporation of volunteers than the positions to be filled. The organization must use its volunteers effectively.

The National Society develops its organizational culture over time and therefore controls the meaning given to the voluntary service. The management of volunteers and the recognition of their efforts have a direct relationship with their permanence in the organization.

The needs and wishes of the volunteer may be dissatisfied because a particular activity is not offered or interrupted. Transition training can be useful in reorienting (and retaining) the volunteer.

The investment of time and energy in incorporating, training and supporting volunteers is significant, but the work doesn't end there.

All people have basic security, performance and approval needs. In order for volunteers to maintain and extend their participation, these basic needs must be met.

A volunteer needs to feel that:

- My needs are compatible with the mission of the National Society.
- My contribution makes a difference.
- They take into account my available time and energy.
- I participate in the planning.
- I receive support in the performance of my responsibilities.
- My skills improve.
- I am part of a team.
- I have a nice place to work.
- People know me and call me by my name.
- They reimburse me for my pre-approved expenses.

Additionally, the following needs must be met:

- I feel that the Society has a commitment to include people of all ages.
- I know what they do with the funds we have obtained.
- People take the time to explain why they do things in a certain way.
- It is a safe place to test my ideas.
- I can behave according to my age.

Permanence also means making life easier for people. Among the considerations that will assume more importance in the retention of volunteers in the future are childcare and flexible training schedules.



STAGE IX: Recognize

Most people feel compensated with the feeling of belonging to an organization that facilitates their personal growth and the achievement of their expectations of:

- Obtaining training
- Personal projection
- Group relationship
- Satisfaction with the development of the activities entrusted and that meant a good contribution to a good humanitarian cause

At this stage, the National Society of the Red Cross expresses to the volunteers who have participated in the activity, service or project, the pride they feel in having them, the importance of their participation in achieving the planned results and the commitment to continue supporting initiatives that promote the strengthening of volunteering.

That expression may be accompanied by a detail: Certificate, diploma, institutional pin, etc. This will depend on the resources available.

It's important that the recognition activity is published internally and externally by the means available to the National Society (Headquarters and/or Branch) (website, billboards, contacts with the media: radio, press, TV).

For recognition to be effective, it is recommended:

1. Do it publicly
2. Do it in a motivated and sustained way
3. Do it periodically



That volunteer is recognized for:

- The utility of the service it provides
- The activity that develops
- The record of their services
- The degree of commitment
- The effort to train
- The chances of being a member and of accessing management positions

This recognition tends to be expressed through established Red Cross / Red Crescent traditions - awards, courses, expense reimbursement, special functions. Although respondents did not mention other forms of recognition, it is understood that many of these are normally used. Recognition stands out as one of several possible motivators (others mention realization, the challenge of a job, greater responsibility, growth, and development) that can influence satisfaction and improvement to perform the job.

Among the ways of giving recognition include certificates, brooches, and plates according to the service. Traditional methods are already established, esteemed and meaningful ways to recognize the commitment of volunteers towards the objectives of the Movement.

However, creativity and innovation are important when looking for other ways to praise the efforts of the volunteer. Practical training, and not only theoretical, presents the first opportunity to validate the skills and potential of the volunteer. By communicating to the volunteer that this experience is as valuable as a paid experience, through attitude, and by writing down and evaluating the effort, we are demonstrating affirmative action. Other ways to show appreciations are the annual quality and quantity reports for the volunteer's resume. Similarly, recognition can be shown through a selection to attend conferences, seminars or courses run by the Society. The promotion, with an appropriate title and new responsibilities, communicates the affirmative action. From time to time, experienced and qualified volunteers are placed in positions as paid staff.

Awards for special purposes, when you can serve while receiving personal satisfaction include field visits, opportunities to promote the Society within the community and participation in leadership positions.

Some personal forms of recognition include a presentation to influential people within the Society, letters of recommendation from members of the Board for special achievements, sharing information and soliciting suggestions. The celebrations are excellent opportunities to thank. Sensitivity to the needs of others can be communicated in many very simple ways - a birthday card, a talk, a warm smile, a pleasant workplace, a few words of praise, or just say "thank you."

The recognition needs of young people include pre-service training records and participation in programs, recounting their experience for the curriculum, letters to influencers, adjusting service needs to their available time, opportunities for share experiences with other young people, membership in the board or a working group, academic credit for a course and letters of reference or recommendation.



