

# Volunteer Leadership Development Interviews

3 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

## Name

2 responses

Part 2 of Marina from Alana interview (Naomi interviewing)

Marina Frota (interviewed by Naomi)

## Organization

1 response

Atados



## Email

1 response

marina@atados.com.br

## Website

1 response

<https://www.atados.com.br/>

## Tell me a little bit about you.

1 response

degree in architecture. started volunteering at org called Tetu (roof), build houses for folks in poverty. all houses built by volunteers. there for 2 years. then became volunteer coordinator there. left and started volunteering with Atados, now director (has been there for 8 yrs). always has been a volunteer, so works closely with volunteer coordination. in touch with a bunch of orgs in South Africa (spent a year there, are hoping to expand in south africa eventually, but put aside bc of pandemic).



Tell me a little bit about your job or role.

1 response

director of atados. Non-profit network = main role. plan on where to expand, how to contact with non profits in other parts in brazil.

What is the organizational structure like where you work?

1 response

2 co-directors. then 2 major groups: 1. companies - projects with companies (corporate volunteering, fundraising, etc). 13 employees here (4 on fundraising, 9 on special projects, like mentoring women entrepreneurs in poverty areas). 2. projects that don't make money (just in it for the good work): 3 employees, 2 in diff regions, 1 for whole of brazil. 4 programmers for website. 2 employees for bureaucracy, finances. Total 32 employees.

Management and Tactics



Tell me a little bit about the volunteer landscape at your organization (e.g. how many volunteers, organizational structure for volunteers, types of roles for volunteers...).

1 response

volunteers for every single project they have. Ex: currently 7 volunteers on her own project, all have been there for over 4 months. 2 help with digital content (create post, newsletter, with basic help from the team). other 5 help with mapping orgs (over 2000), now they help with calls, emails, whatsapp, insta trying to reach orgs. Every 2 months they shift to a new part of brazil, contact new orgs in the area to make contact with orgs, see if they wanna participate in projects. at least 4 calls a week, all the time.



How do you develop the leadership role of your volunteers? For example, is there a specific flow/process associated with different types of leadership roles? Do you rely on a ladder of engagement?

1 response

Now, opening new volunteer opportunities; the old volunteers will train new ones. Made a plan. Steps: 1. volunteer online form, then series of videos. Those who go through whole thing, then know they are committed. 3. Next step, meeting with new volunteers (in a group meeting call with all involved in project). Then they participate in monthly meetings, and being trained by current volunteers. Then month 2, during the calls by themselves (depending on if they are comfortable or not, could take a little longer), plus learn other tools like excel spreadsheets, plus others tools they use.

What role does training or coaching play in your work with volunteers?

1 response

interesting note: they have very close connections with each volunteer, real rlsp. Easier to explain new tasks to volunteers bc of this, sometimes they give ideas or help troubleshoot. Note 2: takes time, but bears fruit: in the past, employees had to do 10 calls a week, plus send follow up emails/messages, etc. Too much time, now volunteers do a lot of this work, frees up their time. Takes time and care.



What/who do the volunteer leaders 'lead'? What are their tasks and responsibilities?

1 response

explained above for first project. here's an example of how another project uses volunteers: "visitors" = visiting partner orgs, very important because builds trust, empowers the org. Now, less odable because they have sooo many partner orgs. So: every 2 months, volunteers schedule a call with the org, explain Atados, gets to know the org, and fills out a debrief form. E.g. last month called over 100 non profits, and put updates on Salesforce. Effective because volunteers get to know all the projects. Then they notice volunteer leaders (who are particularly active): invited 2 volunteers to help coordinator the actual project ("visitors").

another project with a partner non profit: volunteers who have worked with Atados a lot mentor new volunteers every semester. Then invited specific volunteers to coordinate the next semester. Marina sat down with those 2 volunteers: said i chose you, i want you specifically to help coordinate (as opposed to general outreach email to all volunteers with as ask), talks about importance of commitment to project, must



How do you support the volunteer leaders?

1 response

sent surprise - care package (atados notebook, stickers, etc) with individual letter for each. took a full day to do this. send by snail mail all around brazil. very expensive and they really feel it's worth it. And received the most beautiful messages and responses. Was super meaningful, helps build rlsp. In turn all f them are super invested in the work.

Do you have employees supporting volunteers and if so, how many volunteer leaders are supported per employee?

