Volunteer Management Toolkit

Volunteer Management Toolkit

In this toolkit...

Foreword by
MR SIM GIM GUAN

Chief Executive Officer
National Council of Social Service

"Volunteers are not paid - not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless"

— Sherry Anderson

Volunteers can augment manpower in the social service sector by complementing the roles of full-time professionals and staff. An effective engagement of skilled volunteers can enhance service delivery and offer long-term human capital solutions for Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs).

With this in mind, NCSS has developed this Volunteer Management Toolkit to help VWOs put in place good volunteer management practices and identify ways of increasing partnership with volunteers.

Targeted at the social service sector, this Toolkit focuses on attracting and managing regular volunteers. It provides VWOs with helpful practices, resources and tools to enable them to form effective partnerships with volunteers. It has been written in a step-by-step manner along the stages of a volunteer management lifecycle.

This Toolkit takes reference from the national volunteer management framework, "Doing Good Well" developed by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC).

We have also included a section on Job Redesign. Some job processes within VWOs can potentially be reconfigured to include roles for volunteers that will help complement staff in that job. This is an area that NCSS is keen to develop further with our VWO members.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the NCSS Volunteer Resource Committee and NVPC for their valuable contributions towards the development of the Toolkit. We also extend our gratitude to Care Corner Singapore Ltd, Children-At-Risk Empowerment Association (CARE Singapore), Fei Yue Family Service Centre, Lions Befrienders Service Association, RSVP Singapore-The Organisation of Senior Volunteers, Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) and Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited for allowing us to share some of their best practices in volunteer management with you in the Toolkit.

We hope that you will find the Toolkit useful and we wish you success in partnering with volunteers effectively to better serve your clients.

Foreword by
MELISSA KWEE

Chief Executive
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre

> **"There is an old saying that 'one can put a thousand to flight and two, ten thousand.' It reflects the power of two that greatly magnifies the effect of one's efforts."**

As volunteers, we know this truth well reflects what is possible when hearts, minds and hands come together to pursue and realise a dream. It is therefore the privilege of volunteer managers to help take these dreams and bring them to the next level. Your efforts can help catalyse, amplify and sustain the passion of volunteers to continue to be the lifeblood of a giving community. For this, I salute you.

NVPC is committed to helping to build a vibrant giving ecosystem where individuals and organisations contribute to the strengthening of a more united, caring and giving Singapore. Can you imagine a community where what we have is joyfully shared, where needs are seen and met directly, where our leaders lead by the example of compassionate service, where families embrace values of service, where top talent is known by their generosity and where organisations make it their business to be good citizens and neighbours? This is our vision of a Giving Nation.

The giving landscape is quickly changing. Increasingly, more people are stepping forward to contribute their time, talent, and treasure toward charitable causes, in both formal and informal ways. For non-profit organisations, these additional helping hands come as great blessings. They bring with them valuable skills and experiences waiting to be tapped on. The service they bring with their heart cannot be easily quantified or measured. However, engaging, managing and releasing the potential of volunteers is also a skill; an art and a science.

NCSS's Toolkit is a welcome addition to the national volunteer management framework "Doing Good Well" (NVPC 2012); the guide for non-profit organisations to set up volunteer management systems. This current Toolkit will support non-profit organisations in the social service sector to empower volunteer managers with local case studies, ready-templates and other useful tools.

The world becomes a better place when people give. This is the heart of a volunteer and the ability to harness the potential of volunteers ultimately makes the difference between a good and a great organisation. As Margaret Mead once said, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever was." We wish you every success on the journey. Know you are not alone and that the effort you make towards enabling volunteers to give more meaningfully and effectively, is what ultimately makes society a more giving and beautiful place.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to volunteerism

Why do we need volunteers?

Volunteers contribute to community development by committing time and effort for the benefit of society. It is undertaken freely and without financial gain.

Volunteers play a significant role in community building and bring multiple benefits to organisations, communities and people. Organisations reap enormous contributions of time, talent and skills, and communities benefit by being more cohesive through active citizen engagement.

A volunteer can bring significant contributions to an organisation, including:

Promoting the interest and welfare of VWOs as an ambassador

Increasing engagement with the community

Complementing jobs of full-time staff

Injecting energy and enthusiasm

Bringing talent, skills and experience to augment an organisation's resources

Overview of volunteerism in Singapore

Stats at a Glance

2012	2014
1 in **3** persons volunteered	**1** in **5** persons volunteered
7 in **10** volunteered occasionally	**6** in **10** volunteered occasionally
Total of **91** million hours spent volunteering	Total of **66** million hours spent volunteering

Source: NVPC Individual Giving Survey (2012 & 2014)

Even though total volunteer participation rate fell in 2014 as compared to 2012, the proportion of regular volunteers in Singapore has increased.

The proportion of volunteers who served monthly rose from 11% in 2012 to 18% in 2014. The average hours per volunteer also rose by nearly 30% from 72 hours per year in 2012 to 93 hours in 2014.

Volunteers play an integral part in voluntary welfare organisations. Moreover voluntary welfare organisations rely on committed volunteers for their operations and to achieve their mission.

That said, there is a constant need to always build greater commitment from volunteers and create deeper connections that bring an affinity between the individual, the organisation and its mission and values.

Source: Individual Giving Survey commissioned by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC); 2012 & 2014

Effective Volunteer Management

Why people volunteer

Volunteers can come from all walks of life. They could be retirees, students, home makers and professionals, to name a few. The motivation for volunteering for each volunteer can be very different.

That said, it is helpful to understand why the volunteers in your organisations volunteer. Understanding their motivations will help you to better engage and motivate your volunteers.

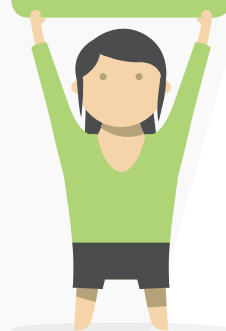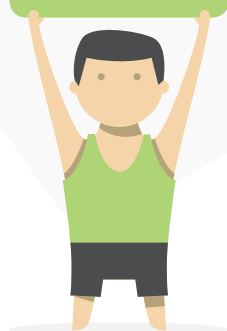Some common reasons for volunteering include:

| To give back to the community | To learn new things | For volunteer's own personal growth and sense of achievement | To make a difference | To make new friends and be part of an organisation or community |

Importance of volunteer management

What is it?

Volunteer programme management is the effective integration of volunteers into an organisation to achieve the mission of the organisation.

Why is it important?

To retain and attract committed volunteers, it is critical for organisations to manage and engage volunteers effectively.

Key reasons why effective volunteer management is important:

✓ Provides clarity on the objectives and roles of volunteers. This helps your staff better engage with volunteers as part of the organisation, and allow for a positive volunteer experience

✓ Allows you to attract, manage and retain the right volunteers for your organisation

✓ Allows you to maximise the benefits that volunteers can bring to your organisation, your clients and your volunteers

✓ Helps you address specific needs of your organisation and your volunteers

Myths of Volunteer Management

✗ **Volunteers are always free**

✗ **Anyone can manage volunteers**

✗ **You do not need much time to manage volunteers**

✗ **You do not need staff to manage volunteers**

✗ **Volunteer programme management is a luxury we cannot afford**

Source: http://www.idealist.org/info/VolunteerMgmt/What

Volunteer Management Toolkit

Objective of Toolkit

This Toolkit aims to help VWOs put in place practices to attract and manage regular volunteers. It takes reference from the national volunteer management framework, "Doing Good Well", developed by NVPC, and focuses on helping VWOs:

Identify opportunities for volunteer partnership within your organisation

Get your organisation and team members ready for volunteer partnership

Put in place practices to attract and manage regular volunteers

Who is this Toolkit for?

If you are an individual or are part of a team that helps with the management or attraction of volunteers in your organisation, this Toolkit is for you!

How to Use the Toolkit?

This Toolkit has been organised along the various stages of a volunteer management lifecycle:

Chapter 1

Helps you get your organisation ready for volunteers. You will learn to:
- Set a purpose for volunteer partnership
- Design and implement volunteer policies
- Get stakeholders in your organisation ready

Chapter 2

Brings you through how you can identify opportunities for volunteer partnership. You will learn to:
- Conduct a needs analysis and recognise volunteer positions
- Write volunteer position descriptions
- Conduct risk mitigation

Chapter 3

Covers how you can recruit and select the right volunteers. You will learn how to:
- Identify sources of volunteers and how to attract them
- Conduct interviews
- Maintain a volunteer database

Chapter 4

Focuses on the volunteer on-boarding process. You will learn to:
- Conduct an orientation programme
- Organise training for volunteers

Chapter 5

Provides you with ways to support and recognise your volunteers. This includes:
- How to support your volunteers
- How to recognise your volunteers

Chapter 6

Provides ideas to review your organisation's and your volunteer's performance. You will learn to:
- Conduct performance management
- Manage the exit of volunteers
- Review your own volunteer management framework

Tips when using this toolkit

✓ Mix and match, adapt and modify the tools and templates to meet the specific needs and goals of your organisation

✓ Although the toolkit has been designed in a logical order where each section builds on the previous one, the sections can be utilised independently as well

✓ For example, if you feel that your organisation already has in place a strategic vision and mission for volunteers but wants to improve the recruitment policies, then skip ahead to the relevant section

GETTING STARTED

Getting Your Organisation Volunteer-Ready

Overview of the chapter

This chapter will help you get your organisation ready for volunteers. You will learn more about:

- Developing and setting a purpose for volunteer partnership in-line with your organisation's vision and mission
- Creating and setting volunteer policies to guide your organisation in managing volunteers
- Getting various stakeholders in your organisation ready and building a volunteer friendly culture
- Establishing a team to oversee volunteerism in the organisation

Samples and Templates

a. Purpose & Vision

- Volunteer vision statement
- Sample volunteer strategic plan

b. Policies

- Sample volunteer code of conduct

- Sample policies
  - Expenses and claims
  - Screening & selection
  - Volunteer record management

c. Organisation Culture

- Staff perception questionnaire
- Operating budget worksheet

Case examples

- Leadership support for the volunteer programme in RSVP
- Volunteer management in Lions Befrienders Service Association

01

A. Developing your volunteer vision and strategic plan

A volunteer management programme begins with the organisation's vision and strategic purpose for involving volunteers.

A clear vision and strategic plan for volunteers will help your organisation to:

- Put a purposeful volunteer programme together
- Connect volunteers to the offerings of the organisation
- Plan how you can achieve your goals

1   Identify your volunteer vision statement

A vision statement is a one-sentence statement that articulates the desired end state which the organisation aspires to achieve. Make sure that your volunteer vision statement inspires all staff and volunteers, and resonates with the organisation's direction and commitment towards volunteerism.

Refer to steps 1 to 4 on the template provided on page 17 to help you develop your organisation's volunteer vision statement.

Make sure your vision statement is...

✓ **Clear and simple**

✓ **Evoking emotion and seeking to inspire**

✓ **Written in the present, not future tense**

✓ **Building a picture, the same picture, in people's minds**

✓ **Describing an outcome, the best outcome you can achieve**

✓ **Easily explained by those involved**

SAMPLE

Volunteer Vision Statement

We strive to create learning environments where volunteers contribute in meaningful ways to student success and reflect the diverse communities they serve.

- Minnesota Literacy Council

2 Articulate your vision clearly

The vision statement should be clearly articulated, widely-shared and openly discussed throughout the organisation. This will inspire volunteer leadership for staff and create a goal for which volunteers can strive to achieve.

3 Develop a strategic purpose and plan to achieve your vision

Creating well-developed strategic plans enables organisations to maximise resources, stay true to vision, and provide high-quality services to your staff and volunteers. With strategic planning, you will be able to identify and find ways to achieve shorter term goals in order to bring your organisation a step closer to your volunteer vision.

