



# Analysis of Volunteering and Youth in the Americas

2016

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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.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to ‘saving lives and changing minds’.

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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# Preface

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Our volunteers are the driving force behind our humanitarian work and the most valuable asset that National Societies have. Millions of people around the world unite efforts around the Red Cross to prevent and ease human suffering. Each member of this volunteer force is a fundamental piece in our organization. The commitment of those who daily contribute to the strengthening of the organization, give us an enormous responsibility towards our volunteers.

Therefore, it is necessary that our network of volunteers constantly improves and grows effectively to face the continuous and emerging challenges of today. We must continue to invest in the development of our volunteers and in the volunteering management systems for its permanent improvement in volume, quality and focus. This in order to better serve and achieve our humanitarian goals globally. We aspire that our volunteers reinforce their active and modern leadership role in the governing and management bodies in each National Society of America and to be the force and motor of development everywhere, for all.

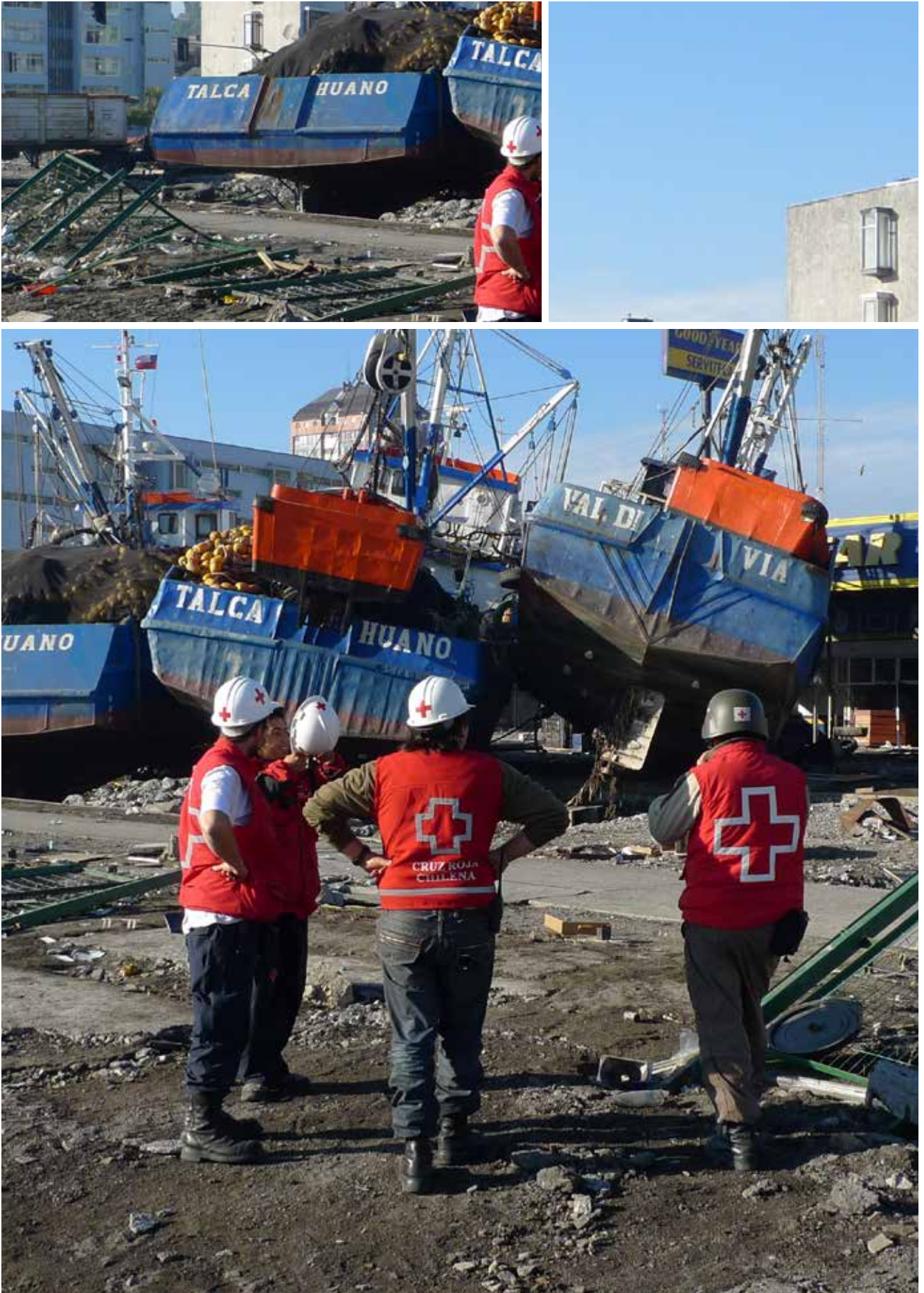
As part of the strategies developed in the Americas region, we have focused our job on promoting volunteering and youth leadership as to promote the social and humanitarian service.

In the last years, the scenario in which our volunteering is developed, has suffered a great transformation and in addition, it has brought new challenges to the National Societies. We need to understand better the work of the volunteers and volunteering management within our organization, in a changing world. The knowledge of the current circumstances and the comprehension of the volunteering situation allow us to deliver a prompt and effective response to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people. Our goal must be to invigorate the Red Cross and adopt initiatives to protect, promote, and recognize volunteers as the cornerstone of our organization.

This study provides an analysis of the volunteering situation of National Societies of the Red Cross in the American Continent in order to improve our capacity to respond to emergencies in the local and regional levels. This allows us to obtain updated information to develop strategies to strengthen this humanitarian force of change, prestige of the Red Cross worldwide.

My sincere gratitude to all the National Societies in our region for their collaboration on collecting the necessary information to develop this study and to strengthen the work of the Red Cross in the Americas.

Walter Cotte  
Regional Director  
Americas Regional Office



# Introduction

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## Justification

The Volunteering and Youth Development Unit (V&Y) of the Americas Regional Office has unite efforts to consolidate strategies to facilitate the volunteering and youth development in the National Societies (NS) of the Americas, to assure a solid base of motivated and qualified volunteers, who can meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, which is the ultimate goal of the Red Cross. The Unit supports the National Societies to provide the adequate environment, both in and outside the organization, to promote and facilitate the work and engagement of volunteers and young people to foster volunteering and youth leadership in all the areas of the civil society. This can be achieved through the constant support to volunteering and youth development according to the priorities of each NS.

