

Strategic Programme 2024–2026

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Introduction

The Finnish Red Cross is a humanitarian assistance organisation the purpose of which is to help people in need at home and abroad. It is a part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which collectively helps people when conflicts, disasters and accidents occur and maintains preparedness to respond to them. The organisation encourages people to look after their wellbeing and to take care of one another. The action of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is guided by its seven Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

The Finnish Red Cross Strategic Programme for the years 2024–2026 builds on the work started by the previous Strategic Programme and reinforces the vision: **Finnish Red Cross action brings joy, gives hope and strengthens people's trust in each other and in Red Cross assistance.**

Volunteering in the Red Cross creates joy through community sense and inclusion. It brings joy to those we help and to those who help. Our assistance activities give hope. For the people getting help, hope opens up new prospects, supports coping and steers towards a better future. The visible action of Red Cross volunteers in their local community enhances trust in people's willingness to act together and help each other. Each one of us can both give and get help.

This Strategic Programme guides Finnish Red Cross work in an exceptionally challenging situation. Amid major shifts in the operating environment, the goals of Red Cross action do not change. On the contrary, the significance of Red Cross objectives in society has become even more pronounced. By progressing towards the goals set in this Strategic Programme, we support three important transformations in society. Firstly, we are building a safe society where people can trust that in acute situations they get the help and protection they need regardless of who they are. Secondly, through our action we support every person's opportunity to drive their own lives, take part in the action of the community and society, and help others, also amid crises. Inclusion creates wellbeing and enhances safety. Thirdly, we strengthen a society based on trust, which safeguards human dignity, acts for humanity and encourages volunteering and active citizenship.

An effective chain of help connects people who need help, communities, our volunteers, our supporters and our employees. Accomplishing our vision requires commitment from the entire organisation. The Strategic Programme offers meaningful goals for all actors in the Finnish Red Cross.

The common factor of all goals in the Strategic Programme is the organisation's comprehensive preparedness. Each volunteer, employee and governance member is a part of our preparedness by ensuring that all joint resources are available when a crisis strikes.

Amid new and persistent challenges

Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of our time and also a major humanitarian crisis. Its effects are seen all over the world. Conflicts, food crisis and rising prices of energy and commodities also cause additional hardship on people's lives in many countries. Crises and conflicts force an unprecedented number of people on the move and expose them to various threats. The people with least safety nets and resources suffer from crises the most. The need for aid in the world is constantly higher than the funding available for it.

The need for aid also increasingly concerns people living in Finland. The coronavirus pandemic and crisis in Ukraine changed Finnish society's approach to preparedness and contingencies but also to helping. Inequality, poverty, loneliness, growing health disparities, discrimination and racism challenge the entire welfare society. The economic outlook globally and in Finland is insecure. This is also reflected on uncertainty among civil society organisations.

The reforms of Finland's public healthcare, social welfare and rescue services, change in the funding environment and people's altered way and will to help call for transformations in the action of civil society organisations from the local to the national level. Digitalisation prompts civil society organisations to increasingly faster development. Diversity in society opens up opportunities but at the same time challenges the Red Cross to review the ways in which it works.

21 April 2023
Finnish Red Cross
Board

MAIN GOAL 1: Help is available locally

The Finnish Red Cross is a leading preparedness and response organisation, whose entire action underpins response capacities. The foundation of Finnish Red Cross' helping lies in the preparedness built on solid local volunteer action. Our help reaches especially the most vulnerable people. We work together as a unified Red Cross, which reacts fast and effectively when needed both in Finland and internationally. The Red Cross has a special role to act as an auxiliary to public authorities to promote people's wellbeing in sudden accidents and disruptions.

During 2024–2026:

We will reinforce our preparedness, including local capacities. We will improve our preparedness to anticipate the need for humanitarian assistance in Finland and internationally. We will develop new modes of action for preparedness and increase skills needed in local-level assistance situations through training. We will also reinforce joint preparedness action and contingencies with neighbouring National Red Cross Societies.

The foundation of preparedness lies in competent actors and an extensive network of local branches, whose action and division of labour are defined in local, regional and national preparedness plans. Local preparedness is built not only through branch preparedness but also regionally through cooperation between districts and branches.

We will contribute to reducing and preventing risks and mitigating their harmful effects by training, communicating and by collaborating with other organisations supporting communities. In our international assistance work we will support our local partners in building their capacities and preparedness, in disaster prevention and in mitigating their impact.

We will actively participate in Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's work to promote climatically and environmentally sustainable aid. Our assistance activities will contribute to reducing the impacts of the climate crisis and support adaptation to effects of climate change.

