

ILLUME

International
Volunteer
Day

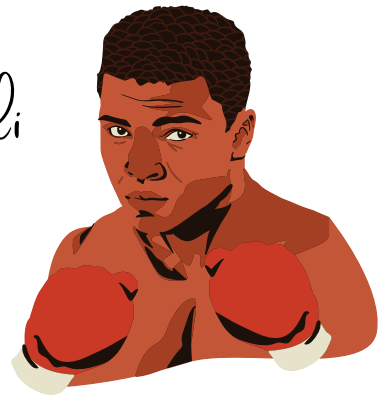


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“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.” -

Muhammad Ali



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” -

Margaret Mead



THE ROOTS OF VOLUNTEERISM

To volunteer is to provide a service involving your time and labor for free. It is important to note that volunteerism is done solely from the goodness of one's heart, not for monetary purposes. Having a definition in place we can now move on to where the ethic of volunteering comes from. For the act of volunteering, we cannot point towards a single point in time after which the act of volunteering came to life because humans as a species have been driven to help one another throughout history. It would thus be near impossible to pinpoint a single point in time to begin telling the history of volunteerism. What we can do is to trace back to a time when the verb *volunteer* entered our vernacular. Volunteer gets its roots from the French word 'Voluntaire'. Its meaning was laced into the fabric of military services. Today volunteerism is seen as synonymous with community service.

Some historians have labeled the act of religious missionaries as volunteering. These individuals, be it Christian, Muslims, or any other religion would travel long distances solely for the purpose of spreading the message of their religion. This was an act that they did from the goodness of their heart



not for monetary purposes. Another early form of volunteerism came in the shape of military service. This dates back to the 17th century when men would willingly join the military services. Volunteerism gained momentum during times of war when women would organize to aid and assist wounded soldiers.

Many such organizations then transformed into what we call Red Cross. During WW2 it was the first time ever that a volunteer group was sent beyond borders to provide assistance to the wounded.

After having experienced the tragedies of both world wars we as a community realized the importance of helping others without expecting anything back. Today, colleges prioritize applicants to have a certain number of volunteer hours in their applications.

THE ETHICS OF VOLUNTEERISM

Involving ethics in volunteer practices has been a key development in the industry. It has forced volunteers and organizations to introspect into the manner they conduct activities, the intention behind them, and the need for them.

The principle of ethical practice falls on both the volunteer themselves and the party aiding the volunteers. When a company/organization initiates volunteer programs a vast responsibility falls on them to ensure ethical practice in the host country. They must first and foremost conduct thorough research to make sure that there is actually a need for their service in the area. It is also compulsory for them to provide a service that will continue to benefit the people once the volunteers leave. This sustainable model is also linked to ensuring that the activities of volunteers do not inversely impact the local environment. In addition to this, volunteer projects must also ensure that the volunteers they take on board are not take away jobs from the local population. Beyond these measures, one of the key actions for an organization is to ensure that they are working in

collaboration with local partners. The reason is that the purpose of a charity project is to ensure the enrichment of the lives of locals not to stand in opposition to them.

On the part of volunteers, it is important that they thoroughly research the charities they wish to work with. For a volunteer to go blindly into a project makes them irresponsible and complicit in the malpractices of the charity organization. The principle of volunteerism and volunteering is to provide services from one community to another, these communities are mostly of differing economic, social, and political power. Many volunteers enter projects with a savior complex.

A visual representation of the savior complex is shown in the pictures below. Seemingly they might appear harmless but it is important to understand that many times, organizers of volunteer trips prioritize creating a

Savior Complex

People who have a savior complex come from a place of great economic, social, and/or political privilege. They seek out marginalized communities to provide help however this help is catered more towards making their own self feel better

a memorable experience for their voluntourists over the local community



In this picture, we see a white woman posing with six young girls of African descent. We see pictures like these all the time, so often that we are not able to point at anything inherently 'harmful' in them. In reality images like these, when posted by an organization themselves or by the volunteer, perpetuate a subconscious notion of white saviourship. It makes it appear as if the white man in this situation is the savior, and the better knowing. Such notions erase a significant part of history that has to do with the exploitation of for example African regions. It erases a decades-long history of colonization and imperialism. Furthermore, it has been found that in many instances the people who are being photographed do not know where their photos are going to be posted and how they will be used. An example of a phenomenon like this can be found with the infamous TIMES magazine cover that featured Sharbat Gula popularly known as the Afghan Girl with green eyes. identification. Steven Curry- the photographer had not inquired about her name, age, or story at the time of photographing her. It was later found

that Curry photographed Sharbat Gula when she was only when she was an adolescent. At the time the image did not include her name or any identification beyond what Steven Curry wanted her to be- the Afghan girl with green eyes in a ragged scarf. This alludes to the fetishization of people from a lower economic, social, and political

