

# 2017

## SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



**1,300**  
**TONS**  
OF TEXTILES  
RECYCLED

**65**  
**LOCAL**  
MEETINGS ON  
SUSTAINABILITY

**144**  
**THOUSAND**  
CUPS OF KRAV-FAIR  
TRADE LABELLED COFFEE



**The Swedish Red Cross Sustainability Report 2017**

**Editor:** Erica Lindblom, the Swedish Red Cross **Photo:** Benoit Matsha-Carpentier / IFRC / The Red Cross, Catalina Martin- / IFRC, Joi Grinde, The Canadian Red Cross, Lars-Eje Lyrefeldt, Michael Drost-Hansen / IFRC, Olle Hallberg, Petter Carlberg, Portable Network Graphics. **Other images:** The Red Cross **Design and production:** Oxenstierna & Partners in cooperation with the Swedish Red Cross.

**Cover photo** Benjamin Suomela/the Finnish Red Cross The Red Cross supports a social initiative in North Korea involving cultivation of vegetables in greenhouses all year round. The produce is then distributed to those in need and sold, with the proceeds used to build more.

# 2017

## About this report

This sustainability report is about the Swedish Red Cross (802002-8711) and is prepared in accordance with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the C4 (Core) standard of the Global Reporting Initiative.

To make it easier to navigate, the report is divided into three main sections referring to the different dimensions of sustainability, that is environmental, social and economic.

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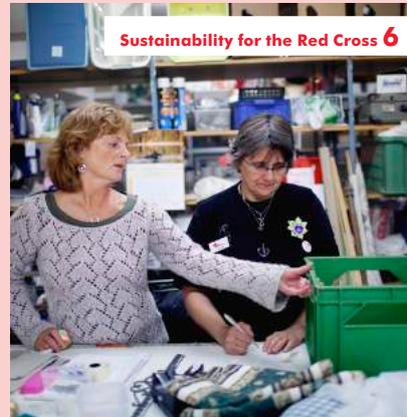
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## Our unique mission is sustainable in itself

The Red Cross is the largest humanitarian network in the world. Based in 191 countries, our mission is to prevent and alleviate human suffering, wherever it affects and however it takes place. With around 830 local societies nationwide, the Red Cross is Sweden's largest humanitarian organisation. Social sustainability is at the core of the Red Cross; that is, preventing and alleviating human suffering by contributing to the resilience of people and communities and enabling preparedness to withstand crises and disasters.

At the Red Cross, we still want to make a difference in 150 years' time. Taking responsibility for a sustainable society coincides perfectly with our humanitarian mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering. We can clearly see how it all fits together. The crises and disasters of the world are our workplace, and we witness first hand the link between environmental damage, climate change, increased poverty and migration, health risks and the growing risk of war and conflict over scarce resources.

It is our actions and the choices we make that determine how our environment and surroundings will be shaped. For us, it's about how we run our organisation. How can we minimise the negative environmental impact of our disaster operations? How can we ensure we remain an open organisation in which everyone is welcome and where we harness the diversity in our society? How can we make use of our resources?

**“ At the Red Cross, we still want to make a difference in 150 years' time.**

We do a lot of work in the area of sustainability, but there's still some way to go. Although our work is never done, we're always getting better. Contributions are made at every level of the organisation, from major decisions, resolutions and policies to waste management in our local societies. I'm delighted we can now present our first sustainability report and shine a light on the vital work we carry out in this area.

Anna Ernestam  
Acting Secretary General



# We are the world's foremost relief organisation

The Red Cross is on the scene before, during and after disasters to help victims and strengthen community resilience. The Swedish Red Cross is one of 191 national societies in a worldwide movement.

## Our mission

To prevent and alleviate human suffering, protect life and health, and ensure respect for the value of every human being.

## Our vision

Nobody should be left alone in a disaster.

## Our objectives 2016–2019

- The Red Cross efficiently reaches out to meet the needs of people during times of crisis and adversity.
- The Red Cross effectively strengthens the resilience of people and communities in the face of crises and helps them to recover when the worst is over.
- The Red Cross effectively helps to reduce the risk of people and communities being affected by crises and disasters.

## How do we work to meet these objectives?

- We act decisively as fellow human beings in a united organisation.
- We prevent and alleviate suffering for people affected by crisis and disaster, both domestically and internationally.
- We reinforce the resilience of people and communities in the face of crisis, and help them recover when the worst is over.
- We take a goal-orientated approach to reduce the risk of people and communities being affected by crises and disasters.
- We carry out advocacy work to prevent and alleviate human suffering and ensure international law is respected.

## SPECIAL AREAS OF EXPERTISE

The Swedish Red Cross has particular expertise within:



### Water and sanitation

We are one of Sweden's leading experts on water and sanitation during humanitarian crises. The organisation has broad expertise and the capacity to provide swift support in times of crisis.



### Gender and diversity

In order for our work to be effective, we must take into account people's different circumstances, needs and capacities. Gender and diversity are key concepts for us. There is great expertise within the organisation regarding this issue.



### Follow-up and learning

When target groups participate in the planning, follow-up and evaluation of initiatives, quality increases and activities are improved. We have broad expertise in this area and provide vital support to Red Cross societies in other nations.

# SEVEN CORE PRINCIPLES

Wherever in the world we operate, we follow the core principles of the Red Cross. They guide us in our work, in everything from local dilemmas to striking a balance in major international disasters.

## HUMANITY

The Red Cross works to prevent and alleviate human suffering, to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the value of every human being.

## IMPARTIALITY

The Red Cross helps those in need irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, social class or political opinion.

## NEUTRALITY

The Red Cross may not take sides in hostilities or controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## INDEPENDENCE

The Red Cross acts independently, even when the national societies have an auxiliary role to their governments within the humanitarian area.

## VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The Red Cross is a voluntary relief organisation not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

## UNITY

Only one Red Cross society is permitted in each country. It must be open to all and carry out its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## UNIVERSALITY

The Red Cross national societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other.



