

## **Pracharumjai Foundation : The Trap of Volunteers Shortage**

Phannaphat Rachaporn  
Ph.D. (Public Administration)  
Graduate School of Public Administration  
National Institute of Development Administration  
Email: phannaphatra@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

The problem of a shortage of volunteers for the Pracharumjai foundation, a public charitable organization, has been a persistent issue since the expansion of the foundation's offices in 1989 and the restructuring of the organization, which resulted in an increased workload for existing volunteers. This signifies a growing demand for volunteers. However, the human resource management process, especially job analysis and design, of the foundation has been deficient, leading to insufficient volunteer engagement with the work. The foundation attempted to address this problem by supporting cross-training to enable volunteers to work interchangeably. However, this approach has become a more complex issue, as it has led to an increased workload for volunteers and reduced commitment to the main tasks of volunteering, consequently affecting the efficiency of the foundation. This research will present the human resource management process of the foundation so far in order to discuss suitable strategies within the public charitable organizational context.

**Keyword:** Job analysis and design, cross-training, volunteer, foundation,

---

In June 2023, at the monthly meeting between the executives and volunteers of the Pracharumjai Foundation, a public charitable organization, Mr.Nattiphong Kaopong, the foundation's committee and as human resources manager of the foundation, expresses extreme concern over the severe shortage of volunteers within the foundation. This concern was raised by former volunteers' complaint due to the increasing demand for new volunteers to assist in various positions within the expanding offices of the foundation and the restructuring of the organizational structure of the new branch office. As a result, the workload on existing volunteers significantly increases.

The establishment of new office branch directly affected to an increased number of volunteers to carry out the expanded operations. Furthermore, due to the geographical distance between multiple offices, the board of directors felt the need to engage volunteers to assist in the administration and management of the newly established office, in order to alleviate the burden on the executive team responsible for overseeing the main office and ensure smooth management practices. Therefore, Pracharumjai Foundation demanded not only volunteers for emergency and disaster relief efforts, but also volunteers to work in the office of the new branch.

To resolve the volunteers shortage in the foundation, Mr. Nattiphong Kaopong and the management committee attempted to distribute diverse tasks to each volunteer, allowing them with cross-training to understand and practice each other's skills in order to compensate for the volunteers shortage. However, this approach has created a more complex problem, negatively affecting of the foundation.

The first impact was the excessive workload imposed on volunteers, as they had to take various responsibilities. Their primary duty was to serve as volunteer rescuers in the field, but they were also expected to handle office tasks. This heavy workload made it challenging for volunteers to manage their responsibilities effectively.

The second impact was the performance of tasks that volunteers were not skilled in, leading to substandard results and causing volunteers to feel oppressive in their work. the result was poor performance and volunteers' dissatisfaction.

According to the impacts significantly affect to the efficiency of volunteers' work and the effectiveness of the foundation. Volunteers were unable to fulfill and devote to their roles the greatest because of the workload from other positions that they have taken responsible for and the original problem of volunteer shortage still remains unresolved. Moreover, If the volunteers are inadequate, the foundation's operations could not be effectively executed. As a result, the public's in the foundation would decrease, which means foundation's existence becomes less necessary in society. Therefore, the issue of volunteer shortage is a matter of priority concern for the Pracharuamjai foundation.

### **Inception of the Pracharuamjai Foundation**

The Pracharuamjai foundation has been established since June 25th, 1982 with Phra Boonyarit Hongprasart being as the founder and chairman of the committee.

**Vision:** Every life is precious. We wish them safety.

**Mission:** Pracharuamjai foundation belongs to the people of every race and every religion

### **The objectives of Pracharuamjai foundation**

The foundation has established key priorities for supporting communities and individuals in need.

Firstly, it supports essential community institutions like hospitals, schools, religious activities, and sports.

Secondly, it emphasizes educational support by sponsoring funds for students in need.

Thirdly, the foundation aids individuals facing hardships, including victims of public hazards.