The strategic planning process:

1 Facilitate an initial planning meeting to determine logistics of the planning process.

2 Create a planning team comprised of staff, board leadership, and volunteers.

3 Create and finalise a comprehensive plan:

- Identify measurable goals to aim to attain within your volunteer programme

> Some suggestions of measurable goals include:
> ✓ **Increase in capacity (e.g. number of beneficiaries served, or number of activities run)**
> ✓ **Increase in types of services provided**
> ✓ **Increase in quality of services offered**
> ✓ **Increase in awareness of your social mission**

- Decide on actions you will take to achieve the goals

- Formulate a timeline for implementation

- Assign person(s) to be in-charge of the implementation

- Identify critical issues and success factors

Refer to page 18 for a template to help you draft your strategic plan

4 Monitor the implementation of the strategic plan.

5 Evaluate your strategic plan at regular junctures (e.g. annually). Refer to Chapter 6 on conducting an evaluation of your volunteer programme.

Volunteer Vision Statement

Instructions: Use these 4 steps to identify your organisation's vision statement for volunteers. Go through the key considerations to help you complete each step.

	Steps	Considerations	Organisation's Input
1	**Review your organisation vision, mission and goals. Understand why your organisation needs volunteers.**	▶ What are your organisation's vision, mission, purpose and goals? ▶ How can volunteers contribute to the mission of your organisation? ▶ How will your organisation benefit by partnering with volunteers?	
2	**Understand what value your organisation can give to potential volunteers.**	▶ What are volunteers' needs and expectations? ▶ What are the benefits volunteers get from partnering with your organisation? ▶ How would you like your staff and volunteers to interact with and view one another?	
3	**Draft your volunteer vision statement with inputs from some staff in the organisation.**	▶ Obtain key ideas from steps 1 & 2 and put them into keywords. ▶ Expand and modify keywords to ensure clarity. ▶ Obtain staff inputs and refine statement if necessary.	
4	**Finalise vision statement.**	▶ Obtain endorsement from senior management and staff in the organisation. ▶ Circulate volunteer vision statement and ensure that it is visible within the organisation.	

Sample Volunteer Strategic Plan

This provides a starting point for key areas you can include in your strategic plan.

Background

Outline all the key facts of your organisation. Here are some guiding questions.

1. Amount of time the organisation has been in operation: _____years_____months
2. Staff numbers: _____
3. Structure of the organisation (including part-time staff):
4. What need does the organisation serve? Why is this important?
5. What successes did the organisation achieve last year?
6. What challenges do you anticipate next year that will need to be addressed?

Strategic Plan

Write a few statements that demonstrate what you hope to accomplish through the partnership with volunteers in your organisation. This statement should be a short-term objective that will get you closer to your broader goal. For each goal, formulate a timeline for implementation, identify critical issues and success factors and formulate a plan for the implementation of each goal.

Measurable Goals

Choose a few indicators you would like to aim for and be specific in what you want to attain. Measure the indicator today to see where your organisation is now.

Timeline: **Person in charge:**

Potential issues:

Critical success factors

Capture how you will manage programs and monitor your success. What will tell you that the things you're doing are working to bring your message to the world and helping you achieve your volunteer vision?

Steps to achieve goal:

1.   **2.**   **3.**
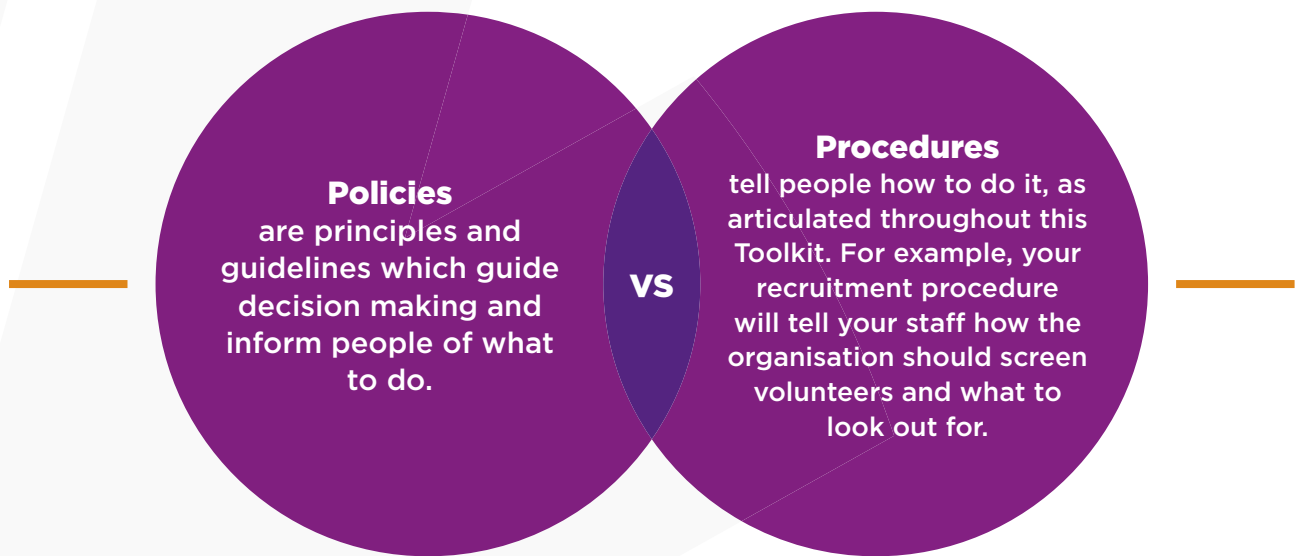
Management Plan

Capture how often you'll review this plan and how decisions about priorities and changes will be made.

B. Setting volunteer policies

Implementing volunteer management policies in your organisation will:

- Demonstrate the organisation's commitment to its volunteers
- Clarify volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Establish values, beliefs and direction for volunteer involvement
- Strengthen relationships within the team

Policies are principles and guidelines which guide decision making and inform people of what to do.

VS

Procedures tell people how to do it, as articulated throughout this Toolkit. For example, your recruitment procedure will tell your staff how the organisation should screen volunteers and what to look out for.

Examples of key policies to support a volunteer programme

The following are some policies which are important for you to get started with a volunteer programme. A sample of policies can be found on pages 21 and 22.

Code of Conduct
- Outlines how a volunteer should conduct himself / herself during a placement in an organisation
- Outlines the appropriate treatment of client information

Volunteer Expenses and Claims
- Outlines types of expenses volunteer can claim for and guidelines to make claims (e.g. out-of-pocket expenses such as travel expenses; mobile phone expenses; equipment cost; events expenses, etc.)

Volunteer Records Management
- Outlines the systems that will be used to record volunteer details
- Outlines the appropriate treatment of volunteer information

Quick guide to writing policies

Writing policies means to simply put on paper your guidelines and approaches.

When developing policies, consider the following steps:

1 **Get help.** Appoint a committee or team to draft the policies and procedures manual. They can seek input from the people who will be expected to follow the policies and consult with the Board as needed.

2 **Organise.** Identify the policies you need. What policies do your current organisation have? Review these and see which ones can be adapted for volunteers. Research on policies from similar organisations and adapt what is relevant to your organisation.

3 **Write the policy.** Write in plain language and make it easily understood by everyone in your organisation. If applicable, make sure that the policy is in accordance with sector-specific legislative and regulatory frameworks.

4 **Approve the policy.** Once the policy is drafted, ensure it goes through the proper approval process in your organisation.

5 **Implement and communicate the policy.** Implement the policy by communicating to stakeholders in your organisation – staff, volunteers, clients and others - on the purpose of the policy and what it entails.

6 **Evaluate the policy.** Review your policy on a regular basis to ensure that it stays relevant.

Code of Conduct for <your organisation's> Volunteer Programme

Policy Title: Code of Conduct　　　　**Policy No:**
Contact:　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Approved By:**
Relevant Forms:　　　　　　　　　　**Reviewed By:**

Policy:

The Volunteer Code of Conduct aims to ensure that all volunteers understand the standard of conduct required. Volunteers are expected to uphold the Volunteer Code of Conduct at all times when carrying out their duties and interactions.

Volunteers are expected at all times to:

- Be present for their duties, otherwise to inform their manager / volunteer manager as early as possible.
- Carry out their duties responsibly, safely and in a competent manner.
- Be appropriately dressed for their duties.
- Maintain confidentiality of all data and information obtained while volunteering.
- Observe all safety procedures.

Volunteers are expected not to:

- Act in any way that may create liability or bring into disrepute the organisation and its name.
- Disclose confidential client information to unauthorised persons.
- Use organisation property, resources, information or funds for any purpose other than authorised uses.
- Seek or accept rewards, benefits or gifts without authorisation.
- Engage in any activity that may bring harm (e.g. physical or mental) to another person or property.
- Be under the influence of alcohol and non-prescription drugs while volunteering.
- Falsify or change any documents or records.
- Post any photographs or videos on reports, advertisement, promotional material or social media without obtaining permission from relevant personnel.
- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation unless prior permission or authority has been given.

Conflict of Interest:

Volunteers are expected to avoid situations which may have conflict of interest with the organisation (e.g. other commitments, roles in other organisations). If any potential area of conflict arises, please consult with your supervisor / manager.

Breaches of the Volunteer Code of Conduct:

I understand that any breaches of the Volunteer Code of Conduct may lead to a warning of unacceptable behaviour or immediate termination of services as a volunteer.

Declaration:

☐ I have read and understood the requirements and commitments written in this agreement. I accept and agree to abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct fully.

....　　..　　..
　　(Name of Volunteer)　　　　　　(Signature of Volunteer)　　　　　　　　(Date)

SAMPLE

Expenses and Claims Policy for <your organisation's> Volunteer Programme

Policy Title: Expenses and Claims	**Policy No:**
Contact:	**Approved By:**
Relevant Forms:	**Reviewed By:**

Policy:

- All volunteers are entitled to reimbursement of allowable and pre-approved expenses incurred while fulfilling assigned duties.

- Expense claims documentations are to be completed, with original receipts to be submitted.

- Reimbursement claims are to be submitted within 14 days of incurring an expense or return from travel.

- Reimbursable Expenses may include:
  - Material cost from event set up
  - Transportation expenditure
  - Medical expenses (where approved) for clients

SAMPLE

Volunteer Record Management for <your organisation's> Volunteer Programme

Policy Title: Volunteer Record Management	**Policy No:**
Contact:	**Approved By:**
Relevant Forms:	**Reviewed By:**

Policy:

- A system for tracking and documenting relevant information regarding the operation of volunteer resources is maintained and continuously improved where appropriate.

- The organisation shall observe strictest confidentiality to maintain the database of volunteers in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) of Singapore.

- The organisation shall not use or disclose personal information about the volunteer unless the volunteer has provided consent for the collection, use or disclosure.

- On giving reasonable notice to the organisation, the volunteer may at any time withdraw any consent given on the use of personal data for any purpose.

C. Building organisation culture

It is important to support the people who work with you and to ensure that the environment is conducive for them. When your staff and volunteers feel that they are being supported, they will work more efficiently, care more about their jobs, and want to do their best. While it is important that the top leadership communicates the volunteer vision and purpose, all staff are essential in playing a part to create a volunteer-friendly culture and environment for volunteers.

Three critical success factors to build a volunteer friendly culture:

Buy-in and mandate on volunteerism from the organisation's leadership team

Ongoing engagement with staff to address concerns on the ground

Dedicated resources to ensure adequate support for volunteers

1 Leadership commitment

The leadership team is responsible for cascading the volunteer vision to the rest of the organisation. This can be carried out through several initiatives:

1 Demonstrate commitment and accountability
- Assign resources (e.g. staff, budget, space) to run and support this programme.
- Identify performance metrics or recognition programmes.

2 Communicate
- Communicate the importance of volunteerism and the organisation's take on this. This can be articulated during board meetings, management meetings, organisation events, or informal sessions with employees.
- Have an open door policy for staff to voice concerns.
- Broadcast the volunteer vision and tips on how to work effectively with volunteers conspicuously (e.g. through posters).

3 Be a role model
- Participate actively in initiatives to promote the volunteer programme (e.g. training, workplace activities, etc.).
- Demonstrate the vision and goals of the volunteer programme.

4 **Appoint a 'spokesperson' or 'champion'**

- Appoint a member of the board to oversee volunteer partnerships. This will ensure that buy-in is aligned at the leadership and working level.

- The organisation can form a committee responsible for volunteer management and planning that will report to the board.

- Quarterly, bi-annual or annual updates can be provided to the board in areas such as: value in which volunteers have brought to the organisation and beneficiaries, potential volunteer management improvements and upcoming recognition activities for volunteers.