We will prepare for large-scale disruptions and emergency conditions. We will increase the number of on-call volunteers and the competencies and expertise of volunteers and professionals. We will ensure the functioning of our preparedness plans and operating models also in emergency conditions as well as our ability to receive international aid. We will clarify leadership, coordination and decision-making structures. We will define the organisation's leadership structure for large-scale disruptions and emergency conditions. We will reinforce preparedness to operate in situations involving mass population movements. We will identify the special assistance and protection needs of people on the move and respond to them.

We will get ready for being able to instruct and train large numbers of helpers during sudden assistance situations. We will develop modes of operation through which we create a situational picture of assistance needs and our resources to help in sudden assistance situations. We will be able to respond to domestic assistance needs also by utilising online training and forms of online helping when needed.

We will utilise better the comprehensive preparedness competencies and resources of the entire organisation. The Blood Service is responsible for supplying blood products all over Finland in a centralised manner in normal and emergency conditions. Youth shelters provide young people psychosocial support also online in sudden assistance situations. Punainen Risti Ensiapu (Red Cross First Aid) is prepared to give people first aid training also in emergency conditions. The Kontti second-hand chain is actively involved in assistance operations in the reception of donated supplies. We will enhance the capacities of our personnel reserve members to also act in domestic assistance operations.

We will agree on preparedness collaboration and modes of operating with our partners, wellbeing services counties, municipalities, public authorities, civil society organisations and companies. We will increase joint preparedness planning and exercises with our key partners.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Number of on-call volunteers

Number of volunteers who have responded to alerts and assistance situations

MAIN GOAL 2: A thriving community includes all

Finnish Red Cross volunteer action enhances inclusion and equality.

In Red Cross action, inclusion entails the opportunity to participate in meaningful action, to influence and to have the experience of being a link in the Red Cross chain of helping. Red Cross action supporting inclusion offers a space to belong to a safe community and to get support for promoting one's wellbeing and health. The experience of inclusion strengthens the safety of the individual and society. We especially support the inclusion of vulnerable people.

Our goal is that inequality and loneliness are identified, reacted to and prevented. We want to be a reliable partner and a key promoter of wellbeing, health and safety in wellbeing services counties and municipalities. In our work, health is understood broadly as physical, psychological and social wellbeing. With our action we advocate for all people's equal opportunities to get the help and support they need. We enhance people's wellbeing and health in order for individuals and communities to be stronger when disruptions emerge. We improve people's ability to act and their resilience to crises. Community-based health work builds preparedness to act also in crisis and conflict situations in Finland and abroad. Our goal is to have people with first aid skills in every home, workplace and community. Our first aid activities and event first aid are of high quality and improve event safety.

During 2024–2026:

We will support people through guidance, training and encounters. We will develop our preparedness to anticipate assistance needs and to understand their changes. We will increase activity forms that enhance inclusion. We will identify factors and situations causing particular vulnerability.

Our food aid action will strengthen community sense and inclusion and offer support responding to needs. Our action will reach effectively both those who need help and new volunteers.

In Red Cross activities young people will get help for their lives and an opportunity to influence and take part in all Red Cross action as active actors. We will offer young people help and support, both to helpers and those helped. Youth action is an important part of Red Cross response capacities.

We will work together with immigrants to identify vulnerable immigrants. Our action will support their integration and wellbeing and will encourage them to participate and influence.

We will guide, advise and train people to take care of their wellbeing, health and safety and those of people closest to them. We will develop our Healthpoints to be easily accessible meeting points, which provide support for wellbeing and health. Support promoting health will also be offered online. Our training will give people skills and courage to act. We will increase the number of first aid actors and enhance the competencies of event first aiders to encounter and help. The nationally harmonised and high-quality event service package will increase event safety. We will establish Red Cross first aid programmes, such as FRC First Aid Course 1 and 2, as integral parts of first aid preparedness among the entire population.

We will agree on ways of collaboration promoting wellbeing and health with wellbeing services counties, municipalities and other public authorities as well as with other civil society organisations (CSO) and parishes. We will be involved in key networks. The Red Cross will have the capacity to coordinate CSO collaboration.

We will design a harmonised national model for online helping, including the required training and support. We will guide people who need help to appropriate assistance provided either on the web or face to face.

We will redesign our work to reduce loneliness to make it more versatile and responsive to the needs of the person who needs help. We will develop our expertise in the diverse forms of loneliness and select the most impactful modes of operation. We will work together with the public and private sector and other civil society actors to reduce loneliness. Our friend activities will reach an increasing number of people in need and new volunteers.

We will enhance psychosocial support with low threshold encounters, community activities and training both in everyday life and in accident and crisis situations. The foundation of Red Cross psychosocial support is in action promoting wellbeing and inclusion that amplifies a person's capacities and creates a basis for the ability

to withstand changing and burdening situations. We will design ways for strengthening mental wellbeing and preventing mental health problems.

