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# Improving Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Practices- Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa District

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## **Abstract**

Amidst unstable global political and economic order, the numbers of people seeking refuge in the west of the world has increased. Effective settlement and integration of this population in the host country is only possible if the organizations facilitating the settlement and integration are also running effectively and efficiently.

This study, by focusing on the Helsinki, and Uusimaa District, explores the challenges the Finnish Red Cross has faced in the recruitment and retention of multilingual and multicultural volunteers who are crucial actors in the effective settlement and integration of the asylum seekers, quota refugees and immigrants alike.

With this challenge in mind, the objective of this thesis is to develop a set of practical recommendations that improve the current approach to the recruitment and retention of immigrant volunteers.

The study uses quantitative surveys to find some of the Pinch Points associated with the volunteer recruitment process. Similarly, it uses qualitative interviews with the staff and past volunteers to find the Pinch Points of volunteer retention. The study finds six themes through inductive analysis that have affected the recruitment and retention process of volunteers.

Building on existing knowledge in the literature and best practice in volunteer management, the outcome of the study is a set of recommendations that improve the current process of volunteer recruitment and retention. It also provides practical tools for the volunteer leaders and volunteers to self-manage and increase the efficiency of the volunteer recruitment and retention process.

The proposal, developed using the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, was presented to the organization in order to validate the recommendations and ensure that they offered practical utility. Here, they were well-received and immediately implemented.

This study can provide a reference point for other non for profit and international organizations that work with volunteers and are looking for ways to make volunteer recruitment and retention process more effective.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
1 Introduction.....	6
1.1 Overview.....	6
1.2 Business Challenge.....	6
1.3 Case Company.....	7
1.4 Objective and Scope.....	7
1.5 Thesis Outline.....	8
2 Method and Material.....	8
2.1 Research Approach.....	8
2.2 Research Design.....	10
2.3 Data Collection and Analysis.....	11
2.3.1 Data 1 – Current State Analysis.....	12
2.3.2 Data 2 – Building the proposal.....	13
2.3.3 Data 3 – Feedback; Validation; initial implementation.....	13
2.3.4 Internal Documents Used.....	14
2.4 Validity and Reliability.....	15
2.4.1 Quantitative Survey:.....	15
2.4.2 Qualitative Interviews:.....	15
3 Current State Analysis.....	16
3.1 Volunteer Recruitment- Findings from the Quantitative Survey.....	16
3.2 Volunteer Retention- Findings from the Qualitative Interviews.....	16
3.2.1 Immediate Triggers.....	17
3.2.2 Listening?.....	18
3.2.3 Safety.....	19
3.2.4 Administration/ Bureaucracy.....	20
3.2.5 Volunteer Appreciation.....	21
3.2.6 Leadership Crisis.....	21
3.3 Key Findings from the Current State Analysis.....	22

4	Existing Knowledge.....	23
4.1	Finnish Red Cross and its work with Immigrants.....	24
4.2	Multilingual Volunteers.....	24
4.3	Best Practices in Volunteer Management .....	25
4.4	Relevant Volunteer Management Practices .....	25
4.4.1	Matching volunteers' skills with appropriate assignments .....	26
4.4.2	Recognizing the contributions of volunteers.....	27
4.4.3	Measuring the Impact of Volunteering.....	27
4.4.4	Providing volunteers with training and professional development Training.....	28
4.4.5	Written appropriate job descriptions for the volunteer positions .....	28
4.4.6	Utilizing Volunteer Supervisors .....	29
4.4.7	Developing Volunteer Management Skills.....	29
4.4.8	Evaluation and Monitoring.....	29
4.5	Conceptual Framework.....	30
4.5.1	Combination # 1.....	30
4.5.2	Combination # 2.....	30
4.5.3	Combination # 3.....	31
4.5.4	Combination # 4.....	31
4.5.5	Combination # 5.....	31
4.5.6	Combination # 6.....	32
4.5.7	Synthesis of Combinations # 1-6.....	34
5	Building the Proposal .....	34
5.1	The Process map of the Recruitment and Retention Process .....	35
5.2	Proposal for Staff .....	37
5.3	Proposal for Volunteer Leaders and Volunteers.....	39
6	Validation of the Proposal .....	42
6.1	Validation Round .....	42
6.2	Partial Implementation .....	42
6.3	Implementation Plan .....	42

6.4	Final Proposal.....	44
7	Discussion and Conclusions .....	44
7.1	Summary .....	44
7.2	Practical/ Managerial Implications.....	44
7.3	Evaluation of the Thesis.....	45
7.3.1	Outcome vs Objective.....	45
7.3.2	Reflection & Afterword .....	45
	References .....	47
	Appendices.....	50
	Appendix 1 .....	50
	Appendix 2 .....	54
	Appendix 3 .....	56
	Appendix 4 .....	57
	Appendix 5 .....	59
	Appendix 6 .....	60
	Appendix 7 .....	61
	Appendix 8 .....	62

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Volunteering is offering time and services at no cost to benefit a person or entity in need. Volunteers from around the world and across centuries have made significant contributions to aid in the aftermath of disasters, natural and human induced, alike. When disasters strike, volunteers mobilize themselves without much instigation from anyone else. The passion and the drive of the volunteers with which they mobilize in such crisis situations can cast an illusion that volunteers are self-motivated, self-sufficient, individuals who will continue to deliver at the same pace and vigour for as long as the assistance is required even without proper organizational structures and management in place. However, when volunteering becomes routine whether in crisis situations or not, volunteers like any other labour force shrugs off its initial commitment at the slightest inconvenience to delivering the service they had committed to deliver (Connors, 2011). It becomes even more challenging when the inconvenience becomes intertwined with confusion about the roles and responsibilities expected of them due to process inefficiencies (Connors, 2011).

For organizations in the non-profit sector that work with new Immigrants, i.e. people with various language and cultural needs, successful recruitment and retention of volunteers with various language and cultural translation skills can determine the success of that program. Most often than not, volunteers serving the client population are themselves relatively new to the country they will be volunteering at and thus are also going through the integration process, albeit at different stages, in a new country. Thus, any preconceived expectations not met by the volunteer roles usually results in them swerving from their commitment. The aim of this thesis is then to bring together best practices of volunteer management from the for profit sector and the non-profit sector alike to help the Finnish Red Cross of Helsinki, Uusimaa District formulate a process change in its current volunteer recruitment and retention practices such that any expectations regarding volunteer rights, roles, and responsibilities, are minimized if not eliminated.

## 1.2 Business Challenge

Not many multilingual immigrant volunteers who have been living in Finland for some time approach or stay long-term as volunteers with the Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa District.

Settled Immigrant volunteers can play a vital role in the initial stages of

new immigrant/refugee settlement mostly because of the language and cultural translation skills the settled immigrants possess; however bringing them onboard the volunteering pool has been a great challenge for the Finnish Red Cross. Persistence of this issue had led the Helsinki and Uusimaa district branch to launch an investigation on the multilingual volunteer Recruitment and Retention processes at their branch. This is when the idea for this study came about.

The terms 'immigrant volunteers' and 'multilingual volunteers' are used interchangeably throughout this thesis to highlight their cultural and perhaps other differences from the native Finnish speaking people and reflect the additional language skills (other than Finnish) these volunteers possess.

### 1.3 Case Company

About 17 million volunteers worldwide are currently registered with the Red Cross (Finnish Red Cross, 2016). The Finnish Red Cross is one of the 189 member organisations of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The IFRC is the cooperative body of the national Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations. The Finnish Red Cross currently has about 45,000 active volunteers (Finnish Red Cross, 2016).

About 27,306 of the 45,000 volunteers are registered with the Uusimaa District in Finland (Kaukiainen, n.d.). Uusimaa district consists of 57 branches which operate in the local communities. Thirty nine of these branches are Finnish speaking; eight are Finnish and Swedish speaking and ten are Swedish speaking. The 27,306 volunteers operate in these local branches under the supervision of employees from the Uusimaa district office (Kaukiainen, n.d.).

Every year, the Uusimaa District Red Cross helps the Finnish Government in the integration process of about 1800 asylum seekers.

### 1.4 Objective and Scope

The objective of the study is to propose an improved process to the current process of recruiting and retaining immigrant volunteers so that the Finnish Red Cross's Uusimaa district volunteer pool is more inclusive of the immigrant volunteers. Whereas any volunteer involvement for the purpose of immigrant integration is valuable, the involvement of Immigrant volunteers is important for an organization like Red Cross which helps immigrants



and refugee integrate into the Finnish culture because the immigrant volunteers can provide essential language and cultural interpretations to the newcomers.

The study explored the expectation of these multilingual volunteers from the volunteer positions/programs at the Uusimaa District Red Cross through Quantitative surveys and Qualitative interviews. The study also analyzed the current system of recruiting, retaining and mobilizing volunteers at the Uusimaa District. It offers suggestions based on existing knowledge in the industry which will help to align the needs and expectations of the volunteers and that of the organization.

The study, however, will not delve into the issues around the native Finnish volunteer population of the Red Cross because the dearth of immigrant volunteer participation at the Red Cross is a serious problem and deserves to be treated as a research area on its own.

### 1.5 Thesis Outline

This section provides an overview of how this document is structured hereafter.

This document is organized as follows: First, the methods and materials used to collect data for the research is discussed in detail. Second, findings from Current State Analysis is presented. Third, Existing Knowledge on Red Cross, nature of volunteers, and Volunteer Management is explored. Fourth, a conceptual Framework is drawn as a synthesis of the Current State Analysis and Existing Knowledge which also served as a basis for a preliminary proposal. Fifth, updated version of the preliminary proposal (referred here after as the proposal) after collaboration with the Red Cross Staff is discussed. Sixth, Implemented aspects of the proposal and implementation plan are presented in the building the proposal section followed by the Final Proposal attached as an Appendix. Finally, the thesis ends with afterword and reflections.

## **2 Method and Material**

This section provides a description of how the research was designed and how data for the study was collected and analyzed.

### 2.1 Research Approach

Volunteers are unique individuals who have different understanding and expectations of their roles as social actors. From an epistemological standpoint, a positivist stance on volunteer management will not have unravelled all the pertinent details about why volunteers decide to

volunteer or not volunteer; especially those that were based on their own expectations of what an ideal volunteer management style should look like. Thus, an Interpretivist logic was used to make sense of the volunteers' world from their own point of view (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007).

To do this, an Inductive Approach (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007) was used where data was first collected through quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and feedbacks and then an attempt was made to come up with a relevant theory.

Quantitative Surveys although usually identified with the deductive approach, was used here to closely simulate the inductive approach by structuring the questions without having any particular theory in mind as to why volunteers chose or didn't choose to volunteer with the Finnish Red Cross. Most of the questions in the survey allowed respondents to explain why they chose a certain answer thus making it possible to have as much as data as possible to induce a theory. In the recruitment phase of volunteer life cycle, volunteers wouldn't necessarily know a great deal about the Finnish Red Cross and thus, a wealth of information couldn't be expected by qualitatively interviewing a small bunch of respondents. However, we as researchers and the staff at the Finnish Red Cross were also at an exploratory phase of why the Finnish Red Cross was not able to recruit as many multi lingual volunteers as it would like and we did not have a concrete understanding of what might be the cause to generate a theory of the possible reason(s). Thus, quantitative surveys were chosen for inductive analysis for this particular phase because there was a need to collect breadth of data (in the lack of depth of data) through a larger number of respondents to genuinely explore their needs and expectations (Madrigal and McClain, 2012) from the Finnish Red Cross which could then help to prescribe some recommendation on how the recruitment process could be improved.

Similarly, qualitative interviews with the currently inactive Finnish Red Cross volunteers were conducted to understand the reasons for volunteers to suddenly stop volunteering and what could be done to improve retention of volunteers that have passed the recruitment phase. The idea was to gather as much data as possible on the possible reasons and build an inductive theory based on the data which could then help to prescribe some recommendation on how the retention process could be improved.

## 2.2 Research Design

The research was designed and conducted in 4 distinct phases: Current State Analysis; Analysis of the Existing knowledge; Building the Proposal and Validation of the Proposal. In the Current State Analysis phase, first set of data (Data 1) was collected. In this phase, the strengths and weaknesses of current process of volunteer recruitment was conducted and analyzed through quantitative surveys of new recruits and the strengths and weaknesses of the current process of volunteer retention was collected and analyzed through qualitative interviews of the existing staff and currently inactive volunteers who used to be fairly active in the past. Also, quantitative surveys were conducted before the qualitative interviews in order to make the qualitative interview questions and candidates more representative of the Finnish Red Cross volunteers of the Helsinki and Uusimaa district.

The second phase or the Existing Knowledge Phase was conducted in order to situate the findings of the Current State Analysis phase on the conceptual framework of a broader discipline of volunteer management. Existing knowledge i.e. existing literature; Red Cross internal documents and annual reports ; and best practices recommended and adopted by various experts and organizations, to manage volunteers effectively were studied and analyzed to come up with a preliminary proposal to which more details were added after collaboration with the Staff in Data round 2.

The third phase i.e., the Building the Proposal phase was designed to collect the second round of data (Data 2). The findings from the Current State Analysis and the Existing knowledge were collaborated and presented to the Finnish Red Cross Uusimaa district staff working closely with the volunteers so that a common consensus on how to better recruit and retain volunteers could be established. The common consensus was the basis for the draft proposal which would contain details regarding the proposed process change in regards to the volunteer recruitment and retention at the Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa District.

