



**European best practices
handbook on the support
to young volunteers
towards sustainable
employment**

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Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the European Commission and The Council of Europe, through its own education departments, culture and youth, have stated more explicitly the value of education made in other contexts than the school ones. Documents from the period 1998 (for example, the Declaration of the responsible European Ministers of Youth, Bucharest) and the early 2000s call for everything explicitly recognizing the impact of non-formal education and volunteering on capacity development and skills for participants of these types of activities run outside the formal education system. In the document „A study on the links between formal and nonformal Education of the European Coordination Committee for Youth (CDEJ)” presented in Strasbourg in the 2002, Socrates and Leonardo programs are mentioned and Youth of the European Commission dedicated to the creation of a space for education, both formal and non-formal. In particular, the Youth program is presented as being dedicated to non-formal and informal youth experiences, an important role being played by sub-programs for exchanges Youth and EVS - European Voluntary Service (introduced in 2001).

These programs supported young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competences, facilitating their integration into social and cultural life, providing them with the framework to become active citizens at the European level. Also a very important link is revealed between non-formal education and vocational training (VET).

Moreover, in 2011, the document Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of nonformal learning / education and of youth work in Europe was released and it is a working paper undertaken by both European Entities (CoE, EC) as a step forward towards efforts made to recognize learning and education in nonformal contexts. The document is linked to Agenda 2020 on CoE's youth policies. It is also linked with the document on cooperation in the youth field 2010-2020 of the European Commission. Finally, in all these papers, volunteering is presented as a context in which young

people learn mostly informally.

Taking this into consideration, through this material we aim to raise awareness on the importance of youth volunteering as a way to learn skills, increase a young person's network of contacts and encourage youth to gain experience needed to enter the labour market, through volunteering. This material can be used by any stakeholders interested in the valorisation of volunteering activities : young people willing to engage and gain new competences, non profit organisations ,trying to help its volunteers fulfil their potential, companies planning to support volunteers' professional inclusion, or decision makers looking for more concrete information on the reality of volunteering.

We believe that volunteering can be a path that young job seekers can take in order to improve their resumes, make positive impression in contexts in which they interact with different people, entities and communities. At the European level volunteering is considered to be a context that fosters learning processes that build soft and hard skills. It does not substitute job training but can be a very important complementary skill. Moreover, studies have shown that people with limited skills or social connections may see an extra benefit to volunteering as a way to open doors and level the playing field.¹

Last but not least, this material comes in support of reaching the aim of the ERASMUS+ Project European Volunteer Inclusion Program (EuroVIP) that is to strengthen the recognition of skills and competences acquired by young adults (17-30 years old) during volunteer activities and to promote them as valuable for their entrance into the labour market.

¹ https://www.iave.org/iavewp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Youth-Handbook_Intro_Web.pdf

Chapter 1

How volunteering experiences can contribute to professional inclusion?

Volunteering Stories from around Europe

Inspired by the “The Most Significant Change” Technique,² we conducted interviews with volunteers from all the partner countries involved in the project in order to measure the impact of their involvement in volunteering activities, towards their professional life and towards their personal and professional

development. In what follows we invite you to get inspired and to read some of the stories that emphasize the importance of volunteering involvement on the process of building skills and attitudes needed on the labor market, ones that are only gained through informal and nonformal learning contexts.

Romania — Collected by VOLUM Federation

I started doing volunteering while in college, at the Student organization. I volunteered for a project that was called “The School for Training and Human Resources – Mania”. I had the chance to work in a team and develop the sense of team work, coordinating people to reach a result and to create a nice experience for the participants. I gained skills and competences, soft and hard, from knowing what human resources field is about to writing projects and implementing them. It was one of the most important experiences I had because of the people I met and also because I realized that this field is not something that I want to pursue in my professional career. I felt lucky to have realized that because not everybody gets to experience the field they think they are interested in before entering the labour market and gaining a full education that prepares you for it.

For the first time in my life, through volunteering, I understood what autonomy in learning means, the first time that I realized I am made to achieve greatness and that I am capable of doing everything that I dream about. I discovered what it means to have an impact on people’s life and how that feels. I truly understood how important is to be able to count on your team and how to have faith in the people you are working with because everybody comes with different perspectives, abilities and knowledge. This all happened because I had a mentor and also the organization had a very well planned process of monitoring and follow up. Nonetheless I learned what that means and how important is not to miss those steps. Last but not least I learned a very important lesson to me: The leader is followed and trusted because of how he/she treats people and how his/her relationship with people is, because respect is gained and if the leader is respected by the people, people will follow.

Furthermore entering the volunteering world led me want to discover more, travel more. As a result I applied for an EVS (European Volunteering Service) project in Latvia, for 6 months. By far that was the experience that had the most impact on my personal development but also, indirectly, on my professional experience. It was the first time that I followed my dream despite what others had to say about me leaving the country and leaving behind family and friends. It is so that I discovered values such as generosity, tolerance, acceptance, the importance of culture and traditions and how people from other cultures relate to them. Before leaving for my EVS I had the feeling that I was living in a bubble just wondering “what if?”, I was a person who was mostly waiting for things to happen for/to her. I started asking myself what would I do if I had 6 more months to live. The answer was that I didn’t want to be the kind of person who just wonders but the kind of person who does.

During my EVS experience, among a lot of things, I had to work in a kindergarten, with other volunteers and the hosting organization. The volunteers I was working with were also my flat mates. The whole experience, personally and professionally, led me to learn that people are different and it challenged me to adapt to each situation. It taught me to face my fears, to learn that being a “people pleaser” is not healthy for me and that as long as there is at least one person who believes in you, it is all you need to move further. In this whole process I understood that it is important to know WHY you are doing the things you are doing and if you care about yourself and about the impact of the project you are working on, things will come naturally.

After returning from my EVS experience I found a job in a kindergarten and I became a person who focuses

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_significant_change_technique

more on what she wants and sets boundaries that make the collaborations successful because, in my opinion, it is important to give time to the process you are going through, to reflect on the things you feel and you learn from each experience.

Finally, I recommend the volunteers and young people to take the time to enjoy the experiences which they have, to invest in their growing process as human beings, to find opportunities that are meaningful to them and to surround themselves with people who inspire them and can become their mentors. Nonetheless, to organizations

Belgium — Collected by Pour la Solidarité Struggle to do the job that we love

My name is Anna, I am 27 years old and I am working as a psychologist. After finishing my master's degree at the end of 2014, it was hard to find a job so I start working as a volunteer. During my first experience of volunteering, I worked in a psycho medical social centre (in French: Centre psycho-médico-social, PMS) where I conducted individual and family interviews for kids in kindergarten school, primary school and secondary school as well as school counselling. I also did some testing for kids and teenagers with whom specific trouble such as learning disabilities or dyslexia was suspected. Throughout my second volunteer experience, I provided therapeutic counselling for kids, teenagers and their family. I also took part of the visitor reception by welcoming them and helping them with any questions. In both experiences I participated in the psychologists meetings, team meetings and the supervision.

