



# Migration Strategy 2023–2027



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# Introduction

It has become clear in recent years: The German Red Cross (GRC) can act quickly and comprehensively in crisis situations in Germany. This was already evident in connection with the large-scale refugee movements in 2015 as well as in the years that followed. The GRC has been quick to fulfil its mandate to act as a partner for politics and society and has worked closely with the federal, state and local governments – as well as with other welfare agencies and partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Accommodation facilities were set up nationwide and the migrants<sup>1</sup> were quickly provided for by a large number of staff and volunteer helpers. The GRC was able to draw on nationwide structures, professional expertise in working with migrants and the professional commitment of volunteers. The association lived up to its mission and claim to help people in need.

The GRC's readiness and ability to act in crisis and emergency situations is therefore beyond question. It is always guided by the seven principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. How-

ever, for long-term work, there is no common narrative for migration that provides a larger strategic framework for the GRC. The focus here is on efforts to help shape the field of migration socially and proactively. The strategic orientation always serves to offer people the best possible help.

For the first time, the strategy presented here sets association policy goals to take up the previous work of the GRC in the field of migration and guide it in the future. Priority is given to addressing: (1) people who need help, (2) the host society and (3) GRC staff and volunteers who need a reliable framework for their actions. The strategy is guided by two key questions. Firstly: How can a society properly welcome migrants? And secondly: How can coexistence and social participation be made possible for everyone?

Ultimately, this aims to provide a high-quality and needs-based services for the people supported by the GRC, enabling their participation.

## The strategy is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 deals with the self-image of the German Red Cross and how it is reflected in its migration work.
- Chapter 2 presents various selected dimensions of migration and their significance in the work of the GRC. For each selected dimension, the conditions that we would like to achieve together in the respective area are presented, as well as the strategic goals on how to reach this condition.
- Finally, an overview is presented of the next steps after the adoption of the strategy.

## Goals of the strategy

The GRC is already extensively engaging with the topic of migration. However, future goals should include:

- Guiding the work of the GRC by awareness of a diverse society.
- Giving greater attention to both migrants and the host society to raise awareness of the various dimensions of migration work and have an impact on the community.
- The GRC thereby contributing to shaping a diverse society and reflecting this in its own organisation.

The overarching **goals of the migration strategy** are:

- Strengthening social infrastructure and opportunities for participation for vulnerable groups.
- Counselling, care or assistance – the GRC provides support tailored to the needs of its target group.
- Being perceived as a competent and subsidiary partner for migration work.

This strategy will be carried out for five years, from 2023 to 2027, and its implementation will be continuously evaluated. Particular attention shall be paid to the challenges of implementation, i.e.: Where do these occur and how can or could they be successfully overcome?

To achieve this, personnel resources within the organization need to be allocated for the evaluation. The measures for implementing the strategy and the mechanisms for evaluation will be developed in the first few months after the strategy is adopted at the federal level, with the involvement of the regional branches.

# 1 Self-image

## The principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and their impact in the field of migration

As a National Red Cross Society and umbrella organisation of non-statutory welfare, the GRC is committed to the seven principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. In the field of migration, this means, for example, that the GRC advocates for the concerns of those who are most vulnerable while maintaining political neutrality. In cooperation with other actors in migration, the

GRC is committed to ensuring that the needs of migrants are adequately considered in legislative projects and decision-making processes. The GRC's goal is to neither promote nor prevent migration. The GRC approach is based strictly on the humanitarian principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The GRC acts on this basis to protect migrants. This includes both safeguarding their rights and enabling them to live in dignity.

## Our mission as the GRC

The German Red Cross is part of the global community of the RCRC Movement that provides assistance to victims of conflicts and disasters and others indiscriminately, based solely on their needs. Under the principle of humanity, the GRC is committed to the life, health, well-being, protection, peaceful coexistence and dignity of all people.<sup>2</sup>

For the GRC's migration work in Germany, this means that we help migrants – regardless of their country of origin, social background, ethnic group, residence status or religious affiliation. The GRC supports migrants, including EU citizens, refugees and migrants deemed illegal by public authorities.<sup>3</sup> Particular attention is paid to groups that are in a particularly vulnerable position.

As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and as the National Red Cross Society of the Federal Republic of Germany, the GRC is in a unique position to advocate for people who come to

Germany and to enter into dialogue with political leaders and decision-makers. In addition, as part of this movement, the GRC is easily recognised because migrants may already know the Red Cross and the Red Crescent from their countries of origin and transit – which often creates a basis of trust for those seeking help. The main tasks of the National RCRC Societies in the field of migration include accommodation and providing care after arrival, information and orientation, tracing service offers, health care and long-term support for integration and social participation.<sup>4</sup>

The GRC is a well-known and trusted partner for migration-specific actors in politics, business, society and academia and therefore a reliable partner for funding agencies. Many essential services for those in need can be realised through project funding. However, in terms of sustainability of these services, a long-term and strategic approach is necessary.

