



## Chapter 4

# Volunteering and Human Resource Management

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*The contemporary non-profit sector is undergoing a period of rapid and uncertain change that is, in turn, impacting on volunteers who are crucial to organisational capacity. Human resource management provides organisations with a framework that enables them to recruit and retain volunteers to ensure the sustainability and viability of the sector.*

### Introduction

The non-profit sector is moving through a period of rapid and uncertain change. It comprises formal and informal organisations of different sizes and missions, which have to cater to the needs of an increasingly diverse volunteer workforce of informal and formal volunteers, traditional, episodic and social enterprise volunteers (Barraket, 2008). Without a reliable group of volunteers, it is difficult to fulfil the mission of the organisation. Thus, volunteer management and development are key resources in building organisational capacity (Healy, Lyons-Crew, Michaux & Gal, 2008; Sobeck & Agius, 2007). The sector therefore requires management approaches that will contribute to both its sustainability and the sustainability of volunteering. In this chapter we outline the critical issues affecting the sector from a human resource management (HRM) perspective. These include neoliberal rationales and new forms of public policy; the influence of marketisation and pressure for professionalisation; changing work and caring environments; and changing volunteer demographics. We then discuss the principles of HRM, along with its advantages and limitations in order to provide organisations with the tools needed to deal with the increasing complexity of working with volunteers in the non-profit sector.

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