



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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volunteering GUIDELINE



VARIED

Volunteering And **RUGBY INCLUSION** Engaging Dreams

Reaching, training and keeping volunteers

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1. Introduction

This document is a follow-up of the previous guideline on recruitment which was aimed at gathering valuable information and feedback from the participating organizations. The participating members received a survey created using the Google Forms tool. The aim of the survey is to learn about the different paths which each organization has followed up to now. Once we have received the completed surveys, the next step is to create a guideline in order to identify the dos and don'ts from all participating members in order to create this guideline which shall be used in the upcoming months to create a solid base of volunteers in the different projects.

Before giving an account of this feedback it is worthwhile to provide a bit of background on the topic of volunteering around the world. The aim here is not to give a solution to an issue which has not been presented yet, rather it is a statement of a reality which is being studied in different places around the world. Our goal is to provide insight and establish an approach which shares some of the common issues stated in other organizations and companies around the world while trying to generate a new way of reaching, training and (therefore) keeping volunteers engaged in the projects which they are working on. The link between volunteering practice and the unified rugby model paves the way for establishing alternative ways of working with vulnerable groups and volunteers who are not only putting in the hours but also entering an environment where the demands are as high as the rewards and risks. Working out how to balance these elements is the humble goal of this project, whether the model we propose is sustainable or not will remain to be seen in the mid to long-term future. Sustainability, thus becomes the underlying concept which must embrace each and every action we deliver throughout the project. It will also become a relevant differentiating element as sustainability has become a valuable asset for any organization and even more for non-profits and volunteer-based ones.



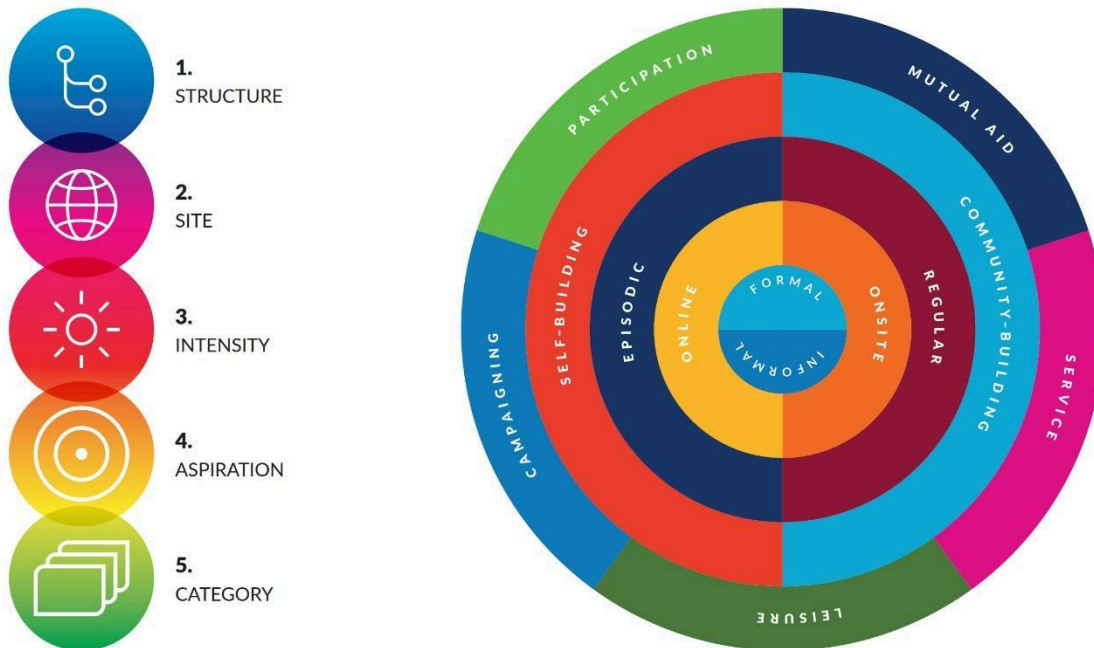
2. Types of Volunteers

Everywhere, every day, people are volunteering to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While volunteering practices are diverse, dynamic and ever-changing, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) have identified five key components common to most volunteering activities:

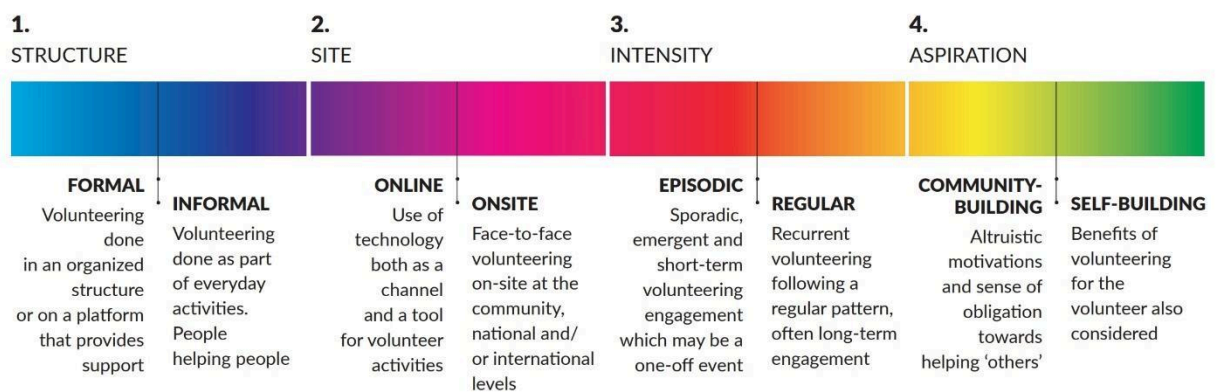
1. The first ring represents the structure of the volunteering activity. Volunteering can be done formally through organizations, community groups or any platform that allocates support. It can also be done informally, as part of everyday activities to help other people.
2. The second ring refers to the sites of volunteer practice. This can be online, on-site or a combination of both. Virtual and online volunteering use technology both as a channel and a tool for volunteer activities. In many spaces, online volunteering is done in conjunction with on-site, face-to-face volunteering. The various spheres of on-site volunteering could further be broken down into community-based volunteering, national volunteering and/or international volunteering.
3. The third ring represents the intensity of volunteer engagement. It can be episodic, involving short-term, emergent, sporadic engagement of volunteers and may even be a one-off event. Volunteering can also be more regular and long-term, with fixed patterns.
4. The fourth ring represents the aspirational element of volunteer practice, i.e., the final goals of volunteering. Community-building refers to contributions towards wider societal outcomes, such as those outlined in the SDGs. This takes into account volunteering that is primarily conducted for the benefit of others. Self-building is the component that takes into account benefits to individual volunteers, such as the accumulation of social and cultural capital (e.g., knowledge, skills, experience, networks, and well-being) as part of volunteering practice.
5. The final ring represents the categories of volunteering. Four are from the previous typology and an additional type “leisure” has been added.

