

# 2017 State of Volunteering Report

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Volunteering New Zealand

*Volunteers are the  
heart of our community*

*Mā tini, mā mano, ka  
rapa te whai*



# State of Volunteering Report

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# Foreword

## Ma whero ma pango ka oti ai te mahi

This Māori whakataukī refers to co-operation – if everyone does their part, the work will be complete. In my opinion it aptly describes New Zealand volunteers getting together to ‘get the job done’. Generosity is an important part of our culture and may be underpinned by our friendliness and can-do attitude.<sup>1</sup> Volunteering is the hidden force in our communities that creates huge benefits for volunteers themselves, the causes they support and for New Zealand as a whole. However, volunteering is often taken for granted, not necessarily acknowledged or even appropriately measured.

Volunteering New Zealand’s annual State of Volunteering Survey takes stock of the volunteering landscape in New Zealand. This snapshot can assist anyone interested in volunteering to develop strategies that ensure volunteer effort makes the biggest impact, now and in the future.

It is a good sign that volunteer-involving organisations value the significance of volunteers’ contribution beyond their own organisation and recognise how this contributes to social capital in New Zealand. The Chief Economist of the Bank of England aptly demonstrated in 2014 that the value of volunteers is made up of the economic value of goods and services created by volunteers; the private value of volunteering activities, in particular the benefits felt by volunteers

themselves; and the social value of volunteering activities, as societal gains may be a multiple of economic and private benefits.<sup>2</sup>

However, nationally the value of volunteering is still very rarely measured, recognised and celebrated. There is a significant opportunity for the sector to better record and report on the volunteer contribution—what gets measured gets attention!

I hope this report will spark many conversations within organisations, the volunteering and community sector and government on how we can collectively ensure that the value of volunteering is recognised and consequently appropriately supported.

## Ngā mihi

**Helga Wientjes**  
**Chair, Volunteering New Zealand**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.colmarbrunton.co.nz/does-what-it-means-to-be-a-kiwi-depend-on-where-you-live/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/speech/2014/in-giving-how-much-do-we-receive-the-social-value-of-volunteering.pdf>

# Background

*In this report we share insights from a survey of the community and voluntary sector that emphasised the way volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) recruit, induct, train and manage volunteers.*

New Zealanders make a significant contribution to the social development, economy and environment of New Zealand through their engagement in volunteering.

The United Kingdom's Charitable Aid Foundation (CAF), which investigates and increases understanding of charitable giving and philanthropy, positions New Zealanders as the western population that most often participates in volunteering (41% of people volunteered in the month prior to interview).<sup>3</sup>

## Top 10 countries by participation in volunteering time.<sup>4</sup>

Volunteering time by country & ranking		People (%)
Indonesia	1	55
Kenya	2	51
Myanmar	3	51
Liberia	4	46
Tajikistan	5	44
New Zealand	6	41
United States of America	7	41
Sierra Leone	8	41
Mauritius	9	40
Australia	10	40

Source: Charitable Aid Foundation. (2017). CAF World Giving Index 2017: A global view of giving trends. United Kingdom: Charitable Aid Foundation.

In the year ending March 2013, volunteer labour in organisations contributed \$3.5 billion (1.7%) to New Zealand's gross domestic product.<sup>5</sup> The General Social Survey completed in 2016 by Statistics New Zealand found: "a strong commitment to volunteering with 1 in 2 New Zealanders volunteering for an organisation or helping a person from another household."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Charitable Aid Foundation. (2017). CAF World Giving Index 2017: A global view of giving trends. United Kingdom: Charitable Aid Foundation. Retrieved from [https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/cafworldgivingindex2017\\_2167a\\_web\\_210917.pdf?sfvrsn=ed1dac40\\_10](https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/cafworldgivingindex2017_2167a_web_210917.pdf?sfvrsn=ed1dac40_10)

<sup>4</sup> Data is for 2016 only and includes only countries surveyed in 2016. Data relates to participation in volunteering time during one month prior to interview.

<sup>5</sup> Volunteering New Zealand. (2017). Overview Paper on the State of Volunteering in New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand: Volunteering New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Overview-Paper-on-the-State-of-Volunteering.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics New Zealand. (2016). Volunteering and donations by New Zealanders in 2016. Wellington, New Zealand: Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/volunteering-and-donations-by-new-zealanders-in-2016>

Despite its significance, volunteering is under pressure, with the 2016 Volunteering New Zealand State of Volunteering survey respondents recognising the ageing of volunteers and reduced time given by volunteers as issues their organisations must contend with.<sup>7</sup> According to the General Social Survey, a small number of volunteers (14.1%) complete over half the total volunteer hours. In line with this, the CAF marked New Zealand's volunteering score three points down on its position in 2016.<sup>89</sup>

While New Zealand holds a strong global position in relation to volunteer participation, it is important for volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) to avoid complacency and strive to ensure volunteering continues to be relevant in New Zealanders' lives. In this report we share insights from a survey of the community and voluntary sector that emphasised the way volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) recruit, induct, train and manage volunteers. These features of volunteering are some of the key means of ensuring effective experiences and adapting to the changing volunteering landscape.

