



November 8, 2012

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash! This week we are highlighting information on volunteers and volunteer management. Firelight, like your organizations, uses volunteers to help with its work. You can see an example of one of our volunteer success stories featured in the New York Times. It's just one example of the great people we have in our Firelight community. All of you have supported our work in one way or another. Thank you for everything you do.

To view the article go here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/jobs/volunteer-work-as-a-path-to-full-time-employment.html>

If you'd like to read more about the Firelight grantee-partner Mia mentions in the story, check out her recent blog post, <http://blog.firelightfoundation.org/2012/11/02/a-bakery-for-good/>

We're trying to bring more attention to the NYT story so please Like us on Facebook and Share the story with your network, or tweet and post on LinkedIn, thank you!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call for Proposals) The Children and Violence Evaluation Challenge Fund Call for Proposals 2012

(Call for Proposals) Common Fund for Commodities Call for Proposals for Funding Innovation

(Call for Proposals) Fetzer Institute's \$25,000 awards for NGOs

(Resource) How to Design a Successful Volunteer Program

(Call for Proposals) The Children and Violence Evaluation Challenge Fund Call for Proposals 2012

The Children and Violence Evaluation Challenge Fund has announced its second call for proposals to support rigorous evaluations of interventions aimed at preventing all forms of violence against children in low- and middle-income countries.

A rigorous evaluation implies the use of recognized social research or evaluation methods that help to assess the changes that can be attributed to a specific intervention or that the intervention contributed to. To this end, the Fund is open to a wide range of evaluation methods varying from experimental and quasi-experimental methods to mixed methods and qualitative research.

The proposed evaluations shall focus on understanding the impact of a specific intervention in line with the thematic area and geographical scope of the call and their findings are expected to be used to inform policies and practices in the child protection sector, thus ultimately contributing to eradicate violence from the lives of the children.

Non-profit organizations/NGOs, universities/research institutes and, exceptionally, for-profit organizations can apply as main applicants. Governments and multilateral organizations are not eligible as main applicants, but can be identified as partners. The application must reflect a partnership between implementers and evaluators. The meaningful involvement of local researchers is strongly encouraged.

Deadline for Submission: December 17, 2012

For more go here: <http://www.evaluationchallenge.org/call-for-proposals-2012-2/>

(Call for Proposals) Common Fund for Commodities Call for Proposals for Funding Innovation

The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) has issued a call for proposals to provide funding support to commodity development activities in its member countries.

(i) Social: Create employment particularly for youth and women, increase household incomes, reduce poverty, and enhance food security;

(ii) Economic: Enhance production and productivity, achieve higher local value addition; improve competitiveness of producers, producer organizations and small and medium sized industries; support the financial sector development;

(iii) Building partnerships: Build effective and cost efficient collaboration between producers, industry, governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders for commodity based development.

The financial support for any individual intervention can be in the range of of USD 60,000 to 1,500,000 mainly targeted to for-profit organizations and social enterprises operating in commodity sector. The CFC funding will be 7 years (2 years

for disbursement of CFC funds and a further 5 years for repayment of debt/loans/repayable grants etc.).

There are more than hundred countries as members of CFC: Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia

Deadline for Submission: December 7, 2012.

For more go to: <http://www.common-fund.org/news-and-events/news/call-for-proposals/>

(Call for Proposals) Fetzer Institute's \$25,000 awards for NGOs

The Fetzer Institute is organizing a competition in which is it offering \$25,000 awards to NGOs. The objective of the competition is to recognize, celebrate, and honor the good work done by a vast array of public service organizations while deepening its understanding of the connection between the Fetzer mission and the broader NGO/nonprofit world.

Referred to as "What in the World are you doing?" this competition allows organizations around the world to submit entries on the work they are doing. Whether it is feeding the hungry, building homes, teaching kids, supporting social entrepreneurs, cleaning streams and rivers, making art or embarking on one of a million other noble pursuits, NGOs are invited to tell their stories about their work leading to making the world a better place.

There are two \$25,000 awards – one for the US-based nonprofit and one for an NGO outside the United States.

Entries will be featured in the Global Gallery of Love and Forgiveness — a showcase of inspiring videos from around the world. And public voting for the MOST LOVED project will determine the winner of a \$5000 award given by the Fetzer Institute.