Case example: Leadership support for the volunteer programme in RSVP

RSVP strives to create an active senior citizenry by offering opportunities for seniors to volunteer in community services. RSVP does this by designing and creating regular and sustainable voluntary programmes, supplemented by ad hoc activities, that are appealing to seniors. By volunteering, seniors benefit by successfully ageing. In so doing, their voluntary services help to build a stronger society of sharing and giving. In turn, senior volunteers continue to pick up new skills, build up their social circle of friends and become resilient in their own lives.

As an organisation that is constantly looking at capacity building and new trends in volunteerism, RSVP sees the importance of having leadership support to drive the strategic plan for volunteer management within the organisation. This is supported mainly by the formation of the Volunteer Management Committee who is responsible for the recruitment, deployment, retention and management of volunteers. The Volunteer Management Committee is chaired by a Board member with long experience and strong credentials in volunteering.

Having a committee dedicated to volunteer management allows for volunteer management to be a part of the board agenda and provide greater focus on volunteer management within RSVP.

The Chair of the Volunteer Management Committee reports and updates the board during board meetings on the progress and any policy changes that the board needs to consider to make volunteer management more efficient and productive, making sure that it is in-line with RSVP's strategic plan. Operational decisions are made at committee level and do not involve the board.

2 Staff engagement

It is important to consult with individuals or teams with whom volunteers will be working with. Here are two ways to engage full time staff to obtain buy-in and reduce potential resistance:

1 Point out benefits

- Cascade the volunteer vision statement to all full time staff.
- Highlight the benefits that partnering with volunteers will bring to the staff and the organisation.

Highlight benefits to staff

✓ **Additional projects or activities can be implemented and maintained**

✓ **Volunteers will be carefully selected to bring in certain key skills and expertise that the organisation may currently not have**

✓ **Volunteers have a network of contacts that can help advance the capacity of the organisation**

2 Consult staff

- Encourage feedback and constructive criticism about the volunteer programme. You can use the Staff Perception Questionnaire provided on page 26 to solicit this feedback.
- Encourage staff to voice their concerns and show that you are open to working with them to resolve these issues.
- Involve full time staff in the development of the strategic plan for volunteers.

✗ Concerns staff may have:

- Will my job be replaced with volunteers?
- It's easier to do it myself than involve volunteers.
- I enjoy the hands-on part of my job. I don't want to give that part up to volunteers and be left with only a supervisory role.
- It takes too much time to get a volunteer trained and up and running.
- Volunteers are well meaning but don't have the same level of professional training that I do. Service to clients will be affected.
- My job description is big enough already without having to add on supervising volunteers. I don't have any training in volunteer management. That's not my job.

✓ How do I address these concerns?

- Share volunteer job descriptions with full time staff and explain the role distinctions.
- Explain to full time staff that your organisation values their specialised skills and that volunteers will allow them to focus on value adding tasks.
- Share the benefits of partnering with volunteers.
- Recognise the training that volunteers will require for the given roles.
- Encourage staff to understand that everyone in the organisation has a part to play in volunteer management.

3 **Equip staff to manage and train volunteers**

- Implement training courses for staff to work effectively with volunteers.
- Equip staff with the tools to manage and communicate with volunteers.

SAMPLE

Staff Perception Questionnaire

1. Do you think we are adequately meeting the objectives of our organisation?

   ○ Yes   ○ No

   If no, what areas can we improve on? ....

2. Do you think we are adequately meeting the needs of our clients?

   ○ Yes   ○ No

   If no, what areas can we improve on? ....

3. What would you like to do or improve if you had more resources?

   ....

4. What is your general impression of volunteers?

   ○ They are valuable resource and help   ○ They add to the workload of staff

   ○ They do not contribute much   Others: ....

5. Do you think volunteers can contribute to meeting the organisation's objectives?

   ○ Yes   Please share areas ....

   ○ No   Please share why not ....

6. Are you keen to work with volunteers?

   ○ Yes   Please share areas ....

   ○ No   Please share why not ....

   ☐ I would like to have training on how to engage, support and supervise volunteers

   ☐ I would like to provide inputs on volunteer job roles and responsibilities

3 Dedicated resources for your volunteer programme

Setting aside dedicated resources is a demonstration of an organisation's commitment, and is important to ensure that volunteers and staff are prepared for the partnership. This will include:

1 Planning a budget for expenses

Set aside an annual budget for the allocation of volunteer expenditures. You may wish to consider the following 3-step process:

1. Determine the types of expenses you may incur

Some typical expense types are as follows:

Area	Operating Expenditures	Capital (one-time) Expenditures
Staffing	Manager of volunteer services • Benefits • Travel • Other	....
Volunteer programme management software	Annual fees	One-time purchase
Office	Office supplies, photocopying, including forms, certificates, invitations	One–time office expenditure, including desk, phone, computer, etc.
Volunteer programme promotion	....	Promotion campaigns for promoting volunteerism at malls, schools, etc.
Volunteer screening	Police records check	....
Volunteer / Staff training	Trainers, handbooks	....
Volunteer recognition/ appreciation	Food, entertainment, gifts, etc.	....
Transportation	Travel	....
Insurance	Liability insurance	....
Professional development	Conferences, memberships	Resource material for both staff and volunteers

2. **Determine the expected cost for each expense**

   This can be based on several factors such as:

   i.   Historical expenses

   ii. Target number of volunteers

   iii. Unit cost and quantity needed

   iv. Feasibility based on organisation revenue and funding

3. **Monitor your budget**

   - The budget is not static. Do review your budget on a monthly and/or quarterly basis.
   - Make adjustments where necessary to ensure adequacy of materials and volunteer support as well as to ensure that expenses balance with revenue and funding.

Operating Budget Worksheet

Instructions: Based on your budgeting cycle, provide an estimate for each cost component. Use this worksheet to track costs of the programme and input actual cost towards the end of your budgeting cycle.

Operating Budget Worksheet	Estimated ($)	Actual ($)
Staffing		
Benefits provided to volunteer management staff		
Travel costs of volunteer management staff		
Others		
Total		
IT and equipment		
Volunteer programme management IT system costs		
Office expenses of volunteer programme management staff or volunteers (e.g. stationery)		
One-time office expenses (e.g. desk, phone, computer)		
One-time purchases of IT equipment		
Total		
Expected programme cost		
Volunteer screening costs (e.g. background checks)		
Volunteer recruitment drive		
Training costs (e.g. trainer, materials)		
Postage and printing of volunteer materials (e.g. volunteer handbooks)		
Volunteer transportation or travel costs		
Volunteer insurance		
Professional development costs (e.g. conferences, memberships)		
Total		
Total expenditure		
Total P/L		
(Income – Total expenditure)		

2 **Appoint a volunteer management team or dedicated individual to be the overall programme manager**

It is important to have a dedicated volunteer management team or individual to manage and support your volunteers. This team or individual is critical to foster a positive experience for the volunteers and provide the link between full time staff and volunteers.

What are the key responsibilities and initiatives of a volunteer management team?

✓ Develop, review and communicate the organisation's volunteer policies and procedures	✓ Manage staff / volunteer relations
✓ Assess staff requests for volunteer involvement	✓ Supervise, evaluate and recognise volunteer contributions
✓ Recruit and screen applications	✓ Public relations and liaising with public on volunteer matters
✓ Conduct volunteer orientations and ensure that appropriate trainings are put in place	✓ Partnerships development with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partners
✓ Oversee volunteer retention	

Some of the qualities required for the volunteer manager role include:

✓ Ability to manage a team or work independently and conduct effective programme management	✓ Good understanding of volunteer issues
✓ Ability to communicate with various stakeholders	✓ Strong belief in the value of volunteer involvement
✓ Ability to multitask	✓ Presentation skills
✓ Willingness to work with people	✓ Problem solving and analysis

Effective volunteer management is an organisation-wide effort!

Volunteer programme management is not the responsibility of the volunteer manager / management team alone. All staff / members of the organisation have a part to play!

The volunteer manager / management team is an important enabler of the volunteer programme, setting the framework, policies, processes and conditions for the programme. All other staff are often involved in either coordinating, supervising and/or engaging with volunteers, and are integral to the success of the volunteer programme.

How big should your volunteer team be?

The ideal volunteer to staff ratio varies across organisations depending on your organisation size, the type of voluntary work and the skills and expertise required. Each organisation should examine its own objectives and workload in volunteer engagement and decide accordingly about volunteer staffing.

Benchmarking your program with others in similar areas of service may also provide insight about appropriate staffing levels and expectations.

Case example: Volunteer management in Lions Befrienders Service Association

Lions Befrienders Service Association is an organisation which partners with volunteers to carry out and fulfill its mission of enriching the lives of the seniors that it serves. Lions Befrienders sees its volunteers as the very heart of their organisation and works with them to conduct their islandwide befriending programme targeted at seniors who require emotional, social or physical support. Even though the number of volunteers whom Lions Befrienders partners with is large, with 967 befrienders as of February 2015, Lions Befrienders is still able to provide good supervision and support that is required for each individual volunteer.

How do they do it? Lions Befrienders employs a full-time volunteer coordinator for the development of recruitment, training, performance review and recognition policies and volunteer manuals. But the volunteer coordinator is not alone in managing volunteers for the programme. Fifteen full-time staff and a group of volunteer leaders work together to coordinate the rest of the volunteers within the programme. Full-time staff are responsible for case assessment of seniors and referral of seniors' needs, guiding and supervising the volunteers who do home visits to the seniors, while the volunteer leaders become the go-to experts for new volunteers. Volunteer leaders also encourage and guide new volunteers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. In addition, Lions Befrienders has established communication tools and channels for every volunteer. These include mediums such as their website, social media, newsletters, mobile check calls and emails. This provides a formal avenue for every volunteer to voice his or her concerns or feedback to management or staff.

Conducting A Needs Assessment

Overview of the chapter

This chapter will help you identify the positions in your organisation that you can partner with volunteers. You will learn more about:

- Conducting a needs analysis to identify potential areas to increase partnership with volunteers in your organisation
- Developing a volunteer profile and position description
- Identifying potential risks in partnering with volunteers and risk prevention and mitigation strategies

Samples and Templates

a. Needs Analysis
- Quick guide to job redesign

b. Volunteer Profile
- Position description template

Case examples

- Job redesign to increase volunteer partnerships in Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities

02

A. Conducting a needs analysis

Conducting a needs analysis will allow you to be more targeted on how volunteers will fit in and how they can meet your organisation's goals

To define your organisation's needs, consider the following:

1 Think about your organisation's strategic purpose in engaging volunteers. How will volunteers help to achieve your organisation's mission and vision?

> When conducting the needs analysis, keep in mind that the volunteer role should reflect not only what the organisation needs, but also what volunteers will want to do. Remember that the experience should be meaningful for the volunteers!

2 Assess the current state of your organisation in relation to your strategic plans

- What are some initiatives that are not being implemented due to limited number of staff?
- Where are some staffing shortfalls that your organisation faces?
- Are there goals that you have difficulties reaching?
- How can services to beneficiaries be improved?
- What skills or expertise do you think are lacking in your organisation?

3 Define and evaluate the scope of the volunteer role

List down the areas identified for potential volunteer involvement. Evaluate the involvement of volunteers in these areas, taking into consideration the following:

- Is the role impactful for the organisation?
- Is the role currently performed by a full-time staff? *If so, there may be a need to redesign the role of the full-time staff. An quick guide to job redesign can be found on page 34.*
- Are there any regulatory restrictions on the volunteer performing the role?
- Would it compromise operations or service delivery?
- Is the role meaningful for volunteers?
- What are the risks associated with the role if it is performed by a volunteer? *You may refer to page 39 for risk mitigation ideas.*
- What are the resource requirements? Is it cost effective to involve volunteers? *This could include staff supervision, training, space, expenses, etc.*

The types of roles which volunteers take on typically fall into the following categories:

1. **Service based roles:** Positions where the volunteer is directly involved in services provided by the organisation. These are usually client-facing.
2. **Event based roles:** Positions where volunteers conduct events. These roles could include conducting public awareness campaigns, fundraising, organising camps, etc.
3. **Project based roles:** Positions that require volunteers with specialised skills. These could be volunteer consultants, web designers, hairdressers, etc.