## About VNZ & volunteering

**Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) is an association of volunteer centres, national and other organisations with a commitment to volunteering. Our purpose is to benefit communities in New Zealand by promoting, supporting, encouraging and representing volunteering.**

**Volunteering is work done of one's own free will, unpaid, and for the common good (Volunteering New Zealand, 2014).<sup>10</sup> This work can be formal or informal. The survey undertaken for this report focused on formal volunteering carried out through the structure of an organisation.**

7 Volunteering New Zealand. (2016). State of Volunteering in New Zealand Report 2016, Wellington, New Zealand: Volunteering New Zealand. Retrieved from [http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/stateofvolunteeringreport\\_ONLINE.pdf](http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/stateofvolunteeringreport_ONLINE.pdf); Volunteering New Zealand. (2015). State of Volunteering in New Zealand Report 2015, Wellington, New Zealand: Volunteering New Zealand. Retrieved from [http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/VNZ\\_Stateofvolunteer\\_FINAL2015.pdf](http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/VNZ_Stateofvolunteer_FINAL2015.pdf)

8 Charitable Aid Foundation. (2017). CAF World Giving Index 2017: A global view of giving trends. United Kingdom: Charitable Aid Foundation. Retrieved from [https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/cafworldgivingindex2017\\_2167a\\_web\\_210917.pdf?sfvrsn=ed1dac40\\_10](https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/cafworldgivingindex2017_2167a_web_210917.pdf?sfvrsn=ed1dac40_10)

9 This situation is in contrast to volunteering in Australia, which is on the rise. In 2017, for the first time, Australia entered the top 10 countries with people most likely to participate in volunteering. A 2016 study of volunteering and philanthropy found that volunteering time and hours have both increased over the past decade with 43.7% of adult Australians volunteering a total of 932 million hours in 2016. Retrieved from [https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/giving\\_australia\\_2016\\_fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_individual\\_volunteering\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/giving_australia_2016_fact_sheet_-_individual_volunteering_accessible.pdf)

10 Volunteering New Zealand. (2014). Constitution of Volunteering New Zealand Inc. Wellington, New Zealand: Volunteering New Zealand.

## The purpose of the State of Volunteering survey

*The 2016/17 State of Volunteering Survey is the third in VNZ's series of annual surveys. Each year VNZ sends a survey to all registered charities in New Zealand as 90% of these organisations engage volunteers in some capacity.<sup>11 12</sup> These surveys are designed to capture a snapshot of the state of volunteering in New Zealand.*

In the 2017 survey, Volunteering NZ investigated:

- what issues volunteer-involving organisations were facing in regard to volunteer engagement
- the view volunteer-involving organisations took of volunteers as social capital
- volunteer-involving organisations' processes and practices around recruitment, induction, training and management
- whether volunteer-involving organisations evaluated the effectiveness of their volunteer engagement; and
- the general view on the state of volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Information gathered through the 2017 survey will underpin policy and strategy that directly supports the community and voluntary sector by identifying current trends, issues and challenges.**

<sup>11</sup> Sanders, J., O'Brien, M., Tennant, M., Sokolowski, S. W., & Salamon, L.M. (2008). The New Zealand Non-Profit Sector in Comparative Perspective. Wellington, New Zealand: Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> In October 2017, the latest survey was sent to just over 19,000 recipients; members of 7,436 organisations opened the email and 1584 organisations responded, corresponding to a 21.3% response rate.

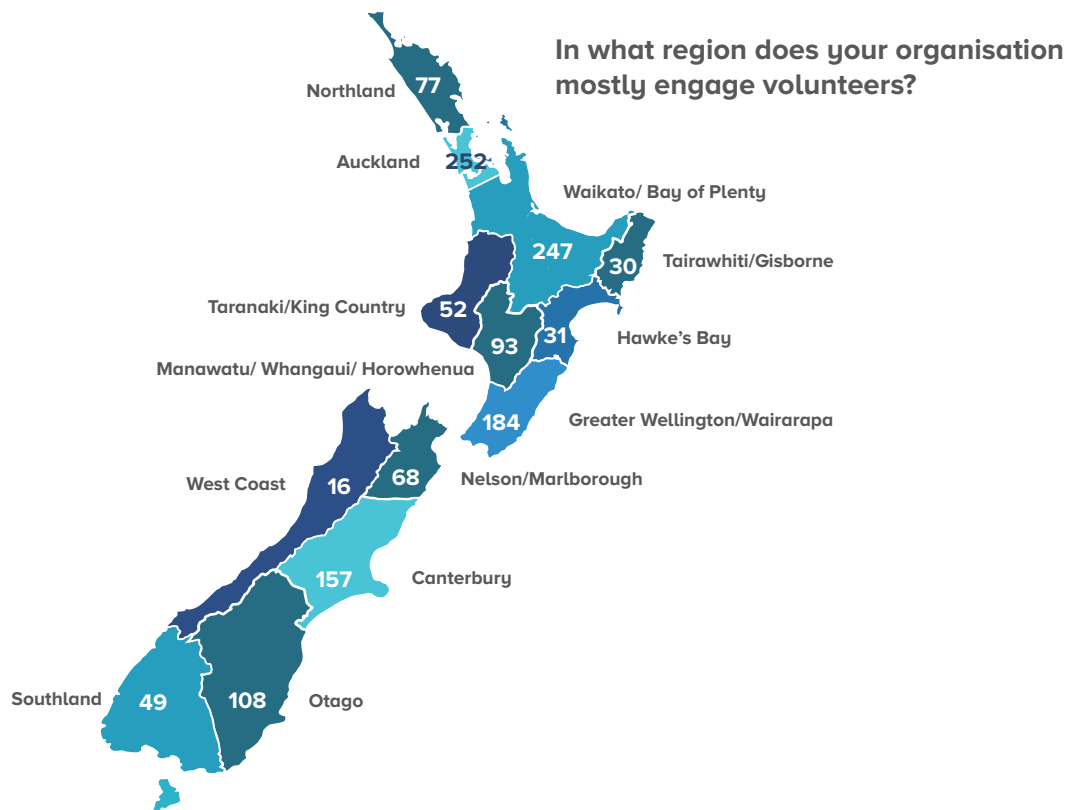
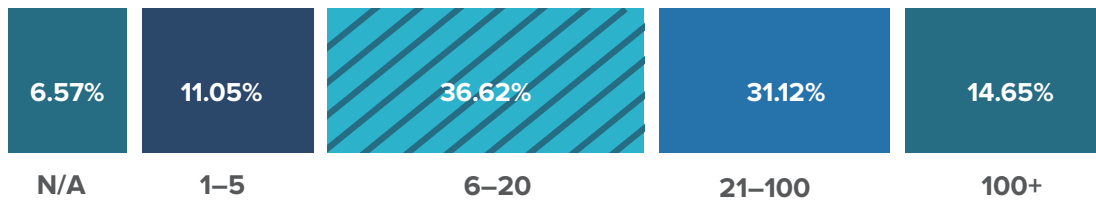