The fourth phase or Validation of the Proposal phase was designed to present the findings of the research and the proposal built from phase 3 to the executives of the Finnish Red Cross to make them aware of our findings, proposed solutions and to get recommendations from the executives themselves on the proposal for the process change. The recommendations were considered to be the 3rd round of data or (Data 3).

The table below provides an illustration of the above discussed phases, activities conducted and the desired outcomes in each of the phases.

Phases	Data	Content	Informants	Outcome
Current State Analysis	Data 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative Survey</li> <li>Qualitative Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New volunteer applicants</li> <li>Staff and Inactive volunteers</li> </ul>	Strengths and weaknesses
Existing Knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In House publications</li> <li>Literature Review</li> </ul>	--	Conceptual Framework
Building the Proposal	Data 2	Workshop	Staff working directly with the volunteer recruitment and retention process	Draft of a Process change
Validation of the Proposal	Data 3	Feedback Session	Development Manager	Process change

*Table 1: Research Design*

### 2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

This section discusses the methods of data collection and analysis used for the research. Data for the research was collected through qualitative interviews; collating annual reports and presentations; and through quantitative surveys. Data was analyzed through the Rapid Miner software (for the quantitative data) and through a Thematic Analysis (for the qualitative data). Data was collected, processed and analyzed in 3 different data rounds: Data 1; Data 2 and Data 3 as shown above in table 1 and discussed in the following sub-sections.

### 2.3.1 Data 1 – Current State Analysis

In the Data 1 phase, strengths and weaknesses of the current process of volunteer recruitment and retention was obtained and analyzed. Two in depth interviews with a development manager and a staff was conducted to design the content of the Quantitative questionnaire. This questionnaire was then used to obtain the Current state of Volunteer Recruitment. Current State of Volunteer Retention was obtained through several Qualitative interviews.

Quantitative surveys were the chosen method for data collection for Recruitment because of its ability to be representative of all the potential multilingual volunteers at the Finnish Red Cross Uusimaa District. Similarly, qualitative interviews were used to investigate the barriers to retention of the multilingual volunteers because of the ability of these kind of interviews to allow for questioning and probing in order to obtain greater depth of the data being collected. The current state of volunteer recruitment was obtained through 2 successive quantitative surveys, handed out in paper, to a group of new recruits attending the Volunteer Orientation Sessions organized by the Finnish Red Cross Helsinki and Uusimaa District. A total of 46 new recruits were surveyed with multiple choice, open ended, and scale questions for the quantitative surveys. The survey aimed to find the needs and expectations of the multilingual recruits from the Finnish Red Cross. The survey questions attempted to identify the needs and expectations by probing on the potential scenarios like hours the volunteers are available, their employment status, expected life changes, previous volunteer experiences, their motivation and turn off factors for volunteering, etcetera. For the full list of the survey questions, please refer to the appendix 1. The sample frame for this research was the wider group of multilingual people who wanted to become volunteers at the Finnish Red Cross Helsinki Uusimaa District. The sample population for this survey was selected through the Convenience Sampling technique because of the convenience of the respondents' availability at the two Volunteer Orientation Sessions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007 pg. 234). The sample population thus, is a representative of potential multilingual volunteers at the Finnish Red Cross.

The data was then transferred into an excel file and was analyzed with the help of the Rapid Miner software.

The current state of volunteer retention was obtained through qualitative interviews of 3 currently inactive volunteers and 2 staff who work directly with the multilingual volunteers. The volunteers for the qualitative interviews were carefully selected such that they

represented the largest ethnic/language groups of volunteers at the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa district. The quantitative survey suggested that the highest numbers of volunteers were from the Asian (21.4%) and other European (21.4%). Thus, the interviewees of the corresponding ethnic/language groups were selected from the current inactive volunteer pool for the qualitative interviews. The staff was selected because of their work with the multilingual volunteers in close proximity. The aim of the interviews was to identify the reasons why these once active and enthusiastic volunteers were suddenly not volunteering at the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa District. Interviews were conducted face to face with only one participant at a time to avoid answers from participants being influenced by another participant. The participants were probed about the challenges they faced while volunteering and their feelings about the challenges in order to get a clearer picture of why they had stopped volunteering. For instance, participants were probed with questions like “can you give an example of that” or “how did you feel about that” and more to understand the situation they were describing in detail. For the full list of the qualitative questions and probes, please refer to Appendix 2 and 3.

The interviews were recorded on tape and were later transcribed. The transcribed data was then coded and analyzed inductively through thematic content analysis from which six themes emerged as the most prominent ones.

Data was also collected through the annual reports and organization’s presentation materials.

### 2.3.2 Data 2 – Building the proposal

In the Data 2 phase, the findings from the current state analysis and existing knowledge, including the Conceptual Framework was presented in a face to face workshop setting to the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa district staff and the training officer. These staffs were selected because of their work proximity with the multilingual volunteers. Data was collected as the staffs gave their ideas and feedbacks on the findings of the Current State Analysis; on the Conceptual Framework; and the Preliminary Proposal outlined by me. This led to the creation of the Proposal.

### 2.3.3 Data 3 – Feedback; Validation; initial implementation

In the Data 3 Phase, the Proposal was presented and discussed with the Development Manager; his feedbacks were then noted down. Once the feedbacks were considered and

changes made, the Final Proposal was created.

The table below provides the details of the interviews, surveys and workshops conducted for the data rounds.

Data Round	Data Type	Data Source	Date & Approach	Recording	Purpose/ Focus
<b>Data 1</b> Current State Analysis	Qualitative Interview Talk rounds	Training Officer Development Manager	19/12/2016 Face2Face 19/12/2016 Face2Face	40 Mins: Notes	Business Problem
	Quantitative Survey	New Volunteer Recruits	12/1/2017 Face2Face 19/1/2017 Face2Face	Survey Filled out on paper	Volunteer Recruitment Pinch Points
	Qualitative Interview	Volunteer 1 Volunteer 2 Volunteer 3 Staff 1	20/1/2017 Face2Face 24/1/2017 Face2Face 30/1/2017 Face2Face 06/2/2017 Face2Face	23 Mins: Rec 38 Mins: Rec 27 Mins: Rec 38 Mins: Rec	Volunteer Retention Pinch Points
	Internal Documents	Presentations, Annual Reports	Research		
Existing Knowledge		Books, Red Cross Materials, Journal Articles and Company websites	Research		Red Cross, Immigrant Volunteers and Volunteer Management
<b>Data 2</b> Building the Proposal	Workshop	Training Officer & Staff 1	April 6, 2017 Face2Face	2 hours	<i>Draft Proposal for Process Change through Sharing Findings &amp; Feedback.</i>
<b>Data 3</b> Validation	Workshop	Development Manager	April 19, 2017 Face2Face	1 hour	<i>Final Proposal for Process Change through Sharing Findings &amp; Feedback.</i>

*Table 2: Details regarding the Data and Data Collection*

#### 2.3.4 Internal Documents Used

Internal documents were also referred to for collecting more data. Below is a list and description of the internal materials used.

Name of Doc	Publication Date	Description/ Purpose	No. Pages
All About the Finnish Red Cross-	2017	For Data 2	1-26

get Involved			
Finnish Red Cross- Annual Report 2015	20 May 2016	For Data 2	28-31

*Table 3: Details of Internal Documents Used for Data Collection*

## 2.4 Validity and Reliability

Reliability gives a research credibility by showing that the applied data collection techniques will yield consistent findings if they were to be re-conducted at other occasions by other observers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). Similarly, research validity ensures that the findings of the research are really about what they appear to be about and (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

### 2.4.1 Quantitative Survey:

Reliability: To ensure reliability of the data, participant bias (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007) was minimized by making the survey anonymous and administering questionnaires in a power neutral setting. Observer bias was minimized as the multiple choice and scale questions left little room for the researcher interpretation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

Validity: To ensure validity, the surveys were conducted with participants that had gone were going through the recruitment process at the Red Cross and thus, had some knowledge about their experience trying to navigate the recruitment process.

Generalisability:

### 2.4.2 Qualitative Interviews:

Reliability: To ensure reliability of the data, participant bias (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007) was minimized by making the survey anonymous. Also, observer error (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007) was minimized through questionnaires that had high degree of structure; however, additional probe questions that followed naturally as part of the interview were also collected and analyzed.

Validity: To ensure validity and representativeness of the sample, interviewees were selected from different groups at the Helsinki and Uusimaa District and who had volunteered



during different time periods.

Transferability: The findings of this research can be used as a reference point by researchers and/or organizations looking to explain the low volunteer retention rate and the low number of volunteer recruits in their organization of interest.

### 3 Current State Analysis

This section states the findings of the Current State Analysis conducted through Quantitative surveys and Qualitative interviews.

#### 3.1 Volunteer Recruitment- Findings from the Quantitative Survey

The findings from the surveys displayed here reflects only the points that highlights the strengths and weaknesses in the current process of recruitment. Other findings from the surveys, relevant for the purposes of building the proposal, are mentioned in the later stages of the Current State Analysis.

Process	Strength	Weakness	Reference
Volunteer Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>48.9% of volunteers heard about Red Cross volunteering through Red Cross' website.</li> <li>Red Cross Volunteering is open to anyone. Thus, the potential volunteer pool that is interested in Red Cross activities is diverse. The biggest ones being from the Asian (22%) and the European Continent (22%) followed by the Finnish (17.1%) and African (12.2%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53.65% mentioned that accessing a volunteer recruitment process at the Red Cross was difficult of which 20 % said the English website had to contain more information about volunteer opportunities.</li> </ul>	Survey

*Table 4: Findings from the Current State Analysis- Data Recruitment Phase*

#### 3.2 Volunteer Retention- Findings from the Qualitative Interviews

Participants who have already worked as active Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa district volunteers were interviewed to understand what the strengths and weaknesses of the current retention systems were. Six themes emerged from the Thematic Analysis of the data collected through the qualitative interviews that pointed towards some of reasons either directly or indirectly corresponding with the volunteers' reasons for leaving their volunteer position at the Uusimaa district. The themes are discussed in detail in the section below.



Figure 1: Pinch Points experienced by the volunteers of the Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa District

### 3.2.1 Immediate Triggers

Volunteers almost always had some trigger issues that led them to discontinue their commitment. These triggers were mostly related to changes in family rather than a discontentment with the organization/management.

Life events like becoming a parent and employment changes, which often lead to increased demands on their time, and relocation were cited very often as the immediate reasons for leaving.

#### Family and Employment Related Changes

Below are some examples of how the volunteers described the reason for their leave:

*[I] became a father and had my own [child].....I started a company with my Finnish partner so basically that was the reason, time was less, there was more work.*

*[I left] mainly because my son was born; I had zero time for anything*

### Relocation

Some volunteers were themselves Asylum seekers and were housed together with other asylum seekers in the Reception Centres. In such cases, these volunteers helped their peers when they were still housed together, but once the volunteers left the Reception Centre premises and moved onto their own housing units they couldn't continue in the same capacity as before.

*The room I was living in was a room of 26 people so, we would had access to everyone. Now, as an outsider, I wouldn't have access to that so it was just cut down and then my Finnish classes started.*

### 3.2.2 Listening?

Volunteers also cited not being heard and not feeling counted on decision makings at the Red Cross as some of the reasons for leaving the Red Cross.

### Not Feeling heard/ important

Below are some quotations from volunteers who felt they were not being heard:

*the volunteers who are like dedicating their time and resources and expertise, their opinions have to be heard, you do not always have to implement them, at least discuss it with them and okay counter them if you think they are wrong or something counter them with logical reasons.. No, you can't have that is not an answer.*

*You cannot judge my mentality of being a refugee from a Finnish mind. Coming from Mosul or Kabul or Jalalabad, I have a total different mentality, let's accept the fact, that's a fact. So, if I am being from that society volunteer for the Red Cross, I know the mentality and I know how to deal with those people they are my people. Of course, I respect the way the Red Cross and Finnish people are and operate, but I actually know what would make a stronger effect on the refugees.*

*I asked [a staff] once about how everyone spoke in Finnish [in a English speaking group] and [the staff] told me that "please go and tell [the group] because I am away of this now, I give it to you, you gave it to them, so please"... so, my son was the excuse and the*

*Finnish was the final stopper.*

*I did a course with the Finnish council that was in English but all the assignments are in Finnish because the refugees are supposed to learn Finnish and I asked if I can form a group in English and I was told no.... so I was not able to give any support there either.*

### 3.2.3 Safety

Although safety wasn't cited as the primary reason for people leaving, not feeling safe in the work conditions was cited as something Red Cross needed to work on. While some volunteers mentioned not feeling safe because of not having official distinctions, others cited absence of boundaries between the volunteers and the clients.

#### No Official Distinctions for volunteers

Volunteers mentioned a lack of official distinctions like badges, or nameplates/labels that could show their affiliation with the Red Cross. Volunteers wanted them for security and authority purposes. Below are quotes from some volunteers who wanted some form of official distinctions.

