Strategy 2020 Everyone Helps





Dear Reader

At Belgian Red Cross-Flanders, we leave nothing to chance. We firmly take control of our future too. Over the past few months, we have been hard at work developing an ambitious new five-year plan. It needs to be a worthy successor to Pledge 2015, our previous policy plan.

This major strategic exercise relied on the support of hundreds of people: not just our own volunteers and staff members, but also external experts, government representatives, people from other voluntary organizations, and many more. We would like to thank them all very much for their enthusiastic efforts and the vital contribution they have made.

The result of all that brainwork is Strategy 2020. Everyone helps. Our new baseline, 'Helps people help', which we launched in 2015, is a great foundation for building our future. As you read this brochure, you will soon notice that self-reliance is the common thread running through everything we do.

This focus on self-reliance makes us, now more than ever, an approachable, caring and engaged organization, as we invite everyone to contribute in whatever way they can. We show people how the assistance we offer can be the most effective for the people who need it. We are absolutely delighted that others want to help us in our efforts to assist vulnerable people.

Self-reliance is exactly what our baseline, 'Helps people help', is all about. It lends a whole new dimension to our operations and crystallizes our aims for current and new activities. Strategy 2020. Everyone helps sets Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' course for the future.

We are ready to rise to the challenge.

The M

Prof dr. Philippe Vandekerckhove Chief Executive Officer

Christ'l Joris President

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Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is an integral part of our care sector. This modern, contemporary organization sets great store by quality. As such, it does not shy away from critical self-examination. In fact, such self-examination is necessary if the organization is to make the right strategic choices to ensure that help is always on hand for the most vulnerable people in our society.

These choices are set out in Strategy 2020. Everyone helps. There is a real need to invest in broadly accessible assistance, online applications and a robust network of carers and volunteers. After all, whichever way you look at it, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' thousands of volunteers and their tireless efforts are the lifeblood of the organization. They are a shot in the arm for our society.

Belgian Red-Cross Flanders' organizational model will also continue focusing on prevention, self-reliance, early detection and early intervention. All of this will be underpinned by a rational approach to financial support: minimal support where possible, and highly intensive, specialist assistance and care where necessary.

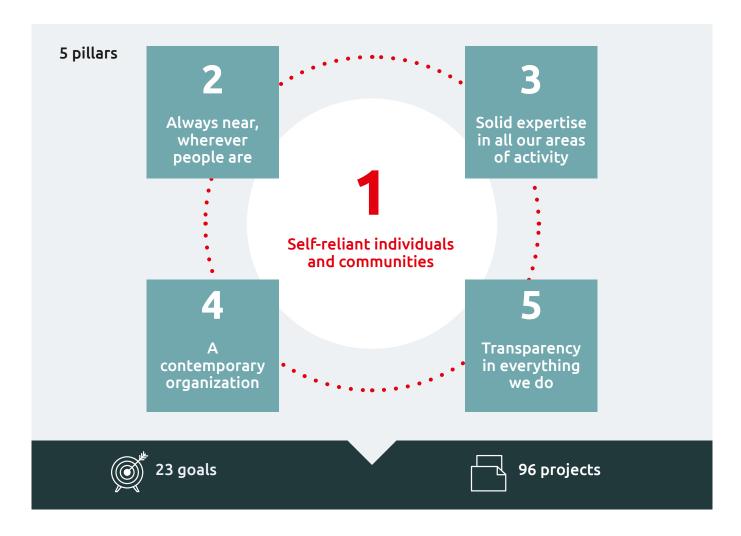
Belgian Red Cross-Flanders hopes that this new policy plan will enable it to regenerate and remain attractive both to its volunteers and to the general public. The Red Cross is an excellent example of an organization covering the humanitarian 'last mile': it is always on hand for every person in Flanders and reaches everyone who needs help. As the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health and Family, and thus the minister responsible for Belgian Red Cross-Flanders, I would like to wish the organization and its indispensable volunteers the very best of luck. Here's hoping that we can look back on a wholly successful mission come 2020!



Jo Vandeurzen is the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health and Family and the minister responsible for Belgian Red Cross-Flanders

Strategy 2020. Everyone helps in a nutshell





Strategy 2020. Everyone helps

An ambitious five-year plan

We have drawn up an ambitious five-year plan to set Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' course for the next five years. This plan is *Strategy 2020. Everyone helps*.

Our society is constantly changing. We have to change with it, and anticipate changing needs. It goes without saying that helping the most vulnerable people in our society is still our core mission. But we are also placing more emphasis than ever before on self-reliance: we help people to help each other.

In order for us to achieve our aims while also ensuring that our service remains of the highest quality, we need a clear guiding framework. This framework is to be provided by our strategic plan *Everyone helps*.

Five pillars that make us unique

Everyone helps rests upon five pillars:

- 1. Self-reliant individuals and communities
- 2. Always near, wherever people are
- 3. Solid expertise in all our areas of activity
- 4. A contemporary organization
- 5. Transparency in everything we do

As you can see, we have decided to make our organization's four key strengths into pillars of *Everyone helps*, alongside self-reliance.

Our strong presence, both in Flanders and worldwide, makes us the equivalent of the humanitarian 'last mile'. Our efforts towards self-reliance, the considerable expertise that we have built up through our own scientific research, our efficient management of our contemporary organization and our role in society: all of these pillars make us unique in Flanders and the rest of the world.

The five pillars underpinning *Everyone helps* have been translated into 23 tangible goals and 96 projects.

