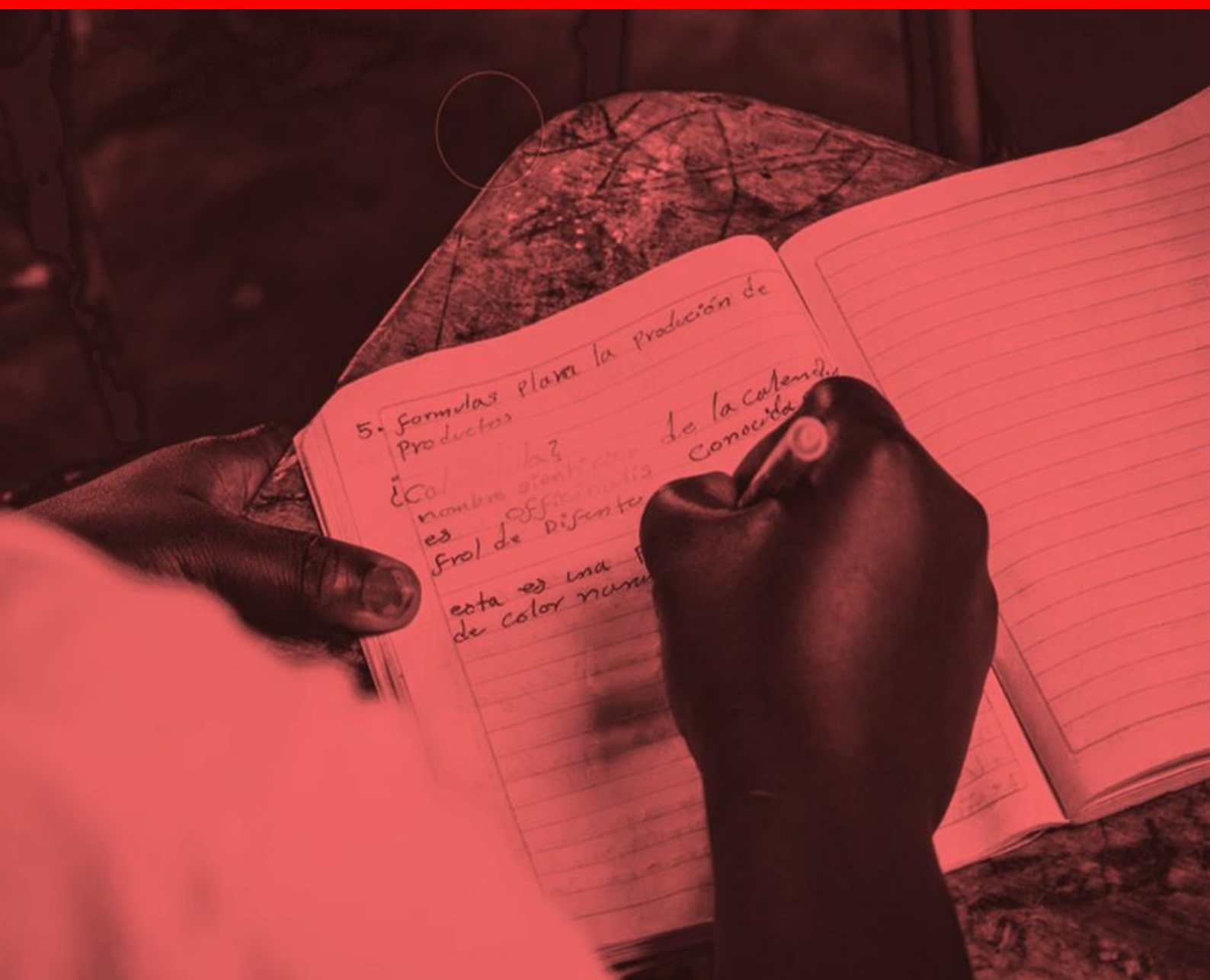


A guide to promoting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities



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Acknowledgements

ActionAid Hellas (AAH), Médecins du Monde Spain (MdM), Centro Promoción de la Mujer Gregoria Apaza (CPMGA), TECHO, Stowarzyszenie Projektow Miedzynarodowych (LOGOS Polska) and Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT), as well as the teams from the Action Alliance offices in Colombia, Bolivia, Senegal, Mauritania and Palestine, for sharing their experiences, reviewing the contents and supporting the development of the Guide.