Six years ago, Carin Bengtsson (pictured left) suffered a breakdown. Her path back to work passes through Mötesplatsen, Östersund, where her tasks include sorting clothes together with Lena Karlsson, who oversees donation of clothing at the local RC center.

## What is sustainability for the Red Cross?

That the Red Cross takes responsibility for and contributes to the development of a sustainable society is taken is self-evident. In the long term, we consider climate and environmental awareness, development and disaster prevention activities to be components of a single mission. The Red Cross strives to set a good example through its operations and ensuring sustainability is always taken into account during our initiatives.

Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This involves:

### **Environmental sustainability**

Maintaining the production capacity of our waters, earth and ecosystems in the long term.

### **Social sustainability**

Building a stable and dynamic society in the long term that meets fundamental human needs.

### **Economic sustainability**

Managing resources efficiently in the long term.

Environmental sustainability is often seen as fundamental to achieving social and economic sustainability. Equally, social sustainability provides the platform for economic sustainability.

We work systematically on ensuring that the activities of the Red Cross in Sweden and internationally do not lead to environmental problems, social or economic challenges. We strive to develop sustainably as an organisa-

tion in order to be as successful in the future as we are today. The Red Cross also works on global development issues and improving people's living conditions. Part of our international work involves improving the ability of local communities to adapt to and withstand recurring or long-term crises and disasters or socioeconomic change. Through volunteers and local commitment, we create good conditions for efficient and long-term initiatives.

# Milestones in our sustainability journey

This is our first sustainability report, but we have made great strides in this area over recent years.

**2010**

→ **Sustainability policy**

**2012**

→ **Clothing policy**

**2013**

→ **Action plan** Sustainable development

**2014**

→ **Materiality analysis**

→ **Action plan** Gender and diversity

**2015**

→ **First** climate summary

→ **Launch** of anti-corruption training for all employees

**2016**

→ **Addition to our investment** policy regarding fossil fuels

→ **Smart Recycling** solutions at our offices

→ **Transition** to green energy at our offices

→ **Only green** and Fairtrade products (coffee, tea, fruit) are purchased at our offices

→ **Checklist** for sustainability work in local societies

→ **Updated** travel guidelines and purchasing manual

# Governance

The Red Cross exercises a policy and action plan on sustainable development which forms the basis of its work on sustainability. Adopted in 2010, this policy maps out our direction on this issue. The action plan represents a framework for our sustainability initiatives. The activity plan sets objectives and outlines activities to be realised across the Red Cross organisation.

➔ *The long-term vision of the Swedish Red Cross on sustainable development is to promote economic, environmental and social development, focusing on the interaction between people and the environment. This involves an ongoing process of evaluation, further training and improvement measures to ensure development takes place.*

**The Red Cross** has a whistleblowing unit. Where there is a suspicion of a serious breach of laws, code of conduct or other regulations, employees, volunteers, members and elected representatives can report their observations anonymously through this unit.

## Sustainability is integrated into the overall strategies that guide the work of the Red Cross:

### THE STRATEGIC FOCUS OF THE RED CROSS 2016–2019

**The strategic focus for 2016–2019** was adopted at the Red Cross General Assembly in 2015. Sustainable development was highlighted as key to the way we should work and fundamental to our success.

➔ *That the Red Cross takes responsibility for, and contributes to, the development of a sustainable society is undeniable. It forms a natural part of our mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering. As a national society, we strive to set a good example in the field of sustainability. This means ensuring our activities are sustainable from an environmental, social and economic perspective as well as following-up and sharing our results. It also means we have to develop sustainably as an organisation. We want to be successful in 2019 as well as 150 years ahead.*

### THE HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY OF THE RED CROSS 2016–2019

The humanitarian strategy provides guidance for those employees supporting volunteers and sister societies in the pursuit of our strategic focus both in Sweden and overseas.

➔ *Continuing to support long-term risk-reducing climate adaptation programmes in our partnership countries.*

➔ *Ensuring the humanitarian initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross are more climate-smart and sustainable in the long term.*

➔ *Analysing how we contribute to environmental and climate impact to ensure we adopt the right measures and improve the way we follow up the results.*

➔ *Focusing on sustainability in Swedish Red Cross second-hand outlets.*

➔ *Providing simple tools (checklists, training materials, procurement documentation), and analysing and reviewing all activities in order to ensure sustainability forms part of the day-to-day work of the Swedish Red Cross.*

### ACTIVITY PLAN FOR 2017

Our activity plan for 2017 was adopted by the Board in autumn 2016. Sustainability is one of its eight overall objectives. This is linked to specific sub-targets and associated indicators broken down by environmental, social and economic sustainability.

#### ➔ **Objective:**

*The Swedish Red Cross is a more sustainable organisation both environmentally, socially and economically.*

➔ *This objective involves working to ensure sustainability underpins each facet of the Swedish Red Cross's activities at every level. This means our activities must be sustainable from an environmental, social and economic perspective. It also means we have to develop sustainably as an organisation. Sustainability is widely integrated into all our activities, however, to reinforce our efforts and succeed in the long term, there are a number of areas in which we are joining forces. These include greater expertise and awareness on sustainability throughout the Swedish Red Cross, reduced environmental impact, leadership development and a commitment to diversity to ensure we promote issues within the movement and provide effective support.*

### Sustainability in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

At the 2007 General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, climate change was highlighted as one of the most significant global challenges facing humanity. A resolution was adopted at the meeting underlining that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement must focus on the impact on climate change associated with its disaster operations and work to raise awareness

on the devastating consequences of climate change for humanity, as well as its causes. In its resolution, the General Assembly announced its support for the work of the UN to stop climate change on a global scale.

The Swedish Red Cross has been working with sustainability in different ways for a number of years and plays a prominent role in the area internationally. In 2017, we moderated three online *engagement sessions* on the theme of sustainability, while a large workshop on the

same theme took place during the General Assembly in Turkey. The main aim was to investigate how we can work together on these issues. There is consensus within the movement that we must contribute to sustainable development and the UN global goals and run our organisation in a sustainable way, by minimising negative environmental impact and taking responsibility for our volunteers and other resources, among other measures.



