



# **GROWTH NETWORKS UGANDA LIMITED (GRONET)**

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY AND PROCEDURES.**

**YEAR 2016**

## **Foreword**

Being a Volunteer has become a meaningful activity for all kinds of people -within the work force, we consider the volunteers to be one of our valuable human resources. Based on GRONET'S experience, it is noted that, volunteering has greatly contributed to improved programming and transformation of our communities.

In order to sustain this kind of service, the response must be safely anchored in a powerful and sound Volunteer policy & procedures. This policy therefore builds the organization upon which GRONET is committed in working with volunteers in all the programs, protect their welfare, define who they are, create and promote the organization's effort of attracting, satisfying and retaining volunteers.

I expect that all GRONET volunteers, staff, stakeholders and development partners will support this policy and implement it with the seriousness it deserves. Its implementation will set GRONET as a model organization and demonstrate its ability to work through volunteers in promoting our peoples.

I recommend that, this policy should be adopted and used as a guide in response to any Volunteer management issues.

I pledge my commitment on behalf of GRONET in seeing its immediate and effective implementation.

## **Acknowledgement**

The formulation of this Volunteer policy & procedures is an example of GRONET's commitment and collaboration between GRONET staff, Board members, development partners and communities, towards their contributions in the realization of GRONET goals and objectives.

Volunteering has become a meaningful activity for all kinds of people - within the work force across the globe, in realizing the Development goals (DGs) and fighting the global poverty and the marginalized communities. We consider the volunteers to be one of our valuable human resources. Based on GRONET's experience, volunteerism has greatly contributed to improved programming, transformation of communities and enhanced welfare of the communities in the world.

We wish to acknowledge with sincerity the contributions of the Founder Members, the Board of Directors and Staffs, community and Development partners. We appreciate the time, funds and efforts utilized in coming up with this important Policy document.

Given the support that, we have received from all our stakeholders in the development of this policy document, GRONET would wish to pledge commitment to abiding by the highest standards of demonstrating ability to attract and retain volunteers thus high productivity.

Thank you

## **Dedication**

The policy is dedicated to all GRONET volunteers.

It is also dedicated to our entire staff, development partners and stakeholders who have made concerted efforts in supporting GRONET in any aspect.

## **1.0 Introduction.**

### **1.1. Profile and Introduction of Growth Networks Uganda Limited (GRONET)**

Growth Networks Uganda Limited (GRONET) is a private not for profit development and advocacy organization, with the aim to mobilize, inform and engage private and public leadership in promoting equitable and transformative social change for sustainable development and improved quality of life of the poor marginalized communities in Uganda. The organization among others responds to community health issues and especially wide spread HIV/AIDS in particular.

GRONET was established to participate in the uplifting the living standards of the rural and urban poor through the alleviation of mass poverty, ensure food security and incessant to access to social/supportive services at household level and thereby offering a meaningful contribution to sustainable national development. The matters concerning Orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) and their households economic strengthening, Youth/Adolescents Empowerment, Skills development, SRH, HIV/AIDS prevention/awareness and other health related programs, natural resource management and climate change adaptation and mitigation, advocacy for young people's rights among others.

## **2.0. GRONET Vision**

A Harmonious and Vibrant Society with Capacity to Advocate for their Rights and to Engage Policy-Makers for the Implementation of socio-economic policies that encourage transformation and promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the citizens of Uganda.

### **2.1. GRONET Mission**

To open up sustainable avenues with a view to empower the people with skills, knowledge, best practices/experiences, and create opportunities for formation of networks that will enable them to demand for efficient service delivery and equip them with sustainable capacity to participate effectively in the socio-economic development of the country.

## **2.2 GRONET Core Values:**

- Respect to Humanity and Rights of Peoples.
- Serve/Service with honesty and Integrity.
- Transparency, good leadership and Accountability.
- Team work, Pay heed, Value and Focus to Mission Statement.
- We build for the Present and future generations with God's support.
- Networking with all peoples of similar beliefs and principles.
- Personal development for ensuring expertise and professionalism.

