

Our overall preparedness is built on thriving volunteers

The Youth Assembly 2026 wants to draw the attention of the Board, districts, employees and other operators of the Finnish Red Cross to supporting the ability of our volunteers, especially the volunteers in charge, to cope and investing in their wellbeing. Thriving volunteers are our most important asset.

The Finnish Red Cross Volunteering Policy (2023) states: “--Our work is based on having a sufficient number of volunteers who are skilled, happy and motivated to help. -- We want our volunteers to experience joy and success in their volunteer activities.” According to the Red Cross Volunteer Barometer (2026), 61% of respondents feel that greater support and improved orientation would make it easier to participate in volunteer activities at the Finnish Red Cross. Furthermore, 19% of respondents feel that they do not receive enough help when they need it. Supporting and paying attention to volunteers’ coping is crucial to ensuring overall preparedness in all situations.

However, too many volunteers recognise a situation where a single volunteer is responsible for several tasks, has not received adequate orientation or takes on a position of trust out of a sense of duty. A volunteer who is stressed or working alone will easily feel like they are giving more than they are getting out of the activities. Inadequate orientation with new tasks will automatically make a volunteer lose motivation from the start.

It is important that those responsible encourage volunteers in charge to take care of their own resources and recognise the limits to their ability to cope. Volunteering is part of life, but there is more to life than volunteering. With a dual leadership model, responsibilities are shared more evenly, volunteers are better able to cope and operations are built on a more sustainable basis. Sharing the work and responsibility in all activities also engages other volunteers in doing things together and creates a sense of belonging. The support structures in place within the organisation should be made visible and accessible. Each volunteer should know where to get help and support when needed. Easy access to training and guidance materials and timely availability of training are also part of supporting the volunteers’ ability to cope.

The Youth Assembly calls for attention to be paid to supporting the ability of volunteers in charge to cope, investing in their wellbeing and taking the necessary action. According to the Volunteering Policy, volunteers have the right to “receive orientation, training, guidance and support for their tasks” and the duty to “participate in orientation and training related to the task,” but it is also their right to “enjoy and learn from their work.” A volunteer who enjoys their work and succeeds in their tasks is also committed to serving as part of overall preparedness.