# 2030 Agenda – The UN Global Sustainable Development Goals

2030 Agenda, its 17 goals and 169 associated targets, were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. Replacing the previous Millennium Development Goals, they are to be achieved within 15 years. They are backed by the 193 member states of the UN. In 2017, analysis was carried out on how the activities of the Red Cross contribute to fulfilment of the global goals for sustainable development.

Most of the work and activities of the Red Cross contribute in some way to these goals, however, as our operations are always defined by humanitarian needs, the global goals and associated targets will not directly govern the way we work. Analysing our activities against the global goals is part of our external environ-

ment monitoring and involves understanding the Red Cross in a broader context, how we can act as a sustainable organisation and how we work with others in this area. The global goals and associated targets are a common way of categorising and specifying what we must all do to contribute to a more sustainable world.

**The work of the Swedish Red Cross is analysed against the global goals in three dimensions:**

- ➔ **WHAT we do** The national and international work of the Red Cross contributes directly to these goals.
- ➔ **HOW we work** – We contribute to these goals through the way the organisation is run.
- ➔ **Our supporting objectives** – Our activities and assignments must take these objectives into account, ensuring they are not hindered.

We have included the logos of the global goals in the various sections of the sustainability report to make it easier to see the goals to which our work relates.





The Red Cross sustainability ambassadors

## Sustainability in a Red Cross

The Red Cross is made up of hundreds of local societies based around the country. This is where the majority of our activities take place, and our challenge is to spread the word on sustainability across the nation. 2016 marked the launch of Sustainability in a Red Cross, a project which aims to underline our status as a sustainable organisation which takes responsibility and leads the way in terms of the way it operates.

**“ The Red Cross can of course exercise influence in support of sustainable development through direct activities. Although we already do this, there is room for improvement.**

– a Red Crosser from a local second-hand outlet

Material was produced in 2016 in the form of a sustainability checklist which branches can use in their work. This is divided into various sustainability themes including criteria for basic and continued measures. At the start of 2017, regional councils were tasked to appoint sustainability ambassadors, with the aim of inspiring, engaging and supporting local societies in their work on sustainability. Ten ambassadors were recruited – with an equal number of men and women – from a range of backgrounds, aged between 20 and 70. What each of them shared was a commitment to making our organisation ready for the tran-

sition to sustainability. During the year, the ambassadors provided support to local societies in their regions, helping people with experience in the field as well as those new to sustainability. Based on the checklist and the working material produced, practical measures kicked off with a workshop attended by the boards of local societies, second-hand outlets and volunteers. The sustainability work of local societies was jointly evaluated, with an action plan including areas of improvement drawn up. The sustainability ambassadors will continue to operate in 2018 by following up action plans and training new branches.



**13 local societies**

have worked actively with sustainability during the year.



**8 local societies**

have workshops booked next year



**65**

information meetings have been held so far.

**” It was great to get an overview of the branch as a whole. I’d like to work more with the work environment.**

– second-hand outlet manager

**” Sustainability means utilising the resources available.**

– branch volunteer

**▶ CLICK HERE TO SEE FILM**

Material was produced in 2016 in the form of a checklist which branches can use in their work. This is divided into various sustainability themes including criteria for basic and continued measures.

Sustainability	Sustainability theme	Area of sustainability	Basic level
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>	Climate	Energy consumption	Guidelines for sustainable travel
	Ecosystem	Purchases	Informed purchase of coffee, tea, sugar, milk and fruit. Ensuring Fairtrade material is visible
	Resources	Recycling	Waste separation stations and associated routines operating in accordance with clothing policy.
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Human rights	The idea of the Red Cross	Promoting our core principles. Red Cross knowledge for all.
		Gender and diversity	Awareness of policies on both gender and diversity.
		Democracy	Everyone has their say. Treating people with openness and respect. Electing General Assembly delegates.
	Work environment	Leadership	Awareness of the Leadership handbook.
		Learning and skills	Ensuring Red Cross representatives have the right skills for their work.
		Security	Awareness of <i>Var försiktig (Be careful)</i> – Security guide, self-assessment form and incident reporting.
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	Ethical	Employer’s obligations	Complying with existing laws on the physical and psychosocial work environment.
		Anti-corruption	Awareness of code of conduct.
	Long-term financing	Ethical investment	Reviewing the bank used by the branch and making demands on sustainability and ethical accountability.
		Fundraising	Using the annual appeal and following fundraising guidelines.
		Monitoring and follow-up	Creating routines for financial management. Preparing financial summaries (EKS) and the branch’s operational follow-up (KVU)



# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY** is about maintaining the production capacity of our waters, earth and ecosystems in the long-term. For the Red Cross, this means taking responsibility for the climate, maintaining and ensuring we don't undermine the ecosystem and consuming and utilising material resources in order to create a long-term sustainable commodity chain. We do this by adopting a more long-term approach to disaster operations, managing clothing and textiles as a valuable resource, taking a climate-smart approach to travel and consumption and choosing fair trade and eco-labelled products.

Social and economic sustainability is underpinned by environmental sustainability. Without functioning ecosystems and a climate in balance, human beings cannot inhabit the earth. There is a clear correlation between environmental damage and climate change, increased poverty and refugees as well as a heightened risk of conflict over scarce resources. A large-scale transformation is necessary within multiple sectors in order to prevent a disaster scenario and effectively adopt sustainable development. To work actively towards functioning ecosystems and reduced environmental impact is to support the right of all people to live, both today and in future.

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE, AND HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE RESULTS?

- ➔ We work actively to ensure that efforts in disaster areas both alleviate acute distress and prevent future suffering by means of long-term sustainability.
- ➔ We are continually modifying our recycling model by taking responsibility for sustainable management of textiles and other products used in the scope of our second-hand operations.
- ➔ We endeavour to make climate smart choices and use fair trade and eco-labelled products in order to keep environmental impact to a minimum.

