

Policy on Volunteering At SEEP- Local & Overseas

Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in SEEP. It is of relevance to staff, beneficiaries, and governing body of the organisation.
- 1.2 This policy was endorsed by Executive Committee, SEEP on March 27, 2012 and was subsequently approved by Governing body and will be kept under review to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of SEEP and its volunteers.

Commitment

- 2.1 Volunteers are an established and integral part of the work of SEEP. Inviting people from the community into our organisation ensures that we have the community's support and input into our activities. Volunteering provides benefits which are above and beyond those supplied by statutory services, and which improve the quality of peoples' lives. Without the involvement of volunteers in this organisation we would not be able to provide the range of services and activities.
- 2.2 SEEP is committed to working with volunteers to meet its purpose and objectives. Volunteering involvement in appropriate tasks is welcome, encouraged, developing at all levels of the organisation's activity.

Values and principles

SEEP

- 3.1 recognises volunteering as a means of fulfilling its purposes, and of being of benefit to all people by providing access from the community and beyond through volunteers;
- 3.2 values volunteering as an inclusive act of participation that is itself important in promoting the work of the organisation;
- 3.3 appreciates that volunteering is enjoyable and can change and enrich the lives of individuals. Successful volunteer involvement takes account of individuals' motivations, aspirations and fulfilment;
- 3.4 acknowledges volunteering as of wider benefit to society and its beliefs and values;
- 3.5 will endeavour to match volunteers' skills, knowledge, experience and motivation in a way that best meets the organisation's needs;
- 3.6 respects volunteers in both listening to and learning from what they have to say;
- 3.7 values and respects the individual through providing equal opportunities for active involvement within the scope of the organisation's needs and resources;

- 3.8 values volunteering as integral to its work at all levels and recognises the gifts of time from volunteers as critical to its well-being and success;
- 3.9 distinguishes volunteering from employment, and puts its flexibility and informality to best effect to complement the work of paid staff.

Definitions

- 4.1 A volunteer is someone who, without expectation of financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses as mentioned in para 8.2,8.3,8.4, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of SEEP
- 4.2 The importance of maintaining a balanced, effective and mutually beneficial staff/volunteer partnership is essential. It is based on the principle that staff provide structure, organisation, direction and day-to-day management together with appropriate levels of accountability, while volunteers add value to the organisation's work by performing a wide range of supportive roles, contributing time, flexibility and specialist skills. Within this framework, volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by SEEP and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment.
- 4.3 The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. Likewise SEEP cannot be compelled to provide regular work, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.
- 4.4 Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expects of the organisation – as well as attainment of the high standards on which the organisation's reputation depends.

Responsibilities

- 5.1 SEEP acknowledges the need for a clear, consistent organisational framework for voluntary involvement which creates a positive climate for development.
- 5.2 Each volunteer has a designated member of staff or volunteer to guide and advise them in their tasks. Volunteers are told who to approach for support and have regular access to that person.
- 5.3 The designated Volunteer manager is responsible for the effective deployment and development of day-to-day voluntary activity.

Recruitment and selection

- 6.1 SEEP is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks.

- 6.2 Volunteers will be asked to provide references and will be selected on their suitability for the volunteering tasks, matching volunteer's skills and interests with the organisation's needs.
- 6.3 There is an age limit for the recruitment of younger volunteers provided they are able to make a useful contribution; they are undertaking suitable and safe tasks.
- 6.4 There is no upper age limit and the organisation recognises the valuable contribution made by older volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience. An annual review will assess volunteer's continued capacity to undertake tasks.
- 6.5 Volunteers will be invited for an informal interview where a mutually suitable role will be identified. Volunteers will be asked to provide references, and may be required to undertake a police check if the position involves working with children or vulnerable adults.
- 6.6 Volunteers have a clear and concise description of their role and tasks. These are prepared by the Volunteer manager after discussions with the volunteer. The underlying principle is the identification of real need for a task to be undertaken.

Training and development

- 7.1.1 Upon Overseas Volunteers arrival in Dhaka, he/she will be met by a SEEP representative who will take him/her to SEEP Office/Project. Once he/she has settled down, he/she will receive further information on the current status of our programme in the local community. New volunteers are made to feel welcome and provided with a copy of the Volunteer's Pack which includes aims and objectives of the organisation plus an introduction to relevant policies such as the Volunteering policy, health and safety, equal opportunities, confidentiality, and settling differences. An induction plan relevant to their role will also be included.
- 7.1.2 The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to provide them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks.
- 7.1.3 Training on 'Working with volunteers' will be available for staff and volunteers involved in volunteer management.
- 7.1.4 Examination of the effective involvement of volunteers will form part of the organisation's annual review of its activities and will be reported upon in the Annual Report.
- 7.1.5 The views of staff, volunteers and service users will be sought to identify opportunities to develop volunteering

Support and recognition

- 8.1 Volunteer managers will discuss the progress of volunteers on a regular basis in order to assess performance and identify potential training needs. Volunteers will also be encouraged to contribute ideas and views on the development of volunteer-led services.
- 8.2 A local SIM card will be provided to overseas volunteer. The user will load credit into phone and will return the SIM on expiry of his/her association with SEEP.

- 8.3 Overseas Volunteers are able to claim USD 50 per month only as travelling allowance.
- 8.4 Local volunteers will be paid Tk 3500.00 per month as pocket allowance.
- 8.5 Local Volunteers and member of staff of SEEP deployed for disaster management will be paid Tk 500.00 per day.
- 8.6 An annual event will be organised by SEEP where volunteers' contribution can be formally recognised.

Conditions of service

- 9.1 Personal accident insurance may be implemented for the benefit of overseas volunteers, if required, and claims are made at the discretion of SEEP.
- 9.2 The organisation does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage.
- 9.3 Personal information recorded about volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Volunteers are informed of their rights, under data protection legislation, to have access to personal records.
- 9.4 The organisation advises volunteers of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information about the organisation which is not public knowledge.
- 9.5 The organisation recognises that volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. Exit interviews are offered to ascertain why a volunteer is leaving, share any learning points and establish whether they may want to be involved again in the future.
- 9.6 All volunteers have to comply with national laws and Organizational Child Protection Policy while working with children.

Settling difficulties

- 10.1 SEEP aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The volunteer manager is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer conduct or complaints. They seek to ensure that volunteer's views are heard, noted, acted upon promptly, and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

Rights and responsibilities

- 11.1 SEEP recognises the right of volunteers to:
 - know what is expected of them
 - have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
 - be shown appreciation
 - have safe working conditions
 - be insured – if required
 - know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
 - be paid expenses
 - be trained
 - be free from discrimination

- have the opportunity for personal development

And in return it expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way which reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- work within agreed guidelines.

Leave policy

- 12.1 Any excursions over and above your planned itinerary with us in Dhaka are to be informed and duly approved by us for your personal security reason.
- 12.2 Volunteers have to apply for leaves and only leave the project on leave being approved by Deputy Coordinator.