## Our vision

In the field of migration, the GRC's work aims to ensure that migration policies and laws are more aligned with the needs of migrants and promote social cohesion. Additionally, the GRC strives to maintain high-quality work in the migration sector. The trust of the population

in general and of migrants in particular in the German legal and social system is strengthened.

Further developing the services and their quality will support migrants and their communities and promote

and facilitate social integration. The GRC visibly assumes responsibility both in supporting state actors and advocating for persons receiving advice and assistance.

As a welfare organisation, the GRC represents the diversity of society – migrants are thus an integral part of the organisation. Their expertise and experience provide a good basis for needs-based, effective and sustainable migration work.

## Diversity in society and within the German Red Cross

In recent years, Germany has experienced further profound and dynamic demographic changes. Due to the influx of people from other countries and a change in the population by age group, the ratio of the number of people of working age (from 20 to 66 years) is changing considerably.<sup>6</sup> So far, this increasing ageing trend could only be partially compensated by migration. The statistics on the group of “people with a migration background” are essential when considering demographic changes<sup>7</sup>: In 2020, 26.7 per cent of all residents in Germany had a migrant background.

When minorities become the majority, the question inevitably arises: Who integrates whom into what, and who has the authority to interpret and make decisions about it? The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has long pursued inclusive approaches. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies make the global network particularly inclusive for people of different colours, ethnic origins and religious backgrounds. Nevertheless, the humanitarian work of the GRC also requires constantly re-examining its own behaviour, practices and structures to ensure that it meets the highest standards of inclusion and social justice.<sup>8</sup>

To achieve societal participation, the German Red Cross (GRC) considers the analysis of social inequalities and exclusions relevant, rather than the cultural, ethnic, religious, or other characteristics of an individual or a group. Social inequality is based on structur-

The approaches in this strategy overlap with those of the GRC Strategy 2030 and with strategies and policies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its components (for example [IFRC Strategy 2030](#), [IFRC Policy on Migration of 2009](#) and [IFRC Strategy on Migration 2018-2022](#)). A Movement Strategy on Migration is currently being developed for adoption by the 2024 Council of Delegates, and initial approaches have been included in this strategy where possible.<sup>5</sup>

al, institutional and social exclusion. Recognising this, analysing its causes, mitigating it or eliminating it altogether – this is the way to enable participation for all members of our society.

Participation is part of a pluralistic and increasingly heterogeneous society. All social actors contribute their specific resources to form the motor for social developments. Therefore, one of the tasks of the GRC is to implement participation where it is not (yet) present.

Participation, however, cannot just be “prescribed”. The question is rather which values should determine how to live together. All members of our society live in multiple constantly changing relationships and assignments and are subject to constant change. The changing social structures and diverse identities should help achieve a discourse at eye level. The GRC is committed to this vision.

The diversity of society offers an enormous potential of social – and economic – resources. Also for the GRC.

As part of a globally active movement and organisation in which voluntary work is of particular importance, the GRC can have an impact on society. For us, diversity means “commonalities instead of differences”. The GRC does not focus on the specifics of individuals or groups, but sees diversity as part of a “new normality” in which people and groups are on an equal footing with each other. The GRC deconstructs categorisa-

tions and “labelling” such as “people with a migration background”, “people with disabilities”, “Muslims” etc. and instead emphasises what connects, what unites, what holds together and thus makes us strong – as an organisation and as part of society.

Helping to shape change in a society requires an impact-oriented approach that focuses on the long term and sustainability. The GRC advocates for the implementation of this new concept of integration and uses it discursively in all areas in which it is active as an organisation: politics, economy, society, social affairs, culture, academia, education, work and health, among others.

Exclusion, discrimination and racism must be addressed wherever they occur. It should be emphasised that integration is not only a cultural, ethnic, religious or national issue, but also a question of class, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.

For a society based on solidarity, the GRC leads the social dialogue on commonly accepted values. The GRC does not believe sovereignty of interpretation should be left to a few, but that all members of society should have their say.

The GRC creates communication and discussion platforms for exchange within the organisation and externally, with a special focus on reflection and perception.

The GRC also conducts these discourses internally: They are part of the process of opening up the organisation and encompass all areas of work and hierarchical levels for both staff and volunteers, as described in subgoal 3 of the [GRC Strategy 2030](#).

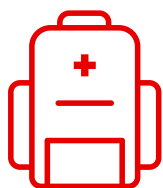
In this context, work with volunteers and persons engaged in civil society plays a prominent role. The whole of society is represented here, so that discourses that take place here can have a far-reaching effect on it. Thanks to its structure and principles, the GRC is predestined to create offers for social cohesion – among other things, places where people from very different walks of life can meet, exchange ideas and establish new networks.

To do justice to the social reality with its new media and forms and means of communication, the GRC is developing innovative formats to conduct necessary discourses that reach all people.