Such efforts are framed in the Houston Commitment (2015), that states the importance of “Valuing volunteering and recognizing the transforming nature of youth, as the cornerstone of the sustainability of the humanitarian actions, by assuring their continuous learning and improvement of leadership capacities, and thus guaranteeing their involvement in the decision-making process, promoting diversity, improving work conditions, and ensuring their safety at all moments.” Even more, in the 10th Meeting of Red Cross Presidents of America in 2015, it was emphasized the value of volunteering and the importance of strengthening the role of volunteers in the National Societies to fulfill the needs of our working environment for an effective implementation of humanitarian aid.

Considering this, it is essential to establish information exchange mechanisms to evaluate the work of the National Societies with the aim of defining the priorities and needs at a local and regional level. Previous studies in the Americas have demonstrated that even though some NS have shown significant advances, the majority of NS in the region are in need of improving the volunteering management and the roles that volunteers and young people have inside the organization. Since 2013, the Unit (V&Y) has conducted several studies to collect information that allow the establishment of a framework for action based on the current situation of the National Societies. These studies have shed light about the current diagnosis of volunteering and youth in the Americas, which is the basis to formulate future strategies of action.

## Objective

The main objective of this study is to elaborate a diagnosis of the situation of volunteering and youth in the National Societies in the Americas, in order to establish a starting point to build strategies at a regional and national level, for volunteering and youth development in the Red Crosses in the Americas.

This diagnosis provides an analysis of the main challenges the National Societies face due to external factors -where the volunteering is developed-, and internal factors -volunteering management from subsidiary and National Societies-. Consequently, it can be provided an efficient and personalized assistance to strengthening the National Societies according to their particular needs, by supporting the recruitment and retention of volunteers to improve the continuous progress of the community work.

## Methodology

This study includes the use of primary and secondary sources. The first chapters are the product of the analysis of the sources gathered in regards to the situation of the American continent and the volunteering in the National Societies of the Red Cross. It also includes a section about the work of volunteers and security issues among the years 2013 and 2015.

Chapter four takes into consideration the data collected in the studies carried out among the years 2013 and 2015. The significant decrease of the participation of the National Societies in the studies conducted in the years 2014 - 2015 produces a considerable bias in the analysis; hence, only the National Societies that have constantly participated in the last three years are taken into consideration. Therefore, 18 National Societies in the volunteering area and 19 in the youth area were considered. (See Annex)

The National Societies included in the volunteering analysis are Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States of America, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela. Included in the Youth analysis are the National Societies of Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States of America, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Surinam, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The survey was sent to focal points or volunteering and youth managers of each National Society via e-mail. In 2013 and 2014, Microsoft Excel was used to fill the information and, in 2015 the software SurveyMonkey was used. The questions do not vary in content from one year to another, although additional questions were added to the volunteering and youth surveys in 2015.







# Chapter 1. Where do we live?

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We develop our humanitarian work in a continent with marked differences between sub-regions and countries. In total, according to figures of the United Nations in 2015, in America there are about 992 million people, which represent the 14% of the world population.

Our continent has particular socioeconomic issues, mainly poverty, exclusion and social cohesion. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, these two sub-regions make up the area of highest inequality in the world. If this tendency to inequality continues, the Oxfam estimates that by the year 2020 the 1% of the richest people of the region will concentrate more wealth than the remaining 99%. The consequences of this inequality not only would cover the sub-regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, but also the entire American continent.

On the other hand, America is marked by strong migration flows from Latin America to Europe and North America. Therefore, migration becomes a factor of discrimination that as a result creates new vulnerability problems. The expulsion leads to new social, legal, and cultural problems in the country of origin and the country of destination. Even more, these flows are perceived from rural to urban areas, which experience a rapid urbanization that exposes the local gaps in the state power and the lack of structured planning.

Both, inequality and poverty have led to an unprecedented increase in social violence, mostly in Latin America. This violence feeds on the lack of opportunity for individual development, the ineffectiveness of the state institutions, and the increasing trafficking of weapons and drugs, thus creating instability in the region and affecting the increase of migration flows.

The susceptibility of the American countries, mainly island countries and the Central American countries, is high compared to other regions in the world due to climate change and the lack of policies to prevent and mitigate in case of natural disasters. Among the most important consequences for the region are the increase of sea levels, decrease of crop yields, changes in rainfall patterns and the development of diseases believed eradicated.

Knowing the context in which the National Societies work is essential to define the strategies of the Red Cross to respond to challenges presented in ever changing regional and world scenery. The adaptation of the National Societies to a changing and evolving context was one of the main topics discussed on the 10th Meeting of Red Cross Presidents of America in 2015.

From the meeting, it can be stated that there are challenges and difficulties in our region, despite the differences, and that they should be a priority of the National Societies:

- Poverty
- Inequality
- Women rights
- Senior citizens
- Violence
- Massive urbanization
- Climate change
- Disabled people, making emphasis on homeless people
- Health, making emphasis on maternal-infant health, HIV prevention, and none transmissible diseases
- Migrants
- Disaster response

## In the future

Projections of population growth by 2030, made by the United Nations, estimate the Americas population in 1,17 billion people, this represents 13,5% of the world population by that year. The decrease in the percentage from 2015 to 2030 is due to a decrease in the fertility rate in the Latin American and Caribbean regions, despite a slight increase in the fertility rate in the North American region, which will continue to have one of the world's lowest fertility rates.





## Chapter 2. Summary of the Conclusions of Previous Studies

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This chapter comprises studies previously carried out on volunteering and youth development in our continent as part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. There were analyzed four studies elaborated in the years 1993, 2007, and 2009: “Challenges of human development: the future of the Red Cross in Latin American and the Caribbean (1993) ,” “The future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean (2007),” “Analysis of Volunteering in Latin America and the Caribbean (2009) ,” and “The future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean: The challenges of social risk and cohesion management” (2009). In addition, there were included the conclusions of the Online Workshop “Volunteering Development in the Americas (2016).” Finally, it was included the “Global Review on Volunteering” (2016) due to its relevance in the formulation of strategies for the development of volunteering in the IFRC and the National Societies. The part taken into consideration for the purposes of this chapter is the one containing the recommendation. Although these recommendations are made from a global perspective, they are equally relevant for our region.

### **Challenges of human development: the future of the Red Cross in Latin American and the Caribbean (1993)**

In the first study, it was concluded that the National Societies perceived a crisis in the volunteering service due to a decrease in the number of volunteers, lack of qualified volunteers to develop specific programs, and a low capacity of the NS to retain and train these volunteers. The causes of this crisis are divided into two factors: internal and external.

Within the external factors related to the crisis perceived by the National Societies are included the financial crisis -which led many women and children to join the workforce-, an increase in the migration of Latin-American people to North America and Europe, and non-governmental organizations that compete to recruit volunteers, as they offer them similar incentives.

