

# MANUAL VOLUNTARY WORK

*My Kingdom for a Volunteer*



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3rd Edition



Volunteers always on the move for better road safety in Europe

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# Table of contents

## **Recommendation**

6

## **Preface**

9

## **Introduction**

11

- Why VAMOS; Specific objectives

## **Voluntary work**

13

- What is voluntary work? Why voluntary work?

- What kind of voluntary work we distinguish?

## **Voluntary workers policy**

17

- Recruiting, Supporting, Rewarding, Maintaining, Ending

## **Project organization**

31

- People and management; management process; quality management

## **Action models**

38

- Political-policy related; Educational/communicative; Behaviour related

## **Literature list & Example documents**

46

## RECOMMENDATION

*The investment of one Euro leads to a return of three to five Euros.*

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The use of voluntary work as a method for road safety improvement is highly recommended. Cost benefit analyses have shown that investing in the introduction of this system in a country, region or at the local level, is worthwhile and revealed in its returns. The investment of one Euro leads to a return of three to five Euros, depending on the country and the field of application. In addition to this quantitative success of launching voluntary work in the field of safety, there is a qualitative advantage as well: Volunteers usually establish personal contacts when they stand up for safety on the road. This approach is more sustainable than the classical information based on advertisements, even if they are very cleverly devised.





In order to enhance the effect of volunteer's training and work, the present manual has been developed by the Dutch Traffic Safety Association Veilig Verkeer Nederland (VVN). Based on their 75 years' experience they have produced an unique handbook. It is the first for Europe and probably worldwide written for volunteer's work engaged in the field of road safety purposes. The manual fills a "market gap" and reflects high quality, testifies qualified experience in the domain and fulfils the main criteria that should be applied to documents of this sort: It

- follows a clear concept,
- describes the background of the approach and the objectives of the cooperation with volunteers,
- is built up on a policy as well as on practical elements,
- contains a realistic description of the volunteers and their work, and

- includes the main functions of the professionals regarding their responsibility towards the volunteers.

In many countries the method of voluntary work has proven to be successful. Therefore I recommend using both, this instrument and the VAMOS manual.

Together they stand not only for good, but for best practice. Those countries which have not yet used them should consider them as their "next practice".

*Dr. Raphael Denis Huguenin, Switzerland  
Evaluator of the VAMOS project*

*Everyone has the right to be able to walk or drive the streets safely.*

The Dutch Traffic Safety Association is a societal organization that dedicates itself to that right by inspiring as many people as possible, to stimulate them and involve them actively in road safety.

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## PREFACE

When it comes to road safety every country has a goal or mission, which is often expressed in terms of a reduction in the number of road deaths. Every country adopts a particular approach when implementing concrete measures designed to achieve this goal, which include legislation, enforcement, infrastructure or education. It is fair to say that the overall aim is to assure safe mobility for all road users, with the emphasis being on the most vulnerable road users as is only to be expected.

In many countries the national government has instigated central agreements. Legislation and the provision of financial resources are important instruments in this respect. Research and experiments are being financed, and the issue of road safety is clearly being taken increasingly seriously by regional and local authorities. Governments are facilitating this process by centralising responsibilities and powers and providing resources. Regional and local infrastructure is being addressed, there is greater emphasis on enforcement, special driving training programs are developed, campaigns get more balanced, vehicle improvement gives a promising vision of the future and children are being taught the principles of road safety in schools. A great deal of knowledge and experience is now available, and this







expertise is being shared in several areas. Countries are cooperating on various projects in Europe as they push for European legislation. Yet research has shown that in most traffic accidents human error is a cause. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the road users themselves need to be approached and directly involved in initiatives designed to promote the kind of behaviour that improves road safety. When it comes to advice on best practices on the road, it turns out that citizens are most likely to listen to other citizens. Hence when experts, authorities and specialists make their knowledge available, it is likely to be most effective if it is communicated by ordinary citizens. Volunteers of all ages appear to be the best people to address road safety issues with different target groups. This insight has led the international road safety organization, La Prévention Routière Internationale (PRI), to take the initiative at an European level in setting up the VAMOS project. As road safety education is one of the most important means for the PRI to create sustainable road safety developments, the VAMOS-project is an appropriate 'vehicle' to stimulate educational initiatives. The central tenet behind the VAMOS project is that we wish to deploy volunteers, to invite our citizens to help combat unsafe traffic situations.

Both registered volunteers and non registered volunteers. On completion of the project the results will be shared with members of PRI all over the world.

This manual has been written in an attempt to provide support for officials and professionals in those countries that wish to work with volunteers. Based on 75 years' experience of voluntary work in the Netherlands this manual provides answers to the following questions:

What is voluntary work? What is the best way to recruit voluntary workers? How do we obtain voluntary workers? Is there such a thing as a voluntary workers policy? How do we deploy voluntary workers? Voluntary workers and project organization? What operational models are the most suitable?

This manual also contains a number of sample documents.

We have sought to provide a general introduction to voluntary work, based on many years of experience, taking the situation in the Netherlands as the starting point.

Joop Goos  
president PRI

Bojan Žlender  
project manager VAMOS

*Participating countries:* **Slovenia, Belgium, Greece,  
Finland, Slovakia, Portugal**

*Model country:* **The Netherlands**

*Quality management:* **Switzerland**





## WHY VAMOS?

**VAMOS is an European wide initiative which aims to set up effective instruments and methods for implementation of the road safety activities in participating countries, focusing on vulnerable road users. The project builds on the White book, the European Commission action plan and the Commission Work programme for 2005 objectives to reduce the number of road deaths by 50 % to 2010. As a result local organizations of volunteers will be set up, training modules and educational material will be elaborated, training of volunteers, experts and trainers for road safety preventive activities will be organized and preventive as well as dissemination activities in selected communities will be carried out.**

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

**[A]** To set up a pilot local networks of voluntary organization in participating countries as an instrument for increasing the road safety in Europe; The main objectives to be pursued by the network of volunteers would be:

- to provide supports to school children and teachers (School patrols, traffic-parents, preparation and exams for the cyclists, etc;
- to provide local support for public awareness campaigns;
- to lobby for road safety at the level of local, regional and national authorities, using media, etc.