Fourthly, it offers cremation services for abandoned corpses. Additionally, the foundation collaborates with other organizations for greater impact and acknowledges supporters with rewards and recognition.

Lastly, it upholds a principle of political neutrality to ensure a focused humanitarian approach. Overall, these sequential priorities demonstrate the foundation's commitment to diverse aspects of social welfare and making a positive impact on society.

## Organizational structure of the new Precharuamjai foundation office

Figure 1: Organizational chart

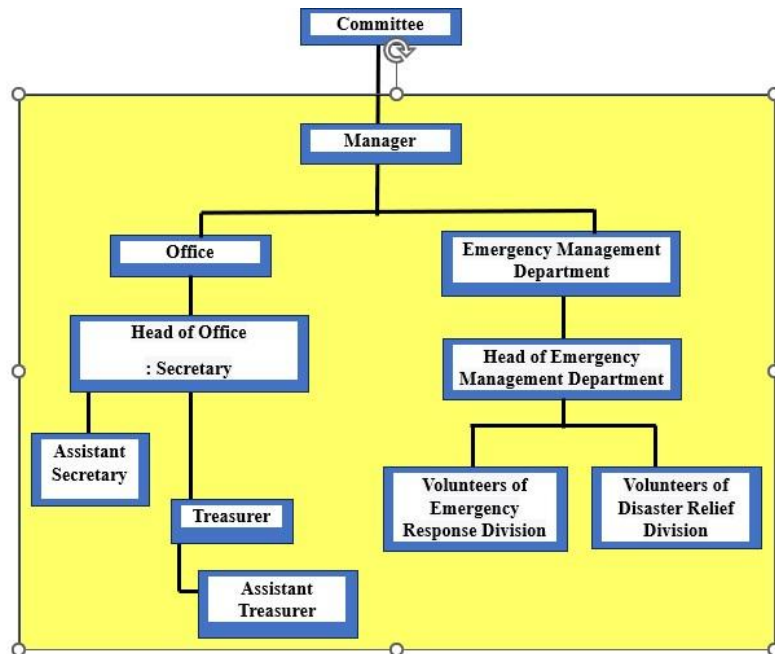


Figure 1 shows the organizational chart. In the organizational structure of the new Precharuamjai foundation office is divided its responsibilities into two parts between committee and volunteers of foundation. The committee part is responsible for managing and resolving the problem faced by volunteers, taking care of volunteers, making decisions on organizational issues, and collaborating with other organizations to enhance their competency in public hazards. The committee members include the chairman, vice chairman, and committee whereas the volunteers department (yellow zone) consists of the manager, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, and assistant secretary in office department, and the head of the automotive department, volunteers in emergency response vehicles, and volunteers in relief vehicles in the emergency management department. The details are as follows:

The manager is a main key of volunteers for managing and coordinating the activities of volunteers, both in office and non-office works. This position is to assist and manage all activities, ensure the smooth operation of the foundation, coordinate between the committee and the volunteers in the new office, and organize the agenda for meetings with the committee. The secretary as the head of the office department is responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the entire office. This includes overseeing document management and the workflow of all departments within the office. Additionally, the secretary serves as a representative and attends meetings with the foundation's management.

The assistant secretary, the individual is responsible for assisting and supporting the Secretary in all aspects of their work as directed.

The treasurer duty is organizing a transparent and accountable accounting system, including handling donation receipts and financial certification documents.

The assistant treasurer is responsible for assisting and supporting the treasurer in all financial matters. The head of the automotive department is responsible for generating work assignments and overseeing the operations of the department. This position has to handle the communication and coordination among volunteers within the foundation to create effective teamwork of volunteer.

Volunteers are divided into two groups: those assigned to emergency response vehicles, responsible for rescuing and assisting victims in incidents and disasters, and those assigned to relief vehicles, tasked with distributing relief supplies to the public. Furthermore, all volunteers have full authority to make decisions regarding their work. They are empowered to do their judgment and take actions in carrying out their work responsibilities.

