

Te Rautaki mō Whanaungatanga

A National Strategy to Support Volunteering for Recent Migrants



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Whiria te tangata. Weaving the people together.

Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) has developed the recent migrant volunteering strategy to improve the experiences of recent migrant volunteers and promote migrant volunteering best-practice across the whole sector. The strategy will support the volunteering sector towards inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering with recent migrants. This strategy is informed by the experiences of recent migrant volunteers shared in surveys, focus groups, and during migrant volunteering workshops held around the country as part of Volunteering New Zealand's broader Migrant Volunteering project.

Our vision is that:

Recent migrants are able to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities through meaningful volunteering. Recent migrants have opportunities to participate in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering that is valued and supported by communities and community organisations.

Recent migrants are those who have been living in New Zealand for five years or less. The priority groups for the strategy are recent migrants in NZ on a permanent or long-term basis (12 months or more). This group includes permanent residents, former refugees, and some temporary visa holders, such as long-term students and work visa holders.

The strategy is underpinned by the core values of *Connect, Engage, Share, and Learn*, each corresponding to a strategic goal:

- Recent migrants are engaged in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations. **(Connect)**
- Recent migrants build networks and relationships Volunteer Centres and community organisations, and with their communities. **(Engage)**
- Staff at Volunteer Centres and community organisations have the knowledge and tools to effectively engage, connect, and support recent migrant volunteers. **(Share)**
- The sector is aware of and values the contribution of recent migrant volunteers, and understands their needs and concerns. **(Learn)**

VNZ and Volunteer Centres have been developing and piloting a number of initiatives:

- **Workshops** – VNZ has supported a series of workshops run in collaboration with Volunteer Centres across Aotearoa. The workshops are designed to raise recent migrants' awareness of volunteering opportunities in NZ and support organisations to learn about the experiences, skills, and needs of recent migrants.
- **Connected Volunteering Model** – Participating Volunteer Centres have been providing additional support and mentoring for recent migrants to connect them with meaningful volunteering opportunities.
- **Information Sharing and Regular Review** – VNZ will facilitate regular information sharing (including sharing the views of recent migrant volunteers) between Volunteer Centres and community organisations to promote migrant volunteering best-practice across the sector.
- **Research** – VNZ will continue to support research on barriers and opportunities for recent migrants engaging in meaningful volunteering.
- **Success Stories** – VNZ has been collecting case studies to raise awareness about the contribution of recent migrant volunteers.

The strategy is a 'living document' that VNZ expects to evolve based on ongoing consultation with recent migrants, Volunteer Centres, community organisations, and the wider sector. Achieving its vision requires cooperation and partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders.

CONTEXT:

He waka eke noa. A canoe which we are all in with no exception.

Volunteering brings communities together, allowing people to work with and across our differences. Volunteering is a language of care and aroha. The meaning of volunteering, mahi aroha and social action differs. For Māori (*mahi aroha*) and Pacific peoples, for example, it is deeply rooted in culture. VNZ recognises the power of volunteering to connect people and the role it can have in promoting recent migrants' connection and engagement with their communities.

Who are recent migrants?

Recent migrants are those who have been living in New Zealand for five years or less. The priority groups for the strategy are recent migrants in NZ on a permanent or long-term basis (12 months or more). This group includes permanent residents, former refugees, and some temporary visa holders, such as long-term students and work visa holders. Recent migrants come from many different countries. In the past five years people have most commonly arrived from China, India, the United Kingdom, the Philippines and South Africa. New Zealand experienced a net gain of 72,300 permanent and long-term migrants in 2016/17. This was 4.7% more than in 2015/16. This was the fifth consecutive year in which migration increased and the highest net gain ever recorded.¹

Background:

The need for the strategy is motivated by the experiences of recent migrants who have said the current volunteering model does not meet their needs. Volunteering for recent migrants should be a meaningful experience that can contribute to their sense of connection with their communities and enable them to develop professional skills specific to the New Zealand context. At the same time, it is important to appreciate that volunteering is only one amongst many possible ways in which recent migrants may connect with and enrich Aotearoa.

