



Myeloma Patients Europe (MPE)

Toolkit: Voluntary worker management

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Toolkit:
Voluntary worker management
Myeloma Patients Europe (MPE)



Objective:

To offer an informative tool for the management of voluntary workers in myeloma patient associations in Europe.

Structure:

Toolkit's objective

Myeloma patient associations defend patients' rights and carry out projects about aspects that institutions don't take into account or don't cover as they should, thus trying to improve affected people's quality of life and represent subjects of general interest.

Myeloma is still a scarcely known disease in Europe and it has serious effects on its patients. With scientific developments and improved treatments, myeloma has been made chronic and the number of patients that receive treatment and deal with the consequences of this illness has increased. Therefore, the creation of raising awareness campaigns, information and the setting up of support projects for all concerned require more and more people to get involved each day.

Patient associations direct their efforts to improving the quality of life, not just of the patients but also of the people that are involved in looking after and supporting them. As a patient association, you probably rely on fewer people and resources than you would like. Therefore, one of the main priorities must be to form a team of united and committed volunteers with whom to work and achieve the association's aims.

The "Voluntary worker management" toolkit of Myeloma Patients Europe (MPE) is a support resource for patient associations, and its purpose is to give guidance and information about the process of managing volunteers. This guide offers practical proposals and introduces a voluntary worker plan that will suit the circumstances of each organisation, leading to a greater social involvement in the achievement of your aims.

It offers an overview of issues you should bear in mind when you want to start up a volunteer programme and thus achieve maximum benefit for your organisation and for the patients you represent. The general idea is that you put a lot of thought into starting up, or into reinventing yourselves, in this field rigorously and responsibly, and strategies will be put forward for you to follow in a practical and suitable way.

The toolkit is organised in three main parts. The first, part examines the concept of the voluntary worker, the principles involved and the value that volunteers provide to non-profit organisations. The second part states the legal and ethical factors that patient associations must keep in mind in the volunteer sector. And the third part deals with the different phases of voluntary worker management: planning, internal regulation, searching for volunteers, selection, incorporation, monitoring and finishing.

You may opt to read only the sections most relevant to you, but for a complete understanding of the voluntary worker management we suggest you read the whole guide.



1. What is a voluntary worker?

1.1. Definition

A volunteer collaborates with a non-profit organisation freely and unselfishly (without receiving any material or financial retribution) devoting part of their time, continuously and responsibly, to take part in achieving the organisation's goals. This person shares the values and aims of the organisation, always carrying out its activity within the context of the organisation.

The volunteer sets out to help achieve the aims of the project, with which they must identify. Likewise, each volunteer aims to make a change in their communities' values, while achieving personal growth as a result of providing a valuable service to society by offering their time, resources and abilities.

Most non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are set up by volunteers, and thanks to them, the NGOs can grow, increase their effectiveness and reach a larger number of people.

Being a volunteer is a way of life, a way of actively making a commitment to improve aspects of the community that aren't covered. In the case of patient associations,

people usually want to collaborate because they themselves are the patients or because their friends or family are, because they have lived near the illness and its difficulties, and they want to join forces for anything and everything that involves improving today's and tomorrow's patients' quality of life.

NGOs are increasingly being managed by paid professionals, which causes a greater specialisation of the activities that are being carried out. This does not imply that the support of the voluntary activity should be set aside; with suitable planning, both can co-exist in perfect harmony.

As our society progresses our needs change, so your organisation will always need new talents and broad experience to help with a variety of tasks.

1.2. Volunteer motivation

The volunteer chooses the organisation in which to take part depending on his/her interests, values or even experiences, which in turn should suit the organisation's mission and values, so that common aims are pursued.

The volunteer's incentives are many and varied. There can be as many incentives as types of people that take interest in your organisation. Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate the most common in order to bear them in mind during the search, selection, admittance and the following up of the volunteers. This way, your team of volunteers will be able to adapt easier to your association, by offering a volunteer's experience more appropriate to their needs and preferences.

Some of the most idealistic motivations that encourage people to start as a volunteer are: feeling useful, making a difference, fighting injustice, defending social rights, feeling better about themselves, developing solidarity, forming part of a team, making new friends, getting to know other disciplines or social issues, making

the experiences that they have gone through useful, supporting people that are in the similar situation and raising social awareness.

