

Initiative 1

Initiator: Youth community of the FRC Savo-Karelia district

Coping of volunteers

The youth community of the FRC Savo-Karelia district is worried about the volunteers' workload and their ability to cope. We often hear from the field that volunteers are overworked. The community is therefore presenting an initiative to the Youth Assembly to better support and pay attention to volunteers' coping.

As the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) is primarily an aid organisation with volunteers as an irreplaceable resource, it is important that volunteers' coping is adequately supported. According to the Volunteer Barometer (2025), 60% of respondents find it much or very much easier to participate in FRC volunteer activities when they are offered more support and orientation. Therefore, the need for support also emerges as an important issue in the volunteer surveys.

One concern that arises among volunteers is the accumulation of different tasks in the hands of a single volunteer. Outside volunteering, a volunteer may have work, school, family life and/or other hobbies. Discussions with volunteers often reveal that district employees do not have enough time to support volunteers.

One reason why volunteers can become overwhelmed by their workload is that they find it hard to say no. It is important to assess whether the organisation provides a safe space in which volunteers can refuse tasks without being pressured or facing disapproval. The Volunteering Policy (2023) states that every volunteer has the right to participate in the volunteer activities of the organisation for which they have the skills and interest. It is therefore certainly necessary for districts to reflect on their general atmosphere and attitudes.

Based on the Volunteer Barometer (2025), 60% of respondents agreed that more support and orientation would make it easier to participate in FRC volunteer activities. 20% of respondents also feel that they do not receive enough help when they need it. Guided by its seven fundamental principles, particularly the principle of humanity, the FRC aims to protect human life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. Supporting and paying attention to volunteers' coping is crucial to ensuring a sustainable aid chain. Thriving volunteers are an important asset. The Volunteering Policy (2023) states the following: "The most important task of the Red Cross is to help people in their everyday lives, life crises and disasters. One of the fundamental principles of the Red Cross is voluntary service. Our work is based on having a sufficient number of volunteers who are skilled, happy and motivated to help. Every volunteer is an important part of the chain of aid. We want our volunteers to experience joy and success in their volunteer activities."

As a solution, the community proposes supporting volunteers' wellbeing by strengthening the team spirit, in which team leaders play an important role. It is crucial that no one is left alone with their tasks. It is important to bear in mind that volunteering should not be stressful. Everyone should be encouraged to take care of their own wellbeing, and it is important to support each volunteer's ability to cope.

Secondly, the community proposes improvements to the monitoring of volunteers' wellbeing. For example, the Volunteer Barometer must be used to assess the wellbeing of volunteers by including stress factors in the survey. Such factors include workload, emotional strain caused by difficult situations or team spirit. Furthermore, although the Red Cross website has a section on volunteer wellbeing, this section requires more substantial content.

Thirdly, the community suggests that the volunteers' support path must be planned and coordinated more clearly, so that each volunteer knows where to go for help and support when needed. More information on the volunteers' support path must be made available, with particular consideration given to how new volunteers can access it. The volunteers' support path needs to be more prominent as part of the process of welcoming new volunteers. Each new volunteer must be assigned a low-threshold support person (mentor) who will act as a primary contact person during the introductory phase. The mentor's role should be light and limited in time, and it should not create an unreasonable burden on the volunteers. Volunteers should receive adequate orientation, training and support and have access to instructions and support materials. Currently, volunteers are often put in charge of activities without adequate training. Roles need to be clarified so that it is clear who is in charge of which task. The volunteer role description must also be sufficiently clear and concrete. With all these means, we can improve the wellbeing of volunteers.

Volunteering Policy 2023: [PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Volunteer Barometer 2025

Principles of the Red Cross: [The operations of the Red Cross are steered by seven fundamental principles – Red Cross](#)

Initiative 2

Initiator: Young volunteers of the FRC Helsinki and Uusimaa district

Accessibility of platforms

With this initiative, we hope to encourage the recipient of the initiative to take into account the different users and user profiles in the further development of the platforms used by the organisation.

Our organisation carries out a lot of voluntary work requiring text, image or data processing skills, sometimes even in large volumes. Our organisation has a visual brand identity that must be used by all levels of employees and volunteers in communications and materials.

The issue is that the organisation has too many different platforms in use and some of the software is not free and accessible to all.

Therefore, we hope to highlight the barriers to accessing existing materials through the following examples:

- All the organisation's materials, event invitations, surveys and documents must be in a format that can be used with any software, operating system and device. Currently, both Word and PDF files are used in parallel, even in situations where the use of only one would be justified.
- The PowerPoint template, which is available to all in the Material Bank, is not editable, i.e. it cannot be used without a licence. Editing it is not allowed in the online version. Therefore, volunteers cannot create PowerPoint presentations using it and the desired visual identity is not easily achievable.

With this initiative, we therefore hope that our organisation will pay attention to the availability, accessibility and usability of the platforms in use, especially from volunteers' point of view.

Initiative 3

Initiator: Young volunteers of the FRC Helsinki and Uusimaa district

Identifying and supporting factors that help increase the number of young members and volunteers

The number of young Red Cross members has been on a downward trend for several years. For example, in the Helsinki and Uusimaa district, the number of young members under the age of 29 in 2023 was 605, while in 2025 the figure dropped to 448. At a national level, these figures stood at 2,703 and 2,234 young members in 2023 and 2025, respectively.

As an organisation, the Red Cross is going grey. Without new young volunteers, we will have no future helpers or members to make our work possible.

Therefore, we must think of concrete ways to identify and support ways of being involved in the organisation's activities, both as a volunteer and as a member, that are of interest to young people. We need to invest in ways to renew networking among young people. We need to ensure that our communications are appealing and transparent. We propose that the National Youth Committee begins to develop this topic. The headquarters should provide training, such as first aid training, in different languages. We need to have people under the age of 29 on our district boards so that young people's voices have power in the organisation. We need to provide a safer space and be bold in welcoming and experimenting with new ideas.

With this initiative, we expect the General Assembly to seek and identify concrete ways to encourage young people to join our organisation as members or volunteers.