

# Retaining Family Replacement Donors as Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donors (VNRBD)

## VNRBD

### *Why is it important?*

Regular VNRBD donors are considered the cornerstone of **safe and sustainable** blood programs. In accordance with the World Health Organisation<sup>1,2</sup> and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,<sup>2,3</sup> the Global Advisory Panel advocates for 100% voluntary non-remunerated blood donation (VNRBD).

## Family Replacement Donors

### *An opportunity to increase the VNRBD donor base*

Recruiting first time donors is a challenge when building a VNRBD donor base. One possible strategy to overcome this obstacle is engaging family replacement donors to return as regular VNRBD donors. These individuals will attend a donor centre to give blood, already familiarising them with the process and alleviating any anxieties they may have as a first-time donor. As with all donor interactions, it is important to provide a positive experience and share with them the importance of voluntarily donated blood.



## Shifting from FRD to VNRBD

### *Understanding motivations*

Understanding donor motivation plays an important role in increasing VNRBD. FRD donations arise from the need to help a family member or friend. Sometimes the donor may consider this an obligation rather than a choice and this can lead to mixed attitudes towards healthcare services. To counter this, the FRD donor experience should aim to re-position the blood collection as an act of choice by minimising feelings of obligation or expectation. Interactions should focus on building trust, developing rapport and providing positive reassurance in the form of gratitude and recognition (see page 2). Promotional material should aim to present recipients in a way donors can relate to.

### *Keys to a successful campaign*

Showcasing individual **recipient stories** is an effective way to demonstrate that strangers who need blood are no different to their family member or friend who needed blood. Displaying the first name and a photo of the recipient, along with the key details of their blood transfusion story promotes feelings of **empathy** - a key motivator that influences behaviour. Stories can be tailored for use in posters, brochures, social media or email campaigns. Ensure the stories captured are diverse and representative of your community. You can access the GAP Storytelling Guide [here](#).

**Marketing materials** should aim to show that the large, anonymous group of recipients are actually individuals with families. By presenting them as mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers, it helps donors connect and feel empathy (image right).

**Language** is important. Position the donor as someone who has already saved a life. Use words like 'hero' or 'lifesaver'. Highlight that they have the power to save another life by donating blood again. Consider incorporating a motivating 'call to action' (i.e. 'step up for someone in need').





## Daily Operations

When a FRD donor attends the blood service:

- **Make the donor feel valued.** Ensure they have an exceptional donor experience and minimise unnecessary waiting.
- **Build rapport.** Use their first name in conversation.
- Ensure the space is clean, well-organised and meets relevant standards so the donor feels that the blood service is reputable and **clinically safe**.
- Blood service staff and volunteers should help ease any worries or concerns. They should ask if donors have any questions before collecting blood. This is a chance to explain the process to first-time donors and make them feel more comfortable.
- Ensure the donor is aware of the importance of provision of honest information to enable pre-donation assessment. Inform the donor that all information provided is treated confidentially.
- Understand that the FRD donor may be worried about the health of their family member or friend, and it may be a stressful time. **Build trust** by acknowledging their experience.
- Carefully consider the **placement of materials** and **timing of the approach**. People will be most receptive once the blood collection has been completed, they are more relaxed and enjoying refreshments. Consider displaying posters in the recovery area and providing take-home material, such as a brochure (access the template [here](#)).
- Display posters and materials that highlight the importance of VNRBD. Consider showcasing **recipient stories**.
- Express **gratitude**.
- Consider providing a token that signals **recognition** from other people (i.e. a sticker indicating that they gave blood today)
- **Follow up** the donor. Send a 'thank you' message a few days after the donation and another prompt when the necessary time has elapsed to donate again (i.e. 3 months).



## Longterm Strategy

Consult with relevant stakeholders to develop a strategy to increase VNRBD and phase out FRD, ensuring availability of blood supply is maintained.

- **Gather information** from the community regarding possible misconceptions and obstacles to VNRBD.
- Implement a targeted framework to **address misconceptions and obstacles** to VNRBD. This may include:
  - initiating mobile collection units to improve accessibility in remote locations.
  - development of targeted educational campaigns to address misconceptions.
- Develop a wider **communication plan** to **educate** the community on the importance of VNRBD. Consider showcasing recipient stories (see GAP resource).
- Conduct **training** to ensure blood service staff are skilled in providing an exceptional **donor experience**.
- Establish a **donor retention programme**. Consider:
  - overall strategy
  - donor database management and communication
  - promoting a culture of blood donation through community engagement, education, marketing and partnerships.
  - feedback mechanisms (i.e. donor satisfaction questionnaires)
  - donor motivation and recognition (i.e. milestone acknowledgment)
  - donor experience (i.e. convenience)



1. Blood Safety, Aide-Memoire for the National Blood Programme. World Health Organization, 2011

2. Towards 100% Voluntary Blood Donation: A Global Framework for Action. World Health Organisation and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2010

3. Promoting Safe and Sustainable National Blood Systems Policy, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2022



WE NEED  
**HEROES  
LIKE  
YOU**

**Thanks for donating blood today.**

By returning to donate again, you can  
**save the life of a stranger.**

Your decision to donate voluntarily will help create a safer and healthier future for all. Together, we can make sure that everyone has access to lifesaving blood.



**WE NEED** **HEROES**  
**LIKE YOU**

**Thanks for donating blood today.**

By returning to donate again,  
you can **save the life**  
**of a stranger.**



**GAP**

**Global Advisory Panel**

on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies







**WE NEED**  
**HEROES**  
**LIKE YOU**

**Thanks for donating blood today.**

By returning to donate again,  
you can **save the life**  
**of a stranger.**

# Did you know?

- **Blood cannot be manufactured** and can only be stored for 42 days.
- Your donation can help **save up to three lives**
- You can donate blood every 3-4 months.
- Your body will replace the lost fluid within 48 hours and there are no long-lasting effects from blood donation
- Your blood will be used to save the lives of children, mothers losing blood during childbirth, road accident victims, cancer patients and patients undergoing surgery.



# CONTACT US

📞 123 456 789

📍 123 Donor Street  
Donor City



You can donate blood again on

---



WE  
NEED  
**HEROES**  
LIKE  
YOU



## Thanks for donating blood today for your friend or family member.

We understand that it can be stressful having to provide blood for a loved one, especially in an emergency situation.

Our blood service is working towards achieving sufficient reserves of voluntarily donated blood for our community. This would remove our reliance on family replacement donation - alleviating any pressure on friends and family to provide blood - especially in emergencies. Repeat voluntary donors are the foundation of a safe and sustainable blood supply.

**Please consider returning to donate blood to help others in our community who need it.**



### Your next voluntary blood donation may

- save the life of someone who does not have friends or family able to provide blood for them
- save the life of someone in an emergency, when there is not enough time to locate a family replacement donor
- relieve the stress from another family in your situation

### Nina's Story

The birth of Nina's precious daughter Lucy was complicated by severe maternal bleeding.

Nina required 6 units of blood to save her life. Some of this blood was donated voluntarily by people like yourself.

Thanks to the generosity of voluntary blood donors, Nina is here to celebrate Lucy's third birthday next week.

*"If it wasn't for blood donors, I wouldn't be here for her. I am grateful beyond words".*

