



Skills acquired through
Volunteering in Sport

LEARNING RESOURCES

/// **PILLAR 4: VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

SUB-PILLAR 4.1
**Developing volunteers'
skills through training
and other means**



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/// Sub-Pillar 4.1

Developing volunteers' skills through training and other means

a/ DESCRIPTION

The development of volunteers' skills makes an important contribution to the successful operation of your sport organisation, helping to bridge any identified skills gaps and shortages across the workforce of volunteers. It is also important that your volunteers understand how the skills they develop within your organisation can be useful and utilised in other aspects of their lives. This section will therefore enable you to work with your individual volunteers to identify their skills needs and help them to manage their development accordingly. Formal training can be expensive and time consuming, so this section provides tools and ideas for your volunteers to be able to access certificated and other sort of training opportunities.

b/ KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS – DID YOU KNOW THAT:

The Global Survey of sport organisations shows that:

- 84% said volunteers need appropriate skills
- But only 17% regularly review the skills and training needs of all their volunteers.

If sport organisations are going to give their volunteers appropriate training, they need to know what their training needs are. Skills audits are vital.

The survey also shows that:

- 97% said that volunteering helps volunteers to develop new skills
- But on average only 46% provide ongoing training to their volunteers
- Most of that training is focused on coaches and officials
- Only around 30% provide ongoing training for other types of volunteers.

If sport organisations are going to provide the best services to their members, all volunteers need to be properly trained.

The greatest barriers to training identified by sport organisations are:

- No budget for training volunteers (57%)

Therefore, sport organisations might benefit from looking at how they use their resources and think about how they can devote more to volunteer training.

From the Global Survey, we see that:

- 78% of respondents said they provided the training themselves,
- 61% said they used a sport federation,
- On average only around 12% use external training providers such as local authorities, colleges and universities.

Sport organisations might benefit from looking beyond themselves and their federations for appropriate sources of training.





>> CONTENT AREA 1 : UNDERTAKING SKILLS AUDITS WITH INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

Undertaking skills audits with your individual sport volunteers involves assessing their skills, knowledge, and personal qualities to better understand their strengths, areas of potential development, and how they can best contribute to the successful operation of your sport organisation. It particularly helps to ensure that your volunteers are contributing effectively and that their skills are aligned with your organisation needs and expectations.

Indeed, such process will help your organisation ensure that sport volunteers are assigned to roles that match their skills, knowledge as well as their interests. When volunteers are assigned to relevant roles that align with their skills and motivations, they are more likely to feel engaged and this will lead to a sense of accomplishment and personal fulfilment.

A skills audit should be seen as a collaborative process. It is essential for your organisation to consult and involve individual sport volunteers in this process to ensure their roles are in line with their skills, knowledge, interests, and availability. By doing so, you can enhance the change of a positive volunteering experience and then maximise their active contribution to your sport organisation.

👉 Here are some tips for undertaking skills audits with your sport volunteers:

Define a clear purpose and scope for the skills audit:

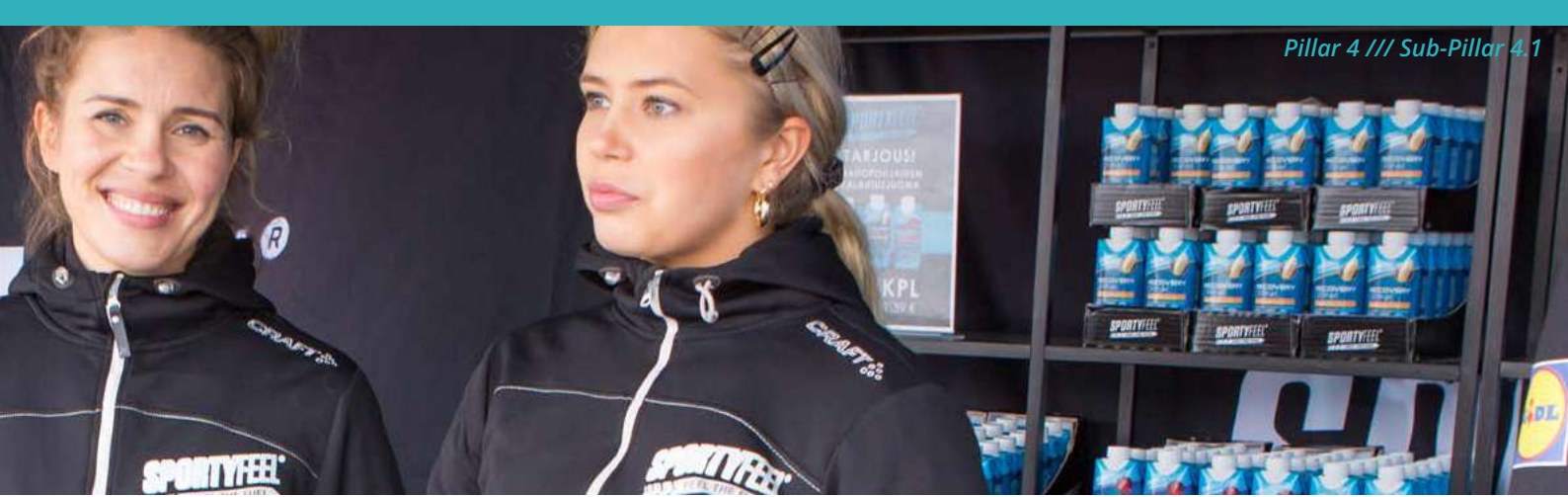
You first need to determine what specific skills you want to assess and the reason why. For example, is your main objective to match your sport volunteers with their specific roles or activities? Are you aiming to identify skill gaps to underline training opportunities for your sport volunteers? Having a clear purpose and scope will help you to guide a useful and efficient skills audit process.