*The first [thing] we do when we go to the reception centre is we get a whistle in case we have a problem. If we are on the 2nd floor alone, and we have a problem with somebody {no one can hear us}. Sometime we have somebody like, who are you? Where are you from? I got this guy from I don't remember the country but he was like oh! Spanish. Andalucía, you need to give it back to us, to Arabs because in 1492, the catholic kings conquered Granada and got the kingdom back and it seems the ISIS is also claiming that back. So, I got some moments where I was like even if I am an American, maybe somebody kick my ass. It would have been nice to also get some official vest that I can return later. I don't care that something that identifies me as a real Red Cross volunteer and not just some guy. So, that was the thing that I didn't like.*

*So, I signed up and until the month before I left, we didn't have any distinction, not even a batch saying that we were Red Cross volunteers. So, basically I could be anybody, nobody. I didn't have any distinction that I was a Red Cross volunteer and I did not get any information from them saying okay now we have registered you as a volunteer for a group. I never got anything!*

### No proper boundaries for volunteers:

When volunteers were themselves also receiving services from the Red Cross, the boundaries between the volunteers and the rest of the clients blurred as they spent most of the time together. This led to violation of personal space and even security at times. Here is what one of those volunteers had to say:

*[Other Asylum seekers] could come to me at any time. But there was a day when a guy, he didn't even understand the context of what I wrote [in the Newsletter for the Red Cross], he didn't even understand proper English but he attacked me because somebody had told him that the writing was against Islam and he just attacked me. But there was a security guy... so, that was the point when I thought that I should not continue with the [Newsletter] when I am in the reception centre. When I go out, I could continue...*

### 3.2.4 Administration/ Bureaucracy

Volunteers explained that the volunteer leaders were their connection to the Red Cross and it wasn't always easy to figure out how to navigate the bureaucratic setup when they needed it for themselves or when wanting to help clients.

### The gap between volunteers and the Red Cross

The quotes below highlight the gap between the Red Cross staffs and the volunteers.

*[The team leader] is in a way the channel and only they can organize volunteer services*

*[the team leader] was official volunteer, I was not*

*Once I left the reception centre, there was no clear way of going back*

*.....he was the team leader and he was managing rest of volunteers... I wouldn't, for example, know how to form a new group....*

### Inexperienced in Volunteer Management

Volunteer leaders/founders did not know what to do when more volunteers joined the group and pushed them away to other groups instead.

*...and when the group became bigger, we told them, why don't you guys go to that reception centre.. That's how we pushed other people to other reception centres...*

#### More Information on Red Cross Groups and Activities

When volunteers wanted to refer clients to other programs or get involved in other programs themselves, there was no list of events they could refer to. Below are some quotes:

*...in terms of overall communication channel, okay let's say you can do these things on these days because this is the influx of [that day]. [If] that would have been there, that would have been much better because the asylum seekers would have known that this is the calendar and if they want, they could already register for the thing and whoever was going to volunteer, they know they will have this number of people to do something with....*

*...there were obviously other reception centres which we had no idea [what] was happening there. Somebody else was going there....*

#### 3.2.5 Volunteer Appreciation

##### No Official Volunteer Appreciation

Volunteers cited absence of efforts and activities from the Finnish Red Cross to appreciate them for their work. They mentioned, although they didn't start volunteering expecting appreciations, it would still have been courteous of the Red Cross to show some gratitude. Below are some quotes:

*Just okay would have been to have an email even better would have been that all volunteers groups that exist have a page in the Red Cross. So, if there is a picture of the group that we take one day that we go there, they don't have to go there, we take it ourselves then we send it to them and these are the volunteers from the karliankatu reception centre. That's it... that would be good.. Just to show ..*

*So there was no trickle down effect from Red Cross as such like ok you guys organize it in a much better way...*

#### 3.2.6 Leadership Crisis

Volunteers cited the absence of leadership who could motivate and sustain the group in the long term and ensure that rules and conducts of the groups are observed in everyday practice.

### No One to keep the group together in the Long Term

Volunteers cited decreasing motivation as tasks became mundane. Here are some examples:

*....because [the team leader] was very..... Every Wednesday we had to go there, period. Everything else stops and we do this. So, there was that pillar of strength was the [team leader], but the [team leader left] and I started my company and it [the group] came to a dead end.*

*... because people [asylum seekers] changed but we stayed the same. So, for us, it was the repetition and then after a while we got bored...*

### No One to Enforce Rules or Codes of Conduct

Volunteers cited rules and codes of conducts whose enforcement became lax with time and the absence of leadership to see them follow through.

*Unfortunately, for me everybody was Finnish and the group itself [was running] in Finnish even though it was supposed to be an English speaking group, so who am I who is not even coming every day to impose everyone to speak in English....*

It can be inferred from the Current State Analysis of the Recruitment and Retention Process of the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa district that all of themes that have come up in the Current State can be grouped under the broader subject of management of volunteers.

### 3.3 Key Findings from the Current State Analysis

The key issues of the recruitment and retention activities at the Finnish Red Cross at present are referred from hereafter as the Pinch Points. These Pinch Points, as mentioned above, are derived from the findings and analysis of the data obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative interviews.

The key findings from both the recruitment and retention activities had information that would be best summarized by the following 6 headings: Immediate Triggers; Appreciation; Listening; Safety; Leadership; and Administration.

<b>Pinch Points</b>	
<b>Recruitment</b>	<b>Retention</b>

<p><b>Immediate Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46.5% were expecting changes in life events in the upcoming 3 months</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immediate Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Related changes</li> <li>Employment changes</li> <li>Relocation</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Appreciation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough Official Volunteer Appreciation (events, certificates, programs etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>57% mentioned that being included in the decision making process of the activity/project that they are part of was important to them</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not Feeling Heard/ Important</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough Official Distinctions for Volunteers (gears, name tags etc.)</li> <li>Not enough Proper Boundaries for Volunteers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>99.9% mentioned that finding a volunteer position at their desired area of activity was important to them</li> </ul>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No one to keep the Group Together in the Long Run</li> <li>No one to enforce rules or codes of conduct</li> </ul>
<p><b>Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>81.39% mentioned that it was important for them to get a guidance from a Red Cross employee or another knowledgeable volunteer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unbridged Gap Between Volunteers and Red Cross</li> <li>Volunteer Inexperience in Volunteer Management</li> <li>More Information on Red Cross Groups and Activities not easily accessible</li> </ul>

Table 5: Key Findings from the Current State Analysis for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Phases

An attempt is made in the Conceptual Framework section of this thesis to address the findings of the Current State Analysis with the help of some existing knowledge in the field.

#### 4 Existing Knowledge

This section discusses the existing knowledge materials studied and analyzed to understand and address the Pinch Points of the Current State Analysis.

Existing knowledge gathered from books, journals and various for profit and non for profit organizations were analyzed in this section to understand the characteristics of Red Cross and multilingual immigrant volunteers; and to search for ways (if any) or solutions other organizations and/ or experts have chosen to apply in situations (Pinch Points) similar to



those illuminated by Current State Analysis of this research.

#### 4.1 Finnish Red Cross and its work with Immigrants

Finnish Red Cross has been in existence for 140 years (Leskinen, 2017). Its structure comprises of the NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION which is responsible for International aid (Disaster relief, development cooperation), National programmes, campaigns (support, development), Organisational services (IT, economy, HR). Similarly, the DISTRICTS are responsible for National aid, Implementing themes, activities, programmes Support to key volunteers and branches. Finally, it has the LOCAL BRANCHES responsible for volunteers, Local aid, Executing themes, activities, and programmes (Leskinen, 2017). The districts have the authority to give permissions to conduct group activities that the local branches might come up with.

Finnish Red Cross has been providing Integration support for immigrants since it received Refugees from Vietnam in 1979 (Hytönen, 2002). Since then, the program has developed into several stream of activities including: language clubs, friend activities, settling in help (asumisapu), activities in reception centers, voluntary activities, and homework support in schools (LäksyHelppi), receiving quota refugees in the municipalities (Leskinen, 2017).

#### 4.2 Multilingual Volunteers

There is a paucity of resources on the nature of immigrant volunteers and how and if their nature and needs are different from those of the native volunteers of a country. Below is a summary of what was gathered based on relevancy from an extensive search of the resources at my disposal.

A study done with immigrants in Finland found that “immigrant jobseekers consistently encounter blockage at the outer periphery of the labour market” (Valtonen, 2001) and more so if they do not possess “acceptable” (Valtonen, 2001) Finnish language skills. Another study done on immigrant volunteers stated that among others, two of the reasons immigrants volunteer are to upgrade/ practice their professional job-related skills, and to “maintain remnants of professional identity” (Wilson-Fronsberg & Sethi, 2015). They volunteers do so with the hopes that the unpaid work would somehow transitions into job gains either at the same place or somewhere else. The study also found that when immigrants volunteer, they mostly do so in the immigrant settlement and multicultural sector (Wilson-Fronsberg & Sethi, 2015).

#### 4.3 Best Practices in Volunteer Management

Best practices are “management practices and models that have been successful in exemplar firms” (Leseure et al., 2004). Best practices in volunteer management, then are those practices and models that have proven to be beneficial to the management of volunteers. Although there is a paucity of resources on volunteer management related best practices, there seems to be a consensus on the available resources regarding what can qualify as a best practice in this field regardless of the country in which the organization operates.

Literatures globally, both from academia and the real world organizations regarding the best practices in volunteer management focus on prescribing actions that need to be taken during various stages in the volunteering life cycle. The different stages in the volunteer life cycle are: planning, recruitment, screening, orientation, training and support, performance management, and recognition (Carvalho & Sampaio, 2017). In the planning phase, creation of mission and vision statements along with the need assessment of the volunteer program is recommended (Volunteer Sotland, 2013). For the second stage or the recruitment stage, learning about the organization in question from the public’s point of view, working on the recruitment message, process and strategy is recommended (Maine Commission for Community Service, 2008). Similarly, various activities for screening, orientation, training, support, performance management and volunteer recognition phases are also prescribed by these best practices. Since, this research is concerned with the recruitment and retention of the volunteers, for the purposes of this research, the planning and the recruitment phases are brought together to be called the “Recruitment Phase” and the screening, orientation, training and support, performance management and recognition are bundled together to be called the “Retention” phase.

In the section following this one, best practices recommended by the literature and tried by various organizations that are relevant and can prescribe solutions for the issues that were brought to light by the Current State Analysis will be discussed in detail.

#### 4.4 Relevant Volunteer Management Practices

Some of the best practices in volunteer management recommended by scholars and experts in the field and by companies who have learnt them through trial and error are discussed below.

#### 4.4.1 Matching Volunteers' Skills with Appropriate Assignments

One of the best practices in the field of volunteer management, the absence of which, is a source for volunteer dissatisfaction is when volunteer skills are not matched with appropriate assignments. The volunteers leave with an “empty feeling when they know that the job they've been given is make-work or a photo op” (Eisner et al., 2009) says the Stanford review when talking about community volunteering like planting in school gardens or painting walls by volunteers who are otherwise highly skilled professionals.

Support for this best practice also comes from Tracy D. Connors, who is a leading scholar in Non for Profit organization management and has helped define and advance the subject area since the 1980s (Wiley, 2017). He contends that a “wise volunteer manager” (Connors, 1995) should understand what motivates a volunteer and utilize that information to increase volunteer efficiency and satisfaction. He suggests that people are mostly motivated by 3 basic needs which are:

The need for affiliation: This is a need where people need to be with other people and enjoy friendship.

The need for achievement: This is the need of a person to accomplish goals and do one's personal best.

The need for power: This is the need of people to have influence on others.

An appropriate assignment for a volunteer, according to Connors would be then that which satisfies the relevant need of a volunteer. Thus, a manager looking to increase volunteer efficiency and satisfaction should match whatever skills the volunteer possess with a job assignment that would satisfy the needs the volunteer is wanting to fulfill through the volunteer position (Connors 1995).

To assign the right volunteers to the right position, Connors recommend conducting a Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Analysis (Connors, 1995) in which the management asks questions like: “What do I need?, Who Could do this job?, What do they need and want from me?, How can I reach them? What should be my message?” (Connors, 1995).

#### 4.4.2 Recognizing the Contributions of Volunteers

Recognizing the contribution of volunteers is another best practice of volunteer management as identified by various literatures and organizations. As talked about before, volunteers in an organization can have different motivation factors. A manager can use this understanding to choose the reward system for the differently motivated volunteers. Connors recommends that a manager looking to motivate volunteers with the need for affiliation to use acknowledgment to keep their interest in the volunteer work alive. Similarly, to motivate volunteers with the need for achievement, Connors recommends offering the volunteer something sort of a promotion, a report with their byline, a letter from the executive director, etcetera. Finally, to motivate the volunteers with the need for power, managers can motivate the volunteers by for example, publishing the volunteers' pictures in newspapers, letting them go on interviews on radio and television etcetera (Connors, 1995).

Similarly, the report from Stanford Review emphasizes the importance of volunteer recognition has "through an organizational culture that values them and through specific appreciation ceremonies and events" (Eisner et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the studies conducted by Carvalho et al., on five different Portuguese Non Profit Organizations also found that the organizations recognized their volunteers in "public speeches at organisational events or blogs, celebrating the International Volunteer Day and giving out [Volunteer of the Year] awards" (Carvalho & Sampaio, 2017). The authors maintain that the organization's' capacity to maintain volunteers is very distinct as a result.

