



Belgian
Red Cross
Flanders

helps
people help

“SPOTLIGHT ON 2017”



HELPING WITH THE RIGHT STIMULUS

The Red Cross is providing more help than ever before, as is immediately apparent to anyone glancing at our figures.

That is why we are happy to spotlight our achievements, such as the continued expansion of our care activities and the growing strength of our local sections. At the same time, 2017 was also a year in which we further developed and passed on our expertise, especially with regard to supplying blood, first-aid training, disaster preparedness and assistance.

As an independent volunteer organization, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders cooperates with 191 countries. The work we do together is based on seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. These basic principles are the reason why our work is valued and respected everywhere.

“The global Red Cross movement was founded on the basis of seven fundamental principles. Hence it is no wonder that internally our organization is also strongly value-driven. Accordingly, we expect professionalism, team spirit, integrity and initiative from everyone, whether employees or volunteers. And this approach works, quite literally. Thanks to the unique cooperation between our thousands of volunteers and our employees, we succeed in helping people all over the world, every day.”

Prof. dr. Philippe Vandekerckhove



HELPING WITH THE RIGHT STIMULUS

EVERYONE HELPS

For us, empowering people not only to help themselves, but also to aid others, is central to the concept of self-reliance.

In Flanders we want to train as many first aiders as possible. That is why our long-term approach is focused on education in schools. This way, teachers can train their students every year, repeatedly.

"This year we developed a completely new Train the Trainer course for primary-school teachers, and behind the scenes we are already working on a course for pre-school teachers."

Hans Verstraeten, First Aid Manager





Training is key to making people self-reliant. This way you immediately offer an entire society the tools it needs to react to adversity powerfully and effectively.

The Great Lakes region in Central Africa is one area where we focus strongly on disaster preparedness. In 2017, some 300 Red Cross volunteers and staff received disaster assistance training in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

“We are making a difference on the ground. Close to areas prone to natural disasters, we have built a number of warehouses from scratch and renovated some others. So if a new disaster strikes, more than 200,000 goods will already be available, for example water purification tablets or sheets of corrugated iron to replace torn roofs.”

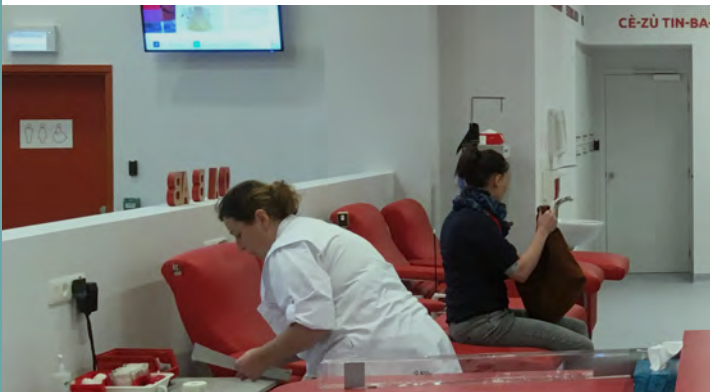
Jeroen Van Keer, International Delegate in Rwanda

READY TO MEET F

Our society is in constant flux. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is evolving with it, constantly anticipating changing needs.

For example, every day we deliver sufficient quantities of high quality and, most importantly of all, safe blood products to hospitals in Flanders and Brussels. In order to coordinate the supply of and demand for blood products even more efficiently in future, the main changes will concern plasma. Demand for plasma is growing worldwide. After all, many life-saving drugs are derived from plasma, so demand for it is rising all the time.

Since the Belgian federal government wants to avoid becoming fully dependent on plasma from abroad, at its request Belgian Red Cross-Flanders will collect 5% more plasma each year over the next five years and put at disposal of the plasma fractionator plant. There, it will be processed and used to make life-saving medicines.



FRESH DEMAND

This is a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity. Consequently, we will prolong the opening hours of our donor centers. Also, in December 2017 we moved to a brand new donor center in the heart of Brussels. This makes us even more accessible for all residents of the city and commuters to the Belgian capital.

“At the same time, we’re also expanding volunteer work from the same location in Brussels. The focus here is on first-aid courses, Adapted Holidays and the Zorgbib library service for hospitals and care institutions. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders’ care activities may not be high-profile, but they make a world of difference for thousands of people.”

Pol Casteleyn, Provincial President



READY TO MEET FRESH DEMAND

EFFICIENT AND E



EFFECTIVE

We want to help as efficiently and effectively as possible. So we put our available resources to optimal use to achieve maximum results. This is done in various ways. Here are a few examples.

