

# Strategy and Program of Volunteering in the National Roma Centrum

2015-2018

Volunteering is an expression of the individual's involvement in their community. Participation, trust, solidarity and reciprocity, grounded in a shared understanding and a sense of common obligations, are mutually reinforcing values at the heart of governance and good citizenship. Volunteering is not a nostalgic relic of the past. It is our first line of defense against social atomization in the globalized world. Today, maybe more than ever before, caring and sharing are a necessity, not a charitable act.

Program of Volunteers in the United Nations, 2000

## Introduction

Volunteering as a voluntary form of assistance to the others makes the mission and task different on the individual plan of the individual and collective perception of the environment and the community to which it belongs. In the last two decades in the world there has been significantly increased interest in volunteering on one side and unambiguous support from governments on the other hand and more and more prominent is the fact that volunteering is an important factor for the overall development of society. General Assembly of the United Nations in 1985 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December declared the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development. On the other hand the year of 2001 was declared the International Year of Volunteers, which eventually resulted in the implementation of the resolution and recommendations on how the governments and the United Nations can and should support volunteering. Starting that year, many countries in Europe implemented measures, plans and policies for the development and upgrading of volunteering as part of the overall system and consequently the European Union declared 2011 the European Year of Volunteering.

The term volunteering, voluntarism and voluntary activities refer to a number of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, undertaken by own free will, for the common public good without cash prize as a major motivating factor<sup>1</sup>.

The competition of getting volunteers to the nonprofit market is growing. Volunteers expect more in terms of what is offered to them by the organization. Through the preparation of a good plan to attract volunteers, we can provide a sufficient number of volunteers who are committed to fulfilling their obligations.

Strategy and Program for Volunteering in the National Roma Centrum 2015-2018 has been developed based on the Law on Volunteering (Official Gazette no. 85/2007 year 161/2008 it), Rulebook on keeping records of volunteer work (Official Gazette of RM 128/2007) Rules on the manner, procedure and

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the UN Recommendations on support for volunteering, p.3, A / RES / 56/38, January 10, 2002

records for granting approval for volunteering of a foreign person in the RM work (Official Gazette of RM 128/2007) and in accordance with the Strategic Development Plan 2015-2018, the NRC, the Statute and other acts of the NRC as an organization that advocates for access to fundamental rights, especially the Roma community. The mission of the NRC through mobilization and strengthening of people using advocacy on the rights and participatory approach, will support its constituents (Roma and others who live under social risk) to fulfill their basic rights and enjoy their freedoms as equal in the society is fundamental to this strategy and program of Volunteering in the National Roma Centre.

Priority of our joint work with the volunteers will be to jointly develop a long-term partnership, to jointly expand horizons and learn from each other with mutual trust, honesty and commitment to building a society in which every individual will be able to enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by national and international norms. Recognizing these values NRC welcomes all who wish to jointly build participatory and inclusive society.

Since its foundation in 2005, the National Roma Centrum (NRC) develops as an advocate and supporter of Macedonia's Romani population, and all community groups living in social risk or disease, poverty, face discrimination, segregation or are vulnerable and live on the brink of social and economic marginalization. NRC is an inclusive organization that seeks to meet the interests and rights of their constituents by building international networks and support groups, by taking a seat at the table of national and local governance representing the rights and interests of those who require it with working on the spot to strengthen people through guidance and education on their rights that are guaranteed by law.

National Roma Centre from 2005 until today creates opportunity CSO to monitor the extent to which national and local policies address inclusion and equal opportunities for Roma and how the social, economic and political needs and aspirations of the Roma community are addressed.

According to findings of the NRC and in accordance with our laws we came to the following positive indicators of why we need volunteers such as saving money, teaching and training of persons, workplace enthusiasm, new ideas, positive attitude and desire, affiliating in the organization and introduction to the work ethic of the NRC. The volunteering strategy consistently follows the strategic priorities of the NRC from 2015 to 2018 defined in three priority areas such as home and decent living conditions, access to quality health services and information, equal opportunities of access to justice and the rule of law.

### **Conditions and manner of performing volunteering in National Roma Centrum**

With this Strategy and Program for volunteering at NRC the conditions and manner of performing volunteering, the rights and obligations of the volunteer and of the NRC are regulated. Volunteering is an activity of importance to the whole community, contribution from people to people, important characteristic which contributes to the development of humane and egalitarian democratic society.

The term volunteering stands for voluntary provision of personal services, knowledge and skills and / or performing other activities in favor of the National Roma Centrum, without compensation or other personal gain. A volunteer in the NRC may be a citizen of the RM or a foreign person in accordance with applicable regulations of the Republic of Macedonia.

