



381,111 successful donations

Belgian Red Cross - Flanders collects blood, plasma and blood platelets. In 2018 our amazing donors made exactly 381,111 successful donations – or about 10,000 more than in 2017!

This impressive figure is made up of ...

- 250,933 successful blood donations
- 114,482 successful plasma donations
- 15,696 successful blood platelet donations

Thank you, donors!

Would you like become a blood, plasma or blood platelet donor? More information available [here](#).

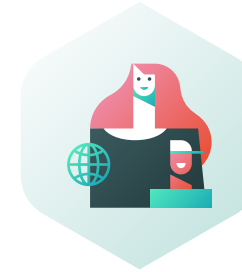
You are always welcome!



13,040 volunteers in 2018

Belgian Red Cross - Flanders is the largest volunteer organisation in Belgium. Without our volunteers, Belgian Red Cross - Flanders would be unable to play as big a role as we do across our many areas of operation: social services, mobile blood collections, care for young people at risk, disaster relief - to name but a few! Young and old give us their time free of charge. Did you know that 1 in 5 of our volunteers is between 20 and 29 years of age? Or that 18% are between 60 and 70? The young starters learn from the old hands, and vice versa! :-) And did you know that most of those volunteers sign up for training courses regularly? Which helps them help others in a professional way!

On Volunteer Day, on 5 December 2018, [we made a video](#) (in Dutch) to thank our great volunteers for their commitment and enthusiasm.



292 unaccompanied child refugees assisted

Every year, young people arrive in this country from places like Syria, Afghanistan and Congo without parents or other adult relatives to look after them. In 2018 our refugee caseworkers welcomed 292 of these unaccompanied children.

The refugee caseworkers protect these children and look after their interests. In 2018 there were six young refugee caseworkers at Belgian Red Cross - Flanders, each with at least 25 unaccompanied children to look after.

New terminology

Were you aware that the terminology for asylum status has changed? We no longer talk of asylum seekers, but say 'international protection seeker' instead. There has also been a change in the way international protection is claimed.



644,980 safe blood products supplied

Last year, we supplied 644,980 safe blood products for hospitals in Flanders and Brussels and for CSL Behring's plasma fractionation process. That's about 6,000 more than last year!

We always issue a full guarantee on the safety of our blood products. No matter how often a person donates, we test their blood, plasma and platelet concentrate thoroughly every time. Our Central Laboratory (CELA) tested all 381,111 donations for HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis.

Safety first! 😊



7,494 new plasma donors

In 2018 another 7,494 plasma donors attended one of our donor centres to donate the very best of themselves. Plasma donation is possible only at a permanent donor centre, where a special machine is used to separate the plasma from the blood. Unlike a blood donation, you have your blood cells returned to you.

As of 2017 Belgian Red Cross - Flanders was asked by the government to begin collecting 5% more plasma than the year before. So we are always looking for new donors! Would you like to become a member of Team Plasma? [Check here](#) for a donation centre near you! Not sure what plasma is? Not to worry! It is all explained for you in the video below.

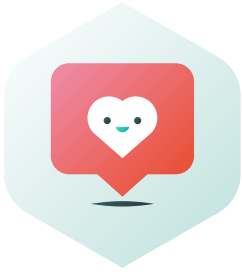


146 workplace donation sessions

This year too we went out and collected blood in the workplace. On no fewer than 146 occasions we took blood from people at work. Easy for the employee, great for our blood stock levels!

Would you and your colleagues like to do a good deed and invite us into your workplace? You will find all the information you need [here!](#)

Who's afraid of a little needle? 😬



Socialising with 24 million people!

In 2018 we reached 24 million people on our social pages. In other words, through our social media, the average Fleming interacted with our organisation three-and-a-half times. In 2018, through our [Facebook](#) page, we appeared on no fewer than **19,098,130** people's computer or mobile screens. 'Occasional volunteer' Ivo got the most views in our annual sticker campaign.

On LinkedIn we reached a very large number of people with our campaign [to become an online ambassador](#). Whereas, on Twitter, the most popular items were two posts in which Eva Mouton illustrated beautifully our first aid tips for [hot weather](#) and [festivals](#). And did you know that we are 25th on the list of #BEHEALTH 2018 INFLUENCERS?



Nearly 1 in 2 blood donors are under 35!

We have donors of all ages, whether they have just turned 18 or are well past that age. Of young blood we have our fair share: 42% of our donors are under 35!

