



Skills acquired through
Volunteering in Sport

LEARNING RESOURCES

/// PILLAR 1: VOLUNTEER STRATEGY AND PLANNING

SUB-PILLAR 1.5 Seeking financial and other resources for volunteering



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/// Sub-Pillar 1.5

Seeking financial and other resources for volunteering

a/ DESCRIPTION

Once you have undertaken the underpinning research and enhanced your understanding of volunteering, you Funding is one of many important resources that can support the successful implementation of your strategy for volunteering in your sport organisation. Other resources include equipment, facilities and less tangible assets such as knowledge and influence. Find out how your organisation can identify its resource needs and acquire the resources required to support volunteering.

b/ KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS – DID YOU KNOW THAT:

Building a volunteer-friendly culture is vital keeping your volunteers engaged in the organisation.

From our Global Survey, the respondents highlighted the following methods of retaining volunteers:

- ① Offer material benefits, such as sport kit, uniforms, reimbursement of expenses (51%)
- ② Provide social events for volunteers (44%)
- ③ Give volunteers training opportunities (41%).

All of these things come with a cost, so it will be important for your organisation to think about how it can raise funds specifically to support your sport volunteers.



TEER

>> CONTENT AREA 1: UNDERSTANDING TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE RESOURCES

One of the many ways in which we can analyse your sport organisation is by thinking of it as a 'bundle of resources'. A resource can be thought of as a strength controlled by an organisation that can lead to competitive advantage.

Put another way, it is "what we have". In the case of your sport organisation and the management of volunteers, the resources that you have or are able to access provide a possible 'competitive advantage' because of their potential to make a welcoming and developmental environment.

The term competitive advantage was promoted by Michael Porter and others, and originally referred to the ways in which commercial businesses can gain leverage against their competitors. These days we think more broadly about the different forms of 'advantage' your sport organisation can gain by having a strong resource base and using it well. This can lead to being more competitive in sporting competition, recruiting volunteers, gaining sponsorship and all other aspects of your organisation's work.

We should therefore also think of resources as assets. These can be broadly categorised as tangible and intangible. Tangible assets have a physical existence and can be felt, touched or consumed in some way.

In the context of your sport organisation, examples may include sport facilities, buildings, vehicles and equipment. Material assets such as these are precious, but they also consume other resources in order to maintain and develop them. As with certain intangible resources (see below), we tend to think of those that are owned or controlled directly by your sport organisation, but we must not overlook those on which you depend and may have some influence over but do not directly control, such as shared sport facilities.

Of all physical resources, money is one of the more critically important ones as it is difficult to imagine any voluntary sport organisation existing without it. Money is the best illustration of how tangible assets can change over time or their value fluctuate. Buildings decay without regular attention, IT equipment becomes obsolete, etc., so it is necessary to constantly take a flexible view of resources.

Tangible assets are, of course, only half the story of resources. A different category of resources exists that is much less visible and potentially altogether intangible: skills, knowledge, experience, influence, goodwill, image, relationships with key stakeholders.

Self-evidently, these are related to people rather than material things. Valuable resources are those which create a service/ product that is of value to customers/ participants and enables your sport organisation to respond to environmental opportunities or threats. Intangible assets can therefore include intellectual property, a sport organisation's brand or market influence and other assets without a physical presence, such as brand recognition, copyrights, patents, trademarks, trade names, a functional website and even consumers' feelings about the organisation. Each member of your volunteer workforce is therefore a 'bundle' of intangible assets and it is important for these to be mapped against the resource base as a whole, for example when considering skills gaps.

Volunteer roles will often incorporate some sort of stewardship over aspects of your physical and intangible resource base. It is, therefore, essential to incorporate a resource-based perspective into induction and volunteer development programmes. Judicious use of resources can be made when it comes to rewarding volunteers for their contributions. Tangible rewards for volunteers could be physical items such as medals, certificates and diplomas, whilst intangible rewards such as praise and recognition are often highly valued.

👉 **A summary of this content area's key points may help as you move on to the other resource-focused ones:**

- Resources (or assets) that are owned or controlled by your organisation can lead to competitive advantage
- Resources can be tangible (physical) or intangible
- Resources can change or be developed over time
- It is crucial to think about how you use your resources in the recruitment and development of volunteers.



>> CONTENT AREA 2: IDENTIFYING RESOURCE NEEDS TO SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING

Elsewhere in this Pillar we looked at the process of conducting workforce analysis and identifying skills gaps within your sport organisation to be filled by new or existing volunteers. From the first content area in this sub-pillar we know that we can think about these skills as intangible resources. We can therefore plan to ensure that all of the right resources are in place in terms of the skills and competencies of our volunteers. The process of achieving and maintaining this situation will, in turn, consume both tangible and intangible resources, so we need to ensure that these are available. In some cases this will necessitate the addition of new resources to your sport organisation's asset base, and this is dealt with in the following two content areas. Here, we look at how to identify the resources necessary for successful volunteer operations as well as considering what those resources might be. These are categorised under recruiting, deploying and developing volunteers.

