

Touchstone

Best Practices to Expand Your Reach



Best Practice (BP) | Best practices are specific, discrete ministry activities that measurably increase program scale, effectiveness, and/or efficiency, and can be replicated by other National Ministries. Best practices should be supported by evidence (data).

BP#5: Establish a Volunteer Reporting System

Benefits:

Volunteers are NM's hands and feet in prisons and communities. Prison work is often decentralized work – prisons and prisoner's families are scattered throughout the country. Having volunteers in close proximity to them, checking on them, engaging them and reporting on the activities allows your National Ministry to grow effectively and efficiently. Another benefit to engaging volunteers in reporting is that it promotes ownership among them.

Volunteer reporting is key when running a children of prisoners program – to have a network of volunteers to help monitor them in their day-to-day activities and to raise any concerns.

Planning Considerations (*How to do it*):

1. Prepare

- Determine what information you want to track.
- Determine what you will use the information for (Are you only collecting data or are you collecting information about progress or potential problems?).
- Determine how the information will be collected – electronically, paper, etc.
- Determine how the volunteers will provide the information collected to the NM.
- Determine (and communicate) due dates for collecting information.
- Determine what system(s) the tracked data will be stored in.
- Determine if any of your current volunteers can perform these activities or if you need to recruit new volunteers.
- Develop reporting template(s).
- Designate someone from your office to oversee this process.
- Determine who will train volunteers to collect information.
- Determine channels for responding to information received.
- Design and implement a monitoring function to assure that data being collected is accurate.
- Define specific areas that a volunteer will be responsible for (geographic, programmatic, other volunteers).



HERE IS AN EXAMPLE FROM TCJ:

To get a better idea of what is happening in schools, PF Rwanda has identified older children in the program who are serving as “School Deans.” These children have been charged with reporting anything of significance that goes on at school regarding TCJ children to PF Rwanda’s program staff. PF Rwanda is not looking to do away or reduce school visits with the appointment of the school deans. They believe this process will provide information that would not be reported by a school official to the staff.

NM with Demonstrated Experience in this BP

 Canada

 Russia

 Spain

2. Roll-out

- Provide training to volunteers on the systems, expectations and processes.

3. Follow-up

- Continuously assess and adjust the reporting functions.
- Provide a channel for feedback.
- Provide additional coaching as the process evolves.
- Regularly review reporting processes for efficiency.

Required Resources (What you need to do it):

1. Human Resources.

- Someone will be needed to oversee volunteer management.
- Someone will need to monitor accuracy of reporting.
- Someone will need to enter the data received into the database.

2. Systems. You will need a system/database for the data to reside in.

3. Collateral.

- A general volunteer application (print and web-based).
- Reporting template(s).
- Training presentation and training aids for volunteers.

4. Time.

- Training volunteers.
- Ongoing coaching for volunteers.
- Reviewing reporting.

5. Space. You will need space to conduct training.

6. Cost. The cost varies. Considerations include types of collateral (web or print), potential software expenses, travel expenses, types of communication (email, phone, text).