### **Working procedure**

In the general work process, volunteers receive information about emergency situations through police radio communication and from the local community in the area facilitated by the head of the automotive department of the foundation. In the large-scale disaster case, volunteers may receive contact from the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, specifically directing and requesting assistance from the secretary.

After that, volunteers will be assigned duties and deployed to the incidents to carry out their tasks. When the assistance is finished, a performance analysis meeting will be held by all participating volunteers to discuss the limitations and obstacles faced during the operations. All issues will be gathered by the secretary and presented at the monthly meeting with the committee for problem-solving and planning for future performances. Additionally, in the case of receiving compensation from the National Institute for Emergency Medical and donations from the public, financial certification documents will be prepared by the treasurer as evidence for transparency.

### **Reasons for Volunteers Shortage**

The problem of volunteer shortages in the community foundation has been persistent since the expansion of new offices and the organizational restructuring of the foundation. However, the problem intensified significantly in 2020 with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a reduced number of available volunteers. Despite the decline in volunteers, the workload increased significantly. As a result, the previously identified problem became even more severe.

### **Change 1: the Expansion of the Foundation**

In 1982, the headquarters of Pracharuamjai foundation was established in Khanom district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province where is near Surat Thani province. Being the first public hazards foundation in the city, its role and responsibility in serving the public significantly increased. For example, the public sector requested their assistance in helping people in danger

areas, the foundation's volunteers were entrusted the authority and responsibility of training people in healthcare and disaster prevention, and it became a place of emergency assistance for the public as a second home.

With the increased responsibilities and the increased demand from people in other areas of Nakhon Si Thammarat, the chairman approved of expanding the assistance coverage to every area in the province. The reasons for the expansion new branch office in Muang district, Nakhon Si Thammarat, were as follows.

Firstly, the foundation's first location was not comfortable to provide convenient coverage for the people of Nakhon Si Thammarat as initially expected. The location in Khanom district being situated the edge or border between Nakhon Si Thammarat province and Surat Thani Province, was far from most area within Nakhon Si Thammarat. Due to the faraway distance, giving aid to people within the province became complicated. The communication and coordination between foundation and people were difficult, and it took an hour to reach the emergency areas. Consequently, the providing of assistance to the public in Nakhon Si Thammarat was not smooth.

Finally, the collaboration with the office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, a government agency, has impacted the foundation and increased responsibility and an expanded role of foundation in society. As a result, the foundation's duties included both its own tasks and collaborative work the government sector.

All the reasons mentioned above, in 1989, the new branch office of Pracharumjai foundation in Muang district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province was situated. Definitely, when the office expanded, the demand of manpower increased. However, the demand of volunteers was not met sufficiently. At that time, the human resource planning was not clearly planned and well-prepared. The committee decided to adapt and rotate former volunteers between the old and new offices in a period of time. Simultaneously, they extended invitations to the network of former volunteers who had previously coordinated and collaborated with the foundation to become permanent volunteers. Additionally, the office opened registration to the public for those interested in volunteering with the foundation

Fundamentally, the chairman of the foundation expected a minimum requirement of 20 field volunteers to ensure sufficient coverage in two time slots, day and night with each slot consisting of 12 hours for 10 individuals. However, the foundation was unable to meet the anticipated number of volunteers. The chairman resolved this issue himself by managing and coordinating to generous people such as motorbike taxi rider for helping the patient transfers. Besides, he fully promoted and encouraged people who were interested in volunteering.

During the interview, Mr. Nattipong commented on the volunteers shortage, he said:

*Many people were interested to work as volunteers within the foundation. However, the limitations and obstacles, training requirement and uncertain work schedule, affected their convenience to commit. Consequently, the applicants could not become part of foundation, but expressed to assist the foundation as external volunteer helpers according to their convenience.*

From the interview, it could be explained that the limitations mentioned was a mandatory 40-hour basic volunteer training by the office of disaster prevention and mitigation. Without completing the training, they could not be certified as volunteers. Additionally, they were devoted to the foundation's operational procedures and were accepted the working time conditions, which might have an impact on their own life schedules.