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PRESENTATION

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The European Solidarity Corps Programme, set out in Regulation 2021/888 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021, establishes inclusion and equality as a priority as a fundamental aspect of giving all young people equal access to opportunities.

Within this framework of work and with the aim of incorporating the establishment of measures to eliminate obstacles that young people with fewer opportunities may have in volunteering programmes, the partner organisations of the project of: Humanitarian Volunteering "Young European volunteers supporting gender issues in humanitarian aid after COVID crisis - Youth4HA - 101099051" led by Alianza - ActionAid Spain, have elaborated this guide of recommendations to promote the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

The new European Solidarity Corps programme includes a special focus on young people with fewer opportunities, which has made it necessary to update volunteer management processes to include and guarantee equal opportunities for all young people. This guide responds to this need for updating and its elaboration is based on the compilation and analysis of the work experiences, needs and problems of the organisations themselves.

A review of SALTO's resources on inclusion has also been carried out, and in particular the Implementation Guidelines for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (Version 1 - 29.4.2021) and the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) on the Framework of Inclusion Measures under the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps Programme 2021-2027 (22.10.2021), among other references.

How does the organisation ensure the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and the principles of equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the processes of volunteer management (preparation, identification, selection, hosting, deployment, monitoring, (evaluation and recognition).

In order to answer this question, actions at each stage of the volunteer management cycle have been analysed, reviewed, and considered, and a series of recommendations are presented on concrete and practical aspects to guide mentors and members of organisations on the management and integration of young people with fewer opportunities in the framework of volunteering programmes.

The first part presents key aspects to understand the concepts of discrimination and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. The second section includes a brief analysis of the commitment and challenges of organisations to ensure inclusive opportunities for all young people.

The third session of the document develops a proposal for actions to ensure the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, adapted to the volunteer management cycle. Therefore, practical and detailed recommendations are found for each of the phases, from the preparation of organisations, pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment. Finally, some general conclusions are drawn.

Although the proposals presented in this document do not cover all the possibilities of working towards inclusion, it is hoped that they will serve as a guide and impetus for organisations to analyse their own strategies and initiate processes of improvement to enable greater participation and integration of young people with fewer opportunities in volunteering programmes.

1. KEY CONCEPTS

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Discrimination is a situation in which a person is, in some way, at a disadvantage compared to others because of a "*specific characteristic*".

In Europe, according to [Eurobarometer 535 from April-May 2023](#) data, respondents say that there is widespread discrimination on the basis of gender:

- 65% to be Roma
- 61% by skin colour
- 60% ethnic origin,
- 57% gender identity: being transgender,
- 54% sexual orientation,
- 49% disability,
- 49% socio-economic status,
- 47% being intersex,
- 45% age, being perceived as too old or too young,
- 42% religion or belief,
- 38% being male or female.

In addition, around one in five respondents (21%), in the same Eurobarometer, say that they personally have felt discriminated against or experienced harassment in the last 12 months.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 21 "prohibits any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation".

To combat discrimination, the European Solidarity Corps includes a horizontal dimension in its programmes to "*promote social inclusion, tolerance, human rights and the value of differences and diversity of all kinds, and to give all young people equal access to opportunities in all its actions*".

This dimension of **inclusion and diversity** promotes measures to support young people who face barriers to access or who have fewer opportunities. It specifically focuses on creating equal opportunities for all people. To this end, barriers that may be faced by different target groups, especially those with greater vulnerability, must be removed.

Young people with fewer opportunities are defined as those who are disadvantaged compared to their peers because they face one or more barriers and exclusion factors.

Some of the **obstacles** that serve as a benchmark for measures to increase the integration of the most vulnerable groups of young people are:

Disabilities. Physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that hinder participation in society due to an unfavourable environment.

Health problems. Serious illnesses, chronic ailments, or physical or mental health situations that may hinder participation.

Educational barriers. School failure or dropout, low labour qualifications, "NINIS" people and structural barriers in education.

Cultural differences. Cultural barriers affecting people from minorities, immigrants, refugees, sign language users or those with linguistic adaptation difficulties.

