



ERASMUS+ PROJECT

**“SOLIDARITY COMP: PROMOTING YOUTH SOCIAL PARTICIPATION THROUGH SOLIDARITY
AND VOLUNTEERING COMPETENCES”**

(Project 2023-3-PT02-KA152-YOU-000173651)

E-book “SOLIDARITY COMP: What do I need to know to volunteer in my community?”



Index

Introduction.....	3
1. The Erasmus+ project "Solidarity Comp: Promoting Social Participation of Young People through Solidarity and Volunteering Skills" (youth mobility).....	4
2. General considerations about the e-book.....	8
3. The concepts of volunteering and volunteer, associated issues and the benefits of volunteering.....	9
4. The different areas of volunteering	13
5. The ethical principles of volunteering.....	18
6.The rights and duties of the volunteer.....	19
7. Research of organizations and projects for volunteering in my community.....	21

Introduction

This is a guide for young people on what they need to know about volunteering in their communities, in order to inform them, motivate them and guide them.

This is the result of the work carried out by young people participating in the Erasmus+ Youth Exchange project "Solidarity Comp: Promoting the Social Participation of Young People through Skills of Solidarity and Volunteering", which took place between 28th August and 1st September 2024 in Alqueva, Portugal.

Therefore, it is intended not only for young Portuguese people, but also for those living in the various countries of the partner entities of the Erasmus project referred to.



1. The Erasmus+ project "Solidarity Comp: Promoting Social Participation of Young People through Solidarity and Volunteering Skills" (youth mobility)

This project, which had the Associação Sementes de Esperança (from Portugal) as promoter entity, had the partner of five more foreign partners entities (Lokalna Akcijska Grupa Vallis Copalapis, from Croatia; Entrepreneurship and Social Economy Group, from Greece; EuroSud, from Italy, Just do It, from Poland and ATIC, from Romania), had as its fundamental objective to motivate young Europeans for volunteering as a motor of inclusion and participation.

Framing

Recent data from the European Union show in the European context, the demotivation and low adherence of young people to volunteering, which, being one of the most enriching forms of alternative participation from the point of view of the volunteer and society, is inextricably linked to the growing and widespread disinterest of young people in terms of participation in democratic life.

This situation is even more evident among young people from rural regions, who tend to exhibit lower levels of motivation, interaction, proactivity and dynamism, resulting in their decrease in social participation and everything that is connected to it, with emphasis on volunteering.

The low values of young people's participation in democratic life reveal the need to bet on a project that promotes solidarity and volunteering among young Europeans.

Problem

The lack of participation of young people in democratic life.

Needs that the project aimed to address

- a) Greater understanding of the individual and collective benefits of volunteering, including developing professionally useful skills and reducing social exclusion, to increase their motivation and uptake;
- b) Development of core values and skills for volunteering, in order to provide confidence in engaging in volunteer activities;
- c) Using non-formal approaches to explore the specific ambitions of each young person, combining them with the local needs of each territory, so that each volunteer is useful for both parties;
- d) More knowledge about the opportunities available in the field of volunteering, at local, national and international level, to facilitate access to them.

Specific objectives

- a) Provide young people with an opportunity for transnational non-formal learning and active participation;
- b) To make young people aware of the advantages of volunteering;
- c) Explore opportunities for local, national and transnational volunteering with young people;
- d) Develop a set of transversal and essential skills throughout the life of young people, promoting their ability to engage in voluntary actions.

Method of work used

The work carried out by the young participants of the project in this context was based on the non-formal work methodology.



2. General considerations about the e-book

This e-book, which is based on the question "What do I need to know to volunteer in my community?" addresses the following:

- The concepts of volunteering and volunteer and benefits of volunteering
- The different areas of volunteering
- The ethical principles of volunteering
- The rights and duties of the volunteer
- The search for entities and projects that offer volunteer opportunities in my community

3. The concepts of volunteering and volunteer, associated issues and the benefits of volunteering

Volunteering

To be willing to help others without expecting anything in return.

Volunteer

It's basically offering and dedicating your free time, services, skills and knowledge to help others in need, without any payment.

Volunteering can be individual and, in a group, and it often benefits both: the volunteers and recipients.

What do I need to know to volunteer?

It is therefore essential to know that we will probably not receive anything in return and expect nothing. And it is also mandatory to know what kind of activities we will be doing, because not everyone is able to do everything.

We have to know what we want to do as volunteers, so we don't get tired, because it's hard to do something that we don't like.