Five components

These components manifest in different configurations and intensity depending on how and why volunteer work is done



The components are not mutually exclusive but cover a spectrum



In 1999, the United Nations looked at how people volunteer all over the world and came up with four categories: (i) mutual aid/self-help, (ii) philanthropy, (iii) advocacy/campaigning and (iv) participation. Since that typology's publication, rapid and widespread changes in the social, political, economic and technological landscapes across the globe have produced new issues for people to volunteer for, new tools for volunteers to use and new channels for people to volunteer through.



After two decades, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is updating these categories in light of the changes by expanding what they may look like as they are practiced in different contexts. UNV also added a fifth category – volunteering as leisure – to account for volunteer work done to express a person's interests and better recognize the benefit of volunteering to the individual volunteer.

Volunteering categories in 2020

There is evidence to suggest that volunteering practices are changing in response to wider social patterns and challenges, such as the climate emergency, technological advances, migration, the changing nature of work, humanitarian crises and inequalities. The global climate emergency, for instance, has inspired diverse forms of volunteer action. The State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2018 underscored the role of volunteers in response, relief and rehabilitation efforts following increasingly common natural disasters. Spontaneous volunteer responses and emergent groups—comprising individuals who are themselves “victims” of crises—are often the first responders following natural disasters. During the earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015, for example, local survivors immediately came together to care for and support each other, while community members and neighbours were noted as the first and most important rescuers. These informal volunteering responses have also been taken up in policies and programmes by formal actors, with mixed results. For instance, in one account of volunteering responses from Australia, broader political and social factors led to higher regulation of volunteering responses to disasters, which were strained by increasing state expectations. Additionally, the rapid spread of new technologies and online connectivity has also diversified volunteer engagement and facilitated certain individuals with access to volunteering opportunities. For example, around 12,000 individuals from 187 countries volunteer online every year through the UNV online volunteering platform. Online volunteering encompasses a wide range of activities, including graphic design, updating a Wikipedia page, administering the

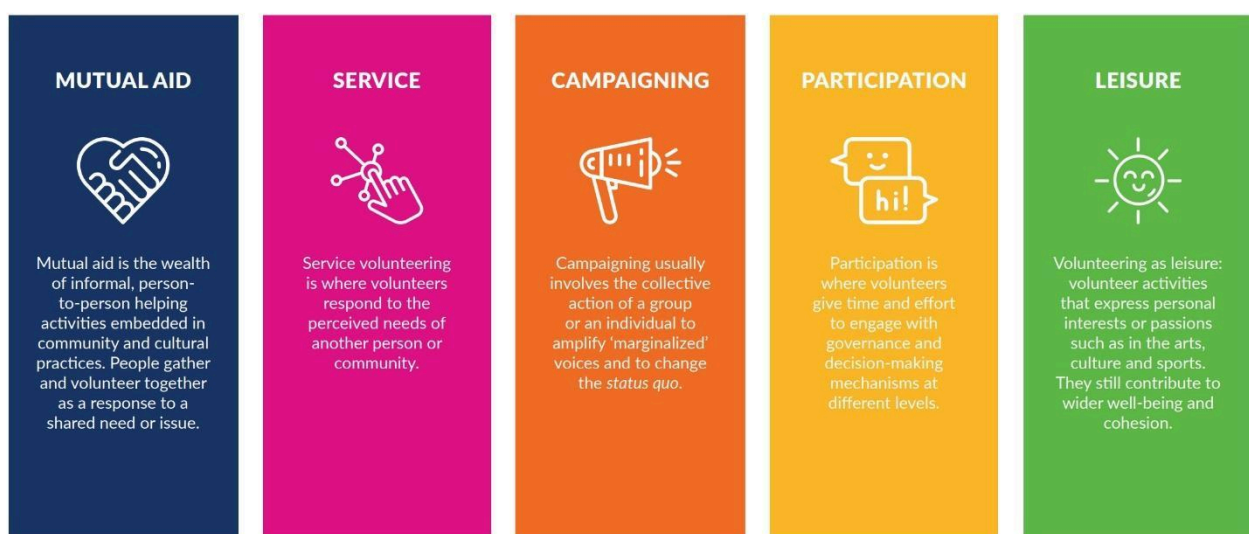


website of a club or writing reports. Many volunteer-involving organizations incorporate online spaces in their engagement strategy, since they can improve access to individuals who may have encountered difficulties to volunteering in the past, such as persons with disabilities. There has also been global recognition of the contribution of informal volunteering or person-to-person helping activities in many communities, with 70 percent of the world's volunteering carried out directly and informally between individuals, outside of "formal" organizations and groups. Recognizing that volunteering goes beyond a "service-delivery mechanism" and is in fact a regular part of many people's everyday lives and livelihoods means acknowledging that volunteering practices can shape and are shaped by social issues at the community and individual levels. For instance, researchers have looked at the link between gender and volunteering, concluding that 57 percent of global volunteering activity is performed by women. Similarly, another cross-country study found that the majority of women volunteer in social and health services while volunteering among men tended to be focused on cultural activities and sports.