Self-reliance as a common thread

In early 2015, we unveiled our new baseline, 'Belgian Red Cross-Flanders helps people help'. It dovetails perfectly with our new strategic plan, which sees us moving from 'helping and caring for vulnerable people' towards 'helping others to help vulnerable people'. In other words, self-reliance is a top priority for us. As such, it is also the first pillar of *Everyone helps* and runs as a common thread throughout the entire strategy.



Contributions by hundreds of people

You cannot draw up a multiannual strategic plan all by your-self. Some hundreds of people contributed to *Everyone helps*. A steering committee coordinated the initial discussions surrounding the new strategic plan. Eight consultation groups comprising volunteers, staff members and external experts were set up to discuss specific topics such as self-reliance, branch operations, emergency assistance and cooperation with hospitals.

Our existing Advisory Committees provided input from their specific areas of activity and gave feedback on the proposed strategy.

Successor to Pledge 2015

Everyone helps follows on from our previous strategic plan, Pledge 2015, which primarily concentrated on boosting our effectiveness. Everyone helps will continue along this path, with an even greater focus on quality and innovation.

Everyone helps builds on the results achieved and changes made by Pledge 2015. At the same time, we are also developing new priorities and embarking upon new activities. The only difference is that now, before beginning a new activity, we always ask ourselves whether it will bolster the community's self-reliance.

A shared project

Every pillar of *Everyone helps* has been translated into quantifiable goals and projects, thus enabling us to closely monitor our progress over the next five years. We will also be reporting regularly – both within Belgian Red Cross-Flanders and externally – on our advancement in achieving our goals. As a result, *Everyone helps* will not be a purely theoretical plan: it will be a real shared project that genuinely engages everyone – volunteers and staff members alike – who is involved with our organization.



Four core values

The Red Cross was founded on seven fundamental principles. With that in mind, our organization needs to be strongly value-driven internally too. We have thus taken advantage of this strategic exercise to review and reformulate our internal values.

Integrity, **professionalism**, **team work** and **initiative**: these are the core values that we expect everyone within our organization to share, be they volunteers or employees.

Our new mission

Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is the Flemish wing of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

We provide assistance to vulnerable people in Flanders and abroad. We provide emergency aid, promote self-reliance, ensure blood supply, and care for the vulnerable.

Our volunteers and staff act with integrity and professionalism. They are team players who are always ready to take the initiative.

As a voluntary organization, we rely on the efforts of volunteers.

Great results for Pledge 2015

Strategy 2020. Everyone helps is a multiannual strategic plan made up of quantifiable action points – just like its predecessor, Pledge 2015. Now the five years covered by Pledge 2015 have passed, it is time for us to review our progress. What did we set out to achieve, and how did we get on?

1. Promoting self-reliance

Over the five-year period, 6,500 high school students earned first-aid certificates. That is almost double our original target of 3,500. Besides, Red Cross Youth developed an extensive range of resources for children, young people, youth groups and schools: learning packs, learning-teaching trajectories, introductory sessions, courses and lending materials.

3. Leaders in blood supply

Our expertise on blood platelets and the relationship with our donors have made us one of the world's leading organizations in the field. We are constantly flooded with invitations to cooperate with other blood establishments, research projects and companies. Our practical experience, coupled with our fundamental research on the collection, preparation, storage, function and quality of platelets and our evidence-based approach, gives us a unique combination of skills that few others can rival.

2. Geared up for emergencies

We formed new rapid response teams – both medical and logistical – in full accordance with our plan. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders first clearly defined, then fulfilled, its (minor) logistical role. These efforts have already paid off – among other things, they made it possible to help the victims of the Brussels attacks of March 22, 2016 in the best way.

4. Caring for the vulnerable

On September 17, 2015, Flemish Minister-President Geert Bourgeois laid the first brick of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' own care hotel in Zuienkerke. Once the hotel is finished, more people who require assistance will be able to enjoy a well-earned, peaceful vacation with their friends or family. From summer 2018, we will be able to provide relaxing vacations for 45 vacationers and their companions each week.



5. Inspiring volunteers and blood donors

We are still attractive to volunteers and donors. That much is clear from the increase in donor numbers, among other things. We are now also recruiting donors in a more targeted way, based on existing blood stocks or an acute need for a certain blood group.

7. Offering top-level, top-quality assistance

We have further optimized our Blood Service's operations. The Blood Service is now an expertise-driven organization based on two centralized campuses in Mechelen and Ghent.

Working together to achieve greater impact

The government involves us in devising long-term strategies on blood and blood products, and in coordinating general emergency and intervention plans. We also sit on various advisory bodies on international humanitarian law, where our opinions are taken into account. By working with others in this way, we are sharing our expertise and know-how in the interests of the general public.

8. Maintaining a high profile

A study on our image (before and after the adoption of our new baseline, 'Helps people help') show that almost everyone has heard of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders and has a positive view of us. That means that we can rely on the public's support like no other organization can, which puts us one step ahead of all the other NGOs operating in Belgium, including in terms of self-reliance.



In short, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is a 'facilitator' that enables the inhabitants of Flanders to help themselves and others. In a nutshell, anyone and everyone can help!

Our new baseline gets back to the very reason for Belgian Red Cross-Flanders' existence – helping as many vulnerable people as possible through the efforts of all those who want to get involved. In other words, we want to boost self-reliance in Flanders. We want to make individuals more self-reliant so that they are better placed to cope in emergencies, and make the community more self-reliant so that more help is available to people in times of crisis.

An Luyten is our press and media manager. Here, she tells us what this rebranding means for our organization.