More basic motivations may include: occupying free time, doing something for others, not getting bored, growing and developing as a person, mixing with other people, avoiding loneliness, satisfying curiosity, looking for work and compensating for losses in the past.

The kind of motivation that a volunteer has will have an influence on the relationship between volunteer and association, on his/her satisfaction and on his/her continuity in the association. By starting with a realistic assessment you will be able to offer a volunteer activity that suits your needs, and will receive the best co-operation.

The more satisfactory the organisation-volunteer relationship, the more successful the projects and the more productive the time put in.

1.3. What does the volunteer bring to the organisation?

The volunteers bring added value to the organisation. Today there are few financial and material resources for patient associations, so it is necessary to incorporate volunteer workers to help to achieve aims.

Working with volunteers requires time and effort from the association but it must be seen as an investment. They are giving their time, dedication, experience and knowledge, and they will be your ambassadors. It's not just about people that help with the day to day tasks, but about people who reflect the association's image, and they can help establish new projects, contacts and funding channels.

Some ways the volunteering co-ordinator can increase, renew and maintain the associate's motivation are:

- Stimulate the interaction of the participants by organising activities where they can get to know each other and work in teams. These activities don't always have to be part of a project, they could just be recreational.
- Encourage a sense of belonging by involving volunteers in decisions or changes in the organisation and keeping up a continuous and constant flow of communication between all involved.
- Recognise their achievements and what they are worth: give them positive feedback publicly and privately, as individuals and as a group. Feeling valued will benefit the group. Recognising each volunteer's distinctive capacities will help them to feel recognised as individuals.
- Adapt the tasks: not all volunteers will have the same capacities and neither will they be able to dedicate the same amount of time to the organisation. It's the organisation's job to be creative and, based on whatever each volunteer can contribute, adapt. This way you avoid making the volunteers feel frustrated for not being able to fulfil the organisation's expectations.
- Offer responsibilities appropriate to volunteers' interests. This will increase their commitment.
- Reporting the consequences of volunteers' actions, the goals they have achieved or even the compliments that the organisation receives will help to make tangible a job in which sometimes the benefits are only visible in the long-run and it will help them not to forget why they joined the organisation.

2. The legal and ethical framework

Each country of the European Union has different regulations that affect volunteer workers. While some have specific legislation that covers the legal relationship between association and the volunteer, in other cases it is regulated by, or implicit in, other laws. With the aim of adjusting the volunteer management of your association to the current legislation, you need to identify the rights and obligations that apply to you as well as to your volunteer workers. You can contact Myeloma Patient Europe (MPE) to find out which specific legal framework is best for you.

It is important to prepare an internal policy that shows the rights and obligations of your legislation, as well as its principles and values. It will be a valid reference for everybody that forms part of your association.

2.1. Internal policy: rights and obligations

It is necessary to lay down a personal framework that regulates a volunteer's activity in your organisation. These rules must be aimed at how to start the activity,

they will allow the processes to flow easier, they will provide assurance when it is necessary to make decisions and will help to regulate the relationship between volunteer and organisation in order to ensure the best results.

To establish a set of rules the organisation must consider the following points:

The organisation's rights and obligations:

RIGHTS

- To be able to count on a team of volunteers who comply with the internal policy.
- To choose the volunteers according to the profile that is the most suitable for the development of the activity.
- To regulate the activity according to the organisation's aims, mission and values.
- To end the collaboration with the voluntary workers if the organisation's requirements change or if they have violated the regulation in force at the time.

OBLIGATIONS

- To provide information about the internal policy to the volunteer.
- To provide a contract that regulates the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation.
- To have available an insurance policy for the volunteer's activity.
- To provide the material, training, advice and support necessary to carry out the activity.
- To carry out the necessary monitoring in order to ensure the achievement of the proposed targets.

The volunteer's rights and obligations ¹

RIGHTS

- To receive training, support and co-ordination from the organisation to be able to carry out their assigned activity, continuously.
- To be treated in a non-discriminatory way that respects their beliefs.
- To be actively involved in the organisation.
- To carry out their activity safely and with suitable insurance.
- To receive reimbursement of expenses that may occur as a consequence of the development of the activity.
- To be provided with the necessary materials to carry out the activity.
- To receive a badge from the organisation that identifies them as a volunteer.
- To receive respect and acknowledgement of the value of their contribution.