Then come the 36 to 49-year-olds, at almost 26%, or more than 1 in 4. Finally, about 1 in 10 of our donors are over 60! Were you aware, by the way, that the maximum age for giving blood was dispensed with in 2019? You can now donate after the age of 71, provided you meet the conditions!

Wondering who all these donors are? [Check out the #DeDag mini-report in Iedereen Beroemd on TV chain Eén.](#)

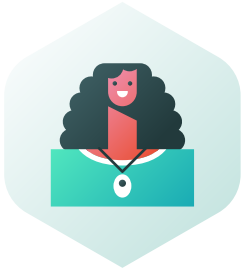


Finally, this was our biggest-hitting Instagram post! 😍



Do you follow us on your favourite networking site?





Wanted. Stem cell donors of foreign descent!

Did you know that 1 in 3 people of Turkish, North or Central African descent cannot find a stem cell donor? Only 65% of these patients find a donor in the worldwide database. That, compared to about 90% of patients of European descent who find a match in the same register.

It was for this reason that we launched a campaign to find as many donors of foreign descent as possible. Only when they receive healthy stem cells do sickle cell anaemia patients like [Dieudonné](#) find that their lives take a turn for the better. Samuel, whose father is Belgian and mother Ghanaian, has already [registered as a stem cell donor!](#)

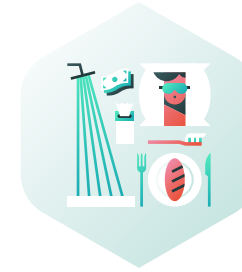


Active in 17 countries

In 2018 Belgian Red Cross - Flanders was internationally active in 17 African, Middle Eastern, Central American and Asian countries. Directly or indirectly, our projects have impacted positively on the living circumstances of an estimated 520,000 people.

A few figures:

- Some 3,400 people followed a first-aid course. There it has an even greater impact than in Flanders, as in these areas of the world the distance to a hospital, or even a doctor, can be much greater.
- Close to 47,000 people learned, through our hygiene campaign, the importance of hand washing, toilet hygiene and clean water. This drastically reduces the risk of spreading cholera and diarrhoea!
- In counties like Syria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Haiti and South Sudan we administered aid to a good 430,000 people who found themselves in dire need as the result of conflict or natural disaster. We provided basics (e.g. food and hygiene kits) and administered medical treatments and psychosocial care.



Emergency reception centres to stay open longer

Belgian Red Cross - Flanders runs several government-initiated reception centres for international protection seekers.

Due to a rise in the influx of asylum claimants the federal government decided to postpone the planned closure of several emergency reception centres until 30 June 2019. And two of our centres, which were scheduled for closure on 30 September 2018, will now definitely stay open for nine months longer than planned. This called for a quick shift: instead of reducing the number of reception centres - as requested earlier - it was now a matter of getting the centres in Houthalen-Helchteren and Sint-Niklaas Westakkers up and running at full capacity again (600 and 300 places).

As an organisation assisting the government, we do everything in our power to accommodate the new residents as comfortably as possible. The reception centres are run according to the principle of bed, bath, bread and good social guidance, with special consideration for the most vulnerable.



International Humanitarian Law

International Humanitarian Law (IHR) is a set of rules which seek to limit the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. This law protects **the life, health and dignity** of people who are not or no longer participating in armed hostilities. It also restricts or prohibits the use of certain weapons and methods in armed conflicts.

The Red Cross plays a key role in disseminating and developing the rules of [international humanitarian law](#). This we do by disseminating up-to-date information through our website and holding training courses, such as the IHR Learning Series, for target audiences with a vital need to know the rules and uphold them. We also enter into dialogue with the government on a number of issues to support the further development and application of international humanitarian law.

In 2018 **685** people followed a course, of which 673 were professionals (journalists, experts in law, servicemen and humanitarian actors) and 12 were policy makers.



759 caring Zorgbib volunteers!

'Zorgbib' is concerned with people who find themselves in short or long term care. If their care provision is such that they are unable to visit the library, the Zorgbib volunteers will bring along a book, a CD or a DVD for their entertainment.

The volunteers also make time for a little conversation or to organise a light-hearted activity of some kind with residents or patients. The aim here is to combat loneliness. In 2018 we opened our 400th library! The tally now stands at 409 libraries across Flanders. To keep those 409 libraries running we are fortunate enough to have 759 volunteers. These volunteers made the day of the 112,889 people who availed themselves of the Zorgbib service in 2018.