## Who are the survey respondents?

Three quarters of respondents to this survey were Board/Committee members or Managers of VIOs. A relatively even split of organisations engaged less than or equal to 20 volunteers (n = 755) and greater than or equal to 21 (n = 725) volunteers.

Respondents represented a broad range of regions across New Zealand, though the largest numbers came from organisations operating in the Auckland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty and Canterbury regions.

### How many volunteers does your organisation engage annually?



## Key insights

### Workforce issues

Approximately one third of VIOs noted that their organisation was grappling with ageing volunteers and not having enough volunteers. Over a third of respondents anticipated their organisation would have a full and engaged volunteer workforce; two-thirds noted that only up to 10% of their volunteer workforce had left their organisation in the past 12 months.

### Recruitment and retention strategies

Organisations were utilising different ways to recruit and retain volunteers to meet their needs. These included developing project-based volunteer opportunities, offering flexibility on time and location and enabling people to work remotely, supporting corporate volunteering, and providing incentives (such as reimbursing travel expenses, providing support with CVs and working alongside employment brokering organisations).

## Inducting volunteers

A third of respondents stated that their organisation did not have an induction programme for volunteers. In regard to training, one-third helped their volunteers increase skills through training and/or moving them into new assignments and areas of greater responsibility; one-third provided training when the volunteer joined their organisation but offered limited ongoing training; the final third offered little to no training for their volunteers. This suggests the sector may still need support to understand the importance of induction and training and to deliver appropriate programmes for their volunteers. It is important to note that training is only one form of professional development and volunteer involving organisations should be encouraged to establish whether or not there is a training need among their volunteers.

## Volunteer management

Two-thirds of respondents indicated their VIO did not manage the hours and work of their volunteers, consequently they did not use a volunteer management system. Half of respondents noted their VIO had someone assigned to strategy, planning, people management and administrative tasks; 28% noted their VIO did not have someone assigned to manage volunteers. Two-thirds of VIOs do not evaluate their volunteer programme.

For some respondents the state of volunteering was regarded as thriving, with their organisations having enough volunteers and volunteers noted to be delivering significant benefits to New Zealand. However, many comments signalled a need for attention to improve the state of volunteering. Key themes emerging from these comments include:

- A time-poor population
- Age-related concerns
- A need for organisational, community and national recognition
- Funding issues