Another dominant observation of how volunteer work has changed is the increasing individualism in decision-making as to where, how and why individuals volunteer. Personal benefits for the volunteer (e.g., improved employment, well-being and mental health) are valued alongside more altruistic motivations and a sense of obligation. This trend is also characterized by a greater interest in short-term and episodic volunteering. In these volunteer engagements, volunteers offer their time flexibly, depending on their lifestyle and availability. In general terms, episodic volunteering refers to short-term, emergent, sporadic volunteer engagement, which may even be a one-off event. Volunteers also tend to engage with specific causes and outcomes they personally identify with or those that are "fashionable" and "trendy", instead of showing long-term loyalty to specific organizations. These trends are described as "new" forms of volunteering that are often pitted against "traditional" ones characterized as "lifelong and demanding commitment".

Much of the research in this particular area has been conducted in countries in the global North, where there are often formal volunteering spaces, meaning it is important to explore whether such trends can also be observed in other contexts. Nonetheless, both “forms” of volunteering can coexist within a particular time and context, instead of one replacing the other.

Again, these categories are not mutually exclusive, one volunteering activity could have aspects of each type.



3. TRI: A Volunteering Experience



Trust Rugby International Spain is an association registered in the Registro Autonómico de Asociaciones, in the first section of the regional unit of Valencia, with the number CV-01-055768-V on the 18th May 2016. We are also registered as a Volunteering Entity registered in the Fourth Section of the Registro de Asociaciones de la Comunitat Valenciana, with the number CV-04-060930-V. We have been operating in the east coast of Spain since 2010 as a partner of Trust Rugby International, supporting and developing social inclusion using the sport of rugby and its values to bring together individuals and communities. We have a Board of Directors composed by five members who directly manage the projects and a permanent group of 12 members which includes professionals from diverse areas such as education, care providers or professional coaches. We have been an active part in the development of our model of unified rugby which creates the necessary environment for people with and without learning disabilities to enjoy the benefits of practising a team sport together. Our main project is based in the city of Cullera where we have created a solid network to sustain a unified rugby team. This network includes three main axis, Cullera Rugby Club who provide the rugby players and the facilities, TRI Spain which provides the coaching and educational tools, and Fundació Espurna which is the care service provider that allows our players with learning disability to take part in the team. In the same way we have been proactive in the creation of educational models to expand unified sports within the Valencian and the Spanish federation. In 2015 we delivered the first Enablers Course to focus on the needs and goals of players without learning disabilities who practice sport alongside players with learning disabilities, attracting an audience that came from other clubs in the region but also from other parts of Spain. It was a great success and we managed to inspire other teams to start their own project. Since the beginning we have been committed to the development of an educational methodology that creates the right environment in our training sessions to allow participants to fulfil their potential. In 2016 we created and hosted the “Festival



Internacional de Rugby Inclusivo Ciudad de Cullera”, a rugby festival where we got rid of the competitive side of sport and enhanced the social side of rugby, making it an enjoyable experience for all those who were involved. During 2018 we continued to involve the regional and national federation which have supported two courses, a regional one in Cullera which was held on 10th February and a nationwide course in the Spanish federation on the 11th March. In September 2019 we held the third edition of the Festival expanding the model to other areas, bringing in dancing and cooking events to showcase the many abilities of our players, involving local companies that learnt about the employability of people with disability. In this time, we have developed a strong alliance with the Fundació Espurna which is one of the most important care providers in the region, helping to promote sport habits in their association and improving their social life. We have also created a strong partnership with the local government of the municipality of Cullera which fully supports our task of developing individuals with learning disabilities through sport. The bond with Cullera Rugby Club is central to the development of the programme as they provide the rugby players and the enablers that make the project inclusive. Without the strong network of volunteers that come to the training sessions and matches, the project would not be possible. At the moment we have a constant base of 64 players with learning disability who regularly train with us along with a list of 37 volunteers, most of them from the rugby team, who are the enablers in our training sessions. The effect that rugby has had on the life of those who are involved in the project is outstanding, it has been a life changing experience for many of them. Practising a regular sport has increased their health and levels of confidence, as well as strengthening their social relations. Now they are members of a much wider group of friends who share the passion for the sport of rugby. Through matches, and tournaments they have received public praise for their efforts and know have an increased self-esteem that comes from seeing themselves as competent rugby players who perform to the best of their abilities against other players



with or without disabilities. TRI-Spain is an independent branch of Trust Rugby International and our members work together in projects both in Spain and Scotland. Both projects were founded by the same team and continue to develop their work following common guidelines, giving both projects a broader field of action. Trust Rugby International (TRI) is Scottish based and a registered charity with a national, international and intercultural remit. Founded in 2010 Trust Rugby International is a proactive organization whose goal is to bring diverse individuals and communities together by using the game of Rugby in all its forms. Our Purpose – To promote and encourage an appreciation of equality diversity and social integration by proactively supporting the personal development of people through participation in rugby Our Vision – Bringing individuals, communities and cultures together through Rugby Our Mission – Creating projects that specifically target personal development and social integration by developing Strategic Partnerships Our Values – Trust; Teamwork; Empowerment; Inspiring all with a sense of ease and fun and developing confidence. Trust Rugby International is an organization that operates within the West of Scotland with partners in other countries within the EU. They have been in operation for over 9 years and over this time period they have been delivering grant funded projects from various public and private sources that have supported learners with disabilities. They have a small team of 3 permanent paid full-time staff, they also have paid sessional workers delivering training programs and volunteers supporting our overall delivery. In addition to this they have a Board of Trustees that oversees their governance and to whom they are accountable as an organization. Trust Rugby International has developed a unique model for unified rugby for participants, with and without disabilities, to train, play and compete safely together in teams and leagues playing contact and touch rugby. This model follows the World Rugby age grade laws with certain adaptations. The model encourages an appreciation of inclusion and diversity by creating friendships, unity, inspiration, growth and engagement of special



