

Training on Local Volunteering



Local Volunteering

Introduction

This volunteering guide is part of the CB4VOL project in which Alianza-ActionAid as project leader, together with the other partners, WIDE+, YWCA and ASTICUDE, will develop volunteering capacities at local level. To this end, the four organisations will work to promote the participation of local youth in each region through awareness raising and knowledge on gender equality and social inclusion.

Volunteering is considered and valued through completely different perspectives from the different regions where the partners of this project are located. This means that the experience and knowledge of the management of volunteering is completely different from one region to another, as well as their experience in this field of work. Thus, in order to unite lines of work and ensure that future work with volunteers is managed and developed in the most coherent and orderly way possible, ActionAid-Alianza has developed this volunteer management guide, which aims to be a useful tool to establish the basis for management and work, taking into account the differences between organisations and the context that surrounds them. It is also intended to serve as material for other organisations that want to start working with local volunteers and for those that are already working with volunteers and want to incorporate new ideas or good practices to improve the processes and management of volunteering.

This guide is based on the knowledge and experience of Alianza-ActionAid, on the one hand, and on the knowledge and learning from other organisations, on the other. This information is based on previous research carried out by Alianza-ActionAid and reflected in the Good Practice Guide for Host Organisations BUENAS-PRACTICASESPAÑOL1.pdf (alianzaporlasolidaridad.org) and Volunteering Manual ALIANZAMANUALVOLUNTARIADO-2019-ESP.pdf (alianzaporlasolidaridad.org) and the report carried out by the United Nations, 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Building Equal and and Inclusive Societies 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Building Equal and Inclusive Societies | Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism (unv.org)

Approaching to the concept of volunteering

Volunteering plays a key role in strengthening the relationship between people and the state. It helps improve governance, contributes to more egalitarian and inclusive societies, and promotes stability. As mentioned above, the way in which volunteering work and volunteering is viewed varies around the world. However, there are certain common aspects and foundations of volunteering that need to be clarified and defined when working with volunteers.

Volunteering is an expression of critical and supportive citizen action in the service of society. It is a form of participation that finds ample possibilities for development at the present time. Volunteering is a collective response of a group of people who intervene motivated by a feeling of solidarity that makes them sensitive to detect people with unmet needs. The intervention of volunteering is related to the unsatisfied (or unsatisfactorily resolved) needs of people in situations of social exclusion. Volunteering actions aim to respond to these unmet needs.

The true value of volunteering lies not only in the concrete action that volunteers carry out every day, giving part of their time and talent, putting it at the service of different causes. Its essential value also lies in the effective participation in a cause, in getting involved as a social agent of transformation, understanding that true social change begins with oneself, defending the dignity of all people, no matter who they are or where they were born.

Thus, volunteering is understood as the free, supportive and transformative action carried out by people in their community, neighbourhood or city, free of charge and within a nonprofit, civic and democratic organisation, in the pursuit of social development and common welfare. There is no single internationally accepted definition of volunteering. However, certain key elements and values can be highlighted.

Key Concepts

In the following, certain concepts will be analysed in order to better understand volunteering

VOLUNTEERISM: is the action that takes place after a period of reflection by the person and free choice. It is the result of a personal, free and conscious decision in the exercise of each person's autonomy.

ACTION: volunteering is not only an ethical value, it is also a concrete practice. When you volunteer, you are doing something. If the concept of volunteering is stuck in the vision of a good person and a good citizen, volunteering becomes meaningless. However, it is worth noting that action is not possible without values that drive you to do it.

SOLIDARITY: Voluntary action implies a commitment to solidarity in order to improve collective life; it only exists when it has an impact on others, when its interest is collective, general and public. It is a form of cooperation for the solution of problems affecting our society, which seeks the common good and the joint development of the whole community. Moreover, it is based on the reciprocity of contributions: it is not based on a relationship of assistance to the disadvantaged person or, at least, not exclusively, as it involves mutual enrichment, a joint growth of the community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: this is the search for balance in situations of social inequality through the creation of protections or inequalities of the opposite sign, in favour of the weaker parties. It demands respect for the human, social and economic rights of all people. Volunteering is a tool for transformation as it allows direct contact with the reality that it aims to transform.

FREE OF CHARGE: volunteering is a free service, i.e. it does not involve any financial consideration. If this were the case, it would lose all meaning, as we would be talking about salaried personnel, self-employed collaborators or any other figure more inserted in an economic-professional context.

ORGANISATION: volunteering is part of an organisation's project, the product of joint reflection and work. As opposed to improvisation and spontaneity, volunteers need to act in an organised way, joining forces. Therefore, voluntary action must be an organised, systematic, synergetic action, which requires an organisation of associations or foundations in which to act. Organised action gives effectiveness and sustainability, as well as a global vision of the functioning of the entity. It gives voluntary action structure and projection.

Volunteering Plan/Strategy

It is important that organisations have a Volunteering Plan. Organisations that do not have a plan should formulate it, including the organisation's vision of volunteering, the different stages of the volunteer management cycle, and the rights and duties of the volunteer.

Defining a Volunteering Plan allows us to strengthen our organisation's capacity to work with volunteering.

Steps:

- Carry out a self-assessment process that invites us to reflect internally on the place of volunteering in our organisation: what is understood by volunteering in the organisation, how is it aligned with the organisation's mission, what are the objectives sought through the involvement of volunteers, how do they contribute to the organisation's mission, how does volunteering fit into our planning, what are the implications, advantages and challenges of welcoming volunteers?
- In the process, it is essential to have a person in charge of socialising the definitions of volunteerism.

WHY: It is important that the vision of volunteering is embedded in the organisational culture. This person could also coordinate the involvement of other areas in translating the policy into a concrete plan for implementing the volunteer management cycle for a specific project.

The Plan or Strategy must ensure the incorporation of volunteers in the action to be developed, establishing all the processes of accompaniment, training, communication, etc.

Possible indexes of a volunteering plan/strategy:

- Presentation of the organization
- The management of the volunteers
- Participation of volunteers in the organisation's processes for their effective involvement.
- Rights and duties of the volunteer and the organisation.

Rights and Duties of Volunteers

It is important that the rights and duties of volunteers are related to the organisation's Volunteering Plan and to existing local volunteering legislation (if any).

Generally, volunteers have the following rights:

- To receive sufficient information about the organisation and the tasks to be performed.
- To be able to freely agree on the conditions

- To receive support and guidance in their voluntary work.
- To be provided with the necessary technical means to carry out their work (material, physical, hygienic...).
- Favour participation in the organisation's programming, in the design, execution and evaluation of the activities in which they are going to take part.
- To be insured for accidents, illnesses or damage to third parties that may occur during their voluntary activity.
- To be reimbursed for the expenses incurred in the voluntary actions they carry out.
- That the volunteer carries out his/her action in his/her closest possible environment.
- The possibility of changing the programme (the place and/or space where they carry out their voluntary work) if the person (and the organisation) sees fit.
- Not to be assigned tasks that are alien to the organisation.
- To be respected and recognised for the social value of their action.
- To be treated without discrimination, respecting their freedom, dignity, privacy and beliefs.
- To receive sufficient support and information on how to carry out the tasks and on the results obtained, as well as to participate in the evaluation.
- To receive sufficient training, both initial and ongoing, for the proper exercise of their activity.
- To be able to freely cease to be a volunteer.
- To receive certification of their participation in the organisation as a volunteer.

Regarding duties, the following are generally addressed:

- To respect the aims and rules of the organisation.
- To participate in the training provided in the organisation that is necessary to maintain the quality of the services.
- Collaborate in the planning and evaluation of activities.
- Communicate in good time when leaving their voluntary action.
- Act in a diligent, responsible and supportive manner.
- Follow the instructions given by the professional in charge.
- Comply with the rules established by the organisation.
- Properly use the accreditation and badges of the organisation.
- Comply with the commitment acquired with the organisation.
- To maintain the confidentiality of the data and information they handle. Respect the rights of the programme participants and other members of the team of volunteers.
- Refuse any economic or material consideration that they may receive from the participant or from other people related to their action.
- Respect and take care of the organisation's resources.

How to attract and motivate volunteers

Organisations must develop awareness-raising and communication actions aimed, among other things, at promoting the participation of citizens in volunteering activities. It is an important challenge to ensure that the organisation provides complete and accurate information about volunteering and the context in which it will be carried out, as well as messages consistent with its mission and the value of volunteering within the organization.

It is recommended to review the following list of useful aspects for the promotion of volunteering:

Ensure that awareness raising, and promotion actions are aligned with the volunteering strategy.

Define which tools and channels will be used to raise awareness about volunteering and offer volunteering opportunities.

Establish the strategies to be used to build volunteer loyalty and inform volunteers about the work of the organisation and their role.

Ensure that there is consistency in communication with the content and focus of the volunteering plan.

It is also important to pay attention to the reasons why people decide to volunteer (many and varied) as well as the reasons why they decide to participate in one organisation or another (also very diverse). It is not always easy to attract and motivate volunteers, however, it is very important to remember that they want the time they are donating to the organisation to be well spent and to be directed to causes they value.

We can distinguish between two types of motivations for deciding to volunteer and where to volunteer:

- Heterocentric motivations: they focus on others (solidarity and altruism; search for social justice, citizen participation; political commitment; religious motivations; desire to transform society...).
- Self-centred motivations: these are based on personal development (desire to occupy leisure time; search for human relationships, acquire new knowledge and skills; search for professional experience; feelings of guilt; escape from crises and personal problems...).

Language and Techniques to motivate volunteers

We must make sure we know our volunteers; we must understand and know their interest and motivation for volunteering. Building good relationships with them will make them feel welcome and part of the organisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Give a positive and constructive evaluation or assessment.

- Encourage completion of tasks.
- Be aware of behaviours and comments that demonstrate a good climate. Make them noticeable.
- Identify potential new reinforcers and use them.
- Propose alternatives.
- Be timely. Find the right moment.
- Be immediate in providing reinforcement.
- Refer to each person by name.
- Be coherent between what is said and how it is said.
- Be an honest person. Do not dramatise.
- Be clear and concise.
- If you thank someone for something: argue it, give reasons.
- Be fair and just.
- Do not differentiate in your treatment if there is no cause for it.
- Give meaning to the tasks: explain why and what for; inform about the results; inform about the calendar and time; adapt the task to the volunteer; adapt expectations; give value to the task.
- Be pleasant to deal with, regardless of the results.
- Encourage teamwork.
- Listening.
- Be assertive, socially skilled.
- Set clear objectives.
- Make a note of pending acknowledgements that have not yet been carried out.
- Hold celebrations and meetings.
- Send written acknowledgements.
- Acknowledge homework.
- Facilitate shared responsibility for important decisions.
- Delegate tasks, if accepted. - Give back results of action.

Volunteer management cycle

The role of volunteering in organisations varies from one organisation to another. Organisations should therefore start with an analysis of the organisation's capacity to host a volunteer. In this training, we will point out some recommendations and good practices for organisations to define, implement or strengthen each step of the volunteer management cycle. This cycle must take into consideration the different moments of the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation, from the first contact to the end of the relationship.

Volunteering experiences have the opportunity to generate an impact in two ways: they contribute to the development of the communities and organisations where they

participate, while the volunteers live a unique and enriching experience at a human and professional level.

1. PROFILE IDENTIFICATION

The aim of defining the profile is to ensure that the personal expectations of the volunteers are in line with the expectations we have as an organisation. To achieve this, it is essential to identify volunteer profiles that can respond to the needs of our organisation and the group or territory to which we direct our intervention.

Steps:

a) Identify organisational needs

We must make a list of the needs of our organisation, taking into account the internal analysis of the resources and capacities we have, carried out previously at the beginning of the design of the Volunteering Plan.

b) Defining volunteer responsibilities

Once the needs of the organisation have been identified, we will identify the responsibilities or roles that respond to these needs and can be assumed by a volunteer.

RECOMMENDATION

- Do not receive several volunteers in the same period of time in case we do not have experience in volunteer management.
- In case the volunteer is going to stay for a specific period of time, we should plan responsibilities or projects that can have a clear start and a clear end.
- We should consider tasks that can include getting closer to the mission of our organisation, the beneficiary population and the local culture. This can help the person to feel more motivated.
- Establish some flexibility.

2. SELECTION

This stage refers to the process of incorporating the volunteer into the organisation.

Steps:

a) Dissemination of the call for applications

For a specific period (normally one month), the organisation will have to publish the announcement of the application on its website and/or other portals. During this period of time, the organisation will receive the data of the candidates (CV, motivation letter...).

b) Table of competences

According to the responsibilities and requirements published in the advertisement, we will create a table with those requirements that we consider essential to join the

organisation and fulfil the role/responsibilities of the profile we are looking for. In this way we will be able to make a first selection of the people we want to interview.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a table with all the requirements. Each one will have a quantitative value and each person will be rated on a score from 1 to 10.

Annex 1

a) Interview and selection

This is the first meeting between the potential future volunteer and the organisation he/she has chosen to volunteer with, therefore, the mission and values of the organisation, as well as the programmes and types of volunteering that are carried out there should be clearly explained. A discussion should be held to find out:

The person's motivations for volunteering and why that organisation.

Social skills, experience, knowledge

The candidate's expectations and how to adjust them to reality. Their availability

During this process, while having a conversation, we will have to fill in a template with the data and information that the candidate shares with us. In this way we will be able to gather all the information we will receive in the interview and make an objective and fair decision.

3. INCORPORATION

When a person joins the organisation as a volunteer, there is an accompaniment, generally favoured by the figure of the person in charge of volunteering, which will facilitate the adjustment of expectations and their integration in the programme, in the work team of which they will form part and in the structure of the organisation itself.

It is important to prepare well for this moment and dedicate the importance and time it deserves, both on the part of the person who is going to join and on the part of the members of the organisation. For these cases, it is recommended to prepare a welcome document to guide us.

In addition, this is the time when the person will receive basic training with the aim of learning and reflecting on the social environment in which they are going to work, as well as going deeper into the model of volunteering that the organisation wishes to promote.

Volunteering Agreement

In the process of incorporation, it is recommended that the entity and the new volunteer sign a Volunteering Agreement, a document signed by both parties (the future volunteer and the organisation) that includes:

The personal details of the volunteer
 The rights and obligations of both parties
 The period of volunteering
 The conditions and framework of the collaboration The tasks of the volunteer.

It may also include training modalities and training options
 The code of ethics or code of conduct and other policies to be respected (e.g. prohibition of discrimination, prevention of harassment, etc.).
 Timetable
 Liability insurance
 Remuneration for transfers or per diems when participating in daytime activities.

All of this depends on the legal framework of the country or region in which the organisation operates. However, as we saw at the beginning of this document, the situation of volunteering varies from country to country; if there is legislation regulating volunteering, you will have to take into account what the law says about the rights and obligations of volunteers. If there is no legal framework or law, volunteers should be offered the best possible conditions according to the capacity and possibilities of the organisation.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVENTION

The development of the intervention requires establishing a process of monitoring the responsibilities assumed by the volunteers and providing human accompaniment to identify and help resolve difficulties.

RECOMMENDATION

The existence of a person in charge of volunteering recognises the importance of volunteering. It is recommended that this person should have the following skills:

Leadership capacity
 Horizontality in the relationship with volunteers
 Communication skills
 Creativity
 Adaptability to change, as volunteering processes are very changeable.

The person responsible for volunteering:

Identifies the volunteer needs of the organisation.
 Defines the profile of the organisation's volunteers.
 Designs the volunteer recruitment campaign.
 Organises welcome and information sessions for those interested in volunteering in our organisation.
 Organises the incorporation and welcome of the volunteer in the organisation and in the activity where he/she will carry out his/her voluntary work.

Manages the registration and deregistration of volunteers in the civil liability insurance.

Designs the accompaniment process

Designs and prepares the training itinerary of the volunteers: initial, specific and continuous.

Participates in volunteer networks

Coordination and monitoring with the people in charge of the different programmes in which the volunteers are involved.

In cases where the size or resources of the organisations do not allow for a person to be exclusively dedicated to this task, it is important that there is someone (one or several people) who is a reference point for the volunteers and who coordinates the voluntary actions. In this case, this responsibility may fall on one or several people from the team who will combine this function with other functions in the life of the organisation.

a) Accompaniment

It is important that the volunteers are accompanied throughout their work and that they know in advance the frequency of the meetings. In these meetings, the development of each activity will be reviewed together, relevant information will be shared and proposals for improvement of the activity will be collected, as well as possible new courses of action. These meetings are also conceived as a meeting place where volunteers can share their experiences, concerns and difficulties with the rest of the group, in order to improve the cohesion of the project members.

Informal volunteer monitoring is also envisaged. In this case, the role of the person responsible for volunteering will be to accompany the volunteers. If it is not possible to do it in person, this follow-up will be done by telephone or email. On the other hand, they will also be informed of the activities planned by the organisation, or any other organisation, that may be of interest to them via email.

b) Training

It is essential to set up training processes that enable volunteers to acquire the knowledge necessary for the work they are going to carry out, the personal skills that will be useful to them and the abilities that will enable them to face their work with the prospect of success.

Each organisation will determine the exact contents and methodology to be applied. The following are some ideas on how this training process can be structured.

Introductory training

Introductory course to volunteering that offers an approach to the social context in which the volunteer action will be carried out, the different models of intervention and the priority

lines of action. Dynamics will be carried out on real cases that allow a first analysis and approach to the reality that the volunteer is going to find.

Continuous training

This is a periodical training space, adjusted to the volunteer's profile, and which also serves as a meeting point and group cohesion. This training includes a training content and a space for the volunteers to meet and exchange experiences. Like any training action, it will be evaluated and the itinerary will be adapted to the needs of the volunteers and the organisation.

Volunteering meetings

The aim of these spaces is to open a space for meeting and reflection for the volunteers who form part of the organisation. The aim is for it to be an event that energises and makes visible the role of volunteering and the challenges it poses to organisations and society today. The use of a participative and dynamic methodology is recommended.

c) Monitoring and evaluation

The follow-up will take into account the evolution of the volunteer in the activity he/she carries out, his/her personal development, the way he/she fits into the assigned programme and into the organisation and the relationship with the beneficiaries, other volunteers and paid staff.

It is important at this point to differentiate between monitoring and accompaniment. Accompaniment can be seen as a pedagogical resource based on dialogue, exchange of experiences, concerns, difficulties... in the idea of joint growth. Monitoring is seen as an evaluation process that allows us to check whether the work being carried out is heading in the direction proposed by the organisation, in a search for effectiveness and efficiency of the voluntary action.

Evaluation, meanwhile, consists of the process used to ascertain whether the work being carried out meets the goals previously set. When talking about evaluation, one cannot forget to incorporate all the agents involved in the process, being the volunteers part of it. It is important to have a space for personal and group reflection in order to improve volunteer action. Evaluation will help us to grow and must be present throughout the whole process.

Evaluation is, therefore, the instrument that makes it possible to compare the initially planned situation with the real situation. In this comparison, information is obtained about the degree of achievement of what was initially planned, as well as the factors that have allowed or hindered this achievement.

5. EXIT PROCESS

The end of the voluntary action or the exit process of the volunteer is part of the natural process of the volunteering itinerary. For this reason, organisations must facilitate the

exit, always based on the recognition of the work carried out by the person and the knowledge and understanding of their reasons for leaving.

On the part of the organisation, the organisation will have to foresee the replacement, since the person who leaves will leave some functions uncovered, which entails a lack of attention to the person for whom the volunteer action is intended. For this reason, it is important that the volunteer informs the organisation well in advance of her/his departure.

In order to have a margin of manoeuvre that allows the organisation to respond to this situation.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a private space in an atmosphere of trust to acknowledge and thank the volunteer for the contributions made to the organisation, as well as to make an evaluation of the experience by the volunteer and the host organisation.

Do not simply give a numerical rating for each aspect of the evaluation, but develop an explanation of the reason for the rating.

Provide a certificate of recognition for the work carried out.

In the event that the person leaves the organisation in displeasure, it is appropriate and **RECOMMENDABLE** to:

Understand the reason

Objectify the facts, mediate and provide solutions, as far as possible.

Accept and accompany the process of leaving.

Self-assessment of the organisation's follow-up of volunteers

On occasions when they do not act in accordance with the mission and common criteria of voluntary action, the organisation will help the volunteer to reorient their actions and, if they do not do so, to abandon their activity.

However, in cases where the organisation is responsible for the departure of volunteers, which may have been caused by multiple causes (inadequate prioritisation of the task over the person, poor management, poor accompaniment, etc.), it is important to be able to assume the responsibility that this implies and, after apologising, try to find ways to encourage the person to continue participating in the organisation. If the relationship of trust has been broken, facilitating and accompanying the volunteer's departure may be the most appropriate thing to do.

Annex 1

CANDIDATES	TRAINING			EXPERIENCE				OTHER					TOTAL		Comments
	Suitable	Score 1 to 10	Av. 0,35	project management	volunteering and European programmes	Score. 1 a 10	Av. 0,35	Languages: spanish and english	flexibility, initiative	Interest for the project and Alianza	Score. 1 a 10	Av. 0,30	Total Score	weighting	
Name	0	0	0	3	7	5	1.75	6	8	8	7.33333	2.2	4.111111111	3.95	
Name	3	3	1.05	0	8	4	1.4	7	8	8	7.66667	2.3	4.88888889	4.75	
Name	3	3	1.05	0	0	0	0	9	8	8	8.33333	2.5	3.77777778	3.55	
Name	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	2	0.6	0.66666667	0.6	
Name	3	3	1.05	5	7	6	2.1	6	6	6	6	1.8	5	4.95	
Name	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	0.175	7	0	0	2.33333	0.7	0.94444444	0.875	
Name	3	3	1.05	5	7	6	2.1	6	6	6	6	1.8	5	4.95	
Name	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	0.175	7	0	0	2.33333	0.7	0.94444444	0.875	
Name	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0.3	0.33333333	0.3	

Annex 2

TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

The interview begins with an introduction of the persons attending and a general presentation of Alianza and the vacancy for which you are applying

Name	
Vanacy	
Country	
Period required	
Name of interviewers	
Date of interview	

CONFIRMATION OF PERSONAL DATA

In this part the candidate is asked to introduce him/herself and describe aspects of adaptation to the general conditions of volunteering relevant to the vacancy.

Ask about availability for immediate incorporation and explore other personal aspects that are important to know. For example, if you are working and need to ask for time before joining, if you need to apply for a residence permit, where you live... etc.

TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

This part explores the technical aspects that are relevant for the position: education, professional experience, relevant technical aspects, etc.

Can you describe how your academic studies relate to the vacancy? Ask about subjects such as career orientation within your studies, intensity of courses, etc.
How would you describe your professional experience related to the position? Ask about specific skills and experiences related to the tasks to be performed, reasons for leaving a job...
Can you describe the last experience you have been involved in / or the most significant professional experience for the position?

TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES

This section examines aspects of adaptation to the work environment, such as: communication, teamwork, self-awareness, intercultural adaptation, work organisation, etc.

How would you describe the way you work?
Have you ever worked in a team? Tasks, context...
What kind of contact have you had with other cultures? Have you ever lived outside your country? Have you ever worked with people of different nationalities?

SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

In this part, adaptation to specific working and living conditions is analysed.

Ask about their adaptation to the general conditions of the programme (pocket money, trainings, and evaluations...)
Ask about adapting the working hours and place of work.
Ask about adaptation to social, cultural, etc. activities to be carried out.

LANGUAGES

Assess knowledge of Spanish, as well as knowledge of other languages important for the performance of their tasks (verbal, not written test).

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EXPECTATIONS AND MOTIVATION

What are your expectations of this volunteering vacancy? Why do you think this experience is right for you?

QUALITATIVE EVALUATION**FINAL DECISION**



Good job!

Alianza por la Solidaridad

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