- [B]** To establish a permanent road safety education and training system for volunteers, trainers and coordinators at local, regional, national and European level;
- [C]** To improve professional capacities of local, regional and national authorities, voluntary organizations and groups and individuals (volunteers) for implementation of effective and coherent road safety activities expanding to other parts of the country;
- [D]** To establish permanent professional support to road safety voluntary organizations and volunteers for the whole country;
- [E]** To later expand the project to other countries.





## WHAT IS VOLUNTARY WORK?

**Without going too deeply into the theory behind voluntary work, it is true to say that the following is what we understand by voluntary work:**

When we use the term 'without obligation', that means that a volunteer can decide whether he or she wishes to be used at that particular time. Freedom from obligation is not an option, however. Repeatedly saying no to something that has been counted on ultimately leads to cancellation of the commitment.

In practically all cases, 'voluntary' means that the effort is 'unpaid'. Unpaid in the monetary sense, that is. There are of course other forms of reimbursement and reward. The term 'organized' might simply mean that flyers are distributed (e.g. regarding alcohol and traffic) to members of the public while they are shopping. But the deployment of volunteers can also be part of an existing and complex organization in which both professionals and numerous volunteers participate within a range of different functions.

“work that is carried out without obligation and on an unpaid basis within some kind of organized context, for others or for society at large.”

'For others or for society at large' indicates that the effort made is a contribution to the welfare of fellow citizens or larger groups within society.

We see in a number of countries that the government wishes to invest in what it calls social capital, to invest in contributions to the social infrastructure or to improve and promote social cohesion. That approach certainly offers all kinds of possibilities for citizens in these countries to count on support from the government, generally also in the financial sense.

In addition to a well-prepared project organization with a well-thought-through objective, the selection of the right resources, a feasible time schedule, thorough evaluation and a well-supported financial plan, we must also set down our implementation plans very precisely. What that means is that in addition to good project management (usually designed by professionals) the volunteers are also aware of what it is they can expect. They must be capable of tackling their work, have adequate knowledge and skills and the sense that they are making an indispensable contribution. The latter applies equally to professionals, of course. Motivation for the work determines to a large extent the ultimate result of that work. These factors mean that we must reflect on our personnel policy in relation to our use of volunteers.

## Why voluntary work?

When people decide to use their spare time to do something to help solve a problem, their motivation and morale are generally high. Somehow the conscience speaks; there could scarcely be a stronger motivator. Moreover, they recognize that something concrete has to be done in society for the sake of a good cause. And most other citizens feel the same. There is a strong likelihood that more people will become involved in that specific problem. Not receiving any financial reward but still putting one's back into the job means a lot of free energy and time to get the job done.

Some remarks on the involvement of volunteers have to be made:

Volunteers are not always fully equipped to execute the job (training and the right support is required); they are, sometimes, less willing to do what is needed to be successful (they have their own intentions and views); hobby-horses are now and then leading in their





behaviour (difficult to deal with these attitudes);  
volunteers with special skills do not always oversee the  
whole scale of what is needed (the same applies to  
professionals).  
Support and training programs are not automatically an  
organizational part of working processes.

BUT:

Volunteers are extraordinarily dedicated to the work:

**high involvement**

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Volunteers have great commitment to the issue:

**high productivity**

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Volunteers are **most motivated**, because they can work in  
their own time, in their own way and according to their  
own insights

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Volunteers **present the ordinary citizen**, though the voice  
of the people speaks through them

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Volunteers gain entry to their own 'peer group':

**external public relations**

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Volunteers can be the multiplying factor in terms of  
results: **there are more hands to do the job**

# What types of voluntary work do we distinguish?

Some say we can divide volunteers into thinkers and doers. But both thinking without doing and doing without thinking yield no benefit and can even cause damage. Nevertheless, we can characterize the work of volunteers roughly on the basis of two ways of acting, although both are required simultaneously: coordinating (board activities/lobbying/etc.) and executing (acting on the spot). We distinguish 2 types of volunteers:

## [1] NON REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS

In the execution phase of all kinds of activities citizens who are getting involved are too volunteers, though they are not directly associated at a road safety organization. Most of the time they don't play any role during the preparation phase or otherwise. Still they are voluntarily committed to the road safety activity at that particular moment.

Ten thousands of people can be directly participated to all kinds of actions.

They are important both for the road safety itself and the political influences they effect.

## [2] REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS

The other category of volunteers are those who are registered as a volunteer. They have got a specific role and task and are an organic element inside the organization. During the time in which volunteers are active, it will become clear what kind of work the volunteer likes most, or what kind of work he/she likes to learn. The professionals now also play a key role in dealing with the relevant situation and the opportunities that exist.

There are more methods in dividing volunteers, but in the road safety area this characterization is appropriate to work with.







**IMPORTANT: A support structure is crucial for success**

## VOLUNTARY WORKERS POLICY

**So, the central tenet is to invite citizens to help combat unsafe traffic situations.**

**What should we be thinking about then, if we want to consider the pros and cons of deploying volunteers? Is there such a thing as a voluntary workers policy?**

**If we want to make serious work of voluntary work, the government, but also the public and others, from which in the final analysis we expect support, must also be able to take us seriously as well. That means that in any case we must be capable of working with considerable thoroughness on the organization of our projects.**

## THE 5 INGS

How do we get hold of volunteers and to register them?

How do we train volunteers? How do we recompense them? How do we keep them? How do we end a partnership with a volunteer?