Nonprofit organizations/NGOs working for a minimum of 3 years at local, national, or international levels, as well as public/private partnerships performing public service functions on a not-for-profit basis, are eligible for submission to the award. Fetzer is particularly looking for applications from developing countries and countries in conflict and/or transition.

Deadline for Submission: January 31, 2012

For more go to: <http://tellusworld.org/competition-overview>

(Resource) How to Design a Successful Volunteer Program

What is Volunteer Management?

Volunteer management is, at its core, selecting and supervising volunteers. Yet it is also much more than that. Volunteer management is a key position in the leveraging of an organization's resources, on par with fundraising/development and human resources. Volunteer management is the gateway to the community, providing citizens with opportunities to become more involved in local issues and global causes, and serving as a grassroots source of public relations and marketing. Volunteer management ensures that there is community buy-in of an organization's mission, thereby strengthening an organization's credibility in the eyes of the public. Volunteer management is the guardian of well-being, for volunteers and constituents, and for the organizations involving them.

Why is Volunteer Management Important?

Great question. After all, according to some of the myths of the field, volunteers can manage themselves, right? So doesn't that just make volunteer management professionals a sort of unnecessary middleman?

Actually, no. For as soon as your organization has decided to involve volunteers (here are some tips to make sure your organization is ready), there are a number of things that need to happen: finding volunteers, matching their skills and interests to the needs of the organization, supervision and recognition, etc. Without a volunteer management professional on staff – whether they be paid or volunteers themselves – volunteers often fall between the cracks of already busy organizations and are left to fend for themselves or forgotten altogether. In either case, the end result is a volunteer who doesn't feel valued or engaged. And that is a volunteer who will leave, taking with them the energy and time they could have contributed to the mission as well as, potentially, ill will towards the organization for how they were treated (think of it as negative PR).

Organizational Readiness

Joining those myths-that-will-not-die like "volunteers are free" and "anyone can manage volunteers" is the whopper "all organizations should/can engage volunteers." As anyone who has been a professional volunteer manager can tell you, this is not at all a given.

While many organizations would like to think that they are volunteer-ready, the reality is that a thoughtful and strategic assessment should take place before a successful volunteer program can be launched and maintained. In this section,

we provide some resources for determining 1) if your organization should engage volunteers, 2) whether your organization can engage volunteers, and finally, 3) how you can start the process of making your organization volunteer-ready:

Why Is Volunteer Program Assessment Important?

Indeed, assessing an organization's capacity to engage volunteers can ensure that a volunteer program is well-thought out, volunteer positions are both valuable and meaningful (in other words, benefiting both the volunteer and the organization), and that infrastructure and resources are available to support volunteers in the organization. Given the importance of this process, several assessment steps have been developed:

Step #1: Who Are We?

According to Sarah Jane Rehnborg, PhD. and Betsy Clubine, the first step in assessing whether there is capacity to engage volunteers involves taking a good look at the organization's "history, culture, and cause." Specifically, this means delving into the history of the organization, including whether or not volunteers were engaged in the past and the success/failure of those endeavors, assessing the image and public perception of the organization, revisiting the mission and vision, and considering the organization's in-office work culture.

Step #2: Make Your Case

Easily the most ambitious phase of the assessment process, an organization should be able to make its case as to why it should and/or can engage volunteers. To effectively do this, they should answer a number of exploratory questions, including:

- Why should we involve volunteers?
- How can volunteers help further the mission of our organization?
- "What will the future be like because of the volunteer program?"
- Where do we need volunteers to serve in our organization?
- What tasks/roles would be good for potential volunteers?
- What skills and knowledge do volunteers need to take on these tasks/roles?
- Is it appropriate for volunteers to do these tasks/roles rather than staff members?
- What meaningful opportunities are there for volunteers to engage in our organization?
- What benefits are there for potential volunteers?
- What benefits are there for the organization to gain from involving volunteers?
- Does the organization have the infrastructure to support and provide guidance to volunteers? Has the organization designated a volunteer management professional to oversee the program? How will volunteers and staff work together?
- What additional staff resources are available to the volunteer program?
- What fiscal resources are available to the volunteer program?

- What are some of the problems one should expect in the future as well as possible solutions to these problems?

Step #3: Talk to Staff Members

Once the initial questions have been probed, it is important to engage the rest of the organization's staff in the dialogue. This will ensure not only that staff have been included in the process but that the volunteer program is planned with a real understanding of areas where training for staff may be needed. Similarly, these conversations speak to the organizational culture and whether it is an appropriate environment for volunteers.