Regarding internal factors, it is important to mention the difficulty of volunteers to participate in decision making, deficiency in volunteer development opportunities, limitation in recruitment campaigns and low motivation of volunteers.

## **The future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean (2007)**

This study evidenced the little progress that the volunteering development of Latin America and the Caribbean had, in comparison to the previous study. Although, there are improvements, the document highlights the difficulty of National Societies to develop an effective volunteering management system. In regards to the crisis, there was a constant decrease in the number of volunteers and a permanent absence of volunteers in the institution, especially in the National Societies of the Caribbean.

The factors attributed to the continuous crisis were the absence of projects and activities relevant to the local populations, lack of incentives, little participation of volunteers in different levels of the institution, and the inability of the institution to stand out from other organizations that try to recruit the same volunteers.

## **Analysis of volunteering in Latin America and the Caribbean (2009)**

The study concluded that there is significant progress in most National Societies regarding studies held in 1993 and 2007 studies. Progress was mainly observed in the implementation of policies to volunteering management.

One of the main challenges that the National Societies still faced was the inclusion of volunteers from the communities where the Red Cross worked in the institutional life of each NS; in other words, the planning of programs and activities. In regards to the volunteers, the quantity does not seem to be a relevant factor, but the quality and appropriate training related to the needs of the National Society are important.

## **The future of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean: The challenges of social risk and cohesion management (2009)**

The study covers a comprehensive analysis of the management of the National Societies of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean. Besides, it addresses the challenges presented to this management by the globalization process that has redefined the economic, political, social, and environmental risks that these two sub-regions face.

It was carried out a review of the conclusions of a previous study “The challenges of human development” of 1993, which concludes that even though there have been significant improvements in the functioning of the NS, there are still shortcomings. These are mainly material and human resources related, and it is argued that this lack comes to increase the perception of a “volunteering crisis.” Such deficiencies, along with an absence of solid structures in the NS, are the ones that make impossible the mobilization and fixation of volunteers. The internal and external factors attributed to this crisis respond to the absence of new projects and activities of interest, lack of incentives, low level of participation of volunteers in the different levels of the National Society, and reduced relevance of the volunteering leadership in the institution. Consequently, the Red Cross has



not been able to cope with the establishment of non-governmental organizations with more attractive volunteering programs.

It is important to highlight, the adoption of volunteering policies of the Federation by National Societies or the creation of new policies, especially in Central America and Mexico where 70% of NS have applied volunteering policies, followed by South America (42%) and the Caribbean with 33%.

This study concludes that the formation and training processes of volunteers are an efficient tool to motivate and retain them. Furthermore, it should be promoted the legal safety of volunteers, as well as a system of incentives to keep a solid, wide, and qualified base of volunteers.

## **Online Workshop “Volunteering Development in America (2016)”**

This workshop, where 18 Spanish-speaking National Societies participated, had as its main objective to analyze the main challenges and opportunities to the volunteering development of the Red Cross in the region. The main problem highlighted during the workshop was the high rotation of volunteers; in other words, the challenge of retaining our volunteers.

The report was divided in different topics. One of the main topics was the diversification of volunteering in a changing world, where there are promoted mixed volunteering programs with flexible schedules and growth opportunities for the volunteers. The importance of including the volunteers in the decision-making process, and coordination and planning of activities and programs. Besides, it was commented the need for strengthening the abilities of national leaders and local units to better support volunteering and more horizontal structures that promote the participation of volunteers in the decision-making. Strategies to motivate and retain volunteers included the recognition of their work and the development of activities that benefit the personal and professional development of volunteers. Moreover, it was encouraged the exchange of better practices between National Societies and local units or branches.

## Global Review on Volunteering (2016)

This paper was based on the research of the growing challenges at the local and global levels and our organization's response to an ever-changing environment. Its purpose is to “ help inform new and strategic thinking within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and to contribute to wider thinking on volunteering and its future in a changing world”.

The summary of this study includes only the recommendations based on the results shown from the investigation, with the aim of optimizing de investment in the voluntary service and the contribution of the volunteers to the Movement. The results and specific mentions to the region that can be found in this document are included in different chapters of the present analysis of volunteering in the Americas. The recommendations can be separated into four main areas:

- Investigation and knowledge: there is a need of an investigation about the relationship between the voluntary service and the development in the countries of the South, with special emphasis on the configuration of the voluntary service in the contexts of migration, urbanization, and voluntary service remuneration.
- Policy, organizational and donor attention: special attention should be given to the different expressions of the local culture of voluntary service that can promote environments conducive to the development of volunteering with the aim of guaranteeing a more meaningful and prolonged participation of volunteers.
- Local volunteers in conflict and crisis: two actions are necessary to achieve a safer environment for volunteers. The first is the recognition of the activities of the volunteers in crisis and conflict situations. The second is the mobilization of resources to ensure the physical integrity and wellbeing of this population.
- Volunteer remuneration: dialogue based on the consequences of the implementation of different voluntary service remuneration schemes should be promoted with organizations and volunteer management managers. The purpose of this dialogue is to formulate good practices to mitigate possible adverse effects and to lead to the reflection of best practices of this remuneration in humanitarian and development contexts.



## 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.



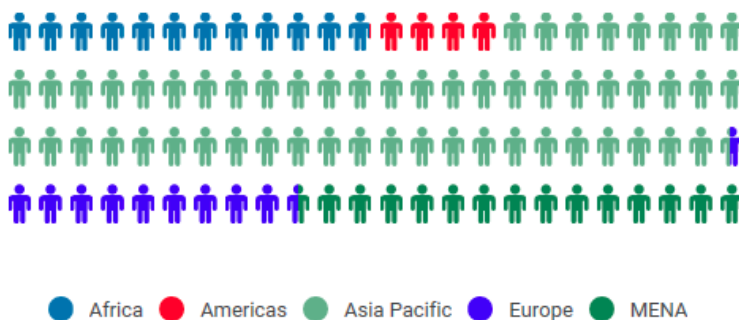
## Chapter 3: Quantitative Overview of Volunteering in America

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in 2012 there were 745 841 (seven hundred forty-five thousand eight hundred forty-one) volunteers in the 35 National Societies. In addition, in the entire American continent, with the exception of Granada that did not provide data, there were 2551 (two thousand fifty-one) local units or branches. USA, Mexico, and Colombia had the majority of local units. The next year, the number of volunteers was 604 970 (six hundred four thousand nine hundred seventy). However, there is no information about Guyana or Dominica. The number of local units by 2013 in all National Societies of the continent was about 3140 (three thousand one hundred forty), missing the data from the National Society of Barbados.

