ENGAGING SPECIALIZED VOLUNTEERS EXERCISE
M2.S11: Handout

Engaging Specialized Volunteers (45 Minutes)
This exercise can use the case study found below or another case study highlighting the roles of specialized volunteers in your context.

1. Participants form groups of 5–6 and are given a copy of the case study handout.

2. After reading the case study, the participants will discuss the following questions:
   a. What factors do you think help prepare the volunteers to be effective?
   b. What might motivate the volunteers to stay with the program?
   c. You find out there was high turnover. What do you think the reasons might have been?
      i. Brainstorm how these might be addressed.

3. Responses can be summarized on flip chart pages and presented in plenary (each group only adding to what had been presented previously) or with a gallery walk.
CASE STUDY:
Child Protection Coaching Program for Outreach Volunteers

Due to the Syrian conflict, Lebanon is now the country with the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. An estimated 55% of the refugee population are children under the age of 18. The situation for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon remains dire, as children continue to face significant barriers to access their basic rights, including safety, protection, education, and birth registration. Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), as well as children with disabilities, are particularly marginalized and at high risk of violence, discrimination, inequity, and exclusion. UASCs face the risk of resorting to working in dangerous and exploitative conditions.

UNHCR, in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), has been implementing a national capacity-building project since 2014, called the “Interagency Coaching Program.” The program trains child protection outreach volunteers (CP OVs) from the refugee community to respond to low-and medium-risk cases of UASC, children with disabilities, and their caregivers. Those targeted are at heightened risk but may not be eligible for individual case management or benefit from complementary community-based support. The CP OV interventions are part of, and complementary to, the case planning conducted by specialized CP case management actors, including partners of UNHCR. Case workers supervise and oversee the CP OVs.

The Specialized CP OV project sought to use the capacities in the community to support the large number of children in need. The CP OVs are identified through self-referral, the ProGres Database, or through participatory assessments and community-based activities to find those who had relevant education or experience working with children. CP OVs have a clear Terms of Reference in place and receive a 15-hour induction training in safe identification and referral of CP cases, effective communication skills, community engagement, conflict resolution, psychological first aid, and other topics before beginning their volunteering experience.
The skills and experience they receive as CP OVs could be used when they return to Syria.

The program has led to an increase in identification and referral of protection cases, as well as specialized support to children who previously did not receive it. CP OVs have developed confidence in supporting vulnerable children, as well as their parents. Specialized case workers have strengthened their skills in supervision. Overall, children and their caregivers feel comfortable receiving support from their own community members, strengthening community-level protection.