The strategy feeds into VNZ's wider goals of championing inclusive volunteering for all and contributes to the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy.²

¹ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, *Migration Trends 2016-17* (MBIE, 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/c22ab0c547/migration-trends-2016-17.pdf>

² New Zealand Immigration, *New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration strategy* (NZ Immigration, 2015). Retrieved from: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/how-we-support-migrants>

VNZ hopes that the strategy sends a strong signal to the wider community and voluntary sector about the importance of connecting and engaging with recent migrants in meaningful volunteering opportunities.

The recent National Migrant Consultation report found that many recent migrants do not feel included in their new communities³. Thirty-four percent had difficulty making friends with New Zealanders, 27% had difficulties finding ways to get involved in their communities and 21% do not feel welcome in their community. Particularly concerning is that almost half (44%) had experienced unfair or biased behavior once or twice, and for 12% this was frequent. Almost one-third (29%) of those who had experienced unfair or biased behavior did not know where to go for support.

Recent migrants continue to face unique barriers in accessing meaningful volunteering opportunities. Consultations undertaken as part of developing this strategy with recent migrants highlighted that they faced a lack of adequate information around volunteering opportunities.⁴ A joint study by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the consultancy firm, MartinJenkins, identified a similar trend, with many recent migrants not familiar with their rights and responsibilities when volunteering.⁵ For example, many migrants may be unsure about the provisions of their visa and whether this allows them to undertake any voluntary work. These findings highlight a strong need for a coordinated and inclusive national strategy for recent migrant volunteering.

VNZ recognises the unique contribution recent migrants can make to New Zealand's volunteering workforce, as well as the role meaningful volunteering can have in fostering connections with their new communities. VNZ recognises that volunteering opportunities for recent migrants must be meaningful, including that the role fits with the migrant's skills, needs, and aspirations; that the migrant volunteer is well-supported; and that the community organisations involved in the execution of the Strategy actively champion diversity and inclusive practice in their volunteering activities. Meaningful volunteering for recent migrants also entails that their voices are used to inform the development and implementation of the strategy and its associated initiatives.

³ MBIE and Martin Jenkins, *National Migrants Consultation 2019*

⁴ Erich Chuah, *Cultural Connections Study*, 2018

⁵ MBIE and Martin Jenkins, *National Migrants Consultation 2019*

THE STRATEGY / TE RAUTAKI:

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi. With your basket and my basket the people will thrive.

The vision of the strategy is that:

Recent migrants are able to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities through meaningful volunteering. Recent migrants have opportunities to participate in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering that is valued and supported by communities and community organisations.

The strategy is guided by four core values (Connect, Engage, Share, and Learn), which informs our strategic goals:

- Recent migrants are engaged in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations. **(Connect)**
- Recent migrants build networks and relationships with Volunteer Centres and community organisations, and with their communities. **(Engage)**
- Staff at Volunteer Centres and community organisations have the knowledge and tools to effectively engage, connect, and support recent migrant volunteers. **(Share)**
- The sector is aware of and values the contribution of recent migrant volunteers, and understands their needs and concerns. **(Learn)**

Ethical and values-based volunteering will protect against exploitative practices and promote a mutually-shared understanding of what meaningful volunteering entails.

Strategic Initiatives

In cooperation with its partners, VNZ has developed several initiatives to achieve the vision. The piloting of these initiatives was funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment until June 2019.

Workshops

VNZ has delivered a series of workshops for recent migrants to raise their awareness about volunteering opportunities and to support community organisations to learn

about the experiences, skills, and needs of recent migrants. To date, 200 recent migrants have participated in workshops across Aotearoa.

Connected Volunteering Model

The Connected Volunteering Programme is one of the key initiatives of the strategy, supporting participating Volunteer Centres to provide additional support to recent migrants. The purpose is to connect recent migrants with volunteering opportunities relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations, and to provide additional mentoring. To date, 70 recent migrants have participated in the programme.