From the interview, it can be further explained that the limitation mentioned is that in order to become a full-fledged volunteer, individuals must undergo a preliminary 40-hour basic volunteer training provided by the Provincial Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. Only after passing the training could they be certified as volunteers. In addition to that, they are required to familiarize themselves with the foundation's operational procedures and accept the conditions regarding time commitment, which may have an impact on their personal schedules.

## **Change 2: the Restructuring of the Structural Organization**

The establishment of new office branch necessitated an increased number of volunteers to carry out the expanded operations. In the year 1989, following the expansion of the office of Pracharumjai Foundation, a public charitable organization, by establishing branches in the Muang district of Nakhon Si Thammarat province to provide widespread and convenient public services. The chairman had a vision to develop a self-managing team to reduce the control from the committee, minimizing delays caused of waiting for command in rapid issues, tackling from the head office.

In the addition, it aimed to distribute the workload and burden among the committee responsible for overseeing the main office and the new office. Furthermore, the committee believed that empowering volunteers would foster their skills, create a sense of unity with the foundation, and provide them with a better situation understanding and awareness of the challenges faced by the foundation compared to the committee and individuals who were located far away.

Therefore, a new organizational structure was implemented in the foundation's new office, resulting in additional responsibilities for volunteers in the office. Table 1 shows the comparison of the job positions with main office and new office.

Table 1: The comparison of job positions between the main office and the new office

<b>Positions</b>	<b>Main office</b>	<b>New office</b>
Manager	-	volunteer
Secretary	Committee members	volunteer
Assistant Secretary	Committee members	volunteer
Treasurer	Committee members	volunteer
Assistant Treasurer	Committee members	volunteer
Head of Emergency Management Department	Committee members	volunteer
Volunteers of Emergency Response Division	volunteer	volunteer
Volunteers of Disaster Relief Division	volunteer	volunteer

From the comparison table of job positions between the main office and the new office, it was exact that all positions in the new office were under the volunteers' responsibility, covering office tasks and field works. The significant impact of the restructuring within the new branch of Pracharumjai foundation was the transfer of authority to manage the foundation from the committee members in the main office to the volunteers in the new office. Moreover, the newly introduced position in the new office was Manager who was responsible for overseeing and managing the overall smooth operation of the foundation.

The manager also act as a coordinator between the main office and the new office for crucial activities such as annual meeting to plan the foundation's operation for the next year or budgeting approval, and monthly performance reports to the main office. This position did not exist in the main office before, as the committee administered all aspects of management. Considering all these changes, it was explicit that volunteers in the new office have taken on office responsibilities that were previously not assigned to them. It could be said that the workload of volunteers in the new office, both in the field and in the office, has dramatically increased. Therefore, there was a greater need for more volunteers than before.

### **Aftermath of Changes**

After the foundation's office was expanded, the organization grew larger, and the restructuring of the organization within the new office involved recruiting volunteers to take on office-related responsibilities. Consequently, the situation concerning human resources in the foundation was severely affected. Specifically, the organization had expanded in size, resulting in an increased number of positions that needed to be filled, requiring a greater level of volunteer involvement.

However, the lack of a clear volunteer planning, it has impacted the shortage of volunteers into the organization. The procedure of recruiting and selecting the volunteers through the opening applications and former volunteers' suggestion. Later, candidates will get the job interviews and internship such as providing basic training for first aid, going to the disaster or accident-prone areas to study and practice form the real situations. Besides, all volunteers must complete a 40-hour volunteer training conducted by the provincial public health department to ensure their professional competency in dealing with public emergencies.

In the volunteer interview process, the interview panel typically consisted of the foundation manager and respective department heads. The main questions asked during the interview were related to the volunteer's desired position and whether they were ready to start working immediately. The foundation manager provided a brief overview of the responsibilities of the position and then selected candidates for a 3-month probation period before final approval for the position. According to Mr.Nattiphong, if volunteers expressed their interest in specific positions during the interview, they were more likely to be assigned to those positions based on the organization's needs. However, even after joining, volunteers might undergo training and work in various positions as needed.