Develop the tools to be used for the skills audit:

You then need to create relevant tools to assess and gather needed information about the skills, knowledge and interests of your individual sport volunteers. This can include surveys or interviews for example. We encourage you to consider incorporating both self-assessment processes as well as assessment by others, such as supervisors or team members, to gather a full picture of your volunteer's skills.

Communicate with your volunteers:

It is very important that you clearly communicate the purpose and benefits of such skills audit to your sport volunteers. Indeed, you will need to take the time to explain them how their active participation to the process will contribute to their own development (personal and professional) and to the overall success of your sport organisation. You will have to provide instructions on how the skills audit will be conducted, what information will be gathered, and how it will be used to make sure you get the full engagement of your sport volunteers.



Conduct the skills audit:

Once the process is ready and the volunteers have been made aware, this step involves administering the selected assessment tools to your sport volunteers and collecting the data. Depending on the size of your organisation and the number of volunteers, this may involve one-to-one interviews, online surveys, or any other methods. You will need to ensure that the skills audit process is conducted in a supportive and non-judgmental manner, and that volunteers feel comfortable providing honest and accurate information.

Analyse the data:

Once the skills audit has been carried out and the data collected, your sport organisation will need to analyse the findings to identify areas of strength and areas for development. The overall ambition will be to search for most common strengths and weaknesses among your sport volunteers, as well as any potential gaps between the skills required for their roles and their current skill levels. This can then help you to identify and propose solutions to any weaknesses (e.g., training opportunities or mentoring).

Provide feedback and create development plans:

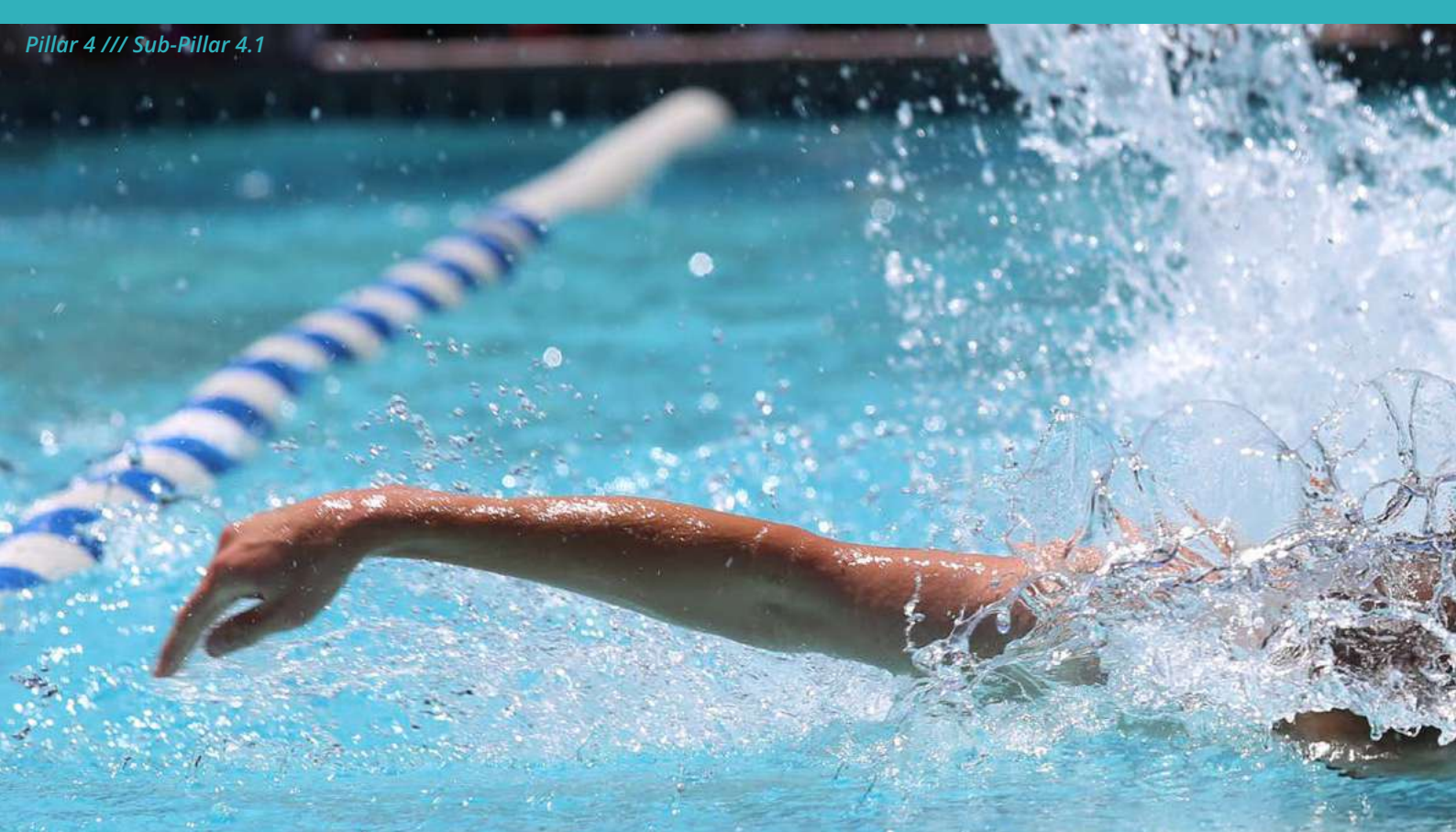
The next step of the process will be to provide individual feedback to your sport volunteers based on the results and main findings from the skills audit. Through this step, you will have the opportunity to recognise and valorise their strengths and accomplishments, but also to discuss potential areas for improvement. You can then work collaboratively with your volunteers to create individualised development plans that outline specific steps for further developing their skills. This can include on-the-job training, mentoring, training workshops, or any other learning opportunities or resources that can help them enhance their skills and knowledge.

Implement and monitor progress:

You have responsibility to implement the development plans and monitor the progress of your sport volunteers to provide ongoing support, feedback, and guidance as they work towards their development goals. Your role will also include regularly reviewing and updating the skills audit data to track progress and make adjustments as needed, including addressing any concerns or challenges, and providing feedback. Ideally, you should create an environment where your sport volunteers feel comfortable asking for assistance and/or sharing their concerns, suggestions and ideas.

Undertaking skills audits with individual sport volunteers is essential for effective volunteer management to ensure that your volunteers are effectively utilising their skills, and that their contributions are in line with your organisation's needs and expectations. It can also help volunteers themselves to identify their strengths, areas for development, and opportunities for growth, ultimately benefiting both the volunteers and your organisation.

Such process will make sure that your volunteers are engaged in roles that align with their skills and interests, leading to a positive experience, high level of satisfaction and improved level of performance. This will contribute to better retention of volunteers and reduce turnover.



>> CONTENT AREA 2 : CREATING INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Creating individual volunteer development plans is an essential step in ensuring that your sport volunteers have the support and resources they need to grow and perform in their roles in your organisation.

