

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RESOURCES IN YOUR NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION



Agence Micro Projets



Human resources are the foundations on which the non-profit sector is built, influencing not just the internal organisation of non-profits but also their ability to carry out their actions. There are different types of status in France – unpaid voluntary work (bénévolat), paid charity work (volontariat) and salaried work (salarial) – and it can be difficult to identify which is the most appropriate for a particular organisation. In addition, non-profits need to plan the resources required to host and supervise recruits over the long term. Produced by the Agence des Micro Projets, this factsheet and testimonies from partner associations reviews the key mechanisms that currently exist to support non-profit activities in France and abroad.

VOLUNTARY WORK

NON-PROFIT VOLUNTARY WORK

Over 16 million unpaid volunteers work in the French non-profit sector today, including around 7% in international solidarity non-profit associations (France Bénévolat, 2016). In spite of the lack of a clear legal definition, unpaid voluntary work is mainly distinguished from similar statuses in three areas:

- **The absence of remuneration** in cash or in kind (although the costs involved in the voluntary work can be reimbursed)
- **The absence of legal subordination** (a criterion for a contract of employment)
- **The voluntary nature of the participation**, which can be terminated without any proceedings or compensation. All volunteers are, however, bound to comply with the statutes of the non-profit association as well as the safety standards in their field of activity.

NB: The Ministry responsible for non-profit work publishes an annual **Guide du Bénévolat – Guide to Voluntary Work** – that presents the various guarantees offered to volunteers by law (payment of costs, insurance, accumulation of statuses, leave, etc.).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

While the volume of (unpaid) volunteering is on the rise, especially among young people, it is also changing fast. **Volunteers are keen for their involvement to contribute to their personal development**, and for it to have a purpose and serve a use. The specific problem facing international solidarity non-profits is finding a way to share the initial feeling that led to the creation of the organisation,

especially if the volunteers do not go into the field. Accordingly, the issues at stake and the results of the actions in France need to have a high profile. **The challenges of professionalising non-profit associations and retaining volunteers**, who switch very easily from one non-profit to another, are entwined with **people being available on a more ad hoc and short term basis.**

HOW CAN YOU RETAIN VOLUNTEERS?

1. Take the time to understand the needs, desires and constraints of volunteers
2. Adapt the working methods: flexible hours, short and / or one-off missions, remote working
3. Identify professional skills and their progression
4. Make the impact of the actions visible
5. Clarify the position in the chain of actions (set a limit on false expectations)
6. Learn how to supervise and delegate: offer specific missions that encourage commitment
7. Facilitate communication between members (a WhatsApp group, physical meetings)

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WITH INPUT
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19 partner non-profit
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OTHER FORMS OF VOLUNTEERING

SKILLS-BASED SPONSORSHIP

Company employees can help non-profit associations with a specific issue during their working hours thanks to skills-based sponsorship. This enables non-profits to draw on expertise that is not available to them internally so they can solve a specific problem at virtually no cost, as well as improve the organisation, efficiency or impact of an action. In exchange, workers have the opportunity to strengthen their professional expertise, develop interpersonal skills and give new purpose to their work. Sponsorship can be based on a partnership agreement between the non-profit association and the company or on an independent unpaid volunteer status directly between the individual and the non-profit.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEAVE

Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile involvement in the non-profit sector and a professional activity. Community service leave allows directors of non-profit associations and volunteer supervisors to benefit from an annual leave of six days (which may be divided into half-days) to perform voluntary work that can take place during working hours. The relevant non-profit must be recognised under law and have been included in the register of non-profit associations for at least three years. This unpaid leave applies to the public and private sectors. The request must be submitted to the employer at least 30 days in advance.

SALARIED EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYEES UNDER FRENCH LAW

Almost 13% of non-profit associations operating in France employ people, equivalent to 1.8 million employees. Many of these non-profits employ fewer than three people. The employment relationship is characterised by:

- **Paid remuneration**
- **The existence of a subordination relationship**, which involves rights and obligations, both on the side of the non-profit association and the employee
- **The application of French employment law** for an agreement in France (Articles L 1131-1 and following of the Labour Code). Abroad, employees are subject to local law, except in the case of an agreement signed in France with secondment.