## **3 0. Introduction of the Volunteer Policy & procedures**

Volunteering has become a meaningful activity for all kinds of people -within the work force across the globe, we consider the volunteers to be one of our valuable human resources. Based on GRONET's experience, volunteering has greatly contributed to improved programming, transformation of communities and enhanced welfare of the communities in the world.

Therefore, this document will state clearly how GRONET is committed in working with volunteers in all the programs, protect their welfare, define who they are, create and promote the organization's effort of attracting, satisfying and retaining volunteers. The document will further put in place guidelines that implement volunteering. It also comprises of all information useful for settling volunteers in our organization and the communities in our areas of operation.

It is divided into several sections each focusing on major areas, that would facilitate both volunteers and GRONET in understanding the work related environment and the volunteers as a human resource like any other employee in the organization. This shall provide overall guidance and direction to volunteer supervisory staff as well as to volunteers.

### **4.0. Elements and dimensions of volunteering**

#### **4.1. As GRONET, we define volunteering as an activity that embeds four of the following characteristics.**

- The activity that benefits a wider community rather than only for the volunteers/ or an organization.
- Volunteerism is not a cheap labor but rather a commitment and sacrifice.
- We note that volunteers give different levels of commitment e.g. full and part-time /short term volunteering, volunteering away from home as well as the volunteers within our own communities.

- Usually the volunteers' motivation is not necessarily for financial gain but often need to involve different levels of remuneration, including fringe benefits, reimbursements & allowances.



#### **4.2. GRONET classifies Volunteers under three (3) categories.**

##### **1. Category one:**

**International development Volunteers** placed to GRONET by any of the international development charity organizations that work through volunteers such as Universities, Experiential attachment in areas of HIV/AIDS, and others. GRONET shall always work with any organization with similar beliefs and aspirations as development partners'. The International development volunteers shall be placed to the organization with the overall purpose of organizational development and improved service delivery both qualitatively and quantitatively.

##### **2. Category two:**

**Local volunteers on long/short term basis/ Interns**-These include the students or any one who has completed school regardless of the level of education and wishes to be taken under Volunteer scheme ,GRONET will consider them under competitive basis, based on the required skills ,they will volunteer and gain skills , experiences as well as exposure.

##### **3. Category three:**

###### **Peer educators/Community service providers/ volunteers:**

- A peer educator is someone who is knowledgeable and uses non formal means to educate or advocate for a cause or change.
- The peer educator could also belong to a social class and helps in providing information and skills among members of her/his class.
- The social group may be based on age, sex, sexual orientation, occupation, socio-economic or health status, and other factors.
- They are considered as main volunteers, and they are not paid as staff, but contribute almost to the biggest percentage of organization goals and objectives.



GRONET shall continue using this policy to motivate and retain them, to ensure that desired goals are achieved.

#### **4.3. GRONET dimensions to volunteerism:**

- Being positive and realistic in commitment as a volunteer
- Readiness to learn and help others to acquire knowledge.
- Showing ability to solve problems using available resources and facilities.
- The adaptability and flexibility in dealing with situations as they arise.
- Self confidence and a sense of humor.
- Promotion of teamwork.
- A non-judgmental approach which respects other people and cultures.

### **5.0. GRONET'S Involvement in working with volunteers**

GRONET is a supportive organization. This policy provides information and direction in addressing the issues and concerns by both parties. The policy decisions shall always be updated from time to time, in accordance to our laid down organization's systems, structure and procedures. It is hoped that the volunteers will comply with these guidelines and that will seek to support both parties.

The specific duties and responsibilities will be defined in the job description and placement agreement; these will also spell out the line of communication and accountability as well as what GRONET provides to volunteers in terms of facilitations. The guidelines will spell out our rules and procedures like any other employees in the organization; this will help in our program effectiveness and to make the volunteers contributions memorable.