A Quick Guide to Job Redesign

What is job redesign?

Job redesign is a process whereby job content is reviewed and possibly reallocated. This will allow you to recognise ways that a volunteer can be involved in a role that is currently performed by a full time staff.

How can a job redesign help my organisation?

Increase productivity

Increase volunteer involvement

Increase workforce satisfaction levels

Improve service delivery

Better use of staff and volunteer abilities

Follow these steps to conduct a job redesign:

STEP 1 **Identify areas to redesign**

• *Identify full-time roles that have the potential to include volunteers*

The first thing you will need to do is to identify the job roles that require a job redesign.

- Speak with full-time staff to identify where they are facing manpower shortages or would like to expand their work
- Observe what area of work takes up the most time
- Understand the skills required to take on these roles
- Shortlist the job roles that have the potential to involve volunteers to ease manpower shortages or increase productivity

STEP 2 **Develop Recommendations**

- *Understand what the full-time role entails*
- *Explore possibilities of job redesign*

Once you have the job role in mind, begin to formulate a redesign plan.

- Study what the identified job roles do
  - Understand their processes and why things are done in a certain way
  - Identify the areas in each job role that is value adding or requires specialised skills
  - Estimate the proportion of time spent on each activity

- Think about how the full-time role can involve volunteers. Here are some ideas:

i. Enhance the existing job role
  - **Objective:** Allowing the full-time role to partake in more value-added work, while volunteers are able to take on activities that require less specialised skills

  - **Suitable for current situations where:**
    - Specialised full-time staff spend a high proportion of their time on tasks that do not require specialised skills

  - **How to redesign?**
    - Identify tasks which do not require the specialised skills that staff are trained or qualified to perform and explore the possibilities of volunteers conducting those tasks

  - **Questions to ask:**
    - Do these tasks require specialised skills?
    - Will there be issues of safety and reliability if this task were to be done by a volunteer?

ii. Improve working practices
  - **Objective:** Partnering with volunteers to bring specialised knowledge to the role

  - **Suitable for situations where:**
    - There are identified opportunities for streamlining of workflow processes, adoption of technology or development of capabilities.
    - There are inadequate staff with the specialised skills required for the role.

  - **How to redesign?**
    - Allow for volunteers who are professionals to be included in job roles as subject matter experts or consultants.

- **Questions to ask:**
  - Are existing staff capable of performing the job roles?
  - Are staff ready to learn skills from volunteers?
  - Are these tasks mission-critical or do they require full-time commitment?

iii. Scale up services

- **Objective:** Partnering with volunteers to expand service delivery to more clients

- **Suitable for situations where:**
  - There is an insufficient number of full-time staff to reach the ideal number of clients

- **How to redesign?**
  - Engage volunteers to supplement what full-time roles do or allow staff to train volunteers to perform tasks that can increase your reach to clients

- **Questions to ask:**
  - Are volunteers able to conduct these tasks?
  - What training would the volunteer require?
  - Are there safety or confidentiality implications of the redesign?

STEP 3 **Study impact**

- *Forecast challenges in redesign*

Forecast the potential challenges of the implementation of the redesign.

- Understand the impact of the inclusion of volunteers on the current job role
  - How will existing staff work be affected?

- Identify the challenges you will face in the implementation of the redesign
  - Are staff in this job role ready to involve volunteers in their work?
  - Will volunteers want to take up the job?
  - Are there any risks involved in partnering with volunteers?

- Establish the resources required for the redesign
  - Manpower
  - Technology
  - Knowledge and expertise

STEP 4 **Pilot test**

- *Pilot implementation of the redesign*

Do a pilot test of the redesign to ensure that the redesign is feasible. A successful test will also allow for greater acceptance and smoother transition during the rollout phase.

i. Get your organisation ready for the redesign

- Train staff and volunteers involved
- Obtain management support
- Set timelines and identify owners for the implementation activities
- Identify desired outcomes of the redesign and how you will measure success

ii. Execute the job redesign

- Assign a facilitator to guide all involved
- Monitor the progress of the pilot
- Keep an issue log

iii. Collect feedback from full-time staff and volunteers involved

- Conduct survey
- Measure KPI
- Provide recommendations and improvements

STEP 5   Rollout

- *Change management*
- *Final execution and review*

Rollout the redesign to the rest of the organisation

- Communicate redesign plan to organisation

- Obtain buy-in from organisation stakeholders

- Address concerns and feedback

- Train all staff and volunteers involved

- Execute redesign

Case example: Job redesign to increase volunteer partnerships in Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities

Thye Hua Kwan (THK) Moral Charities provides services and assistance for various sectors and groups in the community via more than 40 centres nationwide. This includes adults, families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

To augment the manpower of its staff and enable them to improve service delivery, THK explored ways to increase partnership with volunteers through a job redesign exercise for its programme coordinators within its Senior Activity Centres.

During the job redesign study, key tasks and responsibilities of programme coordinators were reviewed with the following considerations:

i.   Suitability of tasks for volunteers. For example, whether volunteers had the requisite skillsets to do the task/role.

ii.   Impact of volunteers taking on the role. For example, tasks which were critical to the smooth running of the centre operations would still be undertaken by the programme coordinators.

iii. Potential risks of volunteers taking up the tasks. For example, the safety of the beneficiaries or volunteers was a key consideration.

The study identified several areas where volunteer partnership could be scaled up, such as:

i.   Conduct of activities at the SAC – volunteers could work with the programme coordinators to help plan, prepare and conduct centre activities. This would allow the centre to increase number of activities run to utilise the centre space better and potentially increase the variety of activities for the seniors.

ii.   Home visits and outreach of seniors – volunteers could assist staff in conducting home visits and outreach activities. This would increase the frequency and length of engagement during home visits, as well as increase community involvement in caring for seniors in the neighbourhood.

Volunteer job descriptions which included key responsibilities, desired volunteer profile and time commitment were developed for each area of partnership. This was important in the recruitment of volunteers, to give volunteers a clear understanding of the roles and commitment required. Supporting work processes were also reviewed to outline how volunteers would fit into the centre operations and work together with staff. Potential risks were also identified and mitigating strategies put in place to minimise these risks. Examples of such risks and mitigating strategies were:

Potential risks	Mitigating strategies
Volunteer unable to manage seniors during certain situations (e.g. when seniors are upset)	• To conduct volunteers screening to ensure fit • On-the-job training by staff or senior volunteers
Volunteer dealing with sensitive information, and the need to maintain client confidentiality	• Require volunteers to sign confidentiality agreement and volunteer code of conduct
Potential injury to client / volunteer in activities, events, etc.	• First-aid trained personnel available (staff / volunteer) on site • On-the-job training by staff or senior volunteers • Purchase of insurance for volunteers

The redesigned roles were tested at one of THK's SACs to ensure that the redesign was feasible and allow for smoother transitions for further rollout phases. The pilot allowed THK to work out operational challenges such as identifying ways to recruit volunteers, training and onboarding them.

The job redesign has allowed THK to increase partnership with volunteers. This has allowed THK to increase the engagement of its beneficiaries. Centre staff have also benefited through increased capacity for their core roles, such as planning and management of the Centre. It has also enhanced the community's involvement in caring for its seniors.

B. Develop a volunteer profile and position description

Once you have determined the scope of the volunteer roles, you should identify the volunteer profile required for the position. The volunteer profile, tasks and responsibilities should be documented in a position description.

Why do you need a volunteer position description?

Provides greater clarity for both staff and volunteers on the responsibilities and accountabilities of the role.

Assists in your recruitment strategy and allows you to find the most suitable volunteer for the position.

Helps your organisation communicate what is expected of the volunteer.

Promotes volunteer recruitment and retention because volunteers are able to know, at the start, the nature and commitment required.

What is in a volunteer position description?

There are 8 key aspects that should be in a position description. They are:

1

Job Title
Name of position

2

Department
Function which job comes under

3

Key objectives
How the job contributes to the organisation

4

Requirements
Skills and attributes required

5

Key responsibilities
Activities that volunteer will be involved in

6

Relationships
Internal/External interactions and relationships

7

Training
Training requirements

8

Commitment required
• Frequency of service
• Minimum length of service

Position Description Template

Instructions: Fill in one position description for each position that you have identified in your needs analysis.

Title: ....

Department: ....

Supervisor: ....

1. Position Purpose

Summarise in one statement why the position is needed; and how it contributes to the overall mission / objective of the organisation.

```
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│                                                  │
│                                                  │
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│                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

2. Key Roles & Responsibilities

.... (insert position title here) is responsible for:

```
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│                                                  │
│                                                  │
│                                                  │
│                                                  │
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3. Specific qualifications / behavioural competencies needed (if any)

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```

4. Time commitment of role (e.g. hours per week/month; specific duration of time, etc.)

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│                                                  │
│                                                  │
│                                                  │
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```

C. Mitigate risk

Once you have identified the potential volunteer positions, you need to be mindful of the risks involved for each position and ensure that they are recognised and managed appropriately.

1 **Conduct risk assessment**

Risk assessment is a pre-emptive measure in order to forecast potential hazards in your organisation.

i. Identify key risks

The following are several broad themes of risk that the organisation can consider:

People
(e.g. Injury to client or volunteer)

Equipment / skillsets
(e.g. Damage to machinery)

Confidentiality
(e.g. Divulgence of confidential information, breach of PDPA)

Mission-criticality
(e.g. Important deadlines not met)

Financial
(e.g. Theft, mismanagement of funds)

Reputation
(e.g. Misrepresentation of organisation)

Compliance
(e.g. Breach of code of conduct)

ii. Assess impact of key risks identified

For each risk identified, assess the potential impact and likelihood of risk occurring. This will help to determine the level of mitigation actions you would undertake. The higher the frequency and severity of the residual risk assessment, the more attention the organisation should pay to that particular risk factor.

Risk Impact	Potential frequency of risk occurring	Severity of risk should it occur
Low	Rare or unusual risk, very unlikely to occur	Little damage to the above themes should the risk be realised
Medium	Risk has occurred before, but is not realised often	Moderate impact to the organisation should risk be realised, but may still be tolerable
High	Risk has high probability of occurring in the future	Catastrophic impact on the organisation

2 Establish risk mitigation strategies

There are various measures you can use to mitigate each risk. Remember to prioritise each risk identified by its risk impact and think about what you plan to do to minimise or prevent this risk. There are 3 courses of action you can take to mitigate risk:

i. Task the activity to a full time staff instead of a volunteer

This option of mitigation should be considered if the potential risk is frequent and severity of impact is high.

ii. Reduce the likelihood of risk occurrence by establishing prevention strategies throughout your volunteer programme

Area	Prevention strategy	Types of Risk addressed
Policies	Develop code of conduct to inform volunteers of the organisation's expectations of their work and the importance of confidentiality. Develop policies on confidentiality, media and social media responsibilities.	People, Equipment, Confidentiality, Reputation
Screening	Conduct screening commensurate with the risk level of the position. For example, conduct background checks for volunteers working directly with vulnerable clients.	People, Financial, Compliance
Orientation	Provide information during induction to inform volunteers of their expected responsibilities and their role in risk awareness and mitigation.	All
Training	Provide training on health and safety measures to equip volunteers with the skills to carry out their job safely. Provide training on volunteer dos and don'ts.	People, Equipment, Confidentiality, Mission-Criticality, Reputation, Compliance
Performance Management	Provide regular supervision and feedback on the volunteer's work. Put in place a dismissal policy.	People, Equipment, Mission-Criticality
Documentation	Document all policies and procedures on volunteer management.	Financial, Reputation, Compliance
Emergency Procedures	Develop safety and incident protocols.	People, Mission-Criticality

Workplace Safety & Health (WSH) Act

VWOs should comply with the WSH Act to ensure a safe workplace for everyone. WSH Act requires the organisations:

✓ To maintain safe work facilities and arrangements.

✓ To ensure safety in equipment, machinery and work processes.

✓ To develop and put in place control measures for dealing with emergencies.

✓ To provide all with adequate instruction, information, training and supervision.

iii. Transfer or share the risk liability

This allows the organisation to be able to move some of its liability to another party. Insurance is one method to reduce your organisation's liability.