By 2014, according to the report “Worldwide Analysis of the Volunteering Service” of the FICR, in American continent there were 745 346 (seven hundred forty-five thousand three hundred forty-six) volunteers of the Red Cross. That represents 4.3% of the total of volunteers worldwide in all the NS. In Latin America, only one from every three thousand people provides volunteer service to organizations of the International Movement of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This ratio is inferior to the world’s average that is one out of 420 people. In the American continent, the American National Society concentrates two thirds of the volunteers.

It is important to stress the absence of growth in the number of volunteers for these three years. This may be partly due to a variable measurement system per year or to a reduction in recruitment and retention of volunteers. According to the document “Introduction – the figures” (2016), derived from the Worldwide Analysis of Volunteering, “based on reliable tests, the most optimistic forecast (about the number of volunteers) shows a stagnation and the most pessimist, shows a decrease.

In this situation, it is necessary to state that the figures per se do not show a comprehensive view of the volunteering service in the Americas. More than the increase in the quantity of volunteers, the strategy should be to capture the number of volunteers needed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable to be relevant in our communal and national response. If we rely on the appropriate structures to motivate, train, protect, and recognize our volunteers, then we can start talking about the extension of the field of action and the resulting increase in the number of volunteers.





## Chapter 4: Volunteers' Security during 2013-2015

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The information gathered in this chapter comes from the yearly reports on security of the IFRC Security Unit and direct communication with such Unit by the Volunteering and Youth Development Unit of the Americas Regional Office. These reports are developed based on the incidents suffered by staff and volunteers reported by the National Societies. During 2013 and 2015, the majority of the incidents included robbery, theft on homes or vehicles of the staff and volunteers, and theft on vehicles and offices of the NS. Moreover, there were reported vehicular incidents that involved the staff and volunteers during the exercise of their duties with the Red Cross and during outside working hours. Regarding these reports, there is no separation between incidents reported suffered by volunteers or NS staff.

In four years, from 2012 to 2015, three volunteers of the Red Cross died. In 2013 and 2014 there were not incidents that resulted in the death of any of our volunteers. However, in 2012 and 2015, three volunteers were killed.

On November 2012, two rescuers of the Red Cross of Panama lost their lives during flood emergency operations. They died after a road collapsed on their way to the flood relief camp in Colón, Panama.

On September 2015, a young volunteer was killed in Santo Tomás de Castilla, Guatemala. She was intercepted by two armed motorcyclists when she was about to take a cab to go to a meeting in a branch of the Guatemalan National Society. She was shot to the head.

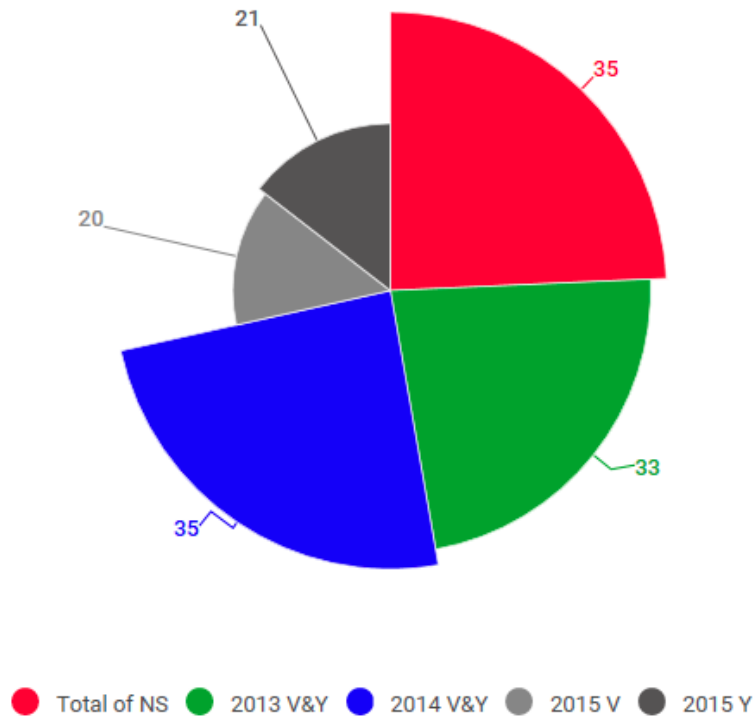
It is worth mentioning that the annual reports of the Federation place the American region as the one with less participation in studies conducted by the Security Unit (great number of NS of America did not send the complete surveys required by the Security Unit). Moreover, the region has the lowest percentage of staff and volunteers trained in security through “Stay safe” courses, on both personal safety and security management courses.





## Chapter 5: Results of the Baseline Studies conducted in 2013-2015

This chapter includes the systematization of the data collected through surveys carried out with the participation of volunteering and youth focal points of the 35 National Societies in the years 2013 to 2015. As mentioned before, not all the NS were included in the study, as they did not answer all the surveys conducted in such three years. The decision of including only the NS that answered the surveys during three years consecutively was based on the need of eliminating all the possible bias and thus to carry out a comparative analysis to make evident the progress in the different areas covered by the instrument. (See Annex)



Number of NS that answered the survey 2013 - 2015

To facilitate the analysis of the data collected through the volunteering and youth surveys, both topics were divided in sections to analyze them comparatively per year in order to determine the progress or setbacks that have been found in a specific topic to a regional level. The sections covered are general information of the volunteering management national program and the National Society, guidelines and policies, and opportunities for volunteers or youth. Moreover, volunteering has a section dealing with insurance.

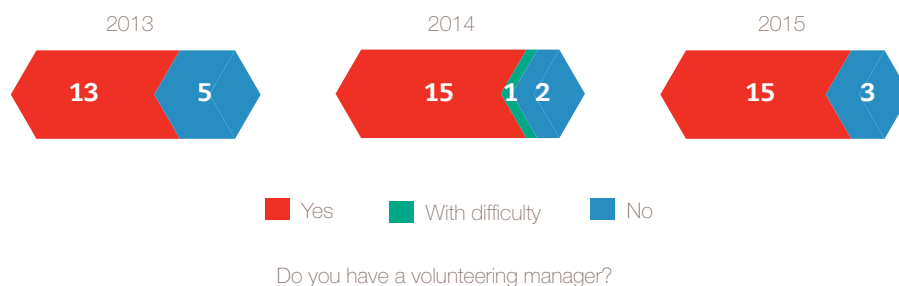
## 4.1. Volunteering

The National Societies included in the volunteering analysis are Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States of America, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

### 4.1.1 General information of the national volunteering management and National Society

#### Volunteering focal point

One of the V&Y Unit's priorities is to support and motivate the National Societies to have a permanent volunteering coordinator at national level. By the year 2015, 83% of the National Societies had assigned a volunteer manager or coordinator at national level, in comparison to the 72% in 2013. It is worth mentioning, that in regards to the Costa Rican Red Cross, at the time of answering the survey, the position was vacant; therefore, it was recorded that there was no volunteering manager. As a result, the analysis shows an increase of 3 NS that by the year 2015 had a manager in such area, in spite of what the graph based on the answers of each NS. The National Societies that in this period included this figure were Barbados, Belize y Surinam. By 2015, 14 of these managers were working full-time.