**In a nutshell, it all boils down to the 5 ings:**

**Recruiting; Supporting; Rewarding; Maintaining; Ending**

### [1] Recruiting

If we want to make use of volunteers, the very first thing we need is the ability to get hold of them. First of all:

Nowadays people are interested in one issue matters and therefore more willing to do volunteers work for a special purpose within a bounded time. Here there two thoughts that are important: As an organization we have a special job that we want to be done by volunteers, or doesn't that

matter: just as long as volunteers turn up? In other words is our search task-orientated or participation-orientated? We can get to work recruiting in either of these two cases, but the way we actually do that recruiting will differ fundamentally from the one case to the other. In cases where we have a special task assignment, the search we make will have to be very specific and the requirements governing the actual recruitment will need to be concentrated and detailed. A special task assignment can be temporary, recurring, large or small. If we are seeking participative volunteers the recruitment can be more general in nature. The emphasis will then lie more on the general aim to combat unsafe traffic situations based on different thematic approaches and within an organization whose specific work is precisely that.

A general condition for the deployment of volunteers is that professionals must be available who are able to undertake the support work involved.

#### **BEFOREHAND:**

In all cases, before we do anything at all, we will first need to consider the following questions:

- How many people do we need?
- From what age, sex, educational background, origin etc. do we want them?
- Do we want to recruit a group of volunteers centrally and then send them out all over the country or must they be associated with a particular place or region?
- If they are associated with a particular place: must it be possible to use the volunteers in other municipalities as well?
- What skills and/or knowledge must the volunteers have?
- How will we recompense our volunteers?
- Will we retain the volunteers for other tasks when their period of deployment comes to an end?





**THE ACTUAL RECRUITMENT CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:**

- [A]** Coming into contact with one or more candidates.
- [B]** The interview with candidates. Setting out the arrangements made in a contract. (see example documents)
- [C]** Introduction to and an opportunity to become acquainted with the specific task and role of the job and future colleagues.

**[A] COMING INTO CONTACT WITH ONE OR MORE CANDIDATES.**

**Advertisement:**

In the case of a large-scale campaign in which scores of volunteers are needed, recruitment by means of advertisements will be the most obvious course to take. Also, when the choice is specifically made for young people as volunteers, recruitment can be conducted through institutions of secondary or higher education. Advertising remains a good method of recruitment however even when different people are being sought for a variety of positions.

What requirements must an advertisement fulfil?

- Must have an attractive opening sentence.
- A short, clear and powerful statement of who we are.
- A description of the activity for which volunteers are being sought. (what is it about; what is the intended result; what the activities consist of in concrete terms; how much time is involved)
- Description of a specific position profile. (e.g. commitment to traffic safety; affinity with the issue as such; teamwork orientation; computer skills; analytical thinking, communication skills)
- What the organization has to offer to the volunteer (professional support; reimbursement of expenses; insurance cover, very pleasant working atmosphere; possibly a job; education and training)
- The arrangements for considering the offer, a name and address. A name and telephone number for further information.

**Personal:**

In practice it has been shown that more than 90% of new

volunteers come in via personal contacts. Personal contacts in the sense that people from the direct background of the interviewer (recruiter) are approached. These contacts are often friends or acquaintances or acquaintances of friends. Personal can also mean that people who have already participated in a well-run action or campaign can be approached directly to come forward as volunteers.

**Volunteer centres:**

Use can sometimes be made of special bureaus that have a register of people who wish to work as volunteers. But there are also possibilities for gaining attention for recruitment campaigns from libraries, sports clubs, district centres, public waiting rooms, supermarkets, schools and town halls.

**Intermediate and Higher Vocational Education, Higher Education:**

Near graduates or new graduates often find themselves searching for a job but do not have the experience that is frequently asked for. These are just the kind of persons who can be accepted as volunteers.

**Businesses:**

To an increasing extent nowadays there are companies that give their personnel the opportunity to undertake voluntary work a couple of hours a week or month (in the boss's time) within the context of the Socially Responsible Enterprise initiative. That also offers a good entrance in some cases.

**[B] THE INTERVIEW WITH CANDIDATES.**

After a potential volunteer has indicated that he/she is interested, there will need to be an introductory interview.





(see example documents) The same rules apply to this intake interview as apply to an ordinary job application interview.

In this case however it is extra important to look into what he/she himself visualises in relation to the amount of time he/she wants to spend as a volunteer and particularly also how motivated the candidate is. The commitment shown may well have more than one cause however and there can be disappointment in the long run for both parties if it is not known in advance what those causes are.

Where insufficient knowledge is available, there is no need for that to be a problem. Where the commitment can be called major it will always be possible to arrange a course, a training programme or even an extended initial period.

**Motivations might be as follows:**

- A desire to do useful/meaningful work, whatever that might be;

- A way of spending time that yields social contacts;
- Gaining appreciation from one's own family or circle of acquaintances;
- Gaining life experience;
- Having a traumatic experience in road safety;
- Having experiences with work that looks interesting on the curriculum vitae;
- Gaining esteem in local, regional or national politics.

Self-interest can be said to play a major role in all cases.

There is nothing wrong with that, but it means we should be inclined to slightly distrust people who present themselves as wishing to be volunteers for altruistic reasons. There is nothing against asking for references, but it is often difficult to bring the subject up.

Experience sometimes teaches that if references had been taken it could have been found out later that mister a. or miss b. had a dubious background. Matters such as

allowing yourself to be secretly paid for recommendations or for supplying information; misuse of power; embezzlement of money or goods, supplying assignments to your own bureau in exchange for payment, etc. all these cases that actually occur.

Volunteers almost always ask how much time the work will entail. When it is clear that the work in question concerns a specific task that has to be completed it is very possible to give a precise indication of how much time will be needed. When that is known to a lesser extent, the clear answer to be given is that the individual agenda of the volunteer determines how much time he/she is willing to make available for the work.

A good deal of space must be given for the candidate to ask questions during the interview.

