

“The blood donation campaign; a humanitarian and a professional achievement!”

My experience with the blood donation drive was, to say the least, unique and exceptional. It all started when I heard about a competition organized by IPSF: the **VAMPIRE CUP!** Being a competitive person who likes to surpass herself and wanting a breakthrough in my associative adventure, I decided to take up this challenge and directly approached my colleagues, former organizers of this event, who explained to me the flow of a blood donation campaign as well as the modalities of participation for the competition. Nonetheless, they advised me that winning the "regular vampire cup" isn't easy, considering that other member organisation competitors are equally tough and the extremely high number of ASEPA members, which had been obstacles.

On the contrary, every ASEPA member, including myself, was determined to take on this huge challenge! I applied for the position as a coordinator of the event, and along with my colleagues, including the humanitarian coordinator, all executive committees and former ASEPA members, we "created" a committee consisting of more than a hundred people, and we had many meetings. Our stakeholders were the **Algerian red crescent** who helped to contact the hospitals and the medical staff as well as the **scientific club of the polytechnic school** who took charge of the logistics and the authorizations of blood donation sites. We had organized some of the blood donation drives at public places including, but not limited to, Schools and Universities. Our goal was to sensitize the young population and to foster the culture of regular and voluntary blood donation: *a donation every 3 months!* We also established the program according to our university schedules and associative events, which allowed us to organize a blood donation drive every 8 to 10 days for the first quarter of the year!

To ensure the smooth running of the blood donation drive, we divided our committee members in a way that there were at least 8 people to raise awareness, 3 to 4 people to organize the flow and 3 people to accompany the patients after the donation. We also had subcommittees to prepare and schedule briefing sessions for new volunteers who joined the team. There was another team who was in charge of preparing the scientific content of the promotional materials, as well as the Media and Publication team who promoted the event. These committee members also prepared little cakes for the donors to encourage and appreciate them!

Although our schedule was slightly affected by unforeseen circumstances, it did not prevent us from continuing our efforts, and in the end, we successfully conducted a total of 29 blood donation drives from January to October 2019!

With more than 600 members, we were still far from winning the regular vampire cup. Therefore, we decided to join the **IPSF Live Vampire Cup** instead which took place for 3 days consecutively in June. We had meetings with our collaborators and we decided to celebrate the **World Blood Donor Day** at one of the biggest esplanades of Algiers, namely *MAKAM Chahid*. We set up tents, banners, posters, deck chairs inside the tents as well as the waiting rooms and coolers to keep the blood bags that were collected. We also invited celebrities to promote the event, made press releases and conducted television and radio interviews.

During the day itself, all committee members, the red crescent and medical team were on site early in the morning, and at 10 am, influencers, television stars, journalists, former members of ASEPA as well as the donors invaded the esplanade! It was one of the most productive days of the campaign, 500 bags were collected at the end of the day and the blood donation drive was continued for another 2 days at different places.

These efforts allowed ASEPA to win the **Live Vampire Cup** for the second time in its history and to top it off, we were grateful to receive the trophy of this magnificent achievement from the *secretary general* of the IPSF during the ceremony of the **70th anniversary of the IPSF** at the **65th World Congress of the IPSF in Kigali!**

At the end of this event, 1503 blood bags were collected and 5000 people were sensitized to regular and voluntary blood donation. We have also trained more than 200 Asepists to sensitize the public to blood donation. A trophy was won but more than thousands of lives were saved!

Myriam Fekhar, Public Health Coordinator of the Blood Donation Campaign
2018-19 mandate, ASEPA Algeria