1 response

it really depends. sometimes over a thousand volunteers in a project, sometimes 45, etc. Basically often it's volunteers on a per project basis, but Marina and other Marina work with volunteers extremely closely. She says about 2 people organising for 30 to 70 volunteers. There are 7 volunteer leaders, and 2 employees to support them.



## What expectations do you have of volunteer leaders?

1 response

answered above. diff volunteers have diff availability, but volunteers leaders are asked to put in min of 5 hours weekly (during work hours). Meeting with volunteers already takes 1.5 hours, calls take at least 1.5 hours, then fill out form after takes at least 30 min, also all the prep for meeting (scheduling etc) about 30 mins. But volunteers usually work way more than that, usually 10-12 hours.

One volunteer leader: mom, tough during pandemic, can only give 6 hours, so they gave her outreach to do through whatsapp, cause this was easier for her, could do on her cell with baby. So they adapt.

Theory





Why do you think supporting volunteer leadership is important?

1 response

For volunteers = duty as a citizen, so this is an opportunity for volunteers to be engaged citizens. Changes everything for them. If you empower a volunteer, they can help so much.

If they keep doing the same thing (always calls, say) they will leave. So opening new opportunities is important, it's about retaining them and being able to do more work as an org. Volunteer leadership is important because it keeps volunteers engaged, otherwise they leave.

Volunteers do consulting for them, e.g. one volunteer works for Salesforce, so he designed their entire Salesforce for them for free.

When they need an expert, they call around, and make a specific ask. Also often just call up friends from other orgs to help them work through, e.g. data analytics volunteer.



What role do volunteers play in your organization's theory of change?

1 response

The entire org is a volunteer platform, they exist to provide volunteers to other orgs. So would be ironic if they didnt. Not absolutely necessary for Atados to have volunteers, but part of their value, how it changes people. Otherwise hypocritical.



Do you rely on any specific model for volunteer management (e.g., GEMS; LOOP; SERVE; PEP)

1 response

No. Their own methodology. First, ask them for 2 month commitment for a small projects. Next, another small 2 month project, but at this point they become closer to them and ask for more things from them. Third, ask them commit to a longer project, and eventually ask them to coordinate a longer project. They train a bunch of new volunteers at all times so that they have volunteers trained up and ready when a volunteer coordinator leaves.

If their house construction project, they have a very specific ladder of engagement: volunteer, leader, chief of school (you visit all fams in a particular slum, you decide which fams will get new houses), head of work (you decide who is gonna be chief of schools). Other opportunities: "help team" so the squad that cooks and cleans the places they live during construction, buy all the food needed. Head of logistics. Construction expert (checks the foundations, checks the materials, the soil, etc. This all turns into a big group of friends...they do so much work together that they build lots of relationships. Marina says most

Terminology



What do you call people who volunteer with your organization?

1 response

Volunteers. or volunteer coordinators.

How did you arrive at that title?

0 responses

No responses yet for this question.

Recruitment, Engagement, and Retention



How do you recruit for volunteers? How do you say no to a volunteer if they are not a good fit?

1 response

Through website, every time they open an opportunity they have over 100 volunteers sign up. over 180 000 subscribed on their website, over 680 000 visiting their website. They are always looking for more projects bc orgs are complaining there are too many volunteers!

If not a good fit: small projects to start out bc if the person doesnt like it they naturally leave, USUALLY. but has happened that volunteer mistreated other volunteers: she had to have casual talk with him, he didn't get it, then had to directly address the fact that he was overly bossy. She had to tell him to end shift as volunteer leader. He was upset, but she had to protect the other volunteers. They also have in some projects a blacklist of volunteers (not openly shared). This is also why it's super important to be very clear about this stuff in initial intro meeting with a volunteer; what they can do, what they cant do, what values are.



## What character traits do you look for in volunteers?

1 response

Diff types of volunteers are important, so difficult question. Once had a 60 year old man working with a 16 year old girl, it went great!! Most important though: commitment. Respect for other volunteers (not good if they're bossy, can destroy the whole project). Usually collaborative people, but some people just wanna do their own hare of work and thats it, and thats fine.

Things they do to create healthy volunteer enviro: first day of orientation they do cooperation games, icebreakers, they have a specialist volunteer come in and do this stuff.