## 2 Dimensions of migration work in the GRC

### 2.1 Ahead of an arrival in Germany / migration related work outside Germany



In the framework of its International Cooperation German Red Cross supports its Sister National Societies in more than 40 countries or else works through the International

Committee of the Red Cross or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The reason behind GRC's focus on migrants and other people affected by the phenomenon of migration lies in the particular needs emanating from their condition. In order to meet these needs GRC through its part-

ners supports for instance with water and sanitation provision, basic medical care, accommodation, tracing services as well as advice on basic services in the migrants' transit or final destination, services provided at times by other providers, and where applicable GRC supports a referral of migrants to the corresponding entity. GRC furthermore supports voucher and cash distributions to migrants, as well as partly to host communities, which can be either conditional e.g., to pay for food or rent or else unconditional. Another measure can be activities aiming at strengthening social cohesion between migrants and host communities.

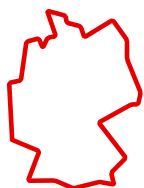
#### In its migration related work outside Germany GRC bases itself on the following strategic elements:

- The needs of migrants and other people affected by the phenomenon of migration are addressed with an integrated approach which includes emergency relief in case of disasters as well as long term assistance and measures strengthening the resilience of communities and individuals.
- GRC adapts its approach to each individual scenario, so depending on the situation GRC may target migrants exclusively or else include migrants in its wider humanitarian programming which tries to address the needs of the population as a whole. In addition depending on the respective vulnerabilities GRC may address the needs of host communities, communities in transit locations as well as of those left behind in locations of origin.
- In its cooperation with its Sister National Societies GRC strives to have migrants' rights respected and supports their social integration where applicable. Supporting migrants also entails efforts to protect them from abuse, exploitation and them being denied to exercise their rights. GRC therefore, in its cooperation with the respective National Red

Cross or Red Crescent Society, strives to enable migrants to avoid abuse and be in a position to exercise their rights, for example by offering legal advice, referring them to relevant and competent organizations or institutions, and supporting the National Society in the field of humanitarian advocacy.

- The humanitarian challenges the phenomenon of migration brings about span borders, regions and cultures. GRC therefore supports regional cooperation between National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as part of the Movement-wide responsibility as to capacity building, mutual support and coordination. Among other things, GRC supports its Sister National Societies in countries along migration routes in order to strengthen their cooperation and coordination with each other aiming at strengthening their common humanitarian response. GRC considers it to be of great importance that potential migrants are made aware of the risks migrating brings with it, without however influencing the decision whether or not to migrate one way or the other.
- GRC does not consider a return to the place of origin to necessarily be the end of a migration journey. For this reason, as part of its international work, the GRC strives to ensure that migrants are advised on their options. When migrants do return to their country of origin, they often face particular challenges; to help and protect them there, the GRC seeks cooperation with the National Societies in countries of destination and return.
- Migration pressures in countries of origin can be caused by social and economic hardship, as well as environmental degradation or persecution, armed conflict and violence. Through its international engagement in disaster risk reduction and resilience building, GRC contributes to alleviating the pressures which drive people into migration against their will.

## 2.2 Arrival in Germany



In Germany, the design of support and assistance programs aims to facilitate the integration of migrants into German society. This includes enabling their participation, avail

opportunities, and unfold their personalities in dignity.

To enable such participation, learning the German language is an important aspect – this requires accessible language courses. Language qualifications lead to better opportunities on the labour market. In addition, recognition of foreign qualifications as well as previous professional experience is necessary. Recognising and valuing this potential is an important contribution to strengthening participation as well as the self-confidence and independence of migrants – just as it is for society in Germany.

It is important to recognise the different abilities and to support people who have special needs accordingly and to create personalised services. Support and guidance by volunteers are conducive to successful participation.

Lack of or hesitant support services after arrival means that migrants are unable to make the most of their potential. Integration services that are not available at the beginning cannot simply be made up for later. It is particularly important to make offers for participation accessible immediately upon arrival, regardless of residence status and residence prospects.

### The GRC has the following strategic goals before and after the arrival of migrants:

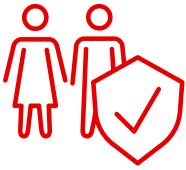
- The GRC advocates unrestricted participation in social life regardless of residence status or residence prospects.
- The GRC supports integration from day one.
- After arriving in Germany, all people should be informed transparently about their entitlements and the necessary official steps. Procedures for registration, receiving benefits, access to medical assistance and other essential measures should be made simple, straightforward and should be explained in an understandable way. This also includes ensuring that asylum seekers can exercise their right to asylum procedure counselling independent of the authorities. The counselling is intended to inform asylum seekers about the asylum procedure in consideration of their reasons for fleeing and to prepare them for the interview. If necessary, advice should be given on residence prospects.
- The services of the GRC Tracing Service – searching for missing relatives and counselling on family reunification issues – should be known and available to families separated from each other.
- All migrants should receive the necessary support to quickly familiarise themselves in their new living environment, move independently and be able to assert their urgent needs. This includes – even when accommodated in shelters – initial orientation services that enable people to meet important needs directly (for example, basic consumer knowledge, digital participation, use of public transport, a bank account, etc.).
- The first offer to learn German should also be made soon after arrival. Access to language courses should be made possible on a regular basis and should consider the different needs of migrants, including those with disabilities. Delays in language acquisition have a negative impact on integration prospects.