All these experiences allowed me to develop my skills and my self-esteem as well as building myself as a young psychologist. I realised as well that it was not because of me that I could not find a work directly after my studies, but because of the job market. However, not everything was perfect. In my second experience, it was hard because I was not supported by my colleagues. I learned a lot by myself during the therapeutic counselling that I was doing but nobody taught me or supported me in my work. That is why I realized how much I needed to be supported and to be recognized in my work. Indeed, after finishing your study, not finding work can be frustrating and your professional esteem can suffer. It is important that if you start some volunteering, you can receive some support or feedback about whether you are doing a good job. I think it is because I experienced this lack of

involving volunteers in their aim to make a change, I recommend to pay attention on how they recruit their volunteers, to set clear objectives, to know why they need volunteers and to offer support to them in their learning process and how they valorize each and every skill they have. Volunteering is a way of living and can change lives so it is important to be present in each step in order for that change to be meaningful.

MIRELA, 25 YEARS OLD

support that now I am more sensitive to the well-being of volunteers that I can meet and I am trying to support them as much as I can. I also discovered my own personal limits. I agreed to work as a volunteer but I needed to be recognized at least.

After all, these experiences and these changes helped me to create a social network, to be known among the professionals and then to find a job. It is because of my volunteer experience that I was able to find a job because my employer heard about me. Indeed, especially in my field, finding a job is really hard and it is usually by your network that you can find one, by word of mouth. So you have to give a lot at the beginning to find a place in the market.

In that respect, if I could give advice to young people looking for more work experiences and opportunities, I would tell them to start by volunteer experience.

On another note, I would advise the organisations that would like to support volunteers, to be considerate towards them. Indeed, it is important to not forget that the volunteers are working without any salary and helping the organisations. However, they can have something in return. They want to learn something, to gain more experience and skills or to have news professional contacts. So it is really important to recognize their work and support them in it.

ANA, 27 YEARS OLD

France – Collected by FACE My volunteering at CCFD TERRE SOLIDAIRE — A springboard for my future!

I volunteered for 8 months in the frame of a civil service, in the international solidarity organization CCFD Terre Solidaire, a global NGO acting to eradicate hunger by tackling its different roots.

I had two main responsibilities : to support a team of young volunteers in their advocacy work and to train young people to raise awareness on international solidarity.

For my advocacy missions, which took most of my time, I was working with another volunteer in civil service to support a group of volunteers in their advocacy work. Basically, my role was to organize meetings with political stakeholders, so that they put forward expose their point of view and get the commitment of politicians on the different issues presented, in the context of the 2017 French parliamentary elections . I have dealt a lot with transversal tasks, such as coordination, or logistical. Sometimes, I also took part in the meetings. I was mostly interacting with other volunteers, decision makers and other major NGOs such as Oxfam.

This experience brought me self-confidence. The context was quite ideal : the permanent team was deeply involved in making the best of this volunteering. They really helped me in my activities while allowing me enough freedom and space to handle the mission myself.

France – Collected by FACE Volunteering brings you more that you think

While I was a graduate student student, I took a one year break to prepare a 6 month trip in South America. To save money, I worked part time as a waitress and thus had a lot of free time. I decided to use it to join a local structure of the UNICEF, an organization working on children rights and protection. I volunteered 8 months during which I did presentations in schools for children around 10 years old. I presented them the situation of children among the world, and raised awareness among them on equality between boys and girls.

These 8 months were also the opportunity to confirm my professional project : working in an advocacy NGO! I can also measure it if I look at how my job research went after this experience: it was much easier to get a job interview, since the NGO was fully acknowledged. After my commitment, I was hired as a permanent employee in the structure.

I would recommend to any young people to volunteer! Though you should be careful when engaging : a lot of structures do not offer a proper frame to fully develop yourself, on personal and the professional aspects. Pay attention to the description of missions and to the internal process set up to include and support volunteers. But otherwise, be curious, and keep trying!

My recommendation to volunteering organizations would be to keep in mind that a volunteer isn't an employee : thus the hierarchy and the pressure on its shoulder should be lower. A volunteer's mentor should be there to help him/her make the best of this experience, as it will bring both to the volunteer and the organization!

CHARLOTTE, 25 YEARS OLD

I also supported the organization in its daily life : communication tasks, organization of events or even helping managing the association, which was fully composed of volunteers.

Thanks to this experience, I've learnt more on a life of an organization : evolving with persons from different age, background and position than me. Most of volunteers were retired or housewives. Thus our exchanges brought me a lot of diversity. Also, I was evolving in a very famous organization, so it was interesting to perceive it from the inside.

I also had the chance to develop new competences : I reinforced my facilitation skills, since I had to organize and facilitate a two hour long workshop with young children. I had to adopt proper attitudes to keep their attention and make them understand the issues at stake. I also gained organization and time management competences, since I had to juggle between my time as a waitress and as a volunteer!

Last but not least, this experience helped me building up my professional skillset: I realized I was very interested in working with young people on societal questions.

United Kingdom – Collected by Volunteering Matters Volunteering breaks language barriers

I am French but I am currently doing a paid internship in Spain. I arrived at this position after full time volunteering at Volunteering Matters for a year. Volunteering changed my life. For a year I supported people with disabilities and their families. It was a great experience and I built a good relationship with all the families I was working with. I was in charge of accompanying two people with disabilities in their everyday activities and supporting them in their free time, doing activities like playing video games or going to the cinema, but also just talking to them and making sure that they were okay when their families could not stay with them.

During this experience I learned not only about working with and communicating with people with disabilities, but I also learned a lot about myself. I was able to adapt to a new city, and work with different service users from different cultures and backgrounds.

I would recommend to any young person willing to volunteer to be curious and to get involved in different organizations, whether or not they look attractive to you in the first place. Associations are very different and will enrich you, through the topics they are working on or by their internal structure! Volunteering experiences were a true added value when I was looking for a job !

I would encourage volunteering organization to give more power to act to young volunteers, to support them growing in terms of competences and responsibility, and to valorize their engagement!