OBLIGATIONS

- To comply with the agreed commitments with the organisation, respecting its purposes and relevant legislation.
- To maintain confidentiality of all information resulting from the volunteer's activity.
- To refuse any kind of payment, financial or material, for the work done.
- To respect the rights of the beneficiaries of the activity.
- To take part in training set up for the exercise of the activity.
- To put specific inquiries forward to the competent professionals in the organisation.
- To represent the organisation's interests.
- To maintain the confidentiality of the information that they receive from patients and from the organisation.
- To represent the organisation responsibly.
- To abide by the organisation's internal policy on how to carry out their role and not go beyond their functions
- To correctly use the material and resources provided

¹ Based on article 6 and 7 Law 6/1996, of 15th January Spanish volunteer law

Processes to carry out to regulate the activity. There must be an internal protocol that will be carried out from the moment that the volunteer contacts the organisation which he/she wishes to join. You can find an example of such a protocol in the following point: Volunteer management.

Each organisation can establish its own legislation as long as it doesn't violate the essential rights and obligations of both volunteers and the association. Thinking about this point thoroughly is highly recommended as the more standardised the processes, the safer you will feel in the development of the activity.

Each volunteer must receive all this information before joining the organisation, and it is recommended to include it, as a reminder, in later training courses.

3. Volunteer co-ordinator

To achieve effective and rigorous management, it is necessary that your organisation has a volunteer co-ordinator. It is advisable for everybody from the organisation to take part in the planning, but for just one person to start up the plan. Depending on your possibilities, this person may dedicate himself/herself solely to the co-ordination of the voluntary workers, or may be able to combine it with other responsibilities.

The person appointed as co-ordinator will be able to rely on colleagues in the organisation for the implementation of the different tasks, but it is important that the person be responsible and the organisation's public face regarding these matters. This way the team of volunteers will always count on an easily recognisable figure to whom they can turn.

The volunteer co-ordinator must know the organisation's needs and the individual traits of each volunteer. This leading figure will act as a connecting link, be a point of reference, provide security and look out for the volunteers and the successful implementation of the tasks.

The duties of a volunteering co-ordinator²:

- To set targets
- To lead the team and represent the organisation as well as the volunteers
- To look out for common interests
- To prepare the volunteer plan.
- To organisation and manage the team of volunteers.
- To make communication flow
- To encourage personal development
- To motivate
- To follow up communications from volunteers
- To assess
- To conduct the selection process
- To train
- To encourage cohesion
- To welcome and dismiss the volunteers

² Based on Volunteer Development Agency, 2001

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The volunteer co-ordinator must adapt the suggested steps from this toolkit to the needs of the organisation, its managerial capacities, and experience. The idea of this guide is to offer a view that more quantity does not always mean better quality. You must think about your capabilities and resources in order to get the best performance of the team of volunteers you have and make them feel looked after and co-ordinated with the upmost thoroughness and quality. Be imaginative and change with the times and adjust to whatever each person can offer to the organisation thus ensuring that each volunteer gives the best of themselves.

A good co-ordinator must have great knowledge and understanding of the organisation, and must also be dynamic, empathetic, sociable, strong at team management and organisation, trained in the social field, flexible and creative.

4. Management of the volunteers

4.1. Planning

Volunteer workers are an essential tool that allows associations to expand the scope of their activities and to have at their disposal more resources in order to increase the quality and quantity of the association's projects. The volunteer's involvement requires, on the organisation's behalf, the responsibility of offering the necessary resources so that the volunteer's experience responds to both parties' commitments and is in agreement with the entity's aims. Therefore it is necessary to come up with a strategic programme that will help you to pinpoint how to start the volunteer's collaboration with your association.

If you devise a programme for the volunteer workers, it will provide a frame of reference to help make decisions, regarding the necessary resources, the desired outcome and the steps to follow. The programme is a flexible document that must be made up like a reference guide for the management of the volunteers. It is a "road map" where you can express how you would like each phase to be carried out and what you want to obtain from it. In the following points you will find information that will guide you in designing a specific programme for your entity.

