

## V4V Good Practice Case Studies: Louvain La Neuve Hockey Club

**Sport / Activity:** Hockey

**Country:** Belgium



Which of the four pillars does the example cover?

- Volunteer strategy and planning
- Volunteer recruitment and deployment
- Volunteer management and retention
- Volunteer development and training

### Focus of volunteer intervention: Recruiting volunteers post Covid-19

#### Objective(s):

Louvain La Neuve Hockey Club is large Hockey club with around 1400 players, 18 teams, and three paid staff. To operate fully, the club also needs approximately 10,000 hours of volunteer support per year. The club also runs the annual 'Golden Championship' for which 600 volunteers are needed to support and run the weekend-long event. The club lost many volunteers due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, whilst recruiting new volunteers has become increasingly challenging.

A key focus of this initiative was therefore to find new, more efficient ways to approach, recruit and retain volunteers.

#### Activities undertaken:

Players at the club were asked to use their personal contacts to approach potential volunteers and were encouraged to share stories and testimonies about their time at the club and the benefits they have received from this involvement. Attention was initially targeted on friends and family. The club also advertised via its Facebook page. The club provided role/ task descriptors for different volunteering roles within the club and those required at different times of the year. Emphasis was placed on how the role/task would contribute to the running of the club or associated events so that prospective volunteers could see and understand the importance of their contribution.

The club created an online 'sign-up' form which prospective volunteers could use to register their interest and match their skills and interests against the different roles. An email reply was sent to all applicants inviting them to a information and training meeting with further training provided to interested applicants. These individuals were then provided with details of when they would be needed, and the goals connected to the activity/event they were contributing to. All volunteers were also thanked for their contribution and how they had helped to make the club / activity or event successful.

#### Challenges faced:

A major challenge has been trying to re-recruit those volunteers lost after the Covid-19 Pandemic, many of whom have since taken up new activities and therefore have less time to support the club. There is also an ongoing societal challenge around the recruitment of volunteers as people generally have less time and are less willing to give up their time for 'free'. Some of the volunteering tasks such as maintenance and cleaning, whilst essential for the operation of the club, are also not seen as attractive and are challenging to recruit to.

**Impact:**

The initiative has helped to create a sense of belonging and community around the club as all volunteers are now much more aware of how their time and effort contributes to the overall success of the club.

The club has also increased its volunteer recruitment and retention, with approximately half of the volunteers lost due to the Covid-19 Pandemic returning whilst additional new volunteers have been recruited. The online 'sign-up' system has also made volunteer recruitment much more efficient and helped to find "the right people, for the right job" (Gorka, Club President).

To help with future recruitment, the club for a small fee has signed up to an online volunteering platform that matches volunteers to volunteering opportunities. This is hoped to remove the pressure on players to recruit volunteers.

For further information: <http://www.lnhc.be/>