



Pre-experience Master Program for volunteer managers

This document

details the various elements of the Evi-Dems project and in particular: The master program for volunteer managers. It outlines its components, uses and design philosophy.



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The Evi-Dems project in summary

What?	Erasmus+ partnership	Creating a pre-experience master program of 60EC	And practice-oriented guides on EU volunteering, ethics, disaster management and inclusivity	For Volunteer managers
Why?	Increasing educational offering in EU	Improving the quality of volunteer management in the EU	Adding to the professionalization and legitimacy of the profession.	
How?	Through collaborative effort by:	 Rotterdam School of Management  University of Ljubljana  Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas	 The European Centre of Volunteering  The Croatian volunteer center  Out of the Box	

The project results

Evi-Dems consists of **6 project results** in total. Alongside the master program for volunteer managers, the project created five additional results. These are detailed below and downloadable [here](#).

The state-of-the-art report on volunteer management education

A cross-national study into formal and informal training opportunities for volunteer managers.

Pre-Experience Master Program for Volunteer Managers

A full 60EC (full year) program consisting of 4 modules and 12 courses covering all the building blocks of volunteer management.

The European Code to Ethical Volunteer Management

A guiding document to the philosophy and values of volunteering, laying out their core elements and possible actions for volunteer managers.

The Guide to Volunteering, Solidarity and European Values

Providing insights and guidance on the link between volunteering values and the core values of the European Union.

The guide on inclusive volunteering

Guiding volunteer managers in their role in facilitating inclusive volunteering in Europe. Diving into concepts and concrete strategies.

The Guide on Disaster Volunteering

A guide to managing volunteer contributions to disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery in Europe.

The Master Program for Volunteer Managers

A brief overview of the program

Pre-Experience Master Program for Volunteer managers

The program consists of four modules which contain 3 courses

That can be taken individually or together

A course is a combination of, lectures, assignments, and exercises that cover a topic

A single module will consist of 15 ECTS, leading to a 60 ECTS program



The modules will cover volunteer management from different perspectives:

- The individual level;
- The organizational level;
- The society level,
- and continuous professional development for volunteering managers

Overview of the courses

Each of the four modules features three courses. Each course represents a building block of what is needed to understand volunteers and manage them. Each course can award students with 5 ECTS. Meaning each course requires 140 hours of student time to complete.

	M1 Individual level	M2 Organisational level	M3 Societal level	M4 Professional level
Course 1	Who is a volunteer, Volunteer resources, antecedents	Diversity of volunteer involving organisations in theory and practice	The value of volunteering	The ethics of volunteer management
Course 2	Motivations to volunteer	Quality volunteering with inclusion dimension	Legitimacy of volunteering in society	The volunteer managers profession(al)
Course 3	Volunteering throughout life	Recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers (advanced)	Volunteering infrastructure and ecosystem	The reflective volunteer manager

Programme level learning objectives

The master programme has learning goals per course. These link back to underlying programme learning objectives. After doing this master programme, students:

1. **Understand** the theory underlying volunteering, volunteers, and volunteer management.
2. **Understand** the specific complexities of the different contexts of volunteering and of volunteers.
3. **Can** analyse the specific components of a volunteer context.
4. **Can** analyse and integrate developments in the field of volunteer work, volunteer work and volunteer management in different contexts.
5. **Can** evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of volunteer policies and practices in different contexts.
6. **Can** create or innovate a volunteer policy and (ethical) practice for different volunteering and volunteering contexts.
7. **Can** create perspective and reflection on your own (ethical) position as a volunteer manager.

Important aspects highlighted

- **Master level**

This program is designed to be taught in higher education institutions at a master level. This is distinctly different from a bachelor's level in multiple ways. Master programs are highly specialised, and assume the student has considerable background knowledge, meaning much more advanced topics can be covered, instead of the fundamentals. Interaction between students and the material is also more complex and richer. The program focuses on critical thinking and analysis, requiring students to challenge what they are taught, and have critical discussions and debates about the content. This will train students in having a holistic high-level perspective and understanding the complex interconnectedness between subjects. Master programs also often cover the professional level more often, preparing students for their upcoming career.

- **Pre-experience**

The Evi-Dems program is aimed toward a pre-experience audience. This means students are not required to have relevant work experience. Pre-experience education is thus much more accessible, making the program more broadly teachable in the EU context. Post-experience education needs to consider all the experiences students can bring to the program, making it a more complex teaching setting. The realities of volunteer management and civil society in Europe also vary widely, making relevant post-experience education more complexly tailor made. Additionally, the infrastructure for pre-experience education is much more widespread.

- **Overall goal of the program**

The overall goal of the master program is to teach students to become a competent and insightful volunteer management professional that can navigate the civil society challenges of today and tomorrow. This means understanding how volunteers interact with their environment, and vice versa, and simultaneously understanding the ever-developing boundaries, demands and dynamics of the various actors and systems at play.

- **Student background**

Being pre-experience and master level, means students need background knowledge. A background in either management, business administration, human resources, public administration, sociology, psychology, communications, or sociology, among others, are most suitable.

- **Modules and courses**

By having four modules, the program succeeds in examining all relevant building blocks of volunteer management, from all relevant unique perspectives. Following a micro, meso, macro, meta framework, (individual, organisational, societal, and professional) has allowed for the creation of an all-encompassing, interconnected program, yet with a clear distinction between courses. In each course manual we describe how the course links to the other courses.

- **Three courses per module**

For the courses to be of significant enough size to cover the topics they address, and yet cover a wide range of topics a course workload of 5 EC was selected. This course size is very common within European higher education institutions which makes modules and courses better transferable.