We will support the capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and reinforce the network of international support especially in countries where basic services have collapsed due to protracted conflicts and crises. We will promote the localisation of aid by supporting the financial sustainability of our partners. In our health work we will focus, among others, on promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to services even amid crises and conflicts. We will promote inclusion by training our partners and by improving collaboration, for example, with local organisations of persons with disabilities.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Number of volunteers, people assisted and encountered in online helping

Experience of volunteers and persons assisted of inclusion in Red Cross activities

MAIN GOAL 3: A society building trust and responsibility

The Finnish Red Cross has a broad group of supporters that trusts in Red Cross action and is familiar with the principles and modes of operation of our work. The trust is based on visible local action, international assistance work and ongoing versatile communications. The Finnish Red Cross acts and speaks out in support of humanity and actively offers solutions to improve the situation of people in need of assistance. Red Cross action unites helpers of different backgrounds.

During 2024–2026:

Red Cross communications about its action will be open and impactful. We will actively participate in societal discussion in Finland and as a part of the international Movement. Through our communications we will show that our action is relevant and has impact.

Special goals of our advocacy work will be mitigating the humanitarian consequences of climate change, crisis preparedness of Finnish society, and reducing loneliness, exclusion and racism in Finland. We will advocate for everyone's equitable right and opportunity to get the help they need. In our communications we will highlight the significance of volunteering as well as the importance of being present and encountering. We will influence decision-making in society in order that the humanitarian consequences of decisions are taken into account.

We will develop means of collecting information and utilising it at all levels of the organisation and as part of cooperation. Reliable information that is based on the experience of people getting help and of volunteers as well as on research will build the basis for both leadership and participation in societal discussion. In collaboration with other actors we will bring out the voice of vulnerable people and the humanitarian and human consequences of decision-making.

We will organise training in and communicate actively about the Geneva Conventions and other humanitarian law and promote their implementation together with public authorities. We will defend the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and the right of the Red Cross to give independent, impartial aid and protect people in all circumstances.

We will develop access to and accessibility of our activities and ensure that our action is free from discrimination and racism. People of different backgrounds will be able to join our activities easily. By offering open and accessible volunteer action we will be an active part of civil society that reinforces democracy and fundamental rights.

We will build trust in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement by acting and communicating in an ethical manner.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Number of members, volunteers, regular contributors, blood donors and customers

Overall grade in the corporate communications research

We will reach our goals with the following transformations

*We will reach our three main goals by focusing on the following **seven transformations in the way we work**:*

1. Red Cross inspires and invites to join in

We will increase the number of volunteers and create dynamic, needs-based action. In this manner we can respond to growing assistance needs. We will ensure that it is easy and comfortable to join our activities.

Members boost the organisation's impact and are a source for new volunteers. We will launch a national membership recruitment campaign which aims at stopping the declining membership rate and reversing it to growth during the strategy period.

At the beginning of the strategy period we will prepare a multi-year programme to develop child and youth action, camp activities and collaboration with schools. In line with the programme, the various organisational units will be guided to direct more financial, human and other operational resources to child and youth action and to increase regional and national cooperation within the organisation and with collaboration partners to provide more opportunities for children and young people to become engaged in activities and to facilitate wellbeing.

We will actively engage new volunteers and utilise the *Oma Punainen Risti* digital system to do so. We will communicate about all our volunteer activities on *Oma Punainen Risti*.

We will enhance an open organisational culture that emphasises the wellbeing, motivation and comfort of volunteers and employees.

We will strengthen diversity. We want that volunteers, governance members and employees include people of different backgrounds. With a diverse volunteer base we will be an impactful helper in all communities. We will work to promote equality. We will especially focus on reaching out to young adults and immigrants.

We will support local branches to assess and develop their own action. Districts will increase needs-based support for local activities on the basis of branch development plans. The continuity of branch action will be ensured by actively recruiting new actors with various backgrounds as governance members and to key duties. We will support local branches and activity groups to actively use digital tools and to utilise the information available through them.

We will work in a manner that facilitates the wellbeing and motivation of volunteers and employees. We will be an attractive employer and the employees enjoy working for us.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Number of volunteers and young people (under 29) involved in the activities, access and speed for new volunteers to join

Satisfaction of volunteers and their experience of the quality of the activities

2. Learning and competence enable change

Ability to learn and competence enable response to constantly evolving assistance needs. Learning takes place best by doing and participating. Participation in Red Cross activities builds skills and capacities that also have broader influence on society.

We will particularly increase competence in Red Cross organisational action. We will reinforce knowledge of the mandate of the Red Cross, its Fundamental Principles and values, statutes and modes of operation as well as its organisation and branch-level action. Organisational competence also entails social and interaction skills, and ability to organise and lead.

We will increase induction and coaching in order that all actors perceive their role as a part of the preparedness and response organisation. We will increase volunteers' competencies in leadership in basic activities and in operations.

