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For many New Zealand organisations, the involvement of volunteers makes the difference between being able to achieve mission and objectives, and not achieving them. Volunteers, therefore, are a very precious resource. Behind every great volunteer programme, there is someone who makes sure the right people are in the right roles doing the right thing, at the right time.

Where would your organisation be without your manager / leader / coordinator of volunteers?

Since late 2009, Volunteering New Zealand has been undertaking a major piece of work dedicated to the support and development of managers of volunteers. We have been unmasking the often-invisible role of the manager of volunteers, and promoting the importance of what they do to make volunteering happen. Even though there is considerable diversity amongst volunteer-involving organisations in New Zealand, the need for the wider organisation to be engaged with what volunteers do and how they are supported cuts across them all.

At the same time, there is so much to celebrate; organisations working creatively and collaboratively towards amazing outcomes, volunteers and paid staff respecting and supporting each other's work, teams where people with responsibility for volunteering are given a key strategic voice. To learn from these innovations, we need to share them.

That's where these **Best Practice Guidelines** come in...

What are the Best Practice Guidelines?

They are designed to be an *aspirational set of targets and pointers* on how to support managers of volunteers, get the best out of your volunteer programme and enhance your organisation's attractiveness to volunteers and paid staff alike. *They give you the opportunity to celebrate your successes and set goals for the future.*

Over time, Volunteering New Zealand will be building up an *inspirational practice bank*, where you can go to find real examples of other New Zealand organisations putting principles into practice. You'll be able to learn about what they're doing, how they're making it work and why they're bothering in the first place.

Definitions and Notes:

STAFF:

In the Guidelines, the word 'staff' is used to refer to both paid and volunteer team members.

BEST PRACTICE:

In the Guidelines, we have followed the Oxford Dictionary definition of 'best practice', which is "professional procedures that are accepted as being correct or most effective"¹.

CAPTURING DIVERSITY:

We recognise that across New Zealand, volunteer-involving organisations are incredibly diverse. As a result, the involvement of volunteers and the management of them are also incredibly diverse. These Guidelines have been designed as a set of overarching principles that can be applied to any New Zealand volunteer-involving organisation. Regardless of what your organisation, club or group looks like, concepts like a broad understanding of what everyone else is doing and valuing the work of managers of volunteers apply to us all.

¹www.oed.com

Behind the Scenes...

Our thanks also go to the wonderful volunteer-involving organisations that piloted them and gave us invaluable feedback. We are also grateful for the contributions made by the fantastic volunteer working group, who developed the Guidelines from concept to reality.

These guidelines drew inspiration from the book *CEOs Who Lead the Way: 12 Key Actions of Volunteer Programme Champions* by Betty Stallings.

PILOT ORGANISATIONS

Aotearoa Cultural and Volunteer Exchange	Parent's Centres New Zealand Inc.	Toy Library Federation of New Zealand
Auckland Regional Migrant Service	Pregnancy Help	Upper Hutt City Library
Auckland War Memorial Museum	Presbyterian Support Upper South Island	Victim Support
Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc.	Ranui Baptist Community Care (Auckland)	Vision West (Auckland)
Hockey New Zealand	Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind	Volunteering New Zealand
National Council of Women New Zealand	Royal New Zealand Plunket Society Inc.	Wellbeing North Canterbury
Netball Manawatu	St. John	Wellington Community Law Centre
New Zealand Coastguard	Save the Children New Zealand	Wellington Somali Council
New Zealand Fire Service	Te Omanga Hospice (Lower Hutt)	World Vision New Zealand
New Zealand Newcomers Network	The Neighbourhood Trust (Christchurch)	YMCA Central

VOLUNTEERING NEW ZEALAND BEST PRACTICE WORKING GROUP

Claire Teal	Programme Manager, Volunteering NZ	Heidi Quinn	Forest and Bird New Zealand
Dr. Carolyn Cordery	Victoria University of Wellington	Delia Small	(formerly) WWF New Zealand
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Biddy Harford	Te Omanga Hospice, Lower Hutt	Gemma Stewart	Wellington Zoo
Liz Hicks	Cancer Society of New Zealand	Jacci Tatnell	St. John
Barbara Jennings	Department of Corrections	Helga Wientjes	Department of Conservation
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If you have feedback on these Best Practice Guidelines, or would like to tell us how you are using them, please contact:

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Frequently Asked Questions:

HOW DO WE USE THE GUIDELINES?

The Guidelines are designed to be used as an organisational self-assessment tool. They are a combination of:

- Tips and recommendations (columns 1 and 2)
- Space for you to apply these to your organisation (columns 3, 4 and 5).