As already stated above, GRONET Volunteers may come from within and outside the country for all age brackets, education background, gender, race, religious backgrounds and with varied previous work experiences and for the interns with a minimum education levels.

The Development partner/Donor, stakeholders or any third parties, will regard GRONET volunteers as part of GRONET team contributing to the same goals and objectives. It shall

be the responsibility of organization to assign duties and responsibilities to volunteers and design an engagement letter for them, as part of involving them. This will be more applicable to GRONET volunteers (full time volunteers placed in the organization by any national or international organizations, based on the placement agreement/ descriptions, and shall operate full time).

The organization shall provide all the required support to full time volunteers, to enable them execute the duties effectively. The full time volunteers shall be provided with a modest allowance where applicable to enable them settle the daily expenses. Other benefits and entitlements shall be determined by both parties, in case GRONET request for a volunteer from international organization.

The Volunteer organizations places volunteers to partner organizations, the responsibilities are assigned by the partners in consultation with the organizations responsible for placing the volunteers. GRONET shall maintain good reputation in working with volunteers, due to the best practices in managing and working through and with Volunteering. The organization will continue providing all the required support to the volunteers, to enable them contributes to the desired goals and objectives.

The development partners/donors and stakeholders will be informed about the involvement of volunteers in the GRONET programming and implementation, this shall give a background of how volunteers mostly the international volunteers, about the need to participate in the programming and implementation, since the desired volunteer's objective is to contribute to organizational development and systems strengthening.

**5.1. GRONET shall work in a holistic Staff-Volunteer approach considering the following:**

- Volunteers and staff work towards achieving the goal and objectives of the organization.
- Every staff member must understand the rationale for the involvement of volunteers.

- Volunteer rights & responsibilities are clearly established and understood by all parties.
- All staff and volunteers work within established guidelines, policies and procedures.
- Staff must be positive when working with volunteers and believes in their abilities and contribution to the organization.
- Planning, decision making & work practices are all inclusive in discussions and meetings.

### **5.2. Volunteers on short-term basis/interns.**

GRONET shall accept both volunteers who will be participating as student interns and those volunteering for a specific period. They will also be guided by the terms and conditions in this volunteer policy. The volunteers on short-term basis/ interns will be assigned to perform under the direct supervision of the program heads.

### **5.3. Motivation for Volunteers on short-term basis/ Interns.**

In-order to help Volunteers on a short- term basis, GRONET will encourage them to share their expectations on a regular basis with their line managers/supervisors and in reasonable time before any serious de-motivation occurs. They will therefore have regular schedules of one-one or group talk with their supervisors to share their expectations and other work related issues.

### **5.4. Volunteer Rights.**

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to GRONET. Short term Volunteers and peer educators/community service providers/volunteers to some extent shall be extended the following rights:

- Be given meaningful assignments for a certain period of time.
- Reimbursement of agreed expenses. This shall follow the financial and other related policies as well as approved budgets.
- Be treated as equal co-workers (This right means each volunteer must have a job description, Occupational Health & Safety, anti-discrimination legislation and organizational grievance processes.)
- To effective supervision.

- To full involvement and participation during working hours
- To recognition for work done.
- Appropriate orientation and on the job training.
- Be kept informed of organizational changes and the reasons for the changes.
- A place to work and suitable tools for the job.
- Be heard and make suggestions.
- Certificate of service or recognition as well as recommendations as may be required by the volunteer from time to time, as appropriate.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of GRONET.

### **5.5. Scope of Volunteers Involvement.**

Volunteers shall be utilized in any programs and activities of GRONET, and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making. Each volunteer's scope of involvement will however be spelt out in their placement description.

