

COMPONENT

02

What do we do and where do we do it?

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Component 2 introduces participants to the structure of the organisation and its service provision, as well as the role of the volunteer and the settings within which they will be working.



Learning Outcomes

Participants:

- Are aware of the structure of the organisation
- Have an understanding of the range of services, programmes, activities, etc. provided by the organisation
- Are aware of what is generally expected of them in their role
- Have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities
- Have increased knowledge of the community/setting within which they are volunteering.



Please note: It is important to remember that youth work has a community dimension and a social purpose. Young people participating in civic life strengthens social cohesion (the sense of togetherness and working toward a common aim).

Involvement in community can bring about positive changes, with young people's contribution being visible and valued. There is a need to take account of the context within which young people live, their experiences and the opportunities and challenges they face.



Factsheet 2.1

The Role of the Volunteer

The role of the volunteer varies in organisations. The following are some examples:

1. Youth Club

With a team of volunteers, running a youth club, empowering young people to take a leadership role in their own club. These clubs usually run during school term, on a weekly basis.

2. Supporting Youth Cafés or Programmes

On a weekly basis or as part of a rota, supporting staff-led programmes and drop-in times that support youth development, working alongside qualified youth workers, developing skills and participating in training activities that will enhance self-development.

3. Summer or Mid-Term Programme

Supporting programmes and events that are run over school breaks. These programmes may have a particular focus such as Halloween or Easter, etc. and often involve trips away to various activities and attractions.

4. Committee Roles

Most clubs/groups are managed locally by a committee including a range of roles such as chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc. For more information on these roles, please see <https://www.youth.ie/ways-to-volunteer/>

5. Board of Directors

Most youth organisations are managed by a voluntary Board of Directors. Directors are usually elected or nominated on to these boards and each organisation has its own procedure in this regard.



Factsheet 2.2

Options for Volunteering

With regard to direct work with young people, the following are examples of some of the options for volunteering within youth organisations:

Occasional Volunteers

These are people who volunteer for a one-off event. They volunteer occasionally, perhaps once or twice a year.

Regular Volunteers

These are people who give a commitment, on an ongoing basis usually within the one organisation to which they have had links with for some time. They undertake regular voluntary work in the organisation.

Specific Volunteers

These are people who volunteer for a specific task or role in an organisation. These include roles such as positions of responsibility for the governance of the organisation, e.g. a board member. They are usually elected and/or recruited from the community and/or staff on the basis of their skills and experience.

Young Volunteers

These are young people under the age of 18 years who can use their talents and skills to contribute to a youth club/group.

This might involve acting as peer mentors to other young people, or assisting adult leaders in their roles in the organisation.



It is important to remember that these young volunteers should not carry the same level of responsibility as adult leaders.

Specialist Volunteers

These volunteers have a specific skill, interest/passion in working with particular groups of young people or on particular issues e.g. LGBTQI+, climate justice, neurodiversity, arts, etc.



Factsheet 2.3

Volunteer Role Descriptions

Volunteers should expect to receive a clear role description. This should be drawn up (as for paid employees), based on the needs of the organisation and should provide a comprehensive description of the volunteer's commitment and responsibility to the organisation. It can include:

- The context of the work and who they will be working with
- An outline of the tasks involved
- The time commitment – when, for how long, is it flexible, is it long or short- term?
- Information on organisational supports such as expenses, induction and other training opportunities
- Information on the management and reporting structures.



Useful Resource

For more information on developing volunteer role descriptions, please see:

https://www.volunteer.ie/resource_library/designing-volunteer-role-descriptions/



Factsheet 2.4

Rights of Volunteers

The volunteer/leader has the right to:

- Receive information about the organisation's purpose, work and values as well as its policy on volunteers and volunteering
- A clearly written description of the work they will undertake and the assigned tasks within that work
- Be seen as a valued part of the organisation through inclusion at relevant training sessions, relevant meetings, social functions, etc.
- Receive appropriate induction and training
- Know who to turn to with questions, problems or difficulties
- Be appreciated by having their work valued by the organisation
- Make mistakes and learn from them
- Express their views
- Receive support and supervision, including regular constructive feedback on performance
- Work in a safe environment
- Be covered by insurance
- Have choices and be able to negotiate those choices
- Be able to say no
- Be reimbursed for any out of pocket/agreed expenses
- Be consulted on matters that affect their work
- Be free from discrimination on any grounds.



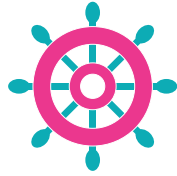
Factsheet 2.5

Responsibilities of Volunteers

Volunteers also have responsibilities to:

- Carry out their role in the best interest of the young people
- Carry out the role to the best of their abilities
- Be reliable – attend the group/club/project at agreed times
- Notify the appropriate person in advance, if not attending
- Agree to adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures
- Respect the confidentiality of young people
- Respect other volunteers, staff and all involved in the organisation
- Be honest and open in relation to any problems or difficulties
- Attend training or support sessions as agreed
- Communicate information appropriately
- Ask for help or support when needed.

EXERCISE 2A



Exercise

Getting to Know our Organisation

Aims of the Exercise

- To introduce participants to the organisation's purpose, structure, and services (programmes etc.)
- To provide participants with information on the profile of the setting/community they will be working in.

Instructions

The trainer provides input on:

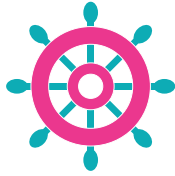
- The purpose of the organisation (aims/objectives)
- The structure of the organisation. The organisation's map (a visual representation of the staff and volunteers structures and hierarchy) will be useful in this regard
- Service provision within the organisation (the range of programmes, activities, events, etc. provided). The organisation's website and annual report will be useful in this regard
- A profile of the community, including the demographic profile, local resources, other relevant organisations, issues impacting the lives of young people, etc. the young people and the main issues impacting them.



Instructions (continued)

The trainer invites questions from the group and provides a range of explanatory materials as relevant.

EXERCISE 2B



Exercise

The Role of the Volunteer

Aims of the Exercise

To give participants the opportunity to:

- Explore their expectations and concerns with regard to the role of the volunteer
- Identify their rights and responsibilities and the supports available to them

Instructions

The trainer invites participants, either individually or in small groups, to answer the following questions:

- Why have you volunteered to work in this club/group?
- What are you hoping to gain from the experience/your expectations?
- What are your concerns about volunteering?
- What are the specific tasks/responsibilities expected of you?
- Who are you expected to work with in carrying out this role?
- What are your rights as a volunteer?
- Who can help/support you?
- What else might you need to carry out your role effectively?



Instructions (continued)

The trainer facilitates feedback and discussion on these questions, addresses any concerns and provides any relevant additional clarifying information, ensuring that participants are clear about their rights, responsibilities and supports. Open and honest discussion regarding the expectations and concerns of volunteers from the outset are essential as they help to prevent future misunderstandings and difficulties.



Useful Resource

The Organisation's information/resources/policies on volunteering.

Designing Volunteer Role Descriptions (from Volunteer Ireland) available at:

https://www.volunteer.ie/resource_library/designing-volunteer-role-descriptions/