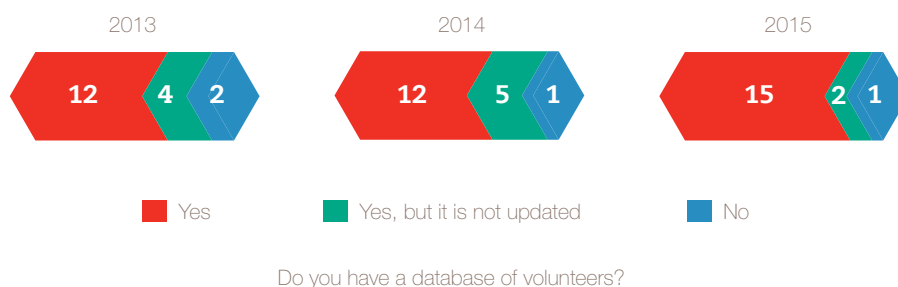


#### Access to FedNet online courses

The access to FedNet online courses is constant. The 94% of the NS have complete or limited access to the platform, equipment, and Internet speed necessary to access.

#### Database of Volunteers

Regarding if the National Societies have a database of their volunteers, it is evident that there is an improvement of 16% by 2015 in relation to the year 2013, as shown in this next graph.



## **Volunteering programs offered by the NS**

Below, it can be found a list of volunteering programs, units or sections. On the side, there is the amount of National Societies that have or offer each program.

- Youth: 19
- First aid: 19
- Lifesavers: 7
- Canine unit: 4
- Patrolman: 12
- Mountain rescue: 5
- Volunteer ladies: 9
- Elderly volunteers: 8
- Corporative volunteers: 8
- Social volunteers: 14
- Virtual volunteers: 4
- Others: 7

### **4.1.2 Guidelines and policies of the National Societies**

#### **Volunteering as part of a strategic plan**

There is a decrease in the participation of the NS in this section during 2014. Consequently, there can be found the same percentage of NS that have volunteering as part of their strategic plan in 2014 and 2015, despite that in absolute numbers there is an increase of two National Societies from one year to another. The two NS, which did not answer in 2014, were Bahamas and Saint Lucia that by the way answered negatively this question in previous years. Out of the 18 NS studied, only Trinidad and Tobago stated that volunteering is not part their strategic plan, by 2015.

#### **Code of conduct**

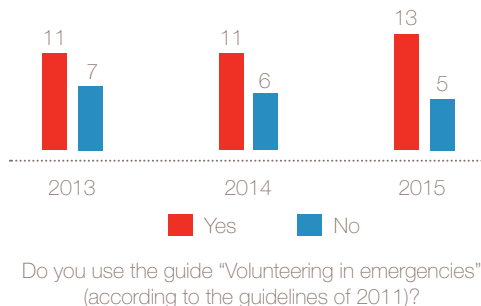
In 2013, 12 NS reported to have approved a code of conduct. By 2015, this number rises up to 13 NS. The ones that did not have this code were Panama, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Venezuela.

#### **Migrants in volunteering**

The participation of migrants as volunteers in the National Societies significantly increased from 2013 to 2015; this despite the fact that they had a low participation in 2014. In 2013, 11 NS said migrants participated in their volunteer bodies. Also, 10 and 15 in 2014 and 2015 respectively, reported the participation of migrants. The National Societies of Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua did not report the participation of migrants in 2015. Out of the 15 that during the same year affirmed the participation of migrants, 6 stated that their participation was little.

### Guide “Volunteering in emergencies”

In 2013, 61% of the National Societies used the guide “Volunteering in emergencies.” By 2015, it increased up to 72%, as shown on this next figure.



### System to evaluate volunteers

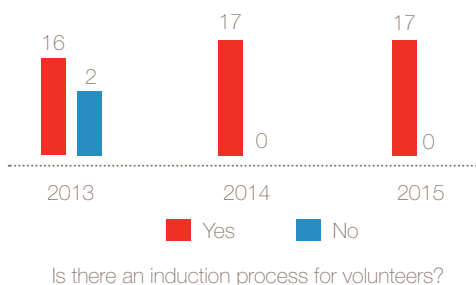
In 2015, a new question was added to the survey to find out if there is a system to evaluate the volunteers. Since there was no previous information, it was not possible to compare; therefore, only the information collected in the last year is presented.

Do you have system to evaluate the volunteers?	Answers	Percentage
Yes	7	41%
No	10	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.1.3 Opportunities for the volunteers

#### Induction process for volunteers

In spite the participation numbers decreased, it is important to mention that the percentage of NS that have an induction process for volunteers reached 100% in 2014 and 2015. In 2013, the percentage was 89%.



## Safety and protection

This question refers to training of volunteers in topics related to safety and protection. These trainings can be based on the “Stay safe” course or its equivalent. The results show an increase in the NS that have this topic as part of the training process of their volunteers.



## System of recognition /motivation of volunteers

In 2015, a question was included on whether there are mechanisms for recognition or motivation for volunteers that help strategies that seek the permanence of volunteers. So far, 11 National Societies have such a system; in other words, 65% of the National Societies included in the study have a system of recognition/motivation of volunteers.

Do you have a system of recognition/ motivation of volunteers? (2015)	Answers	Percentage
Yes	11	65%
No	6	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Website/Social Network for Volunteers

As the previous question, this one covers only one year of study only and the results obtained were the same. Of those who responded affirmatively, the majority stated that they have a Facebook page. Some even said they have a platform for volunteers to interact in the official webpage of the National Society.