## **6.0 Acceptance and Placement.**

Service as volunteers with GRONET shall begin with an official placement and acceptance to volunteer/Interns in a community volunteer/peer educators' positions as per organization's normal placement procedures. No volunteer/Interns shall begin performance in any position until they have been officially accepted and have completed all necessary paperwork and shall receive a copy of their Agreement of service, placement description and orientation plan.

### **6.1. Volunteers /Interns agreements/contracts.**

Volunteer agreement shall at minimum state the following:

- Name, age, sex and permanent address of volunteer.
- Name of employer.
- Date of commencement and placement period.
- Performance of specified work, supervisor name and title.
- Entitlements such as reimbursements where applicable, e.t.c.

- Awards or rewards where applicable.

## **6.2. Probationary and extension period for Volunteers on short term basis/Interns.**

All volunteer placements (short Term-Interns) shall initially be done on a trial period of 30 days. At the end of this period when the volunteers have gone through the probation, the President will re-affirm his/her assignment as a volunteer for a period that will have been determined before. After the first initial period has expired and the volunteer feels want to extend, will again write to GRONET requesting for extension, if the organization still requires the volunteer services, then an acceptance response will be provided to the volunteer re-affirming the extension period.

## **6.3. Re-Assignment of Volunteer.**

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new position shall be interviewed for that position and shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position before they begin work. In addition, any other screening procedures appropriate for that specific position shall be completed.

## **6.4. Length of Service for short term volunteers/Interns.**

All volunteer positions shall have a set term of duration. The recommended term shall not be longer than nine Months with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties.

## **7.0 Orientation.**

Volunteer placement at GRONET is intended to help volunteers to fit in their positions and make them feel at home in the organization. The orientation will familiarize the volunteers with the roles, the responsibilities, the organization's policies, how systems operate, other employees and the surrounding environment. As far as dictated by the volunteer orientation plan, other employees within the organization will be involved in the orientation process.

Volunteer orientation will include the following:

- Tour of GRONET office premises and facilities.
- GRONET departmental /Programs orientation.
- Meeting the volunteer supervisor & President on human resource issues.

Areas to be covered during the specific program orientation will include:

- The organization's history, mission, vision, core values.
- GRONET policies such as Code of conduct, HR policy, Communication policy, HIV/AIDS policy e.t.c
- Organization leadership structure and charts.
- Introduction to program staff and program office facilities.
- The documentation that relates to program work.
- Volunteer work related issues.

### **7.1. Support & Supervision.**

GRONET guarantees support and supervision to volunteers, we realize that volunteers are interested in their personal growth and that GRONET is one avenue along their path of development.

### **7.2. Volunteers Career Paths.**

Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with GRONET, and are to be assisted through one-one mentoring, consultation, advice, and promotion to new volunteer placements to assume additional and greater responsibilities. If so desired by the volunteer, GRONET shall assist the volunteer in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that would assist the volunteer in future career opportunities.

### **7.3. Standards of Performance.**

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards shall list the work to be done in that position, measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of the work. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and the volunteer assigned to the position. This shall be completed within a specific period of the volunteers posting. A copy of the volunteer performance standards shall be provided to the volunteer alongside a detailed explanation of the intention of the performance management process.

### **7.4 Supervision.**

Day to day supervision of a volunteer shall be the mandate of the volunteer's supervisor. The supervisor will either be the volunteer coordinator or the staff person whom the volunteer will most closely work with.

### **8.0 Grievance.**

Should a volunteer feel aggrieved by their supervisor and strongly feel that the supervisor cannot resolve the matter, the first point of contact shall be as conflict/ grievance procedures detailed in a code of conduct policy. However, an informal approach to resolving the matter shall be recommended for all grievances relating to volunteers unless they are serious grievances such discrimination or of sexual harassment e.t.c . Decisions involving corrective action of a volunteer will be reviewed for appropriateness. If corrective action is taken, the affected volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing their concern or grievance.

### **9.0. Performance Management**

Volunteers shall need feedbacks on their performance such as regular feedback. The management will try to provide all the required feedbacks.