"Belgian Red Cross-Flanders helps people help. That has been our new baseline since 2015. Thanks to our organization, Flanders' six million inhabitants can help one another. We are, quite literally, the link between those who need help and those who give it. Take us away, and that help disappears too. Furthermore, we ensure that help is provided in a professional, effective, evidence-based manner.

To lend more weight to our 'helps people help' narrative, we also switched to a new logo, overhauled our website and adopted a new branding through a large-scale communication campaign. That was absolutely vital, since our research showed that lots of people took us for granted and saw us as an organization that had always existed and always would. In the long run, that could weaken us, as we desperately need the support of Flanders' population (blood donors, volunteers, first-aid course participants and financial donors) if we are to fulfil our mission of helping the most vulnerable people in our society.

All of our activities have a common denominator: our belief in self-reliance. 'Self-reliance' is a powerful word if you interpret it properly: it means being able to look after yourself in any situation. But self-reliance goes beyond individuals. Through our focus on self-reliance, we ensure that society as a whole can respond more effectively, more appropriately and more efficiently to emergencies or other crises.

Think of an amateur soccer player who has learned first-aid skills from the Red Cross and is able to give CPR to a teammate who has just had a heart attack. Or a child with leukemia who is still alive because of a transfusion of blood cells. Or the fast response of the hundreds of volunteers who provided assistance following the attacks in Brussels on March 22, 2016. The fact remains that all that help is made possible by the Red Cross. Our baseline puts it perfectly: 'Belgian Red Cross-Flanders helps people help'."

Self-reliance



Self-reliance is one of the five pillars underpinning *Strategy 2020. Everyone helps.* It is a common thread that runs through our entire strategic plan. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is moving from 'helping and caring for vulnerable people' towards 'helping others to help vulnerable people'.

In our view, people need to be able to help themselves and others in the event of an emergency, be they at home, at school, in youth clubs, in sports centers or in the workplace. That is why we want to teach first aid to as many people as possible. And not just in Flanders, either: we are helping other countries to draft first-aid guidelines and prepare the associated training materials. After all, if people are to learn first aid, there need to be enough high-quality first-aid courses available for them.

We will concentrate our efforts on activities and services that will put people and groups in a better position to help themselves in crises and emergencies. People who want to help others will be given every opportunity to do so.

Most people define 'self-reliance' as the ability to administer first aid in the event of an emergency. But we want to take self-reliance much further than that. This practical example illustrates exactly what we mean: vacation camp participants who are able to organize an activity or excursion themselves demonstrate self-reliance even though their actions have nothing to do with first aid.

To further self-reliance in our society, we will examine all of our existing activities and determine the extent to which they contribute to it. 'Promoting self-reliance' will be a core requirement for new activities too.

With Everyone helps, we aim to:

- + place self-reliance at the heart of everything we do;
- + anchor self-reliance in our existing activities in the short term:
- further encourage and bolster knowledge and application of first-aid skills.

Boosting self-reliance in schools too

We hope to increase schools' self-reliance by ensuring that all teachers are able to give first aid and giving all students the chance to learn first-aid skills.

Over the next five years, we want to see more schools include first aid on their health programs and more students earn a first-aid certificate while at school. Our 'Train the Trainer' program teaches high-school teachers and professors at teacher-training colleges how to deliver classes in first aid.

For many years, **Mieke Van Hecke** was the Director-General of Catholic education in Flanders. She was the expert in charge of our Self-reliance Consultation Group.

"Giving young people a sense of responsibility and teaching them how to help themselves and others is not the sole responsibility of the education system — all of the stakeholders in our society need to play their part too. That said, the education system makes a vital contribution. Yet not all schools have the knowledge and/or resources they need to perform this task alone. Luckily, that is not a problem — they can always call on the expert knowledge of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders.

One key conclusion reached by the Self-reliance Consultation Group was that we need to create a sense of engagement among Flanders' residents, as that will improve communication between people – which is extremely important in crises or emergencies. Good communication is vital for resources and people to be deployed efficiently."

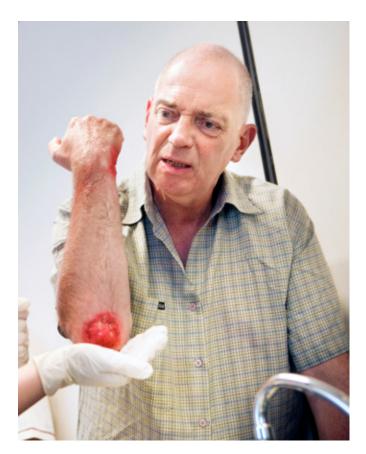


Interesting first-aid courses

In the last few years, we have ensured that our instructors are well-trained and have excellent teaching materials at their disposal. We make first-aid courses as realistic as possible. After all, practical experience is essential. So how do we provide realistic experiences? By calling in volunteer 'accident victims' – 'actors' who simulate injuries and emergency situations as realistically as possible. This approach has made us Flanders' leading expert on first aid.

We want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to become self-reliant. To achieve this, we need not only to organize first-aid courses, but also to ensure that they are interesting. It is also essential for us to keep updating our range of first-aid courses.

With that in mind, we will develop at least one new first-aid course a year from 2017 onwards. We will also conduct a survey on the quality of our first-aid courses. This will enable us to identify our weaknesses and remedy them.



Dr. Geert Vermeersch is is an orthopedic surgeon at Jan Portaels General Hospital. He is the Chairman of our Advisory Committee on Education and headed up our First-aid Courses Consultation Group on a voluntary basis.