### Our objectives:



**Recycling of textiles** – All Swedish Red Cross branches selling second-hand goods must adopt the Red Cross recycling model.



**Greenhouse gas emissions** – Cutting carbon dioxide emissions in relation to number of employees (tones of CO<sub>2</sub> per employee) by 10% year-on-year.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## Sustainable disaster operations

Since 2012, the Swedish Red Cross has been leading a project in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to limit the negative environmental impact of humanitarian aid efforts. This project is called Green Response. Apart from the Swedish Red Cross, the working group includes sister societies in Canada and Australia. The purpose of Green Response is to draw up guidelines in order to identify and reduce the negative environmental impacts which may be associated with disaster operations. The primary aim of disaster operations is, and will remain, to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain or restore the dignity of human beings. One aspect of this objective is the responsibility for avoiding or curtailing the potential negative impact on the environments and ecosystems on which people rely for their long-term development and well-being. In a worst case scenario, an aid initiative following a natural disaster can form the basis for another disaster in the future. To avoid this, work on the guidelines includes ideas on how the affected population should be more involved in aid efforts. The aid initiatives should also take into account carbon dioxide emissions for air transport and the use of plastics. People are

dependent on the surrounding environment and natural resources where they live. More widespread implementation of Green Response in each operation will save resources, helping create better conditions for recovery and strengthening the resilience of communities following disasters. It is also a means of ensuring greater responsibility from the organisation for the people being assisted and the country where the work is carried out. In 2017, work began to make the logistics chain of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) more sustainable. Work is also under way under the theme of Shelter and Settlement, that is, ensuring people have a roof over their head in a settlement/development.

The Red Cross is providing aid to the disaster operation in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, which stems from the massive influx of refugees who fled the hostilities in Myanmar in late August 2017. As always, the primary aim of Red Cross intervention was to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain or restore human dignity. One aspect of this objective involves the responsibility to avoid or reduce potential negative impact on the environment. For the first time, with the help of the Swedish

Red Cross, an environmental expert was integrated into the disaster team based on site in Bangladesh. The objective was to identify potential negative environmental impact relating to the disaster operation and provide advice and recommendations in order to limit any negative effects insofar as is practically viable.

Since autumn 2016, the Swedish Red Cross has taken part in a collaborative project involving the Swedish authorities, research institutions, business and humanitarian organisations in international crisis and disaster management. The project is based on a requirement of needs identified by the Swedish Red Cross's experience of international disaster management, where the lack of sustainable sanitation solutions is a major challenge. The aim of the project is to help achieve the global sustainability goals by creating a collaborative platform uniting business, research and humanitarian organisations in order to jointly identify and develop sustainable technical solutions in the area of water and sanitation. In 2017, work began on the development of a prototype for a technique involving purification of latrine waste, which is to be tested in Sweden before it can be approved as a viable solution for international disaster management.



**The morning meeting in the village of Bolomin, Sierra Leone, where residents were interviewed about the environmental impact of measures against Ebola. In the foreground is Daniel F K James, one of the members of the Green Response team.**

## Recycling of textiles

Items donated to second-hand stores are to be sold locally first and foremost, in order to ensure the financial proceeds remain in the local branch. Under the clothing policy adopted by the Red Cross in 2012, we are also responsible for donations which cannot be sold in stores. Since 2013, we have been sending clothes, textiles, bags and shoes which cannot be sold or reused to a recycling partner, ensuring we take responsibility for the environment and get paid for items which would otherwise have cost money to dispose of. This is of environmental and economic benefit to society and the Red Cross alike.

Recycling of textiles is managed centrally by our salaried staff organisation, with practical work carried out by local societies. The local societies deliver the clothes which cannot be sold to one of our 16 depots located nationwide. 2017 marked the opening of a new depot in Norrköping, an area with no facility previously, while another depot was relocated from Arvika to Forshaga.

In February 2016, the Red Cross began working with Soex Group, a leading player in textiles recycling in Europe, while Texaid was commissioned in 2017 as an additional recipient of textiles, allowing us to recycle larger volumes. Over the year, 1,300 tonnes (1,200 in 2016) of textiles were dispatched to Texaid and Soex. Almost ninety-five percent of the textiles which are exported to their facilities are recycled. The recycled material was used, for example, as insulation material in cars or for new textile fibres.

It is our aim that all local societies running second-hand outlets adopt our recycling model. Although we're not there yet, a total of 162 local societies delivered clothes to depots in 2017, compared with 112 in 2016. An increase of 45%, this represents more than half of our local societies.



Textiles being loaded for recycling at one of our depots.



Our second-hand store on Hornsgatan in Stockholm



Textiles to be recycled are packed in sacks made from 50% recycled material. These are then recycled as plastic by Soex Group and Texaid.

**13** CLIMATE ACTION



**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION





**162**

local societies within the Swedish Red Cross which sell second-hand goods adopt the Red Cross recycling model

Recycled textiles	
YEAR	KG
2013	666,590
2014	1,049,110
2015	1,209,389
2016	1,199,860
2017	1,314,146

[▶ CLICK HERE TO SEE FILM](#)

## Environmental responsibility

### Requirements for purchasing and procurement

Taking an environmental approach to purchasing and procurement has been highlighted as an important tool in the transition to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Underlining environmental requirements in purchasing and procurement enables organisations to cut their environmental impact, sending a clear message to the market that environment adaptation is a key consideration for customers.

In 2016, we updated our travel guidelines and purchasing handbook to include a greater emphasis on sustainability, and also upgraded facilities to enable meetings to be held digitally or by telephone at all our offices. Considerable time and resources have been devoted to informing and training all employees on these changes during 2017.

Our offices have green energy contracts, and we only purchase organic or Fairtrade certified fruit, tea and coffee. We began working with Samhall, the Swan eco-labelled cleaning service, in 2017, and also have a contract with Smart Recycling, processing 22.5 tonnes during the year.