STAGE X: Evaluate

Evaluation is a participatory, interactive, objective, respectful and constructive process that pursues the following purposes:

- Know if the objectives and results of the program, project, service activity that were planned were achieved in order to improve the living conditions of the communities or beneficiaries.
- Know if the community, the beneficiaries, and the volunteers are satisfied with the work done, the meaning that this work has had for their personal and collective development.
- Know what has worked well to maintain and improve it, and what has not worked well to take corrective action.
- Know the level of fulfillment of the commitments acquired by the volunteers and based on that give the respective acknowledgments and recommendations to improve performance.
- Apply corrective and/or sanction measures for breach of responsibilities, previously established in the rules of the commitment agreement, and in the statutory or regulatory norms of the National Society
- Compile the lessons learned and that these become a source of knowledge and learning for current and future volunteers, for volunteer leaders, for officials and executives of the National Society and for the community itself or the beneficiaries.
- Know how the assigned financial and logistic resources were used.

Who participate in the evaluation?

- The coordinator or person in charge of the activity, service or project.
- The volunteers.
- The beneficiaries of the communities
- Other people or entities involved (donors, cooperators, local authorities, etc.).

Who evaluates?

- The person responsible for the activity or service
- An expert person or entity that does not belong to the Red Cross: If the resources exist or if so established.

The results of the evaluation of the activity or service will be available for the same volunteers, for Red Cross officials and managers, for donors and partners and for the audit.

The results of the evaluation of the participation and performance of the volunteers should be made known individually to each one and give them the opportunity to reflect and express their point of view.

Volunteer Performance Evaluation

The performance evaluation of a volunteer is different from the evaluation by working hours. A system of performance evaluation by objectives or achievements must be promoted where each volunteer is evaluated as to what contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the Red Cross, whatever the hours that this effort has meant. Also, this goes directly to the responsibilities and obligations of the volunteer profile and hence the first performance evaluation should be born.

Volunteers can self-assess their performance through surveys or questionnaires. Each person qualifies their skills and determines in which areas they have strengths and in which they need to improve. The volunteer also has an opportunity to communicate their desire to serve in other functions within the organization. Service areas must also be evaluated. How does the volunteer see the operation of the program? What suggestions do you have to improve it? How do you rate training, support, and communication? Volunteer self-assessments are of utmost utility to determine training needs during the service or to improve program design.

Peer evaluations, among couples of volunteers, is a little threatening way to evaluate each other. In any evaluation, a standard format must be prepared and the results are shared only between the two volunteers or between the volunteer and the volunteer manager. The volunteer must know the standards for evaluation used with paid staff, have access to the results and the opportunity to discuss them. Feedback is also used as a method to evaluate performance.

Clients or beneficiaries/participants of a program evaluate performance through a program evaluation form. Any evaluation process needs to be introduced gradually and with the greatest sensitivity. It should not be seen as a threatening notebook, but as an essential tool to improve all aspects of voluntary service.





Program Evaluation

The evaluation provides the volunteer manager a format for systematic data collection. Determine the extent to which the main purpose was achieved, measure the quality of the structure, the operational methods and the distribution of resources. Evaluate the planning and make recommendations for future improvements. Periodic evaluation of a program ensures respect for quality standards. It is important, however, to identify the reasons why you want to evaluate an activity. Who will do it? How will it be presented? What measures is the organization willing to take to make the necessary adjustments? How will volunteers participate?

The evaluation of the objectives can be based on the improvement of the service, the collection of data for future planning, the recognition of achievements and to verify the fulfillment of responsibilities by volunteers and paid staff. The evaluation reveals whether the plans were successful and measures the degree to which the actions achieved the objectives. Trace progress and identify areas of interest or achievement and measure the time of paid staff compared to the progress of volunteers. A summative evaluation evaluates a program after its conclusion. Formative evaluation is done before and during the program for purposes of improving progress. The results and findings mark the way. Informal means of evaluating include the analysis of surveys completed by volunteers and paid staff and longitudinal studies. Budget planning and volunteer requirements are determined with the information collected.