#### 4.4.3 Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

Measuring the impact of volunteering is another best practise in the field in that it not only lets the volunteers see in quantifiable terms the impact of their work, but lets the organizations do the same. However, only a little above 60% of charities in the USA measure the impact of volunteers in their annual reviews (Hager & Brudney, 2004).

The Stanford Review talks about how some organizations in the United States have cited the value of contribution (both monetary and time) from donors in the organization's annual reports to maximize satisfaction and to ensure continued motivation. The government of UK has also recognized the importance of measuring the impact of volunteering and set a guideline that "Charities must include a description of the role played by general volunteers and provide an indication of the nature of their contribution in a note to the accounts" (Charities Somp, n.d.). Stanford Review states that when non-profit leaders see that

volunteers can do highly skilled work that the organization would have otherwise paid for, volunteering will begin to get some respect (Eisner et al., 2009).

#### 4.4.4 Providing Volunteers with Training and Professional Development Training

A study conducted by The Urban State in the USA found that slightly above 80% of charity organizations engage in providing volunteers with training and professional development. The study confirms that such practice was directly correlated with greater retention rates in the organizations (Hager & Brudney, 2004).

The *Maine Commission for Community Service* mentions that trainings provides volunteers with skills necessary to carry out their volunteer duties and serve as a motivation factor for volunteers to keep volunteering. They recommend that the need assessments for the trainings should be conducted on a regular basis and the trainings offered should be “specific to the requirements of the volunteer position and geared to the skill level of the volunteer” (Maine Commission for Community Service, 2008).

An example of such training offerings comes from The American Cancer Society. They, through their “chief talent officer ensure that staff and volunteers participate together in orientation and training classes and work together on important projects such as creating curriculum, delivering quality of life programs to cancer patients and their families, and serving as community health liaisons” (Eisner et. al, 2009).

In addition to all the duty related trainings, *Volunteer Scotland (2013)*, the only National Centre for Volunteering in Scotland, recommends running regular training on diversity, equality and human rights to ensure a safe and discrimination free environment for all volunteers.

#### 4.4.5 Written Appropriate Job Descriptions for the Volunteer Positions

Written Job Description is another best practice in volunteer management. The Urban State in the USA found that although only 44% of charities in the USA “adopt them to a large degree”, close to 80% of them “adopt it to some degree” (Hager & Brudney, 2004) thus showing the widespread acceptance and importance of this practice.

*Volunteer Scotland* states that Job description will let volunteers decide if the job is right for them as it gives them a preview of what is expected of them as volunteers, if they have the

required skills and more. Some of the components they recommend a job description should contain are: the Title of the Job Position, Outline of the Role, Skills, Attitudes and Experience needed, Benefits the Role Provides to the Volunteer (Volunteer Scotland, 2013).

#### 4.4.6 Utilizing Volunteer Supervisors

Giving volunteers to advance in their volunteer position is also seen a great motivation that helps in volunteer retention. In the non for profit scenario, most non-profit leaders are “not taking the time to develop or support volunteer talent adequately” (Eisner et. al, 2009). However, in some organizations, volunteers provide supervision for other volunteers that advances a volunteer to supervisory positions (Fisher & Cole, 2017). Firms can utilize either a volunteer administrator or other paid staff to provide “training, advice, and ongoing support needed by these unpaid supervisors of volunteers” (Fisher & Cole, 2017).

#### 4.4.7 Developing Volunteer Management Skills

Volunteer Canada published a guide in 2005 to help non-profit organizations in Canada create action plans regarding Volunteer management. In the guide, they emphasize the importance of recognizing a person or committee responsible for the volunteer program. It says, “It’s important that someone pay attention to how to attract and keep your volunteers” (Ellis, 2005). This person or committee needs to “develop a core set of skills, including writing recruitment messages, designing volunteer jobs, providing feedback to volunteers, creatively recognizing volunteer contributions, resolving conflicts, avoiding risks, developing orientation and training materials, and motivating others to help out!” (Ellis, 2005).

Developing Volunteer Management Skills can also be found in some best practices resources under the heading of supervision. Literatures mention the need for supervisors who can provide training and direction to help a volunteer perform their task (Maine Commission for Community Service, 2008). However, the personnel responsible for developing volunteer management skills goes a step further and actually ensures the volunteers are continuously interested, motivated and willing to provide their services in the organization also in the long run (Ellis, 2005).

#### 4.4.8 Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring like in any other task is also a great ways to quantify the contributions made by volunteers. These evaluations give organizations “opportunities to set new goals for the volunteer, identify additional training needs the volunteer may have, and

determine the effectiveness of the volunteer program procedures” (Maine Commission for Community Service, 2008).

#### 4.5 Conceptual Framework

Existence of best practices in any field does not necessarily guarantee that firms will adopt them; similar is the situation in the practices relating to volunteer management. A paper published in 2009 by Stanford Social Innovation Review found that fewer than half of non-profits that manage volunteers adopt important volunteer management practices (Eisner et al., 2009). Similar situation was also observed at the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki, Uusima District. There were situations where the best practices were formally recognized by the organization, but were not being implemented for various reasons. At other times, there were no provisions made for these best practices in the volunteer management agenda. In this section, I attempt to match the Pinch Points identified by the Current State Analysis with the remedies prescribed by the Existing knowledge and come up with “Combinations”. The three together can act as a framework to guide Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa District in seeing what the Pinch Points are, which phase (Recruitment or Retention) do they occur at and what existing knowledge is available to help overcome those Pinch Points. Compilation of practical suggestive steps and tools to improve the process will be presented in a later section as Proposals.

##### 4.5.1 Combination # 1

Regardless of any best practices implemented, it is imperative to understand that some volunteers will not be able to continue volunteering at an organization and in some cases the organization “might even desire” it themselves (Eisner et al., 2009). Organizations should be aware and prepared for these sudden changes. In situations where family related changes like birth of a child and relocations are cited as the reasons for discontinuing volunteering, “learning to say goodbyes graciously” (Choudhury, 2016) as pointed out by a network connecting various volunteer organizations in England, would be the best thing an organization can do. Recognizing the contributions they have made to the organization and making them feel good about their contributions will have an impact on what the volunteer would say about the organization once they leave, therefore, contributing to either helping or hurting the organization’s public relations (Choudhury, 2016).

##### 4.5.2 Combination # 2

Volunteers want to feel appreciated for their work, and the gestures of gratitude coming from organizations do not have to be lavish and elaborate. On a personal level, simple tokens like

emails, letters, thank you notes as mentioned by the volunteers in the qualitative interviews usually suffice if the organization cannot afford anything more. To move a step further and let volunteers know the impact they are making annually through the mentions that are quantifiable in Financial Statements of the organizations would contribute greatly to volunteer motivation and retention (Eisner et. al, 2009).

As seen from the Existing Knowledge, immigrant volunteers might actually be in need of the appreciation letters to show to their potential employers in situations where they have been looking for an employment. Thus, an organization's culture of providing or not providing appreciation documents to their volunteers can determine its ability to recruit and retain these volunteers.

#### 4.5.3 Combination # 3

Volunteers showed a desire to be heard and have a say in the decision making of the activity they are part of in the quantitative survey. In the qualitative interviews, they mentioned that not feeling heard actually led them to quit the group they were part of.

When written job descriptions are provided to volunteers, little room is left for assumptions for both the volunteers and the ones supervising them (Volunteer Scotland, 2013). This, eliminates any room for conflict regarding rights and responsibilities required for the job. This supplemented by leaders who are trained to listen to and accommodate volunteers, leads to a safe environment to voice concerns and thus facilitates conflict resolution.

#### 4.5.4 Combination # 4

Safety is of utmost priority to any kind of work done. A volunteer cannot and should not operate in situations where they do not feel safe and it is up to the Red Cross to ensure that volunteers feel safe while conducting their assigned duty. Since each volunteer group at the Red Cross can be operating under different conditions and under different settings, volunteer leaders and volunteers themselves should be trained to identify, avoid, deal with and report potentially unsafe situations.

#### 4.5.5 Combination # 5

Close to 81% of volunteers in the quantitative survey mentioned that it was important to get work related guidance from knowledgeable Red Cross Employee or staff. Volunteer group leaders at the Red Cross are usually some people who got together because of their shared interests and formed a group. Once they form the group, they automatically become eligible to supervise their fellow members or any other volunteer that joins that group on a later date.



The leaders, then, do not necessarily possess management skills let alone volunteer management skills. For this reason, volunteer management trainings should be offered to them by the Red Cross so that the leaders can not only deal with when a management issue arises but are adept at adopting the best practices of volunteer management so that the issues do not arise in the first place.

Trainings these leaders would need is understanding what motivates the volunteer, access if the volunteer is happy with their job placements, ensure their skills and the job requirements match, find ways to ensure that the work environment is safe, ensure the rules and codes of conducts are enforced and the work environment is open to conflict resolution so that the volunteer can perform their assigned duties (Need to Know the Basics of Managing Volunteers, 2008).

#### 4.5.6 Combination # 6

Recruitment process at the Red Cross does not concern itself with screening volunteers for a fit to a position, including evaluation of the volunteer's skills. Volunteers can choose from among the already existing groups at the Red Cross and decide if they want to join them, but it is up to the volunteer to approach the group and ask for an enrollment despite already being present at the Volunteer Orientation Session and usually no assessment for a match is conducted. Once the volunteers have joined a certain group, as mentioned by the volunteers in the qualitative interviews, volunteer leaders who are themselves volunteers supervise them and the connection to the Red Cross staff for that individual volunteer becomes almost non-existent. There is 1 staff at the Finnish Red Cross per about 1000 volunteers (Finnish Red Cross, 2016). Furthermore, as seen in the quantitative interview, the English version of the website does not contain much information which leaves volunteers to navigate the complex system on their own.

Training the volunteer supervisors to act as the bridge between the Red Cross and the volunteers, training them to find a volunteer that is a match to the position should make the system a little less frustrating for the volunteers and thus increase retention.

The table below presents a visual map of the Conceptual Framework which demonstrates, how the Existing Knowledge can help the Finnish Red Cross of Helsinki and Uusimaa District tackle the Pinch Points observed at the Recruitment and Retention phases.

Combinations	Pinch Points		Existing Knowledge
	Recruitment	Retention	
Combination # 1	<p><b>Immediate Triggers</b></p> <p>46.5% were expecting changes in life events in the upcoming 3 months</p>	<p><b>Immediate Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family Related changes</li> <li>● Employment Changes</li> <li>● Relocation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognizing the contributions of volunteers {{Connors, 1995}, (Carvalho &amp; Sampaio, 2017)}</li> </ul>
Combination # 2		<p><b>Appreciation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not enough Official Volunteer Appreciation (events, certificates, programs etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognizing the contributions of volunteers</li> <li>● Measuring the impact of volunteers annually (Eisner et al., 2009).</li> </ul>
Combination # 3	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <p>57% mentioned that being included in the decision making process of the activity/project that they are part of was important to them</p>	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not Feeling Heard/ Important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Written appropriate job descriptions for the volunteer positions (Connors, 1995) (pg.75) Exhibit</li> <li>● Volunteer Supervisor/ Volunteer Leaders</li> <li>● Developing Volunteer Management Skills</li> <li>● Evaluation and Monitoring (Need to know Basics of Managing Volunteers, 2008).</li> </ul>
Combination # 4		<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not enough Official Distinctions for Volunteers (gears, name tags etc.)</li> <li>● Not enough Proper Boundaries for Volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteer Training {{Connors, 1995}, (Recognizing and Valuing Volunteers, 2013)}</li> </ul>
Combination # 5	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p>81.39% mentioned that it was important for them to get a guidance from a Red Cross employee or another knowledgeable volunteer</p>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No one to keep the Group Together in the Long Run</li> <li>● No one to enforce rules or codes of conduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Matching volunteers' skills with appropriate assignments {{Connors, 1995}, (Eisner et al., 2009) }</li> <li>● Self-governing Codes of Conduct</li> <li>● Volunteer Training</li> <li>● Volunteer Supervisor/ Volunteer Leaders (Energizeinc.com, 2017)</li> </ul>

<b>Combination # 6</b>	<b>Administration</b>  99.9% mentioned that finding a volunteer position at their desired area of activity was important to them	<b>Administration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unbridged Gap Between Volunteers and Red Cross</li> <li>● Volunteer Inexperience in Volunteer Management</li> <li>● More Information on Red Cross Groups and Activities not easily accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Volunteer Supervisor/ Volunteer Leaders</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Developing Volunteer Management Skills</a></li> </ul>
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*Table 6: Conceptual Framework*

#### 4.5.7 Synthesis of Combinations # 1-6

A synthesis of *Combinations 1-6* points to a conclusion that the existing process at the Finnish Red Cross Helsinki and Uusimaa District does not support effective Recruitment and Retention of multilingual volunteers. The Current State Analysis and Existing Knowledge suggested the Pinch Points mostly reflected volunteer management related issues. On a positive note, however, the districts and branches have a lot of control over how the recruitment and retention processes can ideally be ran because of the organizational structure. Thus, I propose that by adopting some of the best practices in the field of Volunteer Management, the existing process can be changed to be made more accessible, and navigable which will in turn help in effective recruitment and retention of volunteers.

