

**Board of Directors Orientation Manual for a non-profit
Case: The Vietnamese Student Association in Finland**

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<p>This is a project- oriented thesis with an Orientation Manual for new-coming members of Board of Directors as the outcome. The Orientation Manual will serve as guidelines for Board members to carry their roles in the association and helps creating working relationship among Board members. The thesis was commissioned by the Vietnamese Student Association in Finland – a non-profit that was founded in 2003 and is currently based in Helsinki. The association provides sport, education and culture-exchange activities to preserve and promote the unique of Vietnamese culture to the Finnish community.</p> <p>The project began in December 2013 and was ready to deliver in May 2014. There are three main parts in the thesis structure: the theory, the research and the actual Orientation Manual.</p> <p>The theoretical framework focuses on human behaviour in non-profit sector, which includes volunteer motivation and Board behaviour as the association leaders. These issues are discussed from extensive sources of academic articles and literature. The second part is a research which is conducted from both management and non-management point of view in order to gain practical understanding of the matters.</p> <p>The Manual is built based on desktop research of manuals from similar local non-profit, findings from theory study and results research. Upon delivered, the Manual is considered valuable documentation for the commissioning association.</p>	
<p>Keywords Non-profit, Board of Directors, orientation</p>	

**Special thanks to my band VietSpirit
who keeps me inspired and surprisingly stressed just enough.**

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1 Introduction

In this chapter the author will present about the background to thesis topic, project objectives and its constituted project tasks. Later on international aspects, key concepts, demarcation, risk analysis as well as introduction of the case association will also be discussed in detail.

1.1 Topic background

Most of the studies and practices in non-profit governance have agreed that a highly performing Board of Directors usually coincide with a well- functioned organization. Worth (2012, 5) supports the findings, with a reason that for today's non-profit, except for the smallest ones, management must have been paid well attention. Therefore, the Board of Directors plays an essential role in ensuring the organization's mission and support driving the organization towards its vision. A well-prepare Orientation Manual that gives full information on the current organizational situation will support equipping Board members with their roles and responsibilities and help building relationship between Board members based on mutual agreements.

The thesis is commissioned by the Vietnamese Student Association in Finland. Since the author started volunteered there in March 2013, she had noticed that there had not been any concrete policies under Human Resource Management (HRM) in written format within the association, let alone any policies for Board members. Therefore, the first and foremost benefit to the association thus will be creating a valuable HRM document for a long-term use.

International aspect

Within the association, exchange of conversation is carried out in Vietnamese. However since the association operates in Finland the international aspect thus lie in relationship management between the organizational personnel and external stakeholders such as

sponsors, donors, foreign volunteers and visitors coming to the association's annual events.

The project is mutually agreed to be delivered in the autumn of 2014 so that it can be put into practice after the Board election ends, which is scheduled to happen by the end of 2014.

1.2 Project objectives and project tasks

The **project objective** for this thesis topic is to design an Orientation Manual for VSAF's Board of Directors. There are **project tasks** (PTs) which will serve as building blocks to constitute the Orientation Manual. The project tasks are listed as followed:

PT1. Researching background information

PT2. Constructing the theoretical framework

PT3. Conducting the research

PT4. Writing the Board of Directors' Orientation Manual

PT5. Assessing project and suggesting for further development of the Manual

The overlay matrix with project tasks linked to theories and thesis chapters can be found under Appendix 1.

1.3 Demarcation

First of all, under human resource perspective Lynch (2012, 665) identifies three relevant resources in a non-profit sector: voluntary work, specialist technical know-how and leadership and governance. Due to preferences from the association and requirement from a Bachelor's thesis size the study will focus solely on the last resource. More specifically, this thesis will focus more on the level of leadership behaviours, which is the level of individual factors within organizational behaviour terrain.

Secondly, theoretical study about volunteer's motivation will be based on the assumption that there would be sufficient financial resources for the association to operate and provide volunteers with basic reimbursements. The reason for this assumption will be explained further in Chapter 2.

In addition to that, because of the time limitation other elements in the Manual that presents information regarding regulations and laws, or such information relating to financial management will not be introduced in detail.

Finally, the topics covered in the Manual presented with this thesis will not discuss about the Board's concerns relating to Embassy collaboration or such similar collaborations with governmental and non-governmental institutions in Finland as it is subjected to confidential and sensitive matters. Nevertheless, these matters will be included in the official Manual, which is circulated within the association internally.

1.4 Benefits and risk analysis

Benefit

The project outcome will be an Orientation Manual that aims to equip upcoming Board of Directors with useful information about the organization and serve as a framework to assist Board members carrying out their effective strategic management. With a strong Board of Directors, the association would be able to offer more valuable services. Consequently, visitors of the association's activities will receive benefits indirectly in the longer run thanks for the quality improvement of services.

In addition to that, the project perceives another benefit to the author herself as she has great interests to take more responsibilities and go for further management position within the association and advance her career in the non-profit sector. There will be opportunities for her to gain deeper knowledge about the general organizational practices, especially HRM practices.

Risk analysis

There are some risks that may occur during the thesis writing process that need to be considered beforehand.

First of all, as mentioned earlier not many policies and procedures within the association are written down, especially during 2008 – 2010 and 2011 – 2012 time period when there is a considerably lack of information in the document database. The reasons for that include mainly organizational restructure and renewal of management positions that took place within the timeframe. Therefore, the only channel to access the information is to obtain from former members of Board, especially from the former President and Vice Presidents. In order to ensure the process goes accordingly with the project management timeline there is a need to maintain a smooth flow of communication between the thesis writer and those key persons.

In addition to that, the manual content may require a lot more works on topics outside Human Resource Management, for example financial regulations and legal related issues which also threaten to increase the overall timespan. These addition are not demanded from the commissioning party, however because of the thesis writer's personal interest she may find time working on it on a certain level so that there are spaces for implementation later on.

1.5 Key concepts

Central concepts of this thesis are non-profit, organizational behaviour. Nevertheless, the key concepts are divided into two groups: general and specific key concepts. The former are important to understand theories in overall that cover almost the whole thesis, whereas the later give definitions of more detailed concepts. Further discussion will be introduced during the theoretical study and the research.

General concepts

Non-profit organization, in other name non-profit or voluntary association is founded “with the purpose of non-profit making (in other words the purpose may not be acquisition of profit or other financial benefit for the members)” (Statistics Finland 2014).

Board of Directors is the governing body of a non-profit. Sometimes it is also known as Board of Trustee or Governing Board. The Board comprises of individuals that acts on behalf of stakeholders of an organization with ultimate authorities on decision-making, oversight of the President and implementation of the organization’s objectives and strategies.(Worth 2012, 75.) In this study the Board of Directors will be called shortly as Board.

Orientation is “a process designed to ensure employees understand the policies and procedures of the company when they first begin work, as well as understand how their job fits with the goals of the company” (Lepak & Gowan 2010, 223).

Specific concepts

Motivation under general term is “the cognitive decision-making process, through which goal-directed behaviour is initiated, energized, directed and maintained” (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007, 242). Motivation under work-related context is explained by Robbins & Judge (2013, 236) as a process of personal’s constant endeavour towards obtaining an individual or organizational goal.

Organizational behaviour is “the study of structure, functioning and performance of organizations, and the behaviour of groups and individual within them” (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007, 4).

1.6 The Vietnamese Student Association in Finland

The Vietnamese Student Association in Finland (abbreviation hereinafter as VSAF) was founded in Espoo, Finland with the initial aim of creating networking and connecting Vietnamese overseas students in Finland.

Since establishment in 2003, VSAF has expanded in terms of human resources and quantity of projects offered, therefore it has embraced a larger mission of preserving and introducing the unique of Vietnamese culture to Finn and international residents in Finland. During years of development, VSAF has contributed significantly to facilitate the social integration of Vietnamese overseas youths to the Finnish community. (VSAF Internal document 2013.)

The organization's activities cover three main areas which are for recreational, educational and cultural-social exchange purposes. These three main areas form separate departments that constructed to the multidivisional type of the organizational structure. The multidivisional organization is defined by Lynch (2012, 477) as a type of structure that is formed with self-contained divisions based on the products, markets and geographical area. The complex structure with detailed management positions changes over times upon election of new Board, however the main structure is constant, which is visualized in figure 1 in the following page.

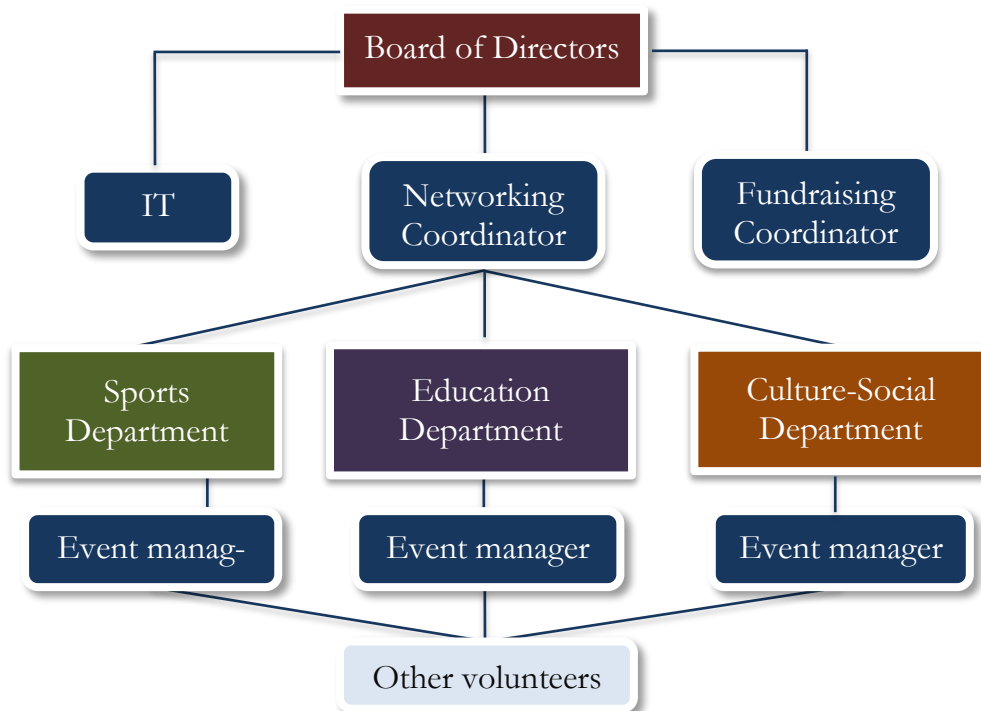


Figure 1. Organizational structure of VSAF in 2013 – 2014.