The situation where additional tasks were added beyond what was initially agreed upon was considered an unauthorized job offer, as it lacked mutual consent from both parties. Specifically, while the foundation had agreed to the changes in the job, the volunteer did not provide consent

but was rather compelled to accept the new responsibilities without prior discussion. This was seen as a manipulative and distorting practice of the original job offer.

Therefore, it was observed that the approach used was not aggressive in seeking volunteers but rather a passive approach, as they waited for volunteers to come forward. It was more of a reactive approach rather than a proactive one in recruiting volunteers. The pool of available volunteers remained extremely limited, with some volunteers being relocated from the main office and new volunteers being convinced to join from existing volunteers. Nonetheless, there were still no external individuals who personally applied to become volunteers. This shortage of volunteers became a prominent issue for the foundation following the various changes that had taken place.

Table 2: The number of volunteer requirement and the number of volunteers available

<b>Positions</b>	<b>The number of volunteer requirement</b>	<b>The number of volunteers available</b>
Secretary	1	1 (former volunteer)
Assistant Secretary	1	-
Treasurer	1	1 (former volunteer)
Assistant Treasurer	1	-
Head of Emergency Management Department	1	1(former volunteer)
Volunteers of Emergency Response Division	10 (minimum)	5 (Both former and new volunteers)
Volunteers of Disaster Relief Division	10 (minimum)	2 (former volunteer)
Total	25	10

Based on Table 2, it was evident that the number of volunteers that the foundation required was significantly lower than expected, by more than half. The majority of the existing volunteers were actually the same volunteers who had relocated from the main office to assist with the operations of the new office of the foundation. At that time, the situation was characterized by a heavy workload, but there were insufficient volunteers to manage the tasks.

The relocated existing volunteers from the main office had to step in as primary leaders. They had to take responsibility for their own disaster response duties and simultaneously train the new volunteers. Furthermore, the old volunteers were selected by the committee to assume office responsibilities. However, the selection process focused on familiarity with the foundation and the desire to work in those positions, without adequately considering the necessary knowledge, abilities, and skills required for the job. For instance, the position of treasurer requires individuals with expertise in mathematics, accounting, and an understanding of the foundation's financial disbursement processes. For all positions in the office, volunteers would learn their duties through teaching and guidance provided by the representatives of the foundation's committee who oversaw the initial phase for approximately 3 months. After that period, the volunteers were entrusted to take full responsibility according to the plans set by the committee.



During interviews with volunteers at that time, they all shared a common view that it was a transitional period where the volunteer capacity had not yet stabilized. This resulted in a mismatch between the workload and the available volunteers. The operations of the foundation were greatly affected due to the inadequate number of volunteers. Some volunteers had to work more hours than what was initially assigned by the foundation. For example, they had to start their shift from 6:00 AM until 6:00 PM and would have to stay until 9:00 PM or even later if there were a shortage of volunteers for the next shift. This caused disruptions in the workflow. The volunteer representative explained the issue of volunteer shortages during that time as follows:

*I worked for more than 12 hours, and on some days, it was as long as 18 hours. There was even a time when I had to stay overnight because there weren't enough people for the next shift. Even though I didn't have to continue working, I felt the need to help the foundation keep going. At that time, I requested the executive committee to intervene and address this shortage issue because otherwise, people wouldn't be able to stay.*

Apart from interviewing volunteers, the situation of insufficient volunteers in the organization was acknowledged by the foundation's management committee as something beyond their expectations. Initially, it was believed that there would be an adequate or slightly lower number of volunteers than anticipated, and there would be occasional new volunteers joining the foundation. However, due to various issues related to the working conditions of volunteers, such as work schedule, training, and responsibilities, the majority of the network and individuals interested in volunteering chose to assist the foundation as external volunteers on an ad hoc basis, rather than becoming full-time volunteers. Mr. Nattipong explained the problem of volunteer shortage in an interview:

*The number of volunteers was less than what the foundation had anticipated, and we were unable to address this shortage immediately. However, we were actively seeking alternative solutions to ensure the continuity of the foundation's work.*

The shortage of volunteers experienced by the foundation was acknowledged by the management as something beyond expectations. They did not anticipate that it would have such a significant impact on the organization's operations, leading to existing volunteers having to work overtime and shoulder a heavy workload. This is mainly due to insufficient numbers of volunteers in the same positions.