## 5 Building the Proposal

A hybrid approach was applied to gather data in this phase of the research. An initial outline of the proposal (also referred to as preliminary proposal elsewhere in the thesis) was first created and then the details/ feedbacks were added in collaborative work with the Red Cross Staff who worked directly with the multilingual volunteers. A presentation was given to the staff about the findings of the Current State Analysis, the Conceptual Framework and the preliminary proposal was introduced. The staff then gave their input on the preliminary proposal. These inputs were then added in and a complete draft proposal was created for the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa District. To access the final version (with updates from Data round 3) of the proposal initially drafted at this stage, please refer to Appendix 8.

Work done at this phase is described below in detail.

## 5.1 The Process map of the Recruitment and Retention Process

In the process of Building the Proposal, a process layout was mapped for the life cycle of a volunteer at the Finnish Red Cross. The two figures below are the process map of the volunteer recruitment process and the volunteer retention process respectively at the Finnish Red Cross.

Both the volunteer recruitment and retention process were identified to be consisting of steps/actions that volunteers and the staff follow in a volunteer's lifecycle at the Finnish Red Cross. Each step has an intended outcome which is the desired result of the action taken; and it also has opportunities that were lost because of inaction on the part of the Finnish Red Cross. The desired outcomes are color coded boxes in blue and the lost opportunities are color coded boxes in red. The color coded boxes in blue also have something called the Action Points (AP). Action Points are the strategic areas of action in the processes where introducing new activities through the use of resources gathered through the existing knowledge review will help Finnish Red Cross to minimize the lost opportunities and make the most of the desired outcomes.

# PHASE I Volunteer Recruitment

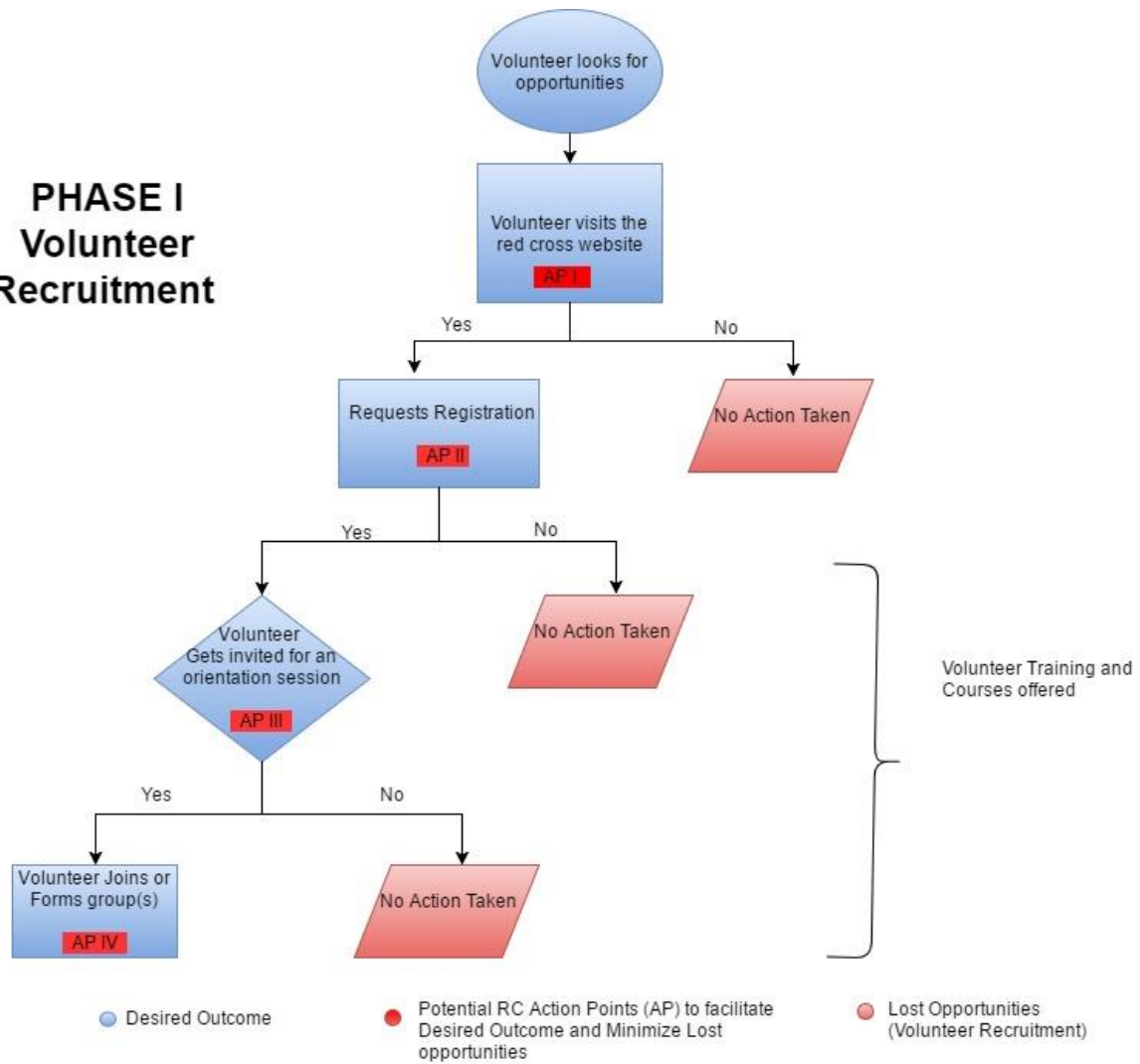


Fig 2: Process Map of Volunteer Recruitment Phase at the Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa District

## Phase II Volunteer Retention

Volunteer Training and  
Courses offered

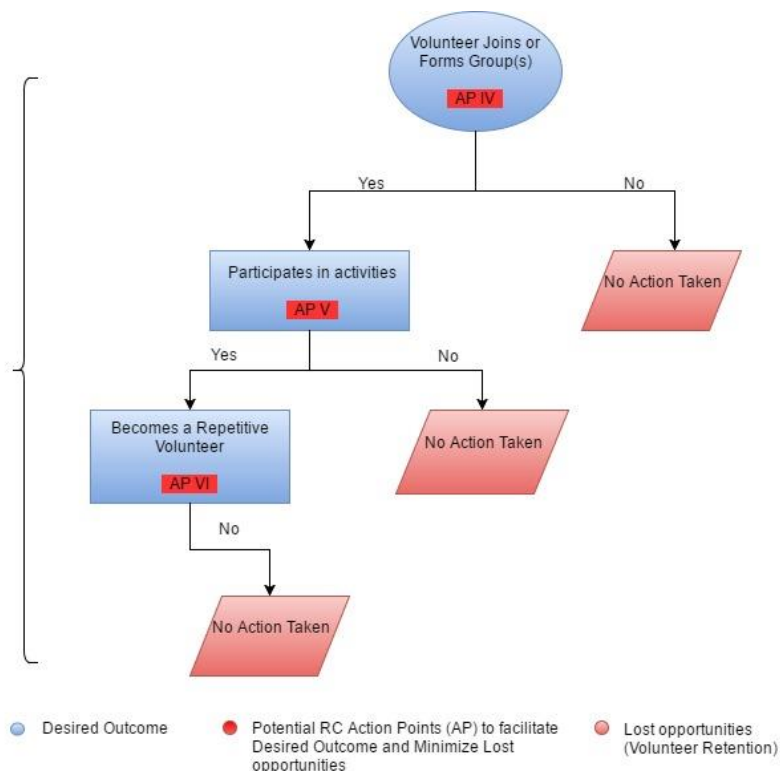


Fig 3: Process Map of Volunteer Retention Phase at the Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa District

Based on the Process Maps (which identify the detailed steps involved in the Recruitment and Retention phases at the Finnish Red Cross), Current State Analysis (where Pinch Points in the Recruitment and Retention phases were identified), and Existing Knowledge (where knowledge available in the present context on how to address the issues of the Pinch Points), two sets of proposals were designed. One was designed primarily for the staff to follow so that they can ensure the new environment is conducive for the volunteer leaders to implement the proposal, and also to facilitate the new proposed work requirements of the volunteer leaders. The other proposal was designed for the volunteer leaders and the volunteers to practice during their work as volunteers with the Finnish Red Cross.

### 5.2 Proposal for Staff

The proposal for staff contains actions that the staff can undertake (AS-DS), the reason for taking that action, what Pinch Points would the action address, under which Action Points (in the recruitment and retention phases) should the action be taken, the method of action delivery, the staff responsible for undertaking the action and how frequently should the staff take that action.

Action (What)	Reason behind the action (Why)	Attempts to Resolve the Pinch Point	When	Method of Delivery (how)	Responsible person (Who)	Frequency
AS Supply each volunteer with a name tag with a Red Cross logo/emblem	To ensure all the Red Cross volunteers are designated as such and to ensure their safety.	<b>Safety</b>	Volunteer first joins a group or during the first orientation session. <b>Action Points (AP) II and III</b>	Hand deliver	Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator or Volunteer Leaders	Once and replacement if lost.
BS Hands Volunteer Leaders all the relevant forms/ templates	To <b>develop volunteer management skills</b>	<b>Administration</b>	When a new group forms  <b>(AP) III</b>	Hand deliver and/or online	Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator	Once and provide support if needed. <b>(Sample Templates attached in the Appendix)</b>
CS Educates Volunteer leaders about the importance of filling out the forms/ templates	To <b>develop volunteer management skills</b>	<b>Administration</b>	When a group forms  <b>(AP) III</b>	In person	Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator	Once and reminders every 6 months
DS Organize Volunteer Leaders Training	To <b>Train Volunteer leaders</b> and increase their <b>volunteer supervisory capacity</b> .	<b>Leadership Listening Safety</b>	At any stage of a group's life cycle when relevant <b>(AP) III, IV, V</b>	Trainings delivered through workshops, short courses and more	Volunteer trainer/ Coordinator	Every 6 months

*Table 7: Proposal for Staff*

Action AS: Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator/ Leader hand delivers each volunteer with a name tag with a Red Cross logo/emblem during Action Point II and III to tackle the Pinch Point of Safety. The name tag will be provided once and will be replaced if lost.

Action BS: Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator will either hand deliver or transfer online during Action Point III, all the relevant forms and templates that a volunteer should fill out during

their volunteering at the Finnish Red Cross. Samples of these forms have been attached in the appendix of this research document.

Action CS: Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator, during Action Point III, will deliver in person a training session to educate volunteer leaders/ founders about the importance of filling out the forms/templates mentioned in Action B. This will develop the volunteer management skills of the volunteer leaders and tackle the Pinch Point of Administration.

Action DS: Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator will organize other forms of Volunteer Leaders Training on Volunteer Management Best Practices through workshops, short courses and the like, during the Action Points of III, IV and V. The topics could include subjects discussed in the Existing Knowledge section above. For example, *How to Identify Volunteer Motivation Factors, How to Keep Groups Together and Motivated*, etcetera. This will tackle the Pinch Points of Leadership, Listening and Safety as the supervisory skills of the volunteer leaders increase. The trainings can be offered every 6 months to ensure the leaders have updated training as new leaders come and go.

### 5.3 Proposal for Volunteer Leaders and Volunteers

Similarly, the Proposal for Volunteer Leaders and Volunteers contains actions that the volunteer leaders and volunteers can undertake (AV-DV), the reason for taking that action, what Pinch Points would the action address, under which Action Points (in the recruitment and retention phases) should the action be taken, the method of action delivery, the volunteer leader/volunteer responsible for undertaking the action and how frequently should the volunteer leader/volunteer take that action.

Action (What)	Reason behind the action (Why)	Attempts to Resolve the Issue(s) of	When	How	Responsible person (Who)	Time Span
AV Team charters completed when a new group forms  Existing groups can also make them	Self-governing Codes of Conduct ensures that group members feel the ownership of their group, its challenges and success.	<b>Leadership Administration Listening</b>	When the group first forms  Action Point (AP) III	Founders of a group decide in person or real time online what the basic rules for their group are and put it down on writing	Volunteer leaders/ Founders	Once and revised whenever necessary  (See Appendix 4)



BV Volunteer Job descriptions are created	To ensure <b>Written appropriate job descriptions for the volunteer positions</b> are available so that volunteers know their responsibilities, boundaries, etc.	<b>Administration Listening</b>	Once the volunteer registers in a group  <b>(AP) III</b>	Hand and/or electronically delivered	Volunteer Leaders/Founders	As required <b>(See Appendix 5)</b>  (District Manager is doing this from the district level in some cases)
CV Timesheets are filled and submitted to the Red Cross Staff	To keep track of volunteered hours for the purposes of <b>recognizing the contributions of volunteers</b>	<b>Appreciation</b>	Every time someone volunteers including the leaders <b>(AP) III, IV, V</b>	Electronically	Volunteer Leader	Every month <b>(See Appendix 6)</b>  Red Cross has timesheets, but usually nothing is done about it
DV Self-Evaluations are conducted	To conduct <b>evaluation and monitoring</b> of volunteer programs and volunteer themselves	<b>Leadership Administration</b>	<b>(AP) V</b>	In person	All volunteers	Every six months <b>(See Appendix 7)</b>  Have been tried in some branches but people don't always fill it out... we talked about with the ownership of group through team charters maybe they would

*Table 8: Proposal for Volunteer Leaders and Volunteers*

Action AV: Volunteer Leader/ Founders of a team will ensure that a Team Charter (Sample Attached in Appendix 4) is completed for each new group when it forms during AP III and gets updated as needed either online through some collaborative software or through in person meetings. This attempts to tackle the Pinch Points relating to Leadership, Administration and Listening by giving volunteers the control of their group and its ownership so that all the management related work does not rest under the volunteer leader.

