

people and places: responsible volunteering

SUPPORT PLAN FOR WORK OF VOLUNTEERS WITH ASSERT 2020-2021

This plan describes ways in which volunteers can help this project to develop their aims and goals.

Comments are based on the work of volunteers in the period up to December 2019, and are derived from questionnaires completed by the projects and reports written by the volunteers. New aims and actions, if any, are shown in green and these have either been identified from requests made by the projects or have arisen from the work done by volunteers.

AIMS	ACTIONS AND COMMENTS
<p>1. To help to develop publicity and marketing strategies for ASSERT members and for the organisation as a whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some volunteers have written marketing briefs to help various ASSERT businesses identify priorities and strategies to help them expand. Future volunteers could undertake similar tasks with other businesses as required. • Several volunteers have helped to establish a centre for ASSERT members to showcase their products. • Volunteers with appropriate skills have helped various ASSERT businesses to develop websites and a presence on social media networks, and this is an ongoing priority which future volunteers can help to address. One volunteer has used her expertise in photography to provide photographs and text to be used for new web pages and possibly a booklet to promote ASSERT businesses. Another has designed web plates for a responsible tourism guide and helped ITTOG set up an online travel brokerage. • Volunteers with appropriate experience have helped with a variety of advertising methods for ASSERT businesses, such as the production of fliers for distribution in local hotels. One volunteer worked on advertising a hotel through different methods of branding. Another discussed the possibility of writing articles about ASSERT businesses for travel magazines. A suggestion for future volunteers is to help ASSERT members market their business through story-telling i.e. more detailed signage or short presentations by craftsmen. Support would also be welcome in the areas of branding, location, planning and product differentiation.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers could continue to help businesses find wider markets for their goods. One volunteer was able to find a number of new outlets among local hotels where one ASSERT business, Guaranteed Gambian, could sell their products. Future volunteers will be able to continue this work, helping to increase marketing opportunities locally, nationally and even internationally. • One volunteer developed a marketing strategy to help the ASSERT management retain their members and encourage new members to subscribe. • Volunteers could help ASSERT to develop co-operative supply between individual member businesses – e.g. food producers & restaurants; tour guides & transport providers.
<p>2. To help to develop the people management skills of ASSERT members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers may work with an ASSERT business to help them develop customer service capacity. One volunteer worked at the Bantaba restaurant (former ASSERT business) and the staff there highlighted her help in training restaurant staff. Another worked at the Safari Gardens hotel (ASSERT business) and was also able to provide very useful staff training. Future volunteers will be able to provide similar help in the businesses to which they are attached for their placement. • Volunteers may help ASSERT businesses to develop processes for staff development within their organisation. Several businesses have highlighted an improvement in staff confidence as a result of working alongside volunteers.
<p>3. To help ASSERT members with the development of new products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers with particular skills have worked with a particular ASSERT member to help them widen their range of products. For example, one volunteer who is a professional leather-worker was able to help local people design new products and learn new skills, and this has provided the foundation for a new business for these workers. Another was able to help a restaurant develop their menu to include new dishes. Future volunteers will be able to help other businesses widen their range of products, as appropriate.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some volunteers could help ASSERT members evaluate their products and adapt them if necessary to make them more attractive to tourists – for example, considering smaller items, multiple purchases, weight allowances, product differentiation and added value. Several businesses are aware of the need to develop their products and this is an area where future volunteers may be able to provide guidance, helping them see a way to use their artisan skills in the development of new, saleable products. • A volunteer could run a training session for appropriate ASSERT businesses to help them with general ideas for production design, development and presentation. • Some volunteers have worked with individual businesses to help them move to and develop new sites.
<p>4. To help ASSERT members with financial management, particularly cash management and costings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers could help businesses to set up appropriate systems for keeping accounts - for example one volunteer helped a hotel convert their manual accounting system to spreadsheets. • Some volunteers could help individual members with long-term financial planning to enable them to develop into stronger and more established businesses. For example, one volunteer helped to write a business plan for the GIG farm to help them with a bid for funding. Another wrote a cost analysis for the development of a new site for the ASSERT office and various associated businesses. Another wrote a strategic review for ASSERT including short-term goals and a possible road-map for the future.
<p>5. To help develop event management skills for ASSERT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers with presentation skills, event management skills, market stall organisation experience could help ASSERT members develop the skills and strategies to enable them to organise and run successful events. • Some volunteers could help businesses with ideas for fund-raising methods and events. Two volunteers planned and set up a Masquerade and Fanal Festival which has the potential to become an annual event.

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6. To help develop a culture of support and cooperation between ASSERT members

- Some volunteers could help to set up systems to enable ASSERT members to be more aware of their identity as a group and to enhance their means of supporting each other e.g. the production of a monthly newsletter. One volunteer helped to set up a weekly radio show which is proving very popular as a means of raising the profile of ASSERT businesses and providing a forum for the discussion of many tourism-related issues.
- A volunteer working with an individual ASSERT member will in future be asked to run a workshop where they will share work they have done with one member as a case study to inform a larger number of members, and a proportion of their project donation will be used to facilitate this.
- ASSERT would like volunteer help to produce a video in which tourists are interviewed to tell the ASSERT story. This would be done collaboratively with ITTOG, using students to do the interviewing – volunteer help would be invaluable in teaching them script writing, interviewing and filming techniques.

Reviewed October 2019