Do you have a website/social network for volunteers? (2015)	Answers	Percentage
Yes	11	65%
No	6	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 4.1.4 Insurance for volunteers

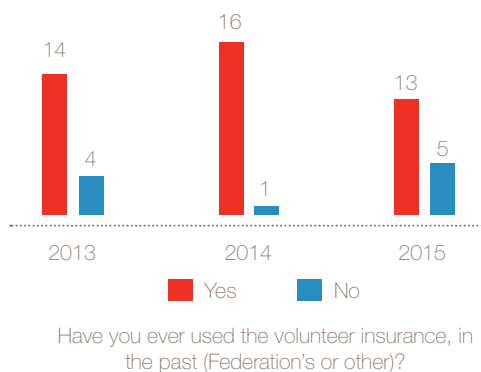
##### Insurance for all volunteers

It is important to state that this question refers to the entire volunteer body of each National Society. In other words, The National Society guarantees that all the volunteers had an insurance coverage, at certain point. This question was only included in the survey conducted in 2015, so it cannot be compared. Last year, 10 National Societies guaranteed that all their volunteers had an insurance, and 7 NS indicated that the insurance did not cover the 100% of the volunteers.

Do you have insurance for all the volunteers? FICR insurance or a national insurance. (2015)	Answers	Percentage
Yes	10	59%
No	7	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

##### Insurance Usage

This question applies to all National Societies, including those who answered negatively to the previous question; as a result, it does not refer to the entire volunteer body, but to the incidents that happened and for which the insurance was used. It is necessary to evidence the importance of having insurance for the volunteers: the majority of the NS have used the insurance before.



On the other hand, the National Societies were asked if they had the need of an insurance for their volunteers, but did not implement it in that moment and per year of study, and four National Societies said they had been in that situation.



## 4.2 Youth

The National Societies included in the analysis of youth are Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States of America, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Surinam, and Trinidad and Tobago.

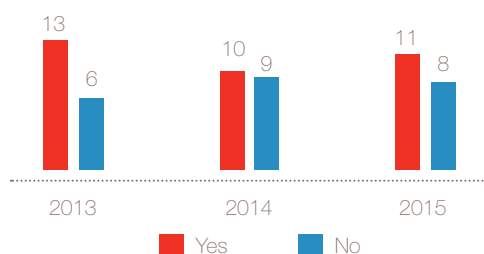
### 4.2.1 General information of the national youth coordination and the National Society

#### Youth Coordination

In 2015, the National Societies were asked if they had a youth coordinator at a national level. Out of the 19 National Societies included in the study, 100% had a youth focal point or coordinator

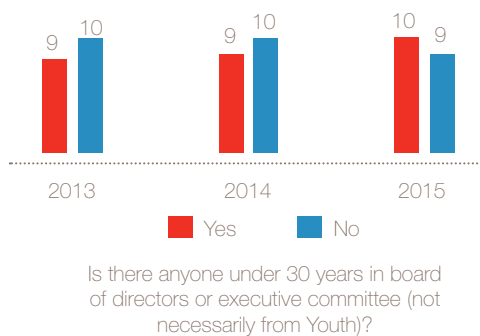
#### Youth in the Board of Directors

It is observed a decrease in the number of National Societies that reported having a youth coordinator or focal point in the board of directors or executive committee. In 2015, a 58% of the NS had a youth focal point in the board of directors; whereas in 2013, it was a 68%. This could be due to a change in the structure or composition of the board of directors.



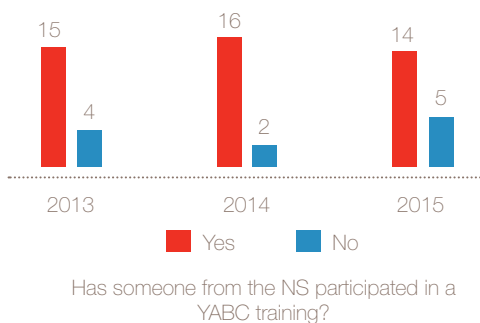
Is there anyone from the youth program in the board of directors or executive committee?

Nevertheless, the number of young people in the board of directors increased. These people were not necessarily involved in the youth program of the NS.

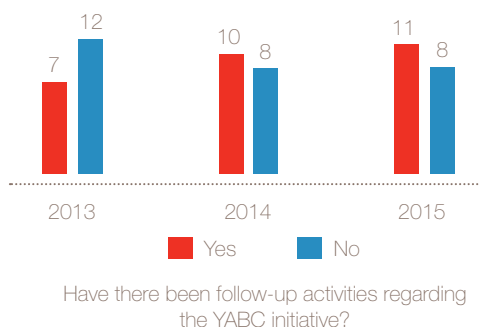


### YABC Initiative

The number of staff trained under the program “Youth as Agents of Behavioral Change” (YABC) has changed per year. The decline from 2014 to 2015 can be attributed to staff turnover and the lack of constant training regarding this initiative in 2014. On the contrary, in 2014 it can be observed an increase compared to 2013, possibly because of staff training during the first year of study.



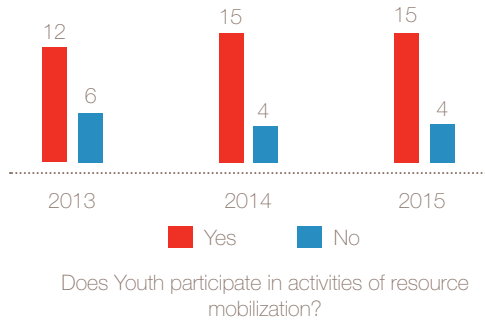
There is an increase per year in YABC follow-up activities; although, these activities are not exactly linked to the training process.





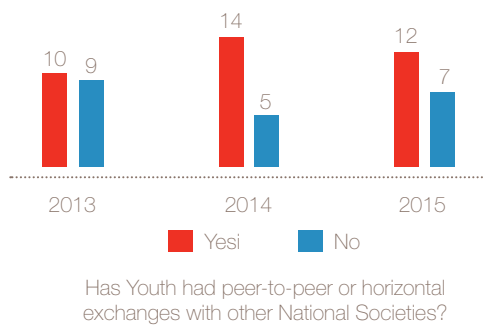
### Youth in resource mobilization

In 2013, only 12 National Societies took into consideration the young people for fund raising at local or national level.



### Peer-to-peer exchange

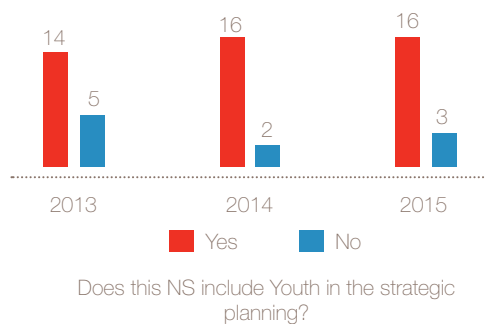
In the second year of study (2014), is when there recorded more peer-to-peer or horizontal exchanges. These exchanges contemplate the interaction of the Youth coordination of a National Society with another; either with its counterparts or other area of the second National Society.