"In the past, books were the source of all knowledge. Now, you can find all sorts of information online. But that information isn't always reliable. We want to incorporate interactive teaching methods into our firstaid courses. Blended learning would be one example of this – it mixes home-based study with classroom sessions. The classroom sessions are an opportunity to discuss problems and/or things that were not clear in the online module. However, their primary purpose is to give trainees a chance to put all the theory into practice. Trainees can learn at their own pace, based on their own interests. If you want to find out more about a particular subject, you are just one click away from a wealth of evidence-based texts and background information, all of which is provided by the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP). Blended learning lets instructors guide our volunteers in finding accurate information on the internet

We also want to increase self-reliance among children. We have developed a project to teach children about every aspect of the Red Cross in a fun, age-appropriate way. After all, the current backdrop of wars, attacks and refugees has left a lot of children with unanswered questions."

Promoting self-reliance among refugees and migrants too

'Promoting self-reliance' is not just a core requirement for our new activities. It is also a key criterion for our existing activities. In practice, this means that we start out by determining what those affected could do if there is a disaster or emergency. If it turns out that they could take some form of action, we check how we could help them to do that.

In short, we offer support to enable people to provide assistance. Obviously, this means that we need to adapt the assistance we offer and change the attitudes of our relief workers. We want to give spontaneously-offered assistance a role, rather than rejecting it out of hand.

For instance, if a reception center for asylum seekers is affected by a disaster, the residents affected could help the reception center to get up and running again. Here is another example: instead of looking for accommodation for recognized refugees ourselves, we tell them how they can go about it themselves and what websites they should consult.

That way, we encourage self-reliance among refugees and migrants – a group that has considerable difficulty finding their way in our society. In this case, self-reliance is an important step on the way to enhanced integration.

Always near, wherever people are



We have local branches throughout Flanders. We have activities everywhere and are always at hand. Every person in Flanders knows that we set up first-aid posts at events, offer assistance in emergencies and collect blood to save lives. Moreover, a lot of people are familiar with our social activities for older people, people with disabilities and other groups.

On an international scale, the Red Cross has operations in 190 countries and has some 16 million volunteers worldwide. Through Belgian Red Cross-Flanders, we are always close at hand in every part of Flanders, and through the international Red Cross community, we reach every part of every other country too. Our worldwide presence is made possible by our extensive network of volunteers.

People say that they are satisfied with our activities, but that certainly does not mean that we can rest on our laurels. To assist as many vulnerable people as possible as effectively and efficiently as we can, we will improve and reorient our existing activities. By doing so, we hope to offer an even better response to the needs of the vulnerable.



With Everyone helps, we aim to:

- + make first-aid cover more targeted and more effective;
- + boost our disaster-preparedness;
- provide long-term assistance in response to long-lasting, complex emergencies;
- + further enhance our care activities;
- + always have enough blood, plasma and platelet donors.

Assistance in the long term too

In Belgium, our emergency assistance is primarily geared towards common incidents, like fires, explosions or gas clouds. However, we also need to be prepared and have the right resources on hand to help in the event of long-lasting, complex disasters and emergency situations. Scenarios of this type include the civil war in Syria, reconstruction efforts following the April 2015 earthquake in Nepal, and the 2015 refugee crisis.

We want to provide active support both during the emergency phase and during the reconstruction phase that follows a disaster. The Nepal earthquake is a good example: one year on from the incident, we are laying a water supply network, giving hygiene and first-aid classes to residents, and teaching people how to rebuild their homes in a way that will make them earthquake-resistant. All of this increases self-reliance among Nepal's people.

In short, we want to be better prepared for dealing with longlasting, more complex emergencies. We are not just mapping the extra material and human resources we need, we are also supplying them efficiently. "The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is committed to meeting the fundamental needs of those caught up in long-lasting armed conflicts. However, we also shore up and protect the existing systems that they can use to meet their needs in the long term.

That is why the ICRC Aid Program works with a multiannual strategy that not only supplies emergency aid, but also finds lasting solutions for subsistence, healthcare, energy, water and sanitation facilities. In long-lasting armed conflicts especially, we highlight the importance of having full assistance cycles for offering individual support to people (injured people, victims of sexual violence, detainees, reuniting relatives, families) and ensuring reintegration into society. All national Red Cross Societies – including Belgian Red Cross-Flanders – need to band together to continue offering long-term humanitarian aid to make those affected more resilient.

At the same time, international humanitarian law is key to the ICRC's approach in long-lasting conflict situations. All countries have an obligation to comply with that law, which underlines the importance of protecting and guaranteeing residents' means of subsistence in conflict zones."

Walter Füllemann is the head of the ICRC delegation in Brussels.



Making first-aid cover more targeted and offering complete care

A painful blister, fainting, a sunstroke... Event organizers are more aware of potential risks than ever before. As a result, we are receiving more and more requests for first-aid cover.

In fact, demand for first-aiders now outstrips the number of first-aiders we have. That means that we have to choose which requests we grant. As such, in future we will focus on the highest-risk events and the events that are most satisfying for our volunteers. That said, we are not turning our backs on the organizers of lower-risk events. We will provide them with first-aid training and first-aid kits, thus helping to boost their self-reliance.

At present, our first-aid posts at events do not offer a full range of treatments – other organizations fill the gaps. We need a number of different medical and health-related skills and qualifications if we are to cover the full spectrum of medical services at events.

In future, we want to be able to offer more complete medical care on event sites, including triage, stabilization and patient transportation, so as to stop the existing emergency medical treatment system from becoming overloaded.



Dr. Johan Gillebeert is an emergency physician with the Ziekenhuis Netwerk Antwerpen (Antwerp Hospital Network). He is the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Relief Service and served as a member of our Emergency Assistance Consultation Group.



