



Be a Volunteer!

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The Be a Volunteer! project aims to develop and strengthen the skills of young people (aged 16-30) with disabilities, enhancing their employability and active social participation through volunteering activities.

The project will utilise non-formal educational methods for the training of young individuals, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Throughout the project, skill-building programs will be designed and used to support volunteering coordinators and people with disabilities to participate in inclusive volunteering activities.

This is the first Be a Volunteer! newsletter, through which we want to keep you informed about the progress of the project.



FIRST TPM

The partners met for the first time in Budapest, in March 2024. They spent two days in the heart of the city getting to know each other and sharing the hopes they have for the project.

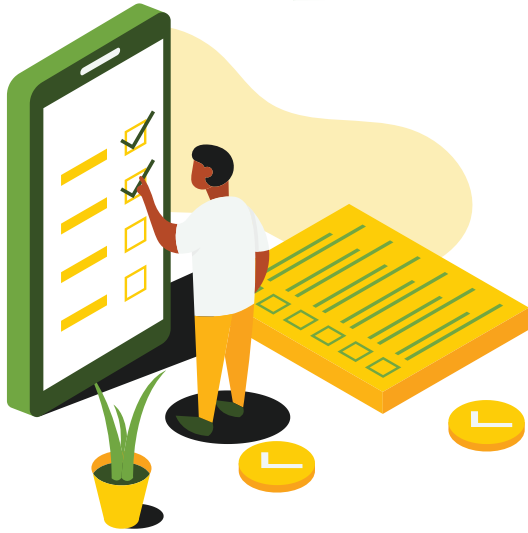
Bringing varying expertise to the table – from knowledge on running inclusive programmes to strengthening active civic participation to representing service providers, and much more – the partners were able to bring together their unique knowledge in order to map out the next steps of the project.



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PROJECT'S FIRST RESULTS



Onto work! The first step of the project was the collection of good practices from support service providers and civil society and volunteer organisations.

The project partners were looking for good practices in the form of successful strategies, approaches, and initiatives implementing inclusive volunteering for youth with disabilities.

The partners collected over 20 good practices, out of which they made a selection for their Handbook of Best Practices.

Additionally, they produced and shared a Youth Worker Competence and Skills Questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to explore the competences and skills required for youth workers to successfully involve young people with disabilities in volunteering activities.

TRAINING IN BULGARIA

The Competence and Skills Development training brought together 35 participants- young people with disabilities, youth workers, and non-disabled young people from Bulgaria, Hungary, North Macedonia, Italy, and Spain. The three-day event, held at the Astoria Grand Hotel in Sofia, aimed to develop the competences and skills of young people with disabilities through volunteering.





The activity was designed to provide a unique space for participants to test innovative tools and methods, focusing on non-formal education and experiential learning. The program was packed with engaging activities, including interactive games, group building exercises, and a shadow theatre workshop. Participants also had the opportunity to design and implement their own volunteering activity in the heart of Sofia. During the volunteering action they cleaned a park, painted and danced Flamenco with locals and promoted the Erasmus+ program and its opportunities for young people.



The event was a great success, with participants reporting feelings of empowerment and motivation to engage in more volunteering activities in the future. They also made new international friendships and developed valuable soft skills. As a tangible outcome of their participation, all participants received a Youthpass certificate, recognising their learning outcomes.

Our project will continue with a training event in Sardinia, Italy, taking place in early October 2024. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved!

“ I have enjoyed all the activities proposed by the organisation and the other volunteers, and also the time spent doing these activities. I would also like to emphasise that the activities have allowed me to feel more relaxed and part of the group.

This experience has allowed me to learn a lot about other cultures and gain self-confidence. Thanks to this, I notice that I have lost my initial embarrassment and I have become more uninhibited, although I need to lose more of it. I would have liked to be able to have more interaction with the other colleagues but I understand that I have to practice my learned skills such as the use of mobile devices for translation and non-verbal communication.

-Alfonso (Participant)



I have liked everything so far; the group of volunteers is very heterogeneous and the activities have made me feel included. However, I think there should be more breaks, even if they are short.

I would like to highlight the treatment received from the technicians, especially Emilio, Álvaro and Miguel, because they have helped me a lot during the whole experience. I would definitely love to do it again and continue growing as a person and developing my skills as a future volunteer.



-Ana (Participant)



BE A VOLUNTEER ON THE MOVE

Once the partners created a flyer for the project, it was time to share it around!

The Bulgarian partner, Fondatsiya "Tsennosti, dobrodeteli, integritet" , shared the flyer at the international conference "Community Impact in the European Solidarity Corps" in Sofia, Bulgaria. The event was attended by 60 persons which represented organisations from 18 different countries.

The Belgian partner, EASPD, co-hosted an international conference in Bratislava, on 20-21 May 2024. The conference was on the topic "Guaranteeing Choice & Control: Transforming Mental Health and Psychosocial Disability Support" and was attended by around 300 people, also from pan-European organisations. There, they shared around the flyer and presented the project at their designated project desk.

