

# GLOW Red Strategy 2023-2027



# Introduction

## The making of GLOW Red

The Global Network of Women Leaders in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (GLOW Red) came together as a reaction to the events and decisions that unfolded during the Red Cross Red Crescent meetings in December 2017. During that event, elections for the Movement's top governance and leadership posts resulted in 26 men and 4 women being elected – meaning women held only 13% of the positions. It was evident to the entire General Assembly that this image did not reflect the organisation's base and composition.

A resolution was drafted, attaining widespread support among National Society representatives present and adopted by the Assembly that same year. The resolution signified a commitment by all parts of the Movement 'to address gender equality and equal opportunities at all levels of their own leadership bodies'. However, it was clear to the group of women who initiated the resolution, based on long experience of previous resolutions and commitments made in relation to women's leadership and gender balance, that without proper follow-up actions and mechanisms in place to hold the Movement's leadership accountable this resolution would go nowhere.

The GLOW Red network was created in early 2018 in response to the need to ensure commitment to, and action from, the resolution. The network is a true network, driven by volunteers giving generously of their time. Investment by National Societies has supported these volunteers, allowing a small group of staff to dedicate part of their time through the GLOW Red secretariat.

The commitment to acting as and remaining a network shaped the two goals set for GLOW Red's first period of work:

- 1) Change the electoral face of the international governance of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement by 2022 with the aim to reach gender parity;
- 2) Increase and strengthen the pipeline of future women leaders, enabling and supporting high-potential women from staff and volunteer for leadership positions beyond 2022.

Since this time, the GLOW Red model has been built organically – through participating in formal and informal meetings across the Movement, building the profile and purpose of the network, and leveraging opportunities for activism and advocacy. It has become an important voice in discussions about inclusion in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

After four years of activities – during which the Movement has made further commitments to gender equality – GLOW Red undertook a period of review, including an external evaluation of the network's effectiveness ([Lighting the Path to Women's Leadership: A Review of Glow Red's Four Years of Action, May 2022](#)). It was also an opportunity to see the impact of some of GLOW Red's work, one of the most important being the elections held in the IFRC General Assembly meeting in 2022 resulting in a board with 51% representation of women.

## Respondents' views about GLOW Red's effectiveness and impact

I do think GLOW have been effective. What it has been effective at is giving voice and presence to the issue keeping the issue on the agenda. Without GLOW the voice would not happen, the constitutional changes would not have changed.

I believe it has influenced the IFRC since day one. The resolution to the international conference really also put the issue at the forefront. Nobody attending the conference in 2019 could have missed the issue, it received a lot of attention.

If it was not there would be less support for women leaders - I'm sure about that because I know - they've been supporting me.

The fact the Red Cross now has an event for International Women's Day is amazing. There is more space for people to talk about women's leadership and now more push back for the men's club. We can feel a shift and people talking about gender.

GLOW Red should be proud of what they've done if they haven't gotten in 2018 nothing would have changed - they've set the groundwork and we really need to deliver.

I think GLOW Red has changed the game a lot...all of a sudden everyone is talking about gender equality.

Visibility, awareness, leadership training also pressure in terms of follow up in conference that's what I see as GLOW Red's impact.

I think they have been wildly successful. When I first started there were no women.

Interviews 11, 12, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

Source: *Lighting the Path to Women's Leadership*

## The strategy 2023-2027

With the achievements of GLOW Red's first four years, there are high expectations of the network's continued work, not just in changing the face of governance in the Movement but in supporting its diverse community of women leaders.

The strategy presented here builds on the structures, work and methods used up until now, articulating clear objectives that align with what the network can achieve. The strategy is based on the outcome and recommendations of the external review, a reflection and strategy workshop held in October 2022, and the concrete actions emerging from these inputs. Like the network itself, therefore, it represents a collective effort.

The strategy is also informed by the knowledge that success must be sustained. The international elections in 2022 and the work by many National Societies to amend their statutes, as well as strengthen their initiatives for better gender and diversity balance in their organisations, deserve recognition. But in order not to lose momentum or continued change, GLOW Red must pursue its advocacy, growing the network, supporting senior and emerging women leaders. Our theme for the coming period is 'Don't Blink'!

The strategy provides a vision and a mission supported by three objectives:

- 1) Increase and strengthen women leaders in senior positions of leadership and representation;
- 2) Expand and diversify the pool of aspiring leaders; and
- 3) Change the electoral face of governance at all levels of the Movement.

It identifies what success will look like within the timeframe of the strategy, by 2027.

GLOW Red depends for its continued success on the engagement and activism of all its members and allies. Creating opportunities for reflection and discussion among GLOW Red members about their issues and ideas is also vital. Our shared goal is a sustained gender and diversity balance at all levels of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and this strategy has a space for all.



