

Volunteer retention

Red Cross Society Seychelles looks inward

The RCSS hosted a workshop to find ways to improve their own volunteer retention, as non-governmental organizations thrive on people to survive.

by S.Marivel

Volunteers and managers of the RCSS gathered at the International Conference Centre on Saturday for a full day workshop so concerns could be voiced out and injected into a new policy on volunteer management and retention.

It was revealed through various group discussions and presentations that NGOs must be run as smoothly as businesses, and this has been stressed time and time again in Seychelles through audit reports and frequent management reviews. This is vital as many NGOs affect various sectors of society.

However the main difference between a business and an NGO is that an NGO's real currency is people - not rupees.

"Why do people stay somewhere,



Volunteers sharing their concerns and ways to keep them interested and willing to work with the Red Cross

be it in an NGO or a workplace?" asks one volunteer. "You could say its money but in this case they are not paid. So, having a strong human resources team or person is vital for volunteering and staff retention,"

he tells TODAY. "People can sense strong leadership, and if they feel that they are valued and are learning things everyday - they will stay and this can be applied to any job out there in companies, not just NGOs."

They outlined that good communication, valuing of volunteers, and frequent recognition of achievements and years of service would help in improving relations among volunteers and expanding the amount of time they spend helping the RCSS.

While they have improved over the past years in their social media presence, internal communication needs strengthening, some of the volunteers said.

Other issues with transport, and taking ownership of some activities and programmes were also highlighted.

"The RCSS provides quality service, but we as volunteers need to take more initiative as well and take ownership of what goes on, so we can make it our own and find new ways of doing things as well," one participant noted.

Erratum

In an article published on Saturday 10 March entitled "Renasense Seychelles: public-private partnership in dialysis treatment", we reported that Mr. Peter Larose was involved in this scheme. We wish to correct that it is Mr. Peter Sinon who is a former Minister and is a dialysis patient advocating for good dialysis treatment. We also clarify that the collaboration is not between the dialysis unit at Perseverance as we printed, but rather is a collaboration between the dialysis unit at Victoria hospital and Renasense. TODAY apologises for these errors.

On the other hand, some of the RSS leaders felt that because they are an NGO, they tend to not hold volunteers accountable for their work because they are not being paid - which they feel could hurt the group in the long-term.

"Volunteers get away with murder in a sense because leaders are sometimes afraid to tell volunteers anything if they are late or do not take the work seriously," one leader points out. "We should have more of a framework to deal with volunteers so that they do not think that just because they are not paid, it does not mean it is not serious work."

After group discussions and presentations, they reviewed their cur-

rent RCSS Volunteer Management Cycle and proposed some amendments.

The Red Cross Society of Seychelles (RCSS) was founded in August 1989. With the enactment of the Seychelles Red Cross Act 1991, the society was officially recognized as a voluntary relief society and auxiliary to the public authorities. The RCSS is a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, the world's largest humanitarian organisation. The Red Cross Society of Seychelles is a voluntary aid society which empowers its members to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and advocate on their behalf, nationally and internationally.

Health Solidarity walk and screening exercises

Patients, staff and volunteers participated in a solidarity walk for International Kidney Day and hosted a religious service at the Anse Etoile Community Centre and various screening exercises on Praslin.

The Ministry for Health joined together with patients, staff and volunteers yesterday morning to

express solidarity on International Kidney Day.

They continue to emphasize prevention through a healthy

lifestyle and in particular regular exercise and a healthy diet.

Activities included a solidarity walk as well as the screen-

ing exercise on Praslin and the special religious service at Anse Etoile Community Centre.



Group photo at Victoria Hospital