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# Guide on the Role of Volunteer Managers in Facilitating Inclusive Volunteering in Europe



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*“Attention should be given to the promotion and facilitation of equal access to volunteering through the development of inclusive volunteering policies and programmes and due recognition given to the role that this plays in promoting inclusion.”*

Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

### Where it came from?

This guide resulted from the research and experiences shared by partners and participants during the **international Erasmus+ project “EVI-DEMS | Enhancing Volunteer Impact - Developing European Management Standards”** involving the following partners:

- Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (The Netherlands) – Coordinator
- CEV – Centre for European Volunteering (Belgium)
- HCRV - Croatian Volunteer Development Centre (Croatia)
- UL - Ljubljana University (Slovenia)
- OTB - Out of the Box Europe (Portugal)
- VDU - Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania).

The main objective of the project was to gain a greater understanding of the current situation regarding the training and qualifications available to - existing and potential - volunteer managers and **develop a Higher Education (HE) learning programme, and associated resources, for volunteer managers to be properly trained at HE level and receive a recognised qualification based on common European standards** for volunteer management training.

EVI-DEMS was driven to ensure that volunteers across Europe can be managed effectively and in a more ethical way, avoiding exploitation, instrumentalisation and job substitution. All the project results pushed to support increased diversity and inclusivity in the volunteering sector across Europe, but the development of the “Guide on the role of volunteer managers in facilitating inclusive volunteering” was crucial to this aspect of the project.

### What is it about?

This guide expects to play a huge role in increasing diversity and inclusivity in the volunteering sector, since more qualified and better prepared and trained volunteer managers, that understand about diversity and inclusivity, will mean that even more citizens from diverse backgrounds and realities will be able to contribute in a democratic and active way in their communities – thus contributing to immediate needs they see around them and to the future of the European Union.

The “Guide on the role of volunteer managers in facilitating inclusive volunteering” **is directed to practitioners, educators or students who wish to develop their volunteer managers abilities, assess the inclusiveness of organisations[1], and develop, manage, and follow up on proactive plans and strategies to mitigate risks of lack of inclusivity.**

Although the guide does not contain specific learning objectives, **it is also set to serve as a resource to facilitate the attainment of the learning outcomes outlined in the courses of the EVI-DEMS Master Programme.** This guide is only available in English, but it endorses useful resources and articles from different European countries. To acquire more information about the EVI-DEMS Master Programme, or other resource guides on volunteer management, please visit the project website at [www.evi-dems.eu](http://www.evi-dems.eu).

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[1] You may occasionally find references to "organisation" along the guide for easier reading purposes. Nevertheless, this guide wishes to take into account different contexts of volunteering, including "non-formal" volunteering outside the framework of a formally established entity.

# 1. CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING

## 1.1 Definitions around Europe

According to the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe[1], volunteering has value and importance as one of the most visible expressions of solidarity promoting and facilitating social inclusion, building social capital, and producing a transformative effect on society. However, some authors[2] argue that volunteering may contribute to social exclusion and reproduce existing social hierarchies, especially when it stimulates little diversity and engagement within its volunteer pool. As such, it is necessary to develop a greater understanding of the concept of inclusive volunteering.

**At the European level, “inclusive volunteering” is defined as volunteering opportunities that are available to all people regardless of age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, social status, or disability (CEV - Centre for European Volunteering). Nevertheless, this definition is not mainstreamed around European countries and the concept of inclusive volunteering is rarely mentioned in formal national documents. Thus, one can find very diverse national understandings of it, and most of them refer only to vulnerable or marginalized social groups.**