This reflected the consequences of the volunteer shortage in the foundation, indicating that the foundation faced a lack of job analysis and design. Job analysis helped in collecting data within the operations of the foundation, in order to analyze the significance of each role within the organization. This aided in planning for the required volunteer workforce in the future, but the committee members had not assessed job description of each position that how each position differed from one another, the job specification was necessary to analyze and assess the suitability of individuals for specific job positions, and the KASOCs framework could be used for this purpose. It allowed us to evaluate the knowledge, abilities, skills, and other characteristics that helped volunteers determine if they were suitable for the job and enabled the organization to select volunteers who were a good fit for the role. Work environment analysis was also essential in understanding the risks associated with job performance and finding individuals with suitable qualifications to carry out the tasks in that particular position effectively.

Job design helped to define how work would be performed and the tasks that would be required in a given job.

Due to the unexpected shortage of volunteers compared to what the foundation had anticipated, the workload and responsibilities of the remaining volunteers increased significantly. They had to take care of both emergency and office-related tasks. However, the situation escalated beyond manageable levels due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Many volunteers contracted the virus and were unable to work, while some were afraid to come to work, resulting in a reduced number of available volunteers. As a consequence, the remaining volunteers had to shoulder an overwhelming workload, leading to a decline in work efficiency.

### **Replacing Volunteers Shortage Through Cross-Training**

When the Pracharumjai foundation faced a shortage of volunteers due to the lack of human resource planning, the management sought ways to address this issue. They recognized that the current recruitment strategies were not effective in attracting new volunteers. Therefore, relying on an increased number of volunteers joining the organization was not a feasible solution. Instead, the foundation opted to focus on developing the existing volunteers within the organization to maximize their contributions.

The foundation chose to utilize human resource development methods to enhance the skills of the current volunteers, enabling them to perform various roles and responsibilities within the organization. This approach aimed to mitigate the shortage of volunteers in specific positions during different time periods. By cross-training all the volunteers, they could effectively fill the gaps caused by the volunteer shortage.

The foundation employed the human resource development approach to enhance the capabilities of volunteers, which involved cross-training. Each volunteer was encouraged to be capable of practicing and performing tasks in various positions within the organization. This approach addressed the limitation of volunteer shortage and was seen as a means of supporting volunteers in developing self-improvement skills for their personal benefits in the future.

In an interview, Mr. Wichai, a representative of the foundation's management committee, stated: *I wanted volunteers to be able to work in diverse roles within the organization, partly to compensate for our volunteer shortage. Moreover, it helped to develop their knowledge and skills, which could become valuable assets for them in the future.*

The process of cross-training involved creating a learning environment where volunteers could engage in various job tasks. It started with the management committee assigning each volunteer position as a mentor to their colleagues. Clear lesson plans were developed within a timeframe of 1-3 months. As part of the evaluation process, volunteers had to produce at least one tangible outcome during their learning period, which was assessed by their mentors in the respective positions. Additionally, they were required to submit their work to the operations manager for further evaluation, ensuring their ability to take responsibility and support work in other positions within the foundation.

For example, a volunteer in the disaster relief department learned the work of the secretary position in the office. Their tangible outcome was producing the financial statements of the foundation. Similarly, a volunteer in the field department was expected to handle administrative documents and record meeting minutes, similar to the responsibilities of a secretary. Their tangible outcome was their effective management of meetings. Meanwhile, an office volunteer was able to assist in disaster relief efforts and support affected individuals in the field. Their tangible outcome was successfully aiding and assisting disaster-affected individuals.