- **Usability of the program**

The program has an overarching learning goal, as previously described, not offering the complete program negates achieving that goal. However, each course is designed to be teachable in a standalone manner. The learning objectives of that course can still be

achieved. Using a single module for 15ECTS worth of credits would fit well as a minor program.

The four modules explained

Each module reflects a different perspective on volunteer management.

- **The Individual Level** pertains to the individual volunteer. Courses, lectures and assignments revolve around understanding the volunteers themselves and the role volunteering has in their lives.
- **The Organisational Level** teaches students to understand the variety within volunteer involving organisations and how organisations interact with volunteers.
- **The Societal Level** takes on a more international perspective, by looking at how volunteering is valued, legitimised, and examining the higher-level systems that are in play.
- **The Professional Level** focuses on both the profession and professional. Students are confronted with the difficult challenges volunteer managers face and how to deal with them. This module also features the students discovering the plethora of opportunities volunteer managers have and are taught to navigate them.

Products and documents

For the master program, a multitude of documents were created.

1. Course manuals

Each course comes with a course manual which describes all relevant elements of the course:

- Detailed course description
- Learning objectives
- Detailed lectures descriptions
- Short Assignment descriptions
- Assessment matrix
- Study hour breakdown
- Study plan
- Used literature

2. Assessment plan

Each course's assignments are then further detailed in an assessment plan, which contains the following elements:

- Short assignment descriptions
- Assessment Matrix
- Detailed assignment descriptions
 - How learning objectives are connected

- Description: describes exactly what is expected to happen for the assignment
- Deliverable: describes exactly what students will create for the assignment
- Grading criteria

3. Slidedecks

A set of slides providing classroom instructions and suggestions for content and the sequence thereof.

4. Learning objective overview

A table providing an overview of all learning objectives of all twelve courses within the program. This makes it easy to gain an understanding of the program's overall goals and to assess the interconnectedness and quality of the learning objectives.

5. Literature Overview

This Excel file shows which literature is used in which course. Providing an overview of the total literature and making assessing interconnectedness easy. This also makes the overall literary narrative easier to follow.

Minor program inspiration

The Evi-Dems master programme is intended to be used not only in its complete 60EC form, but also through combining various courses with clear intent. Throughout the project, and with input from the team of participating experts during our C1 training in Lithuania (Dec 2023), we have created various possible combinations.

These combinations are intended for different target groups, such as post experience students / current volunteer managers, policy makers, funders etc. and will help students reach goals relevant to their (pre-experience) discipline, current- or future job.

Naturally, there are more combinations possible. We will elaborate on the combinations below.

The individual level

Target group: those who want to understand the volunteer themselves

- M1c1 – who is a volunteer, volunteer resources and antecedents.
- M1c2 – the motivation of volunteers.
- M1c3 – volunteering throughout life.

The organisational level

Target group: students that want to understand the organisational aspects behind volunteer management.

- M2c1 – diversity of volunteer involving organisations in theory and practice.
- M2c2 – quality volunteering with inclusion dimension.
- M2c3 – recruiting, training and retaining volunteers (advanced).

The societal level

Target group: for those seeing to understand volunteering's place within society.

- M3c1 – the value of volunteering.

- M2c2 – the legitimacy of volunteering in society.
- M3c3 – volunteering infrastructure & ecosystem.

The professional level

Target group: for volunteer managers seeking professional development.

- M4c1 – the ethics of volunteer management.
- M4c2 – the volunteer management profession(al).
- M4c3 – the reflective volunteer manager.

Volunteering from scratch

Target group: for students without any volunteering experience seeking to understand the basics.

- M1c2 – motivations to volunteer.
- M2c3 – recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers (advanced).
- M3c1 – the value of volunteering.

The what, why and how of volunteering

Target group: students with some volunteer management experience seeking more advanced insights.

- M1c1 – who's a volunteer, volunteer resources & antecedents.
- M1c2 – motivations to volunteer.
- M1c3 – volunteering throughout life.
- M2c3 – recruiting, training and retaining volunteers (advanced).

Diving into volunteer management

Target group: students interested in volunteer management & quality aspects.

- M2c2 – quality volunteering with inclusion dimension.
- M3c3 – volunteering infrastructure & ecosystem.
- M4c2 – the volunteer management profession(al).

Working with volunteers as a professional

Target group: for those working directly with volunteers, understanding them, and reflecting on their own (ethical) practice to become better in their role.

- M1c2 – motivations to volunteer.
- M4c1 – the ethics of volunteer management.
- M4c3 – the reflective volunteer manager.

Understanding the diversity of volunteer involving organisations

Target group: for students seeking to better understand the breadth volunteer involving organisations have to offer and especially how context is an important differentiating factor in volunteer management.

- M2c1 – the diversity of volunteer involving organisations in theory and practice.
- M3c2 – the legitimacy of volunteering in society.

Understanding volunteer involving organisations for funders

Target group: those who must gauge and assess the quality of an organisation in a funding process.

- M2c2 – quality volunteering with inclusion dimension.
- M3c1 – the value of volunteering.
- M3c2 – the legitimacy of volunteering in society.

Creating policy for the enhancement of voluntary effort

Target group: anyone involved in seeking to develop volunteering / voluntary effort in their context. Could be on a local government or even national level.

- M3c1 – the value of volunteering.
- M3c3 – volunteering infrastructure & ecosystem.
- M1c1 – who is a volunteer, volunteer resources & antecedents.

Adapting to culture

Target group: for professionals finding themselves in a new organisational reality, seeking to adapt to its context, culture, and complexities.

- M2c1 – diversity of volunteer involving organisations in theory and practice.
- M4c3 – the reflective volunteer manager.