It must be made clear that it is in the interests of both parties that any collaboration agreed on should be confirmed by signing a contract. (see example documents)

In order to avoid misunderstandings regarding reimbursements, possibilities for training or working conditions, these are set out once again in the contract. Finally, an information package is given to the candidate to take home. This consists of a welcome letter, mission related information and information on the policy of the organization, an organization chart, important names and telephone numbers, a list giving the standpoints of the organization on important issues, an overview of the educational and training courses that can be followed, a reimbursement form and recent periodicals published by the organization.

**[C] THE INTRODUCTION AND OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE SPECIFIC TASK AND ROLE OF THE JOB AND FUTURE COLLEAGUES.**

An important component of the first steps that place a volunteer within the organization is making the





## [2] Supporting

acquaintance of people with whom the new volunteer will work. It not seldom happens in practice that too little time is taken for this process. Bonding with an organization is principally bought about by 'people' and less so by the sense of a mission, however noble and splendid that might sound. Providing insight into the way in which the job can be fulfilled is of extreme importance for the volunteer. Within what limits does he/she have freedom of action? Who is the person to whom he/she reports within the organization? That could in fact be either a professional or another volunteer.

Recruiting volunteers is one thing. Almost more important however is the extent to which we are able to guide and supervise volunteers. In order to accommodate and offer a clear framework to volunteers engaged in carrying out their work, they are guided and supported by a professional. Depending on the task allotted to the volunteer, the professional can elect to entrust the actual work of guidance and support to another experienced volunteer. It is important that the guidance and support given is characterised by 'openness' and the avoidance of 'island thinking'. Transparency and moving ahead together constitute the foundations of this guidance and support. New volunteers are introduced into the organization and are helped to find their way within it through a process that also provides them with more insight and information regarding their own task. In this process the supervisor has a coaching and informative role. The volunteer at this point has already been issued with

a package containing relevant national and regional information. It has been shown to be prudent to have new volunteers follow a kind of basic course in traffic safety and this must be a standard component of the introductory period for new volunteers. A central tenet in guidance and supervision must be that working on traffic safety is an aim particularly suited to be worked towards with much pleasure, form and content. As already said, professionals play a crucial role in guidance and supervision. More strongly still, professionals form the backbone of an organization in which volunteers also play a greater or a lesser role. Professionals stand as guarantors for and monitor all the diverse elements of the business operation, including professionalism, results orientation, market orientation, quotations, performance indicators, monitoring systems, evaluations, etc. The professional machine therefore primarily has a condition creating, facilitative and supportive role as regards

volunteers engaged on activities in the field of traffic safety. We have already said that voluntary work is a necessity for achieving safe mobility. Professionals must take responsibility for the creation of conditions under which volunteers are able to carry out their work in the most optimum possible way.

The professional machine can do that for instance by developing good sample projects and materials, by giving adequate fulfilment to its information and advisory function and through developing good schooling and training programmes. All these are components of a guidance and supervisory function that must be taken seriously. If many volunteers are needed for a particular project, thorough consideration will need to be given to the support structure in advance. It is not absolutely necessary, but it does help enormously when professionals have their offices close to the working areas of the volunteers. The ability to just walk in and ask is one that







is highly prized by volunteers. Volunteers also appreciate it when the supervising professional calls to visit them from time to time while they are carrying out their work. That is also made easier when the professional has his/her workspace nearby. The knowledge of the circumstances and the direct influence spheres helps the professionals understanding the volunteers fully.

### [3] Rewarding

Rewarding the efforts of volunteers is a permanent component of the voluntary workers policy. Depending on the 'corporate culture', this can manifest itself in a range of different ways.

**[A]** The basic assumption must be that the efforts of the volunteer need not involve any costs for the actual persons themselves. While experience teaches that many volunteers are unwilling to make use of an expenses arrangement, such an arrangement must nonetheless be in place. A mileage allowance, postage stamps, lunches, etc, it really is a question of ordinary good manners. (see example documents) For that matter it is important to know that there are sometimes legal or technical tax law restrictions on reimbursements in this area.

**[B]** If rewards given to volunteers start to assume the guise of an actual hourly rate of reimbursement or an

assumed rate of payment for work performed however, we find ourselves skating on thin ice. Quite apart from the fact that there can quickly be an instance of an employer-employee relationship with all the consequences that entails, such as deductions for social security payments and income tax made by the employer, the situation can also lead to unhealthy relations. It might turn out for instance that while one volunteer is being paid, another is not. Or that the volunteer in question starts to build up his own little empire and so becomes impossible to control. That is another reason why contracts are desirable. Avoiding situations in which people find themselves wearing 'two hats' is extremely important..

**[C]** The most obvious way of rewarding people is to give a pat on the back. This simple form of reward is less obvious than is commonly thought however. As professionals after all we all have busy jobs and we tend to assume

that a volunteer only does things that he/she finds rewarding in the time available in his/her individual agenda. Despite this, as professionals ourselves, we also find it important to receive a word of appreciation for our efforts from time to time.

**[D]** Another highly valued form of reward is that of community appreciation of the work you undertake as a volunteer. This can be expressed for instance in the form of media attention; wide scale community participation in an activity instigated by the dedication of a volunteer; follow up actions in other parts of the country; being asked out to speak about these initiatives at meetings, etc.

**[E]** Most volunteers consider it as a rewarding for their efforts when the organization offers them a training or when they are allowed to go to a conference.





**[F]** In cases where a volunteer has turned in a highly exceptional performance, the organization may opt to reward the person concerned by means of a decoration which is awarded during a special celebratory gathering.

**[G]** The development and execution of a project which was not earlier implemented in that form and which has met with great success is worth recording for posterity in writing. This naturally gives the volunteer concerned a tremendous sense of honour.

