

International Association for Volunteer Effort

Preamble

Volunteers, inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989, consider their commitment as a tool for social, cultural, economic and environmental development in a changing world, and believe that 'each person has the right to freely assemble and associate for peaceful purposes'.

Volunteering:

- is based on personal motivation and choices, freely undertaken;
- is a way of furthering active citizenship and community involvement;
- takes the form of individual; or group activities generally carried out within the frame work of an organisation;
- enhances human potential and the quality of daily life, building up human solidarity;
- provides answers for the great challenges of our time, striving for a better and more peaceful world; and
- contributes to the vitality of economic life, even creating jobs and new professions.

Basic Principles of Volunteering

Volunteers put into practice the following basic principles.

Volunteers:

- acknowledge the right of every man, woman and child to associate free regardless of their race, religion, physical, social or economic condition;
- respect the dignity of every human being and their culture;
- offer services, without remuneration, to others by mutual effort or by belonging to voluntary organisations in a spirit of partnership;
- detect needs and elicit the involvement of the community in the resolution of their own problems;
- may, through volunteering, grow as persons, acquire new skills and knowledge, develop their personal potential, self reliance and creativity, enabling people to take an active role in problem solving; and
- stimulate social responsibility and promote family, community and international solidarity.

Considering these basic principles, volunteers should:

- encourage the expression of individual commitment through collective movements;
- actively seek to strengthen their organisations by being fully informed of and adhering to the organisation's goals, objectives and policies;
- undertake to carry out the jointly defined tasks, taking into consideration personal aptitudes, time available and accepted responsibilities;
- cooperate in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect with other members of the organisation;
- undertake training as required; and
- maintain confidentiality in their activities.

Organisations, taking into account human rights and the basic principles of volunteering, should:

- lay down the policies needed for volunteer activity, define the criteria for volunteer participation and see that the ascribed functions are observed by all;
- entrust to each person suitable tasks, ensuring appropriate training;

- provide regular evaluation and recognition of their work;
- provide adequate coverage and protection against risks to volunteers during the exercise of their duties and seek coverage for damages that may be caused to third persons;
- facilitate access to volunteering for all by reimbursing expenses; and
- define the conditions under which the organisation or the volunteer can end their commitment.

Proclamation

Volunteers, gathered at the initiative of IAVE in a world congress, declare their faith in volunteer action as a creative and mediating force;

- to respect the dignity of all people and their ability to improve their lives and exercise their rights as citizens;
- to help solve social and environmental problems;
- to build a more humane and just world, furthering international cooperation; and
- therefore, they invite governments, international institutions, business and the media to join in partnership with them to create a worldwide environment that promotes and sustains effective volunteering by all people as a symbol of solidarity amongst peoples and nations.

Paris, 14 September 1990

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) held its 11th biennial conference in Paris in September 1990, and the assembly adopted this declaration.