- Recognition of foreign educational qualifications and professional experience should also be possible, irrespective of residence status or residence prospects and should already start upon arrival.
- Needs for special protection must be determined promptly upon arrival in Germany and on an individual basis. The test should also apply to people who do not go through an asylum procedure, but are nevertheless accepted as refugees in Germany (for example, as part of a humanitarian resettlement programme). A medical examination should provide information on whether there is a need for protection, a disability or an illness requiring treatment for any other reason.
- The initial orientation should lead to long-term integration support. Here, the starting position, the possibilities and the goals of the individual people are to be dealt with individually. Integration support includes increasing use of the German language, vocational orientation and further training, as well as assistance in taking the necessary steps to move out of shared accommodation. Integration into society also includes knowledge of the rule of law, the democratic constitution and the history of Germany.
- The German Red Cross (GRC) offers a wide range of counselling and support services at various organizational levels of the association, provided by both volunteer and professional staff.



Help for refugees from Ukraine in Ulm May 2022  
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## 2.3 Accommodation



### Fundamental

Arriving and living in a reception centre or collective accommoda-

tion shapes migrants in all aspects of their lives and therefore has a significant impact on their health and resources for participating in society and thus determines their future prospects – not only for their lives in Germany, but also elsewhere. Therefore, the field of “accommodation” involves much more than just the aspect of housing. For the GRC, working in such a facility means working for and with migrants, supporting them according to their degree of need in all situations of life and thereby assisting their arrival and, above all, their journey into society.

As a care association in such a facility, the GRC is, depending on the location, confronted with individual challenges, which it meets proactively through its connection to the social environment, spatial structure and the residents. Furthermore, clients’ accommodation is provided in compliance with asylum and residence law as well as regulatory provisions that are of enormous importance for the work in accommodation.

This applies to all forms of collective accommodation, but especially to the initial reception facilities of the German federal states, which have been further developed into so-called arrival, decision-making and return facilities (AnKER centres). In conjunction with the tightening of asylum and residence laws that have been passed, which in recent years have led, among other things, to longer periods of stay in these initial reception facilities and thus to more difficult access to social life in general, this has had the effect of worsening the personal prospects of many migrants, which in turn has an impact on the work of the GRC.

Against this background, the GRC’s involvement in accommodation is strongly characterised by a simultaneity of auxiliary support for the commissioning authorities and advocacy for the interests of its clients. In this context, the GRC assumes not only a state mandate and responsibility for the protection of the residents within the facility – rather, the GRC is confronted with the challenge of safeguarding the fundamental

and human rights of those seeking protection as well as their rights during and after the completion of the asylum procedure.

Where necessary, the GRC points out the need/needs of the accommodated persons and, if possible, develops proposals for improvement which are submitted to the commissioning authorities. In this way, the GRC takes up professional political positions, assumes advocacy responsibility for the residents of its facilities and works towards improving their situation. At the same time, the GRC must always act in a neutral manner with regard to party politics and be perceived in the same way.

The GRC is active in the accommodation of migrants both in initial reception facilities and in shared accommodation, and sometimes also in other types of accommodation, such as housing associations. Accordingly, the GRC offers a wide range of needs-oriented services in these – in some cases very different – facilities, depending on the location and the situation.

### First reception centers (EAE)

The situation in an EAE is characterised by the immediate arrival of people in a foreign country and the asylum application at the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees). Within a very short time, the newcomers have contact with different federal and state authorities; the complex asylum procedure begins. Here, those affected need appropriate orientation, support and care. The initial reception facilities are thus often much more than just a place of accommodation: For migrants, they can be both the place of residence and the place where they receive counselling, health and medical care or – in the case of children – care and schooling.

Although the concentration of services in AnKER facilities results in short distances, it may also prevent transitions to regular structures by making it difficult to establish contact with external services and to integrate or include the protection seekers in the social space and society.

### **Collective accommodation (GU)**

After the obligation to live in an EAE ends, the vast majority of migrants spend a period of time in shared communal accommodation or, rarely, in housing associations. The GRC is particularly active there on behalf of the districts, independent cities, and municipalities. These facilities differ from EAEs mainly in their size and structure, though there are very large facilities with several hundred residents.

From the clients' point of view, the most notable difference when moving from an EAE to municipal accommodation is the reduced number of services provided in the facilities, which are almost exclusively located outside the GU.

The GRC advocates for conditions in accommodation that respect and promote human dignity – regardless of the type of accommodation, whether in state structures or the private sector.