In accordance with the interview with the volunteers representative, they mentioned the following:

*I was responsible for the disaster relief department, but I also took the opportunity to learn about accounting. Sometimes, it took a lot of time and calculations. There were instances when I didn't understand certain things during work, so I had to discuss them after work. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to complete the tasks.*

*As for me, I was in charge of the office's administrative tasks. However, I also had to go out into the field. Initially, it was quite challenging, and I struggled to grasp certain things. But I had to persevere because I needed to deliver tangible results for the organization to see.*

According to the interview with the volunteer representative, additional information was provided regarding the learning process. It was mentioned that learning took place in two time periods: during working hours and outside of working hours. During working hours, volunteers utilized break times or periods when they had no responsibilities to learn about other positions. Otherwise, they would have to learn outside of working hours. This meant that they had to complete their assigned tasks within their designated working hours before learning about other positions. This arrangement had an impact on their personal time after work.

Therefore, the utilization of the human resource development approach to foster a multi-skilled work among volunteers was the selected method to address the issue of volunteer shortages within the organization, as outlined in the aforementioned process. Despite the potential challenges in volunteer learning, the mandate to achieve successful outcomes through cross-functional learning necessitated that volunteers produced work results based on their expanded learning beyond their designated roles, as expected by the management committee.

### **Unexpected result: The complexity of the problem**

After the effort to address the problem of volunteer shortages in the Pracharuamjai foundation by using human resource development method, cross-training have been developed for the volunteers. The expected outcome from the management committee's perspective was that each volunteer could perform multiple roles to compensate for the shortage of personnel in different positions during their working hours. However, unexpected consequences have emerged, including 1) an excessive workload and 2) discomfort in performing tasks that volunteers were not suited for. These unforeseen impacts have affected the efficiency of volunteer work and the overall performance of the foundation.

The excessive workload referred to the situation where volunteers were responsible for various positions, including their own assigned tasks and other areas that needed to be covered due to

volunteer shortages. This led to an increase in the number of tasks from one to two or three, each with its own job details and varying levels of difficulty. Some tasks required a significant amount of time and effort, in addition to the already time-consuming main responsibilities. For example, a disaster response role required being on duty for 12 hours, preparing rescue equipment, conducting rescue drills, and planning operations with clear and precise steps.

However, concerns also arose regarding office-related tasks, such as unfinished meeting documents, adding to the workload. Consequently, the increased workload affected the personal time of volunteers, as there were multiple tasks that could not be completed during working hours. Each task required dedication and time, leading to a higher workload and impacting the personal time of volunteers, as the tasks could not be finished within the allocated working hours. According to the interview with a representative volunteer from the foundation, he stated:

*The workload was extremely heavy. I had to handle both the on-site disaster response tasks and the administrative duties simultaneously during working hours. What made it challenging was that both tasks had very different job requirements, and I had to perform both of them at the same time. The workload was too overwhelming for someone who had to take responsibility for both tasks.*

The discomfort in performing tasks that volunteers were not suited for meant that each volunteer had their main assigned position that aligned with their skills and preferences. However, with the approach of developing volunteers to perform various tasks to compensate for volunteer shortages in the foundation, volunteers needed to learn and take responsibility for tasks in areas where they were not skilled or interested.

Consequently, some volunteers felt overwhelmed and unhappy when carrying out tasks that they were not suited for. Each position required different qualities and skills, and the suitability of individuals for each position needed to be analyzed, including their knowledge, abilities, skills, and other characteristics. As a result, volunteers who did not have the qualifications aligned with their assigned tasks struggled in their work.

