

Volunteer Policy

Society for Education on Contraception and Education

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in the Society of Education on Contraception and Sexuality (SECS). It is of relevance to all within the organization, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is approved by SECS General Assembly on December 4th, 2010 and will be reviewed once every three years, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of *SECS* and its volunteers.

Commitment

Accordingly with SECS constitution, article 1.2, the Association is constituted as a Romanian national voluntary non-profit apolitical association.

SECS recognizes the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. *SECS* values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

SECS recognizes its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community. The volunteer may be a member but not always so.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by SECS and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff is clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honor, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. The volunteers' activity will be clearly stated through a Volunteer Contract accordingly with the legislation. Likewise the organization cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organization expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organization.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

'Volunteer co-ordination' will be explicitly referred to in all relevant job descriptions within the organization.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organization is <*Carmen Suraiianu*>. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organization's volunteers.

Recruitment & Selection

SECS is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organization in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community. As far as possible the Association will mean to recruit a diversity of volunteers such as to be representative for country's population as a whole (ensuring a mix of ages, professions, sexual orientation, geographic backgrounds, etc.).

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organization or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to complete an Application Form and will be invited to attend an informal interview. Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every year. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above, and documented within Job Description Form.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organization.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organization's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, child protection and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organization in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for same.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognize achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organization's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the organization's volunteers (e.g. internal awards, articles in newspapers and newsletters, thank you letters etc.) or outline any existing process.

Expenses

SECS recognizes that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

What can be reclaimed from the organization and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

The organization has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the General Assemble.

It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Confidentiality

The organization will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organization relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The organization aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organization seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution.

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organization to the volunteer while it endeavors to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organization's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organization recognizes the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive reimbursement for expenses involved in their activities with the organization

- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organization expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organization
- work within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organization and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organization's policies