As an example, the principles of inclusive volunteering are defined by the Law on Volunteering in Croatia[3] requiring the volunteer organisation to pay particular attention to ensuring equal conditions for volunteering, but with special emphasis on the inclusion of members of socially excluded population groups and persons at risk of social exclusion. In other countries, such as Albania, the volunteering law[4] does not mention the concept of open opportunities for all but does refer to the possibility of a person with disabilities to volunteer. Also, in Belgium French-speaking community, since 2014, the law on the rights of volunteers has allowed people who have recently settled in Belgium to volunteer[5]. Yet, in most countries - such as Belgium (both Flemish and French speaking), Portugal, Netherlands, Slovenia, Denmark, Spain, or Slovakia – the concept of inclusive volunteering is not mentioned in any formal document, framework, or regulation. **Mostly, the concept of inclusion in volunteering is only mentioned by the principal actors in the field of volunteering at the practitioner level.** For example, Federació Catalana de Voluntariat Social in Spain operates by a framework that contemplates the right of citizens to participate and, specifically, their contribution through volunteering, whatever their origin, culture, or capacity. As such, they prefer to use the term “accessible”, that invites all to participate, instead of “inclusive”, which takes for granted that there are excluded individuals. The NGO - Slovene Philanthropy, which is the main actor in the field of voluntary work in Slovenia follows the above-mentioned CEV definition. Fundação Eugénio de Almeida, one of the main volunteer organisations in Portugal, share the written definition of CEV, although they add that inclusion is the participation of a person with a disability or any other difficulty that limits their opportunities to carry out conventional volunteering.

### PAUSE ~ QUESTION ? REFLECT \*

***“How do people in your organisation/ initiative define inclusive volunteering?”***

Support your team and board to understand and reflect on more comprehensive concepts of inclusive volunteering.

[1] <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/pave>

[2] Sachar et al. (2019) – You Shall (Not) Pass\_ Strategies for Third-Party Gatekeepers to Enhance Volunteer Inclusion

[3] Official Gazette 22/13, 84/21

[4] Law 45/2016 Article 5 - <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2016/04/28/45>

[5] <https://www.levolontariat.be/inclure-la-diversite-culturelle-dans-les-equipes-de-volontaires>

**This variation in definitions induces a poor understanding of the depth and potential of the concept of inclusive volunteering.** Although many volunteer-involving organisations consider themselves to be inclusive, the reality does not seem to reflect this. As part of the project Volunteering as a Tool for Inclusion[1], it became clear that the two most common types of inclusive volunteering are programmes targeting a specific marginalised group or volunteering done by former beneficiaries. Examples of individuals from vulnerable groups entering organisations without any previous connection to them or of individuals without a client-service provider relationship were the least common.

## 1.2 Inclusion, Diversity and Participation

**Diversity and inclusion in volunteering are complementary terms that go hand-in-hand, but the two are not synonymous. Diversity refers to the variations in terms of personal, physical, and social characteristics of individuals - such as gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and economic status, just to name a few -, while inclusion refers to the procedures implemented to integrate everyone into the project or organisation, thus enabling diversity to thrive.**

Diversity can make your project, team, and volunteers stronger by introducing new perspectives and experiences to your context and by better reflecting the variety in your community. But creators of inclusive volunteering environments must go beyond the conception of social groups and understand that each individual is just that – an individual. Two people from the same group may have very different perspectives, attitudes, interests, backgrounds, and abilities, leading to very distinct experiences. An inclusive volunteer environment avoids stereotypes and preconceptions because it understands individuals are unique intersections of the different groups they belong to and of their distinctive life stories and personalities.

Nevertheless, a programme can have diversity but not be inclusive, and that is often what organisational leaders fail to realize. **Inclusion goes beyond avoiding discrimination. It is about actively involving people and empowering them to belong to your project or organisation. Representation is just one piece of the puzzle since meaningful inclusion is also about welcoming and encouraging everyone to participate actively in the volunteer programme.**

Also, enhancing diversity and inclusion does not mean having to accept all types of people. A volunteer manager must have the right to decline a volunteer if they are harming the organisation or initiative or opposing its core principles and values (example: if the purpose of your volunteer programme is to fight for LGBTQI+ rights, you can decline a proposer volunteer who is visibly opposed to gay marriage and gender rights).

**The UN Volunteers - 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report affirms that “volunteers play significant and diverse roles in decision-making, in co-producing services, and in developing innovative solutions. Moreover, by tapping into the experiences, knowledge and aspirations of marginalised groups, volunteer-state partnerships are addressing development concerns and responding to the needs of communities, thus helping build equal and inclusive societies.”** Also, in the Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering: Recognising and Promoting Cross-border Voluntary Activities in the EU it is mentioned that “particular attention needs to be paid to the promotion of an environment for volunteering activities providing equal opportunities with regard to the access and participation of all individuals.”