🕒 Below you can find some suggestions on how to create effective individual volunteer development plans:

Review skills audit data:

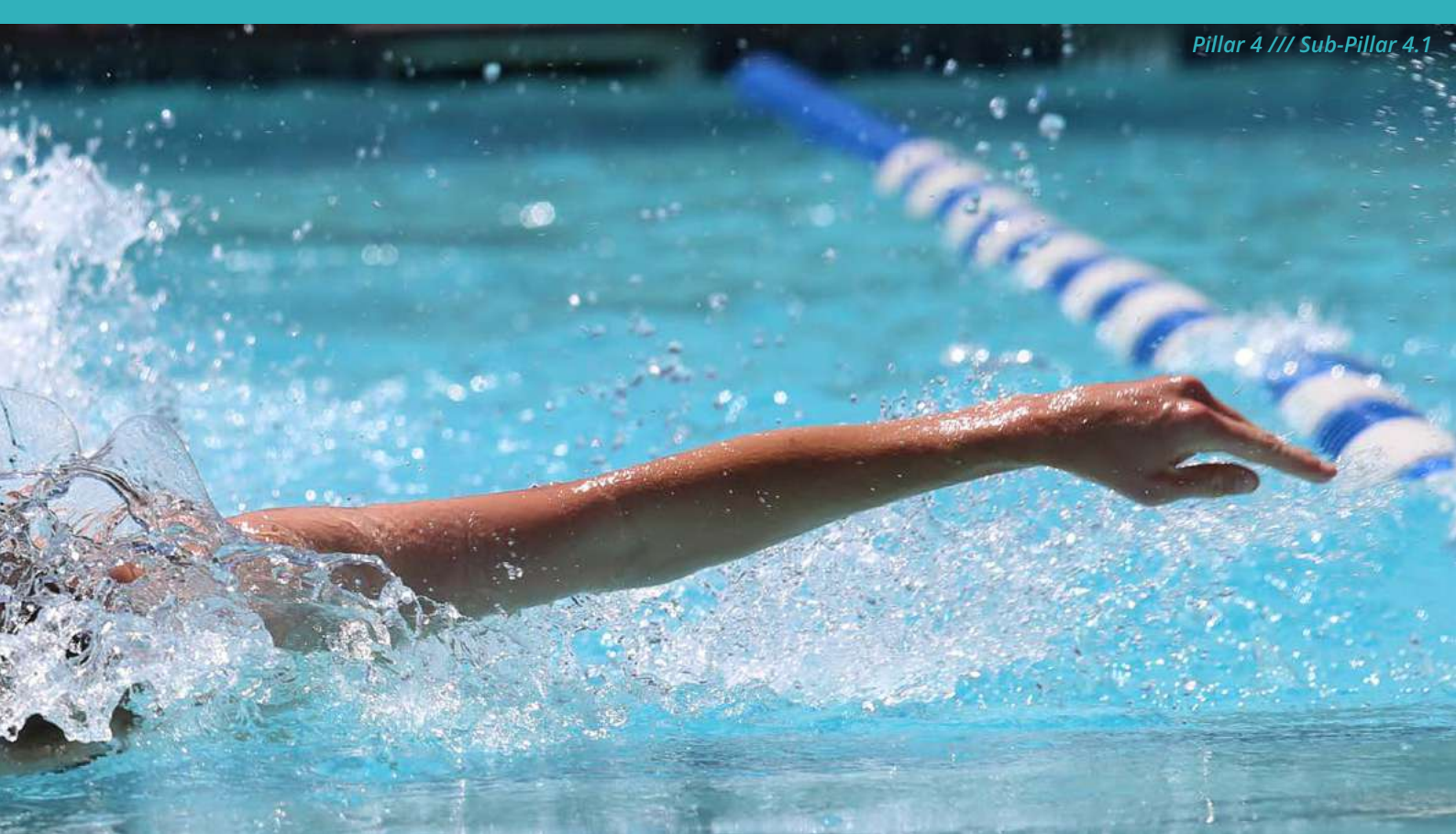
The first step is to refer to the skills audit findings to identify the strengths, weaknesses, areas for development, interests, reasons for volunteering, motivations, and aspirations of each of your sport volunteer. Once you know your volunteers better, you will be able to use this data as a foundation for creating individualised volunteer development plans.

Set clear goals:

It is crucial that you consult and work collaboratively with your sport volunteers to set clear and specific goals for their own development. These goals should be aligned with the skills needed for delivering their volunteer roles and should be clear and achievable within a reasonable timeframe (SMART). You will need to ensure that the identified goals are all measurable and realistic, so the progression of your volunteers can be tracked, monitored, and measured effectively. These goals also need to be in line with the aspirations, interests, and ambitions of your sport volunteers so it will be extremely important to liaise and consult with them. Ideally share the identified list of goals with your volunteers and give them an opportunity to comment.

Identify resources and opportunities:

As a sport organisation deploying sport volunteers, you will have to identify the resources and opportunities available to support your volunteer's development. This can include on-the-job training, workshops, seminars, mentoring, online courses, or other learning opportunities or resources. Involve your volunteers in this process so that you can identify their preferred learning process and availability when selecting development resources.