## 4.2.2 Guidelines and policies of National Societies

### Youth on the Strategic Plan

From the 19 National Societies studied, only Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Paraguay did not include youth in the strategic plan of the National Society in 2015.



### Youth commitment strategy

In 2015, out of the 19 National Societies under study, 10 stated that they had a Youth commitment strategy. These were Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, United States of America, Guyana, Dominican Republic, and Surinam. This question is only in the survey held on 2015.

Does this NS have a Youth commitment strategy or a strategic plan for the commitment of youth?	Answers	Percentage
Yes	10	53%
No	9	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

The next table shows the answers provided by the National Societies that, according to the previous question, have a Youth commitment strategy (10 in total). This includes the kind of information that can be gathered through the strategic plan to provide the affiliates with orientation on diverse topics.

The Youth commitment strategy includes orientation to the branches about:	Quantity of NS	
	Yes	No
How to involve youth in leadership roles	8	2
How to involve young people and adults in intergenerational cooperation	7	3
How to attract young people as volunteers	8	2
How to work with young beneficiaries	6	4

### Recruitment of young volunteers from vulnerable groups

Less than half of the National Societies have strategies for the recruitment of young volunteers from vulnerable groups.

Does the NS have specific methods to recruit young people from vulnerable groups? (2015)	Answers	Percentage
Yes	8	44%
No	10	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Involvement of young beneficiaries

The next table refers to the guidelines that the National Societies take into consideration to involve young beneficiaries from communities where projects are being developed in the activities of those projects. Out of the 18 National Societies that answered this question, 56% had specific guidelines in 2015.

Does the NS have specific policies about how to involve young people that are direct beneficiaries in the Red Cross's projects? (2015)	Answers	Percentage
Yes	10	56%
No	8	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.2.3 Opportunities for the youth

#### Training Courses

In 2015, it was added some information to the instrument regarding the opportunities offered to the Youth from the National Society. Among these opportunities, it can be found training courses for the youth leadership development. Most of the NS did not offer specific training for that purpose in that year.

Does this National Society offer specific training courses for young leaders? (2015)	Answers	Percentage
Yes	9	47%
No	10	53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Website/Social Network for young people

In this section, 16 National Societies stated that they have a website or social network for the youth. The National Societies of Colombia, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago do not have their own website. Out the Ns that do have one, the majority uses the platform of the National Society and/or Facebook to interact with the youth.

Does the NS have a website/social network for the youth?	Answers	Percentage
Yes	16	84%
No	3	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Chapter 6: Volunteers in action

### **Dominican Republic**

#### **Supporting the migrant population**

In response to the call for assistance made by the Dominican government in 2015, the Dominican Red Cross deployed a multidisciplinary team to assist the needs of the migrant population in the shelters established by the competent authorities in the provinces of Dajabon and Jimani.

The Red Cross provided special support to guarantee the supply of drinking water and appropriate sanitation. Qualified human resources were sent to the place, along with buckets of drinking water, hygiene kits, water filters, water tanks with storage capacity of 550 gallons of water, ambulances, 4x4 vehicles, engines, relief works, water and sanitation, equipment, and materials to establish family bonds, as well as visibility materials for the different campaigns.

The National Society kept an intense advocacy campaign in favor of the rights of this population, and thus to guarantee the humanitarian assistance in alliance with national and local authorities of the civil society, and other relevant actors at all levels. The volunteers and staff of the organization visited the field daily. In regards to the humanitarian nature of the situation of the migrants in the Dominican nation, the Dominican Red Cross Emergency Operation Center was activated and the corresponding communication mechanisms to guarantee an effective communication among the different members of the Movement present and the population.

### **Ecuador**

#### **Psychosocial support to communities affected by the earthquake**

On April 16th 2016, the Ecuadorian territory suffered the consequences of a catastrophic earthquake. In the face of the disaster, the response of the Red Cross was immediate. One of the areas of work was to provide psychological support to those affected.

Red Cross volunteers, led by a group of professionals in psychology of the National Society, conducted recreational activities with the inhabitants of the most affected communities to restore the emotional balance and facilitate the natural recovery process of the people involved. In three months, approximately 20,465 children and adults were assisted in the provinces of Manabi and Esmeraldas.

“Our job is to identify who needs help to intervene in the recovery of psychological traumas. Through these interventions, it is possible to recover or acquire the necessary skills to develop a more autonomous and dignified daily life,” stated Tania Cedeño, Coordinator of Psychosocial Support of the Ecuadorian Red Cross Regional Board of the city of Manta.

## **Bolivia-Canada**

### **Maternal, newborn, and child health**

Within the framework of the project “Maternal and child health and nutrition... First,” the Bolivian Red Cross, along with the support of the Canadian Red Cross, and the Micronutrients initiative held in 2012, carried out activities in the departments of Potosi and Cochabamba to reduce malnutrition and promote maternal health.

The activities included the training of staff and community members, along with interventions with mothers and their newborns, and the work with pregnant women and children under 5 years of age. In addition, it was implemented a communication strategy to facilitate the self-care of this population.

The Volunteers played an active and important role in the success of the project. Trained to detect malnutrition and diseases, they carried out home-visits to pregnant women, mothers, newborns, and children under 5 years of age. In the case of detection of any health anomalies in this population, the volunteers referred them to medical centers or provided counseling to mothers and pregnant women on maternal and infant nutrition.

## **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

### **Prompt Response to Natural Disaster Emergencies**

On December 2013, some islands located in the Lesser Antilles were affected by heavy torrents caused by a low-pressure system. The heavy rains caused landslides, collapsed roads and bridges, and floods that caused injuries or death, and significant loss of housing.

In the face of the emergency, the Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT) of the Red Cross of Saint Vincent and Grenadines went to the most affected communities to assess the situation. The distribution of drinking water and food supply were the priority, as well as the promotion of hygienic practices to prevent diseases.

The National Society counted with 10 volunteers trained in Regional Intervention Teams (RIT): 2 of them were specialized in water and sanitation, 2 in logistics, 3 in RIT in general, and 1 specialized in information, communication, and information technologies. In addition, 100 out of the 150 volunteers working with the NS were involved in the emergency operation. Besides the disaster response operations, the Saint Vincent and Red Cross of Saint Vincent and Grenadines initiated actions to assess the consequences and the humanitarian service provided, and thus help in conjunction with the affected communities.