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[1] That resulted on the “Recommendations for Volunteer Coordinators on How to Develop a More Inclusive Volunteer Programme”

To foster inclusion in volunteering, diversity and participation should come along and allow that a wide variety of people can have not only the right, but also the opportunity, the means, the space, and the support to engage in the volunteer programme in a meaningful way. This requires new practices, approaches, and commitments to be put in place, and it involves everyone – from other volunteers, to paid staff, partners, beneficiaries, and senior management.

## 2. ADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING

Promoting inclusive volunteering thus represents a challenging but wonderful journey for a project or organisation. Working with traditionally excluded volunteers, supporting teamwork with very diverse groups and encouraging the active participation of each will certainly be very challenging, but also very enriching. Inclusive volunteering will bring countless benefits to volunteers and institutions, as well as to the community in which they operate. Below we outline a list of advantages, but we are sure that an organisation or initiative that engages in inclusive volunteering will certainly find many others.

### Benefits for inclusive volunteering promoters:

- An opportunity to enlarge the volunteer pool - and since a diverse volunteer team strengthens the relationship between the organisation and the volunteer it also improves retention.
- Helps your team to improve cultural competences, learn new skills and expand perspectives.
- Opens the possibility for the volunteer manager to acquire new skills and experiences.
- An opportunity for the organisation to become a leader or case study in terms of inclusion.
- Staff and volunteers are more receptive to becoming involved and remain in an institution that is inclusive and who can manage diversity well.
- Improves community outreach by engaging a pool of volunteers that better represents the community.
- A diverse volunteer workforce increases the chances of beneficiaries being similar to volunteers which in turn helps improve better service delivery.
- Diversity and participation enrich the volunteer programme and activities.
- Helps fulfil the organisation's commitment to a positive impact on your community.

### PAUSE ~ QUESTION ? REFLECT \*

***“Why does your organisation/initiative think it needs to diversify the volunteer pool?”***

Support your team and board to understand the broad benefits of promoting a more inclusive volunteering. Inclusion is both a serious responsibility and a compromise. It must not be assumed just to serve as a promotional slogan!

### Benefits for volunteers:

- Sharing and communication with life experiences outside their usual social and employment circles.
- Access to new social networks and new opportunities, through the new volunteers but also new partners and social actors.
- Opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities.
- Promotion of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Possibility of acquiring new skills, new knowledge and new experiences.

- Opportunity to fight discrimination and practice respect towards all members of a diverse team.
- Being able to become an example and source of inspiration for others.
- Reduction of loneliness and exclusion.
- Creating better job prospects.
- Physical, mental, and emotional health gains, and all other regular benefits of volunteering.

#### **Benefits for the community:**

- Opportunity to strengthen the network between social services, public entities, NGOs, and other partners while expanding available activities in order to provide a better service to people belonging to vulnerable groups.
- Giving people from vulnerable or socially excluded groups the opportunity to become full members of society, a fact particularly relevant in situations where individuals are unable to find employment.
- Opportunity to get “extra hands” for activities developed locally and to improve the quality of life within the community.

## **3. VOLUNTEER MANAGER AS A LEADER FOR INCLUSION**

### **3.1 A positive divergent**

Quality performance and management, as well as social coherence always come from individuals. **Being socially coherent is also being strategic, connected, interconnected, having a broad vision of the present and the future, considering multi-relationships, multi-stakeholders, action and reaction, analysis of available resources, preservation of prosperity, etc. And that's where good management of an inclusive volunteer programme comes in.**

A “positive deviant or divergent”<sup>[1]</sup> is described as someone who does the right thing despite being surrounded by adversities. **Choosing to be an inclusive volunteer manager, as a career, means that the individual decides to make advocacy for the “ethics of inclusion”** a professional choice, and invest in this purpose inside the organisation in which they work. The leadership, management style, internal policies and communication of the manager, and of the organisation, should reflect this commitment.

#### **PAUSE ~ QUESTION ? REFLECT \***

***"How can you diversify your volunteer pool while having a specific target group?"***

If your project usually only accepts visually impaired volunteers, you can still work on the inclusion of LGBTQI+, physically disabled, gender, migrants - there is diversity within people with visual impairment. Or if your volunteer project is run by, and directed to, African student boys in Europe, maybe it can be very useful to have the support of European men, of entrepreneurial/ academic women, or of old African men, etc.