What are some common types of insurance?

Insurance Type	Purpose
Employers' Liability Insurance	Protects employer when the volunteer sustains an injury from the employer's negligence
Personal / Group Accident, Death & Disability Insurance	Provides the organisation or individual volunteer with accidental death coverage or accident injury expenses of a volunteer
Public Liability Insurance	Covers the organisation if a member of the public sustains an injury or loss as a result of its services
Travel Insurance	Provides coverage for volunteers who travel, to reimburse travel disruptions or loss of personal property
Product Liability Insurance	Provides coverage for injury due to a fault in the organisation's products
Directors and Officers' Insurance	Covers volunteer directors of your organisation from losses by legal action or regulatory investigations

Quick tips on keeping costs of insurance low

✓ Let the organisation carry part of the risk of loss or liability to volunteers

✓ Reduce the likelihood of a claim by better risk management or disclaimers

✓ Look at a large range of insurance quotes to get the best quote

✓ Explore options of block insurance schemes with your networks

✓ Look for insurance packages for VWOs

Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers

Overview of the chapter

This chapter helps you in recruiting and selecting volunteers. You will learn more about:

- Identifying potential sources of volunteers
- Attracting volunteers
- Methods to screen potential applicants
- Maintaining a volunteer database

Samples and Templates

a. Screening

- Sample application form
- Interview assessment form

b. Database

- Sample volunteer database

Case examples

- Recruitment and attraction of volunteers in Care Corner

03

A. Finding sources of volunteers

Before you can start selecting volunteers, you need to know where to find them. The following table outlines some volunteer sources and possible channels for reaching them.

Being targeted in your recruitment allows you to find volunteers which best fit the position and your organisation.

Sources of Volunteers	Possible Channels	Key Considerations
General public	• Organisation's website • Advertising • Existing networks • Volunteer matching portals • Hold recruitment event/roadshow • Social media	• Broad based source. To enhance fit of respondents, consider including information on your volunteer vision and mission, job description and role profile required. • Recruiting through existing networks (e.g. volunteer networks) may also enhance fit.
Homemakers	• Notices on community boards • Online forums • Word of mouth (networks)	• Consider planning the volunteer activities around the family schedules of homemakers.
Surrounding community	• Work with grassroots organisations and Community Development Councils (CDCs) • Notices on community boards • Flyers to local neighburhoods	....
Corporates	• Reach out to corporations' CSR personnel	• Leverage on the specialised skills that corporations have. Tailor the volunteer positions to match your needs to the corporation's.
Secondary/ Tertiary Students	• Notices in schools • Advertise on social media • Advertise in school magazines • Reach out to societies and clubs	• Students normally have a fixed term and are usually required to comply with their project specifications.
Expatriates	• Expat forums • Club notice boards	• Length of commitment to your organisation.
Religious Organisations	• Reaching out to religious organisations/ affiliated religious groups	• Make sure that these organisations have similar values and goals as yours.
Seniors/Retirees	• Newspaper articles • Community centres • Community notice boards	• Physically strenuous activities may need to be limited. • Seniors may vary in how technology savvy they may be.

B. Profile your organisation and volunteers to attract the right volunteers

When reaching out to or engaging potential volunteers:

- State your organisation's services. Try to think of ways to show how your volunteers make contributions to the organisation's work.

- Describe the roles that you are looking to fill and ask if this role will be one that they are interested in.

- Address concerns of potential volunteers e.g. assure them that they do not need prior experience or that training will be provided.

- Put down the basic requirements you need from a volunteer in this role, including time commitment or skills they need.

- Share the benefits that the volunteer will get from their volunteer experience.

- Provide a contact number or website link to the application form.

- Ensure prompt follow-ups with prospective volunteers. The top complaint from prospective volunteers is that no one follows-up with them after they have sent in their applications. This would also have a negative impact on the organisation's reputation.

Feel free to be creative in the methods which you use to reach out to potential volunteers.

Case example: Recruitment and attraction of volunteers in Care Corner

Care Corner Singapore is a multiservice social agency and registered charity which seeks to impact the lives of people in Singapore by providing care and sharing love. It does this through a network of services including family service centres, senior services, children and youth services, special needs and other specialist services such as counselling and family violence intervention. The charity serves more than 50,000 beneficiaries each year.

Care Corner is specific when designing volunteer roles and performs targeted recruitment. Each Care Corner centre has an appointed Volunteer Development and Partnerships (VDP) personnel. The VDP personnel's role is to identify and facilitate meaningful volunteer engagement in meeting the organisation's mission and vision. In identifying these volunteer roles, factors such as their pre-requisites, commitment level, number of volunteers needed and any risks involved are considered. In a coordinated effort with the headquarters, the centre VDP team would then begin recruiting suitable volunteers for the roles.

Care Corner takes a targeted approach at recruitment. For example, for volunteer assignments during office hours, the charity leverages on platforms to reach out to homemakers, seniors and retirees. In addition to the existing network of volunteers, the charity also seeks to work closely with schools, universities, companies, associations, volunteer intermediaries, and utilises both online and offline platforms (e.g. SG Cares) to reach and match prospective volunteers to suitable projects and roles.

Through targeted recruitment, Care Corner Singapore is better able to find suitable volunteers for roles which would meet the needs of its many beneficiaries.

C. Screening your applicants

The next step is to ensure that these potential volunteers are the right fit for the roles you have in mind. Think about the nature and the degree of risk that this volunteer position will be exposed to. What are the traits of your ideal candidate for the position? What will you need to know about the applicant to decide if he or she is the right fit?

Determine your screening criteria. Areas you may wish to consider may include:

✓ **Professional qualifications**	✓ **Motivation for volunteering**
✓ **Personality traits**	✓ **Background and criminal record**
✓ **Ability to forge bonds with your beneficiaries**	

Screening Methods

When you have identified the ideal volunteer profile for the role, you can employ a few methods to help you select the right volunteer. Note that these screening methods will help in making better assessments on potential volunteers but should be tailored based on the risk factors identified. The higher the risk, the more screening you should conduct.

1 Application Forms

Application forms are normally used as the first level screening for potential volunteers. It is an expression of interest in volunteering by the potential volunteer, as well as a means to obtain information for a first level screening on the suitability of candidate for the role.

All volunteers should undergo this level of screening regardless of the positions they will take on in your organisation.

Positions with minimal risk involved may use the application form as a screening tool. In this case, make sure that you are able to use the answers in the form to decide if the applicant meets your criteria for the role.

The advantages of using an application form are:

You will be able to get tailored information — You will be able to compare applications — It will be easier to input data into your volunteer database — It gives the volunteer an idea of what is important to your organisation

When drafting your application form, make sure that it is easy to complete and contains all the essential information you will need.

SAMPLE

Sample Application Form

Instructions: Here is a sample application form for you to refer to and adapt for your organisation. Make sure that your application form covers the following broad categories: (i) Volunteer basic demographic details (ii) Volunteer's interest (iii) Volunteer's skills and expertise and (iv) Time available for volunteering.

Basic Demographic details

First Name: .... Last Name: ....

NRIC: .... Age: ....

Address: ....

Gender: M / F   Home Tel.: ....

Email: .... Mobile: ....

Your Interest

Please check any tasks which you will like to help with.

☐ Administration   ☐ Backend support   ☐ Fundraising

☐ Supporting front line roles   ☐ Others (please state): ....

Please state any past experience / qualifications which may be relevant to volunteering with us: ....

....

Skills and Expertise

Please check any of the following in which you have had previous experiences, expertise, or training.

☐ CPR   ☐ First Aid   ☐ Nursing

☐ Counselling   ☐ Therapy   ☐ Administration

☐ Teaching   ☐ Others (please state): ....

Time Available

Please check how often you will be able to give to the organisation

☐ Weekly   ☐ Monthly   ☐ Quarterly

Please state any preferred day(s) / time(s): ....

Medical Declaration*

Do you currently have any medication conditions which could affect your safety or the safety of others? Yes / No

If yes, please state: ....

....

Personal Declaration*

Do you have any record of criminal convictions? Yes / No

If yes, please state: ....

Have you ever been declared bankrupt, or entered into a personal insolvency agreement? Yes / No

....

* The information is requested to assist the selection process and will be taken into account only when it is considered relevant to the volunteer role.

I declare the information that I have given on this form is true and correct. By providing my details, I understand that the organisation may use my details for record and reference purposes, but will not disclose information to any third party without seeking my permission.

....
Volunteer's Name / Signature   Date

2   Interviews

An interview is the second level of screening that can be conducted. You can shortlist applicants and invite them for an interview.

Interviews serve 2 purposes:

1

For your organisation to see if the applicant suits the position

2

For the applicant to see if the position and organisation meets their expectations

This level of screening should be employed for all volunteers that will be facing a medium or high level of risk. This could include volunteers in service delivery roles or administrative roles.

Preparation is key! It is just as important for the interviewer to be prepared as it is for the candidate.

Before interviewing an applicant:

✓ **Identify who will be interviewing the candidate.**

✓ **Find a suitable place to hold the interview.**

✓ **Read through the candidate's application form.**

✓ **Know about the position that the candidate is interviewing for.**

✓ **Draft a few questions that will allow the candidate to demonstrate their suitability.**

✓ **Anticipate what the candidate will want to know, potential areas of concerns and prepare for them (e.g. potential questions on the beneficiary group).**

✓ **Use an interview assessment form to guide the interview to ensure you get the information you need. You may refer to the sample interview assessment form as a guide.**

Here are some guidelines for conducting the interview:

1. Provide an introduction to the organisation

2. Seek information from the candidate and collect information required

3. Provide information on the position and ask if they have any preferences

4. Ask the candidate if he or she has any questions or clarifications regarding the job role

5. Thank the candidate and inform him or her of when they can expect the outcome of the interview

Tips on interview assessment

Here are some additional considerations for assessing the suitability of the candidate:

1. Did the candidate arrive on time?

2. Did the candidate seem to have similar values, appropriate motivations and cultural fit with your organisation?

3. Did the candidate seem to be friendly or sociable? (this may be important particularly for direct service roles)

4. Observe the body language to see if the candidate seems comfortable in the interview.

Interview Assessment Form

Instructions: This interview assessment form can be used when conducting face-to-face or phone interviews. Its aim is to help the interviewer(s) get an understanding of the candidate's motivations, ability and willingness to volunteer.

Candidate details

Volunteer Candidate Name: _____

NRIC: _____

Job applying for: _____.

Name of Interviewer(s): _____

Date of Interview: _____

Suggested Interview Questions

1. Why do you want to volunteer with us?

2. Have you previously volunteered, or have any other relevant experience?

3. What are your experience / skills / communication abilities?

4. What are your strengths and weaknesses, work style, preferences, likes / dislikes?

5. Would you rather work in a team or individually?

6. How long will you be able to commit to this role? How frequently?

7. Do you have any comments / questions?

Possible roles the volunteer can take on _____

_____

Interviewer(s) Assessment (e.g. on general impressions, answers to questions, interpersonal skills, etc.) _____

_____

Conclusion & Recommended Action

☐ Match to job role: _____   ☐ Consider/hold

☐ Refer to (e.g. other VWO/department): _____

☐ Not suitable for role / organisation at this time

3 **Reference Checks**

Reference checks can be conducted after you have found a match between an applicant and a volunteer position. This applies especially for volunteer positions which may have high risks. This includes volunteers in positions that come into direct contact with vulnerable beneficiaries.

The purposes of these checks are to verify an applicant's identity, and to ensure that the applicant does not have a background that can compromise the safety of your clients.

Reference checks involve talking to people who know the applicant and are able to vouch for their identity, character or skills. Character references can be family members, school teachers, employers or another organisation's volunteer manager.

Reference checks need to be conducted with the permission of the applicant. You will only be able to call the people whom the applicant agreed you can contact, and the applicant should provide you their names and contact details.

What if the applicant is not suitable for the role?

If during the screening process, you realise that the applicant might not be the right person for the position, you need to say "no". Give the person a phone call and give your reasons as to why you are turning him or her down.

