

POLICY ON
VOLUNTEER
ENGAGEMENT

April 1

2022



Change Initiatives

1. Introduction

Change Initiatives (CI) is a Kolkata-based NGO committed to advancing education, environmental sustainability and empowerment, especially among marginalized communities. Volunteers play a vital role in achieving our mission by bringing in fresh perspectives, skills, and energy.

This policy outlines the principles, procedures, and expectations that govern volunteer engagement at CI.

2. Objectives

- To define the rights and responsibilities of volunteers.
 - To ensure a structured, respectful, and safe environment for volunteers and the communities we serve.
 - To foster a mutually beneficial relationship between CI and its volunteers.
 - To align volunteer efforts with the strategic goals of CI.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who voluntarily offer their time, skills, and services to CI without any expectation of monetary compensation. It includes local, national, and international volunteers engaged in:

- Fieldwork (education, environment, digital literacy)
- Online volunteering (content creation, fundraising, design, research)
- Office support (administration, event planning)
- Campaigns, events, and workshops

4. Principles of Volunteering

Volunteering with CI is:

- **Voluntary** – without coercion, remuneration, or legal obligation.
 - **Mutually Beneficial** – contributing to the volunteer’s growth while advancing CI’s mission.
 - **Inclusive** – open to all regardless of gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background.
 - **Safe and Respectful** – conducted in a manner that prioritizes dignity, safety, and respect for all individuals.
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5. Recruitment and Onboarding

- **Application Process:** Interested individuals must complete a Volunteer Application Form, submit a CV, and attend an informal interview.
- **Selection Criteria:** Based on interest, availability, skillset, and alignment with CI’s values.
- **Orientation:** Selected volunteers will receive an orientation covering:
 - Mission and values of CI
 - Code of conduct
 - Safety protocols
 - Project-specific information

5. Volunteer Contribution Fee

To support logistics, training, and administrative costs, CI requires a minimum **monthly contribution of ₹2,000** from volunteers.

Key Points:

- This is **not a salary**, nor a fee for service rendered, but a **support contribution** to sustain our volunteer program.
- The amount **may be reduced or waived** based on:
 - The volunteer's financial situation
 - Background (e.g., students, unemployed youth, donor volunteers)
 - Specific project needs

Requests for waiver must be made in writing and approved by the Volunteer Coordinator and Director.

6. Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Each volunteer will be given a **Volunteer Agreement** outlining:

- Assigned tasks
- Expected outcomes
- Working hours or availability
- Duration of engagement
- Reporting structure

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be punctual and reliable
- Communicate openly about challenges
- Adhere to CI's policies and values
- Respect the confidentiality of all information
- Work collaboratively with staff, communities, and other volunteers

7. Supervision and Support

- Every volunteer will have a designated **Volunteer Supervisor** for guidance and feedback.
 - Regular check-ins will be scheduled to assess progress, resolve issues, and provide encouragement.
 - Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback to improve CI's volunteering programs.
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8. Recognition and Certification

- CI values the contributions of volunteers and may acknowledge their efforts through:
 - Certificates of Service
 - Recommendation letters (on request)
 - Social media or website recognition
 - Invitations to special events or workshops
 - Long-term volunteers may be considered for internships or paid roles if vacancies arise.
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9. Code of Conduct

Volunteers must:

- Uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals
- Avoid any form of discrimination or harassment
- Not exploit their position for personal gain
- Not represent themselves as CI staff unless formally authorized

CI maintains a **zero-tolerance policy** toward any form of abuse, exploitation, or misconduct.

10. Health, Safety, and Insurance

- CI is committed to providing a safe working environment.

- Volunteers must follow all health and safety guidelines, particularly when working with children or in field areas.
 - Volunteers working on-site must declare any pre-existing health conditions.
 - Volunteers are advised to arrange their own health/travel insurance. CI does not provide insurance coverage.
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11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers may have access to sensitive information. They must:

- Sign a **Confidentiality Agreement**
 - Not disclose any internal data or beneficiary information
 - Abide by all relevant data protection and child safeguarding policies
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12. Conflict Resolution and Grievances

Volunteers are encouraged to address concerns early. The process is:

1. Raise the concern with the assigned supervisor.
 2. If unresolved, escalate to the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Head.
 3. Final decisions rest with the CI Executive Director.
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13. Exit and Feedback

- Volunteers must inform CI of their exit at least one week in advance.
- An **exit interview or feedback form** will be conducted to learn from the volunteer's experience and improve our systems.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or when necessary to reflect legal or organizational changes.

15. Contact

For volunteering inquiries or support, please contact: Susrut

Volunteer Coordinator

Change Initiatives

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