

Red Cross Movement in the Arctic

ROLE AND GOALS

WHAT IS THE ARCTIC?



AN AREA GOING THROUGH CHANGES

- The Arctic is a vast northern area, characterised by severe conditions and challenging geography. It is home to numerous northern communities, but also a target of growing interest from outside the area looking to the untapped possibilities, resources and commercial interests the area has to offer.
- Climate change is affecting the Arctic area in a severe way. The rise in temperature is twice as rapid as in the rest of the world.
- The increased Arctic activities also increase possible risks and vulnerabilities in the area.
- Northern communities and specifically indigenous populations are the most vulnerable ones affected by the changes in the area.

WHAT DO WE DO?



SNAPSHOTS OF RED CROSS ACTIONS IN THE ARCTIC

- **American Red Cross** in Alaska trains response teams located in hub communities in Alaska. These teams are deployable and will respond to every disaster in Alaska no matter how remote.
- **Canadian Red Cross** is in discussion with representatives of the Cree Nation about the possibility of supporting the establishment of a winterized field hospital to service Indigenous communities.
- **Russian Red Cross** holds sessions for students and school children on prevention of frostbite and right rules of conduct in cold conditions.
- **Icelandic Red Cross** has evacuation and emergency shelter supplies in mobile trailer systems in 20 locations around Iceland.
- **Finnish Red Cross** has developed an Emergency Evacuation Hospital for rapid deployment and a mobile trailer system for setting up an Emergency Evacuation Centre.
- **Swedish Red Cross** has a mobile pool of Psychosocial support volunteers that can be deployed to the north.
- **The Greenlandic Red Cross** has developed an Arctic First Aid guide and programme to address the specificities of emergencies and response in the Arctic conditions.
- The Longyearbyen branch of the **Norwegian Red Cross** in Svalbard has developed an Arctic Emergency Survival Kit that is airdroppable and contains protective equipment for the Arctic conditions.

WHAT ARE OUR STRENGTHS?

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

- **We are local.** Over 10 000 Red Cross volunteers in the Arctic with broad understanding and know-how of the Arctic conditions.
- **We are global.** Extensive experience of the Red Cross Movement in disaster management and the use of Emergency Response Units in disasters all over the world.
- **We help the most vulnerable** and strive to ensure that no one gets left behind. Red Cross Movement strengthens the resilience of communities through capacity building, such as First Aid and Psychosocial Support trainings and advocating for self-preparedness and for citizen's own capacity to act in emergencies.
- **We understand the humanitarian consequences of climate change.** The Red Cross National Societies and the IFRC work closely on climate change adaptation and community resilience.
- **We have a special role as auxiliaries to states.** The mandate of the Red Cross is based on the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols and the status of National Societies recognized in national legislations.

WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

COOPERATION ON DIFFERENT LEVELS

- **The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement** is made up from over 190 National Societies, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Together the different members of the Movement work towards building strong, healthy and safe communities and assist vulnerable people around the world.
- **States and authorities.** Red Cross National Societies cooperate closely with governments and authorities both on national and local level.
- **The Arctic Council.** The IFRC has had observer status in the Arctic Council since 2000. Red Cross works on Arctic issues together with the Member States, Permanent Participants and other Observers.
- **Non-governmental organizations and other aid organizations.** Red Cross National Societies are involved in various forms of cooperation and networks with NGO's in different sectors.
- **Scientific community.** Red Cross works closely with research institutions and networks. Red Cross also has a Climate Center that provides knowledge and advise on best practices in reducing the impacts of climate change and extreme-weather events on vulnerable people.

WHAT ARE OUR FUTURE GOALS?

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE RED CROSS IN THE ARCTIC

- **Deepen cooperation with relevant actors in the Arctic.** We need to make sure that relevant actors in the Arctic understand and recognize the added value of the Red Cross in emergency preparedness, emergency response in the Arctic and the climate actions and adaptation work on local and global level.
- **Scale up Red Cross Movement actions in the Arctic** to better respond also to the future developments of the area.
- **Ensure that local actors and communities** are kept in the centre of future developments in the Arctic and advocate for the most vulnerable people to be taken into account in future infrastructure and business projects.