In Belgium we launched the Local Support Action: a fundraising campaign whose full proceeds go to local sections, just like those from sticker sales. By working together, the sections sent out more than a million letters this year, effectively informing 38% of Flemish families about their activities.

Online, too, we manage to keep people in Flanders well informed throughout the year. We are active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn and have more than 54,000 followers on one of these social media. Over 2017 as a whole, we reached no fewer than 15 million web users.

In addition, we are also making continuous efforts to automate and digitize existing processes. One good example of this is the Red Cross Online Ordering System (ROOS), offering hospitals a convenient and efficient way of placing electronic orders for the blood products they need.

We are also sustainably using our resources abroad. For instance, in 2017 six successful expertise missions left for Burundi, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania. Belgian Red Cross-Flanders volunteers and staff passed on their specialist knowledge to local first aid teachers, enabling them to act as multipliers and make the local population more self-reliant.

RESEARCH

systematic reviews. One such review helped to change the law this year and prompted the new Blood Act, which entered into force on September 7. Accordingly, men who have had no sex with other men for a whole year are now allowed to give blood.

In addition, in June we also received a quality label from the Belgian Center for Evidence-Based Medicine for the guidelines on which our Help! publications (First aid for everyone and Help! First aid for caregivers) are based. Both were based on extensive research and this year we are seeing those efforts bear fruit.

Our research into forecast-based financing is also new. Countries following this strategy do not wait for natural disasters to occur, but take preventive measures, such as distributing first-aid and hygiene kits or providing tents. Since October, together with the Mozambique-based Climate Center of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the German Red Cross, we have been assessing whether this strategy effectively helps to reduce human suffering and economic damage after such a disaster.



2017 IN FIGURES

270 *rental services for
medical equipment*

3.748 children
learned first aid

76 tra

18 countries

supported in emergencies and disasters

371,209

successful donations

49,329

14 scientific
publications

43 *urgent social
interventions*

935 organ and stem cell transplan

5,704 asylum seekers supported

13,051
volunteers

978
unforgettable holidays

aging cases closed positively

13 structural international partnerships

9 people trained in first aid

25,789
plasma donors

2,539
new company first aiders

46 alarms

station patients matched

*“Once again in 2017,
our mission was to help
the most vulnerable
members of society.
Last year 13,051 volunteers
and 1,270 employees
helped more than 6 million
Flemings to come to the aid
of vulnerable people.
We are proud of such
a tremendous level of
participation. That is why we
are happy to spotlight our
achievements.”*

Philippe Lambrecht, Community President

Want to find out more? Go to
www.rodekruis.be/annualreport
to read our annual report online.

JANUARY



Zorgbib increasingly popular

Ready for a chat, armed with a good book, CD or DVD. That is the concept behind our Zorgbib library service. Social contact plays a central role for our volunteers, and due to the ageing population, alienation and the growing number of people with dementia, we are seeing the popularity of this initiative soar. The extensive range of material available enables us to reach a very wide audience. For example, people living in reception centres for asylum seekers or psychiatric institutions can also make use of our voluntary services.

93,054 ITEMS LOANED
OUT BY **370** ZORGBIB
LIBRARY LENDING
POINTS

FEBRUARY

Aid workers are not targets

February started off with some sad news.

On a single day, six Red Cross employees were murdered in Afghanistan and two were killed in Syria. It proved to be the start of a deadly year.

A total, 45 aid workers worldwide would lose their lives in armed conflicts. The International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) that monitors international humanitarian law launched its #NotATarget campaign. Throughout the year, the ICRC went on to remind everyone that aid workers have to be given the conditions to do their work safely and should never be targets.



MARCH

The emergency response unit deployed to face up to famine in Africa

Extreme weather conditions and persisting conflicts in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen caused a huge famine in several parts of Africa in early 2017. We were one of many organizations to deploy an emergency response unit. In eastern Nigeria we helped 4,500 families start farming again. Our airdrops provided 120,000 people with life-saving food parcels in virtually inaccessible parts of South Sudan.



APRIL

Record-breaking sticker sales

650,000! That was the number of stickers sold by our volunteers, beating the previous year's tally by 80,000! This unprecedented 14% increase generated a total of 3.25 million euro. The revenue went to our 241 local sections, which use it to buy ambulances, care supplies and first-aid equipment, resuscitation dolls, AED devices, stretchers and other key items. In this way, Flemings who bought stickers were directly investing in their own environment.