### Greenhouse gas emissions

Over the last three years, we have measured our climatic impact through carbon dioxide emissions by compiling data on our travel and con-

sumption of energy and paper. International air travel accounts for the largest proportion of our carbon footprint. However, we usually fly overseas because the situation requires us to do so, for example, to assist with humanitarian disasters. We have to deploy personnel on site, and the quickest and most practical option is to fly. With this in mind, a logical strategy for taking greater responsibility for the climate mainly involves continuing to reduce domestic flights by choosing other, greener means of transport, or holding meetings by Skype, for example.

Our activity plan for 2017 included a target whereby carbon dioxide emissions per employee are to have fallen by 10% since 2015. Thanks to implementation of our new travel guidelines, we can see we're heading in the right direction, with emissions from domestic flights falling from 16% in 2015 to 13% in 2017, and journeys by train on the increase. That said, changing established patterns of travel and meetings takes time and energy, and is an ongoing area of focus within the organisation.

Our failure to meet our carbon dioxide emission targets is primarily due to the high number of international journeys taking place in 2017. This is due to a large extent on world events, and where our intervention is required; however, by reviewing our travel habits we hope to make a lot of progress in the future.

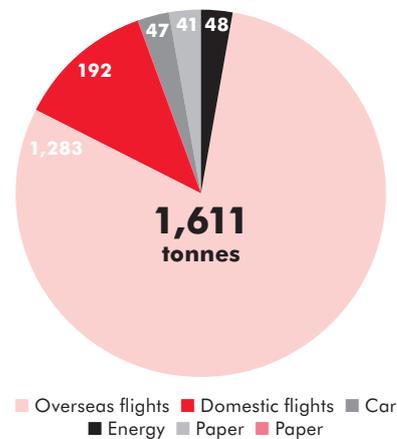
13 CLIMATE ACTION



3.9

Carbon dioxide in relation to number of employees (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per employee)

Emission of carbon dioxide equivalent by the Red Cross in 2017 (CO<sub>2</sub>e tonnes)



Overseas flights Domestic flights Energy Paper Paper



Fairtrade refreshments at our office in Stockholm.



# SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

**SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY** is about building a stable and dynamic society in the long term that meets fundamental human needs. A great deal of our activities contribute to social sustainability. The Swedish Red Cross has an important role to play today, as social vulnerability is increasing. Our meeting places are open for everyone. They are visited every day by people who would otherwise be isolated. We provide information about the rights of new arrivals and asylum seekers. We support lonely people and offer social activities, language practice, home-work support and cycling or swimming courses. Through our societies and our volunteer activities, we attract interested persons to join our societies, an opportunity to make a difference, and social activities to help others.

For us as an organisation, working with social sustainability is about providing a pleasant physical and psychosocial work environment, investing in leadership and democracy in our societies, working effectively with security, taking our responsibility as an employer and actively engaging in issues relating to gender and diversity. Through its work, the Red Cross strives to increase respect for international humanitarian law as well as human rights. As an organisation, we endeavour neither to discriminate nor exclude, pursuing an open, inclusive and transparent culture which welcomes anyone who is interested in or supports our core principles – an organisation in which it is easy to become involved and that stands the test of time.

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE, AND HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE RESULTS?

- We lay foundations for successful leadership and a safe, sound work environment for volunteers, employees and elected representatives.
- We continue to promote democracy in societies by facilitating and inspiring increased participation as well as greater transparency and opportunities to exert influence and reduce hierarchy.
- We develop methods for our work, and learn from the successes and failures of ourselves and others.

### Our objectives:



**Leadership** – Ensuring more people in the organisation have access to some form of leadership development



**Security** – All employees and volunteers must read the Stay Safe training material



**Diversity** – Reflecting the diversity of the locations in which we are active

## Work environment and security

The Red Cross is committed to providing workplaces which promote health, harness the dedication of employees and enable a sustainable workforce over time. Sound work environments provide protection against accidents and ill-health while creating conditions for unity, job satisfaction and personal development.

Working life is increasingly hectic and things change quickly, and we are expected to adapt to new situations and the need to constantly develop and learn new skills. In the Red Cross, we also have employees who in different ways deal with people in need, and have working tasks, or find themselves in situations, which may be extremely psychologically demanding. This requires a systematic way of working and clear guidelines and routines in the organisational and social work environment, as well as support for both managers and employees in order to develop approaches to their work which are sustainable in the long term. As part of this work, we follow the Red Cross's work environmental guidelines and carry out reviews through employee satisfaction surveys.

In 2017, we worked extensively with routines and systematising work environment management. Work environment committee meetings, training for managers and inspections have been carried out at all offices.

The aim of our security management is to provide actual and perceived safety and security for the employees and volunteers who take part in our activities. Awareness of security must be a natural part of our work, with operations continuing even in crisis situations, and we must be able to manage serious events occurring within or against our internal organ-

isation. As employers, we are responsible for the safety of our employees, while responsibility in our local societies lies with the branch board.

Our national security management is made up of four areas: external environment monitoring, security training, analysis of threats in society and follow-up of incidents. There has been much work in these areas during 2017 as part of our general focus on preparedness and our capacity to act in the event a crisis or disaster should take place in Sweden. We have conducted safety reviews and training at a number of sites – both at our offices and branches – in order to raise awareness around safety, and work is under way to put together new safety training.

Since 2017, our international security management has been planned and operated in accordance with our new International Security Framework, which was adopted in May, and we also updated our delegate training programme and security reviews in line with the new framework during the year. We often work in locations and situations in which there is a high security risk, and constantly seek to strike a balance between ensuring security on site and providing sufficient personnel.

One of our objectives is to ensure all Red Crossers have carried out our e-course on security, Stay Safe. This was included in induction for volunteers during 2017, ensuring all new recruits have undergone the course. All delegates are required to have completed the course before embarking on assignments, and up to now, 35% of our total workforce in Sweden have done so.



### Number of people

who have completed the Stay Safe training: All new volunteers, overseas delegates and employees who travel abroad in their work (35% of our total employees).