4.1.1. Volunteers: what do we need?

Before looking for volunteers, think about how many you need and for what purpose. It is important to have contemplated the tasks that are top priority for your association, so you can apply it to the search for volunteers.

It is just as important to identify the tasks that are going to be carried out by the volunteers as assigning a series of requirements and responsibilities to each task. Not everyone is able to do all the tasks, so it is important to know beforehand what you are looking for.

What can a volunteer do in your association?

Here are some of the different tasks that can be carried out in your organisation, as well as some requirements that the tasks entail:

- **Emotional support for patients and family members.** This requires active listening, emotional stability and the ability to handle difficult situations.
- **Regular distribution of information to hospitals, health centres, chemists etc.** This requires availability during office hours and communication skills.
- **Member and volunteer recruitment.** This requires communication and social skills.
- **Customer service on information desks and logistical support at conferences and at workshops.** This requires availability on specific days and communication skills.
- **Involvement in the devising and development of projects.** This requires professional experience in preparing and executing projects.
- **Support on social networks.** This requires expertise in social media and communication.

4.1.2. Volunteers: what do we want to achieve?

This point concerns the drafting of our strategic programme. You may not want to rely on volunteers to achieve all your aims, since it is usual for some projects to be set up and started off by professionals. That is why it is important to have previously thought everything through. Your aims must be based on the mission and values of the organisation and depending on these points, activities or projects can be established in which the volunteers are able to take part.

The projects that you are thinking about letting the volunteers take part in must be clear and viable given the characteristics of your organisation, and a noticeable benefit for those affected and who you represent.

Depending on the description of these projects you can set the means to be able to carry them out. You will be able to determine the correct way for the volunteers to execute their roles and the traits that each volunteer must have to cover each position.

4.2. The search for volunteers

This phase starts by assessing the message that you want to convey as well as the channels that will be used to achieve an increase in the number of people coming forward.

What would be a good message to recruit volunteers?

- ✓ **COHERENT:** It must convey the association's values, aims and principles, and be coherent. It must also be respectful to the group that the association represents.

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- ✓ **NOTICEABLE:** People must be able to relate to it, it must attract attention and make people want to get acquainted with the organisation, and involved in it.
- ✓ **MOTIVATING:** It must recognise the volunteer's valuable contribution and get across the message that volunteering is a satisfying learning experience.
- ✓ **EXPLANATORY:** If you are looking for volunteers for a specific project or position, the message must explain the duties involved as well as the minimum requirements (previous experience, skills and capabilities, availability, etc)

Here are some ways to encourage people and institutions to collaborate with your association:

- Social networks. Platforms like Twitter or Facebook allow you to reach thousands of people directly and freely. Messages connected to the volunteers tend to be shared, multiplying their reach, so don't hesitate to use social networks to get volunteers interested in your entity or in a specific project.
- Web page. An area of the organisation's website intended for the volunteer workers transmits the participative and open character of the association. If you do not have one, a suggestion could be to encourage people to become volunteers through the news that you publish.
- Conferences, workshops and activities. Digital or face-to-face meetings are always a good way to thank volunteers for their work and invite attendees to help further.
- Volunteers. They are the ambassadors of your association and they are able to help you recruit more people to help you.
- Members. They already collaborate with the association, but may not have considered getting more involved. An option could be to send them an e-mail

or a letter informing them about the volunteering vacancies you have on offer.

- Volunteering platforms. There are internet pages that put volunteers in touch with organisations that need support with a given project.
- Corporate volunteer workers. More and more companies are collaborating with NGOs through volunteer work by their employees. It's a good option when you need to involve collaborators for a project of the association.

4.3. Selecting volunteers

The selecting process must be considered bidirectional, since the entity and the person concerned come into contact to evaluate the adequacy of working together. Therefore, it is a joint decision to see if the candidate achieves to become a volunteer in the entity or not.

Below we have listed different phases of the selection process. It may seem an exhausting process to involve volunteers in your association, but the proposal encourages reflection and previous training of the people so that only those that are really committed to your cause and that meet the requirements that you are looking for, continue. However, if you need a simpler procedure, keep in mind that the fundamental pillar should be the thorough interview that you will find in the third point of this section.