"In recent years, we have experienced growing demand for first-aid cover, especially at high-risk events. However, we do not offer a full range of care. For instance, if a person needs to be reanimated, we give CPR and use an AED if necessary, but we do not administer drugs. All we can do for cases of alcohol intoxication is refer those affected to a doctor.

Heart-attack victims have to be transported to the nearest hospital immediately. If we had our own doctor to diagnose patients on-site, we would be able to take patients to a specialized healthcare institution without delay. If we are to offer a fuller range of care, we need additional resources and more people with more advanced medical skills. However, we do not intend to offer a complete palette of treatments at all our first-aid posts in future. We will only do that at events where we can offer the greatest added value."

Remaining attractive to blood donors

Every day, we supply enough safe, high-quality blood products to hospitals in Flanders and part of Brussels. In future, we want to align blood product demand and supply more closely.

We have come up with several ways of doing that. For instance, we will improve demand and supply forecasting and optimize management of our stocks. And we will let donors book a bed at a donor center. Besides that, we will build up a database of 'on-call' donors who can be asked to help when we need them most, based on how much blood from their blood group we have in stock.

Unpaid voluntary donors are the backbone of our blood supply. With that in mind, it is vital that we have enough donors, but also that we can be sure our existing donors will keep donating with us. In future, we want to ensure that we remain attractive to blood donors. We hope to achieve this through good communication, easy accessibility, a warm welcome and a friendly atmosphere at blood collections.





Tessa Kam is a volunteer and represents blood and plasma donors on our Community council.

"I've noticed that good communication really pays off. Donors are now sent text messages containing personal donation information: when they can donate, what site they can go to, reminders to make appointments, and so on. This motivates them to come and donate, and it's practical too. Giving blood is a major commitment for people, so we need to make it as easy as possible for them. Young people, in particular, need to be persuaded to give blood. Sharing information digitally is the way to go in future.

People who are coming to give blood for the first time are given extra support and attention to convince them to come back. Small gestures – like giving out grilled sandwiches at blood collections – give donors an extra boost. After all, it isn't always easy for them to make time to give blood."



More care for more people

We organize care activities for the most vulnerable members of our society: older people, sick people, people with disabilities, and children with difficult home lives. Our care activities may be less visible, but they make a world of difference to thousands of people. In the coming years, we want to reach even more people with our care activities.

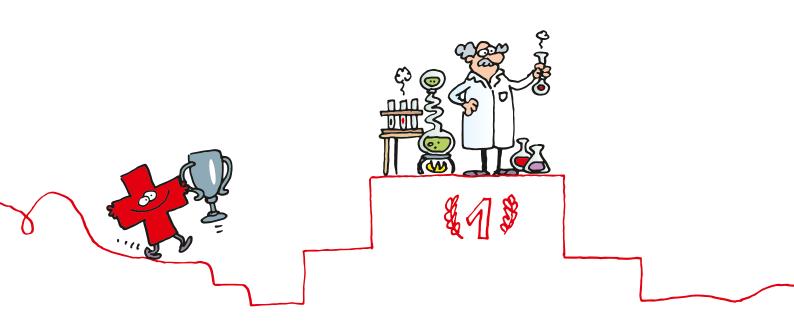
Our own care hotel: Polderwind

There is a lot of demand for special care vacations for people who require care. However, individual, adapted hotel vacations with adapted accommodation and care provision are few and far between. We will provide a structural response to the problem by building and running a care hotel of our own: the Polderwind care hotel in Zuienkerke. From summer 2018, Polderwind will be able to provide relaxing vacations for 45 vacationers and their companions each week. Our volunteers will give guests the VIP treatment all week long.

Reaching new groups of vulnerable people

We also want to reach new people with our care activities. In 2016, we are organizing a vacation camp for socially vulnerable children with disabilities for the first time ever. This target group is especially vulnerable, and we do not have any specific activities for them yet. Our experience with vacations for adults with disabilities (Adapted holidays) and camps for socially vulnerable children (Vacation camps) puts us in an excellent position to offer these children the best possible support. Following this trial run, we will decide whether to make the camp a permanent feature of our vacation program.

Solid expertise in all our areas of activity



We can proudly call ourselves experts in healthcare and assistance. We have developed our expertise through years of experience in a diverse range of activities. Our decision to apply an evidence-based approach in our work has also allowed us to build up substantial know-how.

Our experience, knowledge and evidence-based approach make for a winning combination. We conduct research in our areas of activity and apply our findings in our work. We share our knowledge and experience with others, disseminating it across the academic, scientific and social worlds.

In future, we want to further develop our expertise and give it a broader reach – even sharing it abroad. This is especially true of our know-how in blood supply, first-aid training, disaster preparedness and emergency assistance.

With Everyone helps, we aim to:

- + improve practice through research and vice versa;
- + continue to set the benchmark for first-aid training and hygiene promotion in Flanders and abroad;
- become a key international reference for first-aid provision and disaster preparedness;
- + remain a leader in knowledge and management of blood-related processes;
- + take full advantage of the opportunities offered by new technology;
- + automate and digitize existing processes.





Research to improve assistance

Worldwide, very little high-quality independent research is carried out into our activities. That is why we make a concerted effort to conduct our own research. We do not do research for research's sake, but in the aim of offering better and more efficient assistance. Research in relation to our blood activities focuses primarily on platelets and blood donors. We also conduct research into first-aid training, promotion of hygiene, first-aid provision and disaster preparedness.