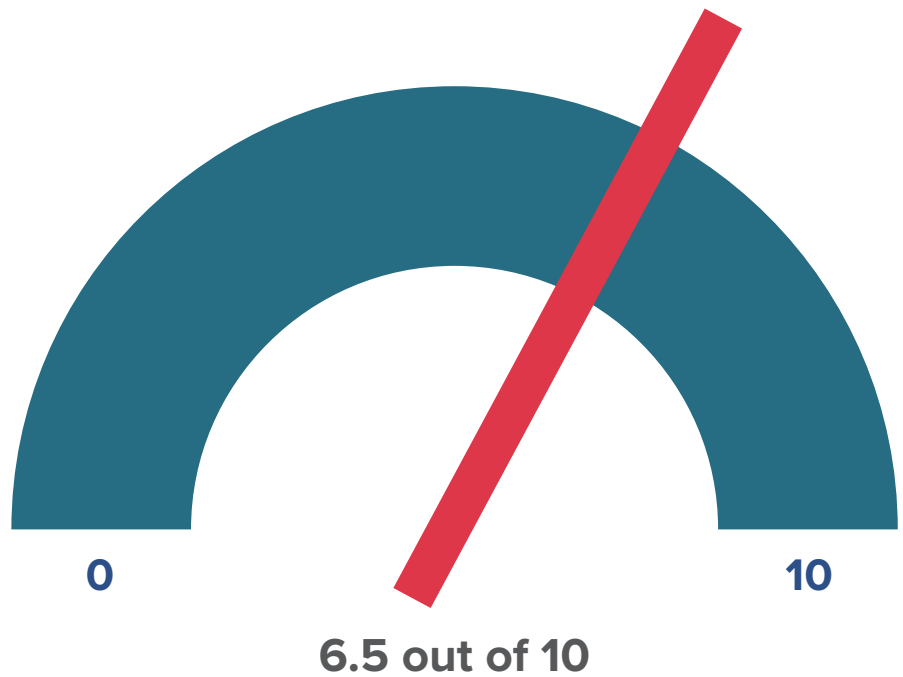
# Findings

## State of volunteering

Respondents were asked to rate the state of the New Zealand Volunteering Sector on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'weak' and 10 is 'extremely positive'). The average rating was 6.5, which is a 0.5 increase from the 2016 and 2015 rating of 6.

In 2015, the rating given by VIOs with larger numbers of volunteers was higher than that of those who engage small numbers of volunteers. Similarly, in 2017 as the number of volunteers engaged increased, so too did the state of volunteering rating.

The vast majority of respondents noted that "volunteers are more than just elements of my organisation's service delivery team", signalling that volunteer-involving organisations value the significance of volunteers' contribution to social capital in New Zealand.



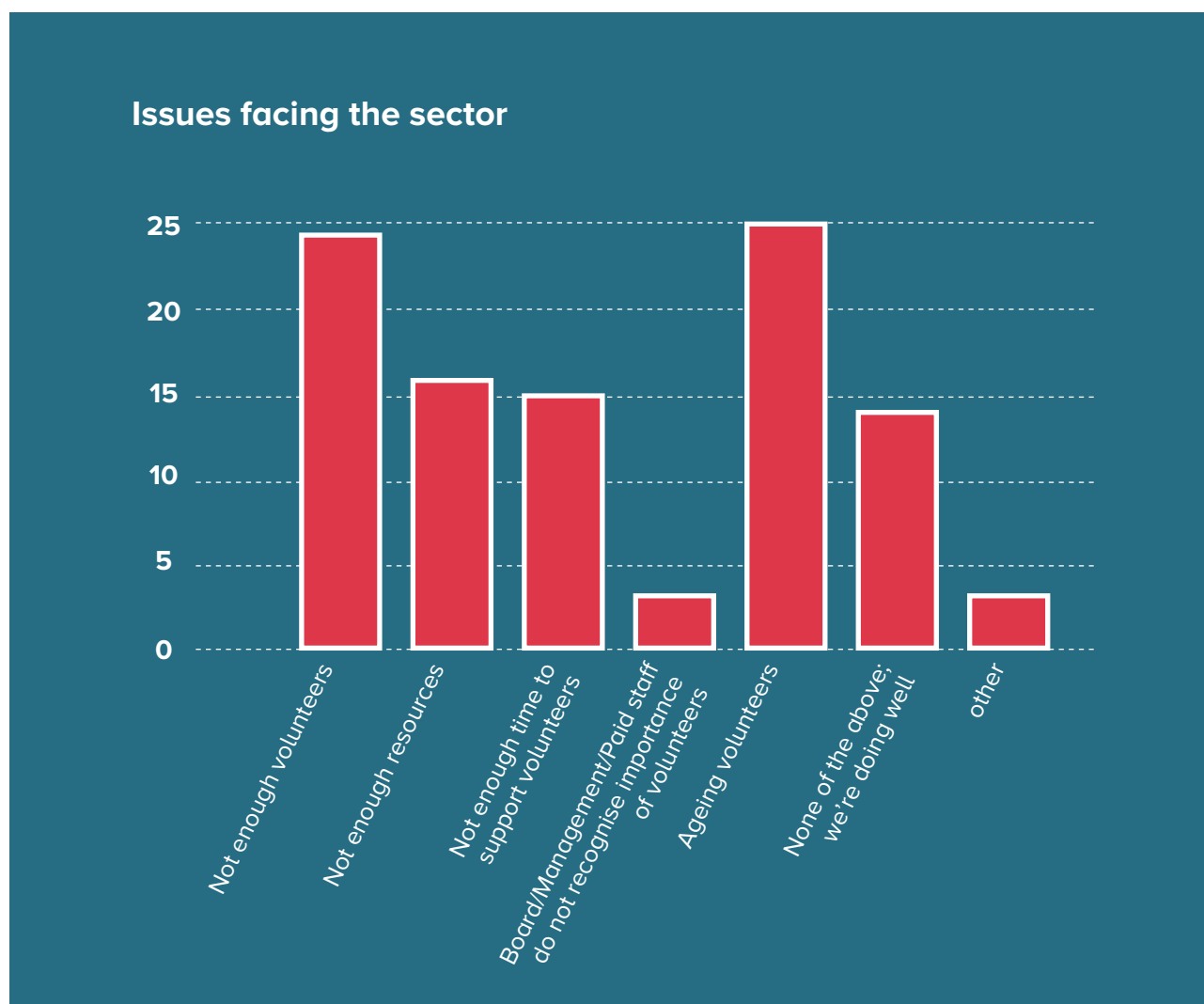
## Key issues facing volunteer involving organisations

The survey asked respondents to consider a range of potential issues facing the sector and reflect on whether or not these issues were affecting their organisation. Respondents could select multiple issues.