Best Practice Tools

Information and tools around migrant volunteering best-practice will be collated on the InvolveMe and LeadMe platforms, to ensure the whole sector is equipped with the knowledge to meaningfully engage recent migrants in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering.

Success Stories

VNZ has been collecting case studies to raise awareness about the contribution of recent migrants to their communities. It will also serve as an important way for Volunteer Centres and community organisations to understand good practice when engaging with recent migrant volunteers.

Research

VNZ will continue to support research on the barriers facing recent migrants in their volunteering engagements with Volunteer Centres and community organisations. More detailed research around the distribution of these barriers by location, national origin, and ethnicity may also be undertaken to better understand the experiences of recent migrant volunteers.

Partnerships / Whanaungatanga

The realisation of this strategy and its vision requires the cooperation of the whole sector and the formation of meaningful partnerships, including between recent migrants and the community sector. Partnerships between recent migrants and the community sector will be developed based on an ethos of egalitarianism and reciprocity. The voices of migrants will be continuously consulted to inform the implementation of the strategy.

VNZ recognises the plethora of existing expertise in working with recent migrants within the sector. Such expertise has informed this strategy and will be key to the realisation of our strategic vision. VNZ, as the peak body organisation for volunteering in New Zealand, will work with Volunteer Centres and community organisations to ensure that they have the tools and knowledge to create meaningful volunteering

opportunities for recent migrants, as well as the capabilities to understand recent migrant volunteers' experiences and advocate for their needs and concerns. Community organisations will be supported to develop operational partnerships with their local Volunteer Centres and strategic partnerships with VNZ, to help achieve the vision of the strategy. VNZ will continue to maintain strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to ensure the Recent Migrant Volunteering Strategy contributes to the aims of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy.

Challenges

The implementation of this strategy comes with many challenges. Volunteer Centres and community organisations may have different views around the role of recent migrants in volunteering and what meaningful volunteering entails. This strategy aims to support Volunteer Centres, community organisations, and the wider community and voluntary sector to be well-placed to engage and support recent migrant volunteers in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering.

Recent migrants' experiences of unfair or biased treatment, discrimination and racism need to be acknowledged, recognising that this is part of a wider issue across our country affecting tangata whenua, Pasifika and other ethnic minority groups that are not recent migrants. Recent migrants' experiences of volunteering should be free from any form of discrimination.