Curry

fame

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for
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did



not. She was deported from Pakistan in 2015 and had to live a life of constant struggle in refugee camps when Curry enjoyed the wealth that came from using an image on her without formal consent. When asked she felt about the whole ordeal she only used the word "angry".

The voluntourism industry gets a lot of criticism most of which has to do with the malpractices in the industry. Inherently volunteerism is a deeply enriching practice that can transform futures but we need to keep an eye out for ethical code in the industry to make sure that all parties involved reap the benefits of volunteerism, not just one alone.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

DOES VOLUNTEERING MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY, OR ARE HAPPY PEOPLE SIMPLY MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER?

1

Volunteering appears to be intrinsically rewarding—when we help others, we tend to experience what researchers call a “warm glow.” When we assist others with our services with no other motive than to simply help them. Our body releases endorphins when we help others and see their lives become better with our contribution. Based on Dr. Allan Luk's research 95% of individuals feel better after they volunteer. It is human nature to want to help others but in the 21st century, we are so entangled in our own capitalist values and activities that we have started to criminalize the act of providing services for free.

2

Volunteering is likely to help boost our sense of social connection. It helps many people escape their social bubble and outside. This '*looking outside*' also helps individuals look within and introspect. By realizing the suffering of the world outside we are able to feel sympathy for those around us. It helps us develop a sense of purpose in our lives where we want to actively reach out and assist others

LOCAL VOLUNTEER GROUPS IN PAKISTAN



THE CITIZENS FOUNDATION



ہلال احمر پاکستان



THE CITIZENS FOUNDATION

TCF has three major volunteer programs namely Rahbar, Career Counselling, and Baaghban.

The key feature of **Rahbar** is the 'Thought to Destiny' outlook which serves as the guiding principle to inspire young minds to think of themselves as creators of their own destiny rather than victims of their bleak circumstances.

Career Counselling sessions are organized annually for tenth-grade students for professionals from diverse industries volunteer for a day to interact with students on a one-to-one basis.

Baghbaan matches the right person with the right skills and knowledge, to the right project. These projects are flexible and range from community outreach and fundraising to event management and technology. Volunteers can choose to work individually off-site or with our teams in the office.



ہلالِ احمر پاکستان

The involvement of youths and volunteers plays a vital role in carrying out the Pakistan Red Crescent (PRC) activities and maintaining strong links and regular interaction with the communities. The youth and volunteer department trains volunteers for National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs), Emergency Response Teams (ERTs), Branch Disaster Response Teams (BDRTs) & District Disaster Response Teams (DDRTs) in all districts to strengthen the disaster response capacities. Currently, the PRC has a base of 1.8 million volunteers countrywide and aims to take this volunteer base to 5 million



The department has more than 6,000 active volunteer members in Pakistan, while 450 ambassadors from different universities and a strong collaboration with 40 youth societies to maximize its potential and strength. Moreover, AKFP Volunteers Department also has operational cooperation with 6 training societies, and memorandums of understanding have also been signed with 9 universities to stabilize and expand bilateral collaboration to undertake activities of volunteerism.

HRDN ACTIVITIES

FOR THE QUARTER OF OCT-DEC 2020

Webinars-Monday 30th November 2020



Session 01-Orientation on EAD Procedures



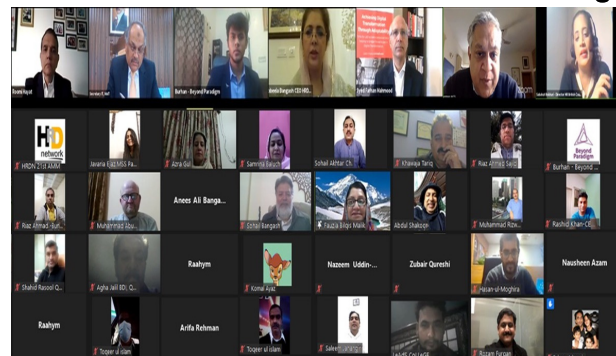
**Orientation on PCP Procedures
Dec 24th 2020**

