



INCLUSIVE
VOLUNTEERING

Recommendations on inclusive volunteering



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These recommendations were developed as part of a transnational partnership, funded by the Europe for Citizens (EFC) - European Commission program, involving organizations from Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Serbia, and Slovenia.

The Vision: Promoting Solidarity and Inclusivity

At its core, our initiative seeks to create a society where every individual, regardless of their background or identity, is welcomed and valued. Through a series of collaborative events—a study visit in Ireland, a conference in Slovenia, and an experimental seminar in Croatia—we were striving to strengthen the narrative around volunteering being a crucial tool for the social inclusion of marginalized groups into mainstream society. By engaging local communities in the practice of inclusive volunteering, our mission extends far beyond conventional boundaries. We focus our efforts on empowering marginalized groups, with a special emphasis on the LGBTQI+ community, racialized individuals, and national/ethnic minorities.

A Crucial Link to European Agendas

Our work seamlessly integrates with the European political agenda, aligning with the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy of the European Commission. By positioning volunteering as a bridge between marginalized groups and mainstream local communities, we aim to promote solidarity among EU citizens and beyond. We recognize volunteering as a powerful force, capable of dismantling barriers of homophobia, xenophobia, and racism within NGOs and local communities. Volunteering brings people who might never meet in person into a joint experience and humanizes them to each other.

Our Methodology: Exploration, Collaboration, and Transformation

Throughout our journey, we have delved deep into understanding the concept of solidarity and the pivotal role volunteering plays in vulnerable communities. We've actively sought to create inclusive environments by collaborating with diverse stakeholders, exploring methodologies, and testing tools. Our endeavor extends beyond theory; we have mapped tangible examples of impactful volunteering within marginalized groups. These examples illuminate the path toward intercultural understanding and solidarity, inspiring change within local contexts.

Reaching Far and Wide: Dissemination and Engagement

Our commitment doesn't stop here. We were determined to reach 100,000 individuals through social media, engage with 10,000 through campaigns and street actions, and directly meet 1,000 young minds and citizens. Through these interactions, we aimed and managed to spark meaningful debates, nurtured intercultural dialogue, and contributed to developing a respectful, dynamic, and inclusive society.

Shaping a More Inclusive Future

We invite you to be a crucial part of this transformative journey. Your support, policy decisions, advocating for inclusive volunteering benefits and engagement are vital in ensuring the success of the continuation of the initiative. By endorsing inclusive volunteering, you are championing a future where diversity is acknowledged and celebrated and solidarity knows no bounds.

Between March 2021 and September 2022, five organizations (Youth Initiative for Human Rights Croatia, INAR Ireland, Loesje Berlin, Ljubljana Pride, and Youth Initiative for Human Rights Serbia) collected recommendations on inclusive volunteering, both via an online survey and during physical events. The majority respondents are young people coming from marginalised backgrounds and identities themselves. We collected **2540** responses and 915 recommendations for decision makers. A lot of recommendations were similar so we compiled them in a way to express their core idea.

Recommendations for decision makers and stakeholders:



1. Establish and/or update the national Law(s) on Volunteering and specify volunteering with/for marginalized groups and how to ensure their inclusion.



2. Establish regional volunteer centers as points of reference for more inclusive volunteering.



3. Argumentatively, consistently, and persistently promote volunteering benefits for volunteers and the community on a local and national level.



4. Recognize volunteer work as relevant work experience on national level.



5. Structurally support organizations in employing their long-term volunteers on national level.



Ensure **equal access to volunteering opportunities** of all volunteers, especially those with **marginalised backgrounds**, by investing in and promoting the **values of inclusion**.



Develop an **EU standard certificate of accreditation for recognition of skills** gained during volunteering.



In conjunction with the Volunteers' Charter, **develop a "safer spaces" policies template** for each volunteering group to develop and agree on a **safer spaces policy**.



Invest resources in **the education and support of volunteers**.



Ensure **constant and independent promotion of volunteering opportunities** by the state institutions but also schools and universities.



Monitor the implementation of the volunteer program and the creation of an **evaluation system** on a national level.



Introduce the **volunteer booklets on a national level** where **records** will be kept as a **structural way to follow the time invested** as well as **specific experience gained**.



Establish an **independent body** where the **volunteers can report the discrimination and/or hate they experience** while volunteering.



Provide **EU-wide recommendations** on how to **ensure differences between voluntary work and employed staff work**.



Ensure **EU-based structural support for the organizations to employ their long-term volunteers**.

Attachment:

Questionnaire on inclusive volunteering

About the questionnaire:

Within the Inclusive Volunteering project, which we implemented together with partners from Ireland, Germany, Croatia, and Serbia, we collected citizens' opinions and recommendations on what people need to volunteer what prevents them from volunteering, and what they would need to get involved in volunteering activities. Based on the responses received, we have developed concrete proposals that we have presented to the relevant institutions and partner countries.

In the attachment, we are presenting the questionnaire to gather opinions and recommendations about the needs and challenges facing volunteering or joining volunteering. This questionnaire can be used as a very useful tool to gather proposals and insights from (potential) volunteers. The questionnaire is available for you to download or print.

Questionnaire on inclusive volunteering



1. How old are you?

2. Mark all the statements that are true for you:

- I am an LGBTIQ+ person
- I am black or person of colour
- I have an immigrant background
- I am a refugee or asylum seeker
- I am part of the Roma community
- I belong to the religious minority
- I live in the rural area
- I face mobility issues
- I experience mental health issues
- I have different abilities / disabilities
- I have multiple marginalised identities
- Other: _____
- None of the above
- I am not sure

3. Have you ever participated as a volunteer in the European Solidarity Corps (previously European Volunteering Service) or Erasmus+?

