

National Board for Volunteering Development

Pursuant to Article 23 of the Law on Volunteering („Official Gazette“, no. 58/07) National Board for Volunteering Development on their 5th session held on May 5th 2008 established

Code of Ethics for Volunteers

INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is one of the key elements that contribute to development and shape democratic change in any contemporary society. It is also a basis that enables citizens to engage in social processes. By giving up their free time, knowledge and experiences, enthusiasm and energy, citizens contribute significantly to the development of their community and the whole society. Volunteering reinforces individuals, builds the sense of solidarity, stimulates participation, protects vulnerable groups from economic, societal and political exclusion and has a potential to be a cohesive element in the society.

The goal of the Code of Ethics for Volunteers is to encourage understanding and acceptance of the established principles and standards and their application in everyday organization and provision of volunteering services. The Code of Ethics represents the minimal common set of values that volunteering organizers and volunteers accept in their own field of activity. It was written at a level of generality that allows volunteering organizers to develop the prescribed standards according to the principles of the organization, while respecting the specificity of the organization and the beneficiaries of the volunteer services. The volunteering organizers may be legal entities whose primary purpose is not gaining profit: non-governmental organizations, foundations, syndicates, religious organizations, public institutions, tourist boards, national authorities, local and regional government units.

Subsequent to the dynamic process of the development of civil society in general and especially in domestic context, Code of Ethics is subject to reviews and subsequent modifications and supplements that are certain to encourage the implementation of Law on Volunteering in practice.

The Code of Ethics consists of Introduction, Preamble, Basic Principles, Ethical Standards and Final Provisions.

PREAMBLE

National Board for Volunteering Development established Code of Ethics for Volunteers pursuant to Article 23 of the Law on Volunteering („Official Gazette“, no. 58/07) and it represents set of values, principles and standards guiding the process of organized involvement of volunteers in public benefit activities. The Code of Ethics promotes the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia. The Code of Ethics is based on the principle that volunteering is the cornerstone of civil society and of vital importance for the development of (participatory) democracy because participation in the social processes also reinforces the personal responsibility of citizen volunteers. Accordingly, the goal of the Code of Ethics is to

promote the positive practice of volunteering and the application of principles and standards of volunteering among volunteering organizers, volunteers and beneficiaries of their services.

Every organizer of volunteering, volunteer and beneficiaries of their services commit to work in accordance with principles and standards of the Code of Ethics.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Principle of participation in social processes

Volunteering represents one of the ways of organized involvement of volunteers in social processes by which every citizen achieves the opportunity to contribute in solving problems in the community and to influence positive social change. Volunteer engagement can only complement and not replace activities and functions for which there is a responsibility of other parties in solving a problem or meeting the needs in their community.

2. Principle of voluntariness and freedom of choice

Volunteering implies voluntary investment of free time, effort, knowledge and skills in activities for the benefit of another person or a wider public. Volunteering is the expression of free will of every individual free from all forms of pressure.

3. Principle of prohibition of discrimination

The right to voluntarily invest time, knowledge and skills and to receive volunteer services is enjoyed by all people notwithstanding their age, race, language, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender and gender expression, political and other views, national or social background, financial assets, education, social status, marriage status, family obligations, membership or non-membership in a political party, association or syndicate, physical or mental difficulties, sickness or other personal characteristics, unless otherwise follows from the nature of volunteering activities.

4. Principle of solidarity, promotion and protection of human rights

Volunteers take responsibility and express solidarity towards all members of society without gaining personal material benefit. Volunteering organizers and volunteers while working with beneficiaries respect the highest international and national standards in the area of promotion and protection of human rights which stem from acceptance of diversity and personal integrity of every individual.

5. Principle of development of personal potentials

Volunteering allows people to acquire new skills and knowledge freely and to develop personal potentials through lifelong learning.

6. Principle of intercultural learning and exchange

Volunteering provides an opportunity to learn from others and to exchange experiences with citizens of other countries, regions and from different cultures. Cooperation with people of different background contributes to reducing the prejudices and stereotypes and to reinforcing the tolerance in the international context.