One of our objectives is to ensure all Red Crossers have carried out our e-course on security, Stay Safe.

## Diversity and participation

The Red Cross and its local societies work continually to promote empowerment among our target groups by involving them in the identification of needs as well as planning, carrying out and following up activities. Local societies play a big role in planning a range of activities and events together with target groups in order to boost their self-esteem and increase commitment. Our friendship groups for unaccompanied children – in which the target group is involved in planning – is one example. Programmes are discussed collectively, with the target group suggesting activities in which everything from organisation, planning and purchasing to implementation is carried out together. This model is used in the majority of local societies, and there is great benefit in giving target groups the latitude to decide how they work. For example, some people have secured work placements at our second-hand centres. Empowerment boosts people’s self-esteem and improves their chances of finding work, a place to live and new friends.

The Red Cross’s diversity policy was adopted in 2003, with the gender policy following in 2005. We have also been following a gender and diversity action plan since 2013. It is important for all Red Crossers to understand what this means in practice, and that there are more dimensions and more complexity to diversity and gender than simply focusing on ethnicity and sex.

### Diversity

For the Swedish Red Cross, diversity means that all people, based on their circumstances and motivations, have the same opportunities to become involved with and included in Swedish society. Diversity is also about finding the right expertise and employees during recruitment, something the Red Cross is actively engaged in. We are convinced that diversity is a crucial factor if we are to continue to be a relevant force in the local community.

We aim to reflect the diversity of the locations in which we are active, and one indicator of this is the number of people born outside the Nordic region. Looking at Sweden as a whole, the number of people with a foreign background is <sup>1</sup> 2.3 million, equivalent to 23% of the population (2016). In 2017, 23% of Red Cross employees had a foreign background. Arriving at a figure for our 30,000 volunteers and elected representative is more complex, as Statistics Sweden measures data on behalf of companies and organisations based on personal identify numbers (that is, anonymously). We estimate there’s still work to be done, particularly with regard to elected representatives, in relation to both ethnic diversity and distribution by age and gender. Boosting diversity and better reflecting the Swedish population in the country’s local branches are areas of priority in the Swedish Red Cross strategy.

People working at the Red Cross <sup>2</sup>			
	Full-time	Part-time	TOTAL
Women	262	47	309
Men	98	7	105
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>414</b>
	Indefinite term	Fixed term employment	TOTAL
Women	255	54	309
Men	91	14	105
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>414</b>
Gothenburg	177	2	19
Skärholmen	15	11	26
Malmö	41	8	49
Stockholm	226	28	254
Skövde	13	3	16
Uppsala	7	3	10
Gothenburg	10	1	11
Umeå	6	4	10
Skellefteå	7	1	8
Overseas (delegates)	4	7	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>414</b>



### Gender and equality

It is the fundamental stance of the Red Cross that women and men are equal and should be afforded the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all significant spheres of life.

Gender is one of the Red Cross’s areas of excellence. We aim to ensure all activity programmes are of equal benefit to men and women, in accordance with their individual needs and through participation and equal representation in the different sections of the society. Men, women, boys and girls may have various degrees of vulnerability, needs, risks and different ways of handling situations, but they have the same rights. In practical terms, this means men and women are to be given the same opportunities to take part in our activities and that discrimination on the basis of gender may not occur when distributing resources and benefits. We will ensure these measures are effective through statistics and data.

Although there are more women than men among our workforce, this does not mean we have achieved greater equality than other organisations. For example, in line with the statistics for Sweden as a whole, we can see a higher proportion of women who work part-time. This is a complex social issue which is related to, for example, who takes out parental leave and looks after of the children, however, along with wider society, it is something we must continue to address.



**65%**

of our managers are women



**23%**

of our workforce have a foreign background

<sup>1</sup> According to Statistics Sweden, either born overseas or born in Sweden with two parents who are born overseas

<sup>2</sup> The number of employees at the end of 2017, including those on leave/parental leave but not including seconded delegates, who do not operate within the Swedish Red Cross organisational structure, or hourly-paid staff (e.g., recruiters at the direct dialogue unit) or paid volunteers.

**Zero tolerance against discrimination and harassment**

The Swedish Red Cross adopts a zero tolerance stance on all forms of discrimination and harassment. It is imperative that all Red Crossers, and those they meet, feel safe and secure at our meeting places, during our activities and when interacting with other employees, vol-

unteers, members and elected representatives. We exercise clear regulations and routines to counteract unequal treatment, sexual harassment included.

Our zero tolerance stance means representatives of the Red Cross are required to treat people with respect and refrain from unequal treatment or discrimination against groups

or individuals on the basis of ethnic or social background, gender, transgender identity or expression, age, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, disability, language or political opinion. Red Crossers may never subject others to sexual harassment, which is outlined in the organisation’s code of conduct.

**Practical measures – checklists for achieving gender and diversity aims**

As an organisation, it is important to provide policies for gender and diversity which everyone in the organisation is aware of. It is also vital to have an action plan and clear objectives to guide our work. However, it may sometimes be necessary to employ more practical means in order to lead the work of our personnel and volunteers. The Red Cross devised two key tools for gender and diversity during 2017.

In order to provide effective support in crisis situations, the staff and volunteers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent must always take gender and diversity into account. To this end, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has drawn up *Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming* as a type of checklist to follow. This is broken down into four areas of focus: participation, access, safety, and dignity.

During the year, the Swedish Red Cross also drew up a checklist – based on that of the Federation – to ensure local organisa-

tions take gender and diversity into consideration. Our local societies can use this document both as a guide when starting up activities or for ongoing follow-up. It is divided into the same four categories as the federation’s checklist. Implementation of the checklist in the activities of local societies will continue during 2018





A woman in the Cox's Basar refugee camp.

## The refugee crisis in Bangladesh

In the latter part of 2017, over 600,000 people fled from Rakhine, in Myanmar, to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where the world's largest refugee camp took shape in just a matter of months. The majority are women and children, with a high degree of vulnerability.