### What do we mean when we talk about leadership?

At GLOW Red we recognise that leadership takes many forms. When we talk about 'leaders' or 'leadership' in general, we intend this to include the everyday ways that women enable others in the Movement, whether recognised by formal titles or not. When we speak about 'positions of leadership and representation' we are referring to leadership that takes place through formal governance roles.

## Strategy on a page



### Vision

We envisage a Red Cross Red Crescent Movement where women's leadership is central to an equitable and inclusive Movement, which draws on its diversity and act in solidarity with all those in need of protection and assistance.



### Mission

GLOW Red's mission is to promote and support women leaders and aspiring to leadership positions across all levels of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, recognising women's own diversity of experience, context and culture.

#### Objective 1

Increase and strengthen women leaders in senior positions of leadership and representation

#### Objective 2

Expand and diversify the pool of aspiring leaders

#### Objective 3

Change the electoral face of governance at all levels of the Movement



**Enabler 1: A sustainable, dynamic and growing network**

**Enabler 2: Strengthen and build outreach, advocacy, and alliances**

## Understanding the Strategy

We, the GLOW Red network, will work towards our vision by actively supporting women who are current and future leaders. We will act as a catalyst, drawing attention to cultural and structural challenges to women's leadership. By promoting and supporting inclusive leadership, GLOW Red and its members will contribute to governance excellence throughout the Movement.

Our engagements will be organised around three objectives and priority actions, supported by two key enablers.

### Objective 1: Increase and strengthen women leaders in senior positions of leadership and representation



#### What this objective is about

While some progress has been made, the numbers of women in senior leadership positions remain overall limited and vary widely over regions. Every positive step must be sustained for longer term progress. Globally, 59% of all National Societies have a male president and a male secretary general, whereas in only 10% of National Societies are both posts held by women.<sup>1</sup> GLOW Red will offer support to women who have put their hands up for formal leadership roles – at all levels. GLOW Red will strengthen networks between women leaders, build knowledge and know-how among all leaders and analyse the dynamics that women experience in positions of leadership.



#### Priority actions:

- Offer trainings related to governance and campaigns.
- Service peer support groups and connections.
- Support annual meetings of women leaders on global and regional levels.



#### What success looks like:

- By 2027 reach a sustained average of between 40 and 50% women in national and international RCRC governance and senior management level.
- There is an established culture of diversity within leadership across the Movement, evidenced through use of language and positive and safe experiences of the Movement's working environment.
- Women perceive GLOW Red as a supporting instrument when in leadership positions.

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<sup>1</sup> [IFRC Everyone Counts Report, 2022.](#)

## Objective 2: Expand and diversify the pool of aspiring leaders



### What this objective is about

The pool of future women leaders at all levels must grow and be diversified if progress in women's leadership will be maintained and sustained. This objective is about supporting, promoting and encouraging women leaders where they currently are in their volunteer and professional life. GLOW Red will contribute to raising awareness of women's roles in the Movement, connect women across the Movement, cooperate with and provide technical input to groups and National Societies as they work to support women in their organisations.



### Priority actions:

- Base key activities, such as training and campaigns, on the diverse needs and priorities identified through regional networks.
- Make use of existing, and create new, tools and resources that are effective in differing contexts and countries.
- Mobilise aspiring leaders for campaigns promoting women's engagement across the Movement's priorities (such as participation in panels, conferences, etc).
- Service peer support groups and connections.



### What success looks like:

- GLOW Red has supported women at all levels in the RCRC (including volunteers at local level, branch leaders, staff, and women in formal governance roles) to provide leadership in their own environment. This support could involve tools such as peer engagement groups, social media, training and conference opportunities.
- There are increasing numbers of GLOW Red service and support networks and they are self-organising.
- GLOW Red has gathered and shared evidence, data and insights on how the Movement recognises and engages with women leaders at all levels.

### Objective 3: Change the electoral face of governance at all levels of the Movement



#### What this objective is about

A number of National Societies are supporting and promoting women's leadership in governance and representation. This is done through formal processes such as adopting revisions of their Statutes to include rules on inclusion and women's active participation, and through initiatives of leadership training, coaching and encouragement as well as adjusted recruitment processes. This GLOW Red objective will add to this work by contributing to a systemic change to improve women's access to formal leadership positions across the Movement. This will be done through cooperation with National Societies as well as proactively encouraging women to run for governance positions at all levels. GLOW Red will promote gender equality, raise awareness about barriers and opportunities affecting women's access to key positions.



#### Priority actions:

- Communicate and raise awareness of barriers and opportunities for change.
- Reach out to National Societies leadership through and during regional conferences to engage them in the follow-up on commitments made in Regional Conferences, General Assemblies, and International Conferences regarding women's leadership.
- Support the statutes reform projects and reviews of National Societies and the Federation regarding diversity in governance and representation.