(Modified from VSAF’s internal documents 2014.)

VSAF is run by the Board of Directors, which consists of 5 to 7 members including a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and at least one other member.

The highest hierarchy after the Board of Directors are the Networking Coordinator and the Fundraising Coordinator, whereas IT is functioned independently. The Networking Coordinator is responsible for recruiting volunteers to support the operations of three main activities. In brief the three divisions are appeared as Departments which are responsible for Sports, Education and Cultural – Social related projects. Each Department has its own functional teams in sales and fundraising, marketing, logistics and human resources. These functional teams are formed once the event programme kicks off and governed directly by the Event manager.

In 2011, VSAF discarded its policy of collecting membership fees. Since then the association has received funding mainly from the participation fees of its local events and fundraising activities.

The estimated number of VSAF volunteers is slightly over 200 annually, however the average rate that volunteers register in VSAF database account for about one fifth of the total volunteers. At the moment all the positions within VSAF are voluntary. (VSAF Internal documents 2014.)

2 Theoretical framework

Before presenting the theories, a conceptual framework with explanations why each theories are chosen is given as the following.

Although the Board of Directors varied in size, term of service and structure dependent on different types and resources available of a non-profit, their roles and responsibilities are still based on three basic rules provided by law, which are often summarized as “the three Ds”. The journal of Association Management has clearly explained these main responsibilities of non-profit volunteer leaders as below:

Duty of care requires exercises of honesty and good faith in an individual’s performance, which also desires the obligations to protect organization’s confidential information.

Duty of loyalty expects the acts of prioritizing the organization’s interests above the individual’s interest with a honest belief that the acts are in good faith.

Duty of obedience expects the compliance with laws and regulations, including the organization’s missions and purposes, its articles of bylaws and other policies.

(Portman 2002, 105-106)

Fulfilling fiduciary responsibilities is believed to be the core of any non-profit existence. Flynn (2006, 3) suggests that to a certain extent, Board’s fiduciary responsibilities are linked with moral duties, which are judged by the suitability and acceptability of behaviours.

Figure 2 below classifies the theories into three cornerstones for theoretical framework.

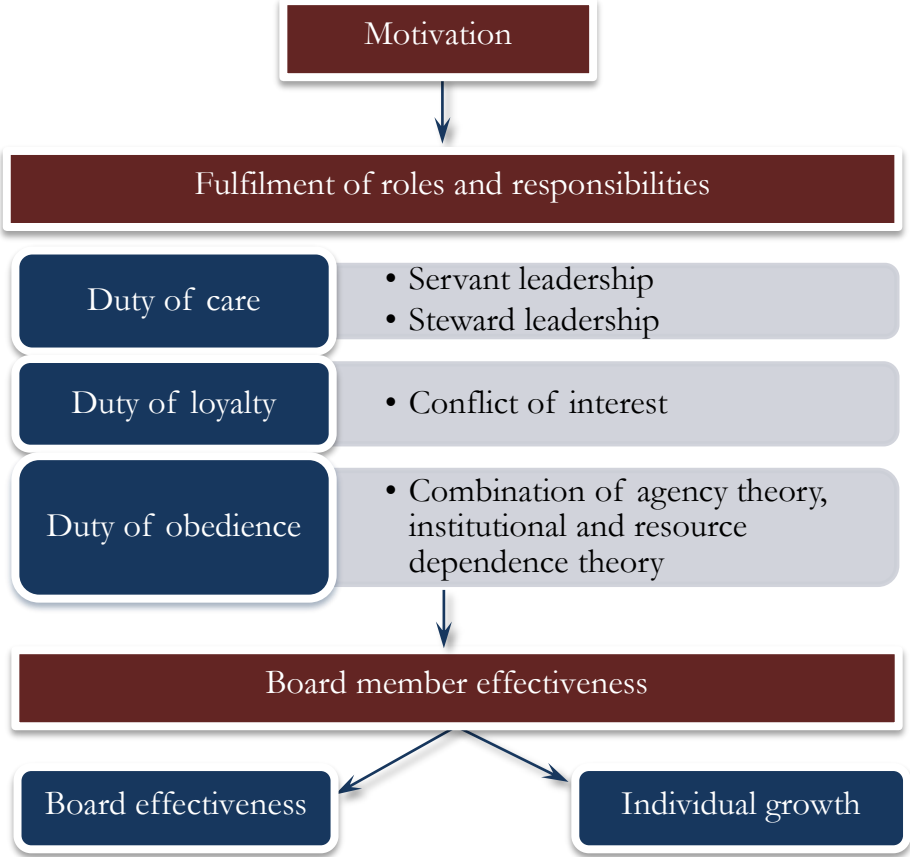


Figure 2. Visualization of theory framework

The theoretical study seeks to examine behavioural aspects of the human values in contribution to Board’s effectiveness. These factors manifest themselves under the form of individual motivation as a volunteer, leadership styles and leadership ethics. Exceptionally in non-profit sector, motivation is the foremost essential factor for volunteer. When volunteers are motivated well enough, the study will continue with defining how behaviours are shaped in order to fulfil those fiduciary responsibilities. Eventually the theories would be able to confirm how being as a non-profit Board member greatly helps individual growth as well as career development.

Nonetheless, Denhardt, Denhardt & Aristigueta (2013, 15) notice that in order to re-search human behaviours in the context of non-profits, five assumptions need to be considered. These assumptions are:

- Human behaviour is purposeful and the majority of our behaviours are destined to attain some purposes.
- Behaviour is caused rather than occurs randomly
- Individual behaviour can be changed as their experiences and knowledge gained
- People should be treated simply as human, apart from their contributions to achieve organizational goal.
- As a non-profit worker, individual should be attentive to special needs from the community.

These assumptions also underline the author’s study in this case.

2.1 Motivation as a volunteer

Motivation in general emerges from achievement and yet, there always exists certain purposes to achieve. Human motivation is basically driven by internal factors (intrinsically) and external factors (extrinsically). Several examples between the two types have been listed by Amabile (1997, 44), Worth (2013, 228) and Dubrin (2004, 137) as follow:

Table 1. Example of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation
- Deep involvement in the work	- Desire to attain certain personal goals
- Satisfaction of competence and sense of self- efficacy	- Recognitions
- Nature of the tasks itself interesting	- Monetary rewards or financial incentives
- Desire to contribute for the society*	- Material benefits

* are factors that can be applied specifically for volunteers

Theories focus on extrinsic motivations, such as the Agency theory regards explicit incentives as major factors of motivators increase (Foss 2007). However the non-profit

sector presents several different aspects to motivation, nevertheless there is one outstanding discovery that the nature of voluntary works is intrinsically inspiring. Due to the mission-oriented nature of non-profits, various studies on motivation of volunteers have been put more emphasize on intrinsic motivations and internal rewards.

2.1.1 Self-determination theory

The self-determination theory (SDT) which was introduced by Ryan & Deci in 2000, examines the human motivation based on utilization of individual inner resource for achieving individual needs, which can greatly represent how intrinsic motivation can affect effectiveness and productivity of volunteer work.

Ryan & Deci (2000, 70) claim that by nature, human is empowered by innate tendencies to enlarge one's capacities by discovering, confronting challenges, and continuously learning. One conclusion from their study indicates that a person's motivational sources are tend to emerge within an individual behaviour and the job itself.

Intrinsic motivations result in various positive outcome, for example Amabile (1997, 40) points out that inner motivations are crucial to creativity at work. Moreover numerous studies based on SDT later on have indicated that autonomous motivation is associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, whereas a sheer dependence on external rewards may result in passiveness at work and reluctance to advance one's knowledge and skills.

2.1.2 Application of SDT

Bidee et al. (2013, 34) use SDT approach to define how motivations are constructed in volunteerism. Their research not supports the findings of Ryan and Deci, but also produces hypotheses about the relationship between motivation and work effort. The research confirms that with more autonomous or self-determined motivation, volunteers are more likely engaged themselves in the work; however the connection between controlled motivated behaviour and less work effort has not yet confirmed.

Nevertheless, statistics has reflected that the sense of achievement is much harder to experience when the financial resource is unstable. This also explains why compensations have still been a barrier to make the Board, or other leadership positions appealing for volunteers.

2.2 Board of Directors behaviour

This chapter approaches Board as a leader of the association and examines their behaviours as a component to deliver Board's effectiveness.

Bayrasli (2011) argues that avoiding doubts emerged from the minds of donors and stakeholders is critically important in non-profit sector, since it will protect the organizational survival aside ensuring the delivery of organizational bottom-line. Trustworthiness therefore has been dwelled in several theories of leadership as well as being the main focus in the study of leadership ethics.

2.2.1 Reflection in leadership styles

While the general leaders have two major concerns: the duty for task and the duty for people, servant leaders concentrate on the later to obtain trustworthiness. A study by Joseph & Winston (2004, 14-15) confirms that an influenced servant leader can built up

and maintain relationships with his subordinates built on trusts, and as vice versa, there is a positive correlation between servant leadership and the organizational trust.

Servant leader was first coined by Greenleaf in the early 1970s as a set of practices that cultivate individual growth in order to create a caring world. The primary focus of a servant leader is “well-being of people and the communities to which they belong” (Greenleaf 2013) and its foremost priority is to serve others. It is understandable as how servant leadership style is appropriate for leaders in non-profit sector, considering the similarity between its mission and the bottom-line of non-profits, which is serving the public needs.

Similar to servant leadership, steward leadership explains that leaders are merely stewards of the organization’s assets that they have been trusted to take care. In the study of Christian steward leaders, Wilson (2010, 40) has found out certain characteristics belonged to steward leader in general, namely altruism, self-sacrifice and autonomous. It is also interesting to know according to Wilson (2010, 45) that stewards are driven psychologically by “intrinsic motivation, organizational identification, and the use of personal power”, which creates a strong connection to SDT theory explained in chapter 2.1.

Being a leader and behaving oneself as a servant, or steward match the criteria to fulfil the Duty of care. As a consequent, once a sense of leadership is established, the need to follow Duty of loyalty arises. The next section will discuss about how leaders represent an organization and acts on its best interest with honesty and good faith.

2.2.2 Reflection in conflict of interest

Board members are among stakeholders who give contribution and receive an interest in the organization; therefore they have influences on its future direction towards achieving targeted goals. For for-profit corporations, generating income for shareholders remains as the primary purpose of existence. For non-profits in contrast, there are certain ethical

pressures for Boards about the needs not only to deliver public services but also to earn profitability at all cost.

