

Recommended actions to strengthen advocacy among young people aged 16–28 at the Finnish Red Cross

Strengthening the advocacy of young volunteers is a strategic necessity for the Red Cross. It ensures that our organisation is vibrant, capable of renewal and ready to act quickly and reliably in crises – in Finland and as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In addition to being the future of our organisation, young people strengthen the preparedness and operational capacity of the Red Cross movement as a whole.

The purpose of the recommended actions is to support FRC branches, districts, the headquarters and institutions in strengthening the presence and number of young people in all our volunteer activities. They are based on the IFRC Youth Engagement Strategy and the FRC Volunteering Policy – the two guiding frameworks for our operations – and demonstrate what the Red Cross of young people's dreams looks like in practice. The recommendations will help develop youth-friendly, accessible and future-oriented volunteer activities, where young people's participation is equal, supported and impactful.

By committing to implementing the recommendations, we can ensure that the Red Cross becomes a place where young people can come to grow and learn, and where their voices and skills can contribute to the development of the entire organisation.

Further information

- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2024. [Youth Engagement Strategy: Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers](#).
- Finnish Red Cross, 2023. [Volunteering Policy](#).
- Finnish Red Cross, 2024. [Nuorten unelmien Punainen Risti](#) (in Finnish).

Welcoming young people – easy participation, support and a safe atmosphere

- New young volunteers can easily find out how to join our activities – what kind of volunteering activities are available and where and when they take place. Volunteers are also directed to take part in online activities.
- New young volunteers are assigned a mentor who contacts them, welcomes them and supports them, especially during their first few days of volunteering.
- The [youth-friendliness](#) (page in Finnish) of the activities and the diversity of the volunteers are part of the daily routine and evaluation of the activities. Efforts are determinedly made to identify and reduce obstacles to the involvement of new volunteers.
- Volunteer communications and orientation are carried out in a multilingual and inclusive way. Young people are encouraged to join in our activities together with their friends.

Young people as active participants – flexible, multilingual and renewing volunteer activities

- Our activities allow for flexible and one-time volunteering in all types of activities. We value the contribution of all volunteers, even if they can only participate for a short period of time.
- Young volunteers have the opportunity to try out a variety of volunteering tasks, and they can move seamlessly between activities and branches. Remote participation in local activities is also made possible, unless the activity actually requires presence.
- Multilingualism and cultural diversity are visible in our everyday activities. Our communications and practices take into account the different needs of young volunteers, and we are open to organising multilingual volunteer activities.
- Our activities respond to local and changing needs, and we introduce new types of activities with a low threshold. Young people can also take on meaningful volunteer roles in their own activity groups.

Young people as experts – highlighting and utilising skills

- The skills of young volunteers are valued and put to good use. Learning is a two-way process, and completing training is not always a prerequisite for volunteering.
- Young volunteers have the opportunity to take on more responsibility at their own pace. They are also offered entry-level roles of responsibility, along with support in carrying them out.
- Cooperation with educational institutions is actively pursued. Students can earn [credits](#) (page in Finnish) for volunteer activities and training.
- Participation and skills are recognised (e.g. certificate, CV), so that the benefits of volunteering can also be used in studies and working life.

Young people as advocates – making young people's voices heard in the implementation and renewal of activities

- Young volunteers are asked for feedback on areas for development. Their feedback, ideas and wishes are used to help us renew our activities. The changes made as a result of this feedback are made visible.
- Application processes for positions of responsibility and trust are visible and open, and young people are encouraged to apply. It is also respected if a young person does not want to take on a position of responsibility.
- Young people have equal seats at the decision-making table, and their participation is supported through ways such as working in pairs.
- The structures of youth advocacy are well known and actively used. We also work with young people to brainstorm and develop new ways of influencing within our organisation and society. Experiments initiated by young people are supported through funding.