There is no easy way to make this call. So here are some pointers that you can include in your call:

- Genuinely thank the applicant for their offers to volunteer
- State your reason for turning him down
- Suggest another position the applicant can consider (if any)
- Tell the applicant you would like to keep in contact and place him or her in your organisation's database

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D. Maintaining a volunteer database

Importance of a volunteer database

It is important for an organisation to maintain a database of its volunteers. This data can be used to assist the organisation in understanding their volunteer demographics, matching volunteers to potential tasks based on their interest, skills and expertise and assist in the deployment of volunteers based on their time availability. It is important to note that the information in the database is not static as volunteers' details, interest, skills and expertise and time availability will change.

The fields can be populated from the data collected from the application forms. The following are sample fields that can be used to track volunteer data. Data for the fields should be used in tandem with the volunteer application form.

Sample Fields

Volunteer personal details	Volunteer interest	Volunteer skills and expertise	Volunteer time availability
• Name • Contact number (mobile) • Contact number (home) • Email address • Residential address • Nationality • Gender • Date of birth • Medical conditions	• Administration • Backend Support • Fundraising • Supporting Front Line Roles • Others	• Administration • CPR • Counselling • First aid • Nursing • Teaching • Therapy • Others	• Frequency (weekly, monthly or quarterly) • Preferred day • Preferred time

SAMPLE

Sample Volunteer Database

Instructions: Refer to this sample volunteer database when creating your own. Look at the sample fields above and decide which you would require from your volunteers.

Volunteer Personal Details					Volunteer Interest		
NRIC	Last Name	First Name	Contact Number (Mobile)	Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Backend Support	Fund-raising	Front Line Roles
S1234567X	Loh	James	96660549	11/12/1976	–	Yes	–
S2345678C	Bala	Vishnu	91779023	01/05/1987	Yes	–	–
S3456789V	Tan	Alice	99499003	22/09/1968	Yes	–	Yes

	Volunteer Skills and Expertise			Volunteer Time Availability						
	Admin	Coun-selling	First Aid	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	–	Yes	–	Morning	–	Morning	–	Afternoon	–
	Yes	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	All day
	Yes	–	–	Afternoon	Afternoon	–	–	Afternoon	–

On-Boarding and Training Volunteers

Overview of the chapter

This chapter helps you to on-board volunteers into your organisation. You will learn more about:

- Developing appointment letters to formalise the agreement and set expectations
- Conducting an orientation programme
- Organising training for volunteers

Samples and Templates

a. Appointment letter

- Appointment letter

b. Orientation programme

- Sample orientation programme schedule

c. Training volunteers

- Training needs assessment

04

A. Develop a volunteer appointment letter

Providing an appointment letter when a volunteer joins your organisation formalises the arrangement and confirms the role the volunteer has been selected for. This allows your volunteer to prepare for their upcoming role, and aligns expectations between your organisation and the volunteer.

What should you include in an appointment letter?

There are four main aspects to a volunteer appointment letter. They are as follows:

1	2	3	4
Volunteer Job Role and Description	**Term of Service and Work Schedule**	**Organisation Policies and Code of Conduct**	**Declaration**
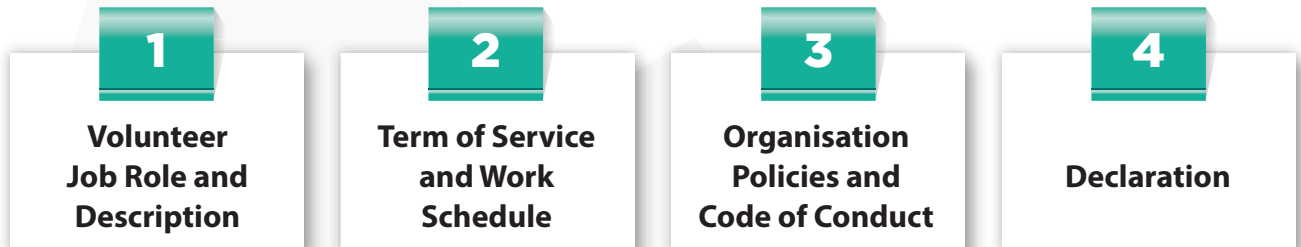
SAMPLE

Appointment Letter

Instructions: This sample appointment letter provides volunteers with details of their service. It also includes a volunteer declaration that the requirements are understood and accepted.

This agreement is written between: _____(VWO Name, hereafter known as us/our) and _____(Volunteer Full Name hereafter known as you/your) on _____ (Date)

Your agreed term of service is from:_____(start date) to_____(end date)

The day(s) and time you agree to volunteer are: Day(s): _____ Hour(s): _____.

Primary volunteer job role (purpose of the role – e.g. care giver): _____
_____

Note: VWOs can also attach the volunteer job description and code of conduct

Overview of your commitment:

- You shall inform us if you are unable to volunteer during the agreed day and time. You will give us as early a notice as possible.
- You shall resolve any issues or problems by raising it with your Supervisor / Volunteer Manager. If the matter remains unresolved, you may escalate it up to the Executive Director.
- You shall maintain confidentiality of all data and information which you may come across through your work with us.
- You shall abide by our policies, procedures and code of conduct.

Declaration

I have read and understood the requirements and commitments written in this agreement. I agree to abide by them and accept them fully.

_____   _____
Volunteer's Signature   Date

_____   _____
VWO in-charge   Date

B. Orientation Programme

First impressions count! Cultivating a good volunteering experience starts with a comprehensive orientation programme to prepare your volunteers for their upcoming contributions to your organisation. The orientation programme should be conducted within the first week of a volunteer's term. The orientation programme aims to assimilate volunteers into your organisation and provide them with an overview of your organisation vision, culture, procedures and expectations of their performance.

Orientation Programme Agenda

Instructions: Use this checklist to see if you have included the key components within your volunteer orientation programme.

Before the arrival of volunteers

☐ Send a welcome letter to volunteers to invite them to the orientation programme

☐ Brief and prepare full-time staff for the volunteers' arrival

☐ Assign a mentor or buddy to each volunteer

☐ Prepare an orientation booklet to hand out to volunteers. The booklet should contain the following:
  - Organisation purpose, goals and staff
  - Volunteer roles
  - Health and safety information and responsibilities
  - Policies and procedures
  - Performance expectations and review

Upon arrival of volunteers

☐ Assemble a team to welcome the volunteer(s)

☐ Conduct an introductory briefing (refer to the following section for more details)

☐ Provide the orientation booklet to volunteers

☐ Introduce volunteer(s) to current staff and to his / her mentor or buddy

☐ Complete any administrative processes

☐ Provide a tour of the centre / home

What should the introductory briefing cover?

As part of the orientation programme, an introductory briefing should be conducted to provide key information and support to volunteers. This will also allow volunteers to ask questions about their role in the organisation. The briefing should cover the following items:

Your organisation's vision, mission and goals	Your organisation's volunteer philosophy	Your organisation's background and history

Roles that volunteer(s) play in the VWO	Roles that your organisation play in the community	Organisation and reporting structure

Performance expectations and review procedures	How to use equipment (if needed)	Question and answer session

C. Training Volunteers

It is important to impart basic skills, knowledge and the right mindset to enable volunteers to be able to do their job properly.

It is important to clarify the time commitment and types of training that will be expected of them. It would be good to share how training will benefit them in their role in your organisation.

Why invest in volunteer training?

✓ Even though the volunteer may not have the desired skills for the position, they will be able to learn new skills in order to take on these more complex positions.

✓ It allows them to understand what is expected of them, to meet organisation quality standards.

✓ It increases their quality of work.

✓ It is a form of risk management.

✓ It displays the value you put on the volunteer's work.

✓ It helps volunteers develop deeper bonds with the organisation, and with other volunteers / staff.

Before sending your volunteers for training, you need to identify the types of knowledge, skills and abilities that the volunteers might not have, but will require when performing their roles.

Conducting a training needs assessment will allow you to identify the critical areas where training is required. A training needs assessment guide is provided on page 62.

Training Needs Assessment Guide

The 5-step training needs assessment aims to identify the types of training your volunteers will require, and how you can go about implementing them effectively.

Step 1: Identify the need for training.

- ■ To inform volunteers on how the organisation works or runs
- ■ To bridge a gap between the position's requirements and volunteer skills
- ■ To keep service volunteers up to date with current trends
- ■ For volunteer bonding
- ■ To meet volunteer's self-identified training need
- ■ Others: _____

Step 2: Think about the methods you can use to conduct your desired training. Consider the pros and cons of each method and weigh what you feel is the best mode of training.

Structured training programme

- ■ Compulsory training as part of on-boarding
- ■ Mandatory courses for all volunteers to attend

On-the-job training

- ■ Provide a demonstration on how the task is conducted
- ■ Assign a mentor to guide volunteer in his or her work
- ■ Teach the volunteer how to execute a task

Periodic training

- ■ On-going training courses to deepen skills and/or keep the volunteers up-to-date on trends in relevant areas
- ■ Refresher courses

Others

- ■ _____

Step 3: Do you have the means to conduct this training?

Mode of training

- ■ Internal – Are you able to develop material, obtain space for training, find staff to conduct the training, etc.?
- ■ External – Are there external courses that suit your needs?

Budget

Do you have enough budget to conduct your desired training? If not, consider revising the mode of training or the method used.

....

Step 4: Record training required and attended by volunteers. Include fields such as name of volunteer, training course, scope of training, date.

Step 5: Perform an evaluation of training provided. Did the training meet the needs you identified in Step 1?

Supporting and Recognising Volunteers

Overview of the chapter

This chapter will help your organisation in managing, supporting and recognising your volunteers. You will learn about:

- How to support your volunteers by providing supervision, resources and managing complaints
- How to recognise your volunteers

Samples and Templates

- Examples of volunteer recognition initiatives

Case examples

- Volunteer development in Fei Yue Family Service Centre (FSC)
- Supporting and recognising volunteers in Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)

05

A. Supporting volunteers

Supporting volunteers helps them remain fully committed to the organisation. This is critical to ensure that a good balance between the needs of the organisation and those of the volunteers are managed.

1 **Provide time and resources for volunteer support and supervision.**

Determine the amount of time and resources by:

THE ROLE

For example, a volunteer working as a volunteer advocate will require a different level of support and supervision than a volunteer driver.

THE TIME COMMITMENT

For example, the number of hours worked.

THE VOLUNTEER

Some volunteers will require more support and supervision than others.

What's involved?

Hold regular short meetings with your volunteers and staff / team members to discuss tasks, progress, updates and resolve queries.

Give clear instructions and check if they have been understood.

Make sure volunteers know who to ask if they have any questions.

Give encouragement and look for ways to recognise progress and work that has been done well.

Keep notes of your observations and discussions about the skill development and contribution of volunteers on their personnel file.

Have an open door policy for volunteers to raise suggestions, questions or concerns at all times.

Run a volunteer feedback survey at regular junctures to identify any potential areas of support which volunteers need.

It's important to address any issues that arise while volunteering during the support meeting. Doing so as early as possible will help avoid problems or tensions from escalating.

Case example: Volunteer development in Fei Yue Family Service Centre (FSC)

Fei Yue Family Service Centre (FSC) provides a host of social services, serving families, seniors, youths and students in the community. They partner with volunteers in many of these services, who take on support roles as well as leadership positions.

Fei Yue FSC takes a keen interest in each volunteer's personal development within the organisation. For regular volunteers who have volunteered for a period of at least 6 months, the organisation would equip volunteers further through in-house and external courses as necessary. Furthermore, regular feedback is obtained from volunteers in order to better understand volunteers' needs and to adjust their scope of work or recommend courses if required. Through these means, Fei Yue FSC recognises the commitment of these volunteers and provides ways that volunteers can achieve personal growth within their given scope of volunteer work.

Fei Yue FSC also constantly provides opportunities for volunteers to be rotated to another programme or to a new area within the same programme. This has helped to keep volunteers interested and invested in the organisation's work, and allows volunteers to develop different skills.

2   Provide volunteer development

Volunteer managers should identify opportunities for development that are relevant and meaningful for volunteers. Volunteer development can be tied into a volunteer's role or can be presented as an optional extra.