**Create an action plan:**

Outline the specific steps and actions needed to achieve the identified volunteers' development goals. You can break down the identified goals into small and manageable tasks/duties and create an action plan with precise timelines, deadlines, and responsibilities. Ensure that the volunteer is involved in the creation of their individual action plan, and that it is realistic and achievable.

Provide ongoing support:

Your role will be very important to offer ongoing support and guidance to your sport volunteers as they work towards their development goals. We advise you to provide regular feedback, encouragement, advise and resources to help them, and to be available to answer questions, provide clarifications, and offer guidance as needed.

Review, monitor and update regularly:

You should continuously review, monitor and evaluate the progress and activities of your sport volunteers against the identified goals. Through this step, you can collect feedback from your volunteers, as well as from supervisors, team members, and other stakeholders, to assess the effectiveness of the development plan and make any necessary updates or adjustments to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. Part of this step will also be to celebrate successes and recognise achievements when relevant and address any potential challenges or obstacles that may arise. We strongly encourage you to make sure to keep an open line of communication with your sport volunteer and create an atmosphere of trust to ensure that their needs are being met and that they are making progress towards their identified goals.

Creating individual volunteer development plans is essential to help your volunteers to enhance their skills, knowledge, and personal qualities, and contributes to their overall level of satisfaction and engagement in their roles within your sport organisation.

It also ensures that your volunteers are better equipped to contribute to the successful operation of your organisation. By providing ongoing support, resources, and guidance, you can help your volunteers reach their full potential, enhance their personal and professional skills and achieve their development goals.

>> CONTENT AREA 3: IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES INCLUDING TRAINING AND SHADOWING

Implementing and reviewing volunteer development activities is a crucial process to ensuring that your volunteers have the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to perform effectively in their roles within your sport organisation.

🕒 Below you can find some suggestions to effectively implement and review your volunteer development activities:

Develop a comprehensive training plan:

Based on the skills audit data and individual volunteer development plans, you will have hopefully developed a comprehensive and individualised training plan for each volunteer. Once you have identified training needs and objectives, you will be able to identify with your volunteers the most appropriate training methods and development activities to undertake. This can include formal training sessions, such as workshops, seminars or online courses, as well as informal training and mentoring opportunities or a combination of different approaches. It will be important to ensure that the training plan is aligned with your overall organisation's goals and objectives, and that it addresses the identified skill gaps of the volunteers and their personal aspirations.

Provide resources and support:

Once identified, you will have to ensure that your volunteers have access to the necessary resources and support to complete their training activities. This may involve gaining access to training opportunities from an external organisation such as a sport federation, or your organisation identifying and securing additional resources to provide or fund development activities. Either way, you need to make sure that your volunteers have the necessary resources and support to succeed in their training activities. Additional guidance on accessing resources to support volunteer management can be found in pillar 1, sub-pillar 5.

Monitor progress:

You will need to regularly monitor the progress of your sport volunteers in their development activities to ensure that the training plan is effective and that volunteers are continuously growing and improving in their roles. You can for example track their active participation and completion of identified training activities, or check their performance in shadowing or on-the-job training. Through this process, feel free to provide regular feedback and support as needed, and address any challenges or obstacles that may arise.

🕒 Some examples of processes to monitor progress:

- Regular meetings with volunteers to discuss their progress to review their training objectives and the skills acquired. Such activity can encourage open and transparent communication allowing volunteers to share their experiences, challenges, and successes.
- Observation of your sport volunteers in action during their assigned roles or tasks. The allocated person from your organisation can attend a coaching session, a sport event, or an administrative duty to assess the performance to check how they apply in live situations the new knowledge and skills acquired through training.
- Regular feedback to your volunteers based on their performance to recognise their strengths and achievements while also offering constructive feedback to help them improve, to address any gaps or areas where additional support or training may be needed.

- Encourage your volunteers to engage in self-assessment and reflection on their own progress and developments. Your role will be to provide them with tools or templates and encourage them to evaluate their own performance against the training objectives. This process can help your sport volunteers to take ownership of their development and identify areas for growth.
- Periodic surveys or evaluations to gather feedback from your volunteers themselves, as well as from relevant stakeholders such as participants, athletes, or supervisors. You can also use surveys to assess the perception of their own progress, the impact of training on their performance, and potential areas for improvement.
- Formal performance review meetings can be organised at defined intervals, such as quarterly or annually to discuss the volunteer's progress, evaluate their performance against the training plan objectives, and set new goals for their continued development.