A survey¹ conducted by BoardSource in 2012 has found out that the demand for a written Conflict of interest Policy accounts for 96 % of over 1000 responds from non-profits' chief executive, making the issues receiving great attention for any Board orientation.

Conflict of interest arise when the personal or professional interest of a Board member are actually or potentially in contradiction to the best interest of an organization. (Anheier 2005, 234.)

According to Worth (2012, 81) a conflict of interest may emerge from, for instance, a voting member also serves on another non-profit's Board or a voting member has to decide on a business contract with a company which is party or wholly owned by the member himself.

Causes and effects

When conflict of interest takes place within Board, it may prevent an individual from fulfilling his Board's role duties and even lead himself to misconduct behaviour. Furthermore at strategic management level, the contradiction of interest no matter between individuals, or between an individual with the organization may result in making the organization vulnerable to public misunderstanding and hinder the process of formulating or developing the organization's common missions and objectives. (Anheier 2005, 234; Lynch 2012, 235.)

¹ A written questionnaire was sent to 5 025 non-profit's "chief executive" or equivalent position from BoardSource members to compose the BoardSource Non-profit Governance Index in 2012. The survey received 1 341 respondents from across the continental U.S.

Solutions and implementations

In order to reach mutual agreement, examination of power, specifically preferences of each individual's influences within the Board and their willingness to compromise, need to be studied thoroughly followed by negotiations (Lynch 2012, 235). In addition to that, legislative solution states that an individual shall be exempted himself from participating in decision-making process and handling contract between himself and the association in circumstances that his private interest conflicts with the interest of the association. (Finnish Association Act 1989/503, Section 37.)

2.2.3 Reflection in organizational theories

In Finland, a non-profit organization is granted tax-exempt status as long as its mission is beneficiary to the community, with obeyed requirements listed under the Finnish Income Tax Act of non-profit activities. (Finnish Tax Administration 2013.) Consequently the Board has to ensure that donated resources will be used properly in compliance with laws and regulations in order to maintain this status. Fulfilling this responsibility is listed under the Board's duty of obedience and is confirmed through various researches, the organization can gain trustworthiness from its stakeholders. This section provides theoretical findings of how well the duty of obedience is accomplished by understanding what factors affect Board's behaviours.

Much studies about Board of Director's roles in the organizations has been put more focus on the governance side, rather than the behaviours which construct that Board's governing style. Miller-Millesen has been the first one to examine Board's behaviour under multiple perspectives of organizational studies by combining agency theory, resource dependence theory and institutional theory.

According to Miller-Millesen, each theory is capable to represent a certain set of activities and functions. The agency theory highlights that ownership and control are independent, given example of the Board's responsibilities to ensure that the interests of the organization are not conflict with the interests of management he or she chose to perform. Meanwhile to institutional theorists, a typical organizational behaviour is shaped by the institutional environment. Its interpretation of norms, values and beliefs explains how non-profits Board involve in similar activities, because in non-profits the organizational processes have a common way of practicing things. The resource dependence theory states that obtaining and preserving resources is crucial to organizational survival, therefore the organization relies on Board as a crucial factor to help reducing interdependencies in its operating environment. (Miller-Millesen 2003, 522- 523.)

Figure 3 below shows the simplified version of the typology of Board behaviour based on these organizational theories.

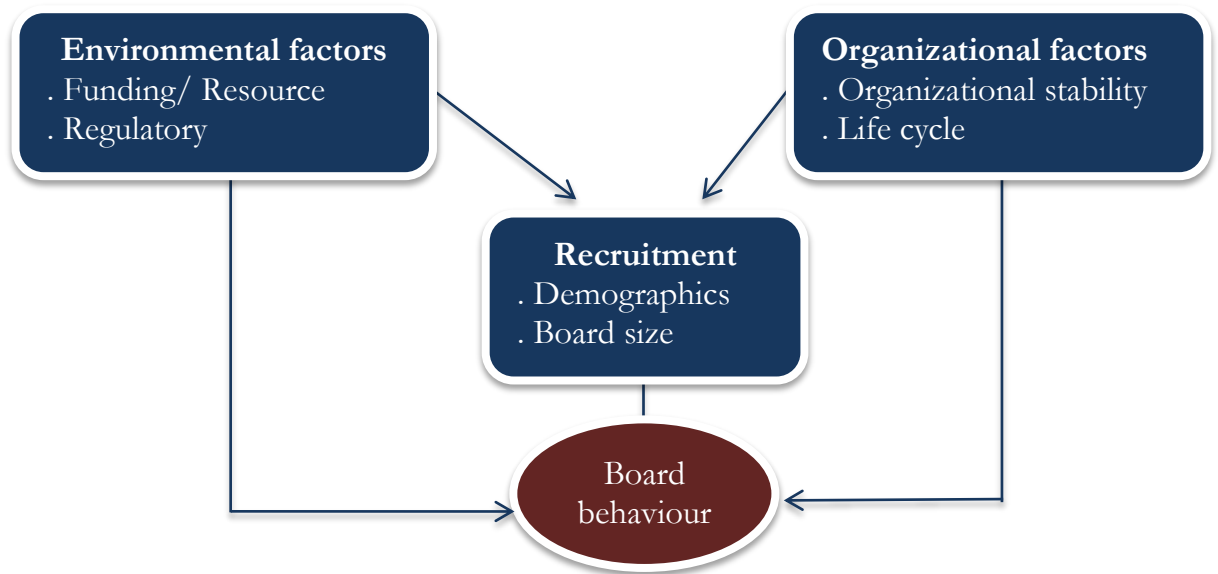


Figure 3. Theory-based classification of Board behaviour (simplified from Miller-Millesen 2003, 523)

As a result from Miller-Millesen's framework, the environmental organizational factors would help making several predictions of situations where the Board likely behaves in a certain way. These predictions are reflected in the Board size, composition and any activities and processes within the Board. It is also noticed that non-profit Board behaviour is likely to be influenced by its recruitment strategies.

3 Research

The research chapter comprises of two main subchapters. The first subchapter deals with research design and method while the other explains about process of data collection.

The aim of research part is to find out what have been good and bad practices at VSAF related to the theoretical study, how their Board of Directors' image is perceived and what kind of improvements can be made upon. For that, a **research question** (RQ) has been identified: What kind of practices could be done better within VSAF's Board of Directors ?

In order to solve the question, three main **investigate questions** (IQs) have been established:

IQ1. What kind of experiences volunteers could gain from serving on VSAF's Board?

IQ2. What is volunteers' current perception about VSAF's Board of Directors?

IQ3. What improvement suggestions could be made at VSAF?

3.1 Research design and method

Burns & Bush (2010, 235) states that there are great differences only between the first two types of research method among the three broad research categories: quantitative, qualitative and pluralistic. The table in the following page helps explaining those differences thus suggests a proper approach for this research.

Table 1. Differences of quantitative and qualitative research (Burns & Bush 2010, 233-235)

Quantitative research	Research aspect	Qualitative research
. Used for specific purpose or to test hypotheses	Purpose	. Discover ideas and support the construction of hypotheses
. Structured questions with response options have been pre-determined	Approach	. Rather unstructured questions that generate descriptive results
. Analysis of data through diagrams and statistics . Numerical in nature	Data collection	. Interpretation of data through observation and statements . Minor use of numerical indices
. Large number of respondents	Samples	. Small groups of respondents

The third approach, pluralistic research, is the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods with the blend of advantages from both. Commonly, a pluralistic research begins with in-depth interviews or other qualitative techniques so that it can provide a firm background to frame the consequent quantitative phase. (Burns & Bush 2010, 237.)

As the benefits for understanding organizational behaviour from different perspectives and ensuring a good structure of key findings, pluralistic research was chosen in this research.

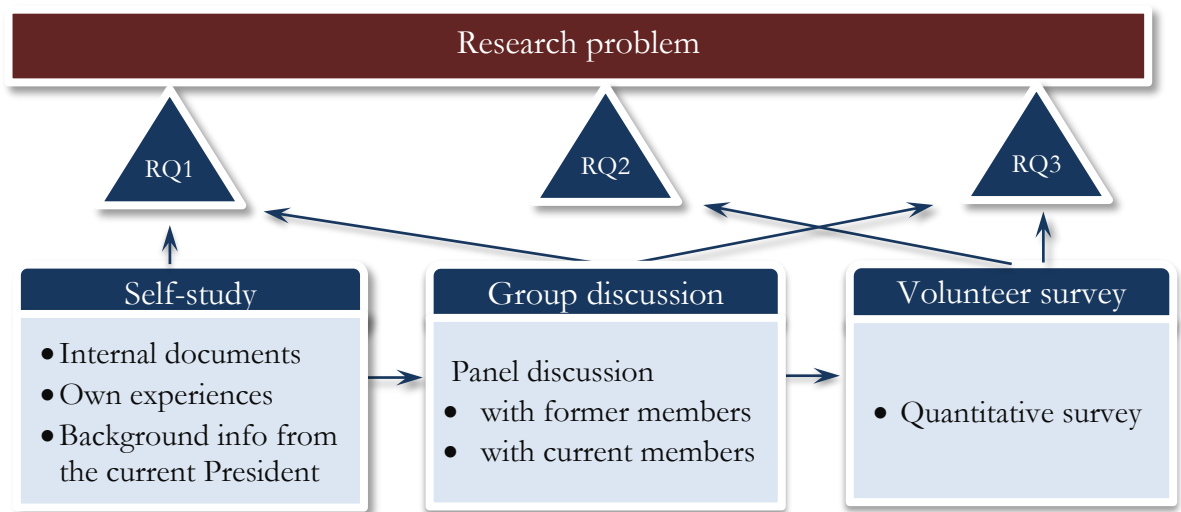


Figure 4. Research design

Figure 4 above presents the three main phases of this research. The whole process started with self-study and background information obtained through continuous conversations with the current President. After that, the research was conducted from the Board member viewpoint through group discussions in order to provide the author with elementary knowledge, which serves as a foundation to carry out the final survey under volunteer viewpoint. Since the last survey suggests a pattern of volunteer behaviours, it is best conducted using quantitative methods.

3.2 Data collection

Group discussions

According to the current President, there were several tough time for VSAF's internal structure ever since establishment as a couple of members joined and left the Board after a short term of service. Therefore, he empathizes that those volunteers who takes responsibilities as a VSAF Board member through a sufficient time possibly acquire deeper understanding of the association and can be able to propose sincere ideas for the

development of Board. Based on these suggestions, the author has drafted the criteria for discussion attendants as follow:

- Had/has been serving on Board for at least 6 consecutive months
- Had/has been involved in key decision-making of Board

As mentioned above, the continuous human resource changes within Board internally happens quite often during the past year, therefore the term “current member” would refer to members who has/had been active within the Board term 2011 until present time, accordingly “former member” indicates volunteers who had served on Board during the term 2008 – 2011 or sooner.