4.3.1. The initial contact

The selection starts with an initial contact of the association and the person interested in joining your team of collaborators. It is important to answer their

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application as soon as possible. The application may arrive via e-mail, telephone, social networks, a form from the web page or in person, but it is convenient to get in contact with the person in question to set up an initial introductory meeting that conveys enthusiasm and incentive to the applicant.

The purpose of this brief conversation (10-15 minutes) is:

1. To thank them for the interest they have shown.
2. To briefly introduce them to the aims of the association and the way it works.
3. To listen to the reasons they give for wanting to join the organisation's volunteering programme.
4. To take some personal information and fill out a volunteer's application form including, at least, their full name, e-mail address, telephone number, occupation, incentive and connection with myeloma.
5. To make arrangements for the next briefing.

This first conversation will allow both parties to get to know each other and the applicant to feel motivated to take part in the briefing before becoming officially a part of the team as a volunteer. It could also be the end of the selection process, because the association's proposals do not meet the candidate's expectations, or because the candidate doesn't comply with the organisation's minimum requirements.

4.3.2. Basic training

It is convenient to complete the basic training before making them officially a part of the team as a volunteer, since your goal is for the person to have a thorough knowledge about the association and the existing volunteering options, in order to assess whether their concerns and expectations are met.

Furthermore, it is a way for the organisation to find out beforehand the degree of commitment and responsibility the person has with volunteering. Keep in mind that, sometimes, people decide to become volunteers without previously thinking about if they really want to or really can do it. This can create more problems than solutions for the association, through recurring breaches in the agreement between the entity and the collaborator. The participation of the future volunteer during the briefing will show a commitment with the association which lays a foundation for a productive partnership.

Even so the basic training can also be included in the INCORPORATION PHASE as part of the basic training that the volunteer must have to be able to carry out his/her duties properly.

This session can be done individually but is always more appropriate to do it in groups on a regular basis as it allows you to bring several people who are interested in becoming volunteers together, strengthening the feeling of belonging to a team.

It won't always be possible to do this session in person, especially if your association is at a national level, so it is a good idea to set up online sessions that allow the interaction of the participants. A platform you can use for this is gotowebinar, which allows you to make a presentation supported by PowerPoint. Furthermore, you will be able to use the recorded session in the future. You could even upload it on to your web page, so that people who are interested in becoming a volunteer of your association can see it.



IDEAS

Share

Brand

social media

customer communication





What should a basic training session include?

- The association's history, structure, vision of the future, mission, values and aims.
- Work areas: projects, services
- Volunteer workers: concept and ethical principles
- The volunteer's rights and obligations
- The volunteer's options: duties, features and requirements
- Question time

4.3.3. Thorough interview

After the initial contact and the basic training, it is advisable to conduct a thorough personal interview, in order to get to know the future volunteer a little better, determine whether he/she is a suitable candidate given the traits of the association's volunteer workers, as well as to point them in the right direction for specific duties depending on their capacities, personal traits and preferences. Likewise, it is an opportunity to offer detailed information about the association so that he/she can decide whether it will meet his/her expectations.

In the event that, after the interview, you think he/she is not an ideal candidate, explain to him/her that every organisation must look out for both the volunteers and the patients, for whom we are not just responsible, but whom we represent. Their expectations may not suit the reality of your association. You may be able to suggest alternative organisations for which their profile may be more suitable.

Aims of the volunteer's selection interview:

- Provide information about the entity
 - Mission
 - Values
 - Types of activities
 - Describe the volunteer's function
 - The volunteer's role

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- Talk about the conditions of the activity
 - The volunteer's dedication to commit
 - Schedules
 - Volunteer insurance
- Know what motivates the volunteer
 - Figure out the volunteer's interests
 - Find out what motivates him/her and what his/her expectations regarding the association are
 - Favourite tasks
- Get to know their skills, experiences and knowledge
 - Training
 - Work experience
 - Experience as a volunteer

The selection criteria could be³:

- Do their expectations correspond with those of the organisation?

³ Based on the manual for the management of volunteers "Obra social La Caixa"

- Do they have enough knowledge to carry out the tasks that they will be entrusted with?
- Is the commitment that will be needed clear to them?
- Do they fit in with the organisational structure?
- Are they highly motivated?
- Do they identify with the organisation's aims and mission?