You will get the best out of the Guidelines if you work through them as a team, with as many members of your organisation involved as possible. The Guidelines are also designed to be something you can go back to, review and reuse over time.

WE'VE GOT A MANAGER OF VOLUNTEERS, WHY DO WE NEED GUIDELINES FOR THE WHOLE ORGANISATION?

Volunteering doesn't happen in a vacuum; volunteers and managers of volunteers are part of the wider unit that is the organisation. Contributions of volunteers, and contributions of those with responsibility for them, enable the organisation to achieve all that it says it is going to achieve. For these contributions to be really effective, and for the organisation and the volunteers to get the best out of each other, the whole organisation needs to be engaged with what volunteers do and how they are being supported.

WHERE'S THE BIT ABOUT HOW TO MANAGE VOLUNTEERS WELL?

Because these Guidelines are directed at the whole group, club, or organisation and its wider relationships with volunteers and managers of volunteers, we have chosen not to include specific detail about best practice management of volunteers. Over time, you will be able to find information about best practice in managing volunteers on Volunteering New Zealand's website at www.volunteeringnz.org.nz.

THEY SEEM A BIT OF A STRETCH...

That's right! Best practice is something we have to constantly strive towards. We might be doing some things really well, but still have lots of room to improve in other areas. The Guidelines can help your organisation work out where it needs to go, and set goals for how you are going to get there.

WE DON'T PAY OUR MANAGER OF VOLUNTEERS, SO WHAT DO WE DO WHEN THE GUIDELINES TALK ABOUT PAYMENT?

There are some sections of the Guidelines that will not be appropriate for entirely volunteer-run organisations, as they talk about, for example, payment of managers of volunteers. If your organisation is 100% voluntary, you might like to skip over sections relating to payment of managers. However, it is important for a set of Best Practice Guidelines to include a section on reimbursement of managers of volunteers. This is not to create a division between paid and volunteer managers of volunteers, or to imply one is better than the other – it is because:

- In organisations where managers of volunteers work alongside other paid staff, 'best practice' involves paying them the same as people with comparable responsibilities, and;
- 'Best practice' involves understanding that management of volunteers is a specially skilled and important role, as opposed to a low-level or unskilled role.

In best-practice organisations...

How do best practice organisations do that?

... VOLUNTEERS ARE SEEN AS A CENTRAL PART OF THE ORGANISATION. IT IS RECOGNISED THAT WITHOUT THEIR CONTRIBUTION, THE ORGANISATION WOULD NOT ACHIEVE ITS GOALS.

Making sure people(s) with responsibility for volunteers have a voice at all levels of the organisation.

Identifying the ways volunteer involvement helps the organisation achieve its goals. Sharing this knowledge:

- Verbally (talking about it around the organisation)
- Via official reporting channels (including it in reports, funding applications, etc.)

Making sure the contribution made by volunteers is reflected in the organisation's strategic plan and goals.

Making sure that people with responsibility for volunteers are treated the same as any other management staff in the organisation.

Promoting understanding that 'volunteering' means different things to different cultural and ethnic groups.

Ensuring that the workplace environment and processes reflect and promote intercultural awareness and respect.

In best-practice organisations...

How do best practice organisations do that?

... THE WHOLE ORGANISATION WORKS TO INVOLVE AND RECOGNISE VOLUNTEERS.

Encouraging all staff in the organisation to get to know and involve the volunteers in functional relationships.

Having an expectation that all staff can explain why the organisation involves volunteers, and the benefits of this.

Offering training and education to all staff about how to effectively work with volunteers.

Recognising that the understanding and practice of volunteering varies across cultural and ethnic groups.

... IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT A STRONG AND DYNAMIC VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME NEEDS A SUPPORTED AND RESOURCED MANAGER.

Recruiting dynamic and competent people into volunteer management roles.

Making sure all staff understand what is involved in the manager of volunteers role.

Paying people with responsibility for volunteers a salary comparable to other managers with similar responsibilities within the organisation.

Treating people with responsibility for volunteers as equals with other staff, and as skilled professionals in their area of expertise.

Encouraging and supporting people with responsibility for volunteers to access professional networks, peer support opportunities and professional development.

... PEOPLE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR VOLUNTEERS HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY DO THEIR JOB.

Making sure that people with responsibility for volunteers have sufficient time available to them to provide proper support to the volunteers, as well as to complete any other tasks.

Providing people responsible for volunteers with access to a budget for the volunteer programme, both to make sure costs are covered and to enable further development.

Providing people with responsibility for volunteers with the opportunity to contribute to the development of annual organisational budgets.
