2018 VOLUNTEER AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UNIT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

In 2018, for the first time in the history of Ukrainian Red Cross Society, a volunteer and youth development unit has been created.

During the preceding year the unit team worked on a series of important tasks, united by a common overall objective: that URCS has at its disposal a sufficient number of well-performing volunteers properly dealing with the tasks and challenges URCS is facing, and is able to provide them with all the necessary support.

Taking into account that a volunteering culture in Ukraine has only begun to be actively developed under the humanitarian crisis (when a spark of volunteerism in the country, theretofore unheard of, came as a shock), achievement of this objective is a strategic perspective requiring close collaboration with all the constituent parts of URCS and creation of the structures necessary for volunteer development.

Therefore, the most immediate objective of the volunteer development unit is an efficient URCS volunteer management framework accommodated to the interests and needs of the stakeholders is introduced and gradually implemented on every management level.

Lack of cohesion between volunteers and staff and weaknesses in organizational capacity of organizations is a risk factor capable of causing significant drop in effectiveness and efficiency of URCS activities and thus, in a longer perspective, reputation crisis. Based on the aforementioned core idea, the following four priority areas to enact meaningful changes in can be determined:

1. Development of volunteering culture
2. Coordination and cooperation
3. Documentary regulation
4. Training and support
ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES IN PRIORITY AREAS

1. DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING CULTURE

I URCS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ASSEMBLY was one of the most important events, aimed at strategic planning of the ways to promote and cultivate volunteering culture in URCS. The Assembly took place in Dnipropetrovsk region on November 22-25, gathering the URCS volunteer leaders from across the country.

VOLUNTEER ASSEMBLY

Volunteer commission is a URCS public commission, whose members are represented in the governing bodies at the national level. Its mission lies in fostering systemic, organic and harmonious development of the URCS volunteer movement, advocacy on behalf of URCS volunteers at each and every level up to the international one. The commission is also tasked with development and promotion of volunteering culture in Ukraine, attraction of new volunteers and motivation of the already present ones. It is elected annually, at the Volunteer Assembly.

The main outcomes of this event are:

- Successful reformatting of the Assembly and Volunteer Commission (previously, they only gathered leaders of the youth as opposed to those of the volunteers in general);
- Raising awareness of the volunteers’ roles in the key areas of advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy;
- Presentation of unified and standardized volunteer management tools and subsequent planning of further volunteer management activities, which contributes to overcoming the communication barriers between volunteers of different profiles.
As the exit poll of the participants shows, the event has been deemed a great success; the volunteers especially enjoyed sessions on the topics like emergency response, safer access, planning of volunteer activities for 2019, volunteer management, international humanitarian law. They were also content with the revised procedures for electing the Volunteer Commission, piloted at the Assembly.


During organization and carrying out of every significant event the VD unit promoted and popularized volunteer activities; the projects implemented by the VD unit were served as yet another catalyst. The Volunteer Assembly was a milestone in this regard, and the composition of the participants thereof can be a reliable indicator of the level of volunteering culture development in URCS.

2. **COORDINATION AND COOPERATION (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)**

**INTERNAL**

In 2018 a position of an URCS HQ volunteer development interregional manager was piloted, occupied by Yuliia Olefirenko.

Yuliia’s activities commenced in April 2018. During that period, she performed the following functions:

- **Fostered** mobilization of volunteers and development of the proper management thereof;
- **Provided** consultations, technical support, supervision over maintenance of the databases by the local branches (namely, those of the local volunteers, their leaders, volunteer IDs) as well as over adherence to the existing regulations of keeping, storing and filling the official documents signed by the volunteers;
- **Helped** in organization and conduction of induction courses, trainings, workshops, volunteer meetings and exchanges.
The interregional manager activities were focused in different regions, including but not limited to the following ones: Luhansk region (Severodonetsk and Lysychansk districts), Kharkiv region (Kupiansk, Krasnohrad); Donetsk region (Mariupol, Volnovakha); Dnipropetrovsk region (Dnipro); Zaporizhia region (Polohy, Berdiansk).

In total, in 2018 the URCS HQ volunteer development unit manager supported/conducted:

- 4 Schools of Social Initiatives (Lysychansk, Severodonetsk, Mariupol, Berdiansk, Zaporizhia, Kupiansk);
- 1 Volunteer and organizational management training (Dnipro);
- 1 regional meeting of regional branch volunteers (Kharkiv region);

*The school of social Initiatives in Kupiansk*

- 1 YABC workshop (Bila Tserkva);
- 1 URCS Volunteer National Assembly (Dnipro);
- 1 YABC peer educators meeting (Kharkiv);

*YABC peer educators meeting*
• 8 induction courses;
• 2 webinars on conducting induction courses and presenting the branch activities. The second webinar was recorded on video, disseminated within the branch and entered the standard documents pack developed by the interregional volunteer development manager for facilitating the branch activities regarding volunteer management.

29 monitoring visits carried out in the course of 8 months (lasting 71 days in total).

The manager also conducted analysis of the volunteer databases of all the regional branches. The number of volunteers according to the volunteer databases is **2027**, 227 of which stopped being volunteers in the course of 2018 but have not yet been excluded from the database. At the end of 2018, 750 new volunteers joined URCS but had not been included in the database due to technical reasons or not having had enough time to undergo induction courses.

However, it should be remarked that the database still needs to be improved, as it lacks full data on all the volunteers. Thus personal communication with the representatives of each URCS regional branch and analysis of the resulting data allows us to conclude that the true number of the currently active volunteers is **2500**.

The Volunteer Commission elected at the previous Youth Assembly also carried out its activities in 2018. This body performed its functions and was actively supported by the volunteer development unit in the following areas:

• Maintaining communications with the active volunteers and their leaders, keeping them informed about the available exchange and training opportunities, updating database of volunteer leaders;
• Analysis and publication of the volunteer management reports of the regional branches as well those of the Commission itself;
• Providing for a higher level of transparency of the selection procedures for international volunteer exchanges;
• Development of local documents regulating Commission activities and issues related to the volunteer movement, developing new regulations on the Volunteer Commission;
• Raising organizational capacities of the Volunteer Commission (yearly planning, Skype and live meetings and their minutes);
- Participating in organization and implementation of Youth Engagement Self-Assessment;
- Organizing and conducting the first Volunteer meeting of the Southern Regional Cluster in Odesa.

Support of volunteer management in the Kyiv city branch. Owing to the IFRC assistance, a separate position of Kyiv volunteer development manager was created in URCS NC, filled by Yekateryna Ostapenko. Her activities included:
- Carrying out of International Volunteer Day events for the volunteers of Kyiv city and Kyiv region;
- Establishing and maintaining communication between the volunteers of district branches within Kyiv city, consolidation of the city-wide volunteer database, checking and updating documentation of volunteer activities;
- Developing an action plan for 2019, aimed at intensifying cooperation between the Kyiv city volunteers, raising the number and expanding the scope of their activities;
- Developing regulations on the URCS Kyiv City Volunteer Commission, reviewing the working areas of the volunteers based on the needs assessment, working towards inclusion of the volunteer commission members in the branch governing bodies;
- Assisting in organization of the conflict prevention and teambuilding training (see below).

EXTERNAL

National Level

During 2018 URCS collaborated with the National Police of Ukraine, Ministry for Regional Development, Building and Housing of Ukraine, State Emergency Service of Ukraine in implementation of the Safety Centers project – multi-profile establishments based in and run by the united territorial communities, aimed at uniting all the local branches of services dealing with emergencies within the same structure and building. It should be remarked that the said collaboration also contributes to popularization of the Red Cross, as the methodology materials for the local authorities on organization of the Safety Centres prepared and disseminated under the auspices of the project contain information on URCS, its activities, fundamental principles, volunteers and their role.

Throughout 2018, URCS also cooperated with UN Volunteer Corps and Peace Corps in Ukraine. A Memorandum on Collaboration was concluded by URCS and Ministry of Youth and Sports...
of Ukraine: the main area of cooperation concerns development of volunteer culture and promotion of humanitarian education in Ukraine. A series of corresponding events and meetings took place in late 2018.

**Signing of the Memorandum on Collaboration between URCS and Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine**

**International level**

URCS and IFRC Youth Commission representatives conducted **Youth Engagement Self-Assessment (YES) in Ukraine (March 31 – April 2)**. URCS became the very first National Society in the world to pilot the YES toolkit created by IFRC; comments and suggestions on this tool brought forward by Ukrainian participants in the course of the assessment contributed to improving the toolkit which was finalized in the autumn of 2018. In the course of the self-assessment, 63 people from across the country took part in the focus group discussions as members of “Youth as leaders”, “Youth as volunteers”, “Youth as beneficiaries” and “Adults” groups. The participants pointed at existing problems and drawbacks in youth engagement as practiced in URCS. As a result of the wide discussion held by the Organization Team (composed of VD unit staff, URCS Volunteer Commission members and IFRC Youth Commission representatives), a preliminary plan of action for URCS was developed, aimed at dealing with the issues discovered in the course of the FGDs. These recommendations will become an integral part of URCS Youth Engagement Strategy (to be developed in 2019).

URCS also hosted the **June meeting of European Youth Coordination Committee (hereinafter – EYCC)** of 2016-2018 term in Kyiv. EYCC members also met to the most experienced volunteer leaders in Ukraine, URCS Volunteer Commission, which had its own working meeting and underwent training in advocacy at the time.
Julia Olefirenko (interregional manager) took part in the ProVoice project meeting in Moldova where the further project implementation issues were discussed, the plans developed and the question of volunteer management and spontaneous volunteerism training scrutinized.

