



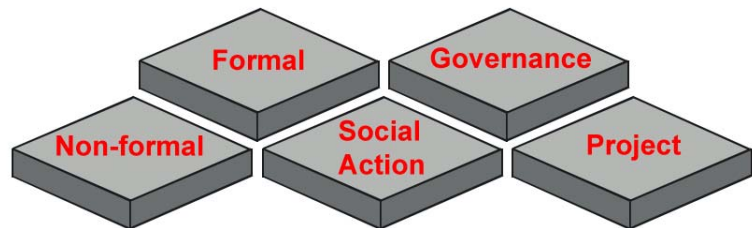
Why Use this Resource?

Understanding the 5 models of volunteer engagement is essential for organisations' to remain viable and socially inclusive in our contemporary society. This information sheet provides an overview of the 5 models and examples of each.

[Links to National Standards for Involving Volunteers - No. 8 Continuous Improvement]

Volunteering Qld recognises that in our contemporary society, there is a multitude of ways in which individuals volunteer or engage with community organisations.

Volunteering Qld has defined five models of volunteer engagement, which reflect the diversity of volunteers and volunteering our modern society. An understanding of the five models promotes social inclusion and diversity of engagement.



Formal

These types of programs tend to be organised around volunteer involvement in the delivery of specific services. They involve defined supervision structures and the organisation of work into structured roles involving long term, regular attendance. There is often a strong emphasis on policies and procedures and quality management of the services being delivered.

Formal volunteering programs tend to have a business management structure, with volunteer coordinators or managers of volunteers working, resourcing, supervising and checking outcomes.

Some examples of formal volunteering include:

- Volunteering for the library trolley in a large metropolitan hospital
- Delivering meals to elderly through services such as Meals-on-Wheels
- Providing activities and outing support in aged care facility
- Volunteer driver for service organisation
- Volunteer animal carer for organisations such as RSPCA
- Volunteering in tourism, museums, large charities and emerging services

Governance

Governance volunteering is simply when individuals volunteer as board members or on management committees. These volunteers provide leadership and direction for the organisation.

Governance volunteers work in clearly defined roles, which are required by the Incorporated Associations Act, (or other legislative requirements of their legal structure). These volunteers often carry high levels of responsibility and accountability, having specific systems and procedures to follow in terms of transparency and reporting to stakeholders.

Governance volunteers may also be involved in volunteering in other areas of the organisation depending on the size, scope and structure of the organisation.

Some examples of governance volunteering include:

- Secretary for the local soccer club
- President of a services club such as RSL
- Volunteer Treasurer for a mother's group



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Non-Formal

Non-formal volunteering occurs in a range of settings, but predominantly transpires in local communities to address specific social needs. Volunteers are generally community members who come together around a shared interest, and work largely in unfunded, less structured settings.

These volunteering programs are often relatively unstructured and may have only a few defined roles. The activities may be undertaken by whoever has the time and interest. There is unlikely to be a volunteer manager, but may well be coordinators for various activities who organise and support members working with them.

Motivation for joining these community organisations tends to be about sharing experiences or mutual assistance and people are likely to think of themselves as members or friends rather than volunteers.

Some examples of non-formal volunteering include:

- Volunteering for a neighbourhood group
- Running the canteen for a sporting or recreational group
- Coordinating the sale of merchandise for a self-help group
- Volunteering for a specific hobby group
- Providing services or support through a mutual support group

Non-formal volunteering differs from informal volunteering which is a term used to describe voluntary acts of helping and kindness to friends, family and neighbours.

Social Action

Social Action groups are similar to non-formal groups in that people come together around a shared interest, but differ in that social action groups have an interest and passion for bringing about defined changes.

These groups may be relatively unstructured like non-formal groups, but often the need to achieve particular outcomes will drive a level of structure and specific roles. People may see themselves as comrades rather than as volunteers. Some groups use a volunteer coordinator, but volunteers are more likely to work under an activity coordinator in areas of interest and skill.

Social action groups are often driven by the motivation and interests of their volunteers, who are frequently passionate about the cause. Volunteers in social action groups may vary significantly in the amount of time they have available, but are no less committed in bringing about defined social changes.

Some examples of social action volunteering include:

- Volunteering for an environmental group
- Political lobbying groups
- Volunteering for a community action group
- Lobbying for change for a specific target group of people or cause



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Project

Project based volunteering is becoming increasingly popular in our contemporary society, reflecting our time conscious, but outcomes-driven way of life. Volunteers often have specific periods of time available, and therefore seek out volunteer projects that have clearly defined timeframes. Projects are frequently characterised by high levels of volunteer involvement over a short time period.

The focus may be on skills that people have to offer rather than formalised volunteering roles, so it's common for project-based opportunities to utilise volunteers' specific skills for projects.

Project based volunteer programs may exist within formal programs, but may also be set up exclusively to deliver a specific outcome, for example a community festival may be planned by a group of interested community members. Project volunteers operating alongside formal volunteers in a specific program, may not be bound by the same parameters as other volunteers.

Individual volunteers may want to develop their own 'project' in consultation with the volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator in this situation may require an approach that is characterised by 'working with' and empowering the individual, rather than managing.

Some examples of project volunteering include:

- Volunteering to oversee the plan and construction of a new building
- Running or assisting a specific event
- Redesigning the website for an organisation
- Volunteering to write a marketing plan for a community group

Project based volunteering is particularly suited to a range of demographics including professionals, students, baby boomers and corporate volunteers.

Volunteering Qld recognises that many organisations use more than one model of engagement, and many will have a variety of volunteers working across the scope of the organisation.

For example, most not-for-profit groups or organisations would have a management committee (governance model) but also have volunteers engaged in formal and project models. A self-help group may recruit some board members for their specific skills rather than because of a strong connection to the group's specific interest.

It's essential that organisations recognise the various ways in which individuals are choosing to volunteer in our contemporary society, and offer a variety of models (or solutions) to address their cause. Doing so will ensure an inclusive, vibrant and sustained volunteering future.



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