CLÉMENCE, 25 YEARS OLD, FRANCE

I learned to react quickly to situations, I became more emphatic and I improved my English. Also working in a big organization help me learn several skills that are necessary for my current job. This experience made me realize that I wanted to pursue this career. It opened new doors for me, for example during this experience I met the person that offered me an EVS. I am now working with refugees, and thanks to the language skills I developed while volunteering I can switch between languages and react to different and challenging situations. Finally, using the Eurovip portfolio helped me translate the skills I learned while volunteering into concrete assets for taking the next step in my career.

Eddy, 28 years old, Sevilla

United Kingdom – Collected by Volunteering Matters I found my career call

I volunteered in London for nine months supporting two men with disabilities in their homes, carrying out daily activities and assisting with their social life. It also involved engaging with their families. One of them had a serious communication disability so part of my role was to facilitate the communication with his family. During my volunteering experience I received several useful trainings that supported me with learning new skills. I also learned to live in a different environment and learned a lot about disability awareness. It changed the way I think about my communications skills and how I communicate with people, and the impact that different people can have on perceptions of things. Definitely this experience gave me the basic training I needed for working in social care and supported my transition into employment. I volunteered just after having completed a Master's degree in Policy Research. Not only did my volunteering experience lead me out of academia, it also

made me understand that I wanted to work as a support worker. I knew I wanted to do something that was meaningful, and I wanted to give back to the community, but I was not sure this was my future. But this experience taught me so many new practical skills and then led me directly to my current job.

Volunteering did not change my values but showed me them in practice, showing me what it means to treat everyone fairly, and how we can work to empower someone else also when they have a communication disability.

Eva, 25 years old, Bristol

United Kingdom – Collected by Volunteering Matters The most rewarding experience of my life

I come from Colombia and before volunteering I was studying to become a teacher. I came to the UK through the full time volunteering programme of Volunteering Matters to volunteer with people with learning disabilities. As a result of this experience the company I was volunteering with recognised the skills I had learned and offered me a job. As part of my volunteering I received several trainings and learned so many new skills. So I can say thanks to this volunteering experience my competences and skills improved so much that I could find a job. Volunteering Matters, the hosting organization, has been so helpful and supported me at the beginning in finding a project that could suit me and also followed closely my volunteering experience to make sure that I was okay and satisfied with it. I learned so much from this experience. On a personal level I became more confident using English for work, and I became independent because I was living so far from home. Professionally I learned several skills like becoming a good listener and learning to communicate

with people with a mental disability or speech impediments. My volunteering experience included spending weekends with service users, so I learned to become flexible and adapt to working with shifts and unsociable hours, a fundamental skill for working in the care sector. Before this experience I was less confident, and now I have learned to take more risks and I am not scared to face difficult situations. This experience definitely made me feel happier, more useful, and more empathic. I now live every moment of my life thinking that there are people that have less skills than me for whom it is very difficult to do even the easiest everyday task, so it makes me feel so lucky and it also pushes me to find new ways to be helpful in the community and empower others.

Esteban, 26 years old, Colombia

Germany – Collected by Wisamar

I CAME, I DID, I THREW UP

I think that there are many positive stories from happy volunteers. My story is rather a summary of how voluntary work should rather not be.

Before I went to university, I took a gap year to do voluntary work in the cultural sector. My organisation placed me at a circus farm in rural South Germany. There, I was supposed to do some artistic design for performances, managing the marketing, mentoring work and I was also obliged to take care of the animals on the farm. To put it in a nutshell, my task was to keep the circus farm going. We were six different volunteers, but I was the only one coming from a cultural volunteering project. Right at the beginning of my work there, my supervisor told me that I was the most expensive volunteer on the farm and that I therefore had to work harder than e.g. the guys doing the 'voluntary ecological year'.

I saw that claim as a big challenge for my personal development and thought, that this could be a good opportunity to prove how much expertise and drive I had to support the circus farm. I worked hard, sometimes for more than 40 hours a week. It was very likely that we received our daily tasks in the morning of that very same day. I did not have any time to prepare myself properly for the workday, and sometimes I had to do farm work in my circus dresses and so on.

Through my work, I accomplished various techniques of circus performances as well as didactical skills by

teaching school groups. I developed choreographies, teaching lessons, and I wrote and professionally produced a song for the circus project. It was a lot of fun working with the children. And I enjoyed the mixture of creative work and hard labour on the farm. But what tore me down right from the beginning, was my supervisor's disrespectful behaviour towards me as a volunteer. When I wanted to show the results of my hard work to my colleagues, I received no feedback at all or something like "That's not good enough.", "Children won't understand that.", or "And that's all you did?!". The fruits of my hard work were the lack of respect for everything I did and complete ignorance of my personality. Now I see that this organisation was using voluntary workers only for positive PR, and for cheap labour. I got seriously ill because of the bad living conditions on the farm and the pressure I was confronted with as a volunteer. After seven months of hard, unappreciated work, I dropped my voluntary activity almost half a year earlier than planned.

I think, this experience taught me two major things: First of all, I learned to think independently and critically about the tasks I am asked to do for others in terms of my physical and psychological limits, and to say "no" when needed. The second thing I learned for my future, is that I will only work for organisations that see the human and the creative spirit in me and not just cheap labour. And despite all the needless situations from that time, this is a very precious insight.

Rebecca, 23 years old, Germany

Food for thought

We hope you enjoyed the stories and learnings that they include. In order to emphasize some of the main aspects we hereby leave a list of things we invite you to reflect on:

- » Volunteering is 'a two way street' — in order to gain experience and to become better both the organization and the volunteer need to contribute to the process.
- » Volunteering creates a context of social change that fosters learning, no matter if it is intended or not.
- » Mentoring and support offered to volunteers in evaluating their learning outcomes is vital and recommended to all organizations that implement volunteering programs.
- » Skills and Attitudes developed through volunteering are authentic and build characters that are defined by responsibility, problem solving, motivation.
- » Volunteering is a context in which one can discover one's own career path thus creating responsible and motivated future employees.

Chapter 2

How can organizations foster appropriate learning processes through volunteering activities? - Examples of volunteering programs based on building skills and competences towards improving employability

- 2A Examples of volunteering activities focused on building Social skills and competences
- 2B Difference between professional experience, work experience and employment history

2 A Examples of volunteering activities focused on building Social skills and competences

We are learning constantly, not only in school or at work, but also without noticing it. In all contexts that we are engaged in, we learn something new and combine already existing knowledge and newly gained information.

By doing so we acquire new competencies. This chapter aims to offer organizations a structured resource on different types of volunteering activities they can develop in their organization, respecting their field

of intervention and, at the same time, being aware of what skills, competences and attitudes these activities develop to the volunteers involved.