NB: Creating a first job involves making preparations for hosting a resource on a sustainable basis, both financially and on an organisational level. (See AMP#10 sheet from the Agence des Micro Projets)

EMPLOYEES UNDER LOCAL LAW

Skills are also available locally in the countries where projects are implemented. Creating a multicultural work team can bring great added value. In addition to technical skills, the cultural knowledge (including linguistic knowledge) of the area in the context of an intervention is generally very useful. Universities, design offices, local non-profit associations and many key players are already present and active, and can join up with a project within the framework of a partnership.



“Skills-based sponsorship has been part of the DNA of the Foundation since it was created in 2011. It means that individuals and companies in the renewable energy sector – members of the network’s Foundation – can get involved in projects that match their areas of expertise and which give a sense of purpose to their work. At the same time, the Foundation can access the technical resources that are vital for monitoring funded projects in the field and essential to the needs of the NGOs that run them. The commitment is made either by means of an agreement with the company or individually, with the employee then taking on the status of an unpaid volunteer.”

Fondation Synergie solaire

SUPPORTING NON-PROFIT EMPLOYERS IN FRANCE

- **General points of support** (Maisons des Associations community centres, Resource and Information Centres on Non-profit Volunteering, CRIB) provide general information on non-profit work and offer advice on procedures and applicable law.
- **Chèque Emploi Associatif (CEA – a system that simplifies the administrative procedures for employees of a non-profit association):** a free range of services from the Urssaf network to promote employment in a non-profit context by allowing them to carry out the administrative formalities for employing paid workers.
- **Dispositif Local d’Accompagnement (DLA – Local Support System):** a public body, the DLA offers employer non-profit associations bespoke support so they can develop their activities, consolidate and create or provide permanent jobs.

“Employees governed by local law are persons holding key positions where it is not relevant to have expatriate skills (e.g. welfare workers who have to know the language, culture and country in order to support families as best as possible)”

Enfants d’Asie

TRAINEES

The international internship is often an opportunity for students to validate a year or a diploma while strengthening the teams working in the field on specific missions. Of limited duration (between 3 and 6 months on average), internships require a significant degree of supervision from the host organisation, which has to guarantee compliance with the educational objectives set by the internship agreement. An internship assignment must be properly identified and defined over time in order to recruit the right profiles and not replace employees. It may involve, for example, a pre-project situation analysis or a specific technique.

Reminder: Any internship lasting over two months must be remunerated in line with the legal provisions in force.

“It is vital to retain trainees who have the skills we need. The trainees we receive come for a precise period of time and work on a subject area that does not require them to stay for several months on a mission. They come to work as part of a team with our charity workers on their project and can help to move projects forward in certain areas (as is the case, for example, with building engineers).”

LP4Y

PAID CHARITY WORK

(Paid) charity work is distinguished from (unpaid) voluntary work and salaried work in France by means of the following criteria:

- **Formal commitment** (with an agreement) for a limited period, full-time, for a general interest mission
- **Receives remuneration** (not comparable to a salary, however)
- **Notice given in the event that the mission is terminated**
- **Paid charity work is exempt from the Labour Code** (e.g. no recourse to an industrial tribunal in the event of a dispute)

There are different methods and forms of paid charity work so that young and old alike can be involved in projects in France or abroad. Volontariat de Service Civique (Civic Service Volunteering) and Volontariat Solidarité Internationale (International Solidarity Volunteering) are the most common types, especially for missions abroad.

TWO SCHEMES: VVV/SI AND JSI VILLE, VIE, VACANCES / SOLIDARITÉ INTERNATIONALE AND JEUNESSE, SOLIDARITÉ INTERNATIONALE

These two programmes are designed for young people aged 15 to 25 made up of groups of 4 to 16 individuals. They focus on inter-cultural encounters between young people, based on an action for the common good that falls within one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a minimum period of 15 days. The actions take place internationally or in France, and they must be led by a French non-profit association in partnership with a local non-profit. Every project must be sponsored by an authorised international solidarity non-profit association in order to benefit from between € 2,000 and € 7,500.