Conditions that need to fulfill volunteer:

- Be aged 18-35 years
- Find secure housing on his own, support for living expenses, insurance, visa and travel costs (if needed)
- Regulate the stay in RM in accordance with the applicable legislation in case of a foreign national
- Have completed at least secondary education
- To submit a notarized statement that has not been convicted in the past (if a foreign person)

Strategy and Program for volunteering NRC aims to implement and synchronize these steps:

Expressing interest in volunteering and manner of reporting of potential volunteers

NRC as an organization in accordance with the Strategic Development Plan 2015-2018 NRC implements programs taking into account the external environment and the factors that have an influence and are shaped according to the needs and priorities of the constituents of the NRC - Roma and marginalized and vulnerable people living in social risk, regardless of their ethnicity, age, religion or gender.

NRC is based on the following values:

- Representation based on the right of the powerless, the poor, the disadvantaged, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or gender;
- Influencing policy and decision-making, for a better today and enjoyment of rights of all people;
- Listening and respecting each other and our constituents, as we work together to achieve mutually beneficial results;
- Diversity is power and force that unites us;
- We work with enthusiasm, appreciation and constructivism, while being open-minded towards others;
- NRC is transparent, inclusive, responsive and accountable organization, acting with integrity towards its constituents and stakeholders in general;

Quality, excellence and honesty are traits that are owned by the NRC and its staff;

- Learning, training, mentoring and professional development are highly appreciated by the team of NRC.

All persons are eligible to apply for volunteering in the NRC and that share the values of NRC are welcome to help us achieve our vision – Supporting the development of a society where all people are equal and have equal opportunities to enjoy the freedoms and rights.

NRC recognizes the vital importance of enthusiasm and expertise of each individual, the NRC integration is a process, not an event, and in this direction we are ready to work together to strengthen the community and with constituents and people who are willing to volunteer in the organization.

When a person expresses interest in volunteering, the first step is to complete a volunteer application available on the website of NRC ([www.nationalromacentrum.org](http://www.nationalromacentrum.org)) or in hard copy available at the headquarters of the organization.

Application form contains: Personal data

Name Address Phone numbers (work and home)

Date and place of birth

Education and special training

Qualifications:

Life experience (marital status, work, etc.)

Other volunteer experience (specify where in that period and which target group)

Areas of special interest

Availability (days / nights / hours per week)

Where learned about the opportunity to volunteer in NRC

In which period you want to volunteer, not less than 2 months and no longer than 6 months (Specify day, month, year).

Within which program of the NRC you want to volunteer (choose one of the offered)

Access to justice;

Right to health and advocacy to improve the health of Roma;

Housing

Preferably recommendations (legal entities, educational and / or academic institutions, civil society organizations)

Interested persons for volunteering in the NRC should send the completed application to volunteer, together with CV and motivation letter of maximum 300 words.

### **Volunteer selection**

In NRC are welcomed all individuals who are committed to contribute to the fulfillment of the strategic priority objectives of the organization with their knowledge, experience and skills.

During a calendar year NRC can receive up to 4 volunteers (nationals or non-nationals) who report volunteering calls for volunteering which will be announced by NRC on its website two times during a calendar year (March and September). For this purpose, the NRC has established a committee for the selection of volunteers made up of three (3) members: Executive Director, Head of Department of Legal Affairs and Advocacy and Head of Department of administration and finance.

Members of the selection committee decided to record a decision which is signed by all members when the application for volunteering, CV, motivational letter from the applicant are reviewed and interview is conducted with the applicant for volunteering. The interview with the applicant for volunteering is conducted at least 8 days before deciding on a choice by all or a member of the Commission for the selection of volunteers. After the selection, the commission for the selection of volunteers will inform applicants for volunteering 10 days the latest, after the election. Selected volunteers can volunteer in NRC from 2 to 6 months.

NRC is obligated with the volunteer – a national person to sign a volunteering contract in written form, if the volunteering lasts more than 40 hours per month. NRC may sign a volunteering contract with a volunteer – a national person for volunteering that lasts less than 40 hours per month. If the NRC does not sign a contract with a national person- volunteer for voluntary work that lasts less than 40 hours per month, then a written document signed by both parties which specifies the rights and obligations of the volunteer and the NRC for volunteers for whom there is no written agreement is necessary. NRC is also obliged with a volunteer - a foreign person to enter into an agreement in writing for volunteering for all volunteer services.

Volunteering contract must contain the following elements:

1) Parties:

- Organizer of the volunteering (title and seat)
- Volunteer (name, surname, address of residence or of stay);

2) The subject of the contract;

3) Place of volunteering and duration of volunteering, but if there is no permanent residence then only the places where the services are provided need to be stated;

- 4) Volunteer activities or services provided;
- 5) Special rights and obligations;
- 6) The way of insurance during the volunteering and coming back from the place of volunteering and other activities provided during volunteering;
- 7) Previously agreed expenses for the volunteering and the manner of compensating them;
- 8) Manner of termination and termination of the contract for volunteering
- 9) Date and place of signing the contract.