Voluntary work is a form of social contribution that does not involve remuneration or employment. It consists in devoting time and effort to the performance of activities aimed at social and community interests, aiming to help others.

Anyone can volunteer, regardless of age, educational background, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

What and Why?

- Because I Liked to help people
- Understanding people who are more vulnerable
- New friends and being part of a community
- Develop new skills

Personal benefits

- Get out of the comfort zone
- Improve soft Skills and hard skills
- New opportunities both for your career and networking
- Be more open-minded
- Satisfaction in growing and expressing yourself

Collective benefits

- Volunteers are the first to act and take initiative
- Building a community
- Developing the team work skills
- Motivating others to get involved
- Becoming more aware of the current world problems



4. The different areas of volunteering

The type of volunteering to be carried out depends on the organization or cause that it frames, namely and the activities to be developed:

1. Homes, day centers and home support for the elderly;
2. Hospitals;
3. animal shelters;
4. Help people and families in need;
5. Support and shelter institutions for children and adolescents;
6. Firefighters;
7. Social projects.
8. Etc...

So, before volunteering, it is essential to find a cause that identifies with what you like to do/ interests. That is, find projects and organizations aligned with their values.

By finding the right cause, you will be on the way to a meaningful and rewarding volunteering experience.

It is important to indicate here which social challenges and problems of the communities of origin pointed out by the participants of the Youth Exchange of the Erasmus+ project of youth mobility, in question, where voluntary activity can make a difference and, in general, they can adapt to the reality of other countries and their project partners. And serve as a guide for the organizations or projects in the communities where young people will want to volunteer. Because this e-book is not only aimed at young Portuguese, but also for residents in the countries of the various partners of the project.

Here are the same:

Croatia

- Elderly people
- Schools
- River beaches
- Accommodation for students

Greece

- Environmental protection (including education and sustainable options)
- Integration of emigrants
- Worker friendly laws
- Drug users in some areas
- Rise of domestic violence (mostly in relationships)
- Integration of the ex-drug addicts homeless in the society
- Usage of abandoned buildings for the homeless and stray animals

Italy

- Immigration
- Elderly people
- Poverty
- Functional illiteracy

- Climate change
- Cultural heritage

Poland

- Adultism (exclusion of older people from the labour market and opportunities for qualification)
- Providing support to people (mainly children) with fewer opportunities (for example whit education)
- Spreading awareness about neurodivergence, providing suitable rights for these people to lead easy normal life
- Fight about homophobia, racism, sexism (education people about it)

Portugal

- Elderly people
- Lack of people in the country
- Loneliness

- Environmental problems
- Emigration
- Drug addiction

Romania

- Help the elderly
- Protection of the environment
- Integration and support for minorities
- Help people with addictive consumption and mental problems
- Help student organizations strengthen their role

5. The ethical principles of volunteering

Volunteering is grounded in several core ethical principles:

- Respect and dignity: Treat everyone with respect and uphold their dignity.
- Integrity and honesty: Act honestly and ethically in all interactions.
- Inclusivity and non-discrimination: Embrace diversity and create an inclusive environment free of discrimination or harassment.
- Commitment to service: Be reliable, follow through on commitments, and strive to make a positive impact.
- Accountability: Take responsibility for your actions and the quality of your work.

6. The rights and duties of the volunteer

The rights

As a volunteer, you have specific rights, including:

- Right to a safe environment: To work in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.
- Right to information and support: To receive clear information, guidance, and support regarding your role and responsibilities.
- Right to withdraw: To leave your volunteer role at any time, without pressure or coercion.

The duties

Alongside your rights, as a volunteer, you have certain duties, including:

- Duty to ensure safety: Behave and create a safe working environment for you and the other volunteers.
- Duty of responsibility: Perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability, following guidelines and procedures.

- Duty to communicate: Maintain open and respectful communication
- Duty to respect confidentiality: To handle sensitive information with care and maintain confidentiality as required.



7. Research of organizations and projects for volunteering in my community

When you want to volunteer in your community, you should do a careful research about the organizations and projects with which you want to collaborate. In order to find reliable information about them, to assess their credibility and social impact and consider the compatibility of organizational culture with their personal values.

Since what is intended here is to answer what it is necessary to know to volunteer in the community where you live, this search should be based on exhaustive research about the respective institutions and projects in force, in order to achieve a whose principles, identify with those of the eventual volunteer, to perform volunteering.

This research can be done online (consult the sites of entities and projects), as well as directly consulting documents produced by them (publications on their activities) as well as viewing videos about them, for example on youtube and other similar platforms.

Go ahead with this great challenge!