We we identified the main domains/fields of intervention that volunteers are mostly involved in and for each we proposed two activities as examples of volunteering as learning contexts that lead to a better employability into the future.

Activity 1

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Description of activity	Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
<p>Education</p> <p>Human Rights</p> <p>Active Citizenship</p> <p>Youth</p>	<p>Workshops with young people</p>	<p>The activity in which volunteers are involved includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Facilitating workshops with young people in high schools on social intervention methods that have as a main focus tackling human rights violation among which the focus will be on – bullying, discrimination on the basis of social status, gender and other aspects that might occur in situations of bullying occurring occurring in high schools. <p>The workshops they will facilitate will include themes and methods like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communication – verbal, nonverbal » Team-building » Human Rights, discrimination, prejudice » Values (tolerance, empathy, solidarity etc.) » Forum Theatre and Image Theatre (as part of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed) – social intervention methods that aim empowering communities to find solutions to their own problems, become more aware of their rights and become more active into defending them 	<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Linguistic (Communication in the mother tongue); » Learning to learn » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship » Digital competences (if the volunteers prepare presentations, make videos of the activities etc.) <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Team worker » Pro-active » Ability to plan » Creativity » Resilience 	<p>Partnerships with High schools in which the workshops are held.</p> <p>For the workshops in schools and training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Stationary (flipchart paper, markers, pens, paper, post-its, notebooks etc.) » Projector <p>For training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Trainers with experience on the topics mentioned » Catering and coffee breaks » Money (if possible) for the fee of the trainer(s) » Space to hold the training phase

³ https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/competences_en

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/competences_en

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Description of activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Education Human Rights Active Citizenship Youth	Workshops with young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improvisation » Debate » Forum Theatre and Image Theatre Plays that will be held in front of other high school students that are confronted with the problems identified and put into the play » Evaluation of the effects the activities held had on the high school students. <hr/> <p>In order for the volunteers to be able to facilitate the workshops they have to go through a training phase so that they are prepared to put into practice the activities. The training phase that the volunteers have to go through should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What is volunteering, what is its impact, what are the benefits, rights and responsibilities » Facilitating Techniques – learning what means to create learning contexts, deliver small workshops » Forum Theatre and Image theatre Methods – what are they, what do they aim, how are they put into practice. » Team Building » Communication » How to interact with high school students » How to assess their needs and the results of the activities. <hr/> <p>This type of activity is divided into two phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing phase of the volunteers 2. Implementing the 10-12 workshops with high school students/ group (1 workshop/week) <hr/> <p>In order to have 3 groups of high school students part of the 10-12 workshops/group it is advisable to have 3 groups of volunteers. Each team/group of volunteers should have 3-4 volunteers. In total 9-12 volunteers.</p> <p>Each workshop should last 2 hours.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Patient » Tolerant » Punctual » Adaptable 	

Activity 2

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Description of activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Active Citizenship Volunteering Human Rights	Event organizing – Recognition of Volunteering and its impact in the community	<p>The activity in which volunteers are involved includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Organizing a national event/gala that celebrates the involvement of volunteers, NGOs and volunteering coordinators in activities and social intervention projects around the country. » Preparing the event – logistics, promotion, project competition, fundraising » Implementing the event with people from the nongovernmental field, the NGO field and corporate field, in one evening of celebration where NGOs, Volunteers and Volunteer Coordinators receive honorary awards for their involvement and impact in the community. <p>The responsibilities of the volunteers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » actively participating at planning meetings » providing support to the logistics and PR department before, during and after the event » Help in creating the specific materials for the event (brochures, gifts/souvenirs, decorations, documents) and helping collect them from suppliers » being in constant in communication with the volunteer coordinator of the event and providing support to organizers in situations that occur on the spot in the process of organizing the event and during the event » being involved in making hand-made materials necessary for decorating the space, for offering souvenirs to guests etc. » being involved in the arrangement of the hall/place where the event takes place » being involved in management of guests in the evening of event/ gala (reception, meals, information about the program etc). » offers support to people with disabilities that attend the event » offers support to the media team with live streaming and social media post before, during and after the event. 		<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Linguistic (Communication in the mother tongue); » Learning to learn » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship » Digital competences (if the volunteers prepare presentations, make videos of the activities etc.) <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Team worker » Pro-active » Ability to plan » Creativity » Resilience » Patient » Tolerant » Punctual » Adaptable 	<p>Partnerships with high schools in which the workshops are held</p> <p>For the workshops in schools and training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Stationary (flipchart paper, markers, pens, paper, post-its, notebooks etc.) » Projector <p>For training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Trainers with experience on the topics mentioned » Catering and coffee breaks » Money (if possible) for the fee of the trainer(s) » Space to hold the training phase

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Description of activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
		<p>In order for the volunteers to be prepared for the responsibilities that they will have it is important that they go through a training/ induction phase so that they are prepared to put into practice the activities. The training/induction phase that the volunteers have to go through should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What is volunteering, what is its impact, what are the benefits, rights and responsibilities » Aim of the activities they are going to be involved in, description in detail of the event, responsibilities and other useful information as such » Team Building » Communication essentials – in the team and also needed for the ones offering support to the PR team » How to interact with guests at the event » How to assess their needs and the results of the activities. <p>This type of activity is divided into three phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing phase of the volunteers 2. implementing the activities 3. Evaluation of activities, impact on the community and on the volunteers (learning process). 			