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[1] Sara Parkin - The positive deviant

In general, volunteer managers make a difference by seeing beyond the obvious, being perseverant, proposing solutions for existing challenges, and mobilising allies within their organisations, with the surrounding community or partner institutions. **They will feel resistance at times, as all established systems are resistant to change.** For this reason, volunteer managers also have the task of ensuring that everyone recognises the gains arising from inclusion, showing its value and benefits for the volunteer programme, for the organisation and the fulfilment of its mission and social value.

## 3.2 Creating an inclusive volunteering culture involves everyone

Volunteering based on high-quality management and performance presupposes openness and willingness to review the way organisations or programmes operate. This is even more important when you are trying to make volunteering more inclusive, as this drive should be seen as part of the foundation of volunteering and not just a 'bolt-on' to normal practice that only gets attention when specific needs arise. Thus, **the option of working with volunteers under principles of inclusion is not "neutral", it implies an option for an organisational style and a model of participatory action that should be encouraged by the volunteer manager but extended to all sectors of the organisation or initiative – from other volunteers, paid employees, partners, beneficiaries and senior management.**

However, to support managing expectations and not feeling overwhelmed, volunteer managers and teams must realize that introducing inclusion is a gradual and collective process and should be done step by step:

- Discuss inclusion concepts, benefits, and possibilities with your team.
- Analyse your project and local reality and determine what are the abilities, profiles, tasks that are more needed or important to be included, what is easiest to change or what is most priority.
- Analyse the internal and external barriers that you need to work on in order to be more inclusive.
- Create a gradual inclusion action plan.

Keep in mind that it is not realistic to change everything and that meaningful changes cannot be implemented in the short term.

### PAUSE ~ QUESTION? REFLECT \*

***"What is most important to change in the organisation/ initiative to be more inclusive?"***

***"What is easiest to change in the organisation/ initiative to be more inclusive?"***

Maybe translating all materials into Chinese is not a priority or easy. Perhaps the best option is to first translate key materials and forms into English or to introduce a gender-inclusive discourse.

**Another vital ingredient is that decision-makers in organisations can provide leadership, by supporting inclusivity and demonstrating why it is good for the organisation and its purpose.** Their governance style, instructions and communication should reflect this commitment. An open communication policy can encourage other team members to identify issues, make suggestions for improvements and receive feedback. Moreover, the leadership should support the capacity building of the organisation in terms of inclusivity, encouraging and providing conditions for the volunteer team and employees from other sectors to engage in assessments, new procedures and awareness or training actions related to inclusion.





**While considering setting up a volunteer programme to become more inclusive, it is a good idea to connect with individuals, organisations or institutions who are experts in inclusion or who are specialists working with particular or vulnerable groups.** They can help you promote volunteering among these groups, support targeting, enhance motivation, and help train potential volunteers, as well as other team members. **Only structured support and the approach of different stakeholders who work together and cooperate can create an enabling and supportive environment for inclusive volunteering.** It contributes to setting up and creating empowering attitudes, procedures, and commitments relevant to the development of an inclusive volunteering concept.

As described in the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe, the EYV 2011 Alliance[1] believes that *“some actions should be shared (among all stakeholders) and special effort invested to take coordinated action to increase impact and prevent the duplication of efforts and resources invested and ensure that volunteering promotion and implementation involves an inclusive approach. This will allow the capacity of volunteering to be maximised especially concerning its contribution to social cohesion and inclusion.”*

## 4. PROACTIVE STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE INCLUSION

### 4.1 Determine barriers and break them down

While analysing existing and potential barriers for the implementation of an inclusive volunteer programme, volunteer managers will need to have in mind both the internal structures and procedures of the organisation or initiative and the perspective from the eventual volunteers.