There were two group discussions taken place in total: the first one took place on 9th April at Vantaa with 3 former Board members. The second discussion occurred on 16th April in Helsinki with 4 out of 7 current Board members. The author spent approximately 3 hours with each discussion respectively.

Volunteer survey

Based on the results from the second stage the volunteer survey was implemented. The volunteer survey aims at defining the perceptions of volunteer towards Board of Directors. The outcome from this research can explain whether or not volunteers are afraid to take higher responsibilities in management positions, and identify key issues that discourage the volunteers from doing so. The cover letter and questionnaire can be found under Attachment 4.

The volunteer survey was designed and survey data was collected using Webropol survey tool. Before publishing, the survey had been tested by two VSAF volunteers and checked several times. The volunteer survey was open from April 22nd to April 27th,

2014. The criteria of survey sample were targeted at Vietnamese or foreign students, who:

- Used to, or currently being volunteer of at least one event organized by VSAF
- Has never been serving as a Board member

Despite the fact that VSAF's volunteer rate is approximately 200 per year, only one fifth of the total volunteers have left contacts in VSAF Volunteer databases. The sample was taken out of the association's list of 181 volunteers within the past 5 years. With the help of the current President to identify volunteers with matched preferences, the sample size was narrowed down to approximately 60 volunteers. There were 24 people gave answers to the survey, making the respondent rate to be 40 percent. Name, email or other personal identities are asked only if respondents wanted to participate in a prize drawing in order to maintain animosity of the respondents.

3.3 Data analysis

For each group discussion, the author recorded the whole sections and spent time listening to the records in order to pick out relevant information. The author categorized the information into three groups based on the theoretical framework, which are motivation, leadership style and leadership behaviours/ ethics. The author has to transcribe and allocate the information into these categories simultaneously because the topics discussed are cross- relating, therefore the information is not received in order of topics referred during the discussions.

For the volunteer survey, because there were no open-ended questions the author only analysed pre-determined questions by calculating frequency of each option answer chosen. The author created a separate Excel sheet where she can choose appropriate charts visualizing each questions. After going through all the questions she transferred the charts back into this document.

4 Research results

This chapter present key findings from both group discussions with the Board members and volunteer survey. The findings are grouped into four subchapter. First of all, the general background of group discussion's participants as well as volunteer demographics is introduced. The following three subchapters reveal further findings correspond to the theoretical framework.

4.1 Representative sample

Group discussion's participants

Internal records has shown that from 2010 until present there have been in total of 13 volunteers who had, or currently involved in VSAF's Board of Directors (VSAF Volunteer database) that match the criteria listed in chapter 4.2. The 7 participants from group discussions has accounted for more than half of these volunteers, with diverse positions in charge ranging from President, Vice President to External Relation Manager and Community Manager.

Volunteer demographics

The questions related to gender, age and current city of resident have helped forming the volunteer demographics. Of all 24 respondents, 13 are male (which accounts for 54 percent) and the rest of 46 percent represents for female respondents. These volunteers are largely between 18 and 25 years of age, only 4 are older than 25 years old and none is under 18.

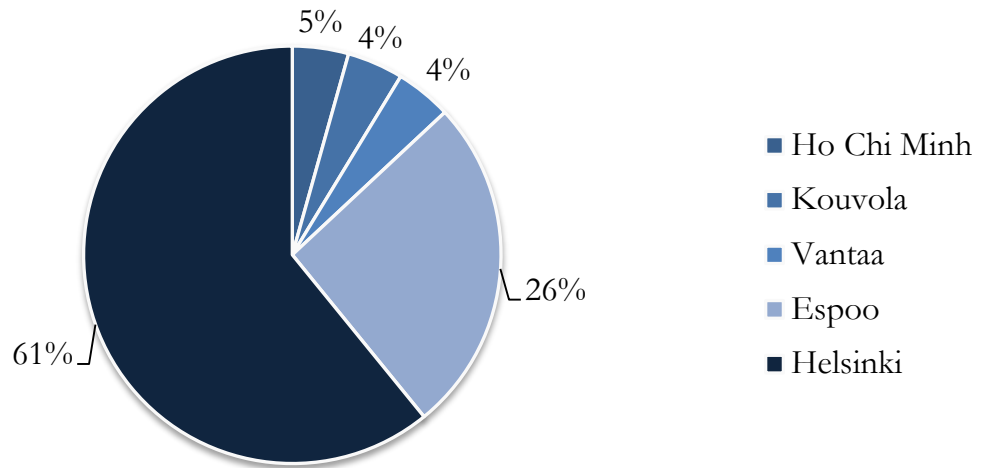


Figure 5. City of residence (n=23)

Figure 5 shows various cities of residence where volunteers currently live, however there is one respondent of “Finland”, which is considered as invalid and is left out from the graph. From the figure it can be seen that the majority of respondents concentrate in the greater Helsinki area, only one is from Kouvola and one currently resides in Ho Chi Minh city in Vietnam.

Although these respondents come from the pool of volunteers registered at VSAF in the past 5 years, it is almost impossible to estimate how well these respondents represent the volunteer force because the database has only stored volunteer’s contact details, commonly email address or phone numbers. However, the majority of volunteers also gather within the Greater Helsinki region, where the main office of VSAF locates.

Volunteers involvement at VSAF

The figure 6 below illustrates the regularity of volunteering activities as an individual. Quite often that volunteers contribute their effort to once or several events per year. As VSAF’s activities cover a wide range of public needs, it may be explained by Gagne and Deci (2005, 331) that only certain events which its tasks volunteers find interesting and spontaneously satisfied their needs can attract their devotion and commitment.

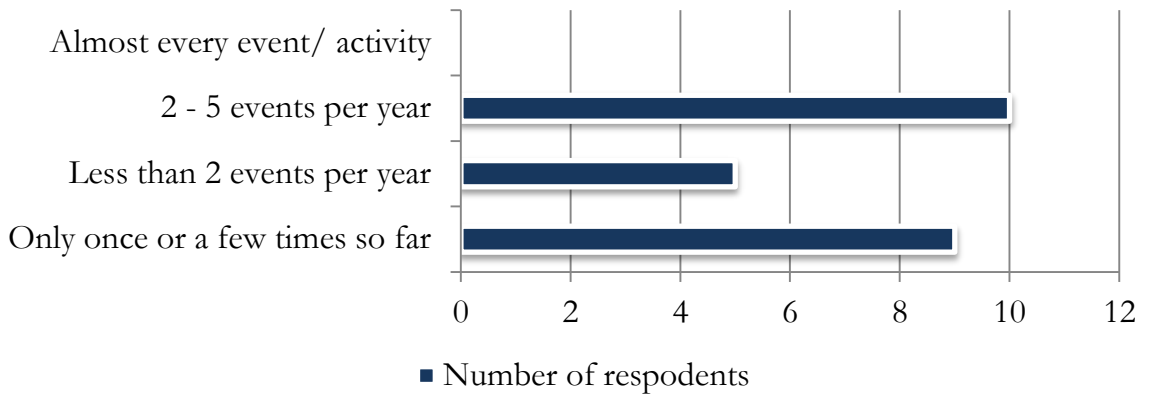


Figure 6. Frequency of volunteering at VSAF (n=24)

When asked about what kind of positions that the volunteers have carried, there is a clear distinction between the frequency that leadership positions (such as project or event manager, leader of marketing, logistic, finance or other functional team) and non-leadership positions are executed. As it is shown in Figure 7 below the former is taken in total 13 times, whereas non-leadership positions like that of team member, on-site event assistant, cameraman, photographer or MC,...has been carried 28 times. There is no real connection between the number of respondents and the occurrence of each position, as one individual volunteer can experience different roles in various events.

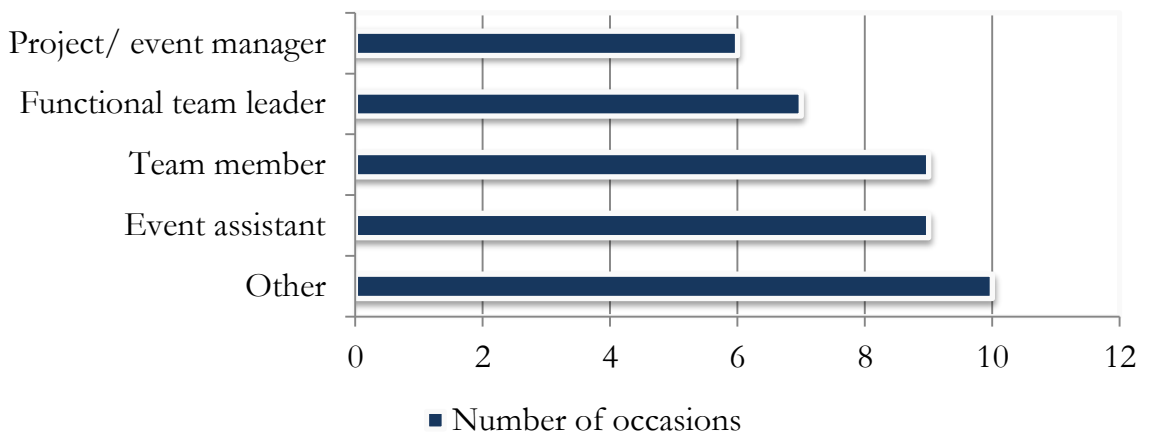


Figure 7. Management level of volunteers

4.2 Serving on Board – the pros and cons

How Board members say

Discussions about motivations during the Board term of services gather several comparable opinions about the pressure of financial resources.

The financial restraint in a way flourishes our creativity and adds a bit different taste to our adventurous journey on the Board. Nonetheless if this financial uneasiness remains for a long time, we have to continue doing small-scale activities with the same old “safe” way of doing things, we would quickly run out of motivation.

However, all Board members agree that they find the tasks demanded in general so appealing and unique they could not withdraw easily.

The position can offer you extensive opportunities to make a difference or create an impact. Actually it has a lot of space for innovation.

In addition to that, the interviewees often emphasized creativity and autonomous as other factors that cause them excitement and eagerness to achieve something.

Taken myself as an example, whenever I have an idea for something new, if it is financially reasonable and affordable in terms of our volunteer size, I always receive supports from my colleagues to make it come real together.