Activity 3

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Description of activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
<p>Education</p> <p>Active Citizenship</p> <p>Cross-Generational</p> <p>Social</p>	<p>Media literacy for elderly people through volunteer-guided gatherings</p>	<p>The activity in which volunteers are involved includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Facilitating afternoon gatherings for seniors where they can accomplish their skills with modern technology and media and have access to help » The volunteers are tutors that will prepare themed gatherings (e.g. on smartphones, tablets, mailing software, social media; more specific software courses possible as well, such as Photoshop courses etc.) <p>The tutorials they will facilitate, will include methods like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Team-building » Time management and improvisation, providing a steady frame in the beneficiaries' everyday life » Professional communication, Q&A rounds, debates on technological, but also non-verbal communication » Evaluation of the effects the activity had on the beneficiaries. <p>In order to facilitate these gatherings, the volunteers will go through a training phase. This training will provide them the preparation needed to become a reliable mentor. There, they will learn about the theory of voluntary work as well as the transition of theory into practice. The training phase will include topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What is volunteering? What is its impact? What are the benefits, rights and responsibilities? » What does it mean to be a tutor/mentor? Which skills do I need to approach elderly people? » What teaching methods can I use to explain technological topics to another generation? » How can I create a team-oriented environment, where the seniors feel safe and understood? » Communication: How to interact with different generations? What rhetoric methods can I use to teach? » How to assess their activities? How to assess my own activities? 		<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communicating in the mother tongue » Learning to learn » Cultural awareness and expression » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship » Digital competences » Technological competences » Digital competences <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communicating in the mother tongue » Learning to learn » Cultural awareness and expression » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship » Digital competences » Technological competences » Digital competences » ITC competences 	<p>Partnerships with schools and/or social centres to keep steady contact about the learning activities. These institutions could also provide the spaces for the gatherings.</p> <p>For the tutorials held at schools/ social centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Stationary (flipchart paper, markers, pens, paper, post-its, notebooks etc.) » Modern technology devices, depending on the course (and if the seniors cannot bring their own devices) <p>For training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Trainers with experience on the topics mentioned » Catering and coffee breaks » Money (if possible) for the fee of the trainer(s) » Space to hold the training phase <p>For the voluntary tutors/mentors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional counsellors and contact persons that can provide technical advice on teaching methods and that are a reference person for socially and/or mentally onerous situations.

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Description of activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
		<p>The training is divided into two phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing phase of the volunteers 2. Implementing the structure of gatherings of 1.5 to 2 hours weekly <p>The volunteering activity can vary depending on the number of interested seniors. There should be at least two volunteers present for a group of six to eight seniors.</p> <p>To reflect the social impacts and issues during the tutorial, it is also advisable to provide professional counselling sessions for the volunteers to report their experiences and problems.</p>			

Activity 4

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Art, Culture	Organizing « Sunday ATOMIX » — Workshops with children	<p>The goal of « Sunday Atomix » organized by the association BRASS (ebrass.be) is to welcome families in a creative and friendly place and to propose them art workshops about movie creation, animation or music. The main goal is the individual and collective emancipation of every citizen through art and culture.</p> <p>The activity in which volunteers are involved includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Organising and facilitating the workshops with the artists and giving them help; » Welcoming families, particularly small children, and helping them by answering to any question they might have; » Explaining cultural practices (movie creation, animation or music) to children; » Helping to prepare the snack after the workshops for the families and to rearrange the place when the event is finished. <p>The families they will have to welcome and the workshops they will facilitate will include themes and methods like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ability to manage 100 families. Great challenge! » Communication – verbal, nonverbal, especially for children » Team-building » Improvisation. <p>In order for volunteers to be able to welcome the families and to facilitate the workshops, they need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » the ability to manage; » Have prior volunteering experience; » Go through a training phase so they are ready to put in practice the activities. The training phase includes briefing and meeting with the permanent staff of the Cultural Centre BRASS. 	<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Determined » Friendly » Adaptable » Team worker » Organized » Sociable » Enthusiastic » Hard working » Tolerant » Trustworthy » Punctual » Ready to help 	<p>Partnerships with other associations in the neighbourhood.</p> <p>For the activities the volunteers are receiving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A roadmap to know precisely what they have to do. <p>For training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professionals with experience on the topics mentioned <p>The activities take place at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In the premises of the association (BRASS) » Outside in parks or public places.

Activity 5

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Art, Culture	Concerts organising	<p>The association BRASS (http://lebrass.be/) is organizing concerts. The main goal is the individual and collective emancipation of every citizen through art and culture.</p> <p>The activity in which volunteers are involved includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Preparing the event – logistics, promotion; » Taking care of the artists and making sure they have all they need; » Implementing the event/concert ; » Taking over the bar and making sure that the guests are pleased. <p>The responsibilities of the volunteers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Active participation at planning meetings; » Provision of support to the logistics and PR department before, during and after the event; » Help in creating the specific materials for the event (flyers, posters, decorations, documents); » Constant communication with the permanent staff of BRASS, and provision of support to organizers in situations that occur on the spot in the process of organizing the event and during the event; » Involvement in the arrangement of the place where the concert takes place; » Support to persons with disabilities that attend the concert; » Support to the media team with social media posts before, during and after the concert. 	<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Determined » Friendly » Adaptable » Team worker » Organized » Sociable » Enthusiastic » Hard working » Tolerant » Trustworthy » Punctual » Ready to help 	<p>Partnerships with other associations in the neighbourhood.</p> <p>For the activities the volunteers are receiving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A roadmap to know precisely what they have to do. <p>For training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professionals with experience on the topics mentioned <p>The activities take place at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » - In the premises of the association (BRASS) » - Outside in parks or public places.

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
		<p>In order for volunteers to be prepared for the responsibilities that they will have, it is important that they go through training so that they are prepared to put into practice the activities. The training notably included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What is volunteering, what is its impact, what are the benefits, rights and responsibilities; » Aim of the activities they are going to be involved, description in detail of the event, responsibilities and other useful information as such; » Team building; » Communication essentials; » How to interact with guests at the event. » How to assess their needs. 			

Activity 6

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
<p>Environment, Energy</p>	<p>Door to Door awareness raising</p>	<p>The goal of « CIVIGAZ» is to raise awareness among low income households about gas safety and energy consumption. Concretely, young volunteers visit during the day different households that are clients of the company GRDF. They are going door to door, to help them better manage their energy consumption and prevent the risk of a gas accident . For example, they check the state of the boiler, the energy consumption of the housing, they show how to use less water...</p> <p>The program is not just about awareness raising. Volunteers also advise people to get in contact with relevant stakeholders in the community, on the topic of concern</p>		<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship » Cultural awareness and expression » Expression in mother tongue <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pedagogic » Friendly » Adaptable » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative » Team worker » Organized » Sociable » Punctual 	<p>Partnerships with other associations in the neighborhood</p> <p>The volunteers are receiving planning, address of households to visit ,pedagogic materials.</p> <p>Volunteers need to be mobile. In big cities, they can use public transport. In rural areas, they might need a car.</p>

Activity 7

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Environment	Advocacy	<p>The association "CCFD Terre- Solidaire » build up advocacy programs during the French parliamentary election, to raise awareness among decision makers on environmental issues, as one of the causes of world hunger.</p> <p>Volunteers are coordinated by a team of employees to meet with decision makers. They develop their ideas and try to convince candidates to the election to address environmental issues in their programs, by signing for example a letter of commitment</p>		<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communication in the mother tongue » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and » Cultural awareness and expression <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pedagogic » Adaptable » Pro-active » Civic competences » Ounctual » Strategic thinking 	<p>Consolidated factsheet to assist volunteers by giving their arguments a strong background</p> <p>Pre-identification of relevant decision makers to meet.</p>