## El Salvador

### Citizen Participation and Social Inclusion

The project “Promoting social inclusion opportunities of young people and their families in the Hábitat Confien community in the city of Delgado (SIO)” aimed to prioritize and consolidate the organizational strengthening actions through the Program of Principles and Values for the promotion of citizen participation, exercise of citizens’ responsibility, comprehensive care with emphasis on the promotion of humanitarian principles and values, and the prevention of social exclusion. During the three years of the project execution, from 2011 to 2014, the number of direct beneficiaries was 1 500, and the indirect beneficiaries was 5 500.

“SIO has developed strategies in the territory where it operates, based on an effort in conjunction with organized local structures and alliances with national institutions related to the themes of the project,” stated Arquimedes Flores, Project Coordinator.

In the activities, volunteers and technicians from the Programme Management and Community Resilience of the Salvadorian Red Cross participated. With the activities and volunteering participation, six results were achieved:

- Strengthening of youth and community structures
- Promoting the practice of humanitarian principles and values
- Improvement of preventive health and environment conditions of young people and their families
- Strengthening of art, culture, and recreation
- Strengthening of the NS capacities by prioritizing the Agua Caliente Relief Post
- Technical and administrative management

## Security

The security guide «Volunteers, Stay Safe!» of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies aims to protect volunteers and ensure their safe access to the communities they serve. These two points are integral to the volunteering and youth policies approved by the General Assembly in November 2011.

From 2011 to 2015, the number of security incidents reported by the National Societies to the IFRC Security Unit decreased by 40%, largely due to the safety campaigns focused on the security of the volunteers using the «Volunteers, Stay Safe!» guide.





## Conclusions and recommendations

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Adapting to a changing scenario brings huge challenges for the National Societies and the volunteering and youth management. These challenges are not only found in the development of programs and projects to assist people in situations of vulnerability, but also in the recruitment of the volunteers to meet these needs.

The challenges of social organizations that use volunteers as the base of their operations, along with a lack of planning in volunteering management in the National Societies, have led to a stagnation in the number of volunteers, in the best scenario, or their contraction, according to more pessimist analysis. This reduction or stagnation in the volunteering body is a wake-up call to the National Societies and it lead to reflection on better strategies to engage and retain the volunteers.

However, the challenge is not to engage as many volunteers as possible, but to ensure a qualified volunteering body for the performance of the humanitarian activities. This can be achieved through the creation of volunteering profiles and job descriptions to facilitate the recruitment of ideal volunteers for this humanitarian task.

Volunteer involvement in the decision-making processes is essential so that programs and projects can be effectively implemented and to keep relevance in a dynamic national and international context. The strength of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent relies in its volunteers, in the knowledge that they provide to the communities, and in their capacity to represent the vulnerable populations and target audience of community projects. Regarding this, it becomes fundamental to transfer this representation to all the decision-making levels of the organization. The political participation of volunteers in the institutional life of the National Societies is low. Two factors can explain this phenomenon: an institutional legal framework that does not have mechanisms for this purpose and the absence of a culture of participation.

One of the main concerns of the National Societies gathered in previous studies and in the Volunteering Development Webinar (2016), is the high volunteer turnover in the Red Cross. Such situation is experienced in most NS in the Americas, and it is mostly due to the lack of appropriate structures and volunteering management that can promote the constant motivation of volunteers.

From the previous studies, it can be stated that there are two significant factors for the retention of the volunteers: continuous training and motivation; both areas in which there is a pending debt at national and regional levels.

The motivation of volunteers can be boost from the recognition of the volunteer work, as well as the granting of opportunities for the individual development. The Red Cross must guarantee its volunteers optimal conditions for their volunteering service in order to avoid the obvious consequences of the lack of trained and motivated volunteers. Therefore, we have to guarantee that volunteers perceive an individual benefit for their voluntary participation, which can be at personal, professional, academic levels, or other forms of personal development. There are also tools for self-training of volunteers available by the National Societies and the International Federation. Previous studies show that not all the volunteers know or have access to these tools.

Volunteers can be in a situation of great vulnerability during their service to the Red Cross. Annually, there are reported incidents of volunteers that have been injured or have lost their life while performing their duties. It is the responsibility of the National Societies and the Federation to minimize the risks. Different tools have been designed for this purpose through the “Stay Safe” courses. However, our region still has a pending debt in training and insurance for the volunteers. This should be one of the priorities in volunteering management.

Peer-to-peer exchanges have proven to be a powerful tool for the promotion of good practices and the exchange generated through the experience in humanitarian aid. The baseline studies shed light on this practice. Even though it has spread in recent years, not all the National Societies put them in practice. The International Federation must facilitate these exchanges of knowledge and encourage the National Societies to engage in these practices.

There are major institutional challenges that threaten the appropriate development of volunteering in the Red Crosses of the Americas. As an organization, it is our responsibility to guarantee the structure and tools needed to motivate, protect, and train our volunteers. This responsibility entails a constant review of the volunteering management in the NS and in the Federation. The generation of academic studies with updated statistics allows us to know the composition and structure of the volunteering body, and in this way to better understand the volunteering needs and measure the impact our work has in the communities and the volunteers themselves.





## Annex. Table of the participation of the NS in the surveys carried out by year and area.

National Society	Year				Total participation	Participation Percentage
	2013	2014	2015			
			Volunteering	Youth		
Antigua y Barbuda	X	X			2	67%
Argentina	X	X			2	67%
Bahamas	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Barbados	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Belize	X	X	X		2,5	83%
Bolivia	X	X		X	2,5	83%
Brazil		X	X	X	2	67%
Canada	X	X		X	2,5	83%
Chile	X	X			2	67%
Colombia	X	X		X	2,5	83%
Costa Rica	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Cuba	X	X			2	67%
Dominica	X	X			2	67%
Ecuador	X	X	X	X	3	100%
El Salvador	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Granada	X	X			2	67%
Guatemala	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Guyana	X	X		X	2,5	83%
Haití		X	X	X	2	67%
Honduras	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Jamaica	X	X	X		2,5	83%
México	X	X	X		2,5	83%
Nicaragua	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Panamá	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Paraguay	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Perú	X	X			2	67%
Dominican Republic	X	X		X	2,5	83%
Saint Kitts and Nevis	X	X			2	67%
Santa Lucía	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	X	X			2	67%
Suriname	X	X	X		2,5	83%
Trinidad and Tobago	X	X	X	X	3	100%
Uruguay	X	X		X	2,5	83%
United States	X	X	X		3	100%
Venezuela	X	X	X		2,5	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>		

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# 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.

