

Stichting VluchtelingKansen

Volunteer policy Stichting VluchtelingKansen

Introduction

This document formulates the volunteer policy used by Stichting VluchtelingKansen, which forms the basis for how we work with volunteers.

The Stichting VluchtelingKansen is active in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug region and is committed to achieving a refugee policy that is as humane as possible. The organisation does this by providing young asylum seekers and approved refugees in particular with guidance in (vocational) training and gaining work experience. The organisation also provides financial assistance for family reunification and offers financial and moral support to asylum seekers who have exhausted all legal remedies through the UVOM (Utrecht organisation for people without documents) scheme. This UVOM scheme is funded by the municipality of Utrecht. Expenses for all other activities are financed from the proceeds of the Eurowinkel run by the organisation, which sells second-hand books and clothing, and for a small part by gifts. The shop is also a work-experience location.

Assistance and guidance to refugees is provided by the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken. This is a group of volunteers, some of whom receive an expense allowance. The coordination of the Eurowinkel is in the hands of a part-time self-employed person supported by volunteers. As the position of the two groups is quite different, where necessary we refer to the volunteers of the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken as 'workgroup volunteers' and the volunteers working in the Eurowinkel shop as 'shop volunteers'. There are also volunteers working as book sorters, general support volunteers and as board member.

In this volunteer policy, we outline the position of volunteers, the procedures and the relationship with volunteers. This documents the organisation's expectations towards volunteers and what it offers the volunteers.

Definition of volunteer work

We define volunteering as the set of activities:

- That is carried out on a non-compulsory basis;
- That is performed by the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken without financial compensation, except for reimbursement of expenses made, and by the volunteers in the Eurowinkel in part unpaid and in part for a modest fixed (daily) compensation;
- That has a social purpose, i.e. benefits society, both at individual and group level.

Vision

The Eurowinkel and the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken both focus on newcomers to our society: (young) asylum seekers and recognised and rejected refugees residing in our region.

The volunteers in the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken provide their skills, time and attention to improve the ability of these individuals to participate in society. Precisely because these volunteers do this 'for free' and are not representatives of any 'official' body, they can easily

build a bridge to people for whom Dutch society is new. Shop volunteers make their time available to gain work experience in Dutch society and improve their knowledge of the Dutch language through contact with customers in the shop.

Position of volunteers

The work within Stichting VluchtelingKansen is carried out primarily by volunteers. The following is expected from all volunteers:

- Central respect for one another's culture and orientation, sex and gender in all interactions between volunteers and those seeking help, and ensuring a safe situation of contact for both involved. The volunteer will not express discriminatory or intimidating behaviour in any form.
- Commitment to the organisation for at least six months (preferably a full year) and be employable for Stichting Vluchtelingkinderen, either in the Eurowinkel, the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken or for the organisation as a whole;
- Participation in the informational sessions offered;
- Receptive to regular feedback and evaluation with the coordinators of shop and working group;

The coordinators of the shop and working group conduct an intake interview with newly registered volunteers, in which, among other things, mutual expectations are discussed. Volunteers in the Eurowinkel have a volunteer contract. Collaboration within the Werkgroep Vluchtelingen is on a confidential basis.

The volunteers are insured through the collective liability insurance that the municipality of Utrechtse Heuvelrug takes out for volunteers (and volunteer organisations).

For the volunteers, the appeal of this type of work is the satisfaction of being socially active in a meaningful way and the personal and often enriching contact with individuals seeking help from other cultures and with fellow volunteers.

In addition, guidance is provided in the Eurowinkel, and regular (informative) meetings are held at all levels.

In the course of 2023, we will begin working with a VOG (certificate of good conduct), which will become compulsory for the volunteers of the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken. Given the vulnerability of at least some of the refugees and the nature of the contact, which often involves one-to-one contact, the Stichting VluchtelingKansen considers a VOG a minimum requirement for volunteers within the Werkgroep Vluchtelingzaken. For the time being, mandating VOGs for shop volunteers faces practical obstacles.

In closing

1. This volunteer policy shall be adopted and amended by the board, last on 23 August 2023
2. The volunteer policy shall enter into force on 1 September 2023
3. The Volunteer Policy is a component of the Stichting VluchtelingKansen's Integrity Policy to which complaint regulations are also associated.

4. The board will ensure publication of this volunteer policy by publishing it on the website. The workgroup and the management team of the Eurowinkel will ensure publication among their own volunteers and employees.

The provisions in this volunteer policy do not prejudice the option of turning to other appropriate persons or bodies, such as the confidential advisor and/or the civil or criminal courts.

These regulations may be cited as “volunteer policy Stichting VluchtelingKansen”.

First adopted in the board meeting of 24 May 2023.