The following are some types of development opportunities which you can consider for your volunteers:

Training or mentoring of new volunteers

Letting an experienced volunteer train or be a mentor to new volunteers entering your organisation can bring several benefits:

Benefits to trainer (experienced volunteer)
- Gains personal satisfaction and recognition from their peers
- Acquires new or deepens existing skills (e.g. communications, mentoring, facilitation)

Benefits to the new joiners	• Exposes new joiners to a positive role model • Helps new joiners to understand the focus of the organisation and how they can contribute
Benefits to the organisation	• Deepens the engagement with experienced volunteers • Prepares volunteers to take on greater responsibilities • Builds a virtual cycle of volunteer support and management

More opportunities within the organisation

After the volunteer's intended term, you can think about offering an opportunity to rotate to a new role within your organisation. This will allow him or her to gain a wider exposure to various departments or programmes within your organisation.

Providing volunteers with learning opportunities

You can identify learning opportunities for your volunteers, including attending local training programmes or international volunteer conferences. This will enable volunteers to deepen their skillsets and potentially carry out more specialised roles within the organisation. International exposure will allow volunteers to act as advocates for your organisation, and obtain perspectives on good practices overseas which can be adopted in your organisation.

Tailor the support and opportunities provided based on volunteer needs and preferences:

The support which volunteers need would vary throughout their service to your organisation. For example, volunteers may need more guidance and feedback at the beginning of the service period. As volunteers become more experienced, they may then be empowered to take charge of their work and can be given a greater level of autonomy.

The extent and type of support needed by volunteers would also vary by individual, and it is important to tailor the support to their individual needs and preferences.

3 Managing complaints

Complaints or disputes can affect relationships within the organisation. Whether the disputes take place between volunteers and staff, volunteers and beneficiaries or between volunteers themselves, it is important that problems are brought to light early and resolved using appropriate processes and procedures. Make sure that volunteers are informed of the channels which they can highlight conflicts and disputes.

Quick Guide to Managing Conflicts

i. Identify the reason for the conflict and clarify each party's position

Sometimes, conflicts may be a result of a misunderstanding. Listen to both sides of the story and provide for the opportunity for each person to fully respond. Articulate your understanding so that all are clear on the issue.

Other common reasons for conflict include:
- Tension between new and old members
- Heavy workloads
- Unsuitable job scope
- A poor relationship between staff and volunteers
- Volunteers not feeling respected or recognised for their efforts

ii. Facilitate understanding between both parties

Encourage both parties to discuss the issues, collaborate and compromise. Trying to get both parties to understand each other's perspectives can resolve the conflict or identify a solution to the issue.

iii. Involve a neutral mediator

If you feel like you will not be able to formulate a neutral stance on the issue, it might be helpful to involve a mediator or neutral third party to help formulate a mutually agreeable solution.

iv. Commit to the resolution

Once you have formulated a mutually agreeable solution, summarise and articulate what the parties have agreed upon. Reiterate the remedial actions each party should adhere to.

v. Resolve disputes quickly

This will prevent the issue from escalating and affecting the dynamics of the team.

B. Recognising volunteers

Everyone likes to be appreciated and thanked for their efforts, and as an organisation involving volunteers, it is important to ensure that their contributions do not go unnoticed. A recognition system can comprise of various aspects, to ensure the recognition is personal and meaningful for every volunteer. Remember to set aside a portion in your volunteer budget for volunteer recognition.

Getting started:

Examples to recognise volunteers in your organisation may include:

Informal methods

1. **Say thank you:** sometimes a heartfelt, personal "thank-you" is all that your volunteer needs to feel appreciated.

2. Check in with volunteers about their volunteer assignments and solicit honest feedback about their experience with the organisation.

3. Include volunteers in discussions and decision making, and ask for their ideas.

4. Send at least one written thank-you note or greeting card to your longer-term volunteers over the course of their service.

5. Treat volunteers with respect.

6. Nominate volunteers for achievement awards by external organisers (with their permission).

7. Add a personal touch – warm greetings; little cards and surprises for special occasions, etc.

8. Plan a special recognition edition in your newsletter.

9. Invite volunteers to attend important meetings.

10. Keep track and be interested in the details of each volunteer.

Formal methods

1. Identify development opportunities for each volunteer.

2. Present certificates of appreciation and special pins or other tokens to volunteers for their support and/or length of service.

3. Present volunteers with certificates when they complete a course, or for a particular contribution.

4. Give awards for volunteer of the month or year.

5. Allow long-term volunteers (e.g. volunteers who have volunteered for more than 1 year on a regular basis) to take leave and sabbaticals from their roles.

6. Organise events/gatherings where volunteers can bring their families and friends along.

7. Put up a volunteer suggestion box and reward/recognise good suggestions.

8. Write testimonials and references for volunteers.

9. Sponsor attendance at training and development seminars and conferences.

10. Provide a support system for each volunteer.

Impact of showing appreciation

You know that your volunteer recognition activities are successful when:

- Volunteers feel appreciated for their individual contributions to your organisation's vision
- Volunteers feel a sense of pride for their collective contributions to your vision
- Your organisation's leadership and your peers have an increased appreciation for the work of your volunteers
- Your volunteers are motivated to continue serving and keep coming back
- Your volunteers recruit their co-workers, friends, and family through positive word of mouth

Case example: Supporting and recognising volunteers in Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) is Singapore's suicide prevention centre. SOS is managed by professional staff, and runs counselling and support services for people in suicidal crises.

SOS enlists the help of volunteers for some of their services. A notable area of volunteer contribution is in the area of hotline work. Operating a 24-hour crisis hotline is a specialised and labour-intensive venture. To ensure that distressed or suicidal callers can be connected to emotional support when they call, SOS recruits, trains, supports and manages volunteers to help operate the 24-hour hotline service. With a team of more than 200 volunteers under its wing, volunteer management becomes an important area of work that is constantly being evaluated and improved upon by SOS.

The whole process starts with volunteer recruitment. This is ongoing to ensure that there are enough volunteers to operate the 24-hour hotline. SOS recruits volunteers from all walks of life and different life stages. There are also volunteers from different races and nationalities. A key requirement to becoming a volunteer is having the heart (and stomach) to reach out to people who are hurting and at possible risk of suicide. Other criteria would include the ability to engage and offer emotional support, and the commitment to be a volunteer for at least 2 years.

After a stringent recruitment process, an in-depth and comprehensive training programme is conducted by staff professionals for volunteers. This is to ensure that the volunteers are adequately equipped to handle crisis hotline work. The training, which lasts up to a year, is conducted in phases. At the end of the training, volunteers not only acquire phone skills but crisis management skills as well.

Continuous training in various related topics is offered to existing volunteers as part of volunteer development. Apart from the training given by the SOS professional staff, external speakers from relevant areas of expertise are also invited to share their knowledge and experiences.

24/7 support is made available to the volunteers to ensure that they are never alone in handling difficult situations or crisis calls. Professional staff are there to provide consultation, as well as to debrief volunteers whenever necessary. Volunteers are the first point of contact for people who call the hotline looking for emotional support. Follow-up of clients who need more support is managed and done by staff. The clear segregation of volunteer and staff's responsibilities, as well as the setting of appropriate boundaries not only promotes volunteers' well-being and care, it also helps to ensure that clients receive professional care from the organisation.

SOS provides volunteers with a platform to serve the community together and to form friendships with like-minded people. Informal activities and interactions are facilitated or encouraged to foster a sense of camaraderie and peer support. To acknowledge volunteers for their contributions, SOS organises regular in-house events to appreciate and motivate the volunteers. Among these events include a 'Sam Day' which serves as a platform for volunteers to bond as well as learn new skills; a 'Volunteer Appreciation Night' recognising volunteers for their years of service, commitment or outstanding contributions; and a 'Family Day' whereby volunteers and their families are invited for a day of fun and bonding.

To ensure a working partnership with volunteers, much effort is made by SOS to integrate volunteer involvement into the organisation. Given that crisis hotline work is a specialised and intensive area, much training (as well as retraining), guidance and evaluation by professional staff is made essential and a priority so that volunteers can participate in this area of work successfully. SOS not only has a team of volunteer management staff to look into the needs of the volunteers; the organisational culture is also such that every staff member recognises the part they play in integrating volunteer resources to provide an important service for the community.

Reviewing Volunteer Management

Overview of the chapter

This chapter will help your organisation to review both your organisation's and your volunteer's performance. You will learn about:

- Planning for volunteer feedback
- Managing volunteer exits
- Reviewing your volunteer management framework

Samples and Templates

a. Performance Feedback

- Sample performance feedback form
- Volunteer questionnaire

b. Exit Feedback

- Sample exit interview form

c. Programme Review

- Sample programme evaluation form

Case examples

- Managing performance feedback in CARE Singapore

06

A. Conducting regular performance feedback

Holding feedback sessions helps your volunteers in their role and provides a two-way channel for volunteers to provide and receive feedback.

Why is conducting performance feedback important?

It is an avenue for the organisation to get new ideas, improve current processes and also increase engagement and rapport with the volunteer. It also allows you to consider the volunteers' suitability should they wish to volunteer again for your organisation in the future.

Volunteer performance feedback steps:

1 **Set a schedule for performance feedback**

- Feedback sessions should be at pre-determined, regular intervals (e.g. every 6 months or annually) or in-line with the volunteer's planned tenure with the organisation (e.g. if the volunteer has planned to volunteer for 3 months, an evaluative feedback session can be conducted at the end of the 3-month tenure).

- Remember to explain the feedback process during on-boarding and make sure the volunteer is comfortable with the process.

- Before volunteers start their work, make sure that they are briefed to clarify tasks and expectations of their roles.

- A volunteer coordinator or manager should conduct the review.

Some volunteers may find the process of performance feedback too formal. Aside from scheduling regular feedback sessions, you can also use the following methods to conduct feedback:

✓ **Casually praise the volunteer and show recognition of good performance immediately after the activity**

✓ **Give encouragement and assurance that work is performed well as the task is being performed**

✓ **Should volunteers not be performing as expected, explain how the task should be performed and suggest improvements**

✓ **Have meetings with groups of volunteers to provide performance feedback and self evaluation**

2 Prepare for the performance feedback session

- Set up an appointment with the volunteer based on the timeline agreed for the evaluative feedback.

- Come prepared for the session. Talk to the volunteer's supervisor or colleagues, to gather feedback on the volunteer's performance. You can use the performance feedback form found on page 75 to collect feedback from staff, other volunteers or clients who interact regularly with the volunteer.

Performance Feedback Form

Instructions: Fill in each section for every performance evaluation session. Remember to focus on the volunteer's work and not your personal views of the individual. Provide detailed evidence to justify your comments.

Evaluator's Name: ....

Volunteer's Name: .... **Volunteer position:** ....

Date of review: ....

Volunteer attributes		Yes/No	Additional Comments
Attitude	Does the volunteer show a positive attitude?		
	Does the volunteer accept supervision and constructive comments?		
Personal attributes	Is the volunteer a good fit for his/her current role?		
	Does the volunteer show up when expected?		
Teamwork	Does the volunteer have a good relationship with staff?		
	Does the volunteer have a good relationship with other volunteers?		
	Does the volunteer have a good relationship with beneficiaries (if applicable)?		
Training	Are there any training you think will be suitable for the volunteer?		

Evaluator Comments	Volunteer Comments

Volunteer's Signature: .... **Supervisor's Signature:** ....

Date: ....

3 Talk to the volunteer

- Bring the volunteer through their performance feedback form. Try and support each area with clear examples and cases. Ensure that comments focus on the work or actions of the volunteer. Give feedback on what the volunteer has done well and possible areas for improvement (if any). If applicable, you can use this section to discuss training and development opportunities.

- These meetings should not be opportunities to raise issues that have not been previously discussed. Those issues should be pointed out as soon as possible so that your volunteer has the chance to make corrections.

- Remember that feedback is a two way process. Ask the volunteer for feedback on the organisation. For example, ask the volunteer on what has gone well and what can be done better. You can refer to the volunteer questionnaire on page 78 to obtain meaningful feedback on your volunteer management programme and understand the volunteer's next steps within your organisation.

- Thank the volunteer for their time and service!

Managing complaints and disruptive behaviour:

✓ If there has been any breach of code of conduct or complaints about the volunteer, ensure that you investigate thoroughly. During the meeting, ask the volunteer for inputs on the situation.

✓ Decide on the appropriate response and work out any support or training if needed and where applicable. Seek a commitment to change and agree on how any concerns may be addressed. Explain the consequences of similar conduct or complaints if necessary.

