

# Te Rautaki mō Whanaungatanga

## A National Strategy to Support Volunteering for Recent Migrants

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**Volunteering**  
NEW ZEALAND

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# Whiria te tangata Weaving the people together

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) has developed the recent migrant volunteering strategy to improve the experiences of recent migrant volunteers and promote migrant volunteering best practice across the sector. This strategy is informed by the experiences of hundreds of recent migrant volunteers shared in surveys, interviews, and during migrant volunteering workshops held around the country as part of VNZ's broader Migrant Volunteering project.

### Our vision is that:

**Recent migrants are empowered to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities through meaningful volunteering. Recent migrants have opportunities to participate in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering that is valued and supported by communities and community organisations.**

This strategy outlines the guiding principles and strategic initiatives for achieving the vision for recent migrant volunteering. VNZ will continue to lead the sector to champion meaningful opportunities to engage in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering for recent migrants. At the heart of the strategy's vision is the concept of whanaungatanga – kinship, connection, relationships, and reciprocity.

Success relies on the whole sector working as a collective, supporting each other to trial, upskill, and share approaches to engage and support recent migrants in meaningful volunteering. It requires careful attention to potential challenges to ensure that individual initiatives developed by VNZ and the wider sector contribute directly to realising the vision of this strategy.

The strategy should be regarded as a living document that can be realised over time with contributions made by Volunteer Centres, community organisations, VNZ, government agencies, recent migrant volunteers, and the community sector more widely.

Our strategy aims to foster more inclusive environments within volunteering. Through meaningful volunteering, recent migrants can have a real opportunity to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities. It is underpinned by the core principles of *Connect*, *Engage*, *Share*, and *Learn*, each corresponding to a strategic goal:

### Connect

Recent migrants are engaged in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations.

### Engage

Recent migrants build networks and relationships with Volunteer Centres and community organisations, and with their communities.

### Share

Staff at Volunteer Centres and community organisations have the knowledge and tools to effectively engage, connect, and support recent migrant volunteers.

### Learn

The sector is aware of and values the contribution of recent migrant volunteers, and understands their needs and concerns.

**“Volunteering helped me settle and find new friends. It really opened doors for me. I have been here for two years, and Wellington now feels like home. It is a great feeling to belong here. My circle of friends has also gotten bigger because of volunteering.”**

**Wael**

Interviewee, from Syria

# He waka eke noa

## A canoe which we are all in with no exception

### CONTEXT

Volunteering brings communities together, allowing people to work with and across our differences. Volunteering is a language of care and aroha. The meaning of volunteering, mahi aroha and social action differs. For Māori (*mahi aroha*) and Pacific peoples, for example, it is deeply rooted in culture. VNZ recognises the power of volunteering and the role it can have in building recent migrants' connections with their communities.

### Who are recent migrants?

Recent migrants are those who have been living in New Zealand for five years or less. The priority groups for the strategy are recent migrants in New Zealand on a permanent or long-term basis (12 months or more). This group includes permanent residents, former refugees, and some temporary visa holders, such as long-term students and work visa holders. Recent migrants come from many different countries, but in the past five years people have most commonly arrived from China, India, the United Kingdom, the Philippines and South Africa. New Zealand experienced a net gain of 72,300 permanent and long-term migrants in 2016/17. This was 4.7% more than in 2015/16. This was the fifth consecutive year in which migration increased and the highest net gain ever recorded.<sup>1</sup>

### Background

The need for the strategy is motivated by the experiences of recent migrants who have said the current volunteering model does not meet their needs. Volunteering for recent migrants should be a meaningful experience that can contribute to their sense of connection with their communities and enable them to develop professional skills specific to the New Zealand context. At the same time, it is important to appreciate that volunteering is only one amongst many possible ways in which recent migrants may connect with and enrich Aotearoa.

The Strategy feeds into VNZ's wider goals of championing inclusive volunteering for all and contributes to the New Zealand Government's Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy, which is led by MBIE. In 2017, VNZ received funding from MBIE for two years to develop this Strategy and the strategic initiatives outlined on page 7. The funding was awarded following a one-off call for proposals to facilitate recent migrant's participation in their host community, and thereby support the Inclusion outcome of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy.<sup>2</sup> VNZ hopes that the Recent Migrant Volunteering Strategy sends a strong signal to the wider community and voluntary sector about the importance of connecting and engaging with recent migrants in meaningful volunteering opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, *Migration Trends 2016-17* (2018).