Webinar- Wednesday 16th December 2020

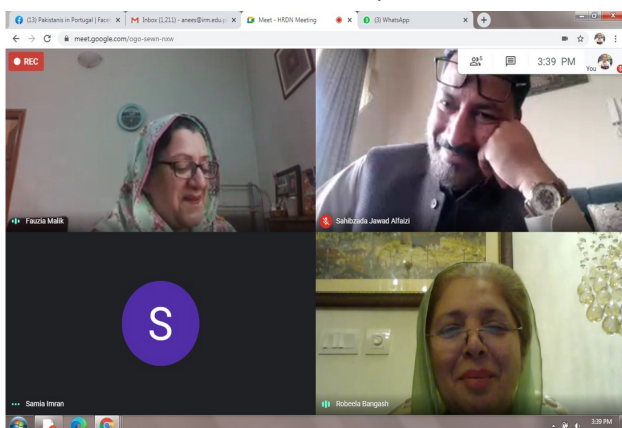


Session 2-Orientattion on EAD-E Portal

21st All Members Meeting



**International Event Committee(IEC)
October 24,2020**



**Digitizing Skills Development & HR Management:
'A New Normal' in post-COVID-19 situation**

2nd Meeting of HRDN Corporate wing Oct 14,2020



3rd Meeting of HRDN Corporate wing Nov 11,2020



Interview with Hashim Bilal of VSO

Hashim Bilal is the Country Director at Volunteer Services Overseas, Pakistan. VSO is a British organization that aims to bring long lasting change through volunteering. Their core values are that of collaboration, inclusion, knowledge, integrity. Bilal has been part of the organization for the past 3-4 years.

In the past 4 years that you have been working in VSO have you seen any change in how we perceive volunteerism?

Initially, the definition of volunteerism leaned towards the supply-side. For the past 3-4 years we have been in a transition that is changing the definition of volunteerism from a supply-side to a demand-side definition of volunteerism.

Volunteers were taught English and given skills, they were often deployed to certain areas, it was heavily focused on the supply-side but today we are moving towards a more demand side. The idea is to generate skill-based volunteers. It might seem slight in terms of definition, but it has changed the very course of volunteerism. Now as we move forward, we move towards retention, policies, and supplies. So there has certainly been a change that

has been observed.

Since you have been active throughout the COVID-19 outbreak have you felt a dip in the willingness of volunteers to come out and participate, due to the nature of the virus?

See, the best example of this is the Tiger Force created by the Prime Minister, seven to eight hundred thousand individuals were registered on the database, so it does show a willingness in volunteers to help. As a nation we incline towards helping others, we see this in times of earthquakes and floods, etc. So, I don't think there was a hesitation to volunteer

during this time. It is normal for people to be concerned about their own health when helping with health-related emergencies. During the outbreak of COVID, there was this concern too especially considering more and more details were coming out about the virus and its SOPs, but I don't feel like that stopped people from participating. In fact, they were more curious and willing to assist in these times.



What kind of screening process do you have for your volunteers?

Our agenda for volunteering is demand-side and skill-based. When we take this forward, we call it volunteer recruitment, not selection. Previously whenever we worked with volunteers, we would have some big questions. Volunteers would fear that they would be given small tasks of filing etc. which would not enhance or enrich their skills. At VSO our hiring process for employees and for volunteers is the same. For instance, we delineate which skill sets are needed for a position. We go through a long listing, shortlisting, and then interviews. Then the individual is given a proper title and a job description. We also have rules like our placements of not more than 6-12 months. The intention behind the job description is to develop a sense of ownership for employees.

Does VSO Intl bring volunteers from the global north to the south during volunteer programs, or do you focus on promoting local volunteers more?

The concept of global north remains prominent in the discussion but our leanings have been towards the global south. We focus on promoting the global south. Our global volunteers' program also takes a bottom-up approach where we bring the local community volunteers to the forefront only then we believe there will be inclusion, accountability, and development. Our priority is always local but if a circumstance shows up where we must have international volunteers even in those situations we prefer to choose individuals in the Asian sphere

How has your experience with local volunteers been?

