

National
Volunteer
Management
Conference



Volunteer
Ireland

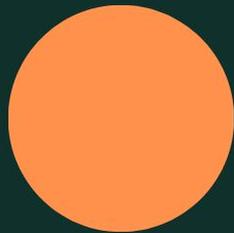
Obair Dheonach Éireann

Involving persons with disabilities as volunteers

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Project Officer

Centre for European Volunteering



Centre for European Volunteering

A SHORT INTRODUCTION



1992

Founded as the European Volunteer Centre
by:

- Association pour le Volontariat,
- Centre National du Volontariat,
- National Centre for Volunteering,
- Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato,
- Landelijk Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk
- Plataforma para la Promoción del Voluntariado en España

PARTNERS

Other stakeholders from the voluntary, business or governmental sector that subscribe to our mission and vision.

CEV

Centre for European Volunteering since
1 July 2020

60

Member Organisations

FULL MEMBERS

Dedicated to the promotion of, and support to, volunteering in Europe and European, National or Regional level.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Without the promotion of volunteering as a main mission.

CEV Members across Europe

European Networks

Albania

Austria

Belgium

Bulgaria

Croatia

Cyprus

Denmark

Estonia

Finland

France

Germany

Hungary

Ireland

Italy

Luxembourg

Malta

Netherlands

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

Sweden

Turkey

UK

Ukraine



CEV | Current Projects

REVIVE/VERA

TEAM IV

VIEWS

eQval

SLIPS

REAL

V-CALC

SPACE

UVMIS

Powered by V

MARVI

ILIVE

SLIPSTREAM

CEV | Other Initiatives

Advocacy and Networks

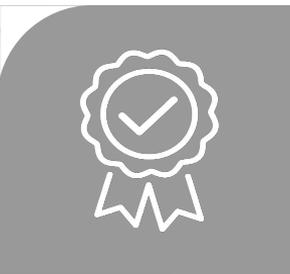
The EQF Advisory Group; Europass Advisory Group; Expert Group On Mobility Young Volunteers & Cross-Border Solidarity; DG EMPL Civil Dialogue Group; The ESC Advisory Group; EESC Liaison Group; INGOS of the Council of Europe; Civil Society Europe; Erasmus+ Coalition; SDG Watch Europe; Civil Society Convention On The Future Of Europe

Policy and Publications

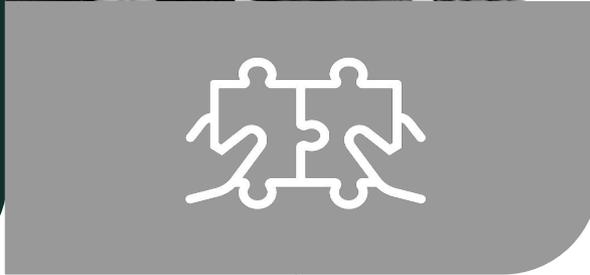
Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030; 2025 European Year of Volunteers; EESC Civil society days; The Road to Recovery; Volunteering in European COVID19 vaccination centres; Standing for Peace and Solidarity; Civic Service and Volunteering; Volunteering and Social Enterprises; Policy Statement on Volunteering & Social Enterprises; Policy Statement on Volunteering & European Civic Service

European Volunteering Capitals

European-wide competition launched in 2013 to promote and develop volunteering at the local level by giving recognition to municipalities that support and strengthen partnerships with volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations



INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS VOLUNTEERS



Volunteering Equality
Rights Action
VERA 2024



Co-funded by
the European Union

Project Number: 101140501

(Revealing European Values in Volunteering in Europe - REVIVE Project No. 101051131)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities as:

*‘those who have long-term **PHYSICAL, MENTAL, INTELLECTUAL or SENSORY impairments** which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’*

CONGENITAL DISABILITY



ACQUIRED INJURY

VISIBLE



INVISIBLE

PERMANENT

EPISODIC

TEMPORARY

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

Based on CEV evidence gathering through a survey and focus groups, we identified **FOUR groupings** for the different barriers to volunteering. These can overlap, interact, and compound one another, and as such should be considered aspects of a whole rather than clear cut categories isolated from one another.

1. Barriers in Outreach

**2. Barriers in
activity/project design**

**3. Barriers from
organisational structures**

4. Personal barriers

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

1. Barriers in outreach

- How organisations reach out to, and communicate with and to people with disabilities
- Method, as well as content, should be considered in terms of accessibility
- Presenting your organisation as inclusive

2. Barriers in activity/project design

- Clarity in terms of needs, responsibilities and roles
- Are the tasks suitable to the volunteer's specific needs and abilities?
- Could an innovative and imaginative solution be found to enable people with disabilities to implement the planned activities?

