

## TOOL

# VOLUNTEER STRATEGY AND VOLUNTEER POLICY

### WHY

There are many ways of working with volunteers – and no single answer to how it should be done. You may use the questions for a volunteer strategy and policy below as a starting point for discussing volunteer roles and relationships in your organization and make a set of written agreements on how to deal with volunteers.

A volunteer strategy may help you to decide how to recruit and involve volunteers to reach your organization's goals. It is a good idea to follow up on your strategy work by doing a more practice oriented volunteer policy.

A volunteer policy may help you to clarify expectations and divide roles and responsibilities among volunteers and staff.

### WHEN

Create a volunteer strategy and a volunteer policy for engaging volunteers, when you do long term planning in the partnership or project. Revisit the strategy and policy, when necessary.

### HOW

#### WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER STRATEGY?

- A strategy is a tool to formulate your goals and chose the best tactic to reach them
- A volunteer strategy helps you to translate your organizational vision into an overall plan for involving the volunteers to reach your organizational goals.
- It entails a focus on:
  - Why you involve volunteers
  - How you involve volunteers, the purpose and priority of the work they do, how you divide roles and responsibilities among staff and volunteers.

Start off your strategy work by **doing an analysis of the situation** and then **develop a strategic plan for reaching your objectives** based on your analysis. You

can use the tools “Organizational landscape and volunteer culture” and “A dialogue on motivations” to analyze the volunteer culture and volunteer motivations in your organization.

#### Important questions for a volunteer strategy

Why do we want to involve volunteers in order to reach our goals?

- What is our vision?
- What goals are relevant in relation to involving volunteers?
- Why are the volunteers important actors in reaching these goals?

How do we involve volunteers in order to reach our goals?

- How is the voluntary work organized?
- What recruitment initiatives are necessary to reach our goals?
- What retention initiatives are necessary to reach our goals?
- What handover initiatives are necessary to reach our goals?

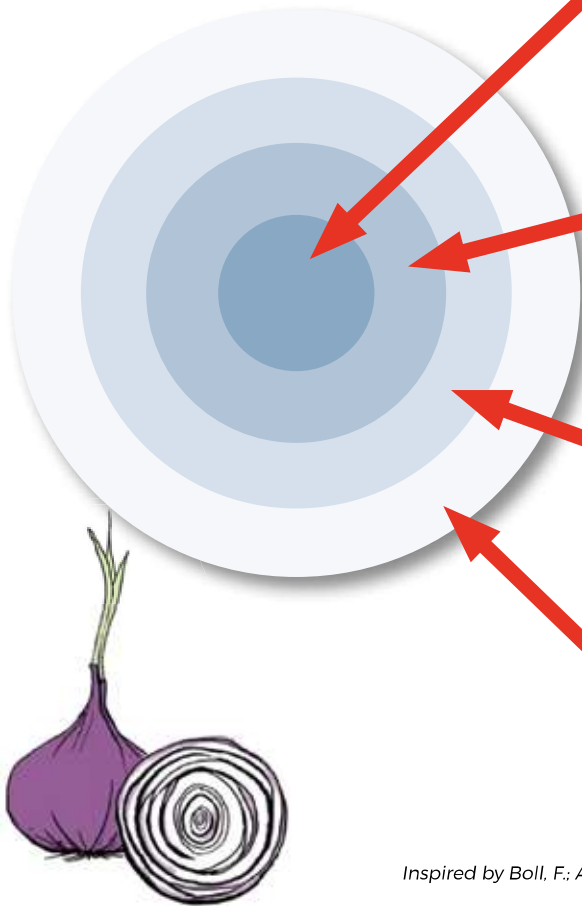
Does the volunteer strategy match our overall organizational vision?

Is our volunteer strategy short and clear, so that it is easy to communicate?

How do you ensure that your volunteer strategy is used in the organization and that all central actors, e.g. the board, staff and volunteers, feel a shared commitment to it?

*Source: "Sådan skriver du frivilligstrategier og frivilligpolitikker, der virker". Boll, F. & Eskelund, C. (2013)*

**ONE ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL**



**Core volunteers:**

- Time spent: High amount, long-term
- Responsibility: Several projects or activities
- Influence: At organizational or project level
- Competencies: Many and specific

**Coordinators**

- Time spent: High amount – long-term/short term
- Responsibility: To carry out a project or coordinate an activity
- Influence: At project level
- Competences: Specific to the project/task

**Loyal volunteers:**

- Time spent: Medium/low amount divided onto tasks
- Responsibility: To carry out tasks
- Influence: At activity level
- Competences: Specific to the task

**Curious / newcomer volunteers**

- Time spent: Low amount
- Responsibility: Low level of responsibility
- Influence: At activity level
- Competences: Few or specific to the task

*Inspired by Boll, F.; Alsted, N.; & Hall, J. (2012) "Frivillig koordinering – Hvorfor og hvordan", Ankerhus*

**WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER POLICY?**

- A volunteer policy is a tool to help you divide roles and responsibilities among volunteers and staff – and clarify expectations between the volunteers and the organizations.
- It entails a focus on:
  - The division of roles and responsibilities in practice
  - The expectations between the organization and the volunteers

Start off your policy work based on your **analysis of the situation** and **strategic plan**.

You can use the tools “Organizational landscape and volunteer culture” and “A dialogue on motivations” to

analyze the volunteer culture and volunteer motivations in your organization.

Another way of analyzing volunteer roles and motivations is to look into volunteer roles in relation to their level of responsibility – as illustrated above.

It is also important to look into how the expectations of the organization match the expectations of the volunteers.

Volunteering is a two-way relationship. You need to balance the needs and expectations of the organization with the motivations of the volunteers.



Source: "Sådan skriver du frivilligstrategier og frivilligpolitikker, der virker". Boll, F. & Eskelund, C. (2013)

**IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR A VOLUNTEER POLICY**

**What is the role of the volunteers?**

- Which rules and regulations guide our work with volunteers?
- What is the relationship between the volunteers and the paid staff?
- How are decisions made and who has the final say?

**What can the volunteers expect of the organization?**

- What responsibility does the organization hold towards the volunteers?
- What does the organization commit to?
- What concrete tasks will the staff do?

**What can the organization expect of the volunteers?**

- What responsibility do the volunteers hold towards the organization?
- What do the volunteers commit to?
- What concrete tasks will the volunteers do?

How does your volunteer strategy and the volunteer policy correspond with each other?

How do you ensure that your volunteer policy is used in the organization and that both staff and volunteers feel a shared commitment to it?

What happens when volunteers make mistakes or how do you deal with conflicts between staff and volunteers?