	LE VOLONTARIAT DE SERVICE CIVIQUE (VSC – CIVIC SERVICE VOLUNTEERING)	LE VOLONTARIAT DE SOLIDARITÉ INTERNATIONALE (VSI – INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY VOLUNTEERING)
WHAT IS IT?	This is a charity work scheme created by the French Law of March 10, 2010 on Civic Service. It forms part of a youth policy designed to encourage national cohesion and social diversity within the framework of a collective interest project.	The purpose of this scheme, which is governed by the French Law of February 23, 2005, is "to perform general interest missions abroad in the fields of development cooperation and humanitarian action". The VSI is contractual and mutually engages the sending agency and charity worker.
REFERRAL ORGANISATION	Agence du Service civique (Civic Service Agency)	Approved intermediation body for sending VSI workers
WHO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any young person between 16 and 25 (up to 30 years old for young people with disabilities) • No pre-conditions regarding diplomas, professional experience or prior training • French or foreigners resident in France if the mission is abroad • Europeans or nationals from partner countries, if the mission is in France 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults, single people or couples (can leave with dependents, spouse and/or child(ren)) • No pre-conditions regarding nationality, except that of the country hosting the mission, and no age limit • Mostly qualified people with experience or not
WHERE AND HOW LONG FOR?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the world (Europe, Africa, America, Asia) • 6 months min. to 12 months max., all or part of which may take place internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only outside the European Union • Legal minimum of six months but in practice 12 months min. (not subsidised below this level) to 24 months max. per agreement, cumulative over a period of six years max.
WHICH AREAS AND WHICH ORGANISATIONS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In non-profit organisations or legal entities governed by public law in France or abroad. • In one of the nine areas of intervention recognised as priorities for the nation: solidarity, health, education for everyone, culture and leisure, sport, the environment, remembrance and citizenship, international development and humanitarian action, and emergency crisis intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The host partner may be a non-profit association, local authority, design office, bilateral or multilateral organisation, local state body, etc. • Areas of action: Education, health and social action, information and communication, sustainable development, project management, public and territorial administration, etc. • Types of project: capacity building of local key players, internal and external communication, appropriation of specific techniques or technologies, help with networking
COSTS AND CONDITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state pays a monthly allowance, social security cover, old-age insurance, leave, training, etc. • The approved host organisation supplements the monthly allowance in kind or in cash (€ 107.58). It must mobilise tutors in-house to support charity workers with their mission and future projects • Internationally, the distribution of additional costs is negotiated between the key players of the host project (the partner sending the charity worker, host partner and charity worker him or herself) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sending organisation undertakes to prepare workers at departure, as well as guaranteeing a monthly allowance, social security cover, old-age insurance, resettlement allowance in the event of a mission lasting a minimum of 24 months, support on their return, etc. • The state supports the sending organisation with a flat-rate contribution to the various costs • The host partner contributes financially to all or some of the following costs: travel, charity worker allowance, accommodation, additional training costs, etc.

FEEDBACK FROM EXPERIENCE

In late 2018, about 20 partner organisations in La Guilde's charity work division replied to a questionnaire about managing human resources in their organisation. Their feedback on their experiences hosting VSI, VSC and trainees is presented briefly in the following pages.

"VSI status offers good working conditions and benefits for charity workers: social security, insurance, support through intermediation, preparation on departure, bonus on returning, contribution to the pension fund, etc. It helps organisations attract qualified, experienced professionals in a framework that is guaranteed by the state."

Blue Energy France

WHY WELCOME CHARITY WORKERS?

- **Commitment and immediate involvement** in the values of the organisation.
- Richness brought by the mix: knowledge of local teams enhanced, who enjoy discussing with individuals from different cultures.
- Brings **dynamism** plus a fresh, unbiased viewpoint together with new skills.
- **Professionalism:** responsibilities delegated and contribution made to the structuring of projects / programmes.
- Confirms **the organisation's involvement in the country** of intervention with partners and beneficiaries, and can reinforce knowledge of the intervention context.