Social barriers. Difficulties in social adaptation, the status of (ex)offender, (ex)drug or (ex)alcohol addict, marginalisation, disadvantaged family background or specific living situations.

Economic barriers. Economic disadvantages, low standard of living, welfare dependency, unemployment, poverty, and financial problems affecting participation.

Discrimination barriers. Arising from discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or intersectional factors.

Geographical barriers. Living in remote, rural, underserved or peripheral areas that make it difficult to access opportunities.

2. COMMITMENTS AND CHALLENGES

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Organisations working in the youth field must incorporate anti-discrimination and equal opportunities as fundamental principles, as well as guaranteeing equal and fair possibilities for all young people to access opportunities that favour their development and dignity.

Working with young volunteers is a challenge for organisations to manage, update and implement concrete measures to ensure their inclusion and equal opportunities, in particular for those with fewer opportunities.

Organisations face a number of challenges, which arise throughout the management cycle, to address the difficulties or barriers faced by young people. Some of these challenges are:

During the preparation phase

- ✓ Wide range of barriers to youth participation (disabilities, health problems, economic, social barriers, etc.), which require organisations to have diverse capacities, structure and funding to address them.
- ✓ Need for training and constant updating of the work teams in order to give an adequate response to young people in the face of each specific obstacle and barrier.

Before deployment

- ✓ It is not always possible to immediately recognise people with fewer opportunities. Previous experience helps to identify some barriers during the first interview, but the process is not foolproof.
- ✓ Young people, already facing their own barriers, are not always able to easily access the mandatory EU academy training (online and face-to-face).

During deployment

- ✓ Often, unseen difficulties emerge only during the period of volunteering, such as personal problems, emotional challenges or other forms of discomfort that were not evident at the beginning.
- ✓ It is essential to maintain constant attention to the well-being of volunteers, as challenges can arise at any time. Each individual is unique and may face different challenges.
- ✓ Organisations must be prepared to adopt a flexible and adaptable approach, able to respond to the great diversity of young people's needs as they arise.

After deployment

- ✓ Capacity to continue to support young people who continue to need assistance to cope with their particular situation.

Organisations have a responsibility to provide additional support for the inclusion of young people, taking into account the specific context and relying on expert judgement. **There is no one-size-fits-all solution; each situation requires individual analysis.**

Even so, it is possible to recognise four areas of work for organisations to achieve the inclusion of all young people:

- a. Analyse the local context.** Be aware of the characteristics of the environment in which the organisation operates, the specific needs of the community and any external factors that may influence the work of volunteers. Tailoring your approach to local specificities ensures more effective and relevant integration for the community you serve.
- b. Knowing the capacities and needs of the organisation itself.** This consists of carrying out an in-depth analysis of the organisation, reflecting on the models on which it is based and what resources are needed to fulfil the support required by young people to face different obstacles. A thorough understanding of the needs of the association allows for the identification of possible barriers or difficulties that could arise during the deployment of volunteers.
- c. Identify difficulties that may arise during the deployment of volunteers.** This involves an analysis of each volunteer's needs, expectations, resources and difficulties. Having detailed information about each volunteer will make it possible to anticipate possible difficulties, as well as to offer opportunities adapted to each person.
- d. Implement a personalised work strategy.** Implement a comprehensive strategy to work with each volunteer, strengthening their capacities to address the obstacles or barriers they face.

3. PROPOSAL

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It is not always possible to foresee or know who are the people with the least opportunities. While it is highly desirable to share this kind of information, especially in missions in challenging locations, volunteers are not always willing to share details of their personal lives.

For this reason, it is crucial to have a comprehensive action plan in place, even when there is no apparent need. This ensures that the organisation is prepared to respond effectively should a risk situation arise.

The following is a **proposal for fostering the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities** that is intended to be a guide for all interested organisations to learn in depth how to implement and adapt their processes and procedures so that they can be prepared to support young people facing various barriers and obstacles.

