

Key messages

Top three key messages for media

- 1. A recent survey has found that Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers contributed 6 billion US dollars worth of services worldwide in 2009.**
- 2. The social value of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers is arguably even greater than the economic value. Our community-based volunteer network and workforce reaches around 30 million people each year during disasters alone and even more through community development initiatives that reach vulnerable people each day. The value of their local knowledge and long-term commitment simply cannot be replaced or calculated.**
- 3. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is calling on governments around the world to continue to increase the protection of volunteers by identifying gaps or barriers in laws and policies related to issues such as liability, insurance, and health and safety.**

Global key messages for broader communication channels

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contributed 6 billion US dollars worth of services worldwide in 2009.
- Volunteers are defined by the survey as those who contributed at least 4 hours of their time during 2009.
- The value of services delivered by Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers in 2009 was the equivalent of 90 US cents for every person on earth.
- The global Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million: greater than the population of Greece, almost twice the population of Switzerland and three times the population of Ireland.
- The global Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million: equivalent to the population of Cambodia, more than twice the population of Singapore and three times the population of the United Arab Emirates.
- In 2009, 13.1 million – two in every thousand people in the world or the equivalent of every person in Tokyo – volunteered with the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
- Donor dollars go much further with the support of the volunteer network. On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1 to 20 – meaning that for every paid staff member, there are 20 volunteers.
- The social value contributed by Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers is arguably even greater than the economic value. Our community-based volunteer workforce reaches around 30 million people each year in disasters alone and even more through community development initiatives that reach vulnerable people each day. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, Red Cross volunteers have helped protect over 2 million people from polio by allaying fears about the safety of vaccines and by administering the vaccine in the most isolated of communities. In Denmark, local Red Cross volunteers comfort people without family in their last days and hours of life. This value simply cannot be calculated or replaced through funding.
- Although the Red Cross and Red Crescent is known mostly for its role in disasters, the area in which most active volunteers are engaged is health, with 37 per cent of volunteers working in the area worldwide. Volunteers add tremendous value in the area of health such as their contribution to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative where total volunteer effort was valued at 10 billion US dollars and that the UNV described as “far beyond the reach of governments or international organizations”.
- Globally, women make up the majority of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers at 54 per cent, whilst male volunteers make up 46 per cent. This breakdown is consistent in all regions except South and South-East Asia, where the majority of volunteers are male at 54 per cent and 60 per cent respectively.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent works in collaboration with governments, other international and local humanitarian organizations, and both the public and private sectors to achieve the collective aims of building resilient communities and a more caring and peaceful world. Our partnerships with the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and Lions Clubs International are key to achieving these aims.

Key messages and call to action

- Since the 2001 International Year of the Volunteer, the United Nations system and other stakeholders have recognized that volunteerism makes significant contributions to social inclusion, civil society, peace and development. Crucial to this contribution is providing an enabling environment for volunteers, by means of laws and policies. A number of gaps in legislation or legal barriers that may prevent volunteers from operating in a safe and enabling environment have been identified. As a result, more than 70 laws or policies on volunteerism have been adopted since 2001. However, there is still a need to close gaps where they exist by working with governments to fine-tune legislation or remove legal barriers.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is calling on governments around the world to continue to increase protection of volunteers, by identifying gaps or barriers in laws and policies relating to issues such as liability, insurance, and health and safety, with a special focus on volunteering in emergencies, and to close any gaps by working with organizations like Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies as a matter of urgency.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its partners are calling on governments around the world to formally recognize the value of volunteers by incorporating their contribution into key economic and social indicators used in decision-making and planning at the highest levels.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is calling for people around the world to 'find the volunteer inside' by giving their time, creating a safer environment for volunteers, providing workplace opportunities that enable employees to volunteer or by exploring innovative ways to fit volunteering into their busy lives.
- As living trends continue to change the way in which people volunteer – including more informal involvement such as spontaneous volunteering when a disaster strikes or sharing professional skills through mentoring – we must find ways to enable people to get involved. There are also many non-institutionalized ways in which volunteers are becoming involved out of traditional office hours and space by contributing their ideas and skills online or volunteering from their workplace with the support of their employer. This must be encouraged.