<sup>2</sup> Immigration New Zealand, *New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration strategy* (2018).

Research shows that recent migrants continue to face unique barriers in accessing meaningful volunteering opportunities. The recent National Migrant Consultation report found that many recent migrants do not feel included in their new communities.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-seven per cent had difficulties finding ways to get involved in their communities and 21% do not feel welcome in their community. Particularly concerning is that almost half (44%) had experienced unfair or biased behavior once or twice, and for 12% this was frequent. Almost one-third (29%) of those who had experienced unfair or biased behavior did not know where to go for support.

Consultations undertaken with recent migrants by Cultural Connections highlighted that many faced a lack of adequate information around volunteering opportunities.<sup>4</sup> A joint study by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and consultancy firm, MartinJenkins, identified a similar trend, with many recent migrants not familiar with volunteering rights and obligations.<sup>5</sup> These findings highlight a strong need for a coordinated national strategy to promote meaningful volunteering opportunities for recent migrants across New Zealand.

VNZ recognises the unique contribution recent migrants can make to New Zealand's volunteering workforce, as well as the role meaningful volunteering can have in fostering connections with their new communities. VNZ recognises that volunteering opportunities for recent migrants must be meaningful, including that the role fits with the migrant's skills, needs, and aspirations; that the migrant volunteer is well-supported; and that the community organisations involved in the execution of the Strategy actively champion diversity and inclusive practice in their volunteering activities. Meaningful volunteering for recent migrants also entails that their voices are used to inform the development and implementation of the strategy and its associated initiatives.

**“It is so hard to come to a new place, but finding a community really helped me to settle. When we came to New Zealand, my first question was how do we meet new people, how can we connect? The answer was volunteering.”**

**Thùy**

Interviewee, from Vietnam

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and Martin Jenkins, *National Migrants Consultation 2018*. (2019).

<sup>4</sup> Eric Chuah, *Cultural Connections Study*. (2019).

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and Martin Jenkins, *National Migrants Consultation 2018*. (2019).

# Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi With your basket and my basket the people will thrive

## THE STRATEGY / TE RAUTAKI

### The vision of the strategy is that:

Recent migrants are empowered to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities through meaningful volunteering. Recent migrants have opportunities to participate in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering that is valued and supported by communities and community organisations.

The strategy is guided by the core principles of Connect, Engage, Share, and Learn which informs our strategic goals. Ethical and values-based volunteering will protect against exploitative practices and promote a mutually-shared understanding of what meaningful volunteering entails.

### Strategic Initiatives

In collaboration with its partners, VNZ has developed several initiatives to achieve the vision.

Initiatives	Description
<b>Workshops</b>	VNZ has delivered a series of workshops for recent migrants to raise their awareness about volunteering opportunities and to support community organisations to learn about the experiences, skills, and needs of recent migrants. To date, 150 recent migrants have participated in workshops across Aotearoa. Every participant rated the workshop as helpful or very helpful, and 88% reported that they were likely or very likely to volunteer as a result.
<b>Connected Volunteering Model</b>	The Connected Volunteering Programme is one of the key initiatives of the strategy, supporting participating Volunteer Centres to provide additional support to recent migrants. The purpose is to connect recent migrants with volunteering opportunities relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations, and to provide additional mentoring. To date, 45 recent migrants have participated in the programme. At the end of the programme, 83% found it helpful or very helpful, and 73% were still volunteering. Going forward, Volunteer Centres may tailor the model so that it fits better with the needs of their migrant volunteers, such as running group-based Connected Volunteering.

<b>Best Practice Tools</b>	Resources will be collated on the ‘Migrant Volunteering’ section of the VNZ website to support the sector to meaningfully engage recent migrants in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering. Information and tools on migrant volunteering best-practice will also be incorporated into VNZ’s InvolveMe and LeadMe platforms.
<b>Success Stories</b>	VNZ has been collecting case studies to raise awareness about the contribution of recent migrants to their communities. It will also serve as an important way for Volunteer Centres and community organisations to understand good practice when engaging with recent migrant volunteers.
<b>Research</b>	VNZ will continue to support research on the barriers facing recent migrants in their volunteering engagements with Volunteer Centres and community organisations. More detailed research around the distribution of these barriers by location, national origin, and ethnicity may also be undertaken to better understand the experiences of recent migrant volunteers. Such research will be shared in VNZ’s <i>State of Volunteering</i> reports.