## [4] Maintaining

Whenever we congratulate ourselves on the dedication of volunteers, we must do all we can to avoid them leaving the organization again (after they have been rewarded). A volunteer who is given extensive executive responsibility, while the corresponding competencies are lacking will have no interest in continuing with his or her work in the long run. These competencies can express themselves in for instance budget responsibility; individual authority to take on new volunteers; authority to devise and execute projects individually; permission to develop a standard for particular work activities, authority to represent the organization externally, and it is possible to think of other examples along the same lines.

It is also good to be aware that all volunteers have a fixed loathing towards the idea that he/she might be forced to do things simply because the professional staff are not willing to. (see example documents) As soon as a feeling sinks in that the volunteer is only there to do the less

interesting or really rotten jobs, motivation will go rapidly into reverse. It is more than possible when a volunteer indicates that he or she wishes to leave, that it might have to do with the fact that he or she is looking for more than the options being offered at that time. The recognition of a certain level of ambition among volunteers is very important when it comes to taking these kinds of development into account. When it comes down to it, most professionals also regard growth possibilities as important.

It remains crucial of course that we treat each other with respect. That also means that at times when situations between people become difficult, we as professionals must not simply walk away. Being taken seriously means that we constantly ask ourselves whether the volunteer in question still feels 'happy in his skin'. In this respect, a satisfaction survey to assess the individual role of the volunteer, the role of the professional and the role of the

organization itself could be helpful in maintaining a clear-cut focus on the real responsibility that exists within the organization as a whole for keeping volunteers on board.

For volunteers, it is sometimes important if they are given the opportunity to attend a conference or an exhibition. Such diversions are not only good for helping them keep up to date with new developments, but often also give them the feeling of being part of a greater whole.

Finally we can mention the end of year meetings, the New Year reception, the Christmas hamper and the individual visiting cards. This category of events and items of course comes under the heading of appreciating or rewarding volunteers, but it undoubtedly plays a role in them wishing to belong to an organization and therefore staying with it.





## [5] Ending

Volunteers can stop carrying out their work at any time. If a volunteer wants to stop, it is always a good idea to find out why the person concerned feels that way. At the same time it is important to know if there are reasons for his or her decision that have to do with the functioning of the organization, whether the expectations of the volunteer were not sufficiently met, or whether the person simply believes it is time to do something else. An exit or thank you interview with a volunteer who is about to leave is important in order to find out the reasons for the discontinuation. The reasons that volunteers give for stopping work as a volunteer might in some cases result in the organization reviewing its policy or the particular activity concerned.

Situations are also conceivable here that are difficult both for the volunteer and for the organization. Sometimes, sadly, we have to say goodbye to each other so that we can prevent distorted relations arising

between us. This might be the case in the following situations. There are some volunteers who have such a high degree of commitment that they experience difficulty when the time comes to bring their participation to a close. Or they find it impossible to trust their successor, or they believe the project cannot go on without their commitment. Although these attitudes are not restricted to any particular age group, this is a phenomenon we see particularly among people who have already reached an advanced age and who have often been volunteers for many years. After all is said and done, an important chunk of their life fulfilment is then about to fall away. Generally too there is nothing more on the horizon to take the place of the work they will be leaving behind and the 'third phase of life' consequently starts to take on an increased sense of reality!

It might also be the case that people are unwilling to go because they subjectively find that they are (still) perfor-

ming their work enormously well. This despite repeated signals that things are no longer going as they should and it is now time to say enough is enough, the fact is not picked up on by the volunteer concerned. Sometimes also such volunteers have the effect of holding back vital developments because they can no longer keep up with evolving patterns or because a different culture of collaboration is now required. In many cases the practice of conducting regular work performance appraisal interviews and discussing progress of the actual work would have been enough to avoid much misery.





# PROJECT ORGANIZATION

**In order to involve and retain volunteers, it is extremely important to ensure that the work is well organized. In addition to a volunteers policy, the way in which the project is designed is crucial for the effectiveness of volunteer involvement. Project management has already been the subject of many theoretical models. That is understandable, because the complicated reality of working together in a team in a hectic society can be more or less controlled by exploiting the benefits of these theoretical reality based frameworks. What actually is a project?**

## **PROJECTS CAN GENERALLY BE CHARACTERIZED AS FOLLOWS:**

- Projects have a definite start and an end point;
- Projects bring about changes faster than would otherwise happen;
- Multiple disciplines are involved simultaneously;
- Projects have a concrete description of the aim;
- Projects have high risks and bring about uncertainty;

- The success of projects depends on the efforts of men, not on techniques;
- Projects have a principal and an executor (usually an organization).
- There is always a project manager and a project team realizing a project means that we have to deal with various aspects . Nevertheless, whether we have a clear view of all relevant elements beforehand depends on the experiences of the project manager.

## **SOME TIPS FOR THE PROJECT MANAGER:**

- Have knowledge of all the possible aspects of the project;
- Before starting, eliminate all the possible arguments from opponents;
- Invest in knowing your team;
- Make use of the different characters of the project participants; use their skills;
- Be honest, sincere and open;
- Tell it as it is, always! (Don't sugar the pill);

- Realize the importance of non-verbal behaviour;
- Take everyone's opinions seriously;
- Don't focus only on what is not right (the exceptions and mistakes);
- Count your blessings and share these with your staff!

If the proposed project is not settled in the organization as a whole, it will ultimately fail. The mission statement, the major policy items, the strategy, the programmes, the means available (materials and people) – all these must be considered before starting a project. And the culture of the organization must not be forgotten. (We cannot perform an aggressive action e.g. blocking a crossing, if it is not in line with the culture of the organization.) An important premise remains that common sense is one of the strongest sources of inspiration. Matters such as feelings, experiences, dreams, 'Fingerspitzengefühl', beliefs, values and standards influence our thoughts and

behaviour without our knowing exactly how they relate to the outcome of our efforts. Although they can give us the inspiration to act, it is not always the right thing for the project. Therefore it is wise, of course, to improve our skills to do the job properly and avoid things happening without knowing how and why.