Review effectiveness:

An important step will be to evaluate the effectiveness, quality, and relevancy of the volunteer development activities by collecting feedback from your volunteers, trainers, mentors, and other stakeholders. This review will enable you to assess whether the proposed training activities are meeting the intended goals and objectives, and if your volunteers are applying the knowledge and skills gained from the training in their roles. You will be able to use this feedback to make improvements and adjustments to the training plan as needed.

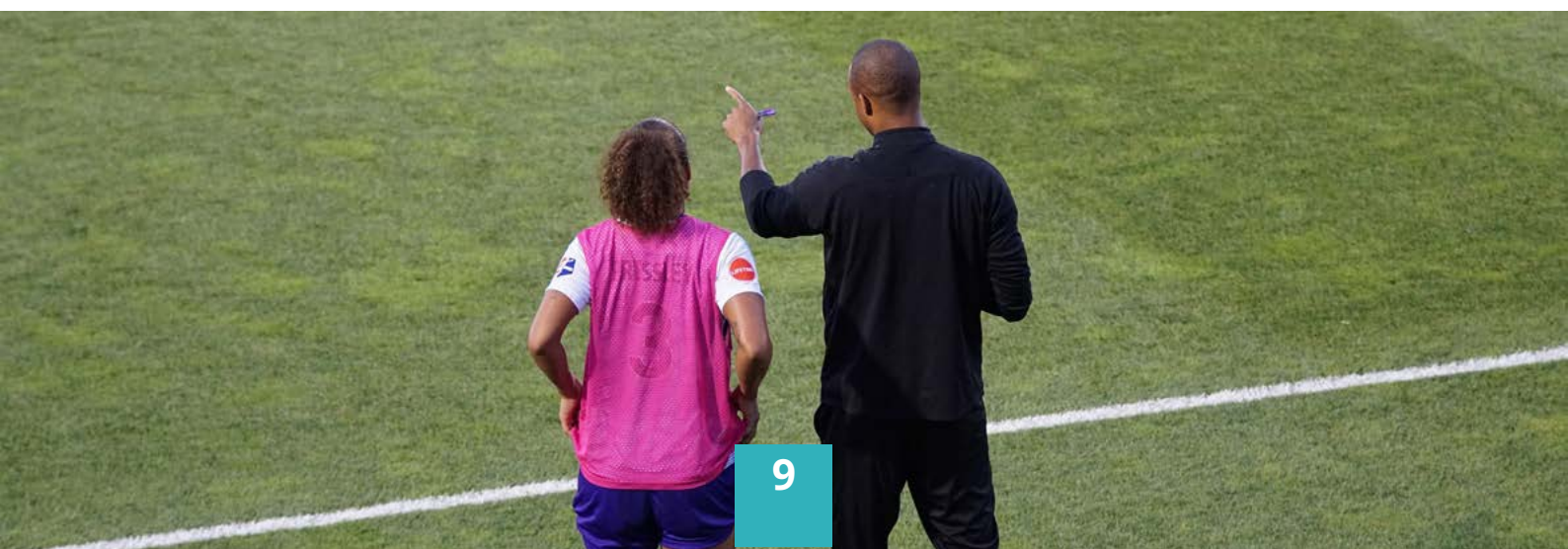
Update individual volunteer development plans:

Based on the progress and feedback from the volunteer development activities, you will update the individual volunteer development plans as needed. You will be able to revise the identified goals, action plans, and timelines to reflect the progress made and the new skills or knowledge acquired through the training or shadowing activities.

Recognise and reward achievements:

This is an ongoing process to recognise and celebrate the achievements of your sport volunteers in their development activities. As an organisation deploying volunteers, it will be important for you to regularly provide positive feedback and acknowledge their efforts, commitment, contribution and progress. There are suggestions of how you can recognise and reward volunteer achievements in pillar 3 sub-pillar 4.

Implementing and reviewing volunteer development activities is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires continuous assessment, feedback, and improvement. By providing your sport volunteers with the necessary training, resources, and support, you will empower them to perform successfully in their roles, to make meaningful contributions to the organisation, to enhance their level of satisfaction, to continue their professional and personal growth, and to enhance the overall effectiveness of your sports organisation.





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VOLUNTEER

V4V PARTNERSHIP:



Coordinator



www.v4v-sport.eu



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