Ageing volunteers and not having enough volunteers were the two issues most commonly selected (approximately one third of respondents).

Only 5% of respondents felt that Board/Management/Paid staff did not recognise the importance of volunteers. However, this finding should be read with some caution given the potential for bias as respondents to the survey were largely Board Members and Managers. Volunteers may hold a different perspective.

It is heartening to note that 22% of respondents did not think any of the issues proposed were affecting them and instead believed the sector was doing well.



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***Over a third of respondents stated they were expecting a full and engaged volunteer workforce.***

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## **Recruitment and retention**

A significant amount of time, resource and energy goes into recruitment of volunteers. It is important that recruitment results in the engagement of volunteers with the right fit for organisations, the tasks to be completed and for the volunteer - their skills, time and/or aspirations. Respondents to the 2015 and 2016 survey commented on the negative impact of regulation, particularly Health and Safety, on their recruitment efforts. In 2017 the impact of regulation appeared to be of less concern, perhaps because the Health and Safety at Work Act is now better understood among workplaces in general.

In 2017, not having enough volunteers was noted as one of the key issues facing the sector. Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising to see that over a third of respondents stated their organisation is always recruiting volunteers. Rather more promising is that over a third of respondents stated they were expecting a full and engaged volunteer workforce and two-thirds of participants noted that only up to 10% of their volunteer workforce had left their organisation in the past 12 months.

It is also worth noting that 10% of respondents did not know what proportion of their volunteer workforce had left the organisation, which signals a lack of monitoring in some VIOs and potentially limited planning around recruitment needs.

Respondents noted a shift towards project-based volunteering rather than joining an organisation over the long-term, corporate volunteering and internships.

***Many potential volunteers are looking for more flexible arrangements (one-off's, short-term, in a team, on-line, ...) next to the traditional long-term opportunities. Non-profits seem to adjust slowly to this demand.***

Among respondents' general comments about the state of volunteering were a number of suggested ways to improve recruitment and retention of volunteers:

***We attract a skilled volunteer team because we provide all volunteers with travel expenses, we upgrade their CVs and we market them into other work in keeping with their newly discovered personal objectives.***

*Younger people seem to prefer volunteering for a specific task or project and then moving on (sometimes to a new project, sometimes not), rather than joining an organisation and working with that organisation long term. I believe it to be a generational / cultural difference.*

*I think there is value in working alongside work-bridging co-coordinators to gain volunteers as this meets two needs. Also it seems that many volunteers are either retired or wanting work.*

*For our operation which is community based we have had very good success using Facebook for recruitment and this has taken a lot of pressure off time spent by the groups administrators getting members.*

# New Zealand case study: IHC Incorporated friendship programme



A useful model of shorter-term volunteering has been developed by IHC in New Zealand. This volunteering model extends IHC's friendship programme for people with intellectual disabilities. While the friendship programme is open-ended, IHC has introduced a skill-based volunteering initiative that supports volunteers to work with a person with an intellectual disability to achieve a goal they have identified over a shorter time period (typically 10 to 12 weeks). Sue Kobar, Manager of Volunteering at IHC, reports that:

*"[W]hile someone can volunteer for a single assignment, this initiative provides an opportunity to volunteer through multiple assignments with IHC, with the ability to take a break when needed. This volunteer model promotes long-term volunteering through shorter-term assignments, a model that works well for university students who may wish to take time off during exams or a volunteer who works full-time and has a project to complete."<sup>13</sup>*



<sup>13</sup> Kobar, S. (October 2016 – January 2017). Looking to the Future: IHC's Plan for Long-Term volunteering through Shorter-Term Assignments, e-volunteering, volume XV11(1). <https://www.e-volunteering.com>.



## Migrant volunteering

One respondent to the survey noted the opportunity to engage with new migrants. New migrants may be an untapped source of volunteers for the community and voluntary sector. VNZ is currently developing a strategy and range of initiatives to support for recent migrants (for more information see: <https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/migrant-volunteering-programme/>).

***We get a lot of new immigrants who volunteer to obtain points toward their resident status. They move on when they become residents unfortunately***

## Episodic volunteering

Perhaps understanding that people are likely to move on from volunteering roles once they have developed skills, completed the project they are working on or when circumstances change, is a prerequisite for VIOs in the current volunteering landscape. As the following responses indicate this situation does not necessarily need to be problematic if it is built into the way a VIO functions:

***The mode of volunteering seems to have shifted. People seem to be less willing to contribute/commit to medium/long term volunteer roles, but happy enough to volunteer hours/half day/day when it suits them.***

***... volunteer turnover is irrelevant for organisations using volunteers for projects. Because of course they turn over... Skills based volunteers do need induction - but not technical training..... Please consider the newer types of platforms and changing volunteering trends ... Volunteer turnover and lack of training can also be positive signs too!!!***

*A third of respondents stated their organisation does not have an induction programme for volunteers.*

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*A research gap exists regarding the barriers VIOs face in providing volunteers with training and why training is not offered to volunteers wherever it is deemed necessary.*

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## Induction and training

Nearly half of all respondents noted that within the first month of volunteering, their organisation always provided volunteers with an induction to the organisation, including its purpose, structure and policies. This practice aligns with the value VIOs place on volunteers in their organisation and is likely part of the reason why most VIOs had low rates of annual churn.