600 volunteer bridge-builders

In 2018 we had almost 600 volunteer Bridge Builders on our books. It is they who provide extra help for socially disadvantaged children. Children, for example, who have lost a parent or grandparent, or whose mother and father have just divorced. Or recently-arrived foreign language speakers, or children whose parents have not yet come to grips with the Dutch language. For these children education can be a major step towards a better future. Our volunteers build a bridge, literally, between the school and the children's homes.



63 missing persons traced

In 2018 the 'Tracing' service was renamed the 'Restoring Family Links' service. This name better expresses the range of services provided: in addition to tracing lost family members we help restore links between relatives and provide information on the Belgian family reunion process for refugees and people with subsidiary protection status.

We launched a brand new website: <http://www.restoringfamilylinks.be/en>. An audio-supported, interactive yes/no model in 8 languages allows refugees and residence permit holders quicker and easier access to family reunion information.

In 2018 we traced 63 missing persons in total and opened 335 family reunion case files.



1,241 staff give the best of themselves daily

A quick glance at our website is enough to see that Belgian Red Cross - Flanders is active across many areas. From blood donation campaigns to international cooperation, from social assistance to disaster relief, we help in many ways. To do this we rely, wherever possible, on volunteers, who are ever willing to play their part with enthusiasm and professionalism.

But, to steer an even straighter course and provide the right - logistic and thematic - framework, we rely on a complement of about 1,200 paid staff. These include people in accounts, communications, quality control, clinical biology, medicine and scientific research.


Is it a secret dream of yours to work for Belgian Red Cross - Flanders? [If so, check out our vacancies!](#) Talented and caring colleagues are always welcome!



Hospital relocated!

Sint-Maarten Hospital relocated to its new building on Liersesteenweg in Mechelen on 15 October 2018. The move was made over the three days of the 15th, 17th and 18th of October.

The patients were all moved with efficiency and concern for their ongoing care needs. The General Hospital asked the Belgian Red Cross - Flanders Auxiliary Service to take care of the move. The patients were moved from their beds on the ward of the old hospital to beds on the ward of the new hospital. In other words, the Auxiliary Service took care of every aspect of the move: from the transfer of beds to patient identification, relocation, monitoring and accompaniment!

We had about 100 volunteers every day on this job, as well as access to transport, such as ambulances and emergency response vehicles. On 18 October we looked back with great satisfaction on this logistic undertaking and joint effort with the hospital staff! 



Help in the aftermath of the Antwerp Paardenmarkt explosion

On 15 January 2018 Antwerp was rocked by an explosion on the Paardenmarkt. The government initiated the Medical Intervention Plan (MIP), under which Belgian Red Cross - Flanders serves as an emergency service in accordance with established procedure. This is usually the case for major incidents.

Ambulances, the Rapid Response Teams (North and South) (SIT) and provincial crews headed out to the Paardenmarkt disaster area, where they administered aid.

Once the emergency had been dealt with, the crew stayed on with 2 ambulances and the emergency response vehicle to help ensure the safety of the fire service. A further 26 relief workers stood by to offer assistance if needed. After more than 17 hours these workers were able to stand down.



211 volunteers help deliver an unforgettable holiday!

At Belgian Red Cross - Flanders we are aware that not everyone gets to have a holiday, even if they are desperately in need of one. This is why, in 2018, we arranged 19 Accessible Accommodation Holidays for people with a mental or physical disability and their family carers. Parents are also welcome to come along on these holidays.

200 or more volunteers helped us provide custom care packages for a truly relaxing stay at the Domein Polderwind care hospital in Zuienkerke, which opened in April 2018!

Domein Polderwind offers every facility needed to provide rest and relaxation for people with or without disabilities. The care hotel is between Blankenberge and Bruges, beside a beautiful 15-hectare lake. It has a paddle boat, a network of wheelchair accessible footpaths, a petanque court and a relaxing beach. There is plenty of room for relaxation in the wellness areas and plenty of scope for exercise in the fitness area. The hotel and its amazing volunteers provide the ideal cocktail for a beautifully relaxing time.



Children can be life savers!

On 8 September 2018, which happened, not by coincidence, to be World First Aid Day, the Red Cross Youth volunteers taught children the right way to contact emergency services. Red Cross Youth is the Belgian Red Cross - Flanders youth club for children between the ages of 6 and 16, which allows children to take part in activities free of charge and without obligation. These activities alternate first aid lessons with fun and games.