In order to make the guide simple and practical to use, each phase of the volunteer management cycle has been considered, with emphasis on the most important aspects at each stage:



It is important that four fundamental aspects are taken into account during the implementation of this work proposal:

- a. **Use of a holistic approach.** Consider all aspects of the person and the environment, integrating different perspectives to address the needs of volunteers in a holistic manner. People are the result of a combination of personal, social and cultural characteristics that have influenced their development. In order to provide appropriate support and establish an authentic relationship, it is crucial to consider the whole person, understanding the diversity of experiences they bring.
- ✓ Offer personalised support that takes into account the specific needs of volunteers, such as training, mentoring and practical assistance.
 - ✓ Focus on the development of practical, professional and personal skills and competencies to enhance future opportunities for volunteers.
 - ✓ Create a welcoming environment that promotes inclusion and a sense of belonging, to help volunteers feel part of a community.
 - ✓ Pay attention to the psychological well-being of volunteers, offering support to cope with stress, anxiety or other emotional challenges.
 - ✓ Facilitate the creation of social networks between volunteers, organisations and communities to foster mutual support and collective learning.

Challenges

Implementing a holistic approach often requires significant financial and human resources.

Organisations may find it difficult to adapt to a more integrated approach, especially if they are used to traditional models of intervention.

Assessing the impact of a holistic approach can be complex, requiring appropriate tools and methodologies.

- b. **Suspension of judgement in the relationship with volunteers.** Maintain an open and receptive attitude, avoiding prejudice and promoting an atmosphere of trust and respect. A non-judgemental approach is essential to facilitate effective and structured communication. Volunteers should feel that they can express themselves freely during meetings with their mentors, without fear of being judged or condemned for what they choose to share.
- ✓ It facilitates communication because it promotes more fluid and honest communication. People feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts, concerns and emotions.

- ✓ It fosters a non-judgmental environment that allows volunteers to trust their mentors. Trust is key to building strong and lasting relationships between team members.
- ✓ It promotes inclusion because each person has unique experiences that can be valuable. Encouraging a non-judgmental approach ensures that all voices are heard and valued.
- ✓ Create a safe space through clear rules that support the suspension of the trial.
- ✓ It encourages active listening, where each participant feels listened to and understood.
- ✓ Ensure confidentiality, what is shared in meetings with mentors does not come out, so that people feel safe to express themselves.
- ✓ Promotes respect for the opinions and experiences of others, even if they are different from one's own.

Challenge

Organisations can face difficulties due to a culture rooted in judgement and criticism. Changing this mindset can be a long and complex process.

Not all team members may have effective active listening skills. Lack of training in this area can make it difficult to create an environment where judgement is suspended.

Maintaining the confidentiality of what is shared can be a challenge, especially in complex situations.

Some volunteers or team members may fear that a non-judgemental approach means a lack of constructive criticism. This concern may create resistance to change and hinder progress.

Establishing and maintaining clear rules for suspension of judgement during meetings can be complicated, especially in dynamic environments where unforeseen situations may arise, the need may arise to deal with sensitive or emotional issues, which and require special skills to handle these situations without causing discomfort.

- c. **Promote the concept of self-care.** Promote the importance of self-care among volunteers, helping them to recognise and address their own wellbeing needs. Self-care in the context of humanitarian volunteering refers to the practices and strategies volunteers adopt to maintain their physical, mental and emotional well-being while carrying out their work. As volunteers often face stressful situations, exposure to trauma, and sometimes even difficult living conditions, self-care is critical to ensuring their health and ability to continue to effectively help others.

This includes setting healthy boundaries, taking regular breaks, seeking emotional support, engaging in activities that promote relaxation and balance, and being aware of their own needs and signs of burnout. Self-care not only protects volunteers, but also enables them to be more resilient and effective in their humanitarian work.

There is no magic recipe for self-care. There are many tools and guides to be found, but it is important to keep in mind that:

- ✓ Each volunteering process is different and unique.
- ✓ Feelings are personal even in similar contexts.
- ✓ Not all tools work for everyone.

Challenge

Difficulty in adopting new self-care practices due to entrenched attitudes and resistance from organizational members.

Limited financial and human resources to implement support and training programs on self-care.

Poor internal communication that hinders the dissemination of information and awareness about the importance of self-care among volunteers.

Excessive focus on short-term operational goals, to the detriment of volunteers' well-being and self-care practices.

An organizational culture that values intense work and personal sacrifice, leading to an underestimation of individual well-being needs.

- d. **Encourage the strengthening of emotional intelligence.** Develop emotional intelligence skills to improve communication, empathy and emotion management, both in volunteers and in the work team. This is essential to improve communication, empathy and emotional well-being and enables volunteers to recognise and manage their emotions as well as those of others, creating a supportive and collaborative environment.