Action BV: Volunteer Leader/ Founders create job descriptions online and/or in print to

advertise the available volunteer positions during Action Point III. A detailed job description clears the room for assumptions about duties/rights/responsibilities and thus, help to tackle the Pinch Point of Listening and Administration.

\*Note: Some job descriptions and job matching are already being created by staff at the district level, but the current changes will make them a standard phenomenon for each group and will shift the responsibility towards volunteer leaders.

Action CV: Volunteer leaders ensure that timesheets for each volunteer are created, collected, and delivered to the Helsinki Uusimaa district Staff so that the staff can mention those hours in the volunteer appreciation/ recognition events and activities. The timesheets are collected and forwarded to Red Cross Staff every month. A sample template for the timesheet is attached in the Appendix 6 which could be filled and accessed online through Google Sheets by multiple users.

\*Note: Timesheets are sometimes collected currently at the Helsinki and Uusimaa district branch, but no further actions are taken on them. With the new changes, timesheets will be collected and the contribution hours will be used during appreciation events/activities. Also, volunteer appreciations events happen every now and then, but clearly from the research volunteers are unaware of them and certainly the frequency is not adequate.

Action DV: All volunteers complete a self-evaluation form during Action Point V to ensure ownership and accountability which can then tackle the Pinch Points of Administration and Leadership. A sample template for self-evaluation form is attached in Appendix 7

\*Note: Evaluation forms have also been tried in some branches, but volunteers have been reluctant to fill it out. However, with the new process, since volunteers will be involved in creation of the group, crafting the rules and codes of conducts for the team, we are hoping that they will be more willing to fill out the forms. Moreover, the new forms are Self Evaluations which will be easier to do than comment on what a group leader and staff did/did not do.

## **6 Validation of the Proposal**

This section examines and discusses the method of validation used for the findings and recommendations of the research, and the resulting outcome.

### **6.1 Validation Round**

The validation round of data collection was done by organizing a findings sharing and feedback session with the Development Manager of Multicultural Programs of the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa District. The findings from the Current State Analysis, the Conceptual Framework, and the Proposal which was crafted with the inputs from the Helsinki and Uusimaa District staff, were shared on a face to face presentation with the Development Manager of Multicultural Programs. This led to the validation of the recommendations from the Proposal by him, and thus, a commitment to implement the recommendations of the Proposal.

### **6.2 Partial Implementation**

At this stage, from the permission of the Development Manager, the staff had already started the implementation of following practices recommended by the proposal:

- 1) Volunteer timesheet will be collected and utilized for appreciation/ recognition purposes. The Training Officer will ensure it happens.
- 2) To bridge the gap between Red Cross and the volunteers, the Training officer and the multicultural officer have made plans to visit the groups at least every month. The Training Officer discussed that the staff “need to visit the branches more often”.
- 3) Name tags, batches have started to be circulated among volunteers and the process is underway to make it mandatory in all the groups.
- 4) Volunteer appreciation will be conducted more frequently and advertised more widely.

### **6.3 Implementation Plan**

A sample Implementation plan for a year was created and immediately endorsed by the staff to ensure everyone the new changes were followed through.

Plan for: Year 1	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	May
Supply each volunteer with a name tag with a Red Cross logo/emblem	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III	(AP) II and III
Hands Volunteer Leaders all the relevant forms/templates	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III
Educates Volunteer leaders about the importance of filling out the forms/templates	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III	(AP) III
Organize Volunteer Leaders Training						(AP) III, IV, V						(AP) III, IV, V
Organize other volunteer training			(AP) I, II, III, IV, V					(AP) I, II, III, IV, V				
Organize volunteer appreciation events/Newsletters						(AP) III, IV, V						(AP) III, IV, V
Volunteer Contributions are made part of the Financial Statements												
Executive Permission to go ahead with the changes												
The Staff will visit the local groups (New Addition)	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI

*Table 9: Proposed Implementation Plan for the Staff*

## 6.4 Final Proposal

Once the validation for the proposal was received from the Development Manager, a final version of the initial Proposal was created, and was named “Proposal for Process Change- Recruitment and Retention” and was circulated with the stakeholders including the Red Cross Staff and the Development Manager. To view the entire document, please see Appendix 8.

## 7 Discussion and Conclusions

### 7.1 Summary

The idea for the research came about as the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa district looked for ways to recruit and retain more volunteers with multiple language and cultural skills. The need for this research became imperative as 32, 478 asylum seekers with settlement and integration needs registered in Finland in 2015, and the quota refugees and immigrants wanting to settle in Finland are also in the rise.

The research studied the current process of Volunteer Recruitment and Retention at the Finnish Red Cross of Uusima District. The data for the research was collected through Quantitative Surveys, qualitative interviews, Red Cross’ presentation materials and annual reports and feedbacks and data received from Red Cross Staff. The research found that the existing Volunteer Recruitment and Retention process at the Uusima district had Pinch Points that resulted mostly because of ineffective volunteer management practices. Practical solutions to formulate a new, changed process was then created and was presented as a Proposal. The suggestion for process change is based on taking advantage of the Red Cross’ de-centralized organizational structure, existing knowledge of the multicultural immigrant volunteers and the best practices already being implemented in other organizations to handle similar Pinch Points.

### 7.2 Practical/ Managerial Implications

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, there are about 57 branches in the Uusimaa District alone and each branch have multiple groups of their own. Uusimaa district alone comprises of over 27,000 volunteers (kaukainen,n.d.). Unfortunately the Staff overlooking these volunteer ratio is about 1 to 1,000. In situations like these, Managers looking to run an effective branch/district must utilize volunteers and must themselves practice and enforce good volunteer management practices.

The Proposals presented earlier in this thesis does exactly that. It provides practical steps to follow for the existing staff, volunteer leaders and the volunteer themselves so that volunteer

management becomes less confusing, more navigable, more appreciative for all the stakeholders, and the organization becomes a more listening organization.

Furthermore, effective recruitment and retention of these multilingual immigrant volunteers can mean a lot of time and resource saved for the Finnish Red Cross and the Finnish Tax Payers.

### 7.3 Evaluation of the Thesis

This section provides the evaluation of the intended objective of the thesis vs. the actual Outcome and some reflections and afterword by the author of the thesis.

#### 7.3.1 Outcome vs Objective

The objective of this thesis was to formulate a process change in the current process of recruiting and retaining immigrant volunteers so that the Finnish Red Cross's Uusimaa district volunteer pool is more inclusive of the immigrant volunteers. A process change was suggested with practical steps on how to achieve it and was summarized in a Proposal which was handed to the Finnish Red Cross, Uusimaa district for it to implement and follow through on the implementations.

#### 7.3.2 Reflection & Afterword

This section discusses the circumstances on which the research was done, some of the possible limitations of the thesis and potential future research topics in the field. It also contains the author's reflections on the prospects and implications of the thesis.

An important point to note in the thesis is the fact that this research was done after a wave of Asylum Seekers came to the Red Cross in 2015 which had demanded immense stress on the capacities of the Finnish Red Cross. The interviewees had also reflected mostly on their experiences from that period when they talked about why they left their volunteer position. However, given the ever increasing number of asylum seekers, quota refugees and immigrants wanting to call Finland home, effective volunteer recruitment and retention practices will prove crucial to saving time, money and other resources.

Also, the research could not comment in depth on how and if immigrant volunteers are different from the native Finnish volunteers, as a result of insufficient prior research done in this area. The differences between these groups can have a great impact on their needs and expectations from the Red Cross. Future researches could researching this as a topic on its own right would contribute immensely towards effective recruitment and retention of these groups of volunteers. This research, nevertheless, is highly credible as it draws on the

experiences of these Immigrant multilingual volunteers in question and the process change prescribed in based on best practices on the field. This research is unique as it is one of the very few studies that attempt to study the volunteer recruitment and retention process of non for profit organizations, let alone for the Finnish Red Cross. Thus, other non for profit organizations or even for profit organization using volunteers and going through similar Pinch Points can also reflect on this research to get ideas on improving their Volunteer recruitment and Retention processes.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### **Volunteering at the Red Cross Survey Quantitative Survey Questions**

- 1) How many hours per month can you volunteer at the Red Cross?
  - a) 1-10
  - b) 11-20
  - c) 21-40
  - d) 41+
  
- 2) Are you expecting any life events in the upcoming 3 months which can change the hours you can volunteer at the Red Cross?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  
- 3) Are you currently:
  - a) Employed Full-time
  - b) Employed Part-Time
  - c) Employed on an On call/Contract basis
  - d) Unemployed
  - e) Student
  
- 4) How did you hear about the volunteer opportunities at the Red Cross?
  - a) Red Cross Website
  - b) Red Cross Staff/ Volunteers
  - c) Friends/ Family members
  - d) Other digital/print media
  - e) Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5) Is this your first volunteer experience?
  - a) Yes, I have never volunteered before
  - b) No, I have volunteered a few times before
  - c) No, I volunteer regularly with an organization
  - d) No, I volunteer regularly with several organizations
  
- 6) Have you ever volunteered in a Red Cross Organization before?
  - a) Yes, here in Finland
  - b) Yes, in Europe
  - c) Yes, in some other country \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) No







## Appendix 2

### **Quantitative Interview Sample Questionnaire (Volunteers)**

Hi, .....! As you know, I am a student from Metropolia Helsinki University and I wanted to interview regarding your volunteer work with the Red Cross for my Master's Degree thesis. Thank you for your willingness to give an interview. I just want to remind you that your name will be kept confidential.

So, let's begin.....

1. Were you born in Finland?/ When did you first come to Finland?
2. What is your ethnic origin?
3. You mentioned you had volunteered with the Red Cross before, can you tell me more about your position and responsibilities?
4. How many hours per month did you volunteer at the Red Cross?
5. Why did you want to volunteer with the Red Cross?
6. What kept you motivated to volunteer at the Red Cross?
7. I want to know more about your volunteer experience at the Red Cross.....
8. What were some of the best things about volunteering at the Red Cross?
9. One worst thing?
10. Is there something you would change on how things are done at the Red Cross?
11. What was the reason you did not continue volunteering with the Red Cross?
12. What was one thing you really liked and would not want to change at the Red Cross?
13. Would you go back and volunteer with the Red Cross again?

#### Sample Probe Questions:

1. You mentioned it's..... can you give an example?
2. Just trying to make sure I understood it right, did you mean.....?
3. What are your thoughts on that?
4. How did you feel about that?
5. How do you mean?

Thank you very much for taking the time to come for the interview. Is it okay if I contacted you if I had further questions or needed some clarifications?

Thank you!





## Appendix 3

### **Qualitative Interview Sample Questionnaire (Staff)**

Hi, .....! As you know, I am a student from Metropolia Helsinki University and I wanted to interview regarding the work you do with the Multilingual Volunteers at the Red Cross. The interview will be used as data for my Master's Degree thesis. Thank you for your willingness to give an interview. I just want to remind you that your name will be kept confidential.

So, let's begin.....

1. Can you tell me some of the responsibilities of your position?
2. In your work, do you interact with multilingual volunteers at all?
3. How do you get access to those volunteers?
4. Do you have problems finding multilingual volunteers when you need them?
5. Do most of the multilingual volunteers continue long term?
6. How much do you feel you have control over the work volunteer do?
7. Would you like to have more/less control....
8. How in your experience are immigrant (multi lingual) volunteers different than non-immigrant or Finnish native volunteers?
9. What are the volunteer recruitment procedures currently deployed at the Red Cross?
10. What forms of marketing/promotions are applied to recruit multilingual volunteers?
11. What are some of the benefits multilingual volunteers provide for the Red Cross?
12. In your opinion, what impedes these volunteers from joining and contributing to the Red Cross for a longer period of time?
13. If you could, how would you do the recruitment and retention of these volunteers differently?

Sample Probe Questions:

1. You mentioned it's..... can you give an example?
2. Just trying to make sure I understood it right, did you mean.....?
3. What are your thoughts on that?
4. How did you feel about that?
5. How do you mean?

Thank you very much for taking some time out for the interview. Is it okay if I contacted you if I had further questions or needed some clarifications?

**TEAM CHARTER FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Group Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

Members	Email	Phone
Member 1		
Member 2		
Member 3		

**Overall Objective:**

The objective of the team is to

**Goals:**

**Breakdown of Responsibilities:**

Action	Person(s) Responsible	Time Limit	Frequency
Manages Account			
Discusses Finances with the Red Cross Staff			
Updates volunteer timesheets		Same day of the event	
Responds to volunteer requests and queries		Within a week	As often as required
Requests Red Cross for			Every 6 months

Trainings for the team and other volunteers of the group			
Sends hours of volunteers to Red Cross staff for recognition purposes			Every 6 months
Self-Evaluation and Goals Monitoring			Every 6 months

**Communication:**

How often does the group meet? Skype? In person?

Every group member is responsible to communicate their absences or lateness.

How does the group plan to deal with conflicts amongst each other?