needs players. It is envisaged that this pioneering model of unified sport requires to be formalized and extended so that the unified model can be developed and incorporated into other sports. Since 2012 they have been working closely with NHS Ayrshire & Arran and the Scottish Government (Keys to Lives, to actively implement the concept of 'unified rugby' pilot projects for adults and youth with intellectual disabilities and Tri Spain has a leading role in Tri International as we are the Development Directors for this area. We are working with Tri Scotland, Tri Canada, Tri USA and Tri New Zealand to provide guidance for the development of their projects and the dissemination of the inclusive sport model across the World as well as creating a shared educational model. We have created a course for Centre de Formació, Innovació i Recursos per al professorat (CEFIRE Ministry of Education, Research, Culture and Sports of the Valencian Government <http://cefire.edu.gva.es/>) aimed at teachers in the secondary public system to better understand the challenges of inclusion in a classroom environment as well as in Physical Education classes, providing the necessary tools to create inclusive learning environments. This course will be delivered during 2020 within the Educational Public System of the region of Valencia. It consists of an online course and a classroom delivered course in compliance with Spanish legislation on inclusive education. We are also going to be working in the year 2020 with World Rugby on a medical research project to assess with real data the impact of Unified Rugby on players. It is a long-term project which will involve research both in Spain and Scotland. In its first phase it will be a two-year study that will be extended to further countries in the following years. We now have a key role in the national development of the sport as we are working for the Federación Española de Rugby (Spanish Rugby Federation) to develop unified rugby across the country, becoming members of the Escuela Nacional de Entrenadores (National Coaching School). It is the first time that a rugby federation places inclusive sport inside the national coaching system, with the same level of resources, coaching and dissemination. We will also be in



charge of creation a nationwide competition that will showcase the model of inclusion through sport. We are working to support Consejo Superior de Deportes and the Catedra Fundación Sanitas de Estudios de Deporte Inclusivo in the development of the Campeonato de España de Selecciones Autonomicas de 7s Inclusivo S18. It is a national championship where teams representing their region compete in a 7s tournament following the inclusive model. We are in charge of the rules of the competition and the development of the tournament in Cullera on the 20th June. In the last year our work has been rewarded by the prestigious Fundación Trinidad Alfonso, who awarded us the Empren Esport first prize for adapted sport (<https://fundaciontrinidadalfonso.org/proyecto/empren-esport/>). We are humbled to receive such a relevant award and the alliance with this powerful entity will allow us to further expand our model and reach many other stakeholders in our region.

What follows is a [brief timeline](#) which comes to show our short timespan and the steps which have been taken towards achieving our goals. The aim of this is to provide our partners with a visual aid which shows at a glance where you are coming from and could also broaden your views as to where you want to move on next. More often than not, non-profits are also too focused on their daily tasks, with a stress on reaching their next goal or making ends meet. The fact that everyone in the organization can take a step back and look at the broader picture helps to put important, and lesser important, issues into perspective. It is also a reminder of projects and ideas that were taken on but never reached port, that is, it is a timeline of events not a highlights reel made for our comfort. Hence our next section which covers the dos and don'ts of volunteering organizations, where we will take a detached approach before going into the details of the replies to the surveys which were sent out to the participating organizations.





4. Dos and Don'ts



Volunteering makes people happy, except when it does not. When managed well by non-profit organizations, volunteers can have transformative experiences and gain countless benefits including new skills, valuable career connections, increased self-esteem and improved health. Volunteering to build a tangible product that improves the community helps tie efforts to results. Therefore, what is happening at some non-profit organizations that causes volunteers to quit volunteering? What follows is a list of “not to-do’s” and some possible solutions if we want to keep volunteers coming back.

1. No training or vetting of volunteers

When volunteers are not provided with training, they will not understand what they are doing, how it fits in with the overall mission to provide value, and what the organization’s expectations are of them. Vetting volunteers helps organizations guide them to the best fit for their service with the organization. Between finding the right volunteers, training them in their roles, and following up afterward, securing a first-time volunteer is hard work, which might be why many non-profits spend so much of their time focusing on volunteer acquisition.

It is agreed that volunteer recruitment is hard work. If that’s the case, why would volunteer programs be put through the trouble of relying on new recruits to fill volunteer slots rather than retaining past volunteers?

When it is looked at in this way, it makes sense that volunteer retention should be a major facet of volunteer management. Nevertheless, many non-profits let their hardworking volunteers slip away instead of investing in them long-term, which leads to more work on the non-profit’s part.

Here are a few specific ways to prioritise retention in a volunteer programme:



- **See volunteers as individuals.** What is being done to reach out to volunteers on an individual basis? Whether it is just remembering volunteers' names or calling them on the phone to thank them for their support, a personal touch can go a long way.
- **Recognise and reward their efforts.** Volunteers do not do their part because they expect something in return, but that does not mean they should not be thanked for their contributions. A thank-you note or public acknowledgement can remind volunteers that they are valued and appreciated.
- **Always seek to improve.** Volunteers might not know that they can have a say in the organization's practices, therefore, asking for their feedback and input is also convenient. Non-profits can send out a survey or seek out individuals' thoughts so they can truly develop a volunteer programme that meets their volunteers' needs and expectations.

2. No flexibility in opportunities

When people want to volunteer and organizations respond with rigid requirements, many of those volunteers are scared away. Volunteers tend to be busy people. The organization that is not aware of that and requires of all volunteers very specific dates, times, and hours per month is going to miss out on some of the best people out there.