## Partnerships / Whanaungatanga

The realisation of this strategy and its vision requires the cooperation of the whole sector and the formation of meaningful partnerships, including between recent migrants and the community sector. These partnerships should be based on an ethos of egalitarianism and reciprocity. The voices of migrants will be continuously used to inform the implementation of the strategy.

VNZ recognises the plethora of existing expertise in working with recent migrants within the sector. Such expertise has informed this strategy and will be key to the realisation of our strategic vision. VNZ, as the peak body organisation for volunteering in New Zealand, will highlight best practice and develop relevant tools and resources alongside the sector. Community organisations can develop operational partnerships with their local Volunteer Centres and strategic partnerships with VNZ, to help achieve the vision of the strategy. VNZ will continue to maintain a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to ensure the Recent Migrant Volunteering Strategy contributes to the aims of the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy.

Other important partners for the realisation of this strategy include key stakeholders such as the Office for Ethnic Communities, the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, and community organisations run by or working closely with recent migrants, such as English Language Partners New Zealand. Partnerships with local Iwi and hapū as well as Māori organisations are important. The majority of migrants (>70%) stated that understanding Māori culture provided a better sense of connection with Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Multicultural New Zealand, *Submission to Immigration New Zealand on Migrant Consultations*. (2019).



**“There are many advantages to be gained from volunteering: You are helping, you are part of the community, you are part of us.”**

**Julia**

Interviewee, from Brazil

## Challenges

The implementation of this strategy comes with many challenges, as outlined in the table below.

Challenges facing Recent Migrants in Volunteering	Challenges for Community Organisations and the Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiencing bias, discrimination, and racism while volunteering. General concerns around inclusion and making friends in New Zealand.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Difficulty accessing information about volunteering opportunities available in their communities.</li> <li>• Lack of clarity around rights and responsibilities when it comes to volunteering e.g. health and safety, eligibility, and visa requirements.</li> <li>• Differing nature and expectations of volunteering for some compared to their country of origin.</li> <li>• Lack of trust and support during volunteering, the effects of which are magnified for recent migrant volunteers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating effectively with people from a range of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds.</li> <li>• Being aware of, and overcoming, conscious/unconscious bias and racism.</li> <li>• Greater appreciation of the mutual benefit of volunteering to both migrant volunteers and community organisations, as well as the benefits of being inclusive organisations.</li> <li>• Some organisations face challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers, including recent migrant volunteers.</li> </ul>

Challenges are especially acute for recent migrant volunteers who are former refugees, people of colour, and those for whom English is not a first language. However, recent migrants facing the most challenges are also the most likely to benefit from increased opportunities for connection and meaningful volunteering.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and MartinJenkins, *National Migrant Consultations*. (2019).

During the strategy’s consultation process, many organisations highlighted concerns about migrants’ level of English. While some recent migrants, such as former refugees and partners of work visa holders from non-English speaking countries, may face additional language barriers, our evidence suggests that the vast majority of migrant volunteers have a good command of English. Four out of the five top countries where migrants come from also have English as a primary or official language (the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, and the Philippines).

**“Sometimes it is a huge relief not to feel like a migrant. Being one is a pain anyway, often being excluded, not being understood because of my accent, having comments about my English, being asked all the time about why I moved. Sometimes it is too much.”**