🔗 Resources for volunteer recruitment:

(In Pillar 2 we look in detail at the volunteer recruitment process, so please go there for further information and ideas)

A well-resourced volunteer process will require intangible resources such as:

- Suitable skills and knowledge on the part of those doing the recruiting
- Contacts / connections that can be leveraged to ensure volunteering opportunities are promoted widely
- 'Soft skills' to ensure the process is conducted in a welcoming fashion.

The process will also demand tangible resources like:

- Appropriate physical facilities in which to conduct interviews and inductions
- Suitable IT equipment and software
- Catering and other means of providing a comfortable experience for applicants.

🔗 Resources for volunteer deployment:

On a day-to-day basis, volunteers are giving your sport organisation a most precious resource that can never be replaced or duplicated: their time. However, their activities may involve the consumption of other resources that can be provided or reimbursed by you, for instance:

- **Transportation**
Volunteers may incur transportation costs while commuting to and from the organisation's premises, sports venues, or events. In some cases they may also require the provision of transport.
- **Personal equipment**
Depending on the nature of their volunteer roles, individuals may use their personal sports equipment, such as sports gear, uniforms, or safety gear.
- **Communication**
Volunteers may use their personal phones or internet services to communicate with the organisation, fellow volunteers, or participants. In some instances they may incur additional costs on their bills as a result.
- **Food and refreshments**
If volunteering for extended periods or during events, volunteers may consume food and beverages, either self-provided or provided by the organisation. They may require reimbursement for the purchase of these items.

- **Printing and materials**

Volunteers may use their printers or purchase stationery and materials for administrative tasks, flyers, or informational materials.

- **Health and energy**

Volunteering can be physically and mentally demanding, and volunteers may experience fatigue or temporary depletion of their energy reserves.

Volunteer expenses can therefore be incurred in a number of ways. Your sport organisation should reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, in line with an expenses policy establishing what volunteers can usually claim for in their role with limits as to how much they can claim.

➤ **Resources for volunteer development:**

In Pillar 4 you will find detailed support for volunteer development and training. Here, it is briefly worth noting that the process of training and providing other development opportunities for your volunteers will consume similar tangible and intangible resources to the above two categories, with particular demands being placed on the time, skills, experience and knowledge of those responsible for the development programme.

Prior to any volunteer recruitment activity, therefore, it is highly beneficial to consider the resource implications of the entire cycle of recruiting, deploying, retaining and developing a new generation of volunteers. Is your sport organisation currently in a position to this?

The one underlying, tangible resource that may be needed to facilitate all of this activity is of course finance. Intangible resources in the form of social capital (personal contacts and connections) will help in terms of leveraging favours, but ultimately money will need to be spent to promote volunteering and all other aspects of your sport organisation's work.

The next two content areas look at how we can access money and other resources to keep the operation afloat.



>> CONTENT AREA 3: IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE SOURCES OF TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE RESOURCES

The search for resources to sustain and develop volunteering in your sport organisation is an ongoing and evolving process. It will necessitate looking in a variety of different places, depending on whether the desired resource is tangible or intangible and whether it is something you already have or are seeking for the first time.

The purpose of this content area is to give you ideas to help you identify resources in new locations, whilst the next content area looks at how to make the case to potential providers of resource support. The focus here is on resources to support your work with volunteers, but the principles are universal so you can use them to help seek resources for other purposes relevant to your sport organisation.

Note that you can think about how to use existing resources to leverage new ones. This is in line with the idea of resources leading to competitive advantage.

Prior to seeking new resources to support your work with volunteers it is first important to confirm that you are making the most of what you already have. Seeking new resources is often a time-consuming and costly exercise, so if you have underutilised resource there maybe a quicker fix to a perceived shortage.

🕒 **The VRIO model, promoted by Barney and Hesterly amongst others, asks you consider each key resource as follows:**

- **Valuable**

Does the resource add value for your sport organisation or customers/ participants?

If not, this could lead to competitive disadvantage and you will be wasting time and energy maintaining an unproductive resource.

- **Rare**

Do you control a resource that scarce yet in demand (*this could be your unique sport facilities, for example*).

If the answer here is no, if the resource nonetheless has value, this might put you in a situation of competitive parity with comparable sport organisations.

- **Imitable**

Is the resource difficult for others to copy? If it is valuable and rare but easily copied, this affords you temporary competitive advantage but others could catch up soon.

This could apply, for example, to being the first sports club in your area to have volunteers complete a new technical qualification.