Activity 8

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
<p>Social field</p> <p>Education</p>	<p>Workshops with young people that are starting volunteering with people with disabilities</p>	<p>The activity in which volunteers are involved includes:</p> <p>Facilitating a workshop with young people that are about to start volunteering supporting people with disabilities to tackle prejudices and develop their social interactions with people coming from all backgrounds.</p> <p>The workshops they will facilitate will include themes and methods like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communication – verbal, nonverbal » Team-building » Human Rights, discrimination, prejudice » Values (tolerance, empathy, solidarity etc.) » Facilitation <p>The volunteer that facilitates the workshop has to go through a short training so they will be able to facilitate the discussion and the activity. The main focus of the workshop though is the participants that will be supported to break stereotypes and prejudices.</p> <p>The workshop is divided into two parts: in the first one the participants take a copy of a case study each without knowing that they are all the same. After having read it. The facilitator (a volunteer) distributes two cups each one. One cup containing ten sweets and the other empty.</p> <p>Then the volunteer/trainer explains that they will read the questions and if they think the person in the case study can do the task they move one sweet to the empty cup.</p>	<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Linguistic (Communication in a different language) » Learning to learn » Social and civic competences <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Team worker » Pro-active » Creative » Adaptable » active » responsible » helpful » resilience » enthusiastic » organized » time management abilities 	<p>Printing of case study for each participant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 2 cups per participant » 10 sweets/cancan per participant <p>Space to hold the training phase</p>

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
		<p>In the second phase one selected volunteer reads aloud the case study so the group realises that they all have the same example. This should lead to a conversation facilitated by the facilitator to make them reflect on why on the basis of so little information they have made an assumption on the ability of the person in the case study. This should make the participants reflect on their prejudices and assumptions on the people that they are going to support.</p> <p>Duration 30 minutes</p>			

Activity 9

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Social field	<p>Activity</p> <p>Active Volunteering to support people with disabilities be active in the community</p>	<p>This activity engages volunteers to support people with disabilities (generally a learning disability) who want to be active in the community and volunteer, but feel anxious about volunteering completely independently.</p> <p>The volunteers involved for a period of six weeks provide one to one support for a number of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Supporting individuals in their homes for up to six weeks, visiting them for 2 hours weekly, helping with odd jobs about the house in a way to allow them to do the task independently in the future » Supporting individuals to attend their place of work until they make friends and feel confident traveling and working alone » Supporting individuals for the first few weeks at their education facility, enabling them to feel confident and safe when going alone in the future » Supporting at a local social group, or at a new hobby group in their area » Supporting development of social skills whilst attending an activity eg. bowling, trampolining » Supporting an individual in travel training on a specified route chosen by the beneficiary <p>Each activity is tailored to the individual needs of the person requiring support and is based on what they wish to improve, whether that be employability or social skills.</p>		<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » personal, social and learning competence; » civic competence <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » organizing » time management abilities » ability to plan » interpersonal sensitivity » willingness to learn » communicative » patient » caring » reliable » punctual » helpful » responsible » attentive » sociable » adaptable 	<p>Commitment of two hours per week for a period of six months.</p> <p>Volunteers have to receive a specific training before starting.</p>

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
		<p>By improving self-esteem, confidence and well-being the volunteers who are engaged as Community Mentors are helping to reduce isolation, increase independence and lessen reliance on social care services. The beneficiaries in turn have a feeling of well-being and by taking part in activities are keeping well and happy reducing visits to doctors and hospital facilities. Volunteers involved also improve their levels of happiness and well-being and fell part of the community.</p> <p>Duration: six weeks two hours per week.</p>			

Activity 10

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
Youth Social field Education Active Citizenship	Tutoring and mentoring work for disadvantaged children and teenagers (after-school sessions)	<p>The activities in which volunteers are involved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Facilitating after-school tutoring sessions for individuals, where they can do their homework and/or receive help » These individuals could be socially disadvantaged young people that can use the safe space to do their homework as well as they can share experiences from school with the tutor » The tutorials they will facilitate, will include methods like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Team-building » Reduction of discrimination, prejudices and the appreciation of values such as tolerance, empathy, solidarity etc. » Time management and improvisation, providing a steady frame in the beneficiaries' everyday life » Professional communication, Q&A rounds, debates on school topics, but also non-verbal communication » Evaluation of the effects the activity had on the beneficiaries. <p>In order to facilitate high-quality tutorials, the volunteers will go through a training phase. This training will provide them the preparation needed to become a reliable tutor and mentor. There, they will learn about the theory of voluntary work as well as the transition of theory into practice. The training phase will include topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What is volunteering? What is its impact? What are the benefits, rights and responsibilities? » What does it mean to be a tutor/mentor? Which skills do I need to approach disadvantaged young people? » What teaching methods can I use to explain school-based learning? » How can I create a team-oriented environment, where the beneficiaries feel safe and understood? What methods can I use to motivate young people to do their homework? 		<p>Out of the 8 Key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communicating in the mother tongue / Communicating in a foreign language (if applicable) » Learning to learn » Cultural awareness and expression » Social and civic competences » Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship » Digital competences (if the volunteers prepare presentations, make videos of the activities etc.) » Mathematical, scientific and technological competences (if the tutorial will be about scientific courses.) <p>Skills/competences/ attitudes/qualities from the ProfilPass for Volunteering activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Team worker » Pro-active attitude » Ability to plan and carry out actions » Creativity » Resilience and flexibility » Patience and tolerance » Independence » Adaptability » Time management » ICT competencies 	<p>Partnerships with high schools and/or social centres to keep steady contact about the learning activities. These institutions could also provide the spaces for the tutorials.</p> <p>For the tutorials held at schools/ social centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Stationary (flipchart paper, markers, pens, paper, post-its, notebooks etc.) » Paper and pens, crayons, other school materials such as rulers, calculators etc. » Books, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedia, formularies and other exercise books <p>For training the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Trainers with experience on the topics mentioned and money to refund their teaching activities (if applicable) » Catering and coffee breaks » Workspaces for the training activities <p>For the voluntary tutors/mentors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional counsellors and contact persons that can provide technical advice on teaching methods and that are a reference person for socially and/or mentally onerous situations.