We have two major issues, the first is that of behavior, and the second is of acceptance. Volunteerism is unfortunately not as recognized in Pakistan. People don't pride themselves on their volunteer work. Often young individuals who have volunteered in the past take their experience as a volunteer out of their CV because they feel their 'free' service will act as a hindrance in their future job prospects. For this, we feel job descriptions help in these situations. Don't just think outside of the box; we need to act outside of the box.

Universities abroad encourage their student to put in volunteer hours before beginning college, how do you feel about adding such a requirement in the university and high school curriculum?

There are two things here. Pakistan used to have this actually with things like girls scouts and boys scouts etc. These were often divided among different years. The issue I see here is on the part of both the student and the teacher. Students are not able to understand the value of volunteerism and teachers are unable to make them understand. I have personally seen how students scurry for internship certification without putting in the hours. These students are unable to understand why internships and volunteerism are important. Last year VSO launched a 'volunteering for development program', based on the international standards for volunteers. From this, we understood that there

was a need to contextualize these global standards. We plan on adopting them at the national level. There are three pillars to this, the first being the academia whom we would like to be part of the discussion and then we would like universities to adopt it in their curriculum. The second is that we want a selection process. A thorough selection process. We also want to get skilled organizations like Rescue 1122 involved. The last pillar is to bring back the concept of scouts etc.

What would you say isn't generally the most important skill for a volunteer to acquire?

We often see fancy discussions in a lot of volunteer talk, particularly in medical volunteer training. When I was talking to the rescue service I discussed with them how fancy equipment is not always available, this puts a hindrance in the first aid service being provided. I would thus emphasize the use of local resources and readily available resources.

Most volunteer organizations highlight how difficult it is to retain volunteers, have you faced similar issues with your volunteers?

Volunteer retention is the biggest problem we face with volunteers. But I think that if volunteers feel they have a job with a title. That makes them feel on track with their subordinates. Individuals want to be treated homogenous and so for that, we like to make them part of the organization. When they know that the rest of the organization's employees' contracts end in the same time frame like his, this shows them that their struggle is together.

Lastly, we wanted to ask you about your whistleblowing policies?

Yes, we have global policies for whistleblowing. We do an 11 days training of every new candidate before they join our team.

We must make these policies and ethical practices part of our daily life, we not only enforce these but strive to make our employees understand these policies.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the local context in which a project is implemented. This includes a thorough understanding of the community's needs, values, and beliefs. It is essential to engage with the community from the very beginning, ensuring that their voices are heard and their input is valued. This process of community engagement is not a one-time event but a continuous one that evolves as the project progresses.

One of the key challenges in community-based research is the issue of power. Researchers often come from a different background and may have different values and beliefs than the community members they are studying. This can create a power imbalance that may hinder the research process. To address this, researchers must be transparent about their own biases and work to build trust with the community. This involves being open to learning from the community and being willing to adjust the research approach as needed.

Another important consideration is the issue of ethics. Community-based research often involves working with vulnerable populations, and it is crucial to ensure that the research is conducted in a way that respects their rights and dignity. This includes obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and being transparent about the use of the data. Researchers must also be aware of the potential for harm and take steps to minimize it.

The second part of the paper discusses the importance of building a strong relationship with the community. This involves spending time with the community, listening to their stories, and understanding their perspectives. It is not enough to simply collect data; researchers must also strive to understand the community's culture and values. This can be done through a variety of methods, including interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.

Building a strong relationship with the community is essential for the success of the research. It allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the community and to ensure that the research is relevant and useful to them. It also helps to build trust, which is necessary for the community to share their stories and experiences. This process of relationship building is often the most challenging but also the most rewarding part of community-based research.

The third part of the paper discusses the importance of sharing the results of the research with the community. This involves presenting the findings in a way that is accessible and understandable to the community members. It is not enough to simply write a report; researchers must also engage with the community and discuss the findings with them. This can be done through a variety of methods, including community meetings, workshops, and presentations.

Sharing the results of the research with the community is essential for the success of the research. It allows the community to see the value of their input and to understand how their stories and experiences have been used. It also helps to build trust and to ensure that the research is relevant and useful to them. This process of sharing the results is often the most challenging but also the most rewarding part of community-based research.