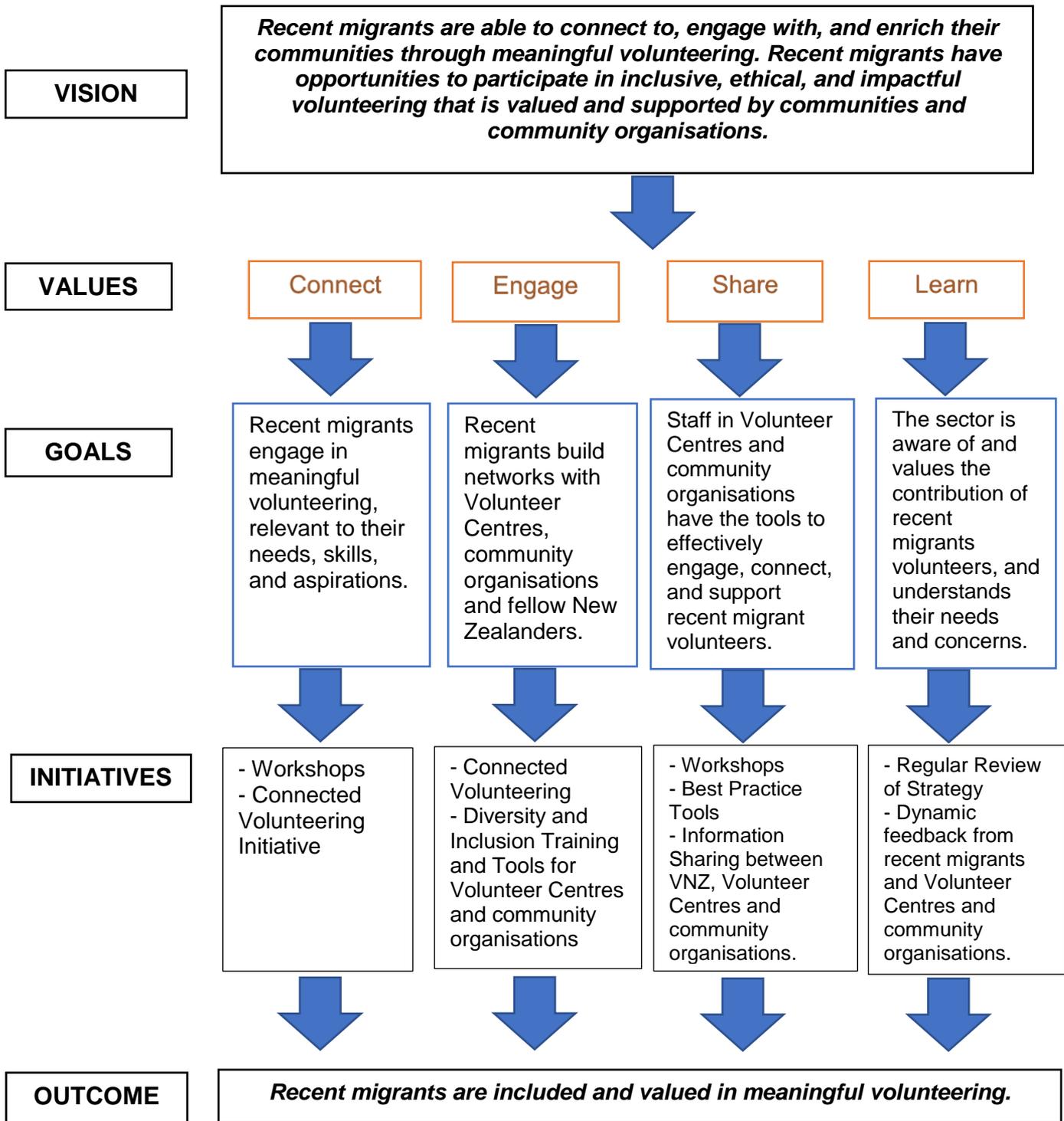
Recent migrants often speak about differing expectations of work and social life in their home countries and New Zealand⁶. Many recent migrants highlighted the lack of information around the rights and responsibilities for engaging in various activities in their communities, such as their eligibility to participate. Cultural Connections, an organisation specialising in cultural research, also identified that many recent migrants were unaware of what volunteering opportunities were available in their communities⁷. Recent migrants may not have engaged in volunteering activities in their country of origin, or these opportunities may be organised in a different way to volunteering in New Zealand.

The community sector will need to consider how to engage and communicate with people from a range of backgrounds so that recent migrants who wish to volunteer are able to do so. These issues pose challenges but also provide opportunities for VNZ and the sector to have a real impact on recent migrants' experiences in meaningful volunteering.

⁶ MBIE and Martin Jenkins, *National Migrants Consultation 2019*

⁷ Erich Chuah, *Cultural Connections Study*, 2018

The Recent Migrant Strategy: Framework



CONCLUSION:

This strategy outlines the guiding principles and strategic initiatives for achieving the vision for recent migrant volunteering. Volunteering New Zealand will continue to lead the sector in ensuring recent migrants have meaningful opportunities to engage in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering. At the heart of the strategy's vision is the concept of *whanaungatanga* – kinship, connection, relationships, and reciprocity. Success relies on the whole sector working as a collective, supporting each other to trial, upskill, and share approaches to engage and support recent migrants in meaningful volunteering. It requires careful attention to potential challenges, to ensure that individual initiatives developed by Volunteering New Zealand and the wider sector contribute directly to realising the vision of this strategy.

Our strategy aims to foster more inclusive environments within volunteering. Through meaningful volunteering, recent migrants can have a real opportunity to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities that is valued by communities.

The strategy should be regarded as a living document that can be realised over time with contributions made by Volunteer Centres, community organisations, Volunteering New Zealand, government agencies, recent migrant volunteers, and the community sector more widely.