## **The GRC has the following strategic goals for accommodation offers:**

- The GRC considers the accommodation, care and support of migrants in its facilities to be an essential task of Red Cross work and is continuously expanding its activities in this field. The GRC offers itself as a professional partner to government agencies and proactively approaches the German federal states as well as districts, independent cities and municipalities.
- The GRC acts as a bridge builder and pursues the approach of “integration from day one” in the EAE. This approach, as well as the diversity of the residents' needs, makes active networking by the GRC absolutely necessary to bring services that are needed but not yet available – after consultation with the commissioning parties – into the facility or to achieve a connection to external services.
- The residence permit perspective of the residents is irrelevant for the GRC; only the degree of need determines how those affected receive support from the GRC. The GRC is therefore committed to ensuring that people with poor residence prospects also have access to the services offered at the facility.
- Once again, the GRC counters this with active networking in the environment of the facility and work with volunteers to establish voluntary services in the facilities as well as targeted referral counselling to external agencies, for example to specific counselling or to regular structures, such as daycare centres, schools or medical facilities. In doing so, the GRC explains structural problems to the competent authorities and works towards overcoming them. The GRC also acts as an advocate for its clients in communal accommodation and works to ensure that their rights are protected.
- In the community context, the GRC staff ensure peaceful coexistence in the facilities through transparent and context-sensitive communication. In addition, the GRC designs project plans and implements them, if necessary, with the involvement of external cooperation partners.

## *“safeguarding the fundamental and human rights”*

### **Quality assurance and conceptual development**

- In the field of accommodating migrants, the GRC contributes its wide-ranging competences and experience and ensures a high level of care and counselling for its clients. In this context, the GRC attaches great importance to transparent, non-violent and context-sensitive communication with the residents of its facilities. This is ensured and expanded through continuous training and further education of the staff, for example through methods of volunteer management as well as knowledge of asylum and residence legislation at federal and state level.
- The GRC also pursues participatory approaches and methods through which residents are won over, for example, as multipliers for their communities in the facilities and are involved in decision-making and communication. This creates empowerment.
- Existing concepts, for example on protection from violence or pandemic plans, are consistently developed further and adapted to the needs of the target group. At the same time, the GRC formulates the need for further fundamental concepts, such as procedures for identifying migrants in particular need of protection, if such methods do not yet exist or have been insufficiently implemented so far. In order to enable its clients to participate in society in all areas of life, all levels of the GRC support its contracting authorities in developing new accommodation concepts and proactively offer their assistance. In this context, the association advocates for adequate equipment and structure in first reception centers and collective accommodations (for example, free Wi-Fi, mobile phone charging facilities, places to retreat, workplaces, etc.).
- In this way, the GRC contributes to the continuous further development of the reception system, the implementation of European Union directives and improvement of the situation of residents.
- The competitive disadvantages in the field of “accommodation” arising from the GRC staff’s tariff-based payment compared to commercial providers are offset by the high importance placed on quality in applications, concepts, and, last but not least, in practical work with the target groups. The GRC presents itself to current or potential contracting authorities as a professional partner organization, thus acquiring new contracts.

## 2.4 Counselling



Individual support and counselling for migrants is an important pillar of the GRC's migration work. Various counselling services within the GRC are available to migrants and support them with their concerns and problems. Counselling is in principle open-ended, independent, transparent, voluntary and confidential.

The GRC maintains a large number of counselling centres funded by the local authorities, the state or the federal government with different counselling focuses and target groups. In general terms, a distinction can be made between four major counselling structures: counselling for asylum seekers on social and residence law issues, migration and integration counselling, counselling on search and family reunification, and return counselling services.

An essential principle of counselling is the focus on the client: The GRC stands by its clients and shows them the advantages and disadvantages of different solutions which they can use to make a decision. Especially for people in vulnerable situations who are particularly in need of protection, this advocacy approach is very important, as it can support them in exercising their rights.

The counselling services are of great importance both for clients and within the GRC: For those seeking advice, counselling services play an important role when arriving in Germany, finding their way in complex systems, active participation and exercising their rights.

For the GRC and other actors, these counselling services provide important connections: Individual concerns and problems meet state structures, programmes and systems here. The work of the counselling services is indispensable for identifying weaknesses in these structures and pointing out the need for change.

Through direct contact with people seeking advice, the counselling services also have a wide range of experience and knowledge that is also of great value for other areas of the GRC and for specific projects and programmes. The counselling services are in close exchange with, among others, programmes on children, youth, family as well as offers of emergency assistance.

Many of those seeking advice have experienced unequal treatment, exclusion and racism. Structural exclusion, residence laws and language barriers are obstacles to access and lead to many services not being used or not being used sufficiently by those seeking advice.

In addition to those seeking advice, the GRC also considers other actors as a target group of the counselling services – these especially include government offices and state and municipal institutions. The counselling service staff are in regular contact with government offices and agencies regarding the concerns of those seeking counselling. They know which services, support and offers are available to their clients and where they experience exclusion and cannot or cannot fully take advantage of offers. Through direct contact with employees of various offices, they draw attention to incorrect handling, gaps in the system and the need for improvement.