3. Asking too much or too little of a volunteer

When great volunteers show up, it is tempting to heap too much on these highly capable individuals too quickly. Volunteers need to go through a series of developmental stages. If they are given too much responsibility before they have had the opportunity to connect on a deep level with the organization, they will disappear. The same is true with giving them too little responsibility. If they are bored because they are not given enough to do, they will feel as though what they do does not matter, and again, they will disappear. Doing real and



valuable work while volunteering makes it more meaningful for volunteers. Instead of tailoring their recruitment process, many non-profits take a generalised approach to acquiring volunteers. Similarly, many organizations do not consider how they can align the right volunteers with the right opportunities. Every volunteer can add unique value to an organization, but only if they take some time to discover what that value might be. Below are some useful approaches to avoid this issue.

- **Create comprehensive volunteer profiles.** Use a volunteer database to store as much volunteer information as possible. With relevant data on file, we can segment the volunteer list to find individuals who fit the bill for what is needed.
- **Search for the right skills.** Starting with volunteer recruitment, consider what volunteer skills will come in handy for your non-profit. Then, do not be afraid to reach out one-on-one to ask previous volunteers or supporters with the right skill sets or experience.
- **Asking for feedback.** If you are unsure what your volunteers would be most excited to do for your non-profit, just ask. Send out a survey or speak to specific individuals in person to find out how they would like to contribute. If organizations do not make an effort to discover volunteers' strengths and place them in roles where they can thrive, they might be missing out on a myriad of great benefits, including increased volunteer retention and greater volunteer engagement.

4. Lack of communication, especially appreciation

Volunteers need to be told, regularly, that the organization values their time and effort. They need to be told thank you. They need to be recognized privately and publicly. Without that recognition, most volunteers will not continue to show up. Telling them—or better yet—showing them how their time has made a difference is a way to make sure they will never leave. Because many non-profits are not managing their time and tasks efficiently,



communication falls to the wayside. Poor communication can lead to a number of unfortunate situations, such as:

- Volunteers do not know about upcoming volunteer opportunities.
- Volunteers do not receive instructions for volunteer day (i.e. time to arrive, location, and other logistics).
- Volunteers do not have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities or expectations.
- Volunteers do not have an outlet to communicate to the non-profit.
- Volunteers do not receive acknowledgement for their contributions.

The best way to avoid a communication catastrophe is to develop a plan for how the volunteer programme will tackle volunteer communications. That strategy might include any (or all) of the following components:

- **Appoint a communications chair or team.** Delegating all communications-related tasks to specific member(s) of your volunteer management team can abate some risk for mismanagement among your staff. Select an appropriate number of team members to stay on top of communications and ensure that all emails, social media posts, newsletters, and direct mailings are sent out on time.
- **Pay attention to volunteers' communication preferences.** Because your volunteer program likely includes a number of different demographics, no one communication channel will suit every volunteer. Ask volunteers how they prefer to be reached and follow through with their requests!

5. Unhealthy or unprofessional environment

Organizations that have a negative energy have a difficult time holding on to volunteers. When a non-profit's staff badmouths others, or does not follow through on commitments, it has an impact on the organization, and on volunteers. To ensure that



volunteers are at the centre of the programme, the current volunteer empowerment strategy must be assessed.

Here are just a few ways that volunteers can be empowered today:

- **Focus on the organization's mission.** The volunteers should know that their service is impactful and meaningful. As tasks are assigned, always make a point to show volunteers how their specific role contributes to the cause at hand, whether that be through helping the organization with administrative tasks or performing community service.
- **Develop an onboarding strategy.** Volunteers should not be thrown into their role unprepared. Instead, an intentional plan for teaching new volunteers and providing them with resources to succeed should be created.
- **Set clear expectations for each task.** A volunteer cannot succeed in their role if they do not know what is expected of them. Volunteers want to help, so show them what would be most helpful!

6. Developing an online strategy

We live in a digital society, and non-profit volunteer programs are no exception. The internet is convenient, accessible, and instant. Most likely, your non-profit has some form of digital communication plan in place already to connect with all your supporters, including volunteers. However, if you are hoping to really engage volunteers online, posting sporadically on Facebook or sending out a generic weekly email is not enough.

When a volunteer-specific digital strategy is not developed, you are setting yourself up to miss out on connecting with a large chunk of your supporters, as well as a wide network of potential volunteers.

To develop an online strategy and reach volunteers in the digital age, the audience must be considered as well as what is hoped to achieve through the digital strategy.

The internet can help an organization reach their existing volunteers in a convenient, engaging way, but it can also be a great tool for reaching prospective volunteers as well.

Depending on your goals, you might try any (or all!) of the following tips:

1. **Revamp your website.** An outdated or hard-to-use website is a major deterrent for prospective volunteers looking to learn more about your cause as well as existing volunteers. Design your non-profit website for optimum user-friendliness, and make sure your volunteer registration form and upcoming opportunities are prominently displayed.
2. **Post opportunities on social media.** Since so many individuals are on social sites on a daily basis, it makes sense to advertise upcoming volunteer opportunities in their social media news feeds. Keep your posts short, provide a link to your website, and do not forget to include high-quality media.
3. **Create a volunteer-specific newsletter.** If you have a high volume of volunteer opportunities, consider sending out a volunteer-specific newsletter every week or month. You can also use this platform to highlight recent activity or give shoutouts to dedicated volunteers. Keep emails brief and link to your website and/or social media for more information.





5. Positive Practices from other Countries

What follows is a summary of the main goals of participating members in the project and their current situation regarding reaching, keeping and developing volunteers.

European Centre for Innovation, Education, Science and Culture (ECIESC) (Bulgaria).

The objectives of the foundation are:

- To promote and encourage youth development and active participation into activities related to the cultural and social life;
- To conduct informative campaigns and seminars, training and conferences aimed at knowledge improvement;
- To increase interest and motivate the desire for personal development, self-awareness, self-responsibility and responsibility towards society through education;
- To create conditions for the development and success of young people into finding innovative solutions;
- To encourage the professional development of disadvantaged people;
- To facilitate social integration as well as personal and professional development;
- To conduct social events and organize volunteer and other support initiatives and related activities;
- To promote and encourage the development of volunteering.