4.4 Incorporating the volunteer

Once the candidate has passed the personal interview and the appropriate basic training, the incorporating process of the volunteer into your organisation begins. It is important to think of it as a process as it does not only involve signing a contract or arranging civil liability insurance, but it also covers how the volunteer will adapt to the organisation and vice versa.

4.4.1. Official registration of the volunteer

The official registration of the volunteer involves the following steps:

- **Giving the volunteer a welcome letter signed by the president of your organisation and the person responsible for the voluntary workers.**
- **Giving the volunteer a voluntary worker's manual**

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This manual contains all the information about the organisation that they will already know from the interview and the basic training:

- General information about the organisation: mission, aims, values, regulations and an organisational chart
- Its current and previous projects
- Different duties of the volunteers in the organisation
- The association's internal legislation: The volunteer's and the organisation's rights and obligations
- Advice to help carry out the different functions
- Links to current legislation concerning volunteers
- Information about insurance
- Schedules, useful addresses and contact details of related people

• **Volunteer's contract**

This is a contract in which both parties commit to fulfil the functions, rights and obligations that have been agreed on. With this contract the association also commits to look out for the volunteer and guarantee to set up activities with the stipulated terms.

This contract may be valid for as long as you think is appropriate, though one or two years is ideal to evaluate the volunteer's continuity. Two copies will be drawn up to be signed by both parties, one will be kept by the volunteer and the other will be filed in your organisation.

- **Proof of identity**

The volunteer is given a card with their personal details and photograph, so that he/she will be indentified within your organisation, becoming part of it.

- **Official registration in the organisation**

Once the volunteer´s contract is signed, you must officially register them in your files, by registering their personal information and the functions that the volunteer will carry out

4.4.2. Welcoming the volunteer

When the volunteer starts collaborating with the organisation, he/she is one more on the team, and joins forces with the others towards achieving the aims of the association. They must be aware of everything they bring to the institution, so the flow of information, monitoring and training has to be constant and two-way.

These first moments of welcoming the volunteers into your organisation are important to make sure the volunteer gets a sense of the enthusiasm and motivation with which your team works to make the patients´ lives that much better. The warmth and friendliness will make it easier for this person to feel, as soon as possible, integrated in the group.

Once all these formalities have been carried out, the volunteer´s phase of reception begins, now as a member of your organisation.

It will be important that they know all the members of the organisation and the functions that each one carries out. In the same way, you must look after and accompany the volunteer in their first activities until he/she gets to meet and feels integrated with the rest of the team.

It would be advisable at this time to arrange a more thorough follow-up to ensure they fit in well.

4.5. Following up on the volunteers

4.5.1. Support and guidance

To be able to perform their functions, the team of volunteers will need continuous support and guidance, especially as the volunteer may continuously be in contact with patients and people affected by myeloma.

Being in contact with difficult situations may cause doubts or they may even feel especially affected by particular circumstances.

Having the volunteering co-ordinator near will make it easier for the volunteers to be able to resolve their doubts and it will make them feel they can count on someone to support them while they are performing their tasks. Conversely, this closeness will allow you to see, at any point, whether they are getting worn down emotionally, so that you can resolve any problems that they may have.

To carry out a detailed follow-up, we suggest you have on hand individual and group follow-up sheets where you can register your actions in this sense and where you can jot down their strengths, areas where they can improve, and any incidents. In this way you can keep a record.

The training activities are also a good opportunity to evaluate and monitor.





4.5.2. Continuous training

The volunteer's job requires a range of skills and extensive knowledge that will get more specialised as they get more involved in the everyday activity of the association. It is the organisation's obligation to offer adequate resources so that the volunteer can develop their job as ideally as possible to benefit patients with myeloma and their family members. For this reason it is convenient to carry out periodic training programmes related to the volunteer's competence. These sessions can be given by collaborating professionals, such as psychologists, doctors, social workers or nurses, depending on the subject of the training. And it can be given in person – this has the advantage that you can promote motivation and the feeling of belonging of the team – or virtual – this has the advantage of getting to more people and it can be recorded for use afterwards.