We apply an evidence-based approach in everything we do. We anchor our activities in scientific evidence and the experience and opinions of experts (mainly our volunteers and staff, but also external experts) and target-group preferences. Besides, we have one unique advantage: we can use our scientific research to improve our activities in the field, and vice versa.

We hope to tap into this strength even further with *Everyone helps*. This will entail involving our volunteers even more closely in data collection and research, as well as gauging how our quidelines work in practice.

We want to further develop expertise in our activities and give it a broader reach – abroad, too. In the past, we have drawn up first-aid manuals and guidelines for Europe (EFAM), Africa (AFAM) and India (IFAG). We currently reach some 3.2 billion people worldwide with our first-aid expertise. In time, we could potentially reach 3.5 billion. We are also planning to prepare first-aid materials for the Caribbean, the Philippines and Pakistan between now and 2020. The materials we produce always take account of the local context and local customs. These actions boost self-reliance among local residents.

"Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is a trendsetter in evidence-based first-aid guidelines. What really makes AFAM stand out is that we used an evidence-based approach to assess both the guidelines themselves and the research that formed the basis for the guidelines.

Generally, in cases like this, a small group of experts gathers round a table and makes all the decisions about the guidelines without being expected to provide any justification for why they have issued certain recommendations. But we used an evidence-based approach for AFAM. Before we even began work, we all shared the same vision of what counts as 'evidence', how we should find it and how we should assess it. We were also very transparent about how we arrived at certain conclusions and recommendations. And we linked our recommendations back to scientific research."

Dr. Jimmy Volmink is Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He was involved in drawing up AFAM – a set of first-aid guidelines tailored to the African context.



Towards a digital Red Cross community

Our society is constantly changing, and so is the way we communicate with one another. The days of one-way media are over. Now, digital technologies allow people to make their voices heard. They can express their views and connect with similarly-minded people more easily than ever before.

Online initiatives are signaling the dawn of the age of the 'prosumer'. Apps like Airbnb show that the line between the professional and non-professional worlds is becoming increasingly blurred. People can offer their time or property flexibly.

With Everyone helps, we want to make maximum use of the opportunities opened up by new technology in order to reach more people. We do not just want to help people more efficiently, we also want to help them to help others. In other words, we hope to bolster their self-reliance.

By providing a centralized digital platform, we can get everyone involved in helping others. The platform will also enable us to communicate more easily and more quickly when we need any kind of assistance. For instance, we could provide a site that would allow people to mark themselves as safe following an attack, or a platform to rapidly draft in ad-hoc volunteers to respond to disasters, or an app that urges people to give blood when our stocks are low.

By developing a digital platform, we hope to create a new, digital Red Cross community.

Stefan Gogaert is a Belgian Red Cross-Flanders volunteer and a member of our New Technologies Consultation Group.

"We live in a networked society. Everyone is connected to everyone else in one way or another – through social media, apps, and similar. People want more diverse, flexible ways to get involved. We need to respond to that and make full use of new technologies. They have enormous potential for our organization.

Our first-aiders and relief workers need to be able to communicate at all times when they are on first-aid cover assignments or responding to disasters. If we use more reliable broadband technology in future, we will have a better idea of where our workers are, who they are treating, and so on.

But technology is more than just a way of improving the assistance we offer. It also puts us in a better position to help people help others. In the event of severe flooding, for instance, those affected could register on a centralized website. We could then immediately provide them with useful tips about what to do. That would make people more resilient."



Remaining a leader in the field of blood

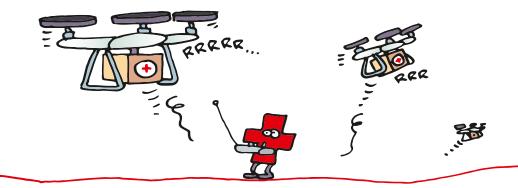
We supply safe blood products to hospitals throughout Flanders. Our labs for testing blood, plasma and platelets are state-of-the-art. And we want to keep them that way. Consequently, we are always on the lookout for ways to optimize and expand our lab technology.

Safety is a top priority for us. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is one of the safest blood transfusion services in the world. Going forward, we will continue to focus on the quality and safety of our blood products and investigate how we can improve further.

We want hospitals to see us as more than just a reliable supplier of safe blood products. With a view to serving them better in future, we are providing them with information and training on transfusion and blood-bank management.

We are an established authority on blood donation and platelets. We want to apply our expertise in donor recruitment and donor engagement to strengthen other blood establishments in Belgium and abroad.

A contemporary organization



Every day, we prove that professionalism and voluntary work go hand in hand. Our services are rooted in streamlined cooperation between 14,000 highly-trained, extremely motivated volunteers and 1,480 professional, quality-oriented and flexible staff members.

We supply blood to hospitals. This is a fantastic example of an activity where permanent employees (our Collection staff), motivated volunteers (the local branch organizing the blood collection) and voluntary blood donors really count on each other. Time and again, they cooperate effectively and with the utmost professionalism.

We are a modern organization that works in a targeted manner to achieve its short-term and long-term strategic goals. That much is clear from this explanatory brochure on our multiannual strategic plan *Strategy 2020. Everyone helps*.

Our operations are anchored in modern management principles. For instance, in 2013, we adopted a new way of working through our Fenix project. Now, our personnel can work whenever and wherever they like in this digital networking society – and all without jeopardizing the organization's efficiency. The Fenix project was designed to enable us to move with the times and be an attractive employer, both now and in the future.