### **9.1 Performance Evaluations.**

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work. The evaluation session will be utilized to review the performance of the volunteers, to suggest any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's

relationship with GRONET, to convey appreciation to the volunteers, and to ascertain the continued interest of the volunteers in serving in that position.

Evaluations shall include both an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities/performance and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have, concerning the position or project with which the volunteers are connected. It is an opportunity for both the volunteers and management to examine and improve the relationships and performance. This will be more encouraged and done effectively to peer educators'/community volunteers.

### **9.2. Written Basis for Evaluation.**

The position description and standards of performance for volunteers shall form the basis of an evaluation. Corrective action will be taken following an evaluation exercise. Examples of corrective action will include the requirement of additional re-fresher courses, re-assignment of the volunteers to a new position, suspension of the volunteers, or dismissal from volunteer services. A written record shall be kept of each evaluation session.

### **9.3. Staff Responsibility for Evaluation.**

It shall be the responsibility of each staff member in a supervisory relationship with volunteers to schedule and perform periodic evaluation and there after forward the records related to the outcomes to program manager, a human resource person and President for further analysis and recommendations. This will assist to determine the need for replacing the peer educators'/community volunteers or determine their destiny in terms of commitment and sustainability of the programs where there are serving.



## **10. Volunteer-Staff Relations.**

GRONET admits that effective operation of a volunteer program requires that there is a supportive working relationship between staff and volunteers. If either group does not understand the needs of the other, or if either group is distrustful of the other, the volunteer program cannot function effectively. It will be a primary role of the President to make sure that both volunteers and staff are able to work effectively and agreeably together, to enable the targets realized in an effective and efficient manners.

### **10.1 Staff Volunteer induction.**

An induction on working with volunteers will be provided to all GRONET staff. The induction exercise will create an effective volunteer handling. This shall be over emphasized to staff-peer educators'/volunteers relationships and handling. The staff shall be inducted on how they should handle them, both in the field and office.

### **10.2. Volunteer/client relations.**

All volunteers shall be required to acquire as much information about the organization as possible. This is in view of the fact that they represent the organization's work in the face of the clients and program beneficiaries. Volunteers shall be professional at all times and take their engagement with the seriousness it deserves.

## **11. Information and Communication.**

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. All volunteers shall be included in and have access to all appropriate memos, hand outs, manuals, teaching materials, and meetings relevant to the work assignments, in order to facilitate the receipt of this information on a timely basis. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteers receive such information will rest with the direct supervisors and program staff of the volunteers. Lines of communication shall operate in both directions, and will exist both formally and informally. Volunteers shall be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

## **12. Volunteer development & Retention.**

### **12.1. Training**

Training is the process by which volunteers are instructed on specific job-related skills and behavior that they will need to perform their particular volunteer job. It will involve the following on an ongoing basis with the supervisor/program staff:

- How to perform their particular duties?
- What they should not do in their duties.
- What to do if an emergency or unforeseen situation arises.

Volunteers will receive an induction to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignments. The timing and methods for delivery of such induction shall be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the volunteers.

### **12.2. Conference Attendance**

Volunteers shall be authorized to attend workshops, conferences and meetings which are relevant to their assignments. Prior approval from the volunteers' program staff or executive director shall be obtained before attending any workshop, conference or meeting. If it will require GRONET to provide travel costs, then the payment arrangements will be done in consultation with the finance department and the President.

## **13.0 Volunteer Recognition**

Rewarding and motivating the volunteers will be undertaken to motivate the effectiveness and morale and performance of the volunteers to the organization, the following will be done:

### **13.1 Awards**

The following awards as periodic provision of tokens of recognition to volunteers, either in a group or on a one-to-one basis will be issued.

- Certificates
- Get together reception.
- volunteer Identity cards.
- . Group photographs.
- Other Items of clothing, such as T-shirts, caps, etc.
- Bags.