What kind of training can you set up?

- Use of social networks. Recipients: volunteers who are interested in diffusing the association's activities and services
- Emotional management in difficult situations. Recipients: volunteers that work in direct contact with patients and family members.
- Organising conferences and events. Recipients: volunteers that are good at co-ordinating raising awareness, support or money raising acts
- Co-ordinating support groups. Recipients: volunteers who promote creating groups between patients and family members

4.5.3. Recognition

A volunteer collaborates in a selfless manner because they feel that the association's principles and values are their own. They do not need any material compensation because the foundation of their work, in this case, is solidarity with the people that live with myeloma.

Even so, the association must recognise the work of its team of volunteers, awarding them the value that they deserve, with the aim of educating society about the importance of solidarity and also motivating them to stay involved with the organisation.

Recognition can be formal or informal, the second option being more important as it is daily and personal. Showing interest in volunteers' concerns, acknowledging their contributions, and involving them in projects are ways of recognising their role and making them feel, day by day, integrated in the organisation.

Formal recognition is public, so it affects the association's external image. It can be made through an official act or through communication platforms such as social networks, newsletters, a web page and mail. This formal recognition can be made to a group of volunteers or a select few. In either case it will be necessary to explain why they are being recognised so the volunteers feel comfortable with the acknowledgement. A formal recognition to a person or group of people must be properly thought through to avoid misunderstandings or upsets between the volunteers. All functions are important, and this must always be emphasised.

Even though the formal method is valid, it is only advisable if followed up by a continuous acknowledgement all year round.

4.5.4. Continuous assessment

One of the most relevant aspects of carrying out an adequate assessment is the possibility of evaluating the proper operation of the different aspects that make up our project of volunteer workers, implementation of the activities, and the day to day work of our team of volunteers.

To carry out this assessment you can use different routes, such as e-mail, interviews, and meetings. You can do this individually or in a group. We advise you to put together a short questionnaire that allows you to obtain quick information from the projects that the volunteers are carrying out, and establish, previously, how often you are going to request these assessments. In the case of the assessments that are carried out in meetings, we recommend you to have group dynamics that make communication and the flow of information easier, always in a constructive way.

It would be positive if you could evaluate all the areas concerning the volunteers. Below we have listed some aspects that are the aims of assessment:

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- Project management: organisation, relationship with different members of the team, material used.
- Information: flow of information and communication, specific training for each volunteer.
- Execution: the volunteer's insight into how the project is executed, and the benefits perceived by the individuals involved.
- The volunteer's personal satisfaction from carrying out the tasks
- Group cohesion
- Personal assessments

Continuous monitoring of the volunteers will allow you to constantly evaluate their involvement and work.

4.6. Ending the volunteer's involvement

Finishing the volunteer's activity is a decision that can come from either side, and it must be managed properly so as to be able to learn from the volunteer's experience, to thank them for their contribution and to end the collaboration on good terms.

The volunteer deciding to leave. This can happen for different reasons, for example feeling unmotivated, a disagreement with the organisation, difficulties in combining volunteering with their professional or personal lives or the desire to join another organisation. If this situation arises it is worthwhile having a meeting with the person in order to:

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- Find out their reasons for leaving the association
- Show them support and respect for their decision
- Talk about their experience as a volunteer, to evaluate what went well and what did not
- Thank them and acknowledge their work as a volunteer
- Warmly say goodbye and leave the door open for future collaboration

Volunteer dismissal: The volunteer must fulfil the duties and standards assumed when he/she joined the organisation. In case of repeated breaches, inappropriate attitudes or inappropriate acts that endanger the image and functioning of the association, the organisation has the option of putting an end to the volunteer collaboration. As discussed above, meetings with the volunteer may improve mutual understanding and redirect his/her behaviour or attitude towards the proper performance of his/her work. But if you have been unable to resolve the difficulties, reach an agreement, a sincere dialogue should be held with the person to communicate the decision to continue without their collaboration, giving the reasons for it.

This decision must be considered thoroughly as it can have implications inside and outside the organisation, and the decision must be taken in the context of the values, aims and recipients of the association. If any of them are put at risk by any act of a volunteer that isn't willing to change, ending the collaboration is probably the best option.