Also, within the international activities VD unit coordinator took part in such international events as:

- **The European Youth Network meeting** (jointly with Kostiantyn Batrak, the leader of the Southern regional cluster). The European Youth Coordination Committee (EYCC) elections took place during the meeting; the **newly elected members of EYCC** (to serve until 2020) include the URCS VD unit coordinator which is currently working on further promotion of URCS activities at the global stage, establishment of partner relations with other National Societies and advocacy of URCS interests worldwide;

  ![Newly elected European Youth Coordination Committee](image)

- Participation in the Alliance meeting of RCRC volunteer leaders (Madrid);
- Participation in the European Network of Development of Organizations and Volunteers (ENDOV) in Brussels;
- Participation in the EYCC meeting (Budapest).

Participation in these meetings resulted in acquiring cutting-edge experience of other National Societies, its introduction in URCS, establishing collaboration with other National Societies. Nothing speaks louder of the humongous extent of this collaboration than fervent, insatiable desire with which Ukrainian volunteers began to be invited to various international exchange events.
3. DOCUMENTARY REGULATION

In 2018 the following regulatory documents were developed by the VD unit and officially adopted by the URCS governing bodies:

- Volunteer Policy – containing basic URCS approaches to working with volunteers, particularly to involving them in the decision-making processes to the largest extent possible;
- Youth Policy – declaring role of the youth as URCS leaders, volunteers, beneficiaries;
- Volunteer development handbook – aimed at sensitization of the local branch leadership and volunteer managers with the methods and principles of effective volunteer management. The handbook was officially launched at the 2018 National Volunteer Assembly;
- Regulations on URCS Volunteer Commission – to define and delineate the Commission’s role, functions and responsibilities. The typical regulations for the regional volunteer commissions were also developed.

The following documents were drafted but not yet officially approved:

- Volunteer profiles – short descriptions of the activities carried out under a given working area as well as of necessary training, documents and requirements brought forward towards the volunteers involved. The volunteer profiles are aimed at facilitation the volunteer recruitment and selection process;
- New version of the Code of Conduct of the URCS volunteers, staff and members, which, inter alia, serves to clarify the specifics of the communication with the media on part of the volunteers, specify the notion of “conflict of interests” according to RCRC fundamental values, emphasizes the zero-tolerance policy towards violence, power and sexual abuse towards and by the volunteers.

4. TRAINING AND SUPPORT OF VOLUNTEERS

During 2018 the VD unit conducted 2 trainings of peer educators in the IFRC “Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change” initiative, resulting in preparation of 40 additional YABC peer educators, 70% of whom introduced the initiative in their own communities. In total, 200 YABC activities were carried out throughout the year in Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, Kyiv, Kharkiv regions and the city of Kyiv;
2 conflict resolution trainings were conducted (September 10-14 and October 8-12, Kyiv). In the course of these trainings 39 URCS volunteers and staff workers were trained in conflict prevention according to the curriculum developed by DCCR (Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution), encompassing knowledge and skills in non-violent communication, active listening, deep democracy etc. Besides, these trainings resulted in preparation of 3 conflict resolution training, to be employed by URCS further on. Monitoring tools have also been developed jointly with Danish Red Cross in order to monitor the conflict prevention activities across the country and the volunteers involved therein;

**Conflict Resolution Training**

*(Kyiv, October 8-12)*

The VD unit staff took part in organization and facilitation of the emergency response workshop (under the ProVoice project) as well as involved therein Vasyl Kundryk, a representative of the “Volunteer Firemen” public initiative. The output of the training was a prepared training curriculum for the future training in volunteer management during emergency response.

On October 22-24 15 URCS volunteers from among different regions took part in the Kyiv pilot training under the curriculum specifically developed by Danish Red Cross Youth. The participants acquired skills in project management basics, facilitation of activities and interactions with other volunteers – to be applied in the course of their further activities in their home URCS branches.
Conflict prevention and teambuilding training took place on December 22-23 in Kyiv, facilitated by the Belarus Red Cross volunteer Ivan Milanovych. The issues of leadership skills, teambuilding, proper activity planning by the volunteer leaders of the regions and regional clusters were under discussion.

In order to provide further support to volunteer activities in regions the VD unit was actively involved in preparing project proposals. Two project applications were successfully granted funding by the donor (the activities are to commence in 2019):

1. *The project supported by Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation – a Project of German Marshall Fund in the US.* The project is meant to support the Zaporizhia regional branch activities aimed at increasing social cohesion by means of implementing YABC initiative and conducting social events.

