

# GAP newsletter

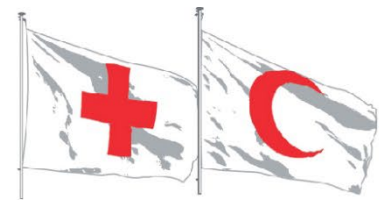
## for Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programs

In this edition, we shine a light on a range of initiatives that have been used around the world to promote blood donation, illustrating different approaches to engaging donors and building awareness.

We introduce a new GAP resource designed to support National Societies considering an expanded role in blood programmes, with a practical presentation outlining the transition from Category C (advocacy) to Category B (donor recruitment).

Finally, we share insights from a recent article examining how climate change is emerging as a threat to blood safety and supply, underscoring the importance of resilient and adaptable blood systems.

As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future topics or resources—please share them with us at [gapsecretariat@redcrossblood.org.au](mailto:gapsecretariat@redcrossblood.org.au)



# Recruiting donors together: Lifeblood Teams

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood uses a team-based approach to encourage people to donate blood together as part of a group, bringing colleagues, community groups, family members, and friends together for a shared purpose. Supported by volunteer “Champions”, these teams draw on existing social networks to make donation a collective experience.

Research evaluating Lifeblood Teams shows that stronger social connection leads to greater satisfaction and increased encouragement of others to donate, reinforcing the value of group-based approaches.

By focusing on purpose, solidarity, and connection rather than incentives, Lifeblood Teams demonstrate how blood services can build sustainable donor participation by making donation a collective experience rather than an individual act.

[Read a recent study about Lifeblood Teams](#)



# Spotlight on group donation

Group blood donation is a strategic and sustainable way to boost donor numbers and maintain a steady blood supply. It's especially valuable during emergencies and can help build long-term donor engagement.

Research increasingly shows that donating as part of a group strengthens social connection, satisfaction, and willingness to encourage others to donate—particularly among new donors.

GAP's e-learning module covers everything you need to know—from what group donation is and why it works, to how to engage different types of groups and run a successful program.

Whether you're new to the concept or looking to refresh your approach, this resource offers practical guidance to help you make the most of group donation initiatives



[Access the GAP e-learning here](#)

# Metallica partnership delivers strong results for blood donation

A year-long collaboration between Metallica and the American Red Cross has shown the impact of creative partnerships in mobilising voluntary blood donors.

Since launching in April 2025, the initiative has generated more than 25,000 blood donations in the United States, and expanded internationally during the band's M72 World Tour, contributing to around 40,000 donations worldwide.

**The campaign was particularly effective in reaching new audiences, with 16% of donors giving blood for the first time and nearly half of new donors aged 16–24.**

By linking blood donation with a shared cultural experience, the initiative helped raise awareness of ongoing blood needs and demonstrated how innovative engagement can strengthen donor recruitment efforts.



[Full details are available on the American Red Cross website](#)

# New GAP resource to support National Societies expanding their role in blood programmes

The Global Advisory Panel (GAP) has released a new resource to support Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies that are considering increasing their level of involvement in national blood programmes.

This resource is designed for National Societies currently involved in blood program advocacy and education (Category C), and outlines what is required to transition to involvement in donor recruitment activity (Category B). The resource covers governance, risk management, voluntary non-remunerated blood donation, and alignment with IFRC and WHO standards. It highlights key considerations such as formal agreements with government, sustainable resourcing, donor care, data protection, and long-term programme sustainability.

This resource is intended to help National Societies assess readiness, understand responsibilities, and plan a safe and well-governed expansion of their blood programme activities.



The resource is now available for National Societies wishing to explore or plan a greater role in donor recruitment

# Educating future donors: a strategic step toward VNRBD

A recent commentary in *Transfusion* highlights the potential of integrating blood product donation education into school curricula. With only 9% of eligible Europeans donating blood and minority groups underrepresented, the article identifies lack of awareness as a key barrier.

Early education can help build a culture of voluntary, unpaid donation by increasing knowledge, addressing fear and misinformation, encouraging family discussions, and reaching more diverse communities. This approach aligns with WHO's framework for 100% voluntary blood donation and is already being implemented in the UK—demonstrating that it is both practical and achievable.

The message is clear: building sustainable and inclusive donor pools starts with awareness, and schools offer a powerful place to begin.



[Find out more here](#)

# Climate change and the future of blood supply

A recent commentary in The Lancet Planetary Health highlights climate change as an emerging threat to the safety and availability of blood worldwide. The authors describe how extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, cyclones and wildfires can disrupt every stage of the blood supply chain—from donor health and the ability to hold blood drives.

The article also warns that climate change may increase transfusion-transmissible infection risks by altering the distribution of vector-borne diseases, while simultaneously reducing donor availability due to illness, displacement, or cancelled collections. These intersecting challenges highlight the need for blood services to strengthen resilience through flexible donation models, robust emergency planning, and adaptive safety measures.

As climate impacts intensify globally, ensuring a safe, sufficient blood supply will require preparedness and mitigation strategies as suggested in the article.



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