Some National Societies have worked with assessment advisors who give their time altruistically and make their knowledge available to the organization. External opinion, even being a longer and more intense process, can result in an impartial and complete report. The evaluation of a program, by including it in a funding request, strengthens the proposal. Any audit of the operations, whether by formal or informal means, must include the full support of the board and the participation of volunteers and remunerated personnel indicated. The results of the evaluation are presented in writing and include proposed solutions to the problems.

STAGE XI: Transition

Transition helps experienced volunteers move towards to new opportunities within the National Society. The volunteer may feel the need to seek new experiences and ask for guidance. Similarly, the administrator-mentor, being sensitive to these signals sent by the volunteer, may initiate a dialogue in order to clarify such needs. The tendency to keep the same volunteer providing the same service may suit the Society, but it's an injustice for the individual. Administrators must promote the potential that volunteers represent, so they're responsible for proposing a work reorientation or promotion.

The permanence of volunteers is closely linked to the support and recognition they receive from the National Society. Generally indicated among the reasons for the progress of volunteers: changes in personal circumstances (health, family situation, relocation, employment), dissatisfaction with the assigned tasks, lack of meaningful programs for them, lack of participation in making decisions, deterioration of relations between volunteers or paid staff, duration of training, mediocrity of leaders, discomfort with the change or fatigue of volunteer.

These are some external factors that contribute to the progress of volunteers. There is a natural cycle in the voluntary service that is known and expected. When personal circumstances prevent the continuation of a volunteer, you can live it as a real crisis in your life. The older volunteer may feel useless and helpless. In the case of a young mother, volunteer work may reflect her time constraints as a result of her responsibilities to educate her child.

Whatever the reason was given by the volunteer for retirement, an interview can provide the opportunity to validate the contribution of this person. A certificate for your service time or special recognition can lessen the pain of leaving. If a dedicated volunteer leaves for other reasons - full-time employment, continuing their education, a move or other opportunity for volunteer service - a letter of recommendation will promote the goodwill of both parties. Also, the internal factors of the organization should be studied.





Termination of voluntary activity

Interviews and selection, as well as pre-service orientation and training, are designed to determine the skills and adaptability of the potential volunteer. They have some exams and adjustments incorporated. One of the main objectives of feedback is to determine which aspects of the volunteer service are not effective, to seek positive solutions and develop a guide to improve. When a volunteer accepts a position, the person agrees to observe the terms and conditions of the service within the National Society.

However, despite precautionary measures, wrong placements sometimes occur and it's essential to treat these situations as fairly as possible and without making judgments. If a volunteer consciously decides to deviate from the principles, policies or procedures of the National Society, his conduct is unacceptable and may adversely affect the image and internal morals of the Society. If the required change in their behavior is not possible, the National Society, through its volunteer manager, can request its termination. However, it should be clarified that the decision to terminate the permanence of the volunteer in the Red Cross for unacceptable behavior does not correspond to the volunteer manager but to the sanction bodies provided for in the statute and following due process.

Basic rules for termination interviews. Include:

1. Total discretion
2. Concrete examples and explanation of unacceptable behavior
3. Objective statements without judgment to ensure that the volunteer does not lose his dignity
4. Wide opportunities to listen to the volunteer's perspective
5. Keep a dialogue framework
6. Propose further support

This is a very stressful situation for both the volunteer manager and the volunteer itself. It is vital that the manager demonstrates a sensitivity to the feelings of the volunteer, which may include special factors (economic, family, health, social) to make their decision. The volunteer may or may not recognize the emotions that affect his self-image. These emotions are sometimes reflected in frustration or anger directed towards the organization. Sometimes the volunteer feels that he/she is a misfit and looks for a way out. The volunteer manager also experiences a mixture of emotions. The self-assessment by the manager is a natural reaction.

Did I put this volunteer in the right place? Did I provide enough support? Was the training adequate for the task? Are there alternatives to resolve this situation? Have I consulted with someone who can help me? Have I provided the volunteer with alternatives and support after the interview? What have I learned from this experience?

If there is training to prepare the person in charge in the process of ending the relationship of a volunteer, it is useful but is often focused on the issues of organizational responsibility rather than emotional aspects. Repeating the termination interview with a trusted colleague can give you confidence in this difficult aspect of volunteer management.

Documentation on the feedback sessions where solutions were discussed and agreed upon and a time for progress was set, along with the request for termination of the relationship, are kept in the confidential resume of the volunteer.