How does the group cope when group member(s) leave the group? Contingency plans?

**Supervision of other volunteers:**

What does the group plan to do if there is a conflict among volunteers or a group member?

How does the group plan to handle volunteer absences and lateness?

**Peer Evaluation:**

Every group member is to evaluate each other



## Sample Volunteer Job Description

Role Title	Name of volunteering role.
Outline of the role	Introduce the organisation and what you're looking for a volunteer to do. You could bullet point the main tasks here
Skills, Attitudes and Experience needed	Outline what's needed to do this role. Maybe the volunteer has to have a driving licence or it's important that they enjoy meeting and talking to new people.
Benefits to the volunteer	Let a potential volunteer know what they could get out of doing this role. It might be that they'll be offered training, gain experience, grow in confidence or get more fresh air and exercise!
Where	Where will the role be based?
When	This can outline exactly when in the week the opportunity takes place, how often it is and if it's ongoing or short term. You can also cover what commitment you hope from volunteer. You should approach this informally as something you hope the volunteer can give, not something that they have to do.
Support	Who will be a point of contact for the volunteer and offer support if they have any concerns?
How to apply /what happens next (selection methods)	If the volunteer now wants to apply, what do they do next and then what happens. Let them know if they have to meet you for an informal interview or become a PVG scheme member and if you cover the cost of this.
Any questions	Who can the volunteer get in touch with if they still have questions?

Source: (Volunteer Role Descriptions, 2013).





## SELF EVALUATION FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS

**1) I have given the best of my abilities to accomplish the goals of my group.**

- a) Yes, I am happy with my contributions
- b) I can put in more time/effort
- c) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2) I do everything I can to fulfill my volunteer responsibilities**

- a) Yes, I am happy with my contributions
- b) I can put in more time/effort
- c) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3) I do all I can to communicate my leave/ absences/ concerns and questions with my group**

- a) Yes, I am happy with my communication efforts
- b) I can work more on communicating \_\_\_\_\_
- c) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4) I do my best to minimize conflict in my group**

- a) Yes, I am happy with my contributions
- b) I can put in more effort
- c) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 8

[Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa District]

[May 2017]

# **PROPOSAL FOR PROCESS**

## **Improvement**

**[RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION]**





## Contents

Introduction	65
Business Problem	66
Objective and Scope	66
Research Method and Materials	67
Findings and Conceptual Framework	69
Proposals	71
Endorsements	76
Next Steps	78
Appendices	79
Appendix 1 .....	79
Appendix 2 .....	80
Appendix 3 .....	82
Appendix 4 .....	83

## **Introduction**

This proposal was created for the Executives, staff, Volunteer Leaders, Volunteers, and/or anyone else concerned with volunteer management at the Finnish Red Cross. This proposal is a result of a master's degree thesis conducted in collaboration with the Finnish Red Cross Helsinki and Uusimaa District, and Helsinki Metropolia University. The idea for the research arose as the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa district looked for ways to recruit and retain more volunteers with multiple language and cultural skills. The need for this research became imperative as 32, 478 asylum seekers with settlement and integration needs registered in Finland in 2015, and the quota refugees and immigrants wanting to settle in Finland are also in the rise. Effective recruitment and retention of these multilingual volunteers can mean a lot of time and resource saved for the Finnish Red Cross and the Finnish Tax Payers.

This proposal contains information about the Methods and Materials used for the research; the findings of the research; actions and implementation plans that the Red Cross staff, Volunteer leaders and volunteers could follow. It also contains practical tools based on best practices in the industry, which the volunteer leaders can utilize for effective volunteer management. Tools are also available for volunteers for effective self and group management.

The executives can refer to this proposal to gain a clear insight on the current process of volunteer Recruitment and Retention at the Red Cross. Information can also be obtained on where in the process and for what reasons Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki and Uusimaa district is losing its volunteer. Finally, they can use it to ensure the timely and effective implementation of the recommended action and implementation plans.

## **Business Problem**

Not many multilingual immigrant volunteers who have been living in Finland for some time approach or stay long-term as volunteers with the Finnish Red Cross, Helsinki, Uusimaa District. Settled Immigrant volunteers, as experienced by the Finnish Red Cross staff, can play a vital role in the initial stages of new immigrant/refugee settlement mostly because of the language and cultural translation skills the settled immigrants possess; however bringing them onboard the volunteering pool has been a great challenge for the Finnish Red Cross. Persistence of this issue had led the Helsinki and Uusimaa district branch to launch an investigation on the multilingual volunteer Recruitment and Retention processes at their branch. This is when the idea for this study came about.

The terms 'immigrant volunteers' and 'multilingual volunteers' are used interchangeably throughout this proposal to highlight their cultural and perhaps other differences from the native Finnish speaking people and reflect the additional language skills (other than Finnish) these volunteers possess.

## **Objective and Scope**

The objective of the study is to formulate a process change in the current process of recruiting and retaining immigrant volunteers so that the Finnish Red Cross's Uusimaa district volunteer pool is more inclusive of the immigrant volunteers. Whereas any volunteer involvement for the purpose of immigrant integration is valuable, the involvement of Immigrant volunteers is important for an organization like Red Cross which helps immigrants and refugee integrate into the Finnish culture because the immigrant volunteers can provide essential language and cultural interpretations to the newcomers.

The study explored the expectation of these multilingual volunteers from the volunteer positions/programs at the Uusimaa District Red Cross through Quantitative surveys and Qualitative interviews. The study also analyzed the current system of recruiting, retaining and mobilizing volunteers at the Uusimaa District. It offers suggestions based on existing knowledge in the industry which will help to align the needs and expectations of the volunteers and that of the organization.

The study, however, will not delve into the issues around the native Finnish volunteer

population of the Red Cross because the dearth of immigrant volunteer participation at the Red Cross is a serious problem and deserves to be treated as a research area on its own.

### **Research Method and Materials**

The research was designed to and conducted using an inductive approach in 4 distinct phases: Current State Analysis; Analysis of the Existing knowledge; Building the Proposal and Validation of the Proposal.

In the Current State Analysis phase, first set of data (Data 1) was collected. In this phase, the strengths and weaknesses of current process of volunteer recruitment was conducted and analyzed through quantitative surveys of new recruits and the strengths and weaknesses of the current process of volunteer retention was collected and analyzed through qualitative interviews of the existing staff and currently inactive volunteers who used to be fairly active in the past. Quantitative data was analyzed through Rapid Miner Software and the Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

The second phase or the Existing Knowledge Phase was conducted in order to situate the findings of the Current State Analysis phase on the conceptual framework of a broader discipline of volunteer management. Existing knowledge i.e. existing literature; Red Cross internal documents and annual reports ; and best practices recommended and adopted by various experts and organizations, to manage volunteers effectively were studied and analyzed to come up with a Conceptual Framework and eventually a preliminary proposal to which more details were added after collaboration with the Staff in Data round 2.

The third phase i.e., the Building the Proposal phase was designed to collect the second round of data (Data 2). The preliminary proposal was collaborated and presented to the Finnish Red Cross Uusimaa district staff working closely with the volunteers so that a common consensus on how to better recruit and retain volunteers could be established. The common consensus was the basis for the draft proposal which would contain details regarding the proposed process change in regards to the volunteer recruitment and retention at the Finnish Red Cross Helsinki Uusimaa District.

The purpose of the fourth phase or Validation of the Proposal phase was then to take the

proposal built from phase 3 and present it to the executives of the Finnish Red Cross to make them aware, of our findings, proposed solutions and to get recommendations from the executives themselves on the proposal for the process change. The recommendations were considered to be the 3rd round of data (Data 3).

The table below provides a list of activities conducted at different phases of the research and the resulting outcomes of those phases.

Data Round	Data Type	Data Source	Date & Approach	Recording	Purpose/ Focus
<b>Data 1</b> Current State Analysis	Qualitative Interview Talk rounds	Training Officer Development Manager	19/12/2016 Face2Face 19/12/2016 Face2Face	40 Mins: Notes	Business Problem
	Quantitative Survey	New Volunteer Recruits	12/1/2017 Face2Face 19/1/2017 Face2Face	Survey Filled out on paper	Volunteer Recruitment Pinch Points
	Qualitative Interview	Volunteer 1 Volunteer 2 Volunteer 3 Staff 1	20/1/2017 Face2Face 24/1/2017 Face2Face 30/1/2017 Face2Face 06/2/2017 Face2Face	23 Mins: Rec 38 Mins: Rec 27 Mins: Rec 38 Mins: Rec	Volunteer Retention Pinch Points
	Internal Documents	Presentations, Annual Reports	Research		
Existing Knowledge		Books, Red Cross Materials, Journal Articles and Company websites	Research		Red Cross, Immigrant Volunteers and Volunteer Management
<b>Data 2</b> Building the Proposal	Workshop	Training Officer & Staff 1	April 6, 2017 Face2Face	2 hours	<i>Draft Proposal for Process Change through Sharing Findings &amp; Feedback.</i>
<b>Data 3</b> Validation	Workshop	Development Manager	April 19, 2017 Face2Face	1 hour	<i>Final Proposal for Process Change through Sharing Findings &amp; Feedback.</i>

*Table 1: Research Design, and Data Collection Details*

## Findings and Conceptual Framework

Upon the analysis of the findings from both the quantitative surveys and the qualitative interviews, a pattern of Pinch Points was observed for both the Recruitment and Retention phases. These Pinch Points were then grouped into six themes. The themes were: Immediate Triggers, Appreciation, Listening, Safety, Leadership and Administration. Existing knowledge was consulted to gather ideas on what other organizations (both for and non for profit), experts and other literatures suggest be done when these Pinch Points occur or how they have themselves resolved the Pinch Points in their situations. It was discovered that the Pinch Points highlighted issues with Volunteer Management skills of the organization. Combinations were then created to link the Pinch Points with the Existing Knowledge to create the Conceptual Framework below.

Combinations	Pinch Points		Existing Knowledge
	Recruitment	Retention	
Combination # 1	<p><b>Immediate Triggers</b></p> <p>46.5% were expecting changes in life events in the upcoming 3 months</p>	<p><b>Immediate Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family Related changes</li> <li>● Employment Changes</li> <li>● Relocation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognizing the contributions of volunteers</li> </ul>
Combination # 2		<p><b>Appreciation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not enough Official Volunteer Appreciation (events, certificates, programs etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognizing the contributions of volunteers</li> <li>● Measuring the impact of volunteers annually</li> </ul>
Combination # 3	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <p>57% mentioned that being included in the decision making process of the activity/project that they are part of was important to them</p>	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not Feeling Heard/ Important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Written appropriate job descriptions for the volunteer positions</li> <li>● Volunteer Supervisor/ Volunteer Leaders</li> <li>● Developing Volunteer Management Skills</li> <li>● Evaluation and Monitoring</li> </ul>
Combination # 4		<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not enough Official Distinctions for Volunteers (gears, name tags etc.)</li> <li>● Not enough Proper Boundaries for Volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteer Training</li> </ul>
Combination # 5	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p>81.39% mentioned that it was important for them to get a guidance from a Red Cross employee or another knowledgeable</p>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No one to keep the Group Together in the Long Run</li> <li>● No one to enforce rules or codes of conduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Matching volunteers' skills with appropriate assignments</li> <li>● Self-governing Codes of Conduct</li> <li>● Volunteer Training</li> <li>● Volunteer Supervisor/ Volunteer Leaders</li> </ul>

	volunteer		
<b>Combination # 6</b>	<p><b>Administration</b></p> <p>99.9% mentioned that finding a volunteer position at their desired area of activity was important to them</p>	<p><b>Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unbridged Gap Between Volunteers and Red Cross</li> <li>● Volunteer Inexperience in Volunteer Management</li> <li>● More Information on Red Cross Groups and Activities not easily accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteer Supervisor/ Volunteer Leaders</li> <li>● Developing Volunteer Management Skills</li> </ul>