In this contribution we confine ourselves to mentioning some aspects of various highlights. Highlights concerning people, processes and monitoring and evaluation (quality management).

## Project organization, people and management

The design of the project gives a structure to the efforts of all the participants, both professionals and volunteers. We must produce a clear project plan, keeping in mind







the project elements referred to earlier. In general terms it could be said that we first need to know what has to be done; second we decide how we will approach the matter; finally we just have to do it! Of course, we need to expand this rough model into more detailed sections and make it 'workable' for the participants.

Meanwhile we have to bear in mind that there are some major context elements in projects. They all need to be examined before the plan is finalized. These elements are: structure; culture; power; people; communication; processes; competition; techniques and costs.

It is important to define the level of influences of each element, because they affect the execution and outcome of the project. After establishing the aim of the project, it is time to gather the right people to get the job done. The question that must be answered is: what kind of competencies are required, of both professionals and volunteers, during the various phases of the execution?

(see example documents). We then need a timetable, an estimate of revenues and expenditures, a communication plan and perhaps a 'plan B'.

Defining the outcome (also during the interim periods) in clear terms (targets, timetables, communication times, type of contribution from the team members, etc.) makes it easier for every participant in the project to contribute and finally to achieve the desired results. (see example documents)

## Management processes

Initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, ending. They are all verbs! That means that we are talking about concept ideas, timetables, movement, dynamics, etc. In other words: we are dealing with processes! Every part of the process group has its own content. Nevertheless, we are focusing on that very simple basic idea which we

have already spoken about: think first, then act!

The **initiating phase** is therefore crucial; making misjudgements in this design stage can cause major problems in the future. Some use the five Ws (What, Why, When, Where and Who) to obtain a clear starting position during this phase.

#### **IN THIS MANUAL WE AIM TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING STRAIGHT QUESTIONS.**

- **What is the problem we want to tackle?**  
(whose problem?)
- **What are the causes of the problem?**  
(research)
- **What target do we want to achieve?**  
(clearly formulated) (see example documents)
- **What is the solution to the problem?**  
(execution phase including timetable, etc.)

We try to define a solution based on the causes of the problem. That helps us not to forget any important detail that causes the problem.

**The planning** is one of the most difficult process elements to define. All kind of unexpected things can happen. The question of whether the project manager is able to use the necessary power to control every stage before entering a new phase depends on his/her competence (project organization). And you can already guess: controlling a whole process is impossible. Therefore, it is wise to be prepared for all kinds of things to happen. That gives us a professional attitude (confidence based on experience) to deal appropriately with random events. Nevertheless, we must make sure that we have knowledge of every significant possibility we can think of. Mapping out all stages of the project and putting them forward to a group of experts will help to reduce the possibility of surprises.





During **the executing phase**, the actual project work, we will discover how valuable our efforts have been in defining and describing all the phases. That is why it is important to monitor the execution process constantly. It can help us to reorganize a specific part of a phase in time and prevent us realizing at the end of the project that things did not work out properly. Then it is too late. And worse: we are going to lose our volunteers who are involved in the project. We recruited them, prepared them, trained them, supported them and now we are going to lose them? A pity, not only because of the actual loss, but also because of the waste of time, energy and money. The organization as a whole will be discredited. Naturally, that would be bad for future projects. We must be very alert during the execution phase. As already mentioned, **the monitoring process** is crucial for the outcome of what we defined in the start-up phase of the project. In the next sub-section we will consider

this subject in greater detail. Important details on ways of avoiding disasters and conflicts between people make the difference between success and failure!

**Ending a phase** looks simple, but almost invariably we neither count our blessings nor learn from our mistakes. We just do not take the time to evaluate properly and to derive benefit from the experiences for future projects. Using the defined phase charters, we must gain a clear view of what we did in relation to the results.

## Quality and management

There are many quality systems e.g.: ISO 9000, Total Quality Management (TQM), TUV, Isikawa, Deming, Juran, etc. What they all have in common is the aim: to satisfy consumers' wishes. Although this phrase has its origins in the world of commerce, we too have to deal with a product (road safety message) that aims to reach

consumers (traffic participants and politicians). And that is what we ultimately want, although as a traffic safety organization we are entitled to do things consumers are not always asking for. But there is no reason at all why in our sector of volunteer project work we should not monitor our efforts and results. Nevertheless, it is sometimes hard to monitor quality alone, and we therefore also use quantity variables. They are unavoidable. They can tell us a great deal about our project organization, management and execution. We aim to be a self-learning organization. We aim to perform better next time in order to save more victims of traffic (injuries and fatalities). We therefore bear great responsibility for our work. Volunteers notice whether we take our work seriously. They might do more, perhaps contribute ideas or invest more time in the project to contribute to the objective which we set. Besides, we are mostly dealing with public funds and the precious time

of volunteers and professionals and we do not want to overwhelm the public (target group).

The Plan, Do, Check and Act circle provides us with a basis for examining what we are doing during the execution of the project in order to make a judgement at the end of the project. Therefore it is necessary to define the quality of all the elements of the project in all its stages. Quality performance is a part of the execution of the project process. But so is quantity! Particularly in the area of road safety activities, it is hard to make a direct connection between our investments and the reduction of traffic casualties. There are too many other variables influencing the outcome of our efforts. That is why we also have to define our outcome requirements in terms of numbers. These are less difficult to measure and provide us and the responsible authorities with information on our project efforts. Beneath an impression, we have an





indication of those effectiveness, or key performers indicators. This list can be supplemented or amended, depending on the project plan and the objectives.

Effectiveness or key performance indicators in terms of quantity and quality of required results

#### QUANTITY (NUMBERS)

Contacts with citizens; new traffic parents; participating sport clubs, schools; participating businesses, local communities; new or active volunteers (groups); promotion of team launches; completed questionnaires; reduction of driving under the influence; exchanges of notice boards; displaying posters; courses and training; collection of signatures; parents' meetings (information meetings); speed measurement; implementing road safety plans; sponsors; loaned toolkits; mailings; driving or other tests; connected people, etc.

