



VOLUNTEERING AND VOLUNTEERS IN SCOUTING

Volunteering is an activity undertaken by a person of their own free will, when they make a personal choice to commit their time, skills, and energy to actions that benefit others and society as a whole. Volunteering is about devoting time to a cause, a project, or an action, which is unpaid, although direct expenses may be reimbursed depending on the NSOs policy and capacity.

Volunteering is often for a non-profit cause and primarily undertaken within a non-governmental organisation but can also happen within governmental, private or commercial settings. Volunteering is not motivated by material or financial gain.

Reasons for Volunteering

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community, make a difference to the people around them, help the environment, or feel valued and a part of the team. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge, and gain confidence and self-esteem. Volunteering is also undertaken by those who find it beneficial to have it on their CV or resumé, it can be a direct route to employment, or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. For some, volunteering appeals because of its social benefits like meeting new people and making new friends. It is a chance to socialize and get to know the local community. Volunteering can have humanitarian causes or a bigger purpose. Regardless of the motivation, what unites volunteers is that they find volunteering both challenging and rewarding.

Volunteering may mean different things to different people and cultures. However, volunteering is recognised worldwide as a force for positive change and a building block of most societies.

Volunteering in Scouting

The Scout Movement's ability to empower millions of young people around the world hinges on having volunteers to make this happen. Scouting is a volunteer-based and volunteer-led participative youth Movement. For more than 100 years, Scouting has been supporting the development of young people, empowering them through a set of non-formal methods of education so that they have the opportunity to play a constructive role in society as active citizens and help to build a better world.

Scouting is volunteer-led and volunteer-based. Whatever the volunteer role is, the NSO needs to empower, guide, and support the adults as much as possible, so all volunteers can create their own path while developing themselves and providing quality support for young people.



Scouting is founded on values-based principles. Through volunteering in Scouting, young people and adults can together, experience the values of community, have the opportunity to exercise their rights and responsibilities appropriately, and realise their full potential as a contributing member of society.

Volunteers can have short or long-term roles such as working with children and young people, supporting the implementation of Scout activities, developing educational tools and materials, implementing community projects, enabling Scouting by doing administration and finances, communicating Scouting internally and externally, collaborating in the NSO structures, and advocating for Scouting.

Volunteering through Scouting enables adults to develop core competencies in leadership, and other life skills that will empower them in their daily lives; foster intercultural and intergenerational cooperation, dialogue and learning; strengthen the sense of identity and belonging to a community; and increase the opportunities to experience participation in decision-making.

Volunteering as a young person is a real personal development opportunity in specific transferable skills, such as working in teams, problem solving and communication; attaining technical or practical skills; and increasing confidence and self-esteem. The wider community also benefits from Scouting's volunteers, mainly through the socialisation of young people and adults (building social capital) and supporting them to become active citizens willing to make a difference.

Supporting Volunteering

Scouting has a strong commitment and a unique approach towards creating a supportive environment for volunteers. As a global Movement, which is based on the founding principle of belonging to a worldwide family:

- We believe that volunteers are more effective and gain more, both personally and professionally, if they are properly trained, skilled and equipped. Additionally, ongoing and continuous personal development is also seen as critical while volunteering in Scouting.
- We are committed to enabling volunteers to grow and develop their full potential through empowering and enriching experiences regardless of their background.
- We are committed to providing volunteers with opportunities to acquire competencies and skills that have a transformational effect on themselves and on their communities.
- Volunteers have the right to expect to be well managed while in their role. They can expect to be effectively led and supported regardless of their role or position in Scouting.
- Volunteers have the right to feel safe and supported and Scouting's commitment to keeping all people- young people and adults Safe From Harm.

Each volunteer needs to have a clearly defined and agreed role, enforced by a mutually signed 'agreement' linked to a position description that is appropriate to the role, and act



in conformity with an appropriate Code of Conduct. The Adults in Scouting World Policy detailing the life cycle approach for the management of adults in Scouting, sets the fundamental principles of our approach to volunteering.

Benefits for Volunteers

Volunteering can help volunteers make friends, learn new skills, advance their careers, and even feel happier and healthier. Volunteering offers vital help to people in need, worthwhile causes, and the community, but the benefits can be even greater for the volunteer. It can reduce stress, combat depression, keep people mentally stimulated, and provide a sense of purpose. While it is true that the more people volunteer, the more benefits they'll experience, volunteering doesn't have to involve a long-term commitment or take a huge amount of time out of a busy day. Giving in even simple ways can help those in need and improve health and happiness.

Pitfalls in Volunteering

In general, volunteering should be a positive experience, beneficial for both volunteers and organisations. Yet, due to some reasons, it can have a negative impact. Depending on the type of work you're doing, volunteering can be time-consuming. The time you spend volunteering may influence neglecting the other areas of your life. It can be frustrating to volunteer if the goals are not clear and work is not planned and managed well. Having to work with someone or a team you find difficult can be stressful and detract from your goals as a volunteer. If you're distracted by another person's negative attitude, you could lose motivation for volunteering. The same can happen if a volunteer doesn't receive constructive feedback or recognition of contribution. After some time, work can become mundane and repetitive and no alternatives are offered.

Visit also:

[Pitfalls of Volunteer Management](#)

[Volunteering Integration Pack - Volunteering](#)

[Volunteering in Scouting](#)

[The Volunteer Satisfaction Model](#)