

KickStart Ghana's Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in KickStart Ghana. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff and beneficiaries. This policy is endorsed by the board of KickStart Ghana and will be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of KickStart Ghana and our volunteers.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Commitment

KickStart Ghana recognizes the right that people have to participate in their communities through volunteering. We also acknowledge that volunteers can contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can be of benefit to our staff, beneficiaries and the volunteers themselves. KickStart Ghana values the contribution made by volunteers, and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop the volunteers. KickStart Ghana recognises its responsibility to recruit and manage volunteers in a responsible manner.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is an activity that is supported and encouraged by KickStart Ghana and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

'Volunteer co-ordination' will be explicitly referred to in all relevant job descriptions within the organisation.

Recruitment and Selection

KickStart Ghana is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance is based on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.



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All volunteers will be asked to produce references and will be invited to attend an informal interview, either in person or over Skype. If the volunteer will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults they will also be required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure (CRB check), which will include a check against the relevant Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) barring list(s), when the volunteer role meets the definition of regulated activity.

Regulated activity is work a barred person must not do and is defined under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and further amended under Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. In other instances where a volunteer role involves contact with a vulnerable group (children or adult) but is not regulated activity then a volunteer may be asked to undergo an enhanced CRB check as best practice and where there is eligibility. This check will not include ISA barring list information.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed annually.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation; in addition all volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training and Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health and safety, child protection and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for the same.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will allow both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise their achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteer role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.



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Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff.

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Settling differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- Have adequate support in their volunteering
- Receive appreciation
- Have safe working conditions
- Be insured
- Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- Receive appropriate training
- Be free from discrimination
- Be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Make the most out of training and support opportunities
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- Work within agreed guidelines
- Respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- Comply with the organisation's policies

Along with this we endorse the "three rights and responsibilities of volunteers" as listed on Idealist.org.

The three rights of volunteers:



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1. **The right to feel valued.** Wherever in the world a volunteer goes, whatever their volunteer task, they have the right to feel that their time and contribution are valued.
2. **The right to negotiate their volunteer role.** If they find themselves in a volunteer position that isn't working for them they have the right to talk to their volunteer manager or supervisor to discuss ways they might be able to shift the role or take on another project or position.
3. **The right to leave.** They have the right to leave. This isn't a decision that should be made hastily but, if after talking to and working with their volunteer manager or supervisor, they still feel unhappy, unappreciated, or unsatisfied with their volunteer experience, they do have the right leave the organisation.

The three responsibilities of volunteers:

1. **The responsibility to communicate their needs.** If the volunteer is not enjoying the work or finding it fulfilling they should talk to their volunteer manager or supervisor, providing specifics about their dissatisfaction and at least a few suggestions of ways to make it better.
2. **The responsibility to follow through on their obligations.** Volunteers should do what they say they'll do, whether it's honouring the volunteer role and schedule they'd agreed to, providing ample notice if they're unable to perform tasks or responsibilities, or serving as a good representative of the organization in the community.
3. **The responsibility to honour the organization's investment in them.** Volunteer should recognise that whilst they are donating their time, they are not a free resource for the organisation. They will have invested valuable time and resources in the volunteer. Before deciding on not fulfilling a commitment, this should be in their mind.