#### QUALITY (CONTENTS)

Degree of satisfaction; level of awareness; acquired knowledge; increased involvement; improved processes; widened spin-off; improved performance; extent of reputation; level of involvement of volunteers; contribution on a scientific level; taking more into account; change of image; improved cooperation process; method of establishing the branding, etc.

“The better these indicators are described, the better we can measure our achievements.”

# ACTION MODELS

**We already spoke about the need to compare common sense and the knowledge of project management to get things done in a proper way and to use the different instruments from the voluntary workers policy to work successfully as a team in gaining a specific traffic safety problem. The different elements we worked out in the previous chapter 'Project organization' are important to set up the structure of the work. (see also: example documents)**

It can be expected of professionals that actions, projects, campaigns, etc. will have a theoretical basis of support; that adequate quantities of materials will be available; that careful thought will have been given to the target group and the appropriateness of the resources to be used; that the costs have been covered and that the all-important time factor has been dealt with realistically.

**Now we take a closer look at some important variables when it really comes to the execution of the work. The most important questions involved in actually taking action to be answered are:**

- [1] What do we intend to achieve with a particular action? What is the aim?
- [2] Who are we aiming to reach with our efforts? What is our target group?
- [3] What role does the time factor play?
- [4] What resources do we have at our disposal?
- [5] How and when do we make use of these resources?
- [6] How do we find the money to finance our activities?

## **[1] WHAT DO WE INTEND TO ACHIEVE WITH A PARTICULAR ACTION? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT IS THE AIM?**

In all cases the aim is to bring about a change or an improvement in traffic safety. Here we can think of infrastructure measures, education, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, seat belt use, legislation, driving licences, environment, pricing policy, model split, transport alternatives, modalities policy, enforcement, etc. An initial warning is appropriate here: not infrequently, we find ourselves setting targets that are either too high or too low. Coming up with a realistic estimate of what seems to be achievable with the resources and manpower at your disposal is of the highest importance if you want to be successful.





Without going into the concrete improvements we are aiming for in any detail at this point, we chiefly wish to look in greater detail now at the most significant levels of influence that are open to us:

#### **Political-policy related**

Many of the measures that are needed in order to enhance traffic safety demand either a legal basis or the willingness of administrators and policy officials to take the maximum level of action that is feasible.

It necessarily means that contacts with the authorities are primarily directed towards having an influence on prevailing political and policy related thinking.

Yet at the same time, these contacts are also directed towards forcing breakthroughs in current practices that are skewed too much in the direction of upholding vested interests.

Example: lowering of the permissible alcohol percentage, voluntary installation of blind angle mirrors by transport companies, increasing the amount of attention given to road safety improvements in election campaigns, a prohibition on all telephone calls (including hands-free calls) while driving.

#### **Educational/communicative**

Where we have good reason to foster improvements in educational programmes, the standards we propose will mainly need to be orientated towards a willingness on the part of people to work for modernisation or to work towards conducting pilot studies centred around particular styles of projects orientated towards target groups or towards innovative forms of communication. Example: developing a traffic learning methodology for primary education, targeted communication alongside roads about various traffic safety issues, involving citizens in setting up traffic safety measures in the infrastructural context.

#### **Behaviour related**

With this form of influencing, we primarily aim at bringing about an attitude change among road users themselves. Based on the principle of transference of knowledge and by means of pointing out alternatives, the fundamental attitude targeted will be influenced in such a way that we can have grounds for hope it will be followed by positive changes in behaviour. Example: a major mass media speeding campaign, education for parents, involving parents in traffic education, etc.

## **[2] WHO ARE WE AIMING TO REACH WITH OUR EFFORTS? WHAT IS OUR TARGET GROUP?**

The better we know who we are trying to reach, the better we will be able to select our resources and the more effect our efforts will have.

Depending on the choices we make, we can identify a number of different target groups:

### **Political-policy related:**

It will be clear that when we direct ourselves towards this level of influencing, we will be engaging primarily with political office holders, members of political parties and the managers and officials of lobbying organizations in the midfield section of our society.

In general, these are the policymakers, captains of industry, important people who often take decisions that have significant consequences for large groups within the society as a whole.

### **Educational/communicative:**

Lobbying organizations in education, traffic victims' groups, public transport companies, the welfare sector, residents groups, the transport sector, the driving schools sector, commercial companies and of course a whole range of traffic participant groups.

Concerned here are representatives of sector organizations, the managements of educational institutions, owners of companies and naturally of course cyclists, car drivers, etc. These are people who in general bear a responsibility towards their own organization or who act as representatives of a group.

### **Behaviour related:**

Influencing at this level will be primarily directed towards individual road users, but can also be intended to reach groups. These can be groups of concerned citizens; individual traffic participants, cyclists, scooter riders,







motorcycle riders, car drivers, lorry drivers, teenagers, adults, senior citizens or residents groups: all of these are potential individuals or groups of people to whom we can target our communications.

In getting our message across, we can point out that what we are saying concerns the individual, that individual behaviour is central to the issue and that there is the opportunity of bringing our own individual influence to bear.

Sometimes however the policy is to direct ourselves primarily to towards a particular target group in order to be able to reach an ultimate target group.

To reach the scooter rider target group for instance we need to get the local administration on board in order to gain financing for a scooter rider course. Once our contacts with the local administration have been concluded successfully, we can invite scooter riders to come and take part in a course.

Alternatively we may appeal publicly to the relevant minister about a topic that is already known to him/her with the specific aim of letting others (organizations and/or individual citizens) know what our position is.