Due to the complexity and diversity of the issues, training counselling service staff is time-consuming. Sustainable and long-term financing of programmes is therefore of great importance for the long-term employment of the staff.

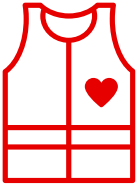
The GRC's counselling services offer individual case-based counselling and therefore work within the framework of the Act on Out-of-Court Legal Services (RDG), which stipulates various aspects of professional counselling. By adhering to the requirements of the RDG, the specific challenges faced by counselling service workers can be addressed.



## **GRC has following strategic goals for counselling:**

- Those seeking advice are supported in exercising and claiming their rights. Migrants who have difficult access to services and offers due to discriminatory structures should have their access facilitated and made easier through the counseling services. Where necessary and appropriate, the GRC offers counselling services for specific groups.
- Counselling service staff participate in local networks, exchange information with other (counselling) services and – if required by the concerns of the counselling seekers – involve other actors.
- The GRC advocates for municipal, state-wide and nationwide programmes that consider the specific needs of people with migration history or in particularly vulnerable situations. The counselling services therefore contribute to adapting state offers and structures to the reality of a post-migrant, multi-collective society within the new concept of integration.
- However, the GRC bases its counselling services on actual needs. It designs its counselling services so that access and support are tailored to the target group and can be implemented over the long term. Counselling and support is available to those with the corresponding need, regardless of residence title or origin.
- In addition to the GRC providing up-to-date information on the state and national level, further training and events for the staff of the counselling services are organised and facilitated. Only in this way is it possible to know and apply the current status of the large number of changes in law and very differentiated regulations in the various areas of counselling. In addition, the GRC provides contact persons who offer support for specific questions and have the necessary legal expertise.
- To address the concerns of those seeking advice appropriately, it is also necessary for the counselling service staff to be able to obtain further support and expertise. The GRC is committed to ensuring that interpreters in particular who establish good communication between those seeking and those providing advice can be included if necessary. The support of volunteers who can, e.g., accompany people seeking advice to appointments is also important for counselling services. Staff members also have the opportunity to share and process their counselling experiences through regular supervisory sessions.

## 2.5 Human resources management and volunteering



The basis for needs-oriented, effective and sustainable GRC migration work is provided by qualified staff and a solid volunteer base. A high degree of professionalism, motivation, commitment and intercultural competence characterises the work of the staff and volunteers involved in the GRC migration work. At the same time, both staff and volunteers are confronted with the ambivalence of wanting to provide the best possible help while having to move between the conflicting demands of their own professional ethics, the principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, legal regulations, organisational conditions and the plight of their clients.

In addition to the efforts to create good working conditions for people in the GRC, the recruitment of workers from abroad is also an issue: In the view of the GRC, the ethical justifiability of recruitment is paramount. Workers recruited from abroad need information and appropriate support services to help them find their way around the workplace and in Germany.

To be able to do this, appropriate working conditions are needed that are flexible and offer a longer-term prospects.

### The GRC therefore pursues the following strategic goals for personnel and volunteer management:

- Within the framework of personnel management and the supervision of volunteers, it is ensured that the professional competence of staff members is promoted. Training, advanced training and training events with migration-specific content, but also on other topics relevant to the work (social/socio-political, legal, methodological-didactic, intercultural content, etc.) are organised and offered.
- In view of the numerous factors that influence, often hinder and burden staff and volunteers in their activities, they are provided with suitable methods and tools for orientation and relief. These range from peer counselling and resilience training to supervision and other measures for personal development and strengthening. In addition, offers are made available that provide employees with clarity and transparency with regard to those principles that can guide them in the context of their work, that are binding for them and that determine their actions. Staff members are empowered to act and provide assistance according to the principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
- The organizational conditions that shape the activities in both staff and volunteer roles are of tremendous importance for the commitment, motivation, and impact of the staff. The culture and climate of the organisation, the workflows and other structural processes, as well as the spatial, temporal and technical conditions are designed to be positive and engagement-friendly. Members of staff and volunteers experience recognition, appreciation and care.
- The partnership and trustful cooperation between the staff and volunteers is promoted and supported.
- Requirements and expectations of employees, e.g., with regard to flexible working hours and opportunities for mobile working, are taken into account.
- The importance and relevance of migration work, both in society as a whole and within the organisation, are recognised at all levels of the GRC. Migration work is embedded in sustainable structures and appropriately funded. Staff are offered long-term employment prospects; fixed-term contracts, which are often due to the requirement of

annual funding, are avoided as far as possible. The GRC seriously and emphatically advocates for adequate and appropriate funding, including multi-year and long-term funding for staff positions with funding agencies and actors responsible for granting funding. Organisations and employees involved in the GRC's migration work receive the necessary planning security and prospects to be able to work sustainably and effectively.