**Maria**

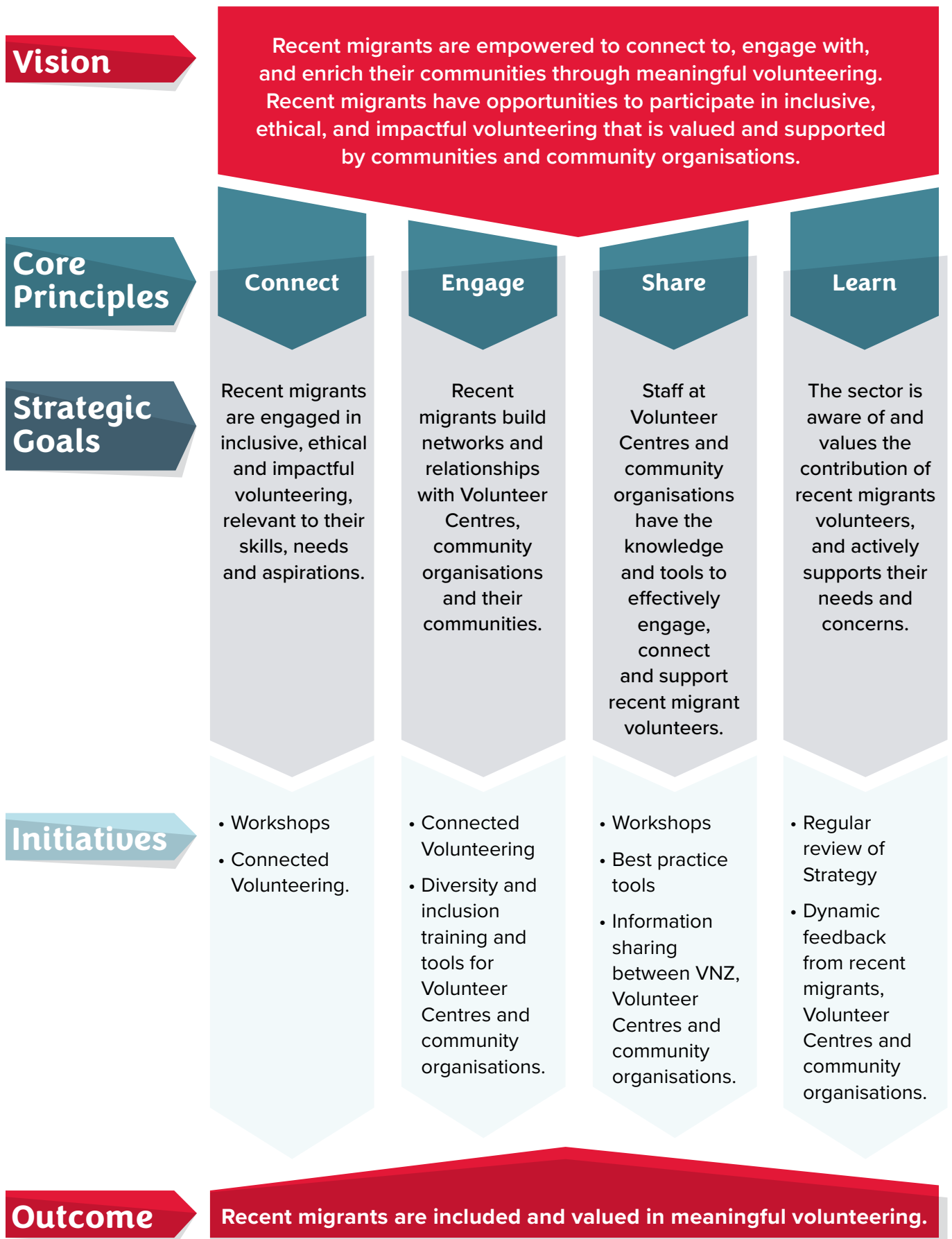
Survey Respondent, from Russia

Recent migrants’ experiences of unfair or biased treatment, discrimination, and racism need to be acknowledged. The sector should also be more accommodating of those for whom English is not a first language, drawing on a solutions-focused, strengths-based approach rather than fixating on a deficit. Volunteer Centres and community organisations, working together with recent migrant volunteers, can create ethical, impactful, and effective volunteering opportunities.

Feedback received from recent migrants during the strategy’s consultation process indicated that the majority (74.5%) volunteered for the purpose of contributing to their communities and building connections with others. One further recurring theme provided in the consultation by recent migrants relates to concerns about employment. While most respondents acknowledged that volunteering is intrinsically valuable as a means of connecting and contributing to the community, several commented that they participated in volunteering in lieu of employment or as a pathway to paid work. This feedback should be taken in its wider context; namely, as a symptom of the ongoing difficulties recent migrants face in gaining meaningful employment relevant to their skills and experiences.

The aforementioned issues pose challenges but also provide significant opportunities for VNZ and the sector to have a real impact on recent migrants’ experiences in meaningful volunteering. Through the formation of meaningful partnerships and whanaungatanga founded in equality and reciprocity, the strategy can make important headway in realising our vision.

## FRAMEWORK



**“For me, volunteering is about meeting each week, with a chance to grow, learn and challenge myself. It is a personal way for me to say: ‘Aotearoa/New Zealand, here I am’.”**

**Juan**

Survey Respondent, from Colombia

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[www.volunteeringnz.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz)