



Skills acquired through
Volunteering in Sport

LEARNING RESOURCES

/// PILLAR 4: VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

SUB-PILLAR 4.5 — Facilitating volunteers' personal and career development



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



/// Sub-Pillar 4.5

Facilitating volunteers' personal and career development

a/ DESCRIPTION

Alongside the other categories in this Pillar, it is advantageous to be able to help tailor the day-to-day volunteering experience to each individual's wider development goals. Volunteering interactions can thus serve the interests of both your sport organisation and the individual volunteer. Here, therefore, you will find ideas to help your organisation design volunteering opportunities that are developmental as well as operationally important.

b/ KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS – DID YOU KNOW THAT:

From the Global Survey of sport organisations:

- 20% of respondents thought that lack of progression opportunities was a barrier to people taking up sport volunteering
- 23% said the existing volunteers see few opportunities to progress in their volunteering roles.

Providing sport volunteers with progression opportunities in their personal and career development could be an important incentive for their recruitment and retention.



>> CONTENT AREA 1 : IDENTIFYING AND DISCUSSING VOLUNTEERS' PERSONAL AMBITIONS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

As a manager or coordinator of sport volunteers it is important to identify volunteers' ambitions and support their personal and professional development. This will give you a deeper insight into the volunteer's motivations, help you get the best from them and support their long-term involvement with your sport organisation. Arranging a discussion or interview with a sport volunteer can be a valuable opportunity to support their personal and professional development.

🕒 Interviews can be used to support a volunteer's development in a number of different ways:

Identify volunteer ambitions and motivations to gain experience:

ask the volunteer about the ambitions that led them to your sport organisation or event, also ask what kind of experiences are foreseen and expected by the volunteer as an outcome of the volunteer experience.

Identify areas for improvement:

ask the volunteer about their skills and experience and identify areas where they may need additional training or support. This can help the volunteer to develop a personalised development plan, which can include training, mentoring, or other development opportunities.

Discuss career goals:

ask the volunteer about their career goals and aspirations and discuss how their volunteer work in sport can support their professional development. This can help the volunteer see the connection between their volunteer work and their long-term career goals, and may motivate them to take on new challenges and responsibilities.

Set performance goals:

set performance goals with the volunteer that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). This can help the volunteer focus on specific areas of improvement and track their progress over time.

Offer feedback and guidance:

offer feedback and guidance to the volunteer on how they can improve their performance and achieve their goals. This can include constructive feedback on areas for improvement, as well as guidance on how to develop new skills or gain more experience.

Provide recognition and appreciation:

provide recognition and appreciation to the volunteer for their contributions to the organisation. This can help motivate the volunteer and make them feel valued and appreciated.

By using a specific discussion or interview to support a sport volunteer's development, you can help them develop new skills, gain more experience, and achieve their personal and professional goals. This can also help your organisation retain valuable volunteers and ensure that they continue to make meaningful contributions.

③ The discussion or interview with a sport volunteer can also be helpful in allowing you to know their ambitions. It is important to acquire this information for several reasons:

- To ensure that their volunteer work aligns with their personal and career goals.
- To provide opportunities to express the feeling of goodwill, donate time or take part in charity activities, which may be an interest to former athletes of the sport.
- To provide opportunities for personal and professional development and opportunities to learn new skills, gain experience, and build their CV.
- To retain volunteers through making them feel that their work is meaningful and aligned with their ambitions.
- To support career development by positioning volunteering as a stepping stone to a career in sport, or another sector.

Overall, knowing the ambitions of a volunteer (inside and outside the sport sector) helps you to provide a more personalised and meaningful volunteer experience for them, which can benefit both the volunteer and your organisation.



>> CONTENT AREA 2 : MATCHING INTERNAL ROLES TO VOLUNTEERS' DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND WIDER AMBITIONS

Matching volunteer roles to development needs is especially important in the sport sector where volunteers play a vital role in all aspects of the delivery of sport – especially at the grassroots level. This includes roles as a coach, referee, administrator, manager or board member or event organiser. Aligning the volunteer's time, talent and ambition with internal roles or positions in the organisation will promote their efficiency, interest, and fast learning, improving the quality of outputs and achievement of goals. Here are some steps that can help you match volunteer roles to their development needs in the sports context:

Identify the key skills and experience needed for each role:

start by reviewing each volunteer role in your sports organisation and identifying the specific skills and experience that are required for each role. This may include technical skills such as knowledge of the sport and coaching techniques, as well as soft skills such as communication, leadership, and teamwork.

Assess the skills and experience of your volunteers:

conduct a skills assessment for each volunteer to identify their existing skills and experience. This can be done through a self-assessment, an interview, or an evaluation of their past performance. (See the first sub-pillar of Pillar 4.)

Identify areas for improvement:

based on the skills assessment, identify areas where each volunteer may need additional training or support. This may include technical skills related to the sport, as well as soft skills that are important for coaching, such as effective communication and leadership. ((See the first sub-pillar of Pillar 4.)

Match volunteers to roles that fit their skills, experience and ambitions:

assign volunteers to roles that match their skills and experience, while also providing opportunities for them to develop new skills and gain more experience in accordance with their wider development goals. For example, if a volunteer has strong technical skills but lacks experience in coaching, they could be assigned to an assistant coaching role to develop their coaching skills especially if this aligns with their career goals.

Provide training and support:

once volunteers have been assigned to their roles, provide them with the training and support they need to be successful in their roles. This may include workshops, mentoring, or on-the-job training. Encourage volunteers to seek out additional training and resources on their own, such as attending coaching clinics or online courses. ((See the first sub-pillar of Pillar 4.)

Regularly evaluate and provide feedback:

regularly evaluate the performance of your sport volunteers and provide feedback on areas where they can improve. This can be done through regular check-ins, evaluations by players or other coaches, or performance reviews. Use this feedback to provide additional training and support to volunteers as needed.

Do not be hesitant about providing volunteering opportunities that align to individuals' personal goals – there is a temptation to be influenced by the possibility that your sport organisation will lose the volunteer as soon as they have achieved what they wanted from the arrangement. This will undoubtedly occur in some instances, but in general the benefits outweigh the risks. By matching volunteers' roles to their development needs, you can help ensure that volunteers have a positive and fulfilling experience while also providing them with the opportunity to develop new skills and gain more experience. This can help increase volunteer retention, improve the quality of volunteers' work, and ultimately lead to a stronger and more engaged sports community.



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VOLUNTEER

V4V PARTNERSHIP:



Coordinator



www.v4v-sport.eu



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.