



Skills acquired through  
Volunteering in Sport

# LEARNING RESOURCES

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

### **SUB-PILLAR 4.4** **Recording volunteers' experiences and achievements**



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## /// Sub-Pillar 4.4

### Recording volunteers' experiences and achievements

#### a/ DESCRIPTION

If you are providing pivotal developmental experiences for your volunteers, it is appropriate to develop mechanisms for recording and celebrating their achievements. This may be of use in obtaining educational places, getting jobs and setting the volunteering experience in the wider context of an individual's development. The resources in this section will help you develop clear records of achievement that can be readily accessed and completed by your volunteers.

#### b/ KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS – DID YOU KNOW THAT:

From our Global Survey of sport organisations, we can see that:

- 37% of respondents said that lack of recognition as a volunteer was a barrier to people taking up sport volunteering
- 31% agreed that existing volunteers do not feel their contributions are recognised
- 27% thought that certificates of achievement would help to retain sport volunteers in the organisation.

Offering records of what the volunteer has done for the organisation might be one effective method of recruiting and retaining volunteers.





## >> CONTENT AREA 1 : UNDERSTANDING WHICH VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENTS CAN BE RECORDED AND HOW

Volunteering allows people to build on previous learning and life experiences in order to apply new knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Sustained success for your sport organisation will be aided by the development and retention of a solid core of volunteers around which your work can be organised. Giving volunteers the opportunity to record their achievements will make an important contribution to this aspiration, as well as opening up new possibilities for them in their home, work and educational lives. It is important not to forget that a key reason to record volunteers' achievements is to celebrate all they do for your sport organisation and enable you to show appreciation for their efforts.

Kelvin's famous quote "*What cannot be measured cannot be improved*" provides us with food for thought when considering the achievements of our volunteers. Much of this Toolkit is themed around the notion of continuous improvement, so it makes sense that this can be facilitated in part by fostering a better understanding of the contributions of our volunteers. Achievements can be assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively; in other words we can collect numerical information as well as gaining a deeper insight into volunteers' experiences and their feelings about their work within your sport organisation. (We can also measure and evaluate the efforts of your sport organisation to support your volunteers, and this is covered elsewhere in this Toolkit.)

### 🔗 Examples of volunteer achievements that can be recorded:

#### **Hours of volunteering:**

keeping track of the number of hours each of your volunteers contributes to your organisation can help to recognise their dedication and commitment. For example, a volunteer who has contributed over 300 hours of service to your sport organisation in a year should be recognised for their outstanding contribution.

**Special achievements:**

record any special achievements or initiatives that volunteers have successfully undertaken and achieved, such as organising a fundraising campaign, or an event, to recognise their effort and dedication. For example, a volunteer who organised a charity walk and raised €1,000 for your organisation would be recognised for their fundraising achievement.

**Impact on the sector or the organisation or even the community:**

record any positive impact that volunteers have had through their activities with your organisation, such as increased participation in a sport event.

**Skills and training:**

record any new skills or new knowledge that your volunteers have acquired while contributing to the operation of your organisation.

**Longevity and commitment:**

recognise volunteers who have shown consistent dedication over an extended period.

**Leadership:**

acknowledge volunteers who have demonstrated leadership skills and promoted a collaborative atmosphere within your sport organisation.

**Training and mentoring:**

recognise volunteers who have taken on mentoring roles, helping to onboard and train new volunteers or develop existing ones.

👉 **There are several ways to record volunteer achievements:**

**Spreadsheets:**

keep a record of your volunteer achievements in a spreadsheet, which can be easily updated and shared with others. You may need to ask volunteers to log their hours and activities in order for this to work effectively, but if you do so try and keep the process as quick and simple as possible.

**Online volunteer management tools:**

use an online volunteer management tool to track volunteer hours and achievements.

**Newsletters and social media:**

highlight volunteer achievements in your newsletters or your social media, which can help raise awareness of the contributions of your volunteers to your organisation.

**Qualitative recording:**

share stories and testimonials from community members who have benefited from the sport organisation's efforts. Document volunteer testimonials as well.

**Rewarding achievement:**

consider implementing a "Volunteer of the Month/ Year" programme. Share their accomplishments through social media, newsletters, or at your sport organisation's events.

In summary, recording your volunteer achievements is an important way to recognise and celebrate their contributions to your organisation.







## >> CONTENT AREA 2 : SIGNPOSTING VOLUNTEERS TO EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Outside of personal development, volunteering brings other kinds of advantages. By doing voluntary work, the volunteer will be in contact with countless people who work in completely different professional areas. This approach also allows the individual to network and to widen their network of contacts. This can be useful when embarking on new projects and professional challenges. Moreover, if a volunteer is unsure what professional path to follow, this experience can give a new insight into certain professions and functions.

In the context of work, a worker or candidate who has experience in voluntary activity can unlock skills that are highly appreciated in the current labour market. In many professional areas, young university graduates find it difficult to find their first job due to lack of professional experience. When looking for their first job, volunteering can help with entering the labour market in a field of interest.

Why, therefore, is it important for your sport organisation to guide volunteers to employment and educational opportunities as opposed to the volunteer seeking these for themselves? Your existing and even previous volunteers will continue to share their knowledge and experience they gained from their volunteering journey in their professional life, regardless of the sector. If they had a good volunteering experience, they will hopefully continue to promote your organisation and may remain in contact with you for a longer period. Volunteering is a sustainable field as long as a good bond is established.

You can support volunteers in their future employment by informing them of job openings within your sector and/ or sharing educational opportunities with them even after the end of their volunteering period in your organisation. This does not have to be an onerous process. You can organise experiences that promote networking and open future possibilities for the volunteers. Examples may include recruitment fairs, round table discussions and networking picnics. Making links with employers of this nature may lead to other opportunities such as sponsorship deals.



You can also share information with your volunteers from a range of sources and in a range of ways:

**Search online sources:**

follow EU websites that regularly publish training/ online courses, such as eurodesk.eu or EURES (look for similar information sources in your country.).

**Match your volunteers to relevant opportunities:**

try to make suggestions to your volunteers according to their skills and interests by creating an online library from the opportunities published in channels such as LinkedIn.

**Provide relevant information and resources:**

share more local information with your volunteers about employment and educational opportunities in the sport sector and beyond, including job opportunities and training programmes.

**Offer career counselling:**

provide a one-to-one career counselling exchange to your volunteers, helping them identify their strengths, interests, and career goals.

**Connect volunteers with employers:**

develop relationships with potential employers and connect your volunteers with concrete job opportunities.

**Provide training and development opportunities:**

offer training and development opportunities for your volunteers, such as workshops on job search strategies, resume writing, interview skills.

By providing guidance and support to your volunteers in pursuing employment and educational opportunities, you can help them achieve their personal and professional goals while strengthening their connection to your organisation. Whilst some of these activities might initially seem a long way from the core business of your sport organisation, this content area has hopefully shown that other benefits can accrue from having enhanced employer links.





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# VOLUNTEER

## V4V PARTNERSHIP:



Coordinator



[www.v4v-sport.eu](http://www.v4v-sport.eu)



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