NRC is obligated to keep records for the volunteering of all the volunteers according to the Regulation on the manner of keeping records of volunteer work (Official Gazette of RM 128/2007). Manual or electronic evidence shall contain information such as:

- serial number;
- personal data of the volunteer (name and surname, ID number, place of residence or place of residence);
- number of contract with a national person;
- number of contract with a foreign, non-national person;
- a written document signed by both parties which specifies the rights and obligations of the volunteer and organizer of volunteering for the volunteers for which there is no written contract that is signed;
- duration of the volunteering;
- duration of volunteer hours per month;
- Type and duration of the training that the volunteer had during the volunteering and
- signature of the volunteer and the person authorized to represent and seal.

If the volunteer is a foreign person NRC is obliged to submit a request for granting approval for volunteering of foreign persons to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Along with the application NRC should submit the following documents:

- contract for volunteering;
- volunteering program;
- document proving the identity of the foreigner;
- a statement that he/she is not punished for an offense;

- a copy of the registration in the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia or the competent court of the organizer of the volunteer work and
- the amount and method of covering travel costs and accommodation costs of the volunteer.

NRC is obligated to:

- provide conditions for performing the volunteering according to the law and the contract for volunteering,
- issue to the volunteer a volunteer booklet for volunteering and in it provide data stipulated by this law,
- provide materials and assets for performing the volunteering;
- provide payment of the previously agreed expenses,
- provide confidentiality of data and protection of privacy,
- provide other conditions stipulated by this law or for which they are mutually agreed and
- provide insurance from professional diseases and injury at work during the volunteering, according to the regulations on pension and disability insurance regulations for health insurance, if it is agreed upon.

Based on the costs associated with volunteer work specified in the contract, no personal income tax is to be paid in accordance with the Law on Personal Income Tax.

### 3. Rights and obligations of the volunteer

The volunteer is entitled:

- in writing to receive a description of the rights and obligations to be fulfilled and be familiar with the conditions related to the time of volunteering before starting the volunteering,
- Be familiar with the general acts of the organizer of the services, i.e. those parts that relate to voluntary service, for which he/she is engaged,
- use means of protection at work in accordance with the regulations on safety at work,
- leave of absence during the volunteering if there are justified reasons,
- daily rest,
- Be informed and consulted when deciding on the manner of provision of services,
- to compensation of the previously agreed expenses related to volunteering and planed the Treaty on volunteering

- protection of privacy and personal data.

The volunteer is obligated to:

- inform the NRC for illness or other reasons that prevent the provision of services
- provide service according to the law, volunteering contract and the general acts of the organizer that he was previously introduced to,
- give services personally and directly;
- participate in training, in order to provide quality of service,
- store confidential data or classified information to the NRC, which he/she was introduced to before giving the service;
- notify the NRC about the harmful consequences that he/she is familiar with and which may damage the NRC, himself or others.

The volunteer has the right to a volunteer booklet which is a public document and contains data on the type and duration of volunteering and the type of training that the volunteer was trained on during the volunteering.

### **Way of volunteering and orientation according to the Strategy and Program for volunteering NRC 2015-2018**

All selected volunteers must spend enough time in the process of training and orientation, so that they become completely familiar with the idea, mission, vision and functional structure of the NRC. During the acceptance of the volunteer and the orientation and its emphasis, a full explanation of the strategic objectives and their implementation will be given. Special emphasis will be given to the description of work tasks which will target in a way, two-way information and help the volunteer and the team of NRC meet better. The volunteer will be familiar with the statute, the annual program of work Rules, Guidelines for policy work of the NRC and annual plans for the documentation archive.

Candidates for volunteering in the application for volunteering must indicate their aspirations in achieving one of the strategic goals of the NRC in which they would participate based on their knowledge, skills and experience. The actions in which the volunteer will be involved for the duration of volunteering in the NRC will depend on the choice of priority area. Priority areas in the NRC Strategic Development Plan 2015-2018, are:

- Decent Home and Living Conditions
- Access to high quality health services and information
- Equal opportunity for access to justice and the rule of law



Under each of these areas NRC will act in accordance with its defined values and beliefs and to achieving a better life for its constituents, at the same time continuing to strengthen its role as advocate and position on national and international level.

Each volunteer will be assigned a mentor for logistical support by the coordinators of NRC programs, depending on which program he is going to volunteer.

#### *Volunteers for a decent home and living conditions*

If the volunteer chooses to volunteer in the field of housing they can get acquainted closer with the development and implementation of a systematic approach to support Roma living in Macedonia, as well as other vulnerable, marginalized people living in social risk, to address their questions with legalization of property / house, and fulfill their rights to decent housing by supporting access to water, electricity, sanitation and other utility requirements of today's modern society.