Components of emotional intelligence:

- ✓ Perception of emotions. Identifying and distinguishing one's own and other people's emotions.
- ✓ Emotional facilitation. Using emotions for decision making and problem solving.
- ✓ Emotional understanding. Understanding the meaning and relationships between emotions.
- ✓ Emotional regulation. Managing and expressing emotions in a healthy way.

Challenge

In some cultures, or contexts, there is a stigma attached to discussing emotions and mental health, which can hinder openness and communication among volunteers.

The need to meet operational targets can divert attention from developing emotional intelligence, leading to a stressful work culture.

Without a safe environment to practice emotional intelligence skills, volunteers may find it difficult to apply what they learn.

Creating an environment in which volunteers feel comfortable expressing emotions and vulnerabilities may take time and effort, and may not be immediately visible.

3.1. PREPARATION

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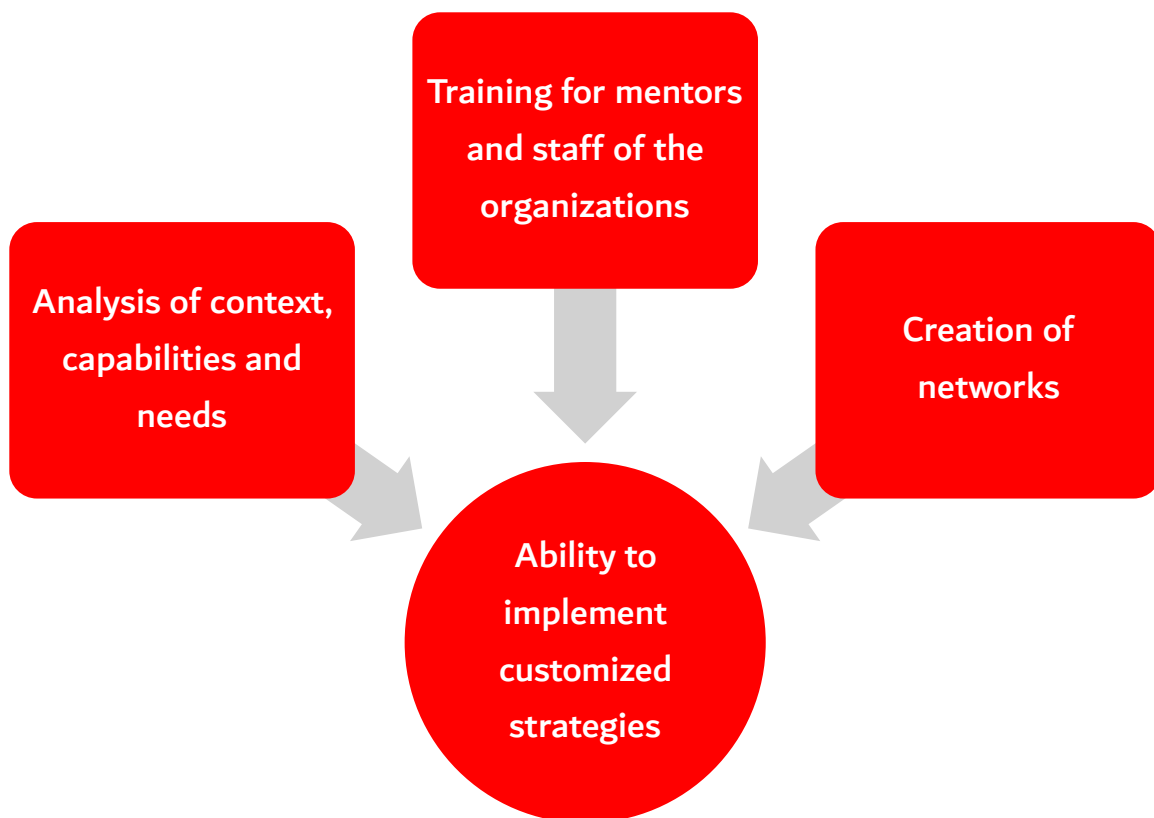


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The preparation of organisations prior to the hosting of volunteers is crucial in order to respond adequately to possible needs identified during the volunteer management.