Other opinions come up that give the discussion some thoughts about what could have done better. The opinions express these member’s concerns from the beginning of their service term, which could give answers for the IQ3.

Should we have better orientation during the transition, we would have been a lot more confident in our job and thus, would have had more time to concern about other matters.

How other volunteers say

After giving a short definition about the current roles and responsibilities of VSAF's Board, the survey continues with a yes/ no question as whether or not volunteer would like to take opportunities and challenges serving on Board. The question has separated two groups: one consists of 8 respondents who said they would want to take a try, and the other which gathers 16 refusals from the respondents.

For the first group, results have matched the prediction from theoretical study: the substantial reason that attracts volunteers to leadership positions is the belief that they would have chance to contribute for the society. There is only 1 respondent strongly disagree with this idea. Other factors that are also encouraging include improving self-confidence, discovering own capabilities and awareness of organization governance, which all receive agreements from the respondents.

Differences in agreement level about the statements are visualized in figure 8 below.

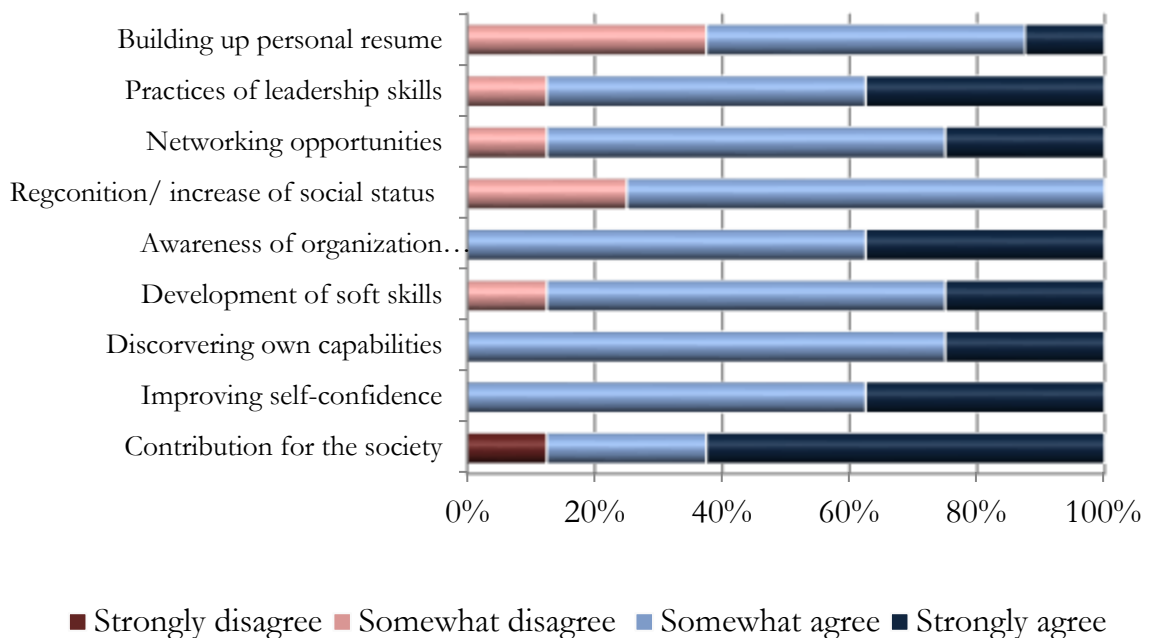


Figure 8. Agreement level about the opportunities serving on Board (n=8)

For the second group, differences in agreement level about the statements are visualized in the following figure.

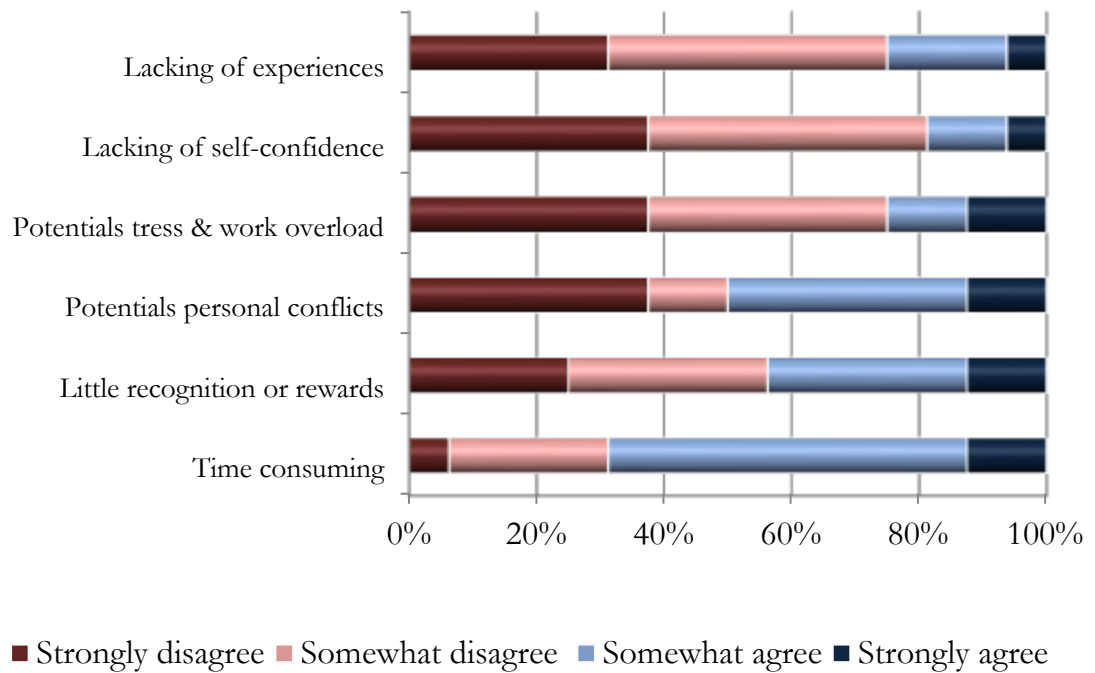


Figure 9. Agreement level about the reasons not to be on Boards (n=16)

As it is shown in figure 9 their biggest concerns about Board positions is that they could be time asuming and potential personal conflicts may emerge during Board services, with 69% and 50% of respondents are on the “agree” side respectively.

However, the overall responds was that the listed factors, except for the concern of “time consuming”, were perceived as not too negative: more than half of the respondents chose either “Strongly disagree” or “Somewhat disagree” with the other concerns. This pattern would suggest that, either the Board members has not considered thoroughly about the disadvantages of being on Board, or there are other factors depending on each individual, for example certain personal issues that influence and prevent volunteers from taking Boad’s roles.

4.3 Characteristic of an influenced non-profit leader

Defining the key elements for an influenced non-profit leader would help building up how the Board is structured and how a typical decision-making procedure is done through. In addition to that, it would suggest a guideline for identifying potential non-profit leaders as well as planning strategic Board recruitment.

There is no clear indication of hierarchy at VSAF: when I have to lead a team, I am with them as a team member and perform the most basic tasks. I think that is the best way to make people listen and do something together.

Because this nature of a common successful teamwork, it is also noticed that within a team of Board members, the leadership position is rotated regularly in order to maintain the balance in decision- making power.

Additionally, due to high dependency in external environment resources of the association, one opinion come up highlighting the correlation between one's personal network and his ability to influence other team members.

Because we operate relying so much about external factors, for example donors, partnership with other non-profits, the supply of volunteers,...it is often the case that the team members with a strong networking will likely take the leadership role.

Nevertheless, the first and foremost characteristic that helps an individual becoming a real trustworthy leader, is the extreme level of his commitment.

If I see one of my teammates working so hard, I unintentionally have energy to get back to my assignments.

Finally, all the Board members agree that one can learn to become an influence non-profit leader. Therefore, they would suggest leaving the criteria for choosing leaders

open and focusing on strategic planning to attract highly commitment volunteers to join the Board in their annual election.

4.4 Overcoming ethical challenges

Let aside the lack of financial resources that affect Board motivation, other challenges the Board encounters are mostly related to ethical issues. All members admit they had not experienced any serious conflict of interest, but more or less have been involved in similar situations when they have to find the best solution to satisfy both parties in the negotiating table. They have proposed a clear approach of dividing decision-making power and ensuring transparency in communication.

We all come to mutual agreement, as who will take the lead during the negotiation and how difference the power of decision-making of each member who present in the meeting.

All in all, the questions remain with trustworthiness within the Board team which is originated from self-awareness of each individual.

There is not a big deal if one says he could not go with the team for some time because of school assignments, work and so on. But what really makes the rest of the team upset is the stagnation of one's work that slows down the whole team's process. So we make clear that either one needs to have a "short vacation", or he will work with the team devotedly.

As a conclusion, the findings from both group discussions with Board members and volunteer survey confirm about typical behaviours in non-profits that presented in chapter 2 and 3. In addition to that they also implement the theoretical studies by adding the practical perspectives.

5 Creating the Orientation Manual

This chapter explains the chronological process of building up the Manual. It began with choosing the right elements to put in the Manual, forming its structure, implementing the contents and designing the Manual's layout. The entire progress of working on the Manual has been broken down into 4 main stages with outstanding subjects as visualized in the figure 10 below.

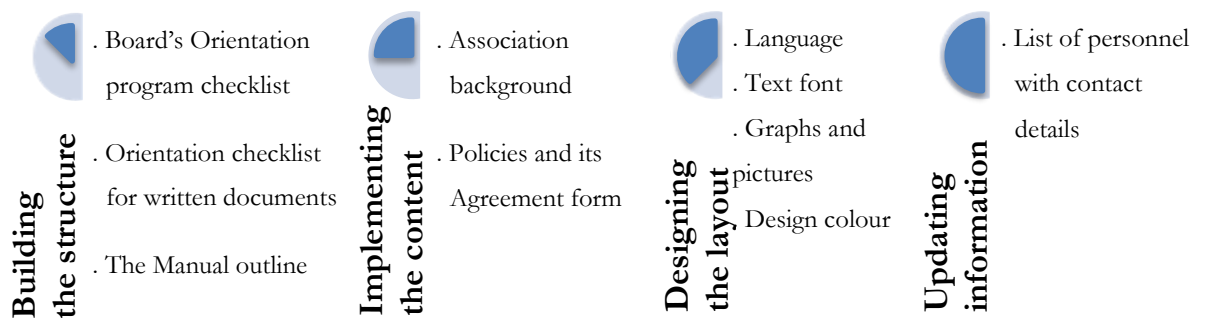


Figure 10. Process of creating the Orientation Manual

5.1 Building the structure

BoardSource, an organization which has said to have spent more than 25 years of experiences working with non-profit Boards, was a decent source for the author to collect materials for the literature reviews as well as practical advices for the author herself, as she has been considering starting her career in a non-profit. The idea for the Manual's outline therefore was not an exception since it was based on BoardSource's *Getting on Board with an effective orientation* document, where the author could get a concrete checklist of what should be included in a Board's orientation program. The Orientation checklist was then narrowed down to fit with the theoretical studies, as well as the convenience to present on papers.

