

WORLD SERVANTS

IMPROVES GLOBAL LIVING STANDARDS WITH SCRUM



JANUARY 2018



CASE STUDY



ORGANIZATION



www.worldservants.nl

The Organization

World Servants is an international voluntary service organization and youth movement based in The Netherlands. The organization sends teams of 30-35 young volunteers to developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin-America to help local communities build amenities such as schoolhouses, clinics and sanitation facilities (800 total volunteers annually).

At its office in The Netherlands, World Servants has 13 staff members working on programs including project management, fundraising, communications, training, IT and participant support, as well as approximately 250 volunteers to help fulfill the organization's mission.

Business Challenge

World Servants needed to implement a new CRM solution across its organization to help its team members more easily prioritize their work-flows, and initially used a [Waterfall Approach](#) to help with this. In Waterfall, progress flows in one direction, downwards - through the phases of conception, initiation, analysis, design, construction, testing, deployment and maintenance. ➤

But, this approach failed to help staff and volunteers to release updates and projects to the solution quickly, which was becoming problematic - as a youth movement and service-oriented organization, it is essential for World Servants to quickly release products and respond to challenges, requests, minor updates and bugs.

This is why Henk-Jan Bouwsema, head of IT at World Servants, began the search for other methodologies or frameworks to complete the tasks at hand. Through positive recommendations from friends and volunteers at other organizations, Bouwsema eventually selected the [Scrum framework](#).

Solution

With Scrum, World Servants Product Owners are able to identify which of their requests are higher priority and should be completed first. In turn, they also use Scrum to help them collectively agree on which backlog items should be assigned to the IT department in the next [Scrum Sprint](#) - a time-box of 30 days or less during which a "Done," usable, and potentially releasable product increment is created.

Initially, Bouwsema, along with the entire IT department, first had to teach select staff and volunteers how Scrum worked, and how to use the tool that they use to manage their backlog, [Scrumwise](#), and teach them about the benefits that Scrum can provide.

After getting some Scrum Teams on board, Bouwsema and his IT team needed to get remaining colleagues comfortable using Scrum - e.g., with Scrum, they need to write their project requests on a ticket and trust that their Product Owner(s) will prioritize the issues, instead of asking the IT department to solve the problems for them. The IT department also recognized the need for its own team members to no longer solve issues if they were not assigned to a Sprint, and

instead, for them to direct staff and volunteers to write issues down on a ticket.

Now, World Servants staff and volunteers eagerly use Scrum, running one or two-week Sprints, and have been doing so since their first Sprint started on March 13, 2013.

Results

Everyone, from managers, to volunteers, and to the IT department, have changed the way they approach reporting, developing action plans and even what gets covered in meetings - they evaluate (inspect) each process as they go, identifying those that are higher priority, and speed along only the necessary communications between all stakeholders during the execution of plans. This saves staff and volunteers precious time to make quicker, higher value releases and allows them to respond faster (adapt) to market demands - all while having fun in the process.

Additionally, Scrum has accelerated the speed of internal processes since IT is no longer the lone gatekeeper of issues, freeing up other staff and volunteers to work independently on issues they can handle themselves.

World Servants also used Scrum to select, customize and get its crowd funding platform (www.geef.ws) up and running in a timely and efficient manner. The platform has become one of the largest online fundraising platforms in The Netherlands over the last two years which they use to help global communities in need. The Scrum framework helped World Servants gain insight into what steps they had to take to create the platform and enabled staff and volunteers to deploy their first release with a few basic functions after only a few months. With Scrum, World Servants regularly implements updates and new releases to the platform on a weekly to monthly basis. ➤

Other implementations World Servants developed using Scrum include a new front page for its website (www.worldservants.nl), which helps recruit new volunteers, and a new back end, which makes it easier for staff and volunteers to communicate with the organization's partners abroad.

Culture Change

Thanks to Scrum, World Servants has ushered in a new way for team members to collaborate with each other. It's now understood across the organization that the road to "Done" doesn't mean writing full, exhaustive reports, or having extended action plans or long meetings. Through Scrum, the World Servants team reacts to and executes projects more quickly than ever before and, more importantly, they have a lot more fun while doing so. ♦

About Scrum.org

Based on the principles of Scrum and the Agile Manifesto, Scrum.org provides comprehensive training, assessments, and certifications to *improve the profession of software delivery*.

Throughout the world, our solutions and community of Professional Scrum Trainers empower people and organizations to achieve agility through Scrum.

Ken Schwaber, the co-creator of Scrum, founded Scrum.org in 2009 as a global organization, dedicating himself to improving the profession of software delivery by reducing the gaps so the work and work products are dependable.

Read more whitepapers and case studies about the Scrum and Nexus frameworks in action at:

www.scrum.org/resources