

## **Volunteers: is your NPO missing out on opportunities?**

Today, more companies have formal volunteering programmes than ever before, not only in South Africa, but globally. According to Trialogue, just 46% of South Africa's companies had formal volunteering policies in 2007, but this mushroomed to a whopping 70% by 2016. SAIF doesn't see this trend slowing down any time soon; in fact, it's set to grow even more.

So just how does your NPO view volunteering? Gone are the days – we hope – when a crowd of well-meaning corporate staff would descend on a centre to paint walls (that didn't need painting) or give sweets to children (who didn't need the sugar) or ... (fill in the part you remember best!).

Truth is, you may be missing out on a valuable opportunity if you're dismissing volunteering out of hand because of unpleasant past experiences. If your NPO has work – skilled and non-skilled – that could be executed by volunteers, why not reconsider?

Without compromising your mission and mandate, look at specific areas of work or projects that you could accomplish faster – and more cost-effectively – by tapping into the volunteer armies at corporates.

Start by looking at your own needs – those tasks or projects – that you've identified as being perfect for a volunteer-staff partnership. Formulate a plan around how you think it could work best considering your organisation's circumstances; and then – and only then – start to look at suitable corporate partners who may be willing to come on board.

Start by assessing your NPO's current corporate partners for volunteering possibilities. Many corporates have well-organised volunteering programmes in place; find out who leads this initiative, and ask to meet for a discussion.

If your current corporate base is dry, then look at previous corporate funders. Or, you could simply go for gold and research which corporates actively involve themselves in formal volunteering programmes and simply start there.

*Courtesy of: SAIF – SA Institute of Fundraising*