According to “Inclusive Volunteering – Recommendations for volunteer coordinators, on how to develop a more inclusive volunteer programme”, most of the challenges that organisations are confronted while designing an inclusive volunteer programme refer to:

- Lack of experience of working with diverse or specific target groups and consequently being fearful of involving them in volunteering.
- Lack of specific tools, resources or specialised equipment needed to work with specific volunteers.
- Lack of personalised procedures required in work with vulnerable volunteers.
- Concern that the management of these volunteers would be more difficult and time-consuming.
- Limited knowledge of which volunteer positions would be suitable for volunteers.
- Limited physical access for volunteers with physical disabilities.
- Fear of taking up the challenge and not knowing what to do if issues arise.
- Stereotypes and preconceptions that exist within the organisation or society.

**Overcoming all these challenges and barriers requires organisations to be willing to invest time and energy in training their staff to deal and manage volunteers from diverse or vulnerable groups while understanding that all this effort, when being done properly, is very worth it.**

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[1] European Year of Volunteering 2011 Alliance

The Institute for Volunteering Research[1] states that barriers that prevent people from volunteering in formal organisational settings are both psychological and practical. They affect people's willingness and ability to volunteer at different points in time: some operate when an individual first thinks (or doesn't think) about volunteering, others operate when they attempt to take their first steps into volunteering, and yet others operate after they have become involved. Some of the barriers that (potential or new) volunteers may face are:

### Before considering volunteering as an option

- Negative perceptions or lack of awareness of what volunteering is.
- Fear of being rejected or not be welcomed in an organisation/ initiative as volunteers.
- Previous negative experience(s).
- Lack of self-esteem, confidence or perception of being worthless for the organisation/ initiative.
- Perception of volunteering in a particular organisation/ initiative as an activity for only certain groups of people.
- Lack of knowledge about available volunteer positions or how to apply.

### Considering volunteering as an option but before taking the first steps

- Fear of being asked to do too much.
- Time constrains.
- Lack of childcare, or support for transportation or other expenses.
- Physical barriers and other accessibility or health issues.
- Concerns about risk/liability (from the volunteer or his/her tutor).
- Lack of opportunities to volunteer in a particular organisation/ initiative.

### After taking the first steps into volunteering

- Very complicated or formal recruitment processes and internal communication.
- Feelings or experiences of stereotypes, prejudice, or discrimination.
- Slow or no follow-up and support from the organisation or manager.
- Misalignment of expectations.
- Interaction and communication challenges.

Countering the barriers that prevent people from volunteering is, in fact, much more effective than merely appealing for individuals to volunteer more often. That is why volunteer managers must perform a diagnosis on the inclusiveness of their organisation or initiative to identify the existing barriers and work on a plan - together with their team and other stakeholders - to break them down.

### PAUSE ~ QUESTION ? REFLECT \*

#### *"How to manage positive and negative discrimination inside your volunteer programme?"*

Maybe you need to provide exceptional schedule benefits to a volunteer who is also a single mother. Volunteers from some vulnerable groups will probably need more frequent recognition. If you have a very low percentage of men volunteering in your programme maybe you can open a clause in favour of male proponents during recruitment.

Take the time to explain and discuss the reasons for these positive discriminations with your team and volunteer group.

[1] The Institute on Volunteering Research, 2004

**According to CEV a volunteer-based organisation or initiative that wishes to develop its inclusiveness should analyse the coherence between its mission and values and the type of volunteering opportunities they offer, and gain a better understanding of the inclusiveness of the opportunities they offer to work on becoming more inclusive in the future.** You may consult CEV “Inclusive Volunteering Toolkit”[1] for more assistance in performing an internal reflection and diagnosis on the inclusiveness of your organisation or initiative.

If you wish to receive better guidance on how to work on the inclusion of particular groups (gender, LGBTQI+, minorities, disabilities, refugees, etc.) please consult the manual Inclusive Volunteering - Recommendations for Volunteer Coordinators on How to Develop a More Inclusive Volunteer Programme[2]

## 4.2 Quality management for inclusion

Volunteer managers who wish that their programme can be more inclusive must implement a quality system at all stages of the volunteering programme management. This involves a complex process that must be facilitated and ensured by the volunteer manager, but involving everyone - from inside of the organisation, external partners and the local community! **The role of the volunteer manager refers to taking all the needed steps to ensure a professional management process, based on best practices and according to the specific requirements and needs of an inclusive volunteer pool.**

However, there is not a one size fits all proposal or quick fix when it comes to make a volunteer programme more inclusive. The following inclusive management cycle model is a suggestion from the author, but volunteer managers should adapt it according to their organisation, programme model or management charter.