Communication and constant evaluation of the cycle

Local managers of the cycle must be constantly communicating and evaluating the different stages of the cycle in order to improve and learn from the challenges.

Communication

People communicate to send messages to others. The message can be verbal, signals or body language. A transmitter sends the message to a receiver. Communication must be clear, timely and consistent. Modern technology has developed teleconferencing, video and computer connection techniques to improve communications. Although these techniques become more essential every day, person-to-person interaction remains an essential aspect of communication. The greater awareness today of the need for sensitive communication is first on the list when planning consultations, campaigns, and training.

Communication is successful only when there is a mutual understanding. The content, structure, and order of the dialogue vary from one culture to another. Differences also exist in terms of values, perceptions, attitudes, and roles. What is acceptable in one culture may be inappropriate in another. For example, cultural rules may determine that there is physical or visual contact between the transmitter and the receiver. To interact successfully with others, it is important to examine and practice communication skills and effective listening.

Lack of sensitivity, especially by a paid staff member, can form a significant barrier to effective communication with volunteers. Some other barriers to positive interaction are the lack of respect for internal policies and procedures established by paid staff to shorten paths, not wanting to face difficult issues and the retention or manipulation of vital information. These tactics may serve their short-term purposes at the expense of personal and organizational integrity and may result in a failure in communication between volunteers and paid staff.

Direct communication systems include meetings and workshops. Reports, records, manuals, minutes, bulletins and surveys all convey information. However, active volunteers should feel that their participation in these systems is of value and essential for their success. Board members should communicate with other active volunteers their desire to involve them in all aspects of decision making. Successes and concerns must be shared openly and objectively, either at meetings or through other forms of communication.

Indirect methods or informal channels of communication are well established in all organizations and include hallway comments, shared breaks, social events, and the usual office gossip. Effective communication with volunteers requires a disposition in favor of flexibility in the time management of paid staff. An open-door policy allows the volunteer manager to listen to the concerns of the volunteers as they arise. Intuition and active listening skills allow one to “hear” background concerns.

Symbols convey emotional messages. For example, the red cross symbolizes hope and interest; the skull with crossed bones represents danger and death. Use the symbols to communicate only when everyone understands and accepts them.



Some forms of effective communication can't be taught, but they're assimilated by those who are willing to model the skills. An example of effective communication is a negotiation in which both the transmitter and the receiver give and receive. Winning is not the desired result, progress with a spirit of goodwill is.

Regarding internal and external communication goals. The internal goals should be formulated around the activities that are within the National Society and taking into account its global strategic objectives. When planning external communication activities, the target audience should be investigated before formulating the plans. This is especially important when developing incorporation strategies for specific groups. Communication is the best element for success in the incorporation and management of volunteers. A comprehensive plan maximizes effectiveness, effectiveness, and responsiveness.

Evaluation

The evaluation serves as a bridge for the volunteer to discuss with the volunteer manager all issues related to the volunteer service. Maybe you had to work on a difficult or frustrating experience when developing a program. Sometimes the volunteer finds solutions by talking with a manager who encourages him without judging him. Evaluation helps to understand the motivations and feelings of the volunteer. It's important to conclude the evaluation session in a positive way.

Feedback takes the interrogation a step further. Feedback is like looking in a mirror to see how others perceive one. The main purpose of feedback is to cause the recipient to think, learn and grow. It promotes the knowledge of oneself ... what we do and how we do it. It facilitates change and more effective communication. Feedback should be provided by the volunteer manager or by the team in a way that gives support and includes both positive and negative elements. You should focus on the behavior or actions, not the person; it consists of observations instead of deductions, description instead of judgments, the specific rather than the general, sharing ideas and information instead of giving advice; the amount of information that the person can use at the time and the behavior on which he can act. (adapted from The Trainer's Handbook, Inskipp, F.)

Likewise, work with assessment advisors who give their time altruistically and make their knowledge available to the organization. External opinion, even being a longer and more intense process, can result in an impartial and complete report. The evaluation of a program, by including it in a funding request, strengthens the proposal. Any audit of the operations, whether by formal or informal means, must include the full support of the board and the participation of volunteers and remunerated personnel indicated. The results of the evaluation are presented in writing and include proposed solutions to the problems.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

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.

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 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.