To fulfil these goals ECIESC has organized campaigns for volunteer recruitment with a reach between 11-20 volunteers, of whom only two are currently working with them in managing, training or coaching. There were face-to-face courses available but not all volunteers went through them. In order to improve their volunteer's well-being, they are



questioned as to which roles or tasks they would like to take in so they do not become an obligation for them.

Rugby Union Donau Wien. ROB (Austria)

ROB offers young refugees and migrants the opportunity to be part of the Austrian rugby community. Our holistic integration concept is built upon special weekly training designed for this group, which culminate in “get-togethers” involving cooking and eating in the clubhouse. Here we do not just communicate the great values and principles of rugby, but also give the refugees the opportunity to talk with our care/coaching team and other young Austrian players. The main focus of these meetings is that of living together and building social links in Austria. Talented participants also have the chance to step up to the youth teams of the cooperating clubs where a more intensive exchange with young Austrians gives them opportunity to integrate long-term into the community.

To fulfil these goals ROB has recruited volunteers from local clubs up to a number 10 each time, of whom around 20 are currently working with them in admin, training or coaching. They have not developed any courses for these volunteers. In order to improve their volunteer’s well-being, they use sound management as well as reasonable time-management which makes it a more enjoyable experience them.

6. Sustainable Volunteering

Although the reasons for keeping a solid base of volunteers are quite obvious it is not uncommon to find many companies, institutions or organizations which, no matter what, are constantly looking for new volunteers to work with them. Apart from a series of personal reasons which some volunteers may put forward before moving on, below is a representation of what could be labelled as the negative cycle of volunteering.





Volunteer engagement is a process, no different than fund development or marketing: it connects non-profits with mission-critical resources. Few organizations question spending money to raise money; spending money to raise people (a pre-requisite to raising money) is just as necessary. Relations between a non-profit organization and its staff are characterised not only by the work staff contributes to the organization but also by what the organization provides its employees (salaries, benefits, professional development, and the like). Similarly, relations with donors are characterised not only by the input of the donors' funds but also the organization's ongoing efforts to build a bridge with those donors. Clients, members, or constituents play a role in helping a non-profit fulfil its mission; they receive in return products, services, and, often, opportunities for input into the organization's overall direction. Thus, only volunteers receive the exceptional—and generally unproductive—treatment of regarding their need in return for entering into a relationship with a non-profit as vaguely equating to the non-profit's own needs (i.e., the volunteer needs no more than whatever satisfaction can be attained in having helped you complete a task or meet a goal). What makes the matter worse yet is that many volunteers never learn how their efforts actually support the non-profit. A proven way to reverse this paradigm is by empowering the volunteers with relevant and qualified training which should in due time also provide long-term benefits for any organization.

Why is volunteer training important?

At its most basic level, volunteer training prepares volunteers for their work. But an effective volunteer training program benefits all stakeholders.

Volunteer training engages volunteers. According to the study *The volunteer stages and transitions model: Organizational socialisation of volunteers* by Debbie Haski-Leventhal and David Bargal, engaged volunteers— those who demonstrate emotional involvement with your cause—are the most impactful. One of the best ways to foster engaged



volunteers is to provide basic training, as volunteer training aids in the formation of the volunteers' emotional connection to your organization.

Moreover, volunteer training provides volunteers with the knowledge and resources to complete work independently and effectively, empowering them to have a measurable impact in your community. Plus, as stated in Strategic Volunteer Engagement: A Guide for Non-profit and Public Sector Leaders, volunteer training is associated with higher performance and long-term involvement. Simply put, communities get more from your programme when the volunteers are prepared for their work. Training should familiarise volunteers with the needs of the community and clients served. It can also help volunteers engage appropriately with sensitive or challenging topics they may encounter.

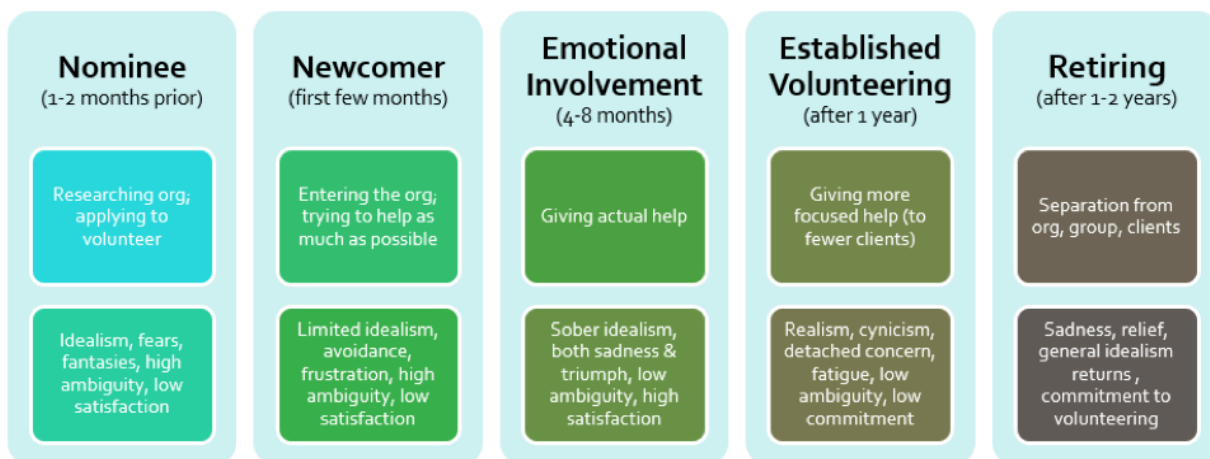
Nevertheless, volunteer training takes time, but the long-term benefits can outweigh the initial time investment. Volunteer training can improve volunteer performance and efficiency, while reducing turnover, therefore increasing your program's return on investment.