Red Cross Youth joined our experts to create a lesson which teaches children aged 6 to 10 how to call the 112 emergency number. Through games, songs and educational exercises the children learn a lot about the emergency services. Above all, the lesson emphasises the need for clear and essential information. Our Red Cross Youth volunteers gave out 11, 199 learning cards on World First Aid Day.



By kissing it better ...

... you might stop your little one crying, but it is hardly the best way to treat an injury :-). In [‘Shall We Kiss it Better?’](#) (Een kusje op de wonde) our First Aid department published a handy booklet for anyone with young children to look after. You don't have to be an expert to administer first aid in straightforward or slightly more difficult circumstances, but with this book you will certainly go about it the right way. It shows you a few basic treatments and tells you how to deal with a few of the more common injuries and specific symptoms.

In 2018 we also published a first aid mini-guide. The mini-guide gives first aid tips for the most common injuries and ailments involved in everyday activities. But the first aid tips are also available from our website. Has anyone got a blister? Or fainted? Or got sunstroke? Help is always close at hand [via this link \(Dutch\)](#)!



27,454 people attended a first-aid course

In 2018 the topic of first aid was hotter than ever before. Which is actually quite logical. First aid training can mean the difference between life and death. For this very reason the Red Cross has been teaching first aid for decades. After obtaining your First Aid certificate you may want to follow the next course as a First Aid Helper. You can also follow the Resuscitation and Defibrillation course, on which you learn how to use an AED machine

15,063 people got their First Aid certificate in 2018, by signing up for a course at their local branch or joining in with their colleagues at work. We also trained a lot of pupils in schools. So we can all rest a lot easier now: last year we gained a wealth of life-saving potential! ;-)



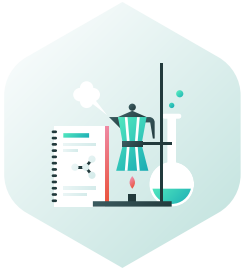
645,000 stickers sold!

Think of the Red Cross and you think of stickers. For 58 years our volunteers have sold stickers at places where people gather and at busy intersections. A sticker costs 5 euros, and that 5 euros goes towards the running of your local branch of the Red Cross.

What happens with that money? It gets used to buy materials and equipment for the first aid stations at local events. Whether that's the cyclo-cross race in Zichen-Zussen-Bolder, or a benefit festival for your local youth club, each event gets the appropriate support. Consider too, for example, the aid we administered in the aftermath of the Zaventem terrorist attacks of 22 March 2016. We were able to be there thanks only to those who had supported us, by buying a sticker, at some point in the past. In 2018 our volunteers sold 645,000 stickers, which fell just below the record number of 650,000 stickers sold in 2017.

Are you buying a ticket this year? You will notice us right across Flanders after April 25th! But did you know that this year stickers are also available online? You can buy them here!

A big thank you to you!



Belgian Red Cross - Flanders and science ...

... inextricably linked! Did you know that there is a scientific basis to every Belgian Red Cross - Flanders activity? We conduct primary scientific research – in the lab or in the field – as well as secondary scientific research based on existing literature.

The primary scientific research conducted by Belgian Red Cross Flanders consists of laboratory studies of blood platelets and field studies relating to water projects: what is the best type of water pump for the people of Kasungu, a region of Malawi? Our Centre for Evidence-based Practice (CEBaP) conducts secondary scientific research, by using existing studies to formulate guidelines to optimise our relief work.

The smart minds at Belgian Red Cross - Flanders, in collaboration with the Blood Service, published eleven scientific papers in 2018. These papers covered a variety of subjects: from a science-based underpinning of blood, plasma or blood platelet donor selection criteria, through the development of first aid equipment for African children to insights relating to blood supplies in the aftermath of attacks such as those in Zaventem.

The CEBaP annual report is available [here](#). A more in-depth explanation of our research on blood products is available [here](#).



Did you know ...

... that a 5-year-old child can learn how to dial the number for emergency services? Or that an 11-year old is capable of responding appropriately when someone ingests a poison?

These are examples of the insights gleaned by our Centre for Evidence-based practice (CEBaP) on the basis of large-scale literature reviews. By means of systematic reviews of existing studies the CEBaP does things like formulating guidelines for teaching first aid, giving first aid recommendations for psychological issues and testing a programme to improve hand hygiene in Tanzania.

The results of their work impacts on our organisation as a whole, and its activities, and enables us to offer efficient and effective aid – in the short and long term.

You can find an overview of the CEBaP literature studies and posters [here](#). You can read more about the scientific activities of Belgian Red Cross - Flanders [here](#).