- **Organised**

This is the key to sustained competitive advantage. Whatever the resource in question, even if it is valuable, rare and difficult to imitate, does your sport organisation have the necessary structure, culture and systems in place to capitalise upon it?

Without this, you will have unused competitive advantage and any search for new resources might not be the most efficient use of people's effort at that time.

Assuming you have applied VRIO to the principal resources connected to your volunteer operation and found that you are already maximising their value, it will likely be necessary to go in search of tangible resources like money, equipment, transportation, maintenance equipment and materials as well as intangible resources like influence, media access, patronage, knowledge and skills.

🕒 **Here are some sources to explore:**

- **Local community**
Engage with the local community to find volunteers, sponsors, and potential donors. Attend community events, collaborate with local schools and colleges, and build partnerships with other community organisations.
- **Online platforms**
Utilise online platforms and social media to reach a broader audience and promote your organisation's needs.
- **Corporate sponsorship**
Approach local businesses and corporations to seek financial support or in-kind donations. Many companies have corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes and may be interested in supporting sport organisations in their community.
- **Government support**
National and local governments will often offer grants for sport organisations, so check what is available in your country/ locality.
- **Regional and local federation**
Connect with your sport's federation at regional or national level to explore funding opportunities, training resources, and networking possibilities.
- **Member subscriptions**
Leverage your organisation's membership dues and organise fundraising events to generate funds for activities and projects.
- **Sports retailers**
Approach sporting goods stores or manufacturers to inquire about potential equipment sponsorships or discounts for your organisation.
- **Local media**
Partner with local media outlets to gain exposure and attract new members, volunteers, and sponsors.
- **Alumni networks**
Reach out to former club members and athletes who might be interested in supporting the organisation or returning as volunteers.
- **Universities and colleges**
Collaborate with educational institutions to find student volunteers or seek support, particularly through sport management programmes.
- **Existing supporters**
Engage with your current members, volunteers, and supporters to tap into their networks and seek referrals for additional resources.
- **Community foundations**
Explore opportunities with local or regional community foundations that may provide grants or financial support for community sport projects.
- **Professional athletes**
reach out to professional athletes with ties to your community who may be interested in supporting or endorsing your club.

>> CONTENT AREA 4: ACQUIRING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING

This final content area of Pillar 1 is focused on how to persuade outside organisations and individuals to support your sport organisation with tangible and intangible resources. (See the previous content area for more detailed advice on where to look for support.) The single, overarching principle of how to make resource-sharing arrangements work for your sport organisation is to see each one as a partnership in which each party stands to gain in some way. You may be able to secure individual handouts without doing this, but the key to sustainable partnerships is to understand your partner's objectives and motivations so that you can provide them with value even as they support your volunteer operations.

Sponsorship, for example, is usually thought of as a commercial arrangement in which one party provides financial or in-kind help to another. It is important, however, not to overlook 'what's in it' for the sponsor. If you are seeking commercial sponsorship to help recruit, deploy and develop volunteers in your sport organisation (or indeed to support any other activity), you should identify in advance what you are able to offer in exchange for the resource you are seeking. You will need to think about the connections that can be made between your sport organisation's brand and activities, and those of potential sponsors. The sponsor will be looking for enhanced public awareness of their brand, goodwill by association with a 'good cause' and ultimately a commercial return on their investment in the form of changed purchase intentions amongst the intended audience. Think carefully about which of your existing resources you can leverage to make this possible. In the context of volunteering, remember that in-kind sponsorship is possible in the form of training and other developmental experiences for your volunteers.

When seeking resources from public or third sector donors, the partnership message is just as strong. Find out as much as you can about any government agency, federation or body from whom you will be applying to receive grant aid or similar support. As well as the explicit funding criteria you will need to meet, you may have the opportunity to illustrate to them how your sport organisation can contribute to them meeting wider strategic goals. The greater the overlap between your objectives and those of your partner, the greater the likelihood of a successful funding application. Outside of grant applications, partnerships between multiple agencies (including sport organisations such as your own) can be put together for any purpose, including pooling resources, seeking resources and developing resources to support volunteering. The key resources needed are the skills of your organisation's representative(s) in engaging people from the 'outside', understanding their motivations and finding common ground.

Finally, whenever resources have been secured from external sources to support the recruitment, deployment and development of your volunteers, ensure that this is communicated throughout your sport organisation. For instance, volunteers can be asked to collaborate in raising the brand awareness of sponsors. This can be as simple as word-of-mouth promotion within their personal networks. Where less commercially-oriented partnerships have been entered into, the shared partnership goals should be disseminated amongst the members of your organisation as they may be asked to interact with representatives of partner organisations. To sum up, it is rarely the case these days that a handout approach will help you sustainably grow your resource base to support volunteering in your sport organisation, so a partnership mindset that is adopted by everyone from the casual volunteer to the most senior board member is the key to success.



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V4V PARTNERSHIP:



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