When non-profits think about volunteer training, the immediate thought is volunteer orientation and induction. However, it is more than that. Volunteer training can be helpful and inspiring support for all stages of volunteer involvement from newcomer to established volunteer to volunteer leader. Volunteer training can be the engine to moving a volunteer past placement to commitment and will help keep their passion fuelled. That said, more and more volunteer organizations are finding it challenging to train and retain committed, long-term volunteer talent. While volunteers may complete their orientation training, only a fraction stay to complete their initial commitment. Scholarly research¹ has shown

¹ Haski-Leventhal, Debbie & Bargal, David. (2008). The volunteer stages and transitions model: Organizational socialization of volunteers. *Human Relations*. 61. 67-102. 10.1177/0018726707085946.

volunteers go through various stages of emotional involvement, they often lack formal training, and that much of their socialisation and induction into the organizational culture is done on the job. Striving to learn their roles, skills, and expected attitudes, volunteers sometimes turn to informal sources, such as peers, their own social circles, trial and error, and feedback from the organization's customers. If proper volunteer training is not provided, volunteers will make their own assumptions, which may not align with the organization's mission and goals.

The Stages of Volunteer Involvement



According to the research, in the newcomer stage (which is generally the first few months), a volunteer's intention is to try and help the organization as much as possible. At this stage, you risk a volunteer quitting if they do not understand the goals of the organization, how their role plays into these goals, and how they will be supported. Not having full understanding in these areas causes ambiguity, frustration, and dissatisfaction.

Learning designers can add specific activities to their volunteer training programs to mitigate loss during this fragile stage. Below are some possible interventions the research offers:



- ✓ **Match each new volunteer with a mentor or “partner”** to observe the veteran performing the skills and then try the skills with coaching before going “solo.”
- ✓ **Provide job aids with frequently-used facts** and procedures to reduce ambiguity, minimize the complete reliance on recall, and increase volunteer confidence.
- ✓ **Send a welcome email series** with short, simple, practical answers to frequently asked questions.
- ✓ **Communicate regularly** (e.g., monthly “in-the-loop” email newsletter) with updates or changes to any technical info and helpful tips.

These interventions can be paired with fun, team-building volunteer orientations and activities that build trust with the organization and foster connections, such as:

- ✓ **Social events**, like ice cream or pizza parties, help volunteers get to know one another. Include some kind of structured networking activity to get the ball rolling.
- ✓ **Tours** of other departments in your agency in action help volunteers see the bigger picture and context within which they will do their work.
- ✓ **Have a meet and greet** where new volunteers can sit down with executive leadership. This lets the volunteers know they are truly valued.
- ✓ **Use of technology** to get volunteers connected with each other – either through social media, an email list specifically tailored for their needs, or regularly-scheduled webinars on topics of interest and open discussion.

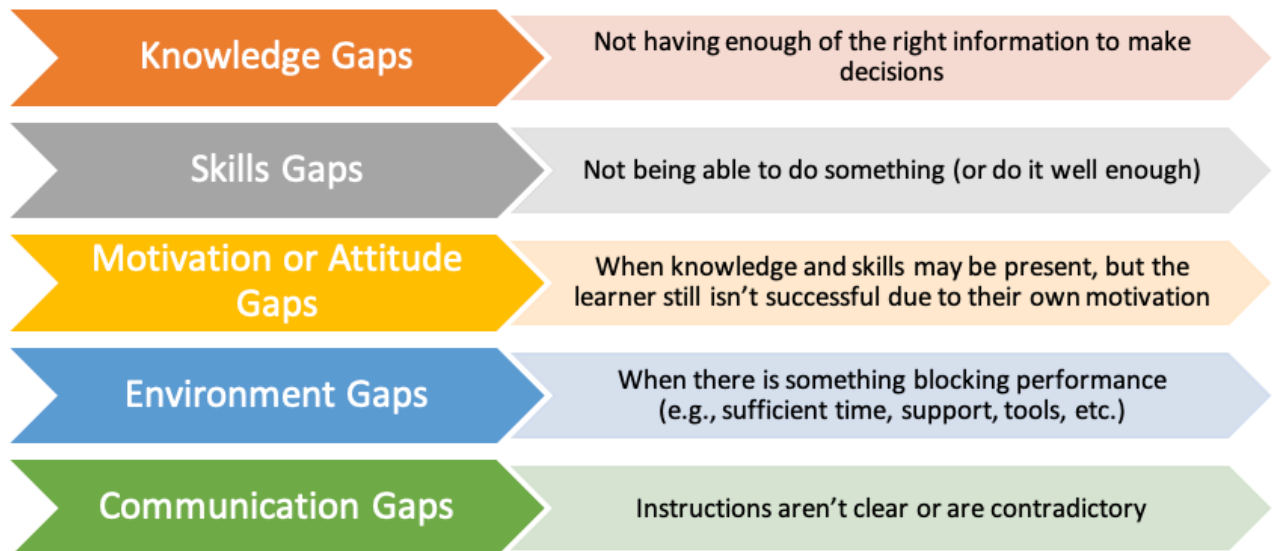
New Volunteer Training

Think about the training as a process, not a destination. The goal is to help align volunteers’ skills with the needs of the organization. A well-designed volunteer orientation will help bridge the gap between what a volunteer already knows and what is needed for them to do the job well. Organizations must make sure that the training bridges the most



common gaps in their context. Below are the most common learning and performance gaps people encounter on the job.

Five Key Learning Gaps



Time is of the essence in new volunteer training. Busy volunteers do not have a lot of extra time on their hands and prefer to spend it making a difference. Therefore, the design of the course should account for the greatest efficiency and focus on the “needs to know” information. The focus here is to ensure that we are actually addressing a gap and solving the real problem, versus wasting their time with information they can read elsewhere, assess and define which learning gaps are being addressed before the training solutions are designed. Most volunteers are also highly social, which means that it is important to build in opportunities to network and get to know one another. When they bond during training, they will be more likely to return to meet up with new-found friends.