2. *EU Aid Volunteers project supported by the European Commission* Within the project framework, during September 2019 – March 2020 4 volunteers specially selected by the Finnish Red Cross will provide support to Kyiv and Kharkiv regional and Kyiv city branches as well as
to the URCS HQ in developing such areas as volunteer management, information activities, humanitarian education, emergency response.

Two events were organized by the VD unit staff around the International Volunteer Day as designated by the UN General Assembly (December 5) - a general nationwide event and another in the city of Kyiv specifically for the Kyiv city and Kyiv region volunteers;

**International Volunteer Day in Kyiv**

Throughout 2018, 11 URCS volunteers took part in different international activities, supported by the VD unit and partner National Societies:

1. Basic training course for Finnish Red Cross youth delegates (Heinola, Finland, May 19-23).
   URCS participant: Dariia Akhmedova, volunteer leader of Poltava regional branch. Objective: to prepare the future international youth delegates which will be involved in the international humanitarian missions by the Finnish Red Cross;

**Basic training course for Finnish Red Cross youth delegates**
2. 2018 Danish Red Cross Youth Leadership Academy (Vallekiilde Folk High School, Denmark, August 5-17). URCS participant – Solomiia Pyndykvkska, Ternopil regional branch volunteer leader. Objective: preparing strong youth leaders in RCRC movement to pose as role models and agents of change as well as to initiate and carry out youth activities in their national societies.

2018 Danish Red Cross Youth Leadership Academy

3. International training camp of Baden Red Cross within the framework of the joint project by several national societies - «Peer Prepared Project – Empowering Youth for Social and Humanitarian Emergencies» (Німеччина, Kirchheim-unter-Teck, Germany, May 28 – June 6). URCS representatives: URCS NC emergency response team volunteers Liudmyla Makarova, Fedir Nastenko, Olena Panshyna, Anastasiia Voidevych, Dnipropetrovsk regional ERT volunteer Dariia Hrechyshcheva (as training participants under “Emergency Simulation” track), VD unit coordinator Maryna Kozhedub (as a YABC trainer under the parallel YABC track). The participants acquired new skills and knowledge in organizing emergency and first aid simulations, imitation of injuries and emergency states, acting skills for those playing the injured, teamwork at the international level, improvement of English-language communication skills.
4. 63rd Austrian Red Cross Youth International Study and Friendship Camp (Langenlois, Austria, July 9-23). URCS representatives: Polina-Iryna Bilanenko (volunteer leader of the Dnipropetrovsk regional branch) and Yaroslav Kholod (volunteer leader of the Sumy regional branch). Objective: establishment of intercultural dialogue, presentation of the participants’ RCRC National Societies and their countries at large, visible demonstration of the unity of the RCRC volunteers across the globe and their commitment to humanity ideals.

5. Volunteer Academy of Bulgarian Red Cross Youth (Kamchia resort, Bulgaria, September 2-9). URCS participants: Yekateryna Ostapenko (volunteer leader of the Kyiv city branch) and Kostiantyn Batrak (volunteer leader of the Southern regional cluster). Objective: teaching the latest developments in volunteer management and development and the structure of RCRC; intercultural exchange between participating National Societies.

6. International Youth Camp of Turkish Red Crescent Youth (Istanbul, Turkey, August 9-16). URCS representatives: Maksym Zharikov (Kharkiv region volunteer) and Oleksii Cherednichenko (URCS NC volunteer development manager). Objective: bringing together volunteers from different National Societies in order to jointly move towards achievement of RCRC common goals.
OTHER VD UNIT ACTIVITIES

Social cohesion

Throughout 2018 the VD unit staff supported by Danish Red Cross coordinated project activities aimed at increase of social cohesion in communities through the administration support and coordination support of following projects:

- Under the **“Promoting protection, well-being and social cohesion of the vulnerable groups in Ukraine”** project (funded by Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs): 9692 beneficiaries in the regions of Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kyiv, Odesa and Kharkiv, 1284 of them were benefitted by 100 YABC activities;
- Under the **“Community mobilization for conflict prevention and social cohesion in Ukraine”** project (funded by the Danish CISU fund): 2158 beneficiaries in Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia regions who took part in 100 YABC activities in the larger groups.

Translations

Throughout the year VD unit manager translated documents by requests from the URCS NC finance department.

Organization and carrying out of the URCS NC activities:

- Throughout the year, VD unit coordinator conducted induction courses for new URCS NC employees;
- The unit staff lent assistance in organizing events at the national level (such as celebration of the 100th URCS anniversary);
- The unit staff workers were involved in facilitation of BOCA (Branch Organizational Capacities Assessment) activities.

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It should be remarked that the volunteer and youth development unit activities are supported by Danish Red Cross. Implementation and introduction of various initiatives throughout the country are executed jointly with different RCRC bodies (ICRC, IFRC, partner National Societies).