STATUSES	ADVANTAGES	IMPORTANT POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION
VSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of the commitment is flexible and renewable • Diverse profiles (no age limit) • Experience, skills and ability to adapt to sometimes-difficult conditions • Good working conditions (social security cover) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high cost, difficulties obtaining visas • Supervision still required • Turnover remains high (every 1 to 2 years) • Local integration relatively easy / long depending on the profile
VSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated and committed young professionals with a wide choice of profile • Good ability to adapt • Good working conditions at low cost • Flexible commitment (6 to 12 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative burden, time required to obtain approvals • "Rigid" status, agreements cannot be extended • Possible difficulties in adapting assignments and working time to those of the local team • Significant need for supervision
TRAINEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated, dynamic, eager-to-learn profiles • Interest in the projects supported • Temporary skills contribution to a specific project • Moderate cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiles sometimes inexperienced and of variable commitment • Duration sometimes too short (imposed by schools) • Confused with "humanitarian missions" • Need to contribute to supervision and training
EMPLOYEES UNDER LOCAL LAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific key know-how and soft skills • Long-term commitment • Key players in the field and reference interlocutors for the beneficiaries • Reinforcement for better organisational viability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible inequalities with agreements governed by French law (working time, social benefits) • Motivated and committed to intercultural work • High turnover depending on the country • Difficulty matching the salaries offered by big NGOs
EMPLOYEES UNDER FRENCH LAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term commitment • Expertise • Lifeblood of non-profit associations working on behalf of their mission • Organisational reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative management and cost

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND ADVICE

Numerous difficulties are encountered: choosing the appropriate profile during recruitment; remote management (behaviour, conflict management, interculturality); understanding the mission and its challenges by the various stakeholders; long-term funding of posts; ability to receive and support teams on site; subtle nature of the different statuses; leaving projects early, etc.

Here are some tips offered by the organisations:

- Be demanding and transparent when recruiting so you can ensure that the mission and the intervention context are clear and that there is the right match between the charity worker and the required profile. Do not assume that the person will be autonomous immediately (with some exceptions).
- Evaluate the needs and added value of hiring a charity worker carefully if the skills can be found locally.

- Clarify the expectations of the host organisation regarding the role of charity workers and give local employees the tools to welcome and support foreign staff.
- Listen to the charity worker carefully, as he or she may not spontaneously share the difficulties encountered in the field.
- Give careful thought to the before, during and after so you can offer the best support and make the mission a success.
- Possibly suggest prior experience within the non-profit association – an internship or unpaid voluntary mission – so you can get to know each other.
- Dedicate the required human resources to monitoring, and plan regular Skype contact.
- Provide the possible and desirable financial framework for these missions.

IN SUMMARY

The need for human resources varies depending on the type of project to be carried out. This means you need to review your strategy on a regular basis, asking yourself whether it is coherent, relevant and sustainable according to the reception capacity available (financial, equipment, organisational, etc.). Internal training and new resources are also essential.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Guide to voluntary work https://associations.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide_du_benevolat.pdf
- Community service leave <https://associations.gouv.fr/conge-engagement.html>
- Finding volunteers via digital platforms <https://blog.assoconnect.com/articles/9373-11-plateformes-pour-trouver-des-benevoles-pour-votre-association>
- France Volontaires- Guide des volontariats internationaux d'échange et de solidarité <https://www.france-volontaires.org/app/uploads/2019/07/guide-vies-2019.pdf>
- La Guilde – Services d'envoi de volontaires <http://la-guilde.org/volontariat/>
- FONJEP - JSI & VVV-SI <https://www.fonjep.org/solidarite-internationale/projets-de-jeunes-jsi-et-vvvs>
- Hello Asso - Welcoming students on internships <https://www.helloasso.com/blog/comment-accueillir-un-etudiant-en-stage-demarches-encadrement-hebergement-assurance/>
- Hello Asso – Non-profits as employers: special characteristics <https://www.helloasso.com/blog/associations-employeurs-les-particularites/>
- Agence Micro Projets - Making the transition from micro to meso: structuring a non-profit association with the creation of a first job <http://mediatheque.agencemicroprojets.org/bonnes-pratiques-micro-meso/>
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