Prospective volunteers should properly understand and subsequently implement policies to achieve this goal, which will primarily include measures to advocacy for the right to housing, which is in accordance with basic standards concerning the right to adequate housing (available services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, the habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy and affordable housing costs, access to water, electricity, sewerage and other utilities of contemporary society).

Within the volunteering, volunteers can be involved in providing direct support, education and empowerment of target users on their legal rights and active policy measures, sensitize the public using the power of the media and social networks on substandard conditions in which people live, which leads to their social segregation and even exclusion.

Within the housing as a strategic objective of the NRC program and **Decent home and living conditions** the volunteer can:

- Participate in creating a framework for advocacy for the right to adequate housing at the national and international levels,
- Participate in data collection analysis to housing problems of the Roma, using primary and secondary research data,
- Participate in open forums and public events in various places in Macedonia and abroad,
- Participate in workshops with Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable communities,
- Participate in site visits by the NRC.

#### *Volunteers for access to high quality health services and information*

In terms of the second strategic target that includes tasks for setting up a system that supports access to quality health care and social services for Roma in Macedonia, as well as other citizens living under social risk, volunteers will need to know in detail the national policies and specific strategic objectives of

the NRC as an organization as they would be part of it. The position of the NRC as a reliable partner for social dialogue and commitment to national and local decision-makers on the issue of access to high quality health care and services will be explained to them in detail.

Within the right to health as a strategic objective of the NRC **Program and access to high quality health services and information** the volunteer can:

- Participate in creating a framework for advocacy for the right to health at national and international level,
- Participate in data collection analysis for Identification of barriers to access to quality health care and services for Roma and other marginalized groups,
- Participate on forums and public events to inform the Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable communities affected by limited access to quality health and social services
- Participate in workshops with Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable communities,
- Participate in site visits by the NRC.

#### *Volunteers for equal opportunity of access to justice and the rule of law*

As part of volunteering in the NRC, the third strategic objective of the NRC will certainly be included, where the volunteers will have the opportunity to be informed on how to achieve equal opportunities of access to justice and the rule of law. They will have the opportunity to be informed about the work of NEC in terms of the support and promotion of equal access to justice for socially unprotected and neglected citizens through strategic advocacy and activism.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to follow the process of promoting and monitoring the transparency, accountability and integrity of government; promote equal access to justice (judicial and administrative proceedings); and public outreach for vulnerable groups and disadvantaged Roma community in Macedonia. They can also be introduced to the use of media advocacy as a form to alert and to keep the focus of the general public and decision makers and policies of importance of equal access to justice and the rule of law.

Within the right to justice as a strategic objective of the NRC program and equal opportunity of access to justice and the rule of law the volunteer can:

- Participate in creating a framework for advocacy for the right of access to justice at national and international level,
- Participate in data collection analysis to identify the obstacles to access to justice for Roma and other marginalized groups,
- Participate on forums and public events to inform the Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable communities affected by limited access to justice

- Participate in workshops with Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable communities,
- Participate in site visits by the NRC.

Volunteers from all programs could be included in the exchange of experiences, writing proposals, increasing the visibility of NRC and lobbying Networking NRC.

## **Evaluation**

The evaluation process in the NRC will take place in a manner that will primarily ensure the systematic collection of information. The evaluation determines the degree of achievement of the main objective, the working methods and the use of resources. It helps in planning and provides recommendations for the upcoming activities. Periodic evaluation of volunteering provides quality and meets the standards. The evaluation will be carried out by one of the members of the Committee depending on a predetermined list. It is important to identify the reasons for the evaluation and how and in which way to engage volunteers in this process. The objectives of the evaluation can improve service, gather information for future planning, and identify the achievements and accountability of volunteers. The evaluation reveals how well the plans were prepared and measures the extent to which the activities have achieved the goals. Formal information for analysis is all completed questionnaires from volunteers and staff. The information collected by evaluation, helps when planning budgets and determining the number of volunteers needed to implement some future activities and increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

Each volunteer will have to submit a written monthly report to the executive team that actually coordinates volunteers (Executive Director, Head of Department of Legal Affairs and Advocacy and Head of Department of Administration and financing). During the period of one calendar year, the executive team of NRC will prepare evaluation report for each volunteer, which will be submitted to the Management Board in order to measure the impact, outcomes, utilization, process and importance of the organization on one side. After completion of volunteering each volunteer will fill an evaluation sheet and deliver it to the NRC, in order to measure the impact, effects and importance of volunteering for the volunteer on the other side.

NRC understands evaluation as a two-way process which will determine the impact caused within the organization, as well as the volunteer equally. All this will contribute to the NRC to highlight the added value of volunteering in the implementation of its mission and to have ownership over this organizational value.

The significance of volunteerism has been expressed by the thought of the great author and political activist Helen Keller: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