### **13.2 Rewards**

The following rewards which are more intangible to day-to-day activities of recognition and motivation will be issued or conducted as an appreciation to GRONET volunteers.

- Volunteers will be recommended for promotion to a more responsible job.
- Volunteers will be involved in decisions that affect them.
- We will provide all the necessary reimbursements and support where applicable.
- Volunteer will be attending trainings and meetings.
- We shall adequately orientate volunteers.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to participate in team planning.
- Recommendations of a good volunteer to prospective employers will be done.

## **14.0 Volunteer Administrative Procedures**

### **14.1 Records**

Volunteer personnel records shall be kept by the Human resources office and accorded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records.

### **14.2. Leave of Absence**

At the discretion of the immediate supervisor or President, leaves of absence shall be granted to volunteers. This leave of absence will not alter or extend the previously agreed upon ending date of the volunteer's term of service. Volunteers shall be expected to perform their duties on a regular schedule and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers shall inform their immediate supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made.

### **14.3 Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteers, whether this information involves a single staff, volunteers, clients/peers, or other person. The peer educators/volunteers must not exposure or give any information related to GRONET work to any third party without approval from the President or program staff. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result into disciplinary action.

### **14.4. Reimbursement of Expenses**

Volunteers shall be eligible for reimbursement of expenses incurred while undertaking GRONET business where applicable. The finance department shall distribute information to the volunteer regarding specific reimbursable items. Prior approval must be sought for any expenditure.

## **15. Access to GRONET Property and assets.**

Volunteers shall have access to GRONET property and assets necessary to fulfill their duties. The assets shall be utilized only when directly required for GRONET purposes as per GRONET asset management policy (refer to asset management policy)

## **16.0. Insurance.**

16.1. Liability and accident insurance shall not be provided to volunteers.

### **16.2. Volunteers Workers Personal Accident.**

This covers accidental injury or death as a result of any authorized activity carried out by volunteers on behalf of the organization, including travel to and from the activity. GRONET may not provide medical cover, but may provide out of pocket expenses that will be determined by the management where applicable.

## **17.0. Separation.**

GRONET accepts the service of all volunteers. Volunteers agree that GRONET may at any time, for whatever justified reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the organization. The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, also decide to sever (call it off) the volunteer's relationship with the GRONET. Notice of such a decision shall be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer immediate supervisor or President. The same case to peer educators'/community volunteers, for any reason, a peer educator decides to sever the roles he/she will communicate to the immediate project officer and arrangement to handover the reports and other GRONET items will be taken immediately.

### **17.1. Dismissal of a Volunteer**

No volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with the immediate supervisor. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff will seek the consultation and assistance of the overview Volunteer Supervisor. The following procedure for dismissal will apply: The supervisor will send a

query request for the volunteer to explain the circumstances. A dismissal may be effected if the misconduct is gross however a warning or notice will be issued. The Investigation will determine if the volunteer has actually broken the rules. This means, that a volunteer like any other GRONET staff can never be terminated or dismissed on the spot regardless of the infraction /failure to comply, not until appropriate data about the cause of misconduct is gathered and final decision is taken.

#### **17.2. Reasons for Dismissal.**

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property, failure to abide by GRONET policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

#### **17.3. Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer.**

In the event that a volunteer departs GRONET, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new position, it shall be the responsibility of the Volunteer Supervisor to inform the affected staff and clients that the volunteers are no longer assigned to work with them. In cases of dismissal for cause, this notification shall be given in writing.

#### **17.4. Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their service at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision.

#### **17.5. Exit Interviews.**

The Volunteer Supervisor shall conduct an exit interview to ascertain why the volunteer are leaving the position and suggestions.

## **Receipt of GRONET Volunteer Policy**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of GRONET Volunteer Policy. I agree to read it thoroughly, including the statements in the foreword describing the purpose and effect of the policy.

I also understand that this policy and procedures are continually evaluated and may be amended, modified or terminated at any time.