*Table 2: Conceptual Framework*

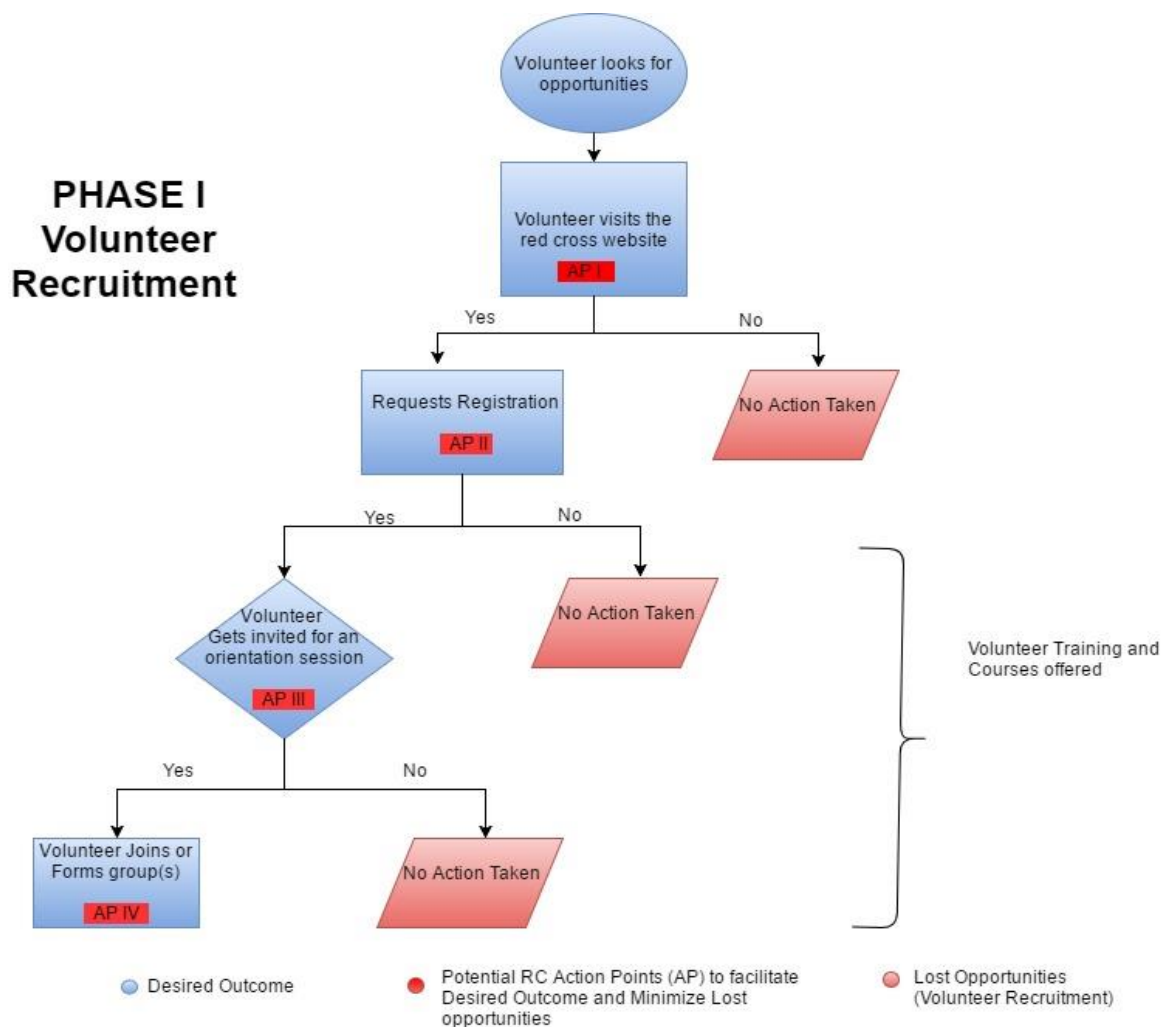
## Proposals

To effectively suggest a process change, a need to understand the existing process and what needed to be changed in that process had to be identified. Thus, two process maps, one for the Volunteer Recruitment phase (Figure 1) and the other for the Volunteer Retention phase (Figure 2), were created. Each map consists of an intended outcome, which is the desired result of the action taken; and opportunities that were lost because of inaction on the part of the Finnish Red Cross. The desired outcomes are color coded boxes in blue and the lost opportunities are color coded boxes in red. The color coded boxes in blue also have something called the Action Points (AP). Action Points are the strategic areas of action in the processes where introducing new activities through the use of resources gathered through the existing knowledge review will help Finnish Red Cross to minimize the lost opportunities and make the most of the desired outcomes.

With the help of the process maps, two distinct proposals, one for the staff to follow and implement and the other for the Volunteer Leaders and volunteer themselves to follow and implement, were created. These proposals have information on what actions to take,



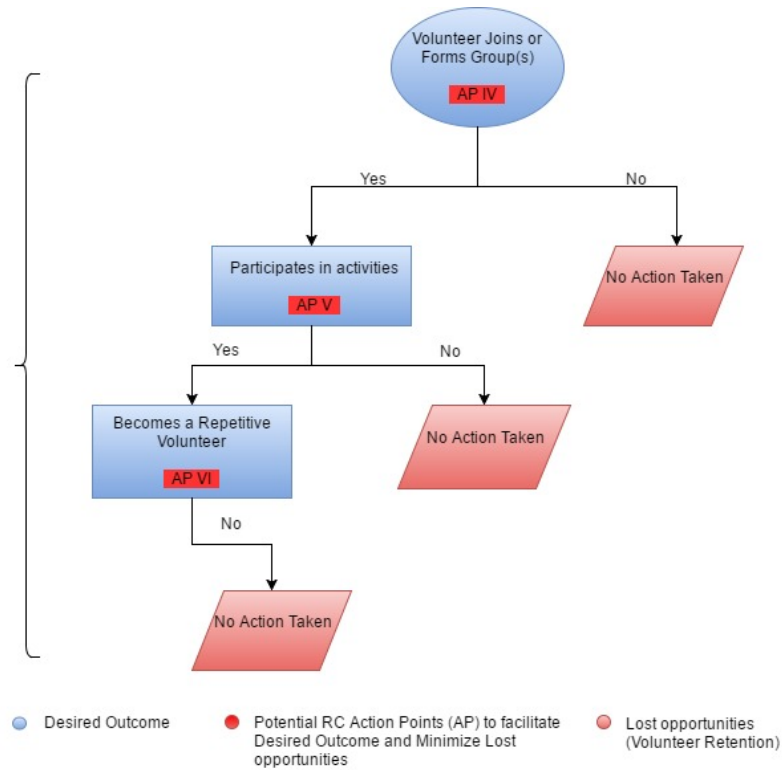
by whom, from which existing knowledge did the idea for the action come from, what Pinch Points it will solve, how will the action be delivered, and how frequently should the action be taken. Also, mentioned in the proposals are various templates of forms that the Volunteers and Volunteer Leaders could use to facilitate the volunteer management on a day to day basis.



*Figure 1: Process Map of the Recruitment Phase at the Finnish Red Cross*

## Phase II Volunteer Retention

Volunteer Training and  
Courses offered



*Figure 2: Process Map of the Retention Phase at the Finnish Red Cross*

Action (What)	Reason behind the action (Why)	Attempts to Resolve the Pinch Point	When	Method of Delivery (how)	Responsible person (Who)	Frequency
AS Supply each volunteer with a name tag with a Red Cross logo/emblem	To ensure all the Red Cross volunteers are designated as such and to ensure their safety.	<b>Safety</b>	Volunteer first joins a group or during the first orientation session. <b>Action Points (AP) II and III</b>	Hand deliver	Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator or Volunteer Leaders	Once and replacement if lost.
BS Hands Volunteer Leaders all the relevant forms/templates	To <b>develop volunteer management skills</b>	<b>Administration</b>	When a new group forms <b>(AP) III</b>	Hand deliver and/or online	Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator	Once and provide support if needed. <b>(Sample Templates attached in the Appendix)</b>

CS Educates Volunteer leaders about the importance of filling out the forms/ templates	To develop volunteer management skills	<b>Administration</b>	When a group forms  (AP) III	In person	Volunteer Trainer/ Coordinator	Once and reminders every 6 months
DS Organize Volunteer Leaders Training	To Train Volunteer leaders and increase their volunteer supervisory capacity.	<b>Leadership Listening Safety</b>	At any stage of a group's life cycle when relevant (AP) III, IV, V	Trainings delivered through workshops, short courses and more	Volunteer trainer/ Coordinator	Every 6 months

*Table 3: Details of the Actions Proposed for the Staff*

Action (What)	Reason behind the action (Why)	Attempts to Resolve the Issue(s) of	When	How	Responsible person (Who)	Time Span
AV Team charters completed when a new group forms  Existing groups can also make them	Self-governing Codes of Conduct ensures that group members feel the ownership of their group, its challenges and success.	<b>Leadership Administration Listening</b>	When the group first forms  Action Point (AP) III	Founders of a group decide in person or real time online what the basic rules for their group are and put it down on writing	Volunteer leaders/ Founders	Once and revised whenever necessary (See Appendix 1)
BV Volunteer Job descriptions are created	To ensure Written appropriate job descriptions for the volunteer positions are available so that volunteers know their responsibilities, boundaries, etc.	<b>Administration Listening</b>	Once the volunteer registers in a group  (AP) III	Hand and/or electronically delivered	Volunteer Leaders/Founders	As required (sample template attached 2)  (Tapani is doing this from the district level)

CV Timesheets are filled and submitted to the Red Cross Staff	To keep track of volunteered hours for the purposes of recognizing the contributions of volunteers	<b>Appreciation</b>	Every time someone volunteers including the leaders (AP) III, IV, V	Electronically	Volunteer Leader	Every month (See Appendix 3)  Red Cross has timesheets, but usually nothing is done about it
DV Self- Evaluations are conducted	To conduct evaluation and monitoring of volunteer programs and volunteer themselves	<b>Leadership Administration</b>	(AP) V	In person	All volunteers	Every six months (See Appendix 4)  Have been tried in some branches but people don't always fill it out... we talked about with the ownership of group through team charters maybe they would

*Table 4: Details of the Actions Proposed for the Volunteer Leaders and Volunteers*



Financial Statements													
Executive Permission to go ahead with the changes													
The Staff visits the local group (New Addition)	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI	(AP) IV, V, VI

*Table 5: Proposed Implementation Plan for the Staff*

Below are the list of actions which were already being implemented when this document was prepared:

- 5) Volunteer timesheet will be collected and utilized for appreciation/ recognition purposes. Training Officer will ensure it happens.
- 6) To bridge the gap between Red Cross and the volunteers, the Training officer and the multicultural officer have made plans to visit the groups at least every month. The Training Officer discussed that the staff “need to visit the branches more often”.
- 7) Name tags, batches have been started being circulated and the process is underway to make it mandatory in all the groups.
- 8) Volunteer appreciation will be conducted more frequently and advertised more widely.

## **Next Steps**

The next steps should then be to follow up on the implemented changes and the suggested implementation by the proposals.

- Next Step 1: The Development Officer sees whether the suggestions have been implemented.
- Next Step 2: The Development Officer oversees the results of the changes already implemented in quantifiable terms if possible.
- Next Step 3: The rest of the staff continue to look for ways to update and make the process better by active listening and participation with the volunteer led groups.

## Appendices

Appendix 1



# Finnish Red Cross

## TEAM CHARTER FOR VOLUNTEERS

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Team Members

Members	Email	Phone
Member 1		
Member 2		
Member 3		

### Overall Objective:

The objective of the team is to

### Goals:

### Breakdown of Responsibilities:

Action	Person(s) Responsible	Time Limit	Frequency
Manages Account			
Discusses Finances with the Red Cross Staff			
Updates volunteer timesheets		Same day of the event	
Responds to volunteer requests and queries		Within a week	As often as required
Requests Red			Every 6 months



Cross for Trainings for the team and other volunteers of the group			
Sends hours of volunteers to Red Cross staff for recognition purposes			Every 6 months
Self-Evaluation and Goals Monitoring			Every 6 months

**Communication:**

How often does the group meet? Skype? In person?

Every group member is responsible to communicate their absences or lateness.

How does the group plan to deal with conflicts amongst each other?

How does the group cope when group member(s) leave the group? Contingency plans?

**Supervision of other volunteers:**

What does the group plan to do if there is a conflict among volunteers or a group member?

How does the group plan to handle volunteer absences and lateness?

**Peer/ Self- Evaluation:**

Every group member is to evaluate each other or decide as a group for self-evaluations instead.

Appendix 2



**Sample Volunteer Job Description**

Role Title	Name of volunteering role.
Outline of the role	Introduce the organisation and what you're looking for a volunteer to do. You could bullet point the main tasks here
Skills, Attitudes and Experience needed	Outline what's needed to do this role. Maybe the volunteer has to have a driving licence or it's important that they enjoy meeting and talking to new people.
Benefits to the volunteer	Let a potential volunteer know what they could get out of doing this role. It might be that they'll be offered training, gain experience, grow in confidence or get more fresh air and exercise!
Where	Where will the role be based?
When	This can outline exactly when in the week the opportunity takes place, how often it is and if it's ongoing or short term. You can also cover what commitment you hope from volunteer. You should approach this informally as something you hope the volunteer can give, not something that they have to do.
Support	Who will be a point of contact for the volunteer and offer support if they have any concerns?
How to apply /what happens next (selection methods)	If the volunteer now wants to apply, what do they do next and then what happens. Let them know if they have to meet you for an informal interview or become a PVG scheme member and if you cover the cost of this.
Any questions	Who can the volunteer get in touch with if they still have questions?

Note\* This table was copied as it is from:

Volunteer Role Descriptions (2013). Volunteer Scotland. Available at:  
<http://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/242093/volunteer-role-descriptions-guide.pdf>





# Finnish Red Cross

## SELF EVALUATION FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS

### **2) I have given the best of my abilities to accomplish the goals of my group.**

- e) Yes, I am happy with my contributions
- f) I can put in more time/effort
- g) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- h) Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **2) I do everything I can to fulfill my volunteer responsibilities**

- e) Yes, I am happy with my contributions
- f) I can put in more time/effort
- g) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- h) Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **3) I do all I can to communicate my leave/ absences/ concerns and questions with my group**

- e) Yes, I am happy with my communication efforts
- f) I can work more on communicating \_\_\_\_\_
- g) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- h) Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **4) I do my best to minimize conflict in my group**

- e) Yes, I am happy with my contributions
- f) I can put in more effort
- g) I really need to work on my initial commitment
- h) Other \_\_\_\_\_