Domain(s)	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity	Name/Type of Volunteering Activity		Skills, competences and attitudes it develops	Resources needed
		<p>» How to deal with tragic or upsetting stories told by the beneficiaries?</p> <p>» Communication: How to interact with disadvantaged young people? What rhetoric methods can I use to teach?</p> <p>» How to assess their activities? How to assess my own activities?</p> <p>» Whom to contact if I recognise something wrong with the beneficiaries? (Close work with local social workers, teachers, if applicable for parents etc.)</p> <hr/> <p>The training is divided into two phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing phase of the volunteers 2. Implementing the structure of tutorials of 1.5 to 2 hours weekly <hr/> <p>The volunteering activity can vary depending on the number of potential young people that want to take part. The ratio of voluntary tutor and student should be one or two students (max.) to one volunteer.</p> <hr/> <p>If the volunteer realises that he/she can deal with more beneficiaries and/or more often a week, bigger groups or more sessions can be possible. It is advisable though to start with a small, manageable amount.</p> <hr/> <p>To reflect the social impacts and issues during the tutorial, it is also advisable to provide professional counselling sessions for the volunteers to report their experiences and problems.</p>			

2 B Difference between professional experience, work experience and employment history

At a European level, work experience is generally aimed at younger students and very early career planning. Work experience is typically a short placement of one or two weeks up to 1 year, where a student/young person will shadow an employee and get a feel for the work environment. He or she might be also asked to carry out certain tasks and small projects, part of a structured program or not.

Internship ⁵

1. A formal work experience arrangement that is part of an education or training course where the student needs to gain experience in a particular occupation or industry
2. Always a short term arrangement
3. Provides students with skills to help them transition from study to work
4. The work performed is not measured by productive activities
5. The volunteer, not the organization, is the chief beneficiary of the arrangement

Furthermore, work experience is focused on building the hard and soft skills needed afterwards for entering the labor market. The main beneficiary is the young person who is part of the process and not the community. Sometimes internships are called placements, and you'll be asked to reflect on how the work has helped you develop skills in relation to your particular subject area. These can vary quite a lot depending on the nature and size of the company. For example, larger companies might have a structured internship scheme much like a graduate programme, where young people or participants can be given a mentor and supported

Work experience in European language usually often refers to internships (but not only). Below you can see 5 key ingredients an internship has in order to make the difference between it and volunteering, which has a social cause and a different focus.

throughout the tasks and responsibilities they are asked to carry out. They also act as a solid grounding and introduction to a company; in some cases interns are offered a job at the end of the internship time. ⁶ Moreover, before moving on, it is important to acknowledge what volunteering is. There have been many attempts to define volunteering at an international level.

1. The terms volunteering, voluntarism and volunteering activities refer to a wide range of activities, whether formal or informal, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation. Volunteers act under their own free will, according to their own choices and motivations and do not seek financial gain. Volunteering is a journey of solidarity and a way for individuals and associations to identify and address human, social or environmental needs and concerns. Volunteering is often carried out in support of a non-profit organization or community-based initiative. ^{7 8}
2. Volunteering is a creator of human and social capital. It is a pathway to integration and employment and a key factor for improving social cohesion. Above all, volunteering translates

the fundamental values of justice, solidarity, inclusion and citizenship upon which Europe is founded into action. Volunteers help shape European society, and volunteers who work outside of their home countries are actively helping to build a Citizens' Europe. ⁹

3. Volunteering takes place in many sectors. The biggest area for volunteering is sport, followed

by social care, welfare and health. Other sectors include justice, culture, education, youth, environment and climate action, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy and equal opportunities. ¹⁰

In terms of roles, for a better understanding, we briefly described 5:

Volunteering Roles

- » A volunteer is someone who works unpaid for the main purpose of benefitting someone else
- » Volunteering activities have a social cause and aim to create a change into the community or offer a better living to people in need
- » There are countries (eg Romania) where there is a legal framework for volunteering that sets the grounds of the collaboration – a volunteering contract, a health and safety instruction, a volunteering certificate and a legal age. Most of EU countries, though, do not have a legal contract that binds a volunteer to perform or attend the activities.
- » No pay is provided for the volunteering activities performed.

All this being said, whether we are talking about volunteering or other types of work experience, the people who are going through those experiences are going through some learning processes, they gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that they later use in their personal and professional life. Professional experience one gains in all contexts (no matter if it is volunteering, work, employment experience) due to the fact that, being aware of it or not, one learns, gets better and then applies the learning subsequently. Work and employment experience, on the other hand, one gains only when the context itself has this as a main purpose, it involves a contract that sets the relationship between the two actors and does not necessarily involve a social cause.

⁵ <http://www.volunteering.com.au/internships-versus-volunteering-use-top-5-tips-tell-difference/>

⁶ <http://debut.careers/insight/difference-between-work-experience-internships-volunteering/>

⁷ Council Decision No 37/2010/EC on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011) of 27 November 2009, OJ L 17, 22.1.2010, p. 43–49.

⁷ United Nations General Assembly - Recommendations on ways in which Governments and the United Nations system could support volunteering - 76th plenary meeting, 5 December 2001

⁹ EU Citizenship Report 2010 – Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizen's rights, COM (2010) 603 final of 27 October 2010.

¹⁰ Manual on the measurement of volunteer work, International Labour Organization 2011

Chapter 3

Conclusions

- 3 A Why do volunteer? — Benefits of volunteering and how it can impact and contribute to building personal and professional experience.
- 3 B Aspects to be taken into consideration by policy makers, EU decision makers, labor market, volunteering organizations

3 A Why do volunteer? — Benefits of volunteering and how it can impact and contribute on building personal and professional experience.

- » In some countries, volunteering is considered professional experience by law
 - » After a volunteering experience, you can receive a Volunteering Certificate that specifies what activities you have been involved in, what responsibilities you had and what you have learned.
 - » You have the chance to exercise hard skills that you gain in formal learning contexts.
 - » You discover yourself, find out what career you would like to pursue, what motivates you and what change you want to effect in your community. You discover your strengths and weaknesses and discover how you can develop and improve.
 - » You can develop friendships that can last a lifetime because what bring you together are common passions.
 - » You learn about the environment and the society in which you live because you see the good parts and also the bad ones, which can make you more responsible and make you want to make this world a better place.
 - » You have access to a lot of information that can help you in your personal and professional life.
 - » You create contacts with people from many backgrounds with whom you can share ideas, perspectives and with whom you can later collaborate
 - » You learn to communicate effectively and discover the importance of teamwork.
 - » You are part of an offline social network, out of people who want to make a change, who have different experiences.
 - » You have the opportunity to give life to your dreams.
 - » You can try new things and get more courageous to get out of your comfort zone because you are never alone but have people who help you overcome your fears.
 - » You have the satisfaction of contributing to society through something that you enjoy doing.
 - » You can find a future job.
 - » Sometimes you travel, discover new cultures, new people and understand the importance of diversity.
- There are volunteers who say that through volunteering you learn to love, to be empathetic, to help. Others say that volunteering „is addictive“, fosters the feeling of fulfilment and contentment that you can have a real contribution to change.