✓ In situations of serious or recurring breach of code of conduct or complaints, it may be advisable to consider whether the volunteer should exit the organisation.

4 Post volunteer performance feedback

- Make sure that you keep the notes and forms and input these data into the volunteer records database.

- Note any follow-up actions to be taken (e.g. training, volunteer feedback, etc.) and set a date for the next volunteer performance feedback session.

When conducting feedback:

✓ Set expectations for your volunteers during on-boarding and on a regular basis

✓ Share what will be assessed during appraisals

✓ Focus on the volunteer's work

✓ Allow the volunteer to conduct a self-assessment

✓ Be objective when writing down comments on the volunteer's performance

✓ Provide detailed evidence to justify comments

✓ File and keep all forms for future reference

✓ Treat all volunteers equally

Volunteer questionnaire

Instructions: Fill in each section for every performance evaluation session. Articulate the questions clearly and assist the volunteer should they have any questions regarding the questionnaire.

First Name: .... **Last Name:** ....

Job Role: .... **Start Date:** ....

Date: ....

No	Question	Answer
1	How did you find out about this volunteer position?	
2	Was the application process friendly and efficient?	
3	Was the orientation programme useful?	
4	Did the job role meet your expectation?	
5	Were the staff helpful and welcoming?	
6	Was the training provided adequate for your role?	
7	Are there adequate equipment and resources to support your work? What are we lacking?	
8	Do you feel appreciated for your work?	
9	Do you want to continue volunteering with us in the future? Why yes or no?	
10	Are there any other roles that you will be interested in?	

Supervisor Comments	**Volunteer Comments**

Volunteer's Signature: .... **Supervisor's Signature:** ....

Date: ....

Case example: Managing performance feedback in CARE Singapore

CARE Singapore is an organisation that works to provide social services for the disadvantaged, vulnerable and at-risk youths of the community. CARE Singapore currently partners with around 900 volunteers each year, generating more than 6000 volunteer hours in 2014.

CARE Singapore believes that providing and receiving consistent feedback to and from volunteers helps to keep them invested in the work that they do and instills ownership within volunteers for the work that they undertake, be it a direct or indirect service. CARE Singapore does this via a structured volunteer management system with a full time volunteer coordinator to plan, recruit, train and evaluate all volunteers.

Volunteer feedback starts from the beginning of a volunteer's experience with CARE Singapore, one-on-one interviews with potential volunteers are conducted during recruitment. Feedback gathered from and provided to volunteers during this time provides clarity to both parties' expectations, helps in creating a positive experience for volunteers and helps CARE Singapore retain its volunteers.

CARE Singapore also provides volunteers with two-way formal and informal feedback on-site and at the end of their service. This allows volunteers to know what was done well or could be improved and to understand the needs and concerns of volunteers.

"Providing and receiving regular feedback to and from our volunteers allows CARE to ensure that we are committed to providing our volunteers a great CARE volunteering experience. It gives volunteers the opportunity to improve where need be and at the same time affirms them on their valuable contribution to our cause. For CARE, receiving regular feedback allows us to address any concerns from our volunteers promptly rather than at a later stage. This form of support system to our volunteers has allowed us to forge a closer bond with them as well."

B. Exit management

Volunteers may choose to leave your organisation when the tenure of their service ends, or for various other reasons such as a change of job, life and family priorities, burnout or loss of interest.

Conducting exit management allows the organisation to understand reasons why volunteers leave the organisation and seek solutions to improve any areas which may contribute to that. It also helps to maintain good relationships with volunteers and increases the likelihood of their future involvement with your organisation.

Exit management interview steps:

1

Conduct an exit interview with the volunteer

1 Ask the volunteer to fill up the exit interview form

2 Ask for clarifications of any questions from the exit interview form

3 Keep the notes and forms in the volunteer records

If possible, conduct the exit interview with the volunteer before the individual has left the organisation. Once volunteers have left your organisation, response rates will typically not be high.

Quick tips when conducting an exit interview for volunteers:

✓ Allow the volunteer to conduct a self-assessment

✓ Ask for suggestions to improve the volunteer experience and volunteer job role in the organisation

✓ File and keep all forms for future reference

✓ Ensure that the volunteer returns any property belonging to the organisation

✓ Don't forget to thank the volunteer for their contributions – some organisations provide leaving volunteers with a letter or certificate of service as a way of saying thank you!

2   Provide a testimonial for volunteer

It is a good practice to provide a testimonial for all volunteers within your organisation at the end of their tenure for documentation of their experience in your organisation, and as a form of appreciation for their work.

Make sure to include in your testimonial:

Name of volunteer	**Volunteer's strengths**
Tenure of volunteer work	**Name of organisation**
Main responsibilities of volunteer	**Name, designation and signature of supervisor / centre manager / executive director**

TEMPLATE

Exit Interview Form

Instructions: Conduct the following exit interview before the volunteer leaves the organisation. Remember to follow up on the comments provided and keep an open mind on the feedback given.

First Name: _____   **Last Name:** _____

NRIC: _____   **Job Role:** _____

Date: _____   **Tenure Date:** _____

What are area(s) that were positive (if any) in your volunteer experience?

☐ **Self-satisfaction**   ☐ **Community service**   ☐ **VWO team**

☐ **Helping others**   ☐ **New friendship**   ☐ **Others:** _____

☐ **Personal growth/learning**   ☐ **Helping others**

What are area(s) that were negative (if any) in your volunteer experience?

☐ **Stress**   ☐ **Lack of support**   ☐ **VWO team/conflicts**

☐ **Lack of rewards/recognition**   ☐ **Financial strain**   ☐ **Others:** _____

☐ **Time commitment/hours**   ☐ **Lack of training**

What are reason(s) that you are leaving the organisation

☐ **Health** ☐ **Burnout** ☐ **Shifting location**

☐ **New volunteer commitments** ☐ **Lost interest** ☐ **Others:** _____

☐ **Lack of time** ☐ **Physically not capable**

Were you given appropriate training to do your job?	☐ **Yes**	☐ **No**
Were you given appropriate resources to do your job?	☐ **Yes**	☐ **No**
Did you feel you had sufficient supervision?	☐ **Yes**	☐ **No**
Did you feel that your work had a positive impact on the community?	☐ **Yes**	☐ **No**
Would you recommend others to volunteer with us?	☐ **Yes**	☐ **No**
Would you return to volunteer with us?	☐ **Yes**	☐ **No**

Please explain your reason: ....

Any other comments?

C. Reviewing and evaluating your volunteer programme

Conducting regular programme evaluation allows you to determine what works and does not work, identify problems and solutions, increase volunteer engagement and satisfaction, and improve efficiencies and reduce costs.

1 Plan for your volunteer programme review

Have a plan for your volunteer programme review. Typically, the review of the volunteer programme is carried out annually. Ensure that a date is set for the review with time planned for to collect inputs and feedback, make the assessment and determine the solutions and changes to be made.

An example for your volunteer programme review plan could be:

Jun 2015 ● Collection of inputs and feedback around your volunteer programme

Sep 2015 ● Conduct of your volunteer programme assessment

Dec 2015 ● Determine any solutions, changes for implementation

2 Gather the appropriate inputs and feedback

Before a review and evaluation of your volunteer programme can be done, be sure to gather inputs and feedback. There should be consultations with various stakeholders to gather input on the effectiveness of various activities within your volunteer management programme.

You can collect feedback from various stakeholders to help you with your programme evaluation. The following are some areas of feedback which you can obtain from different stakeholders:

Full time staff

Feedback areas

Strategic planning
- Awareness of volunteer vision and strategic plan
- Whether volunteer roles match the needs of the organisation

Stakeholder engagement
- Adequacy of leadership support
- Staff receptiveness to volunteers

Recruitment and screening
- Adequacy of number of volunteers
- Suitability of volunteers to meet ideal profile

Support and recognition
- Adequacy of training and resources

Volunteers

Feedback areas

Stakeholder Engagement
- Whether they feel engaged by the organisation's staff / leadership
- Whether they feel they are helping to meet volunteer vision

Recruitment and screening
- Efficiency of screening process
- Effectiveness of advertising

Support and recognition
- Adequacy of training
- Whether they feel valued and recognised

Beneficiaries

Feedback areas

Strategic planning
- Whether strategic goal(s) in service delivery, client satisfaction has been met

Recruitment and screening
- Suitability of volunteers for role

Support and recognition
- Adequacy of volunteer skills

General public

Feedback areas

Recruitment and screening
- Awareness of organisation and organisation's work
- Effectiveness of advertising
- Whether they are keen to volunteer with the organisation in the future

Several channels to collect inputs and feedback include:

1. Dialog sessions with stakeholders
2. Staff surveys
3. Focus group discussions
4. Observations on the ground
5. Lessons learnt from events conducted

3 Process the input and feedback gathered

Once inputs and feedback are gathered, you should benchmark and review the feedback findings to assess where you have been lacking, or areas that you think require improvement. These are some ways you could assess this:

i. Internal reviews that compare volunteer programme results with prior set objectives

- Remember the strategic plan that you developed in chapter 1? Are you on track with the management plan?

- How have you fared in the critical success factors you identified?

- Have your organisation's needs been met?

ii. Self assessment of performance against previous years

- Have you addressed the areas of improvement identified in the previous evaluation?

iii. External reviews against other organisation or sector prevalent volunteer programmes

Use the volunteer programme evaluation pointers on page 86 to assist you in rating various areas of your volunteer management framework. This will allow you to make an assessment of how well your volunteer programme has performed and allow you to identify areas which the programme has done well or areas in which can be improved.

4 Determine any changes or improvements to your volunteer programme

Based on the assessment, identify possible workable solutions to identified problems and review your management plan within your strategic plan. Be sure to put a deadline for their implementation.

For areas done well, make sure to highlight these successes and communicate positive feedback to staff and volunteers.

> Remember to go back and analyse the how you fared in the strategic goals that you set in your organisation (Chapter 1, page 18) at the end of the year.
>
> ✓ **Measure the goals that you set out to achieve. For example, if your strategic goal was to increase the number of beneficiaries served, calculate the number of new clients you have reached out to for the year.**
>
> ✓ **Think about how you have fared. Did you manage to hit the goals?**
>
> ✓ **Come up with reasons why you think the goals were not met.**
>
> ✓ **Think of possible solutions to help you achieve the goals.**

Programme Evaluation Form

Instructions: This evaluation form should be completed by a volunteer manager. This can be conducted on an annual basis. Remember to collect feedback from various stakeholders when conducting this evaluation.

Date of review: .... **Review approved by:** ....

Strategic Planning	Outcome	Avenues for improvement
Have you met the strategic goal(s) that you have set for your volunteer programme?		
Do the volunteer roles currently match the needs of the organisation?		

Stakeholder Engagement	Outcome	Avenues for improvement
Are management and board members effectively cascading the volunteer vision to the rest of the organisation?		
Are staff receptive to volunteers? Are they effective in engaging the volunteers?		

Volunteer recruitment & selection	Outcome	Avenues for improvement
Did the number of volunteers we engaged meet our target number?		
How many applications did we obtain for the organisation's roles advertised?		
Was the screening process effective? Were the volunteers selected suitable for the role?		

Volunteer support and recognition	Outcome	Avenues for improvement
Are volunteers adequately supported in their work?		
Are the volunteers recognised for their work and contribution?		
What is the average tenure of volunteers? Is this in-line with our desired tenure profile?		
Are volunteers provided with adequate training?		

Conclusion

This Volunteer Management Toolkit serves to provide Voluntary Welfare Organisations with practical tools and guidelines on volunteer management. Given the diverse nature of VWOs, the Toolkit is not meant to be prescriptive, but for VWOs to customise and modify to suit the individual context, needs, and requirements. Case studies have been included as part of the Toolkit precisely for this purpose – to share and learn from each other's experiences and to spark new ideas.

The Volunteer Management Toolkit is an evolving piece of document. As we progress on the volunteer management journey, new challenges will no doubt arise, but new ideas and practices will certainly also be generated and flourish.   We welcome your contribution of feedback and ideas, and on how this Toolkit can be further enhanced in the future.

Enjoy the journey!

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