We will learn to better identify and bring up the needs of people who need assistance and develop the impact of our action. We will build competence in identifying vulnerabilities and protection needs and responding to them.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Experience of increased skills and capacities as measured by the volunteer barometer survey (volunteers) and by staff surveys (personnel)

3. Achieving more through collaboration

We will reach our goals by collaborating within the organisation and with other actors. Cooperation based on good interaction enables an efficient use of resources for assistance work.

We will work together more between branches, between districts and with our institutions. In sparsely populated areas joint action between regions, branches and activity groups is particularly important.

In the strategy period we will initiate discussion at all levels about the kind of administrative and personnel structures that will best serve our ability to respond to the evolving needs of aid. We will encourage local branches to seek and try out new modes of operation.

Our common support services support the attainment of the goals of the Strategic Programme. We will design support services to support branch action. We will prepare a joint personnel policy which will enhance equality and equity in the entire organisation. The policy will boost human resources management that is based on appreciation and trust and will promote good employee experience.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Adopting a new personnel policy

Making a proposal on new options and development paths in structures at the 2026 General Assembly

4. Utilising digitalisation and leading with knowledge

We will increasingly often reach people receiving aid and volunteers online. To this end, the Red Cross will have a model for online helping that responds to needs, and functioning digital platforms.

By taking advantage of digitalisation we will adjust our action fast also in situations that are exceptional and require new action. In all digital development, the modes of operation of the preparedness and response organisation and information needed for the situational picture will be taken into account. The aim of digitalisation is to support efficient Red Cross branch and volunteer action and transforming action. We will actively use common digital systems and modes of operation at all levels of the organisation. By utilising digitalisation, we will also reach better those whom online communications do not reach.

We will produce and make use of information at all levels of the organisation. We will diversify and harmonise methods and tools of information gathering and utilisation.

We will place emphasis on the quality of information by ensuring that it is current, correct, coherent and relevant.

We will take action to promote digitalisation in local branches by providing them more tools for working electronically. We will listen to the branches' wishes and needs regarding the tools and aim at fulfilling them. We recognise that digital environments in the Red Cross must be developed further.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Number of local branches using digital services in their action (*Oma* and *Ossi* systems and one of the following: social media channel, *Hupsis*, *Ohto*)

5. Increasingly open and versatile communications

Communication is a part of rapid assistance work. We will put effort into open, up-to-date and targeted communications in order that the goals and outcomes of our action will be widely known within the organisation and at all levels of society. An extensive and competent network of volunteers and employees is the strength of Red Cross communications. We will ensure that volunteers taking part in communications are given adequate training and support, and we will create new ways of communicating. We will utilise the competencies of our young volunteers in online communication.

Our communications will be multi-channelled and versatile at all organisational levels. We are a bilingual organisation, which will be visible in our communications.

We will communicate fast, efficiently and in a goal-oriented manner by utilising digitalisation, analytics and automation.

We will develop our multilingual and diversity communications. Communication will reach new volunteers and supporters and will support their entry into the activities.

Good internal communications support cooperation especially when disasters and accidents occur. Tools, methods and communication materials of internal communication will be easily accessible to employees and volunteers.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Total number of social media impressions (excluding paid marketing)

6. Red Cross reinforces ethical and accountable action

We will encourage and support all people involved in Finnish Red Cross action to assess the climate impact of their own action, make emission-reducing decisions and alter their ways of operating. We will observe the organisation's Climate sustainability policy in all work. Our operations will be carbon neutral by 2030.

We want that everyone feels safe to act in the Red Cross and we do not tolerate unethical behaviour, discrimination, racism, bullying, sexual harassment or abuse. All Red Cross actors adhere to our code of ethics and principles for safer space. The Finnish Red Cross will create procedures for intervening in situations in which the code ethics is not adhered to or the principles for safer space are violated. The reporting procedures for misconduct will be known to all.

We will put special effort into an open and interactive operational culture in the entire organisation.

Good governance, responsible use of funds, internal controls and functioning risk management will ensure accountable action in all units.

We want the Finnish Red Cross to be recognised as a responsible and appreciated employer.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Our operations will be carbon neutral by 2030

7. Balanced finances enable Red Cross action

We will maintain economic stability. Balanced finances enable operational ability. Our procurement and services are cost-effective and promote sustainable development. Our investing activities are ethical and

responsible. Together we will seek modes of operation that respond to assistance needs and the expectations of volunteers, while the utilisation of digitalisation will also enable financially more efficient operations in the entire organisation.

We will boost our own fundraising by offering ways to support our action that are cost-effective and appealing to various target groups. We will put effort into retaining our supporters by communicating about our versatile activities and assistance work in a manner that is open and creates trust.

We will measure success in achieving the goal by

Membership and number of volunteers

Stable finances of organisational units: adjusted net profit and net assets