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

3. Barriers from organisational structures

- Resources and environment to be accessible
- Accessibility for certain disabilities, but not others
- Staff/Volunteers equipped with the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills, including of the legal and welfare systems within the country, to empower a disabled volunteer

4. Personal barriers

- More personal, or interpersonal, factors such as social stigma, lack of self-confidence within the volunteer, or lack of support structures within their home life to enable volunteering.
- Media portrayal, societal discussions, as well as past personal experiences, all contribute to building these personal barriers and misconceptions
- Assumption that people with disabilities will volunteer only on disability issues and/or in peer-to-peer support

1. SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS IN OUTREACH

- Content should be presented in an accessible way - readable, clear, appropriately sized font, easy to read colours, and accessible language
- Different ways of sharing information can reach different audiences - physical events, digital materials, audio, visual or written formats for example
- Emphasise inclusive credentials - Make clear that the project is accessible, and that people with disabilities have a place within the organisation
- Directly involve people with disabilities, particularly when designing communication and checking accessibility.
- Volunteers with disabilities included in dissemination material - Video testimonials
- Staff and volunteers have the right knowledge and skills when communicating with potential volunteers with disabilities, to motivate and handle concerns - requires training, an open mind, and a collaborative approach



2. SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS IN PROJECT/ACTIVITY DESIGN

- Variety of roles and tasks within the project for people with different abilities to contribute in different ways.
- Do the roles and tasks need to be more accessible, and if so how?
- Communicate directly with them to learn how best to support and empower the volunteer
- Individualised approach - Each volunteer can contribute in different ways, has different needs
- Is family volunteering used as a model of participating?
- Meaningful, impactful, and relevant tasks for the volunteer - Make use of their abilities to build towards a goal
- Recognition of contributions for the volunteer - Direct validation of skills, project celebrations, evaluation & review of progress throughout
- Support structures: Mentoring, Peer-to-Peer Support, Clear point of contact in the organisation
- Discussions on the structures/adaptations for a specific volunteer, take place involving that volunteer

3. SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS IN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

- Principles of inclusion, accessibility and collaboration should be implemented in the organisation's structures and approach, not just within projects
- Structures should be flexible, able to adapt to specific needs on a case-by-case basis
- A strong code of ethics should include not just non-discrimination, but also active inclusion principles
- Staff need the skills to approach and engage volunteers with disabilities, empathetically and respecting boundaries
- A safe environment which encourages and facilitates communication abilities and needs
- Physically accessible space
- Identify potential gaps - A space which is accessible for people with certain disabilities but not others
- Material resources to accommodate volunteers with disabilities



4. SOLUTIONS TO PERSONAL BARRIERS

The timeline of volunteer engagement should be accessible and inclusive at each stage:

Pre-Volunteering

First Impressions:

- how you present information - accessible, relatable format
- what you choose to present - positive role models, inclusive language

Aim: Make a volunteer feel welcome and see potential to grow in your organisation

During the Activities

- Supported by a someone they trust and feel comfortable with
- Clear meaningful tasks, fitting their abilities
- Resources there to meet their needs
- Clear procedure in case of conflict or issues
- Possibility for Family Volunteering

After the Activities

- Skills and contributions are recognised and celebrated
- Enabled to continue volunteering if they so wish
- Discuss other roles and tasks they could have in the organisation i.e. mentor

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

3 rounds of discussions in parallel (10 minutes per topic).

TOPIC 1:

Inclusive
Communication: More
Than Just Words

“How can we ensure that the way we communicate is inclusive - during recruitment, onboarding, and day-to-day?”

TOPIC 2:

Designing Volunteer
Roles for Everyone

“Many roles in volunteer programmes aren’t designed with disability inclusion in mind. How can we change that?”

TOPIC 3:

Unconscious Bias in
Volunteer Programs

“How do unconscious assumptions about disability influence who we recruit or how we assign volunteer roles?”

NEXT STEPS

Take a moment to fill out the worksheet provided (10 minutes). Afterwards, we will share with the group.

QUESTIONS

- *"One action I can take to make my volunteer programme more inclusive is..."*
- *"One resource I need to explore to improve accessibility is..."*
- *"One thing I will do differently when recruiting volunteers with disabilities is..."*

THANK YOU

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