Crises and disasters are associated with a heightened risk for violence, sexual assault and trafficking. In an emergency situation, gender, age, financial circumstances, ethnicity, sexuality and disability have an impact on people's needs, vulnerability and capacity to act. At an early stage of its engagement in the refugee camp, the Red Cross set up a women's tent – a free zone for women to discuss and share their experiences. Several women in the camp said they felt afraid and unsafe, for example, when using the camp's toilets or showers. The Red Cross also ensured that men and women were separated at distribution points, so there was no risk of women being crowded out or threatened with the prospect of sexual harassment. With regard to gender, older women, those with small children and the disabled are given priority. After receiving feedback from women in the camp, we have also produced a special independence kit which we hand out, including washable bandages, a change of clothes and a solar-powered torch.

The checklist is used at all times to ensure gender and diversity is taken into account during all work carried out in the camp. For example, the Red Cross field hospital has been

assessed in terms of accessibility and security, among other factors. This includes ensuring that everyone has access to the facility and that there are locks on the latrine doors.



The Red Cross women's tent.

## Leadership and learning

Managers play a key role in any organisation, and competent, proactive leadership is necessary in order to operate successfully. A good leader must be able to convey and communicate the fundamental values of the organisation. In our case, this means the Red Cross's core principles and code of conduct, among other things. Effective leadership should be clear, influential, attentive, understating and motivational. Leadership skills are fostered through education, support and networks. It is important to identify and recruit individuals with leadership skills as well as enable sustainable leadership.

A new organisation was put into place on 1 January 2017, and as a consequence, almost one-half of all new managers were new to their roles. Some have transferred internally and others have never worked in a leadership role, and there are also people with managerial experience who have been recruited externally. To ensure organisational efficiency, it has been necessary to focus on leadership and organisational culture. During the year we have revised our code of conduct, drawn up a leadership profile and devised a training course for branch boards, which was delivered in the autumn.

Evaluation by both participants and educators showed the course was of a good standard,

and it will be included in our society unit support programme in 2018. Work is also under way to rework other supporting materials and documents targeted towards elected representatives. In addition, films and materials for development of societies have been produced, and will be presented to local societies progressively in the spring.

### Education and skills development

Training and career development for employees is essential in order to inject fresh knowledge, skills and competence into an organisation. The Red Cross provides guidelines for skills development covering what applies in terms of scope and limitation, responsibility and cost control in relation to skills development.

Our elected representatives (chairpersons, local boards and nomination committees) are offered training in society theory, recruitment, leadership and diversity. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has a wide range of e-courses which are available to employees, delegates, elected representatives and volunteers. And since First Aid plays such a big role in the work of the Swedish Red Cross, this training is provided on a regular basis for all Red Crossers.



**46**  
new chairpersons have undergone training.



**27**  
local boards (around 100 people) have been trained during the year.



**16**  
managers attended internal training, and three external.



**39**  
elected representatives in our local societies have completed the course on voluntary leadership.





# ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

**ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY** refers to the way we manage our resources in the long term. For the Red Cross, this entails working with our internal and organisational efficiency, exercising ethical, long-term accountability in relation to our capital, investments and fundraising and donation channels and actively counteracting corruption. Financial resources are fundamental to the fulfilment of our mission. It is vital that our funds are utilised in a responsible way, and that we have sustainable fundraising methods and partnerships which ensure the financing requirements of the organisation in the long term.

People's confidence in the Swedish Red Cross is fundamental to our ability to operate. This is our greatest asset, without which we would not be able to assist day-to-day in the world's conflicts and disaster zones. We have now recovered from the downturn which took place around 2009–2010. This was particularly evident in the autumn of 2015 through the fantastic response we received in the wake of the refugee crisis. We succeed in building trust by being transparent, and taking the right course of action at the right time. We are constantly working to ensure people choose to put their faith in the Red Cross.

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE, AND HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE RESULTS?

- We pursue cost-efficiency and transparency by developing the way we follow up and evaluate our activities.
- We manage the Red Cross's capital in a responsible way.
- We ensure that long-term sustainable financing and reinforcing confidence is planned and reported under these specific objectives.

### Our objectives:



**Anti-corruption** – All employees are expected to have completed training on the organisation's policy and routines regarding anti-corruption



**Cost-efficiency** – Cutting cost per employee by five percent compared with 2016

We are continually developing new ways of financing our activities in order to remain a neutral, impartial and decisive organisation. We receive support and resources from a number of sources. To find out more about how we allocate these resources and ensure financing is utilised for the purposes intended, see our annual report and activity report.

## Anti-corruption

Corruption is a reality and is something that the Swedish Red Cross always has to face. There is a high risk of corruption in many of the countries in which we work. In all cases of corruption, the Red Cross takes appropriate steps in consultation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or the relevant national Red Cross or Red Crescent society. Other affected parties and funding bodies have also been consulted, such as Sida and Radiohjälpen. However, if corruption is detected, this does not have to lead to the end of cooperation with a nation, even if such incidents must always be reported and addressed. A collaboration may sometimes be inactive if a corruption case progresses over a long period. During 2017, corruption or suspected corruption was identified in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone in connection with the Ebola operation, as well as in Madagascar, Ukraine, Sudan and Myanmar.

All our international programmes and partners are subject to a risk assessment, of which corruption is a part. Owing to the generally high risks associated with our international pro-

grammes, we assume the highest risk of corruption, adopting appropriate inspection measures until we receive the green light. It is the responsibility of each partner to ask that we relax such measures and thereby request an assessment. When entering into bilateral collaboration, we also evaluate our partners' internal inspection functions and the additional inspection measures the Swedish Red Cross may need to deploy.

The Red Cross also has internal inspection routines at national level in order to prevent and identify suspected cases of impropriety among branches and the salaried staff organisation. During 2017, three incidents in the local branch organisation resulted in a police report being filed in relation to individuals who had abused their position of trust.