Beyond exploring the concerns and experiences of staff members towards volunteers, there is the additional question of assessing need. Discussing volunteer program planning with staff members is an opportunity to find out what their volunteer needs are, what meaningful volunteer opportunities exist in their area, and what kind of management support they can offer.

Developing Your Volunteer Program

Step One – Developing the Vision, Mission, Policies and Procedures

Where the vision and mission paint the picture of what you want to accomplish with your volunteer program, policies and procedures serve as the backbone. This is the place to consider and structure responses to issues like volunteer/staff relations, disciplinary procedures, and methods of communication. Should you run into uncharted waters on your way to achieving your vision, your program's policies and procedures will be your compass to keep you on track.

Creating the mission, vision, and policies and procedures for the volunteer program also presents an opportunity to collaborate with fellow staff members on developing the volunteer culture at your organization, making sure that volunteers are fully integrated into the organization and supported by all staff members, not just you! Here are some resources, and examples, to get you started: <http://www.idealists.org/info/VolunteerMgmt/Developing>

Step Two – Creating Infrastructure: Applications, Agreements, and Position Descriptions

With your internal systems in place, you're ready to develop some of the external documents. This includes volunteer applications, volunteer contracts or agreement forms (to outline both organization and volunteer expectations and responsibilities), handbooks for volunteers (sort of an orientation on paper), and specific volunteer position descriptions. There are a number of ways to structure these, so we've included several examples below. If you manage volunteers in the

U.S., it's important to remember that the Americans with Disabilities Act also sets the standards for selecting volunteers.

When developing position descriptions, keep in mind some of the current trends regarding episodic volunteering. As more and more individuals seek to fit volunteerism into their already busy lives, they are often looking for short-term or one-time opportunities. So as you develop positions, try to offer a healthy mix of long-term, short-term, one-time, and online/virtual volunteerism opportunities. Also keep in mind the range of skills volunteers can bring to your organization, offering positions in both skilled and non-skill-specific categories.

Step Three – Keeping on Course: Tracking and Evaluation

Much like risk management, you should regularly review your volunteer program to make sure you are in line with its vision and mission. Annual evaluations – of individual volunteers, your role as volunteer manager, and the overall program (this is a great time to review risk management and policies and procedures) – may seem like a hassle but they are invaluable in keeping a volunteer program running smoothly. Be sure to provide opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback. And try not to approach evaluations as a negative process: not only do they highlight areas for improvement but they also give you the opportunity to celebrate what's going well!

Similarly, by setting up a system to track volunteer program information, you will be well-equipped not only for evaluation but also for making the case for your volunteer program to potential funders (grant applications are magnets for data!) and the decision-makers of your organization. Tracking doesn't have to be overwhelming; it can be as simple as using an Excel spreadsheet to record contact information and hours, as well as answers to questions like: When are volunteers available? What do they enjoy most? What do they not enjoy? What are they best at? What motivates them? How do they like to be recognized? How many hours did they volunteer?

With all of this at your fingertips, you're better prepared to find the right volunteers for the right volunteer positions. At the same time, should you need to make a case for the volunteer program as organizational priorities shift or funding gets tight, you're already armed with invaluable knowledge on the breadth, scope, and impact of volunteers in the organization!

Step Four – Training and Orientation – For Volunteers AND Staff

The final step before you can begin looking for volunteers is to decide what kind of orientation and training you should, and can, offer. Where a formal training on systems or tools is unique to a specific volunteer or task (and often integral to risk management!), orientation tends to be a more global picture of the

organization, providing information that is largely universal to all volunteers. In either case, trainings and orientations are often the equivalent of your volunteers' first impression, so it's important to make it positive, informational, and motivating. No small feat to be sure...

At the same time, it is important to train your fellow staff members on how best to work with volunteers. Do some group brainstorming for innovative ideas on how staff can support volunteers – one great strategy is to set up shadow mentoring so that every time Volunteer X is in the office, Staff Person Y checks in with them to see how they are doing and whether they need anything.

This is also the time to talk about appropriate behavior and boundaries as well as determine who among staff will be available to answer questions and provide supervision. The bottom line is that your staff (hopefully!) operates like a team and bringing volunteers on board is bringing new team members on board.

For more go to: <http://www.idealists.org/info/VolunteerMgmt>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>. We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.

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