- In the area of volunteering, interested people are offered both short-term and project-related assignments as well as longer-term opportunities for involvement. Volunteers experience appreciation, support and intensive guidance. Appropriate financial and human resources are available for this purpose. The support structures available for staff are also accessible to volunteers.
- Diversity and multiculturalism are significant factors in staff recruitment, staff retention and staff development.
- An inclusive, diverse and anti-discriminatory organisational structure and culture ensures that barriers to employment and engagement are removed for all who are interested – especially migrants – and that valuable human resources that were previously ignored are gained.
- Diversity-oriented human resource management contributes significantly to ensuring that the GRC's migration work, which, in accordance with the principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, stands for neutrality and impartiality towards world views, religions, ethnic groups and nationalities, is carried out and implemented effectively, successfully and sustainably.
- The GRC advocates ethically acceptable recruitment from abroad and offers accompanying services to support recruited workers in Germany.

*“professionalism,  
motivation, commitment and  
intercultural competence”*

## 2.6 Funding of social work



Supporting people after migration to Germany to settle in well and to be able to develop a secure perspective is a central task of the GRC.

Sustainable structures and long-term funding are prerequisites for good and successful migration work. Project-based funding should therefore function as start-up or transitional funding and then be transferred into long-term structures. In migration work, stable framework conditions are needed that provide personnel and financial planning security.

### The GRC pursues the following strategic goals for the financing of social work:

- Migration is understood as a cross-cutting issue and is taken into account in all of the GRC's main areas of activity. GRC structures base their services on the needs of diverse target groups and develop needs-based support structures for migrants.
- Main staff and volunteers work closely together and thereby sustainably ensure need-based, target group-oriented and high-quality care and counselling services at the GRC. Branches create or expand adequate structures to recruit and sustainably involve volunteers. Through regular training, volunteers become qualified and prepared for the care requirements. In acute emergencies, they can respond quickly and offer first support structures to enable migrants to participate from day one. A close connection between the principal structures and the establishment of regular networking and exchange formats ensures that the target groups are placed in the existing support and counselling structures quickly and correctly.
- A long-term strengthening and adequate financing of existing and newly emerging counselling and support services are essential goals of the GRC. Basic funding for central counselling and accommodation services must be ensured in addition to project funding. The GRC lobbies funding agencies at the political level to create adequate framework conditions for the implementation of the services. A central goal in this regard is to mitigate the continuously increasing members' share of own funds and ensure framework conditions tailored to the needs.
- In addition, alternative financing models are needed, such as parallel co-financing, business cooperation and systematic and proactive acquisition of funding. To develop good and sustainable funding concepts in practice, close and regular networking between the participating departments of migration and funding/cooperation and, e.g., foundations is essential for success. Alternative financing concepts can be developed in project formats and best practice examples can be applied across the GRC. Proven foundations and funding bodies as well as potential cooperation partners can be approached proactively, and professional policy impulses and current target group needs can be coordinated and further developed.

## 2.7 Related areas and their points of contact with migration



Migration is an cross-cutting issue that encompasses all fields of the GRC's welfare work and must also be taken into account for the na-

tional aid society. Migrants are part of our diverse and ever-changing reality. In **care**, it is important to perceive people in their diversity and acknowledge their migration history. In **child and youth welfare**, services for unaccompanied minor refugees have been established in many regional associations in recent years. Furthermore, whether regular child and youth welfare services consider the diversity and the ever-growing proportion of children and young people from families with migration backgrounds in our society must be questioned. In **integration assistance services for people with disabilities**, it is particularly important to recognise the needs of migrants with disabilities and respond appropriately. It is also important for the **emergency medical service** to adapt to the diverse reality. The "Integration and Participation Concept of the GRC for Refugees" from 2016 allows this to be applied to non-refugee migrants. When developing services, it should be consistently examined whether they are accessible to these groups or whether they need to be adapted accordingly. The demand that services directly targeting migrants should consider the specific needs of the target group and should be developed and evaluated in collaboration with the recipients could thus be expanded. Migrants are not only a target group for services, clients and customers, but also must be considered when recruiting staff. This

produces a strategy for counteracting the increasing problem of lack of staff and a decreasing number of volunteers – and not only in specialised services, but in all fields of the GRC.

In special situations, for instance, it may also happen that people, before they are accommodated in regular state structures, are housed, cared for, and provided for in emergency shelters by the **GRC Care Service** in its capacity as a specialized unit for disaster relief. The GRC care service is a specialised service of the emergency care community. Care services focus on helping according to the degree of need, strengthening self-efficacy and restoring normal living conditions. To achieve this goal, the GRC care service connects with all internal and external partners at an early stage – e.g., with diverse local and regional migration services. Here too, migration is relevant for care and cooperation and exchange benefit persons receiving care.