It is important to note, however, that a third of respondents stated their organisation does not have an induction programme for volunteers. This suggests the sector may still need support to understand the importance of induction and to deliver appropriate induction programmes. Regardless of whether someone is joining an organisation as a paid or voluntary staff member, induction is important to introduce people to the structure, processes and culture of the organisation. Induction is a form of orientation and without it people's sense of belonging to an organisation and their ability to navigate and add value may be compromised. Induction can also support volunteers to become organisational ambassadors who support other volunteers, staff and the people served by the organisation.

## Training opportunities

An interesting split occurred when respondents were asked about the training opportunities their organisations offer volunteers. One-third provided training when the volunteer joined the organisation but offered limited ongoing training; one-third helped their volunteers increase skills through training and/or moving them into new assignments and areas of greater responsibility; the final third offered little to no training for their volunteers.

It would be useful to understand why there is such variation in training offerings. A research gap exists regarding the barriers VIOs face in providing volunteers with training and why training is not offered to volunteers wherever it is deemed necessary. One possible explanation - as half of respondents noted - is that people with the appropriate skill set apply for their volunteering roles; consequently, these volunteers do not need to receive training to fulfil their responsibilities at the VIO. However, there is a lost opportunity to value volunteers by providing them with opportunities to increase their skills and responsibilities while volunteering and potentially enhance the likelihood of retaining them as engaged volunteers.

***“I would like to know how to better recruit, train and support volunteers, a manual or guidelines would be great - we are new to this and see the value of employing volunteers but are fudging our way through.”***

*“Local govt. can support organisations with resources -e.g. training in volunteer management / communication, recruitment, data bases and public recognition.”*

*“Not enough training or support to help sports clubs (based on our experience) do a better job at recruiting, training and managing volunteers.”*

*“We are struggling to manage and train volunteers to motivate the new generation to volunteering due to lack of resources. There should be a central mechanism to provide training to volunteers.”*

## **Management and evaluation**

Two-thirds of respondents indicated their VIO does not manage the hours and work of their volunteers, consequently they do not use a volunteer management system. Less than one quarter use a generic management system such as Microsoft Excel and only 6% use a specific volunteer management system, such as FrontStream or Better Impact.

## **Volunteer leadership and management**

While over half of respondents stated that their VIO had someone assigned to strategy, planning, people management and administrative tasks; 28% said that their VIO does not have someone assigned to manage volunteers. Furthermore, two-thirds of VIOs do not evaluate their volunteer programme. Just under one quarter noted using evaluation forms and exit interviews, while only 4% used online assessment tools or platforms.

Given that 575 organisations who sent in responses to this survey engaged 21 or more volunteers in the past 12 months, it is concerning that the work of many volunteers is not managed by personnel dedicated to management. Organisations with much smaller numbers of paid staff are likely to be actively managing their staff and utilising industry-specific management systems to keep track of leave entitlements, hours worked, work anniversaries, and performance review. VIOs would benefit from putting more emphasis on the management of volunteers to improve the volunteering experience and outcomes for both volunteers and the organisation.

*Apart from resourcing, a major issue can be the unhelpful mindset that some senior managers/decision makers have about volunteers. For example, that they don't need to be managed, invested in, or treated like paid staff.*

## General discussion

Approximately 500 respondents added additional comments in a free text field to provide further information about their thoughts on the state of volunteering in New Zealand. Amongst these, respondents made many references to the significant contribution that volunteers make to New Zealand's social and economic foundations. For some respondents the state of volunteering was regarded as thriving with their organisations having enough volunteers and their volunteering system working well. However, most comments signalled a need for attention to improve the state of volunteering. Key themes emerging from these comments include:

- Time-poor population
- A time-poor population
- A need for organisational, community and national recognition
- Age-related concerns
- Funding issues

### Time-poor population

Many respondents noted that New Zealanders were time-poor which affects their desire and capacity to volunteer. Older New Zealanders are retiring later in life, which reduces the length of time they could engage in volunteering following their paid working career. New Zealanders are having children later in life which reduces the amount of time middle-aged adults have available for volunteering. Young people are fully engaged in the workforce and leading busy lives often focusing on paid work rather than making voluntary contributions. Respondents comments included a mix of sentiments around people genuinely being time-poor due to work and family life pressures and perceiving they were too busy to volunteer. Comments also reflected sentiments that paid work and leisure time were more important to people than volunteering; that somehow the desirability of volunteering had reduced over generations.

*As the need to work longer hours in order to survive high rents/mortgages there is less time for people to volunteer.*

*In today's financial climate, so many people need to be in full time employment until retirement age, then they may not have the health and strength to perform some volunteering tasks.*

*I think it's getting more difficult to attract volunteers because people are more time poor and/or there are so many distractions or entertainments that people prefer in what little spare time they have.*

*Our volunteers are mostly mums/parents and it seems difficult to get people involved – mainly I think to more mums going back to work sooner awfter having kids – there is just no time for anything else.*

## A need for organisational, community and national recognition

Respondents stated that volunteers need to be appreciated by colleagues in their organisations, members of their communities and by Government at a national level to recognise the significant contribution they make without any form of compensation.