## How do you retain your volunteers over time?

1 response

explained already re: ladder of engagement, but to add to that: from time to time, personal call or message to check in, meeting with them if possible. But usually what happens is that they become friends with employees.



What platforms do you use to engage and manage volunteers?

1 response

Whatsapp group (not the best), mostly excel spreadsheets. And personal outreach.

How do you deal with problem volunteers? How do you say no (or redirect) a volunteer ?

1 response

SHE HAD TO LEAVE, scheduled a second meeting next week to finish this up!

## Compensation

How do you compensate your volunteers for their time?

1 response

- posts and homemade vids on social media, specifically naming work of volunteers, e.g. "this work was done by \ video made by X volunteer."
- care packages (see other responses before)
- team supports volunteers with their own projects



How do you work to support volunteer leadership development in a world of resource inequality?

1 response

volunteers aren't so diverse. But everything is distance these days, makes it easier for people to volunteer all over Brazil (e.g. makes it easier for folks living in slums).

People in their community will not necessarily identify as volunteers, even though they are active community members, doing mutual aid work. On specific projects that work in slums, they connect with folks like this.

They adapt to each volunteer's needs as much as possible, but if that isn't possible, they are clear about what they can do and what they can't do. Mentoring project with volunteers: if they can't make it, they are out of the program. So sometimes that excludes folks, but the weekend is sooooo important to the functioning of the volunteer work that it just can't be missed.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Who are your volunteers? What is the composition of the team?

0 responses

No responses yet for this question.





Who are your super volunteers or leaders?

1 response

Proactive in the work, bring ideas themselves. Many more women than men (this is typical in Brazil she says). average age = 25 to 35. Young people are not super stable, they are always moving, changing jobs so they commit for shorter amounts of time. People who are already settled are more available. But goes for the team to be intergenerational when possible.

How do you get diversity of volunteer leadership (or what are your challenges in that?)

0 responses

No responses yet for this question.

Measurement



## How do you measure the success of your volunteer programs

1 response

Feedback form sent to volunteers after every project. Sometimes also midway through. Also measure number of volunteers who made it to the end vs number they started out with. Also, final result of the project; current goal is 40 new non profits in one particular state by X date. So measure success of volunteer programs based on whether goals are met.

Challenges, Resources, & Tips



What are some of the challenges you have come up against when supporting volunteers?

1 response

Time to coordinate volunteers; sometimes it's a lot. Difficulty in Atados os that they dont have one specific cause; they work with all causes cause they connect volunteers to non profits, thats the entirety of what they do. Tough to retain volunteers sometimes because ppl like to identify with one cause.

Also, how to get them to remain engaged, to constantly give them new stuff to do. They are thinking now they will get volunteers to choose a cause and stick to project related to, e.g., the elderly.

Also, how to be collaborative (takes more time when lots of people are involved in creating a project). They do this a lot though. And then building consensus within the volunteer group; some agree with a project idea initiated by a volunteer, others dont.



Do you have any resources or guides on volunteer management that you would recommend to others?

1 response

They have their own guide online:

<https://www.atados.com.br/guias/como-engajar-voluntarios> !

And vids on Youtube. Basically they have a website that they share with all non profits :

<https://trello.com/b/C6SJjgaF/materiais-para-rede-atados> .

They also do lives on different aspects of volunteering (e.g. they did one on volunteering at a distance, another on how their website works, how to manage volunteers.)

What are the key things to remember when supporting volunteers?

1 response

1. believe in the volunteers, and that they can make a huge impact in the project. If you dont believe in them, you will not give them real stuff to do, will not allow them to grow, project wont work.

2. professionalism: when staff is very professional, gets volunteers to be professional. do not be late for meetings, etc. otherwise allows volunteers will be late. Remember their names.

3. share the dream: volunteers are doing this not for the money, but for the cause.



What would be your main piece of advice for an organization developing a volunteer program?

1 response

just do it. we learn by doing. start small, learn from it, and do it again. if you are transparent with the volunteers, nothing can really go wrong; tell them it is the first time, they can give suggestions if you do something wrong. It's okay to end a project if it isn't working, just be very transparent about it.

Map it out: You need to be clear about what, where, when, how the volunteer work will be involved, what's the delivery, what's the purpose of project, on which platforms you will communicate. Think through FAQs, and all things the volunteers will do.

Very important to be clear about how often you are going to communicate with volunteers.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google. [Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Privacy Policy](#).

Google Forms