### 1.Planning your inclusive volunteer programme:

- In-depth analysis of the assistance needs of the organisation/ initiative in its diverse sectors (employees, board of directors, volunteers, beneficiaries, etc.) and exploration of possibilities for the involvement of diverse abilities.
- Building a vision to introduce or advance inclusive volunteering in the organisation/ initiative or initiative (also in writing format) – ensure that everyone is involved and understands the importance.
- Design of the purpose and objectives of the inclusive volunteer programme.
- Analyse the internal and external barriers for an effective inclusive volunteer programme.
- Create a gradual action plan mediated between easier and higher priority measures/ actions.
- Establish volunteer profiles and tasks.
- Sourcing volunteers from the target group of an initiative (user engagement) can be a useful and positive approach but volunteer outreach and inclusivity should not be limited in scope in this way.
- Revision and adaption of internal policies and procedures of the organisation or initiative.
- Assessment and management of material, financial and human resources.
- Ensure the right support for volunteers (it may include partnering with external experts).
- Possible design of new projects.
- Development/ deepening of new professional competences among the team.

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[1] Dutch and French translations available at: <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/toolkits>

[2] Portuguese adapted translation available at: <https://www.fea.pt/social/voluntariado/centro-de-conhecimento/publicacoes-proprias/detalhe/voluntariado-inclusivo>

## 2. Recruiting process to reach volunteers with a wide diversity of profiles:

- Plan recruitment strategies making sure that its implementation is accessible also for volunteers with vulnerabilities.
- Create materials needed for the recruitment that can be visual and appealing but make sure the materials and messages are accessible and adapted to the capacity and profile of volunteers with diverse profiles (for example use an all-inclusive speech, designs materials to be readable by audio description tools, etc.).
- The application forms to be filled in by the volunteers (or tutors) should include key information about volunteers and their specific needs but should also give the opportunity to share positive competencies.
- Outreach potential sources for volunteers (such as schools, special schools, sections of a faculty, civic groups, associations, etc.), mobilize existing volunteers for finding and approaching other potential volunteers.
- Inform the primary contact persons about the inclusive volunteer programme and recruitment process so that they can offer consistent information.
- Periodically review task and role descriptions along with volunteers and those who work directly with them, update them according to the needs and evaluation results.

## 3. Selecting volunteers:

- While conducting the interviews, present the different activities offered and discuss in detail the organisation's, as well as the volunteers', expectations and needs.
- Online matching systems can be used as a resource, but in order to provide an inclusive and quality approach they cannot completely replace physical matching and support.
- In case the selection process takes too long or if there are reservations about the ability to provide a good experience to a candidate with vulnerabilities with a clear and realistic possibility to make a meaningful community impact, a possible strategy could be to place the potential volunteer in the organisation/ initiative as an observer until the selection process is completed.
- Create a clear, fair, and safe selection procedure.
- Include an intermediate pre-selection process to ensure that the volunteer can be sufficiently prepared for an activity (for example training, on-the-job training, trial period).
- Appoint suitable volunteers for the implementation of various activities – take into consideration the capacity and needs of each person.
- In case a suitable opportunity leading to meaningful community impact cannot be identified, make efforts to support the person in contacting other organisations and/ or initiative with the potential to do so.

## 4. Volunteer orientation and training:

- Develop an orientation programme for all volunteers, regardless of the activity they will be involved in - keep in mind to adapt the organisation's presentation materials to volunteers with specific needs.
- Identify assistance needs of team members regarding their work with volunteers, offer counselling and implement regular seminars on inclusive volunteer programmes and management.
- Evaluate volunteers' training needs, including those of vulnerable volunteers and create the initial training plan together with the supervisors of volunteering activities and more experienced volunteers.
- Evaluate volunteers' training needs, including those of vulnerable volunteers and create the initial training plan together with the supervisors of volunteering activities and more experienced volunteers.
- Review and adapt training manuals and prepare useful documents.