Yes

No

I don't know

4. Have you ever been a volunteer or would you like to become one?

- Yes, I am a volunteer
- Yes, I was a volunteer but am no longer volunteering
- No, but I am considering to become a volunteer
- No, I do not wish to be a volunteer

YES, I AM A VOLUNTEER

What needs do you need to meet in order to be a volunteer?

- Covered food costs
- Covered transport costs
- Certificate of completed volunteering
- Certificate of acquired knowledge and competencies during volunteering
- Recommendation for a job or for involvement in other projects by the organization on the basis of completed volunteering
- Mentoring during volunteering
- Training before or during volunteering
- Possibility to volunteer from home
- Opportunity to volunteer in your hometown
- Adaptability and accessibility of the environment where volunteering takes place
- A sense of safety and acceptance in the organization where I volunteer
- Other: _____

What challenges do you face in volunteering?

- It is difficult for me to cover the cost of meals while volunteering
- It is difficult for me to cover the costs of arrival and departure from the location of volunteering
- I cannot prove that I volunteered
- I cannot prove that I have acquired certain competencies during my volunteering
- The competencies I acquired during the volunteering are not considered relevant
- I do not have enough support in carrying out my volunteer tasks
- I don't have enough information about where and how I can apply my volunteer experience
- I find it difficult to evaluate my acquired competencies in various fields (personal growth, labor market, society)
- I don't have enough information about the volunteer work I do
- My volunteer tasks do not fulfill me or are too easy

- I feel used because I perform the same responsible tasks as employees, but I do not have the same rights
- There are no opportunities (interesting to me) for volunteering in the place I live
- It takes me a long time to get to the volunteer location and back
- I experience discrimination in volunteering
- I do not dare to volunteer in organizations that do not specifically address my identities or circumstances because I am afraid that I will experience discrimination.
- I can't access or find it harder to access volunteering because the location or the rooms are not adapted to my needs (eg use of a wheelchair)
- I cannot access or find it more difficult to access volunteering because the course of volunteering activities itself is not adapted to my needs

We invite you to share with us concrete ideas on what volunteering would make more inclusive at the systemic level.



YES, I WAS A VOLUNTEER BUT AM NO LONGER VOLUNTEERING

What influenced you to no longer volunteer?

- It was difficult for me to cover the cost of food while volunteering
- It was difficult for me to cover the costs of arrival and departure from the location of volunteering
- I could not prove that I had done voluntary work
- I could not prove that I had acquired certain competencies during my volunteering
- The competencies I acquired during the volunteering were not considered relevant
- I did not have enough support in carrying out my volunteer tasks
- I did not have enough information about where and how I could use my volunteering experience
- I had a hard time evaluating my acquired competencies in different areas (personal growth, labor market, society)
- I did not have enough information about the volunteer work I did
- My volunteer assignments did not fulfill me or were too easy
- I felt exploited because I performed the same responsibilities as employees, but I did not have the same rights
- In my place there is no or there are no more (interesting to me) volunteer opportunities
- It took me a long time to get to the volunteer location and back
- I experienced discrimination while volunteering
- Location oz. the volunteer premises were not adapted to my needs (eg use of a wheelchair)
- The course of volunteer activities itself was not adapted to my needs
- Other: _____

What would you need to re-engage in volunteering?

- Covered food costs
- Covered transport costs
- Certificate of completed volunteering
- Certificate of acquired knowledge and competencies during volunteering
- Recommendation for a job or for involvement in other projects by the organization on the basis of completed volunteering

- Mentoring during volunteering
- Training before or during volunteering
- Possibility to volunteer from home
- Opportunity to volunteer in your hometown
- Adaptability and accessibility of the environment where volunteering takes place
- A sense of safety and acceptance in the organization where I volunteer
- Other: _____

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NO, BUT I AM CONSIDERING TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Why haven't you volunteered yet?

- I don't know how to start
- I don't know where to look for information on volunteering
- I don't know what I'm interested in yet
- I am afraid that I will not be accepted because of my identity or circumstances
- I am afraid that I will be discriminated against because of my identity or circumstances
- I fear that I will be a burden to the organization because of my specific needs related to my identity or circumstance
- Other: _____

We invite you to share with us concrete ideas on what volunteering would make more inclusive at the systemic level.



NO, I DO NOT WISH TO BE A VOLUNTEER

Why don't you want to volunteer?

- Because I don't want to do unpaid work
- Because I can't afford it.
- Because I don't have time for that
- Because I'm afraid I won't be accepted because of my identity or circumstances
- Because I am afraid of being discriminated against because of my identity or circumstances
- Because I fear that I will be a burden to the organization because of my specific needs related to my identity or circumstance
- Other: _____

What would it take to get involved in volunteering to change your mind?

- Covered food costs
- Covered transport costs
- Certificate of completed volunteering
- Certificate of acquired knowledge and competencies during volunteering
- Recommendation for a job or for involvement in other projects by the organization on the basis of completed volunteering
- Mentoring during volunteering
- Training before or during volunteering
- Possibility to volunteer from home
- Opportunity to volunteer in your hometown
- Adaptability and accessibility of the environment where volunteering takes place
- A sense of safety and acceptance in the organization where I volunteer
- Other: _____

We invite you to share with us concrete ideas on what volunteering would make more inclusive at the systemic level.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for users to provide their input on making volunteering more inclusive at the systemic level.

