

***Assistance to
asylum seekers, refugees
and other vulnerable
migrants***

**Presentation by
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Our basis and organization

- The seven fundamental principles are: Humanity – Impartiality – Neutrality – Independence – Voluntary Service – Unity – Universality
- The 1949 Geneva conventions on International Humanitarian Law and their additional protocol
- Resolutions by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conferences
- 31.000 volunteers and staff in 1.000 local branches all over the country
- The Red Cross board and staff on a national level

Assistance to asylum seekers

The Swedish Red Cross acts to ensure that asylum seekers have **access to a fair and proper asylum process**. Asylum seekers can contact the Swedish Red Cross in order to obtain

- **information about the asylum process**
- **assistance to identify and clarify reasons for asylum**, including legal advice and representation in some cases, and
- **information supporting a claim to remain in Sweden on other grounds** (e.g. humanitarian/compassionate)

We also provide **counselling to rejected asylum seekers** who are obliged to return to their country of origin and we **visit detained asylum seekers** to ensure that their rights are respected and to offer psychosocial support.

Restoring family links services

The Swedish Red Cross **traces family members** who have been separated due to wars, armed conflicts or natural disasters and transmits Red Cross Messages. We help **reunite families** in Sweden.

Persons who need assistance to reunite with close family members can contact the Swedish Red Cross in order to receive

- **information about Swedish legislation and how to apply for family reunification**
- **assistance to facilitate the family reunification**, including legal advice and representation when so needed
- **assistance to arrange transport for the family** and, in cases where the family is unable to pay for the journey, there is a possibility to apply for **financial support**

Psychosocial support and help in the integration process

In many local communities across the country the Swedish Red Cross offers

- Psychosocial support to asylum seekers in reception centers
- Help to refugees to integrate into society
- Visits and organized activities together with separated and unaccompanied minors

The contents of these activities vary depending on local needs and resources and include, e.g., social gatherings, such as meeting places, support groups, language training, mentor to mentor, and activities for children.

Rehabilitation centers for victims of war and torture

The Swedish Red Cross works to **alleviate the trauma of war and torture**. We have five rehabilitation centers for refugees and asylum seekers who live in Sweden and who have suffered torture and violence or have otherwise been affected by armed conflict.

At these specialized centers, professional teams – being composed of physicians, psychologists, psychotherapists, sociologists, and interpreters – work closely together with the clients.

These centers are to be found in Skellefteå, Uppsala, Stockholm, Skövde, and Malmö

Health care for irregular migrants

- The Swedish Red Cross promotes the **right to the highest attainable standard of health** for all persons, irrespective of their legal status.
- In Stockholm and Gothenburg we arrange **health care for irregular migrants** and rejected asylum seekers who do not have access to the public health care system.
- We have a meeting place with advisory social service in Stockholm (project).

Policy and advocacy

The Swedish Red Cross seeks to influence political decision-making and legislation with the aim to contribute to **open and humane asylum and migration policies**. To this end, we

- monitor the implementation and application of national and EU law
- comment on proposed national and EU legislation
- engage in a continuous dialogue with relevant government ministries and agencies at all levels, and
- participate in national and European networks, e.g. PERCO and ECRE
- fund migrant staff at the Red Cross European office

Refugee operations in other parts of the world - (Syria)

Conditions are very hard – 5 million people need daily support, e.g., food, clean water, and health care

The Movement (ICRC, Fed, SARC and SRC) gives support in a country, where there are hardly any safe places, by

- evacuating people from the war zone
- supporting healthcare, hospitals and ambulances
- giving psychosocial support
- food distribution
- repairing the water system

Red Cross response to the Migration Board

- A long tradition in the Swedish Red Cross
- Regular contacts with the Migration Board
- Red Cross conference in mid October
- A Facebook group for experience sharing
- Central Task force with different departments involved
- Very positive response from our local branches
- Many small places with bad communications (and also small branches)

Mapping and follow up of Red Cross activities

- Psychosocial support and meeting places
- Language training (important for the asylum seekers)
- Material support (warm clothes, shoes and toys)

Asylum seekers' needs

- Psychosocial support
- Information about Swedish society
- Information about the asylum process
- Practical support
- Material support (clothes, internet, toys, etc.)

Lessons learnt

- We need an ongoing dialogue with the Migration Board to be prepared as early as possible
- Material service, like clothes, needs to be discussed and followed up with the Migration Board and also internally
- Volunteers need help with recruitment, training, and support
- Language training – we would like to be a complement to other kinds of language learning as SFI and SFA
- We will work to follow up our experiences and develop our methods

Nobody should be left alone in a disaster

- ***Our brand personality:*** The people who get things done
- ***Our greatest strength:*** Our unique mandate
- ***Our method:*** On the ground; before, during, and after
- ***Our philosophy:*** Showing humanity
- ***What we achieve:*** Give hope, save lives

Thank you!