## 5. Supervising and monitoring the volunteer programme:

- Organize regular meetings for volunteer management with the staff of the organisation.
- Offer the volunteers a chance to take part in individual and team meetings.
- Establish/revise the timetables and volunteers' support measures.
- Be available to clarify and solve issues and, if needed, to offer emotional support.
- Monitor the way in which vulnerable volunteers are involved and whether the volunteering is in agreement with their capacity and abilities.
- Make sure that supervisors treat all volunteers with respect and dignity and that the mutually agreed values and procedures of the programme are safeguarded.
- Develop a regular evaluation plan to assess and discuss volunteers' progress and evaluate individual performance with the volunteer and with the supervisor.
- Offer feedback and consultancy for efficient activity implementation.
- Be a role model in terms of professional behaviour.
- Establish evaluation plans for the volunteers.
- Stay in contact and remain available for each volunteer, employee, beneficiary, or partner.
- Create tools for monitoring volunteer activity, including risk assessment and overall project management.
- Offer tools and train volunteers to perform self-assessments.
- Use the data obtained in project planning and management process.

## 6. Motivate and recognise volunteers' merits:

- Ensure volunteers' motivation and appreciation by promoting a welcoming atmosphere within the organisation, organising events, activities, and training opportunities.
- Identify individual motivating factors of the volunteers and try to adapt the strategy to them.
- Establish a way in which volunteers can express their feedback and evaluation and offer suggestions.
- Encourage and support putting in practice volunteering activities developed by vulnerable volunteers.
- Promote an efficient communication among all those involved in the volunteering.
- Coordinate formal recognition activities for all the volunteers, but also identify volunteers who deserve special recognition, keeping in mind the diversity of conditions and abilities among your volunteer pool - volunteers from vulnerable groups may need and benefit from more frequent recognition than might be the case for more mainstream volunteers.
- Involve official representatives of the organisation into the recognition process.
- Draft recommendation letters and ensure certification of competencies and support given by each volunteer.
- Assess and ensure that there are opportunities for volunteers to grow or take on new responsibilities within the programme or organisation.

## 7. Evaluation of the volunteers and the volunteering program:

- Coordinate regular programme evaluations and ask all those involved in the volunteering programme to collaborate.
- Create diverse tools for volunteer and programme evaluation, including quantitative and qualitative evaluation factors.
- Analyse the data, return the results to all those involved in the volunteer programme and adapt/design an action plan based on the evaluation - offer the opportunity to volunteers to present their ideas and proposals.
- Coordinate interviews for closure of the activity with all volunteers who are leaving the organisation, regardless of their reasons.

## CONCLUSIONS & FINAL REMARKS

The concepts of “inclusive volunteering” vary greatly among different contexts across Europe, and most of them concern to volunteer programmes targeting a specific socially excluded group or done by former users. However, at the European level, CEV presents a more comprehensive interpretation, defining it as volunteering opportunities that are available to all people regardless of age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, social status, or disability.

The principle of inclusion in volunteering brings along the concepts of diversity and participation, implying that a wide diversity of people can access volunteering opportunities but also that they can have a say in the processes and decisions that regard them and the service, encouraging them to be active in the volunteer project and, ultimately, in their own lives and within the community.

It is important to reaffirm that inclusion is a process outcome, not an activity. It implies a dedicated and ongoing commitment to improving access to opportunities and providing supported and rewarding volunteering experiences and encourages the involvement of all parties involved in the volunteer initiative or programme, including leadership to paid staff, other volunteers, local partners, and the community. Likewise, it requires that volunteer managers and organisation leaders are willing to review barriers and readapt structures and processes in a way that can favour participation over efficiency, but it also implies acting on a daily basis in line with the principles of inclusion and thus living in greater coherence with the mission of the organisation/initiative and with the fundamental principles of volunteering[1].

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[1] For more information, please consult other EVI-DEMS guides for practitioners at [www.evi-dems.eu](http://www.evi-dems.eu):

- European Code of Ethics for Volunteer Managers
- Guide to volunteering, solidarity, and European values
- Guide to managing volunteers contributing to disaster prevention, preparedness, and recovery in Europe

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report - Building Equal and Inclusive Societies. United Nations Volunteers (UN Volunteers). (2021). [https://swvr2022.unv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/UNV\\_SWVR\\_2022.pdf](https://swvr2022.unv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/UNV_SWVR_2022.pdf)
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