7. Principle of environmental protection and care for sustainable development

Volunteering is conducted in accordance with international and national standards for environmental protection and sustainable development of the community and society.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

a) for volunteering organizers

- Volunteering organizer develops and implements volunteering programs that have clear and visible criteria for including volunteers, monitoring and evaluation of volunteering activities. Volunteering organizer also creates a pleasant and stimulating atmosphere and encourages personal development of volunteers through learning, team work and exchange with associates.
- Volunteering organizer ensures safe and stimulating atmosphere for volunteering as well as financial, organizational and human resources needed for realization of volunteering activities, all the while taking in account expertise and competence of volunteers for working with beneficiaries.
- Volunteering organizer has a responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for volunteers and an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. Organizer has a duty to make an effort to remove all physical, psychological, economic, social and cultural obstacles for including volunteers that belong to different social groups.
- Volunteering organizer respects freedom of every volunteer to decide on the beginning and end of volunteer engagement.
- Volunteering organizer informs volunteers about an organization's operating model, their rules and requirements of the work that match knowledge, skills and previous experience of volunteers. Volunteers have the right to all information related to their engagement in the organization.
- Volunteering organizer encourages volunteers to participate in decision-making on matters related to volunteering and tries to enable their contribution in the organization in a way they choose to.
- While including minors in volunteering, volunteer organizer pays particular attention to monitoring and support, with the goal of protecting the volunteer, in collaboration with parents/legal guardians and educational institutions.
- Volunteering organizer pays particular attention to protecting volunteering beneficiaries by applying domestic and international regulations related to certain target groups.
- Volunteering organizer encourages organizational culture in which volunteering contribution is desirable and appreciated.

- Volunteering organizer keeps accurate records on volunteers, their contribution and volunteering activities.

b) for volunteers

- Volunteers have the right and obligation to acquaint themselves with the Law on Volunteering, the Code of Ethics and other rules and procedures of volunteer organizer.
- In their work volunteers cherish and promote work for the common good of the entire community.
- Volunteers respect the integrity and dignity of all associates and they act as a part of the team in the organization.
- Volunteers act in accordance with the mission and vision of the organization they volunteer in and they share with it the amount of knowledge, skills and competences that don't exceed their abilities.
- Volunteers respect the mission and rules of the organization they volunteer in, they also respect health and other security standards in order to reduce the risk of inflicting damage to themselves, volunteering organizers and volunteering beneficiaries.
- Volunteers respect and accept different personalities, attitudes, sets of values and living conditions of volunteering beneficiaries. While working with volunteering beneficiaries, volunteers don't impose their religious, political and other personal beliefs and they try to identify and meet their individual needs.
- Volunteers don't misuse in any way the relationship established with the volunteering beneficiaries in order to fulfil their emotional, physical, financial and other needs.
- Volunteers refrain from activities that could damage the reputation of volunteering organizer and volunteering beneficiaries. They present their work in a true and affirmative way. During their public presentations they are not allowed to give out untrue and unclear information that could be misleading for the information recipient.
- Volunteers respect the confidentiality of the information about the beneficiaries. Every collection of that kind of information should be authorized by the beneficiary and the volunteering organizer.
- If they encounter a problem or a dilemma in performing the volunteering activities, volunteers need to address only the responsible persons in the organization.

c) for volunteering beneficiaries

- Volunteering beneficiary has the right to acquaint themselves with the Law on Volunteering, the Code of Ethics and other rules and procedures of volunteer organizer from whom they receive volunteering services.
- If he receives volunteering services, the beneficiary accepts the basic ethic principles of the volunteering organizer, Code of Ethics and Law on Volunteering.
- Volunteering beneficiary has the right to refuse volunteering services.
- Volunteering beneficiary shall report to volunteering organizer any inappropriate behaviour of the volunteer which compromises Code of Ethics for Volunteers and other volunteers.

FINAL PROVISIONS

National Board for Volunteering Development shall ensure conditions in order for volunteering organizers, volunteers and volunteering beneficiaries in the Republic of Croatia to acquaint themselves with the Code of Ethics. National Board for Volunteering Development shall establish the Ethical Council, a body in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Code of Ethics. Ethical Council consists of three members chosen from the National Board for Volunteering Development. The duty of Ethical Council is to proclaim necessary acts for implementation of the Code of Ethics and to ensure equal opportunity in the process of investigating the violation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics for every volunteering organizers, volunteers and volunteering beneficiaries.

In case of violation of the Code of Ethics of volunteers, beneficiaries or volunteering organizers all parties included are advised to resolve the problem together and responsibly.

If the latter is not possible, they shall inform the Ethical Council of the National Board for Volunteering Development about it.

Code of Ethics comes into force on the day of its publication in "Official Gazette".

The President
of the
National Board for Volunteering Development
Gordana Forčić, M.A.,