The Red Cross has an anti-corruption policy as part of its code of conduct which refers to all employees, volunteers and elected representatives. Under this code of conduct, all types of corruption are to be opposed. This means it is forbidden to give or receive bribes in the form of money, gifts, services or other benefits. The terms also covers bribery, favouritism,

## Organisational efficiency – doing things the right way

### Financing

Financing is vital in order for the Red Cross to continue to operate and allocate resources to its stakeholders, both now and in future. It is also vital so that the organisation can remain competitive and deliver operational efficiency. Our annual report outlines the way our funds were managed during 2017.

It is important for us to be cost-efficient. In 2017, our objective was to cut costs per employee by five percent compared with the previous year. Cost per employee was SEK 435,000 in 2017, falling by 4.4%.

### Social investment

The Red Cross is on site before, during and after crises and disasters. Our social investment – the (indirect) effects of our initiatives in the local communities in which we work – is primarily the result of the preventative and rebuilding measures we employ. Examples of preventative measures include First Aid training, educational initiatives in conjunction with

epidemics and outbreaks of disease and the development of local emergency preparedness throughout Sweden.

### Effective programmes

It is essential for the Red Cross to evaluate the effectiveness of its activity programme and communicate the work carried out, to ensure our stakeholders know what we represent and what we can deliver.

The way we follow up and evaluate our activities provides vital insight into the organisation's ability to deliver quality and efficiency across its programmes, and measure the impact of programmes and initiatives. Although much of our financing is subject to reporting requirements, we must also follow-up activities internally and communicate the results of our work externally.

All our activities are entered into our planning and follow-up tool, categorised by initiative and area of operation linked to our units and divisions. We use the tool to follow up and



## 65%

of our workforce have undergone training on the organisation's policy and routines on anti-corruption.

nepotism, embezzlement, blackmail, fraud and conflicts of interest. It is neither permitted to provide gifts or benefits to individuals or groups in exchange for services. What this actually entails, for example, when something is considered to be a bribe, is outlined in detail in our code of conduct.

In suspected cases of fraud or corruption, employees, volunteers, members and elected representatives may file an anonymous report to the Red Cross whistleblowing unit.

Due to the high risk of corruption associated with operations overseas, all personnel at our international division are given special training in this area. However, our objective is for all employees to undergo our e-course on anti-corruption. In 2017, 65% of our workforce had done so.



## SEK 435,000

Cost per employee less salaries and operating grants to local operations

report internally on the progress of our activities on a quarterly basis, with a financial review and follow-up in relation to our overall objectives also carried out at this time. The findings are then summarised in a report submitted to the Board of the Red Cross.

We continually evaluate the impact of our activities in Sweden and the rest of the world, compiling an impact report once a year which can be obtained from our website. A lot of information about our work during the past year is also provided in our annual report and activity report. Producing a sustainability report is a further means of communicating the way we work and being even more transparent.

## Ethical responsibility – doing things the right way

### Responsible investments

The Red Cross’s asset management is in accordance with our investment policy. This policy is continually reviewed, and contains rules on ethical investment as well as restrictions. It is of great importance for us to achieve an even and predictable distribution of funds from financial investments. However, good returns, low costs and effective systems of administration and inspection are not enough in themselves; we must also generate returns in ways which do not conflict with our fundamental values.

The ethical guidelines in our investment policy state that asset managers must exercise environmental awareness and social responsibility. In addition to legislation, this means complying with international standards on human rights, labour conditions, anti-corruption and the environment. These international

standards are based on UN declarations and conventions, whose relevance to companies is summarised in, for example, the UN Global Compact. The Red Cross is to avoid investment in companies which have deliberately or repeatedly violated these standards.

In 2016, there was a key addition to our investment policy which specified that the Swedish Red Cross is to avoid investment in companies whose core activities involve extraction of fossil fuels.

### Ethical fundraising

We seek financing from a range of sources. Such funds must always be attributable to ethical sources and may in no way compromise the independence of the organisation. We exercise guidelines on fundraising, for example, declining donations in cases where we cannot accom-

modate the wishes of the donator, and sometimes also on ethical grounds. We also decline contributions in cases where the donor is seeking personal gain in the form of marketing and publicity for which no agreement has been reached.

### Commercial communications

Commercial communications are those carried out in order to generate funds. Such activities may not, for example, impinge on personal integrity or attempt to influence vulnerable groups, such as children.

In addition to complying with national and international law in this area, the Red Cross exercises fundraising guidelines which regulate the way we communicate with donors, the channels we employ, use of text and images in such communication and the rules applying to collaboration, advertising and the media.



Zozan Hussein recruiting on behalf of the Red Cross in Gothenburg.

# Auditor's statement

To the General Assembly of the Central Board of Directors of the Swedish Red Cross, corporate ID number 802002-8711

This sustainability report refers to the Swedish Red Cross and is prepared in accordance with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act. The report has been prepared in accordance with the C4 (Core) standard of the Global Reporting Initiative.

To make it easier to navigate, the report is divided into three main sections referring to the different dimensions of sustainability, that is environmental, social and economic.

## **Mandate and allocation of responsibility**

The Board of Directors is responsible for the 2017 Sustainability Report, and that it is prepared in accordance with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act.

## **The scope and focus of the audit**

My examination has been conducted in accordance with FAR's auditing standard RevR 12 – The auditor's opinion regarding the statutory sustainability report. This means that my examination of the statutory sustainability report is different and substantially less in scope than an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden. I believe that the examination has provided me with sufficient basis for my opinion.

## **Statement**

A sustainability report has been prepared.

Stockholm, 13 April 2018

Tomas Lönnström  
Authorised Public Accountant  
Ernst & Young

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**We would like to thank all Red Cross disaster partners who contribute  
their dedication and knowledge in societal crises in Sweden.**

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**Swedish Red Cross** Box 17563, Hornsgatan 54, 118 91 Stockholm.  
Telephone: +46 (0)8-452 46 00. E-post: [info@redcross.se](mailto:info@redcross.se).  
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