

# **Volunteer Management**

## **Need for volunteers**

As organizations cannot afford to employ professional or full time paid staff, volunteers become all important in handling and taking on various responsibilities for activities/programs of the organization.. They also help out in team based grass-root level work. It is also essential to establish desired outcomes for volunteer involvement. Establishing these outcome objectives will help organizations guide the type of volunteers that have to be recruited. It will also help to manage them better, once they have been recruited.

## **Formulate volunteer opportunities**

There is a need to formulate volunteer assignments to provide volunteers with challenges and motivation for continued success. Each job should have defined roles and responsibilities. We need to plan proper induction, training and support programs to facilitate volunteer learning and development, and ensure that volunteers are aware of the goals and outcome objectives for their involvement.

## **Recruitment**

It is important to target appropriate audiences and methods to attract volunteers who are truly interested in the cause and the organization. It is also important to define the profile of volunteers that would fit in a particular organizations culture and recruit volunteers accordingly. Every volunteer's workload and time commitment for various activities should be articulated. Volunteers who think that they are doing a favor to the organization should be avoided. It is important to have volunteers who want to be there as they think that they would be an asset to the cause or the organization and that they would make a tangible difference to the activities/objectives of the organization.

## **Screening and interviewing**

It is very important to screen and interview volunteers. Screening and interviewing potential volunteers facilitates their commitment to the organization and the cause. It also shows the organization if the potential volunteers that are recruited take both the project and their time seriously. Screening also gives an opportunity to match qualifications and skills with the organizational needs and also the needs of the volunteers themselves

An interview should be conducted so that one can define availability and schedule activities that are convenient to both the organization and the volunteers. Volunteers frequently play a highly public role on behalf of the organization as they are the people that the public, animal lovers and even potential donors would see first and most often.

## **Training**

Orientation and volunteer training programs should be formulated to give volunteers a feeling of belonging and status. It shows that the organization values them enough to make an investment in them and also helps them to reinforce their commitment to the cause. Orientation would also help set the tone of the work area and allow volunteers to adapt more easily to the organization

As part of the volunteer training/induction sessions, the organization should provide a general orientation about the organization, including a discussion of its mission and philosophy, the organizational framework, code of conduct, and communicate roles and responsibilities of the volunteer for the activity the volunteer has opted for.

## **Recognition.**

Recognition shows that the organization values volunteer support. It also provides a motivation for continuing commitment from volunteers. Recognition should be both formal and informal, with informal events (like picnics), as well as communication-letter of appreciation from the trustees/e-mails on birthdays etc., newspapers and media reports and mention in newsletter.

## **Follow-up effectively**

A final element of a successful volunteer program is continual follow-up and evaluation. Effective follow-up provides feedback to volunteers and opportunities to improve service for the organization. With a careful plan, and continual volunteer communication and training, it should be easy to evaluate the organizations success and improve the Volunteer Management Programme with time.