For example, volunteers assigned to financial tasks in the field were responsible for financial matters despite requiring individuals with accounting knowledge, analytical skills, numerical proficiency, and a professional demeanor. Without the appropriate qualifications, volunteers faced difficulties in their tasks. Similarly, office volunteers who were responsible for overseeing field-related tasks encountered challenges due to the lack of alignment between their personal qualities and the specific requirements of those tasks. The details and qualifications required for each task needed to be considered, and the lack of alignment could lead to discomfort when carrying out tasks outside their main responsibilities. It aligned with the volunteer's interview, as they stated:

*I did not really like having to deal with tasks like donation receipts and accounting. There were many steps involved, and it required precision. I wasn't good with numbers, and I wasn't a detail-oriented person. It became very stressful when I had to do them.*

*The work didn't fit well with me. For certain field tasks, it was specific and I didn't know what to do. It went beyond just being responsible for the task; it required skills that were compatible with the job.*

The unexpected results mentioned above had a direct impact on the efficiency of the volunteers' work and the overall effectiveness of the Pracharuamjai foundation. When the workload that volunteers had to handle became excessive due to the need to manage tasks in multiple positions, their focus and dedication to their main responsibilities diminished. There was no time for proper preparation and readiness to carry out tasks since the workload was overwhelming. Additionally, their personal time for rest and rejuvenation, essential for performing well in subsequent work, was affected. The cumulative burden resulted in a decrease in the volunteers' performance in their main tasks and subpar performance in other assigned tasks due to lack of interest and suitability. The work was executed merely to complete the tasks rather than striving for optimal efficiency. Ultimately, this had a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the foundation. Furthermore, it emphasized that the underlying problem of volunteer shortages in the organization was not genuinely addressed but rather temporarily patched. These circumstances directly affected the organization's reputation since the shortage of volunteers meant that the existing volunteers had to handle multiple responsibilities without being able to excel in both their primary and secondary tasks. As a result, the organization's achievements were unclear, and public confidence and support in terms of financial donations diminished. This, in turn, undermined the organization's viability and its essential existence in society.

Therefore, developing multi-skilled work among volunteers did not effectively address the issue of volunteer shortages in the nonprofit organization. Instead, it added complexity to the problem, resulting in a negative impact on the work performance of volunteers and the effectiveness of the organization.

### **Move Forward or Change Direction?**

The situation of volunteer shortages in the Pracharuamjai foundation was evident in the middle of 2023. Mr.Nattiphong was deeply concerned about this issue. The attempt to solve the problem of volunteer shortages by providing volunteers with a variety of job skills resulted in creating more complex problems within the foundation. In other words, volunteers were burdened with excessive workloads and had to work in positions they were not suited for, which affected the overall efficiency of the foundation.

However, ultimately, he understood that all the consequences that occurred within the collaborative charity foundation were indeed the result of addressing the problem incorrectly at its core. The foundation had a deficiency in Human Resource Planning, but the problem-solving approach had been focused on Human Resource Development. Therefore, the root cause of the problem, which was the shortage of volunteers, had not been properly resolved. Instead, it had been left unresolved, as if the problem had been swept under the rug. At present, it could be likened to "*burying the problem under the carpet*," where the real problem was not addressed decisively, but rather, attempts were made to manage it on a day-to-day basis. It was similar to taking medication that didn't match the illness. This understanding led him to comprehend the concept of a "*chronic disease*" that couldn't be completely cured.

Mr. Nattiphong understood well that the foundation was a public charitable organization, and volunteers joined with a selfless intention to contribute to society. Therefore, regardless of the management committee's approach to operations, volunteers would try their best and fulfill their duties. Even though there might be some opposition, it never exceeded the volunteers' aspirations to create benefits for the community. Notwithstanding, he believed that it was not the right approach, and he wanted to truly understand the genuine needs of the volunteers and address the obstacles they faced before they had a lasting impact on both the volunteers and the foundation. He knew that, for now, it might not be possible to achieve that, but even so, he was determined to continue his effort

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) What is your opinion on the definition of "Volunteer" within the management committee? Does it result in a chronic shortage of volunteers in Pracharuamjai foundation? Why?
- 2) Do you think the problem of volunteer shortages in Pracharuamjai foundation is a significant issue? Why?
- 3) Do you agree or disagree that managing the problem of volunteer shortages through cross-training is a viable solution? Why?
- 4) If you were a committee member with a role in decision-making within an organization, how would you solve the problem of volunteer shortages in the organization?