

POLICY

Volunteering

Established:	July 2018	Review frequency:	Every three years
Prepared by:	P Simmons	Approved by:	Board

Purpose

To ensure mutual value, respect and rigour in the attraction, management and retention of volunteering service and support

Introduction

GraceWorks Myanmar (GWM) relies on specialist volunteers in many areas of our program/project work and broader functional work. Our philosophy of volunteering is that it should first be anchored in the delivery of real value for the people we ultimately serve, not taking opportunities away from people in Myanmar or working against community development principles, and second in the delivery of two-way value between GWM and volunteers. Healthy volunteering should be based on necessity and driven by the same quality expectations expected of paid services, with unique respect given to the free nature of the support provided.

Building on lessons learned from GWM's earliest years of operation, we rarely accept unqualified volunteer support in Myanmar and, when we do in Australia, it relates to non-operational activities such as fundraising support. In general, we seek to only engage qualified, specialist volunteers. We also match those specialist volunteer roles to our capacity, resources and ability to manage them respectfully.

Definitions

Volunteering

Volunteering is the provision of unpaid services to an organisation. Those services can be professional and specialist in nature, offered pro bono, or non-expert in nature, as an 'act of service'. GWM's focus is specialist volunteering.

Accepting specialist volunteers

For someone to become a GWM specialist volunteer, there are key characteristics we look for and requirements we maintain. Prospective volunteers:

- ◆ Need to demonstrate they have the relevant qualifications, experience, values and work ethic to make a meaningful contribution to a nominated program/project or the broader operations of GWM
- ◆ May need approval from the Myanmar Board of Health for some medical positions in country
- ◆ Need to provide at least two referees
- ◆ Need to provide an Australian 'Working with Children' certificate, or international equivalent, if working with students under 18 years of age (with the exception of professions for which this is already a prerequisite, such as Australian registered teachers), and sign GWM's Child Safeguarding Policy.

In turn, GWM will:

- ◆ Commit to ensuring volunteers are only accepted if their time and resources can be used in a respectful and meaningful way with the same level of consideration given to paid roles
- ◆ Monitor volunteer support to ensure time and cost contributions do not exceed agreed, reasonable and fair levels, and that new expectations for time, financial and other contributions are not placed explicitly or implicitly on volunteers without clear agreement
- ◆ Formally interview all prospective volunteers, either by our CEO or a designated representative, as a two-way discussion to ensure a suitable fit for all parties



- ◆ Select people based on interest, knowledge, skills or attributes relevant to the role, and consistent with anti-discrimination legislation
- ◆ Provide a job description where relevant that sets out the volunteer's roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and timeframes, and ensure it is shared with all relevant employees and other volunteers.

If a volunteer placement relates to work within Myanmar:

- ◆ Our CEO will forward pre-approved volunteer candidates for placements in Myanmar to our Country Director (Myanmar), or a designated project manager, for final approval
- ◆ The job description will include a requirement for the volunteer to accept the authority of our Country Director (Myanmar) while in country
- ◆ The job description will include a requirement to provide a report of the work carried out, evidence of outcomes and suggestions for follow-up work/activities within one month of completion or, for longer-term volunteer activities, as per an agreed reporting schedule.

Volunteers accept their role with GWM on the basis they agree to, and can fulfill, key responsibilities including:

- ◆ Undertaking tasks in line with their job description or other written agreement
- ◆ Being familiar with, and abiding by, GWM's policies
- ◆ Completing the online Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct training within three months of appointment, and emailing the completed certificate to info@gwm.org.au, for roles of suitable durations
- ◆ Covering agreed personal costs – including international flights, accommodation and food – and not incurring any costs for GWM beyond pre-approved costs
- ◆ Making their own arrangements for international flights, accommodation and food, with the ability to request recommendations and referrals from GWM.

Local transport by any mode (eg air, road, boat), is to be funded, sourced and managed by agreement between GWM and the volunteer. This is to ensure the safety of the volunteer at all times and seek opportunities for on-the-ground compensation of support to the volunteer, while maintaining reasonable value for money for GWM and not placing burdens on local team members or partners.

Inducting volunteers

Volunteers will receive an induction package outlining relevant policies. This will be supported by verbal briefings by relevant GWM personnel. New specialist volunteers of suitable duration will undergo ACFID Code of Conduct training as stated above.

Managing volunteers

Volunteers are provided with supervision and support to enable them to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. This includes our commitment to protecting the safety of our volunteers, like all of our stakeholders, promoting a culture of health and safety, and promoting personal responsibility for safe work practices. Volunteers working in Myanmar are to pay particular attention to our Travel Safety and Security and Risk Management policies.

Volunteer contributions are vital and valuable to GWM's operations. Positive contributions will be recognised in practical, meaningful ways, particularly in recognition of the unpaid nature of the support.

Volunteer performance or misconduct issues will be promptly identified, recorded and addressed in line with the principles of natural justice.



Visits to former GWM projects

GWM does not facilitate volunteer visits to children's homes and other communities previously supported by our organisation unless an existing relationship with the volunteer already exists or a request is made by approved orphanage or community leaders. Under exceptional circumstances, determined by the CEO, Country Director (Myanmar) or a project manager, such visits may be arranged through a third party.

References and related documents

References

- ◆ ACFID Code of Conduct

Related documents

- ◆ Code of Conduct
- ◆ All GWM policies

Review

Previous reviews: June 2021
Next review: June 2024