The processing of building up the Orientation Manual actually started in mid- March when the theoretical framework was half done, as it is shown in the Project timeline (see under Attachment 2). Deloitte's template for building Board's Orientation was an effec-

tive tool to start with the Manual’s construction. Together with the ready Orientation checklist, the author began looking for more samples of Manual from for-profit corporations to other local non-profits. The final outline was completed by the end of March so that the author can move on to the next stage of implementing the Manual content and carrying out the first group discussion.

5.2 Implementing the content

When the outline was ready, the author began implementing the content. The process started first with the association’s history, mission, vision and values and continued with writing typical policies. Table 2 below show how the major project tasks are reflected in the Manual’s content.

Table 2. Overlay matrix of the Orientation Manual

Project tasks	Topic/ Sub-tasks	Purpose/ Output	Manual’s chapter
Background study	Reading internal documents	Association’s history, mission, vision and values	1
	Consulting internet sources		2.3 – 2.5
Theory framework	Motivation as a volunteer	Compensation and Benefits packages	4
	Leadership behaviour & ethics	Code of Conduct Policy Conflict of Interest Policy	3, 5
Research	Group discussions	Qualification of Board members and guide for succession planning	2.2, 2.6
	Volunteer survey	Better perception about Board reflected in Board’s history	2.1

The agreement forms for Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Policy were designed and written based on the Policy’s Agreement form samples provided by the HR

Council for the Non-profit sector², with adjustment and simplification to fit VSAF's context and layout requirements.

In addition to that, some information regarded as confidential will not be shown to public, for example list of key volunteers and their contact details. Such information will be marked as "(Private info)" in the Manual and will be updated by the Secretary shortly after the author hands it over to the association by 31st August, 2014.

5.3 Layout and visual design

The Manual layout follows closely with VSAF's simple guidelines for writing documents and event reports. Other visual components, such as pictures and graphs, are up to the author's creativity as long as they contains a spectrum of blue and red.

Since the Manual is used with governing purposes, the language will be written in a formal form. English is chosen as the official language for the Manual because of the following reasons:

- Although at VSAF the internal communication is carried out in Vietnamese, both private and public documents so far have been conducted in English or Finnish.
- The author had been studying her specialization in Human Resources under English Degree Programme, there would have been extremely difficult for her to translate the core idea and related concepts from the Manual into another language, even her mother tongue.
- Almost all of VSAF's volunteers from the past 5 years are Vietnamese overseas students with backgrounds of higher education in Finland. According to the current President the average stage that volunteers enter the Board is

² The organization's HR Toolkits provides practical information about developing HR policies and procedures in small non-profits.

Please find more information at <http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/policies-overview.cfm>.

approximately after 2 and a half year living in Finland. Considering that their Finnish proficiency is not enough and, like the author, they would have struggled to understand professional terms in their mother tongue, the author decide to leave out Vietnamese and Finnish from the language options.

However for some common terms, the author has included short explanations in Vietnamese in the Glossary of terms (see the Manual's Attachment 2).

6 Conclusion

The author had received approval with an accelerating mark for her thesis plan in late December 2013 and started working on it since then. The author focused on finalizing theories and conducting the research for the first 2 and a half month, and had spent relatively equal time on building the Manual afterwards.

6.1 Project assessment

Broadly speaking, this project requires extensive researches at organization level, such as theories about corporate governance to researches at team and individual level, such as the studies on human behaviours and leadership. At some point the readings overwhelmed the author as she found difficulties in choosing appropriate theories and connecting them to visualize Board behaviours as a coherent whole. Nevertheless, the project still brings positive impacts, which will be explained further below.

The author has realized, after reading through various sources of literatures, that there has not been much scholarly attention regarding Board of Directors in non-profit sector. She also acknowledged that the major studies on non-profit Board have more interested in describing Board governance rather than understanding the behaviours that underpin the constitution of the governance. From the author's viewpoint, the general positive outcome from her study is that it could serve as a basis for much deeper researches about human behaviours within Board of Directors of non-profits, especially voluntary Board members of local non-profits.

For the commissioning association, the author receives an overall rating of above satisfactory. The project has been assessed to highly fulfil their expectations and is perceived as valuable documentation for their management in near future.

6.2 Personal assesment

During the past 5 months the author had allocated her personal time with thesis, normal school classes, part-time work, meaningful volunteering activities as well as several musical projects for my hobbies. The author would say she has learned a lot about organizing my personal schedules so that she could maximize my time fulfilling both professional duties and her own other interests. Meanwhile it had also helped strengthening her multitasking competency and self- discipline.

During the process of gathering literature resources for the theoretical framework, besides the focused topic of study the author has gained much more knowledge about the non-profit sector, especially local non- profits in general and the operation of its Board of Directors in particular. There had even come to a point that the thesis itself had inspired and encouraged the author to devote herself even more to the commissioning association. The author has truly integrated the spirit and sense of satisfaction from the acts to “make an impact”, “contribute to the community” or “broaden personal expertise” and so forth, such things she had previously known only through theories.

6.3 Suggestions for development

Development for the Manual

As it is mentioned in in the demarcation part (chapter 1.3) due to the time constrain the author does not look into detail issues concerning managing budgets. Therefore there are still many spaces for implementation in the Manual, and as she took samples mainly from BoardSource’s *Getting on Board with effective orientation* she would suggest some other elements to put in the Manual, such as the following.

- Strategic fundraising plan of how the association get funding in near future
- Annual budget plan

Development for the Board in general

The Manual can only prove its effectiveness on the condition that it's properly used with a throughout orientation program. As mentioned in chapter 5.2, the group discussion with current Board members reveals that internal supports, especially from the predecessor member is critically important as it would help saving time and gaining confidence for them to fulfil Board's role at their bests. Therefore it's advisable to have former Board members staying for a bit longer time during the transition, either being mentor or mere supporter.

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Attachment

Attachment 1. Overlay matrix for the project

Project objectives	Project task	Output	Chapter
Board of Directors Orientation Manual	Background research	Association background	1.2
	Theoretical framework	Motivation theory Leadership styles & ethics	2, 3
	Research	Management viewpoint	4
		Volunteer viewpoint	
	Results	Board of Directors Orientation Manual	6
	Project assessment	Self- evaluation and indication for further research	7

Attachment 2. Project timeline

No	Project task	No	Subtask	Calendar week																											
				Dec					Jan				Feb				Mar				Apr				May				Jun - Aug		
				48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23 - 35
1	Backfround research	1.1	Finding suitable topics	■	■	■																									
		1.2	Association's backfround info			■	■	■	■	■																					
		1.3	Thesis advising										■											■							
2	Theory framework	2.1	Finding manual samples					■	■	■	■																				
		2.2	Finding literature									■	■	■	■	■	■	■													
		2.3	Finalizing theory framework												■	■	■	■	■	■	■										
3	Research	3.1	Desinning discussion questions																■	■											
		3.2	Scheduling group discussion																	■	■	■									
		3.3	Designning volunteers survey																			■									
		3.3	Sending questionnaires																				■								
		3.4	Analysing data																					■							
4	Results	4.1	Drafting the Manual outline																■	■	■										
		4.2	Discussing research results																		■	■	■								
		4.3	Implementing the Manual																					■	■						
5	Project assessment	5.1	Self- assesment																								■				
		5.2	Recommendation																								■				
6	Other task	6.1	Getting updated information																							■	■	■			
		6.2	Implementing the Manual																								■	■			
																												Deliver DL 31 Aug			

Attachment 3. Questions for group discussions

General

1. How long have you served as a Board member?
2. Which position and responsibilities are/ were you having on Board?
3. How did you understand the role and responsibilities of Board member before joining?
4. In your opinion, what are the qualifications that an individual should have before electing himself for Board?

Motivation

5. On the scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate your satisfaction during the time serving on Board?
6. How do you get yourself motivated during the time serving on Board?
7. What tools do you use to motivate others?
8. How the experiences you have gained fulfil your expectations as a Board member?
9. What are your suggestions of other tools that keep Board members motivated?
10. Please tell me about

Ethical issues

8. What kind of conflicts of interest have you personally experienced?
9. When do others' conflicts of interest influence your decision?
10. If you perceive a potential conflict of interest, how do you manage to ensure that it doesn't result in unethical behaviour for you and others?
12. How was the decision- making carried out in teamwork?

Attachment 4. Volunteer survey questionnaire

Cover letter

Dear VSAF's volunteers and supporters!!!

You are invited to participate in this survey to help us better understanding about your perception towards VSAF's Board of Directors.

Your respond will be anonymous. In addition to that some promotional gifts from VSAF will be awarded to the 2 luckiest participants. Therefore if you wish to participate in a draw for promotion gifts, leave your information by the end of the survey.

It will take no more than 5 minutes, and we would be appreciated if you fill in the survey by 27th April, 2014. Thank you for your time!

Demographics

1. Please specify your gender *

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. Please specify your age *

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-25
- c. 25-30
- d. Above 30

3. What is your current city of residence? * _____

Involvement

*VSAF: the Vietnamese Student Association in Finland. The organization was founded in 2003 in Espoo with the mission to connect Vietnamese overseas students in Finland in order to preserve and develop the Vietnamese culture.

4. How often have you participated as a volunteer for VSAF? *
 - a. Every activities and events
 - b. At least 2-5 events per year
 - c. Less than 2 events per year
 - d. Never

5. Which positions as a volunteer have you participated? (Tick as many as applicable)*
 - a. Project/ event manager
 - b. Functional team (logistics, marketing, fundraising, ...) leader
 - c. Functional team member/ organizing team member
 - d. On-site assistant
 - e. Other, what? _____

Perception about Board of Directors

6. Do you want to take higher responsibilities and challenges as a Board member of VSAF? *

(Filter questions. If answered a, move to question 7. If answered b, move to question 8)

 - a. Yes, I definitely want to try
 - b. No, I don't want to be on VSAF's Board

7. How do you agree with each statement below? I would like to join VSAF's Board of Directors because of opportunities in...*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Career Orientation				
Building up personal resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practicing of leadership skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Better understanding of internal organizational system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking with sponsors & partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal growth				
Discover owns capacities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improvement of self-confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognition & increase of social status	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development of various soft skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribution for the society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do you agree with each statement below? I DO NOT want to serve on Board because of...*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Lacking of leadership experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of self-confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential stress and work overload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential personal conflicts with other volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Little recognition or rewards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time consuming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promotional gifts drawing

We will have surprise gifts for 2 luckiest participants. If you wish to receive one from us, please fill in the information below (not compulsory)

Full name: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

The winner will be contacted personally by the time this survey is closed.