***The biggest issue for us is that paid staff at the Federation level forget that club staff are volunteers.***

*“They are taken for granted by local and national governments for the work that is carried out.”*

*“I think we need a qualification on being a volunteer, so people are recognised for their contribution to the voluntary sector. NZ can't operate without them. A qualification could be a stepping stone for some to get employment.”*

**“We work in the disability sector and are 100% voluntary run so we see that disabled people use their time voluntarily because of the difficulty of finding paid work as a disabled person. We see that disabled people doing volunteer work are not adequately recognised in terms of their contribution to the economy through their unpaid work but they live on low incomes and are still taxed on any additional income they manage to generate to support themselves. We feel that there should be some tax-rebate recognition of significant voluntary contribution to reduce the financial burden on disabled volunteers so they can increase their own income (which is still far below the liveable wage) and continue to contribute significant volunteer hours to support organisations like ours which are essential to community wellbeing.”**

*“There needs to be a greater recognition from Government and Employers of the time and effort made by volunteers. Government needs to provide a mechanism to remunerate/assist volunteers.”*

*“Time for volunteering needs to be valued more highly by employers, the government, and NZ society in general. We give tax back on donations but not on volunteer time. This benefits those who are asset-rich and generous but not those who are asset-poor but time-generous.”*

## Age-related concerns – a variety of theories, experiences

Many respondents linked the state of volunteering to the age of volunteers or their perception of age-cohorts that were not engaging in the community and voluntary sector.

Respondents offered various reasons why different age cohorts were not readily available to volunteer. A familiar discourse was that older people more commonly volunteered but were less physically able; while younger people volunteered less and moved on in a shorter timeframe than their older counterparts.

***Volunteering has become increasingly the role of older Kiwis... time and financial pressures prohibit younger people from stepping up.***

*Organisations are struggling to recruit younger people who have work & family commitments so lack time for volunteering & older people are running out of energy. Younger volunteers do not want to get involved with committees.*

*Our volunteers are awesome, but the main problems we find with new younger recruits is they move into the work place and older volunteers are sometimes not fit enough for our physical activities.*

*Younger volunteers are more mobile. They move out of our district for job opportunities.*

Some respondents presented alternative views that flipped ideas about volunteering behaviours of these age cohorts.

***I would like to have older people coming in to volunteer in our Psychiatric Hospital, but this seems to be very difficult. All our volunteers are young students. Stigma and discrimination are alive and well in the older generation.***

*We target the retired people in the main who are enthusiastic in their approach and love the involvement in something that they find rewarding. The volunteers are always very reliable and from the relieving list can find a replacement should they be unable to attend on the allocated days.*

While most comments were about ‘the younger generation’ and ‘older people’, concern was also raised about a lack of volunteerism among children and middle-aged people.

***Little or no involvement from 30-50 year olds -a lot to do with work/play life. These days it is difficult to find people to commit to volunteering as they are generally time-poor and children have many more sports and activities to choose from these days.***

*We find the young and the elderly give their time generously, but the middle aged have nothing extra to give.*

Among respondents' comments there was a view held by some that young people lack the service mentality of their older counterparts and consequently they are concerned about being paid for any contribution they make. Comments signal a sense of disappointment about this shift in behaviour and view it as a personal choice rather than positioning it within a broader context of the demands currently faced by younger people. People's motivations for volunteering differ; not everyone is service driven so volunteer involving organisations may need to accommodate different motivations among their volunteering opportunities.

***The younger population always seem to ask, what is in it for me and payment?***

***Volunteering is driven largely by an aging population who have an ethos of giving back, and for whom payment has never been a part of the role. Sadly this has changed. One of the first questions we are asked when trying to engage a younger demographic is "is it paid?"***

*Younger volunteers are motivated by more specifically focussed issues affecting them and the future of their families. This leaves a gap in the ongoing wider care services and many other areas of community volunteering*

***People don't have enough time and young people don't have so much of a service mentality***

The volume of comments discussing the state of volunteering through a lens of generational participation suggests that this is a very real issue of concern for people in the community and the voluntary sector. Most comments highlighted the problems experienced in dealing with one or another age cohort or their concerns about the population ageing and ultimately losing their volunteer base. A few respondents made suggestions about how to tackle recruiting and retaining people of a mix of ages in volunteering.

*Volunteer culture in NZ is quite strong at this time, however organisations need to make sure they are also focusing on making sure this holds for the future. Organisations should have strategies in place to have the right proportion of older and younger volunteers. Great if VNZ and other organisations involved with volunteers can emphasise these or come up with a national effort to keep volunteering in front of people.*

*With new technologies available it's preferable to engage younger volunteers especially in the positions of social media/design etc. This I find is difficult so we tend to target young professional mums who would like to engage in some capacity while at home with the children. Of course this requires the organisation to be flexible to their family demands. The effort is more than worth it for the skills they bring.*

## Funding issues

A number of respondents commented on the funding issues faced by the community and voluntary sector. At an organisational level, respondents noted that funding shortfalls mean they need to engage volunteers in roles where they would typically employ someone in order to ensure capacity. This does not mean that organisations value the work of paid employees over volunteers, but rather that the context of some roles lends themselves to being more appropriately taken up by paid staff.