3 B Aspects to be taken into consideration by policy makers, EU decision makers, Labor market, volunteering organizations

Under the direction of PLS, the EuroVIP project partnership had the capacity to produce a relevant summary document to communicate strong and useful recommendations to stakeholders. These recommendations are presented below, for wider public dissemination and higher impact towards decision-makers, for local, national and European policies.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Decision-makers should support unemployed people that want to volunteer.

Volunteering is a powerful lever to employment: scientists in the United States of America highlight the beneficial effect of inserting a job seeker in a volunteer experience, which increases on average by 27% their chances of success (Spera C., Ghertner R., Nerino A., Ditommaso A., 2013). This is even more powerful for non-bachelor-level job seekers and those living in rural areas, whose chances increase by 51% and 55% respectively. Empirical studies on the subject, with a more qualitative than quantitative approach, also confirm that volunteering promotes the return to employment of individuals who are distant from it. Volunteering missions should be encouraged by the decision makers, carried out, controlled and approved by the administration, but without creating a register.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Decision makers should promote tools and methods to help volunteers raise awareness on their skills.

For the acquisition of skills, volunteering has an educational dimension. The challenge today is to install an effective mediation between what is part of the learning phase and that of the mobilisation of the gains of the latter in the context of a job search. During this period, the persons concerned should be able to benefit from competent mediation to extract and evaluate the skills acquired, to make the person aware of these skills, so that they can be of professional benefit to them. Valorization aims to encourage the acquisition

of skills that volunteers themselves are not necessarily aware of, despite the fact that they experience it every day. The process consists of a self-evaluation process, maneuvered with the support of his supervisors. Support for this approach can take the form of a booklet, such as the Youth Pass or the Volunteer Experience Portfolio developed by the EuroVIP project.

Valorization of volunteering is an important lever to improve the professional integration of young people particularly affected by unemployment. Volunteer activities often take place in an informal setting, meaning that no certification can attest to the commitment or skills acquired. Validation aims to guarantee what does not come from a formal educational process. It comes in a summative form (obtaining a certificate) or a formative form (educational aim in the context of the development of a professional project). Indeed, experience alone is not enough; there is a need to build a discourse around the experience, around what has been done during the volunteering experience, from meaning to discourse, and from meaning around the experience. Skills acquired by persons can be accredited by public or specialized structures (such as Institut de l'Engagement in France).

RECOMMENDATION 3

Decision-makers should promote non-formal and informal learning contexts of volunteering, contexts throughout awareness-raising campaigns.

Decision-makers must support the effort to promote the non-formal and informal learning context. Volunteering should be seen as a serious work activity, not a hobby. As such, volunteering has to be recognized and supported, especially through advertising and awareness-raising campaigns.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Decision-makers should keep in mind and support that volunteering means that people are volunteers. The public authorities must promote the fact that volunteers are not expected to be, nor are they replacing, employees.

Our societies are going through a period marked by the scarcity of employment and its precariousness. From an economic point of view, a massive recourse to voluntary practice, whatever the situation in which it fits, carries a risk of development of substitution, precariousness and concealment of employment. Volunteer employment, despite being free labour, is not without cost. Its management, in particular, is delicate, not being restrained by economic imperatives, as would an employee. The management of a volunteer role requires a fairly heavy investment in management, which requires a lot of effort to discourage abusive recourse.

Performed for free, volunteering subtracts from the work activity the commercial and professional logics that organized it, producing alienation, creating exclusion, which then becomes emancipatory at the same time as being a socializer. The altruistic manifestation of the gift of selflessness, it also allows the individual, isolated or not, to seek the contact with society and to establish stronger links with it. Public decision-makers should encourage and further develop such practices of volunteering.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Decision-makers should support volunteering and involving volunteers in their actions and thus, they should approach hosting organizations for support in this matter

Any decision involving the use of volunteers must be developed and evaluated by structures that will know whether there is abuse or not. Indeed, decision-makers should adopt a new approach, in order to finally make use of volunteering both "more" and "differently". „More" by developing at all decision-making levels ambitious and coherent strategies for employing researchers through the exercise of a voluntary activity. "Differently" by associating job seekers and host structures in this design work, as much as possible co-constructed. The synthesis between the "more" and the "differently" certainly responds to the absolute necessity

of carrying out fiercely voluntary - but above all fair, balanced and consensual - reforms, conditions sine qua non for the success of the operation; the survival of "the goose that lays the golden eggs" is at stake.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Decision-makers should promote that financial benefits should not be sought from the employment of volunteers.

The free nature of volunteer activity does not imply the unproductive nature of it. On the contrary, volunteer activity creates capital, economic and social, just like any other paid job. The fear is that volunteer positions come to replace existing jobs. Volunteer commitments should not replace „traditional" jobs. They must help improve the quality of life of others without putting job prospects at risk. Volunteering must remain a civic engagement in which individuals voluntarily engage.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Decision-makers should support and encourage people to be concerned and responsible about their community issues, encourage the spirit of society with a view to territorial cohesion.

While an overwhelming majority of volunteers are committed to „being" useful to society and acting for others", other motivations also drive them. These other motivations are more personal although they always imply a necessary collective dimension, or at least external to the individual: "to link relations with others", "to defend a cause" or "to belong to a team".

RECOMMENDATION 8

It is important that the decision-makers promote associating of structures employing volunteers in the development of public policies.

When developing public policies, ask yourself if you can rely on the network of associations and social economy enterprises rather than just on the administration: make both work together.

Closing remarks

Thank you for using this guide.

We hope the guide has piqued your interest, that you have learned useful information that can help you create new learning experiences, effect community change and make your voice heard

We invite you to continue exploring opportunities and volunteer contexts where you can leave your mark on people and communities, make new friends and experience things you have not had the courage to try before. We encourage you to remember that nothing in this world is not impossible, especially when you have a team together, because together we are stronger.

Last but not least we hope that this guide helps volunteers, organizations, employers and decision makers, in equal amount, to acknowledge the reality that volunteering in becoming a valuable context to build skills and values needed in all types of working environments, in a society in a desperate need of integrity and empathy.

EuroVIP Team



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