We need to make our local branches more effective in order to ensure that everyone living in Flanders has access to at least a minimum range of our services. To achieve this, we are working to implement far-reaching cooperation between branches. After all, working together enables us to deploy people and resources as efficiently as possible. We can also offer certain services as a network, and dispatch volunteers to other branches. Our organization was founded on the basis of a number of

fundamental principles, which ensures that our employees and our volunteers share the same culture and embody our values. The fact that everyone in our organization clearly shares the same values contributes to our credibility, our genuineness and our success.

Our staff and our volunteers share the following **four core values**:

- + Integrity
- + Professionalism
- + Team work
- + Initiative

These values shape how our staff and volunteers behave, both within and outside our organization. By acting with integrity, professionalism, and working in team and with a sense of initiative, we will always be able to help vulnerable people to the best of our ability.

Disseminating and raising awareness of our four core values within the organization is an important action point. In practice, this means that we will incorporate them into all key documents for staff and volunteers and inform new staff and volunteers about them from the day they join our organization.

With Everyone helps, we aim to:

- + genuinely embody our four core values;
- + streamline volunteer work and further enhance performance in this area;
- + make our local branches more effective;
- + standardize the activities of our provincial offices and increase their efficiency.



Greater cooperation between branches

Branches that cooperate effectively can deploy people and resources more efficiently. A branch that cannot perform certain key activities on its own can still perform them by joining forces with other branches nearby. That way, we can ensure that everyone living in Flanders has access to at least a minimum range of our services.

As we work to establish greater cooperation between branches, we will not have to start from scratch. We can draw inspiration from the clusters that already work together on first-aid cover, emergency response, patient transportation and refresher training. Neighboring branches already cooperate with one another. There are cases of multilateral cooperation within the organization too, where several branches band together to help another.

We intend to issue a clear action plan by early 2018. This will set out our goals for increasing the range of activities we offer to the people of Flanders.

Dr. Mathias Verbeke is the Chairman of the Red Cross Youth Advisory Committee.



"Inter-branch cooperation is becoming more and more important for Red Cross Youth too. On the one hand, demand for our activities is growing. On the other hand, volunteers are increasingly looking for voluntary commitments that they can slot into their free time. As a result, a single branch often doesn't have enough volunteers to meet demand.

By teaming up with other branches, we can provide a more flexible response to needs within a region. That goes for both our activities as a youth service (e.g. introductory first-aid classes in schools) and our activities as a youth movement (teaching children and young people about various Red Cross themes in a fun way). Working together in this way, we can also set up new Red Cross Youth branches in places where there are too few young people to set it up in one single branch."

Ing. Luc Van Hauwenhuyse is the Deputy Community President of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders. He chaired the Branch Activities Modernization Consultation Group.



"At branch level too, we want to put our baseline 'Helps people help' into practice by deploying people and resources as efficiently as possible. This means that branches will be increasingly reliant on one another to help fulfil requests for assistance. Our local branch in Herzele has already shown what we can achieve with a structural approach that involves several neighboring branches in patient transportation in the region. The Kunst@Rode Kruis art exhibition organized by our Ronse branch was a great success thanks to the president's encouragement and highly effective cooperation within the committee and with neighboring branches. We need to continue along this path.

Other branches already work closely with one another, both for first-aid cover and for training. For instance, the Oosteeklo and Assenede branches merged to form the Groot-Assenede branch in a bid to improve their service provision. All in all, we definitely have a solid foundation for rolling out realistic partnerships in future."

Special arrangement for Brussels

We also need to streamline volunteer activities in Brussels-Capital Region in order to provide better care and assistance. Belgian Red Cross has a federal structure, which means that Belgian Red Cross-Flanders and Belgian Red Cross in the French-speaking community are autonomous organizations. We define our own policies and set our own priorities, targeting the most urgent needs in our respective communities.

There are special arrangements in place for Brussels-Capital Region. A number of activities there are conducted jointly (and thus in two languages), like emergency assistance. First-aid courses are organized separately by each language community.

The Brussels-Capital Region Committee is responsible for joint activities involving both language communities (i.e. the Relief Service, the Social Intervention Service and the Ambulance Service), as well as for overseeing the local branches in Brussels-Capital Region. Flemish-community activities are organized either by the province of Flemish Brabant or directly by our Headquarters. Here, the focus lies on Adapted holidays, the Zorgbib library, and first-aid training for children and young people and in schools.

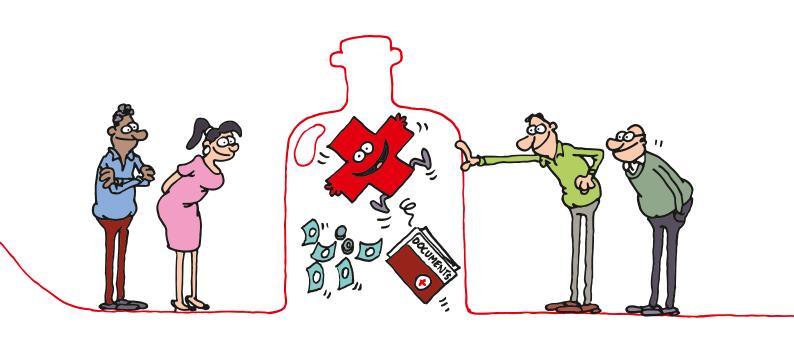
Pol Casteleyn is the Provincial President for Red Cross-Flemish Brabant and a member of the Brussels-Capital Region Committee. He was also part of the *Everyone helps* steering committee.



"In Brussels, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders projects had trouble reaching their intended target groups. The reason? The complex structure and operations of Red Cross Brussels-Capital. Our methods and procedures were not appropriate for working in Brussels either. On top of that, the local branches in Brussels are more closely aligned to the working methods of Belgian Red Cross in the French-speaking community. Most communication is in French.