Training for the Established Volunteer

Once volunteers become more comfortable with their roles, they will enter into the more established stage. At this point they will be offering more focused help and are ready to learn new skills. If their needs are not being met at this stage, the organization may risk



losing them to fatigue, detached concern or cynicism. There are a variety of things which can be done to keep them engaged by enhancing their growth within the organization.

Training is not effective by simply assembling a slide deck or posting resource materials online. It happens by taking a strategic and focused approach. A strong training begins with setting goals on behaviours we want to change or knowledge we want to enhance partnered with evidence-based design, skilled facilitation, and reinforcement through practice on the job.

Requirements for **Effective** Learning



Learning objectives are the foundation to effective training, when designing volunteer training programs, we want to develop action-based learning objectives. This helps focus the course content on “need to know” information and develop quizzes to assess what volunteers learned from the course. A learning objective is a statement that defines the expected goal of a curriculum, course, lesson, or activity in terms of demonstrable skills or knowledge that the learner is expected to acquire.



Is Training Always the Answer?

Sometimes, when volunteers are underperforming or are dissatisfied, training may not be the solution to the organization's problems. In most cases, knowledge and skills gaps can be successfully addressed head on through more (or more effective) training.

With careful research, planning, design, and delivery, we can create meaningful volunteer trainings for all volunteers at any stage, which will foster sustainable growth and development of volunteer-based organizations.

7. Volunteering Feedback Form Replies

Volunteering Form Reply

ROB Austria

08/01/2021

Questions list:

Timestamp: Fri Jan 29 2021 11:50:25 GMT+0000 (Greenwich Mean Time)

Email address: xxxxxxxx@gmail.com

Explain very briefly your organisation's work and goals.: ROB offers young refugees and migrants the opportunity to be part of the Austrian rugby community. Our holistic integration concept is built upon special weekly training designed for this group, which culminate in "get-togethers" involving cooking and eating in the clubhouse. Here we do not just communicate the great values and principles of rugby, but also give the refugees the opportunity to talk with our care/coaching team and other young Austrian players. The main focus of these meetings is that of living together and building social links in Austria.



Talented participants also have the chance to step up to the youth teams of the cooperating clubs where a more intensive exchange with young Austrians gives them them opportunity to integrate long-term into the community.

Do you have paid staff in your organisation?: Only part-time.

Do you have volunteer staff in your organisation?: Yes.

Did you carry out any volunteer enrolment campaigns?: Yes

Briefly explain your campaign. : We recruit volunteers from the local clubs teams.

Ocassionally, we've launched an advertisement looking for a more specific position.

How many volunteers did you reach with this campaign?: 6 - 10

How many of those volunteers are still working with you?: it comes and goes, but for the past year (despite Corona) we've managed to keep a steady volunteer team of up to 20 people

If you have not carried out any volunteer enrolment campaigns, tick the correct options to explain why not.:

What roles do your volunteers take?: Admin, Training or coaching

Do you keep a registry of your volunteers?: No

Have your volunteers or staff been through any kind of training or courses within your organisation? : No

Did all volunteers or staff members go through the course?:

How many hours did the course have?:

What type of course is it?:

Which steps, if any, have you taken in order to keep your current volunteers in your



organisation?: We haven't done anything in particular. I think a good management and organisation of the working times and responsibilities makes everybody work for their own reasons and see and enjoy the outcomes of our work easier. The connection within the team is also very important for us, as well as respecting everybody's limitations in time, or capacity to offer their work.

Volunteering Form Reply ECIESC Bulgaria

08/01/2021

Questions list:

Timestamp: Fri Jan 29 2021 11:49:14 GMT+0000 (Greenwich Mean Time)

Email address: xxxxx@xxxxx.net

Explain very briefly your organisation's work and goals.:

Our mission is to help young people in their personal and professional development.

The objectives of the foundation are:

- To promote and encourage youth development and active participation into activities related to the cultural and social life;
- To conduct informative campaigns and seminars, trainings and conferences aimed at knowledge improvement;
- To increase interest and motivate the desire for personal development, self-awareness, self-responsibility and responsibility towards society through education;
- To create conditions for the development and success of young people into finding innovative solutions;
- To encourage the professional development of disadvantaged people;



- To facilitate social integration as well as personal and professional development;
- To conduct social events and organize voluntary and other support initiatives and related activities;
- To promote and encourage the development of volunteering.

Do you have paid staff in your organisation?: No.

Do you have volunteer staff in your organisation?: Yes.

Did you carry out any volunteer enrolment campaigns?: Yes

Briefly explain your campaign.: We organize various campaigns for recruiting volunteers. We believe that each volunteer has individual needs and requirements, so different people are usually enrolled in different types of campaigns.

In addition to volunteer project initiatives, we have organized a campaign for volunteers to support youth online media.

We often ask young people what they want to happen and organize the recruitment of volunteers based on their needs.

How many volunteers did you reach with this campaign?: 11 - 20

How many of those volunteers are still working with you?: 2

If you have not carried out any volunteer enrolment campaigns, tick the correct options to explain why not.:

What roles do your volunteers take?: Management, Training or coaching

Do you keep a registry of your volunteers?: Yes

Have your volunteers or staff been through any kind of training or courses within your organisation? : Yes



Did all volunteers or staff members go through the course?: No

How many hours did the course have?: 1-5

What type of course is it?: Face-to-face traditional course

Which steps, if any, have you taken in order to keep your current volunteers in your organisation?: We ask young people what they want to happen.

We must maintain their interest and not make them do something out of obligation, but because they want it.

8. Bibliography

Volunteering Practices in the 21st Century

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Editing, layout and translation: Strategic Agenda, London, United Kingdom
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