Thank you again for your contribution!

* -mandatory question

Attachment 5. Board of Directors Orientation Manual



The Vietnamese Student Association in Finland

Orientation Manual for Board of Directors

2015 – 2016

Congratulation

...And welcome to VSAF's Board of Directors!!!

We appreciate to have your willingness and commitment serving on Board. This role carry heavy responsibilities that only positive mind-set can bring forward positive results. We wish you gain the most rewarding experiences and valuable memories during the time leading VSAF to achieve its goals.

This Orientation Manual will guide you to adapt and fulfil your responsibilities as a Board member. Basically it explains about VSAF's missions and your roles as a Board member. You will also learn about decision-making procedure, conflict of interest management and ethical Code of Conduct.

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1. The Vietnamese Student Association in Finland

1.1 Our history

The Vietnamese Student Association in Finland (registration name in Finnish: *Vietnamilaiset Opiskelijat Ry*, abbreviation VSAF) was founded in 2003 by a group of young immigrants with Vietnamese origin. The year 2008 marked the turn point in VSAF's management positions as the very first generation of Vietnamese oversea students joined Board of Directors.

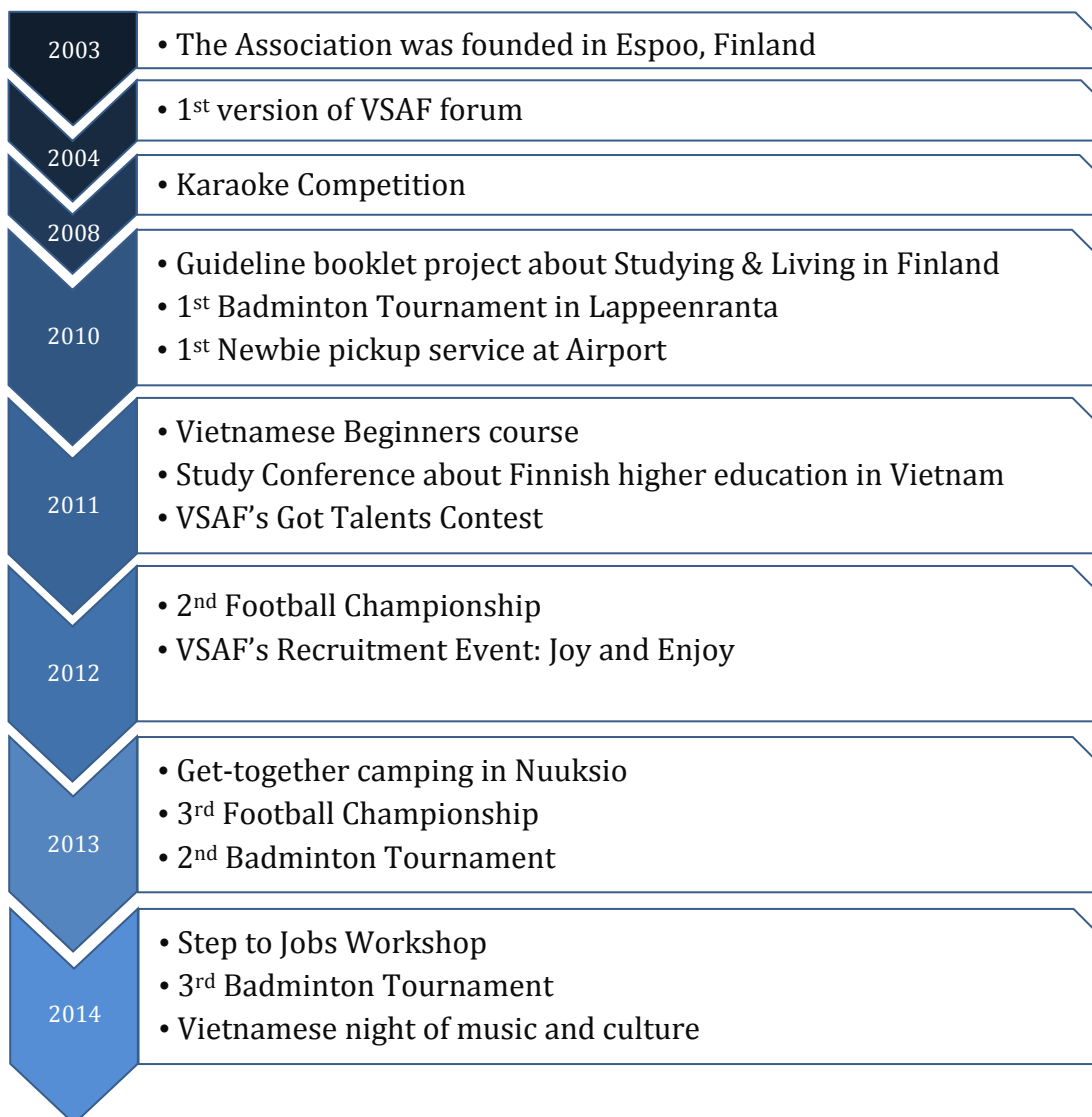


Figure 1. VSAF's activities 2003 - 2013

During more than 10 years of development, we have established co-operations with several other non-profits and student associations. Our key partners include CIMO, Caisa Kulttuurikeskus, Colourful Espoo and Suomen Vietnamilais-ten Yhteisö Ry.

1.2 Current activities

By purposes VSAF's activities cover three areas. Under **Education** there are workshops for Vietnamese job seeker and seminars about Education in Finland in Vietnam. **Social- Cultural** activities are entertaining events or events that are organized in celebration of national anniversaries and public holidays. **Sports** event target at recreational activities, at the moment they mainly target at badminton and football practices.

The preliminary plan for upcoming activities can be found under Attachment 5.

1.3 Mission and vision

VSAF is a platform for all generation of Vietnamese oversea students in Finland to connect and together we preserve and promote the unique of our culture to foreign friends in Finland.

There are 4 core values that influence everything the association does:

Variety	we seek diversities in every of our activities
Solidarity	we always do things together
Accomplishment	we appreciate every contributions of individual
Failures as opportunities	we recognize and nurture the learning environment in the association

Our long term strategic goals concern with more effective business process, greater benefits for VSAF's stakeholders and achieving higher financial stability. Specifically:

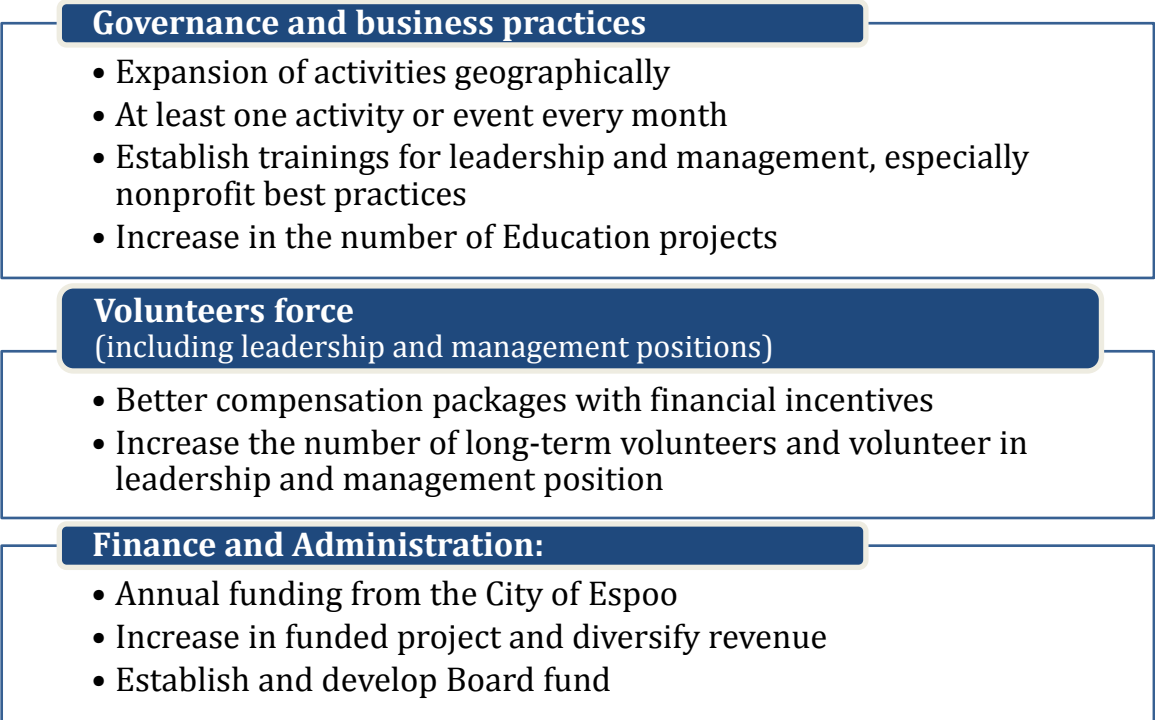


Figure 2. VSAF's strategic planning goals 2015 - 2017

1.4 Structure

(Private info) The association structure with contact detail of person in charge will be provided by August 2014.

(Private info) Organizational chart and list of key staff 2012- 2014 will be provided later.

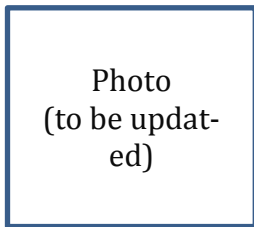
2. Board of Directors

2.1 History

Since 2003, VSAF has in total 18 volunteers who have spent a reasonable period of time serving on our Board. Below you can find a list of these key persons. If you wish to get in contact with any of these, please get the permission and further information from the President.