***Many organisations rely on volunteers for their administration roles because grant funding for appropriately skilled staff wages is very restricted unless included in a specific 'programme/project' being funded. Often, the quality of administration determines how much support and relevant data is available to Managers and Boards to assist with their decision-making***

*Funding streams are one area that could improve. Volunteer co-ordinators can help to improve experience and numbers but funding for such positions are very limited.*

For some respondents, Government was seen to be under-funding services and placing pressure on the sector to cover the shortfall through volunteering.

***Many of the current volunteer roles should be paid positions. I think it is damaging to our economy and communities to have so many important services reliant on volunteers. It means that there are less quality jobs available and it means that people may not be as qualified, engaged or energized as they would be if the role was paid. For example, I strongly believe that all emergency services personnel should be paid, as well as those that care for the sick or elderly, or do any work where they would be letting someone down if they didn't show up.***



***I think it is great that so many NZers want to volunteer BUT central and local governmental departments are placing more and more responsibility on the NFP [Not for Profit] sector. However, funding is NOT increasing and the expectations and contractual elements are more intrusive. It also means that more volunteer organisations are competing for funding. So have we gone too far?***

This perspective is similar to that offered by correspondent, Goodman (2018) in the New York Times where he discusses 'Britain's age of austerity'. Goodman states:

“Conservative Party leaders initially sold budget cuts as a virtue, ushering in what they called the Big Society. Diminish the role of a bloated government bureaucracy, they contended, and grass-roots organizations, charities and private companies would step to the fore, reviving communities and delivering public services more efficiently. To a degree, a spirit of voluntarism materialized. At public libraries, volunteers now outnumber paid staff. In struggling communities, residents have formed food banks while distributing hand-me-down school uniforms. But to many in Britain, this is akin to setting your house on fire and then reveling in the community spirit as neighbors come running to help extinguish the blaze.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Goodman, P. (2018) Britains' big squeeze. New York: New York Times. Retrieved from <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2018/05/28/world/europe/uk-austerity-poverty.html#click=https://t.co/RE1CpW5415>

# Conclusion

Despite a high level of engagement in volunteering by global standards, respondents to the 2016/17 State of Volunteering Survey have highlighted the continued need to support New Zealand's community and voluntary sector with their volunteer management activities. Specifically, support with recruitment, retention, induction, training and evaluation. Approximately one-third of respondents stated their organisation did not offer an induction programme or training opportunities to volunteers. Two-thirds of organisations did not evaluate their volunteering programme. On a more positive note VIOs appear to be successfully retaining volunteers; over a third of respondents stated they were expecting a full and engaged volunteer workforce and two-thirds noted that only up to 10% of their volunteer workforce had left their organisation in the past 12 months.

When rating the state of volunteering the average response has hovered around 6 out of 10 over the past three years, albeit moving in a promising, upward direction. This rating signals room for improvement. Respondents' comments about the state of volunteering signalled four common concerns:

- New Zealanders being time poor on account of their paid work commitments, late retirement and the myriad leisure activities that are preferable to volunteering
- a lack of recognition of volunteers from within organisations, local community and Government

- variability in volunteering participation by age cohort, with a particular concern about the ageing of volunteers and lack of young people engaging in volunteering
- funding issues that limit the support organisations can provide to volunteers.

These concerns raise issues that individual organisations cannot solve on their own. As a sector and with the leadership of VNZ, there are opportunities to address these issues through advocacy, promotion, research, learning and development. VNZ has a role to advocate the importance of volunteering to New Zealand's society and economy and raise awareness among New Zealanders of the volunteering opportunities available.

VNZ is working to support the community and voluntary sector in its volunteering activities through providing a range of resource, learning and development opportunities. VNZ developed InvolveMe, an online tool, to enable volunteer involving organisations to assess the effectiveness of their volunteering programme. A Level 4 national certificate in Managing Volunteers is offered through Careerforce, as well as regular webinars, professional learning groups and CE Forums. VNZ, additionally maintains an up to date research page full of resources about volunteering.



**1 in 2** New Zealanders volunteer for an organisation *or* help a person from another household

Volunteer labour  
in organisations  
contributed

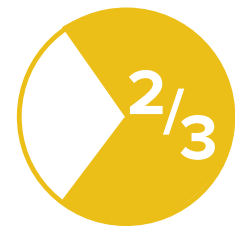
**\$3.5**  
**BILLION**

to  
New Zealand's  
gross domestic  
product

(1.7%)



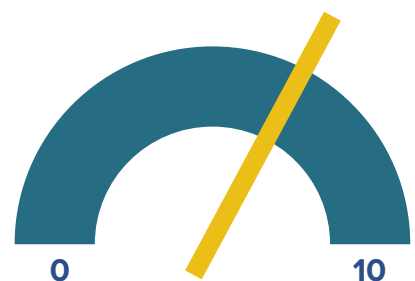
of  
respondents stated  
their organisation  
**did not offer an**  
induction programme  
or  
training opportunities  
**to volunteers.**



of organisations  
did not evaluate  
their volunteering  
programme.

**14.1%**

A small number of volunteers complete  
over half the total volunteer hours



Rating = 6.5 out of 10



**Volunteering**  
NEW ZEALAND

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