In future, we want Belgian Red Cross-Flanders entities to directly provide Flemish-community activities in Brussels. We hope to be able to work in a more targeted manner through community-level support and assistance from Red Cross-Flemish Brabant. Of course, the Brussels branches will remain key partners for the implementation of our activities."

Transparency in everything we do



We have a vital role to play in society. We need to shoulder this responsibility consciously, based on genuine conviction. Regular communication with all stakeholders is a key factor in this. Our attitude must be both transparent and responsible in everything we do.

For us to be able to provide our services – and thus live up to our responsibility to society – our organization needs to be financially capable of meeting its commitments in the long term. The creation of specific funds will go a long way towards achieving this.

within the organization; + enhance our collaboration with government bodies;

+ develop more targeted partnerships with other organizations;

With Everyone helps, we aim to:

+ improve our governance and increase transparency

- + support refugees and migrants with their reception and integration into society;
- + heighten social awareness in the Red Cross's areas of expertise.

Emergency relief funds to guarantee a rapid response

Both in Flanders and abroad, the Red Cross is the last hope for many people who need help. As such, we need to ensure that our financial position always allows us to deliver on this commitment. We need to be able to help people in need at any time, wherever they are – be it in Flanders or further afield. A number of funds need to be put in place if we are to achieve that.

For instance, our Emergency Relief fund enables us to respond rapidly to disasters. We do not need to wait for funds to be raised, as they generally only become available a few days after a disaster has struck. The money that we take from the Emergency Relief fund is always replaced afterwards, either from government funds or through public fundraising.



Ir. Guy Peeters is the Chairman of the Governing Board at Turnhout General Hospital. He was a member of the steering committee.



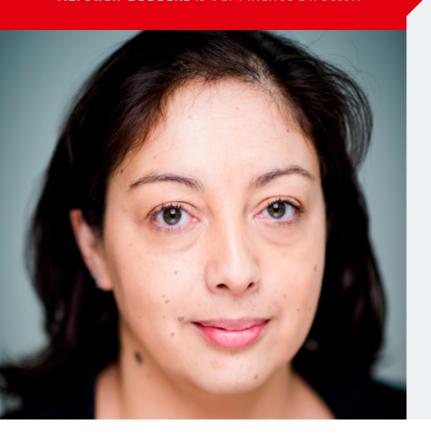
"If we are to be ready to help at all times, it is absolutely essential for us to have enough financial resources to provide assistance and support whenever it is required. From experience, we know the exact amounts that we need to have available to perform these tasks. At the same time, we need money to fund certain initiatives requiring significant investment. One such project would be the construction of our care hotel.

If we pool our branches' financial resources and manage them carefully, our branches can earn more interest on the funds they collect. In other words, it is important for us to manage financial resources prudently and set up (emergency relief) funds to shore up our operational readiness."

Transparent in everything we do

We are an open organization and our communications about our finances are totally transparent. Where do we get the money we use to fund our operations? How much money are we receiving, and how much are we spending? What are we using it for? Every year, we issue an annual report containing all of these figures. We have no secrets.

Karolien Geudens is our Finance Director.



"We believe we have a duty to be transparent about our income and the costs we cover with it. We communicate as clearly as possible about where our financial resources come from and which activities we use them for.

Any financial surpluses are placed in funds that were set up for a specific purpose. Our annual report provides full details of this.

We want to demonstrate that we are responsible and efficient in managing the resources placed at our disposal by government bodies and by donors. As such, it is important for us to know the costs of all our activities and evaluate them on an ongoing basis. Whether it's first-aid cover, emergency assistance or blood supply, we need to know what costs are associated with our activities. That way, we can request appropriate compensation for our services.

We also communicate clearly on how we have used donors' donations, whichever activity they have chosen to support. Large donations and legacies that were not earmarked for a specific purpose are always assigned to funds and projects. Thanks to this approach, we can minimize our use of external funding and do not need to rely on grants as much."

Strategy 2020. Everyone helps Overview of pillars and aims

Self-reliant individuals and communities

- 1. Place self-reliance at the heart of everything we do.
- 2. Anchor self-reliance in our existing activities in the short term.
- 3. Further encourage and bolster knowledge and application of first-aid skills.

Always near, wherever people are

- 4. Make first-aid cover more targeted and more effective.
- 5. Boost our disaster-preparedness.
- 6. Provide long-term assistance in response to long-lasting, complex emergencies.
- 7. Further enhance our care activities.
- 8. Always have enough blood, plasma and platelet donors.

Solid expertise in all our areas of activity

- 9. Improve practice through research and vice versa.
- 10. Continue to set the benchmark for first-aid training and hygiene promotion in Flanders and abroad.
- 11. Become a key international reference for first-aid provision and disaster preparedness.
- 12. Remain a leader in knowledge and management of blood-related processes.
- 13. Take full advantage of the opportunities offered by new technology.
- 14. Automate and digitize existing processes.

A contemporary organization

- 15. Genuinely embody our four core values.
- 16. Streamline volunteer work and further enhance performance in this area.
- 17. Make our local branches more effective.
- 18. Standardize the activities of our provincial offices and increase their efficiency.

Transparency in everything we do

- 19. Improve our governance and increase transparency within the organization.
- 20. Enhance our collaboration with government bodies.
- 21. Develop more targeted partnerships with other organizations.
- 22. Support refugees and migrants with their reception and integration into society.
- 23. Heighten social awareness in our areas of expertise.

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