#### What success looks like:

- An increase in National Societies that have revised their statutes to ensure more equitable and inclusive governance structures at all levels.
- An increase in National Societies that through targeted measures promote and support women's leadership and development in their National Societies.
- The RCRC Movement is recognized as a global leader in gender equity and women's empowerment.

## Enabler 1: A sustainable, dynamic and growing network



### What this enabler is about

GLOW Red is a strong network of current and future women leaders. For our success we depend on a small number of part time staff support by National Societies and a large number of members volunteering their time and commitment to the network. Through our 2023-2027 strategy we create a sustainable foundation for the network in years to come, activating our membership and strengthening the network's structures and leadership model.



### Priority Actions

- Recruit women across all regions to join the network, through outreach campaigns and by demonstrating the impact of GLOW Red's actions.
- Mobilise members to contribute time and expertise within GLOW Red, to take initiatives as GLOW Red, and to advocate for women's leadership inside and outside the Movement.
- Build and sustain regional GLOW Red Networks.



### What success looks like:

- The network has appropriate and sustained funding.
- The network has an effective and efficient governance mechanism.
- GLOW Red can rotate the volunteer leadership in its executive committee every 3 years through engaged volunteers stepping forward.
- By 2027 there are 1,000 active GLOW Red members.
- By 2027 there are (at least) three self-organizing and sustainable Regional GLOW Red networks.

## Enabler 2: Strengthen and build outreach, advocacy, and alliances



### What is this enabler about

Effective advocacy requires a solid evidence base and strong collaborations. GLOW Red will develop advocacy and outreach through use of evidence gathered from research, National Societies, the IFRC, the ICRC, and other organisations. GLOW Red will work in cooperation and complementarity with allies from inside and outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement on mutual interests and with an overall goal of promoting and supporting women's leadership.



### Priority actions:

- Design and implement a joint communications and advocacy plan for GLOW Red.
- Develop and implement a resource mobilisation plan for both people and financial resources.
- Generate, share and make use of evidence and learning related to leadership, diversity, and women across the Movement, the humanitarian sector, and other global trends.
- Develop systems that allow the network to stay aware of, and able to leverage, advocacy and engagement opportunities.



### What success looks like:

- GLOW Red members and allies notice a stronger presence of the network across a range of channels, including social media, internal Movement communications, and during Movement meetings or events.
- GLOW Red drives targeted and thematic campaigns on issues relevant for RCRC women.
- GLOW Red successfully implements our first resource mobilisation plan by 2027.
- A follow-up report on the 2019 International Conference resolution no 331IC/19/R5 'Women and leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement' by GLOW Red, in partnership with National Societies, is helping to promote accountability for change.

**“We used the statistics of the gender imbalance in the Federation and arguments on what diversity means in terms of quality and business success. Our communication was evidence based ... the organisation would simply be a better organisation with more women at the top”**

Participant in GLOW Red strategy workshop, October 2022

# Getting involved

GLOW Red welcomes and encourages new members to join. Today we count about 400 members, some of whom are taking an active role alongside the GLOW Red secretariat and others that are supporting by sharing our newsletters and working for change in their own contexts. We hope and trust that you make use of your ownership of GLOW Red, and encourage other to get involved too. The progress and success of achieving GLOW Red's goals depends on all of us!

## What does it mean to be a member of GLOW Red?

Members of GLOW Red are invited to share in the values and goals of our network – inclusion, equity, voluntary action – structured through the specific objectives we set in our strategy.

Our network embraces the diversity of women and of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and there are many ways to contribute, from joining in discussions, sharing information and updates, helping to organise or facilitate training and peer support, and becoming an ally for women around you. There are opportunities for bigger roles in the network's regional structures, coordination group, and secretariat.

We would also love you to share what you do and learn from your experiences. This helps us move the agenda forward and contributes to our advocacy work as a network. Having a wide range of case studies and lessons learned strengthens the influence of GLOW Red and keeps our profile high.

## Where can I learn more about GLOW Red?

Our website <https://www.glowred.org> has a wealth of resources about GLOW Red and women's leadership. You can meet the many fantastic women leaders in the '100 Voices' series, look through our leadership toolbox and webinars, and read the lessons from the independent review of our first four years.

### How can I connect?

You can get in touch with the GLOW Red secretariat at [glowred@redcross.se](mailto:glowred@redcross.se) with your questions, ideas, to learn more and to become a member. We look forward to hearing from you!

Facebook page: [GLOW Red](#)

Instagram: [glowrednetwork](#)

LinkedIn: [GLOW Red](#)

GLOW Red Newsletter: [Sign up here](#)

