

Q: What was the reason for conducting the survey?

A: The survey and report provides IFRC with a baseline for subsequent studies to track the evolution of volunteer recruitment and retention. It also values the volunteer contribution so that we can advocate for recognition and better protection of volunteers.

Q: In the past, you have quoted that you have 100 million volunteers. Why has that number dropped?

A: Our survey quotes the number of active volunteers for the period 2009. There are more than 100 million people worldwide who support the Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer network as members, through in-kind support, episodic volunteering, workplace volunteering and through the donation of resources.

Q: What is your definition of a volunteer?

A: The survey methodology defines an active volunteer as someone who gave at least 4 hours of their time in 2009.

Q: Do you ever pay your volunteers?

A: Volunteers may at times be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, but the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies policy is not to pay a salary or wages.

Q: Is this economic value replacing the responsibility of governments?

A: No. Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers add social value that is either incalculable – such as the local knowledge required during an emergency; irreplaceable – such as their contribution to the 2000 Global Polio Initiative valued at 10 billion US dollars that the United Nations described as far beyond the reach of governments or international and national organizations; or immeasurable – such as the commitment of Danish Red Cross volunteers who comfort people without family in their dying days and hours.

Q: Are these volunteers replacing paid jobs or taking jobs?

A: No. It has been recognized by governments, the United Nations system, civil society partners and other stakeholders that volunteerism makes significant contributions to peace and development. This means that volunteers create stronger societies that can advance economically and ultimately create employment opportunities.