Regional key messages and statistics for zones and National Societies

Sub-Saharan Africa

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contribute 117 million US dollars worth of services in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in sub-Saharan Africa is 86 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, more than the population of Zimbabwe.
- In sub-Saharan Africa alone there are 1.4 million volunteers, more than the population of Swaziland or Mauritius.
- On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:327 in sub-Saharan Africa – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 327 volunteers.
- The social value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers is arguably even greater than their economic value. In sub-Saharan Africa, 2 million people are better protected against malaria because local volunteers hand deliver mosquito nets to households in their local communities as part of the Keep-up programme.

Middle East and North Africa

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contribute 50 million US dollars worth of services in Middle East and North Africa.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in Middle East and North Africa is 94 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, more than the population of Tunisia and three times the population of the United Arab Emirates.
- In the Middle East and North Africa alone, there are half a million volunteers, more than the population of Cape Verde.
- On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:35 in the Middle East and North Africa – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 35 volunteers.

Central, southern and western Europe

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contribute 1.1 billion US dollars worth of services in central, southern and western Europe.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in central, southern and western Europe is 855 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, more than the population of Greece, twice the population of Denmark and three times the population of Lithuania.
- In central, southern and western Europe alone, there are 1.3 million volunteers, equivalent to the population of Estonia.
- On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:32 in central, southern and western Europe – meaning that for every member of staff, there are 32 volunteers.

Eastern Europe, central Asia, Turkey and the Southern Caucasus

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contribute 25 million US dollars worth of services in eastern Europe, central Asia, Turkey and the Southern Caucasus.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in eastern Europe, central Asia, Turkey and the Southern Caucasus is 114 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, more than the population of the Czech Republic, almost twice the population of Tajikistan and three times the population of Georgia.
- In eastern Europe, central Asia, Turkey and the Southern Caucasus alone, there are 217,000 active volunteers, equivalent to over half the population of Malta.
- On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:19 in eastern Europe, central Asia, Turkey and the Southern Caucasus – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 19 volunteers.

US and Canada

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross volunteers contribute 868 million US dollars worth of services in the US and Canada.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross volunteers in the US and Canada is 1,224 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, more than the population of the Cuba, twice the population of Paraguay and three times the population of Puerto Rico.
- In the USA and Canada alone, there are 710,000 volunteers, equivalent to over half the population of San Diego and the Canadian province of Alberta.
- On average, the Red Cross network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:11 in the US and Canada – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 11 volunteers.

Caribbean

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross volunteers contribute 19 million US dollars worth of services in the Caribbean.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross volunteers in the Caribbean is 268 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, more than the population of the Cuba, twice the population of Paraguay and three times the population of Puerto Rico.
- In the Caribbean alone, there are 72,000 volunteers, more than the population of Bermuda.
- On average, the Red Cross network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:45 in the Caribbean – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 45 volunteers.

Latin America

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross volunteers contribute 66 million US dollars worth of services in Latin America.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross volunteers in Latin America is 401 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, almost the population of Guatemala, and twice the population of Paraguay and more than three times the population of Panama.
- In the Latin America alone, there are 165,000 volunteers, almost the population of Saint Lucia.
- On average, the Red Cross network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:15 in Latin America – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 15 volunteers.

South Asia

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contribute 279 US million dollars worth of services in South Asia.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in South Asia is 102 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, equivalent to the population of Cambodia.
- In the South Asia alone, there are 2.7 million active volunteers, more than half the population of Singapore.
- On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:23 in South Asia – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 23 volunteers.

South-East Asia

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers contribute 225 million US dollars worth of services in South-East Asia.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in South-East Asia is 79 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, equivalent to the population of Cambodia.
- In South Asia alone, there are 2.8 million active volunteers, more than the population of Mongolia.
- On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:432 in South-East Asia – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 432 volunteers.

East Asia

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross volunteers contribute 3.1 billion US dollars worth of services in East Asia, the highest value of services of any region in the world.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, equivalent to the population of Tokyo. In East Asia alone, there are 3.1 million volunteers, more than the population of Mongolia or the city of Osaka in Japan.
- On average, the Red Cross network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:118 in East Asia – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 118 volunteers.

Pacific

- A recent survey has found that Red Cross volunteers contribute 29.5 million US dollars worth of services in the Pacific.
- The average annual economic value of Red Cross volunteers in the Pacific is 542 US dollars per volunteer.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 13.1 million worldwide, or three times the population of New Zealand.
- In the Pacific alone, there are 54,000 volunteers.
- On average, the Red Cross network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1:18 in the Pacific – meaning that for every paid member of staff, there are 18 volunteers.



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