MAY

Replacers for 40,000 donors

Every year we lose 40,000 blood donors. Some bow out temporarily, due to pregnancy, extensive travel plans or because they get tattooed. Others have to stop donating because they pass the age ceiling of 71 or fall ill. Consequently, this year we focused on replenishing our donor pool via our 'Replace me' campaign.

**165,499 DONORS
OF BLOOD, PLASMA
AND PLATELETS**





JUNE

Repair Cafés, training courses and culture in reception centers

On average, asylum seekers spend a year in our reception centers. Our centers encourage their residents to make the best possible use of their time by participating in a range of various activities. More residents than ever before took Dutch classes. The big draws included sport, games and also acting. Indeed, last year saw a number of projects launched together with theater companies. Repair Cafés, where residents help to fix faulty or broken bikes, microwave ovens and even clothing, also remained popular.

JULY

Spotlight on first-aid post

During the summer of 2017, our volunteers were on hand at thousands of events, including athletics tournaments, village fetes and concerts. And their presence did not go unnoticed! The TV magazine Iedereen Beroemd (Everyone Famous) came by to film, producing a behind-the-scenes report each week on one of our first-aid posts. Our volunteers also constituted a prominent presence at festivals, for the first time deploying a brand-new, nippy emergency vehicle that can easily transport victims lying flat. The Ambu-Gator was immediately deployed at 14 different events.



AB plasma donors save a life

Plasma – the fluid in the blood in which blood cells circulate – unexpectedly made the news this summer. Our stocks came under pressure because one patient needed several bags of AB plasma every day to treat a life-threatening disease. Moreover, only 5% of the population has an AB blood type. AB plasma is prized anyway, because just as O is the universal blood group for blood, AB is the universal blood group for plasma. Fortunately, our appeal managed to attract a lot of donors. In just two days we collected more than 1,000 extra plasma bags and made 37% more appointments.

“Although plasma is not as well-known as blood, every year tens of thousands of people need it, either because they were injured in a serious traffic accident or because they are seriously ill.”

dr. Daan Dierickx - hematologist at the university hospital
UZ Leuven

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

First aid not that simple after all?

8 out of 10 Belgians say they know what to do in emergency situations, but that self-assessment of their know-how appears to be inaccurate. 35% of people make wrong choices when they want to help others. This was one of the findings of our World First Aid Day survey. And it provides us with a perfect reason to raise people's awareness that correct first-aid knowledge really can save lives.



742 REGISTERED
TEACHERS GAVE **11,799**
HOURS OF FIRST-AID
INSTRUCTION

OCTOBER

A helping hand for 40,000 families

Extreme violence in Myanmar caused more than 600,000 people to flee to neighboring Bangladesh in 2017. More than half of those who fled are children. They are now stuck in overcrowded refugee camps on the muddy banks of the Naf River. A serious shortage of clean water and sanitation means there is a high risk of an outbreak of cholera or diphtheria. At the request of the Bengal Red Crescent, Red Cross-Flanders' emergency response unit left immediately to help in the camps at Cox's Bazar.



"This is the region's most serious humanitarian crisis in decades. We've already been working round the clock for three months to somewhat alleviate the needs of the families living here. In all, we already helped 40,000 families with food, tent material and ropes to reinforce the bamboo huts."

Natalie Sterckx, volunteer member of the emergency response unit team

“My husband has been partially paralyzed since suffering a brain hemorrhage. We used to travel a lot, but now that’s no longer possible. Thanks to the Red Cross, though, we managed to get away for a week together this summer. We enjoyed it so much!”

Sigriet, 49 years old



NOVEMBER

Holiday fun for everyone!

Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, another 375 guests enjoyed a carefree holiday in 2017. For the last time on the holiday ship in the Netherlands, in Hotel Ijsselvliedt in Wezep and in the Middelpunt holiday home in Middelkerke, because in November we also finished the structural work on our own brand new hotel: Domein Polderwind. This is a unique 4-star holiday home, specially designed for people for whom going on holiday is not always easy due to a handicap, illness or old age.

13,000 volunteers: our pride and our strength

Always being on hand and ready to help anyone is no easy matter. So on International Volunteer Day (December 5), we launched a new campaign centered on volunteering, entitled 'Geef er eentje voor eentje die zich geeft'. As the largest volunteer organization, we want to ensure that there are always sufficient resources on hand to deal with major or minor disasters.



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