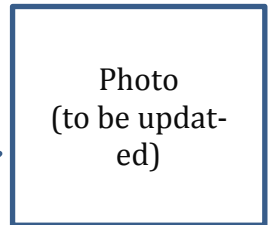
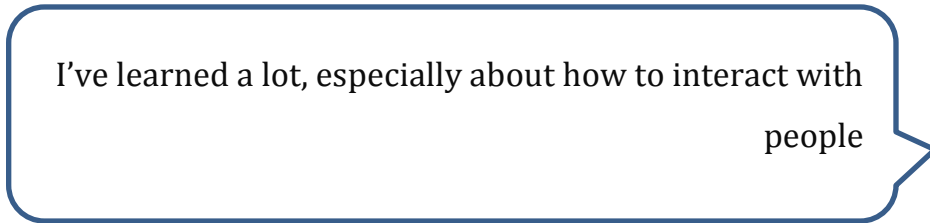
(Private info) List of former Board members will be provided later.

Let's see how our predecessors comment about their positions on Board.



Ever lost motivation? Honestly speaking, I've never experienced that, the tasks itself are changing all the time and always appealing for us

Name
VSAF President 2010 - 2013

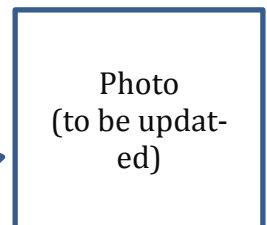
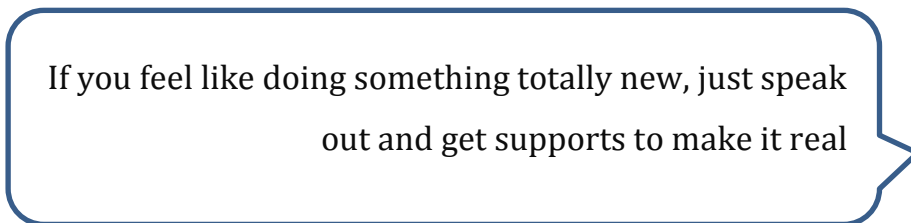


Name
VSAF Social Media Manager 2011 - 2012



The feeling that we are stressed to a certain degree together, then having the sense of achievement together, is really amazing

Name
VSAF President 2010 - 2013



Name
VSAF External Relation 2010 - 2013

2.2 Qualification

- Each and every Board member is committed to serve on Boards for 1 year, no more than one-third of the Boards being elected within the term of services.
- Both genders should be presented on Board
- The Board shall compose of at least 3 members and not more than 6 members
- Board member should have at least experiences of 3 years living or studying in Finland

2.3 Structure and responsibilities

The Board is responsible for administration and general operations of VSAF and is expected to act in the best interest of the association. Its fundamental role is to supervise, control and inspire the association to move forward, taking account of the possible influence of every external factor. It should also pay attention to the general governing rules, which are engagement of all members, priority on collective interest.

Its duties include, be means of law

- Duties of care: to protect confidential information and to complete responsibilities with honesty and good faith
- Duties of loyalty: to act for the best interest of our association
- Duty of obedience: to comply with the association's missions, bylaws and policies

President

- Serving as the Chair and being the spokesperson of VSAF's Board
- Safeguard the behaviour of all Board members in accordance with policies
- Provides directions for VSAF's activities
- Prepare meeting agenda and give notices to every Board member in advance of the meeting.

Vice President

- Acting on behalf of the President in his/ her absence during an indicated time

Secretary

- Taking minutes at Board meeting
- Approving minutes, should it be taken by another individual
- The Secretary is supervised by the Board of Directors and shall execute other duties prescribed by the Board
- After reviews and approvals of the Board, updating the Board's Orientation Manual and other policies by the term end

Treasurer

- Supervising and bookkeeping of account and accounting records
- Preparing the financial statement at the end of Board term

Board members

- Participating in Board meeting
- Participating at least half of the events/ activities organized by VSAF during term of service

2.4 Meeting

- Board of Director's meeting should be carried out at least once a month. The members should be present at every Board meetings and any VSAF's special events during the term of services
- Notice of meeting time should be given at least 3 days in advance. Notice of meeting agenda should be given at least 1 day in advance.
- The Board shall conduct a review of its performance by the term end

Decision - making Policy

The governing rule of Decision- making Policy is that transparency in decision making process, for example in form of disclosure should be stated as clearly as possible, in order to help preventing perceptions of conflict of interest and strengthen public's trusts.

Each member of Board is eligible for 1 voting right, except the Secretary. Decision is made by the majority of votes only if at least third quarter of members present at the time of voting. Voting right cannot be transferred to a representative.

2.5 Dismissal

Failure to fulfil Board's responsibilities and being inactive may lead to being removed from the Board. Dismissal of a Board member happens if any of the following cases take place

- Being absent from more than half of the Board meetings or being absent from 3 consecutive meetings without specific reasons
- More than three fourth of the Board agree on resignation of the member

2.6 Succession

Planning of election should start at least 3 months in prior to the actual announcement.

After the election, at least 1 member of the former Board remains as mentor for the successors. This mentor is eligible to participate in any Board discussions but do not have a voting rights.

3. Conflict of Interest Policy

Conflict of interest occurs when there is a clash either between individual interest and the organization's interest, or between individual interests with interest of another person from Board. Conflict of interest may resist individual to act for the best outcome of the association. Hence, it is crucial to go through and approve upon the Conflict of interest Policy (acknowledge form can be found under Attachment 4).

Case samples

Concerning the size of our association, the potential and perceived conflict of interest can take place in the following areas

Financial interest

- Offering individual services, for example accounting, documentation...for earning profits
- Inquiring to get part of the financial/ in-kind supports from sponsors and donors, as compensation for fundraising activities
- Individual who on behalf of VSAF, receives gifts or financial rewards to VSAF personally but choose not to report it or report with dishonesty

Affiliation with other association

- Placing benefits of another organization which the individual is also in charge of Board member in higher priority with the benefits of VSAF

Undertakings and relationships

- Other form of interested related to friends, relatives or business matters

Procedures to address Conflict of interest

The Policy forbids any individual from making a decision in order to profit from it personally. Board member shall not, directly or indirectly, receive benefits or gifts in their capacity as a Board member.

A Board member shall not offer generous material favours from vendors that provide goods or services to VSAF. Good or services offered by a Board member or from whom the individual has affiliation with can only be paid if is discussed and approved by the Board. The President should also make sure the business proposal and transaction are noted in the meeting minutes.

Duty to declare and disclosure

The individual who have a contract interest directly or indirectly with the association can advocate his interest in the Board meetings.

Every conflict of interest proposed and discussed during the Board meeting should be recorded accordingly and disclosed formally afterwards. The minutes should include name of the declared individual and names of Board members who were present at the discussion and voting, the content of discussion process and the voting results.

Absentee of interest person

The declared individual has to be present, but exclude himself during the discussion or voting of his conflict matters.

4. Compensation and Benefits

There will be no financial numeration for time spent serving on Board. However, VSAF may be able to reimburse reasonable expenses. The reimbursement for example

- Additional cost for regional travel
- Phone and material cost
- Conference, seminar or other event tickets which individual presents on behalf of VSAF

Goods or services offered by a Board member can be paid only if the Board approves the transaction. The offer should also be documented and reported properly in accordance with Conflict of interest Policy.

Nevertheless, being member of Boards itself present more opportunities than a volunteer may receive

- Expanding networking with partner associations
- Sharping leadership and team working skills

5. Code of Ethics

As a non-profit association representing the Vietnamese young generation in Finland, each and every member of Board should be embraced with the highest moral standards, which fulfill trust from our donors and expectations from our volunteer force.

The commitment to Code of Ethics is not limited to the following statements, but also depends on yourself to act for the best interest of VSAF. The Code will be reviewed and updated periodically in accordance to the Board term cycle.

- Understand and getting familiar with the association's bylaws, policies and other legal responsibilities
- Attend Board meetings on a regular basis and be prepared before the meetings, which included getting familiar with the agenda and related issues.
- When a voting is through, support Board's decision at the very best
- Respect the confidentiality of sensitive matters
- Participate and promote an environment of mutual trust and respect when doing teamwork
- Accept commission or other promises of benefits from anyone who may seek benefits from VSAF with good business morals.

The Code of Ethics will be distributed and collected with personal signature before the Board term starts. Failure to comply with the Board's Code of Ethics Policy may result in a request of resignation from the Secretary, the President or any other Board member.

Attachment 1. Further readings

(Ctrl+Click on the Documents title)

Regulations on establishing and governing an association

Finnish Association Act 1989/503

Other documents, please contact the Secretary for more information

- VSAF's Association By-laws, updated in 2014 (in Finnish)
VSAF yhdistyssäännöt
- Financial accounting 2013 – 2014
- Budget plan 2015 – 2016
- Sponsorship documents

Attachment 2. Glossary of term in Vietnamese

Đây là bản dịch sát nghĩa các từ phổ biến, được phân chia theo các phần chính tương ứng với cơ cấu của văn bản:

Board of Directors

(Board, or BoD)

Ban chấp hành

(viết tắt BCH) gồm có

President

Chủ tịch

Vice President

Phó Chủ tịch

Secretary

Thư kí

Treasurer

Thủ quỹ

Members

Các thành viên khác

Decision- making Policy

Nguyên tắc đưa ra quyết định

Code of Conduct

Nguyên tắc ứng xử

chủ yếu là các quy tắc về hành vi ứng xử nội bộ

Conflict of interest

mâu thuẫn/ tranh chấp về quyền lợi

Compensation & Benefits

Chế độ ưu đãi & lợi ích

Attachment 3. Individual Orientation checklist

Reference: Board Source

Information	What to do	Notes
Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation of former President and other key members <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Board orientation meetings	
History	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Annual Report 2013- 2014 <input type="checkbox"/> Read other Event reports during 2013-2014 <input type="checkbox"/> Read documents from previous years	
Finances	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of current financials	
Roles & responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with whole Board of roles, responsibilities, benefits, ... <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to active members of projects <input type="checkbox"/> Signed Letter of agreement Bylaws <input type="checkbox"/> Signed Conflict of interest Policy	
Operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of Orientation Manual <input type="checkbox"/> Attend meeting with Mentor <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting Financial plan	
Other		
Other		

Attachment 4. Policy Agreement forms

Conflict of Interest agreement form

Full name: _____

Position: _____

I have read and understand all the information written under this Policy and I agree to conduct my activities in accordance with its content. I also acknowledge that breaching of these standard will result in termination of my Board term.

Date

Signature

Witness's signature

Code of Conduct Agreement

Full name: _____

Position: _____

I have read and understand VSAF's Code of Conduct. I confirm hereby, that I may be dismissed as a Board member if any of the rules violated.

Date

Signature

Witness's signature

Attachment 5. Preliminary Calendar of Annual events