## The GRC therefore pursues the following strategic goals through its work:

- Migration and the resulting issues affect all areas of GRC work. The broad range of services offered by the GRC for child, youth and family welfare, care for the elderly and disabled, as well as social services, are also geared to the needs of migrants
- The needs and abilities of migrants are accepted, supported, used and valued in the many different services and areas of the GRC.
- The GRC develops its services to take this diversity into account and respond to different needs, possibilities and abilities.
- The GRC reflects on its own actions and services and determines where gaps can be closed to not exclude anyone. Services are adapted where necessary to embrace diversity.
- Where people work together, conflicts may arise. The GRC values the diversity of ideas and approaches, addresses existing conflicts, and strives for a productive and appreciative cooperation.



Reception camp Friedland: German language course for refugees  
© Brigitte Hiss / DRK

## 2.8 Advocacy



In the field of migration, it concerns people who may be in particular need of protection. In accordance with the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent

Movement, the mandates, tasks and activities of its components, and its resolutions and decisions at the national and international level, the GRC works to protect life and health and ensure respect for human dignity. In addition to the various dimensions of the GRC's migration work, which provides practical support on the ground to overcome hardship and circumstances and disadvantages that do not respect human dignity, the GRC also advocates for migrants at all its levels through exchanges with politicians and authorities. The GRC is predestined for this, both with

its structures in Germany and through its network with other National RCRC Societies worldwide. Both levels of action are mutually dependent: Practical work on the ground improves the living conditions of those affected and allows the recognition of competence and experience – a crucial prerequisite for articulating the needs of those affected to third parties; a credible advocacy role builds trust both with target group and political decision-makers.

Advocacy with regard to the offers and services as well as the function as a voice for the needs of migrants – and much more the commitment to ensuring that those affected can speak for themselves – play an important role in the work of the GRC in this area. The expertise of migrant organisations is essential here.

### The GRC therefore pursues the following strategic goals for advocacy:

- At various political levels, the GRC advocates for fair and sustainable legal frameworks. It addresses deficiencies, regulations and gaps in legislation and administration that adversely affect groups in vulnerable situations.
- In cooperation with other actors in the welfare sector, the interests and needs of migrants are given adequate consideration in legislative projects and decision-making processes. The GRC acts as an advocate for its clients and ensures that their rights are respected.
- The GRC addresses structural problems and strives towards overcoming them.
- The GRC's many years of expertise and its networking, inclusion in a global movement and work with the target groups make it a reliable partner for both policymakers and social actors.
- The GRC is increasingly working with migrants and migrant organisations to collectively have a strong voice on the subject.

# Outlook

This strategy aims to provide the German Red Cross with guidance in the field of migration and establish a unified understanding of migration work throughout the entire GRC organization.

In the five years following the adoption of this strategy, it will be implemented and continuously evaluated. In the process, challenges that arise will be analysed and solutions will be developed to achieve the goals that have been set.

A commitment to the established goals and the allocation of financial and human resources are essential prerequisites for the successful implementation of the strategy. To drive the implementation forward, an implementation plan and evaluation mechanisms will be developed in the next step.

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## Endnotes

- 1 We use the term migrant in this strategy to refer to anyone who leaves their country of origin or habitual residence and enters another country – whether due to fleeing conflict or in search of new opportunities. This includes migrant workers, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants deemed irregular by public authorities, and stateless migrants, cf. [IFRC Strategy on Migration 2018-2022](#).
- 2 Cf. [DRK Strategy 2030](#).
- 3 [Flight & Migration – Our Topics – DRK-Wohlfahrtspflege \(drk-wohlfahrt.de\)](#).
- 4 [https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/IFRC\\_StrategyOnMigration\\_EN\\_20171222.pdf](https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/IFRC_StrategyOnMigration_EN_20171222.pdf) (ifrc.org).
- 5 See [Towards a Movement Strategy on Migration, CD/22/R9, June 2022](#), [https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2022/06/CD22-R09-Towards-migration-strategy\\_23-June-2022\\_FINAL\\_EN.pdf](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2022/06/CD22-R09-Towards-migration-strategy_23-June-2022_FINAL_EN.pdf).
- 6 Federal Statistical Office: Press release no. 459 of 30 September 2021 [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2021/09/PD21\\_459\\_12411.html;jsessionid=649168BA06004A99616CB6752978AC9C.live711](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2021/09/PD21_459_12411.html;jsessionid=649168BA06004A99616CB6752978AC9C.live711). Retrieved 7 March 2022.
- 7 A person has a migration background if he or she or at least one parent was not born with German citizenship. This definition includes immigrant and non-immigrant foreigners, immigrant and non-immigrant naturalised citizens, (late) repatriates and the descendants of these groups born as Germans. Persons displaced during the Second World War have a separate status (according to the Federal Displaced Persons Act); they and their descendants therefore do not count as part of the population with a migration background (definition of the Federal Statistical Office).
- 8 From: International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement statement on building an environment free from racism and discrimination. 1 July 2020. <https://www.icrc.org/de/document/erklaerung-der-internationalen-rotkreuz-und-rothalbmondbewegung-ueber-die-schaffung-eines>. Retrieved 15 March 2022.



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