### **[3] WHAT RESOURCES DO WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL? HOW AND WHEN DO WE MAKE USE OF THEM?**

It all depends what we want to achieve. The way we select our resources and the target group we want to direct ourselves towards will depend entirely on the target we set for ourselves. Do we want to get local government bodies to support local projects? Do we want more measurements in order to reduce speed limits in residential areas? Do we want the driving school sector to devote more resources to traffic safety? Do we want to involve young people in traffic safety? Do we want to see an end to large freight lorries driving through residential districts? Do we want to ensure primary teachers get the time they need to give

traffic education lessons?

Do we want to see a traffic safety day organised for schools en bloc or in the schools themselves? Do we want to see parents making more bringing-up efforts to ensure the safety of their children? As professionals, we all struggle with these questions to a greater or lesser extent. Not least because in the final analysis there are almost infinite forms that any particular action can take.

**Political-policy related:**

Action models that fall under this denominator are: Individual lobby contact with politicians or officials; Participation in project groups or committees; Organizing traffic safety conferences; Writing editorial articles for periodicals; Interviews featuring exponents of prominent issues or adopted positions; Publication of research results through a press release; Street demonstrations; influencing election campaigns;

Protest campaigns run over the internet or by means of postcards; etc.

**Educational/communicative:**

Innovative projects; developing and introducing traffic education methodologies; Encouraging parents to do their best for the safety of their children; Organizing theory examinations for children in primary schools; Organizing practical examinations for scooter riders and parents; Information meetings for different target groups; Billboards along different types of roads; Citizen participation projects; Mutual competitions between driving schools; etc.

**Behaviour related:**

Mass media campaigns; Speed checks in residential districts; Promotion campaigns in combination with the police; Information meetings for different target groups; Safety measures at dangerous crossing points; Company





open days in town halls; 'Tie-in' actions to major public demonstrations; Flyer distribution in markets and shopping centres; Actions by which the home situation is benefited; Having children assess the driving behaviour of their parents; Giving a good example campaigns; etc. To conclude, it is pointed out that most of the action models are made up of a combination of the possibilities described above.

#### [4] WHAT ROLE DOES THE TIME FACTOR PLAY?

The time factor has a role of crucial importance. Launching an action either too early or too late can negatively influence its objective. Sometimes it seems we have all the time in the world to prepare for an action. Sometimes we need to bide our time and exercise patience so that we don't interrupt a particular (political) process. Sometimes again we need to make sure we don't sleep through the right moment.

#### Sufficient time:

The ability to prepare with certainty for the ultimate realisation of an action or campaign will generally increase the effect of that action or campaign. It will be possible after all to consider all aspects of the ultimate aim in detail, campaign resources, financing, manpower, communication, etc. This notwithstanding, we sometimes have to add a 'but' at this point. When the pending start of an action or campaign has been known to the public, politicians, or the media for some time, that simple fact will generally have a negative effect on the attention value of the issue concerned.

#### Spontaneous action:

Imagine that now, all of a sudden, the following happens; road safety figures are released earlier than expected; a minister makes an unscheduled statement; a motorbike rider thunders through a village at 200 kilometres an

hour; 'Brussels' puts off an important decision at the last moment; a school is sent away empty-handed by the municipality against all expectations; freight traffic is responsible for a serious accident in a residential district; etc. A spontaneous action based on a specific news item of this kind can lead to a great deal of commotion and can become front-page news for a time. The attention value is consequently very high. As long as it is tackled with the right input, the outcome of a situation such as this can be highly profitable for the issue in question.

**Uncontrolled:**

And what is to be done then about an uncontrolled spontaneous action aimed at improving traffic safety that totally fails to hit the target? Campaigners who use mistaken arguments or deploy inappropriate resources or aim to force something through politically can be the cause of great damage to the efforts of organizations that

are dedicated to combating unsafe situations. And yet sometimes, against all expectations, such actions nonetheless turn out to be effective - and what is our response in those cases? We can state clearly and without contradiction that the professional staff play a crucial role in matters of this kind. Crucial because it is frequently underestimated just what actions that are spontaneously mounted by citizens can bring about despite all the odds.

**[5] HOW DO WE FIND THE MONEY TO FINANCE OUR ACTIVITIES?**

This is a difficult question. Every country in any case has its own rules and its own history regarding subsidies and donations. Situations where you have good contacts with potential finance providers such as government departments and sectors of industry do not come about just like that. Sometimes years of investment in relationship management are a condition for gaining the





confidence of potential financiers. Sometimes on the other hand a well-prepared campaign has been structured in such a congenial or practical way that money becomes readily available. In the Netherlands we have noted that actions designed to allow citizens to take up their responsibilities without further ado, which reach the road user in a direct sense, can depend on receiving funding from the government. Where private companies gain a publicity advantage from a campaign they are also often prepared to contribute towards financing it.

In cases where almost no financial resources are available, the following is quite likely to be possible: When we are able to gain the attention of politicians and citizens in an appealing way and we know that we have only negligible financial resources, a larger or more expensive campaign at a later stage will most likely be eligible for financial funding by the government and/or industry. In other words, we need to go to work fairly shrewdly.

When we can expect a contribution from industry we need to realise that a company never parts with its money just like that. In exchange, a company often wishes to increase its name recognition or to gain a sympathetic image by linking itself to an ideal aim. There is nothing wrong with that of course, but caution needs to be observed.

A celebrated example shows how it could all go wrong: there was a producer of alcoholic beverages who wanted to sponsor an alcohol free campaign.

**TO CONCLUDE:**

**It is quite difficult to get volunteers involved into road safety actions. But when they are, you can build up a kingdom!**



## Literature

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## Example documents

**[Ex 1]** The Dutch Example

**[Ex 2]** Intake form volunteers

**[Ex 3]** Competence volunteers

**[Ex 4]** Contract volunteers

**[Ex 5]** Claims guide volunteers

**[Ex 6]** Target(groups) and action combinations

**[Ex 7]** The seven deadly sins of directing volunteers