

An interview with...

## Valérie Bettinger

## FEAD Network



We interviewed Valérie Bettinger from the French Red Cross, to tell us more about the inspiring work of Croix-rouge sur Roues.

### Can you tell us a little bit the work you do?

I have been working for the French Red Cross for several years, including 6 years specifically on food aid.

For the last 18 months, I have been responsible for the financial and material management support department within the social action department at the French Red Cross headquarters.

My framework covers the textile activities through our 800 vesti-boutiques (dressing shops) and dressing rooms, food aid with our 700 food retail stores, and donations. We have a team of dedicated volunteers throughout France who manage these activities.

Our role is to bring technical and field support to the units. We provide them with progress and development of their actions throughout methodological, educational or specific support according to the problems identified.

### Can you tell us more about your project and the issues you want to address with it?

It is our priority to fight against all types of potential problems, which is not a small task.

Currently 4.8 million people use the food aid system in France. Our role as an association is also to accompany those welcomed in a social inclusion path. This enables each individual including the most underprivileged to participate fully within society.

Our actions have to be diverse, and even though it is necessary to provide food and clothing, we work collectively to work with people to maintain a social link, health, cultural awareness, budget management etc.

### What were some of the bigger challenges you faced during your project and how did you overcome them?

We have over 10000 people within our volunteer network and we have to support them at a juridical, material and financial level. The food aid work they are involved in is very complex and we try to be on the ground as much as possible. Therefore, we try to be consistent in our approaches and recommendations with regard to volunteers' daily activities - it requires effective education and communication.

### What do you hope to get out of the FEAD Network?

The 'Croix-rouge sur Roues' (Red Cross on the road) enables us to meet with those who are isolated in rural zones.

Red Cross on the road provides aid to communities which are under developed. In this mobile system beneficiaries can find people who are trained to welcome, listen, orientate and if needed propose material assistance.

Food aid is just one part service Red Cross on the road can implement. As a traditional system, it opens the door toward other support measures which aim to maintain the social link and fight against social exclusion.

With regards to maintaining FEAD after 2020 it is essential to demonstrate the decisive role of varied food aid based on people's needs, the liberty of choice and nutritional balance. This forms a solid foundation for further support, the foundation is vital in the fight against poverty and exclusion in Europe.

### How has FEAD made an impact on your project?

As with any French Red Cross food aid action, the Croix-Rouge sur Roues mobile program aims to provide beneficiaries with a diverse range of products and services. The FEAD products represent a crucial foundation on which volunteers rely on.

Thanks to close cooperation with the French managing authority, the products distributed by FEAD are of high quality. We ensure beneficiaries receive the same food supply as any other citizen. In contrast to unsold products which are recovered from supermarkets where quantities and types can be unpredictable.

### Has being part of the FEAD Network led to any collaborations or useful knowledge sharing?

Being part of the FEAD network meetings have offered the opportunity to meet new people, discuss various issues and share good practices on FEAD implementation all over Europe, including social inclusion measures (OP2) countries.

#### FEAD Network

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The FEAD Network is an open membership community for people providing assistance to the most deprived in Europe. [Learn more here](#)