The analysis of the context, its opportunities and threats, as well as the capacities and needs of the organisations, their challenges and strengths, are identified as essential aspects for adequate preparation. This analysis will involve the updating and adequate preparation of staff and work teams to achieve an environment capable of promoting holistic care, without judgement and based on self-care and emotional intelligence. In addition, networks for exchange, learning and coordination between organisations should be fostered to strengthen and improve the care provided to young people.



With this preparation, organisations will be better able to define and implement an inclusion strategy adapted to the local context and to the organisation itself, in order to work with young volunteers with fewer opportunities.

3.1.1. Context, capacities and needs analysis

There are many methodologies (SWOT; CAME, FQM...) that organisations can use for their internal and external analysis. They should choose the one that best suits their conditions and objectives.

The minimum basic data you should have in order to analyse the effort that young volunteers will require to adapt/integrate into the local context, as well as to ensure an adequate response to the needs of the communities, is shown in the following table. This is only indicative and should be complemented with all the information that each organisation defines as a priority.

Minimum information for context analysis

Geographical location	City/Region/ Neighbourhood/Community. Geographical aspects to be taken into account: altitude, climate...
Demographics	Total population. Age distribution. Predominant socio-economic level. Cultural and ethnic diversity.
Social characteristics	Poverty index. Access to basic services (health, housing). Main social problems (crime, health, education).
Infrastructure and services	Accessibility and public transport. Availability of community facilities (health centres, cultural centres).
Community needs analysis	Main needs identified. Current programmes and resources available. Gaps between needs and existing resources.
Key aspects of volunteer work	Local particularities that hinder or ensure integration. Challenges and opportunities.

Another key aspect is the analysis of the capacities and needs of each organisation to assess the possible barriers that volunteers may face during their deployment and to identify actions to achieve their full integration.

For this analysis, it is proposed to have some basic information about the organisation, as shown in the following table. Again, this table is only indicative and organisations can add as many aspects as they consider necessary.

Minimum information for the organisation's capacity and needs analysis

Areas of intervention	Main areas of work (education, health, environment, etc.). Current programmes and projects.
Available resources	Human resources (number of staff and volunteers). Financial resources (budget, sources of funding). Material resources (facilities, equipment).
Specific objectives	Short and long-term goals. Expected results of the voluntary intervention.

Internal challenges	Insufficient resources (financial, human, material). Training programmes. Capacities and skills required of volunteers. Retention and motivation of volunteers.
External challenges	Influence of local socio-economic and political factors. Relationship with the local community (level of trust and collaboration).
Possible barriers during the deployment of volunteers	Logistical challenges (transport, communication). Community resistance or lack of commitment. Security risks and considerations. Other...

Finally, in this phase, organisations should identify or update their inclusion strategy, adapted to the context, as well as to the characteristics of the organisation and the possible difficulties that may arise. The strategy should contain as a minimum:

Declaration and legislative framework	State the commitment to promote the principles of inclusion, equality and non-discrimination and explain how the organisation will support their achievement. For example: resources to be made available, inclusion in general lines of work, staff training, etc. The legislative framework of reference is defined.
Target	It sets out the objectives that the strategy aims to achieve.
Outreach	Define the scope that the strategy will have within the areas and services of the organisation (e.g. only for recruitment issues, for all areas...), as well as the staff directly involved.
Definitions	It includes the main definitions that relate to the application of the principles of inclusion, equality and non-discrimination in the organisation.
Actions and procedures	It specifies the actions and procedures aimed at each of the areas where it is to be applied.
Responsibilities	It defines the roles and responsibilities of all staff and volunteers, senior managers and teams in the implementation of the strategy, as well as compliance with procedures, the identification of situations that violate agreed principles and the responsibility to report them.

Training and communication	These include actions to promote the strategy, staff training and communication and dissemination plans.
Funding	The resources needed to implement the strategy and the sources of funding are defined.
Periodic review	Periods for review and evaluation are defined, as well as the persons responsible for carrying out this task. Constant updating ensures that the legislation is complied with and effectively implemented.

3.1.2. Training for mentors and staff of organisations

To ensure the inclusion and proper management of young people with fewer opportunities, it is important to know and strengthen the role of mentors in support and fostering organisations.

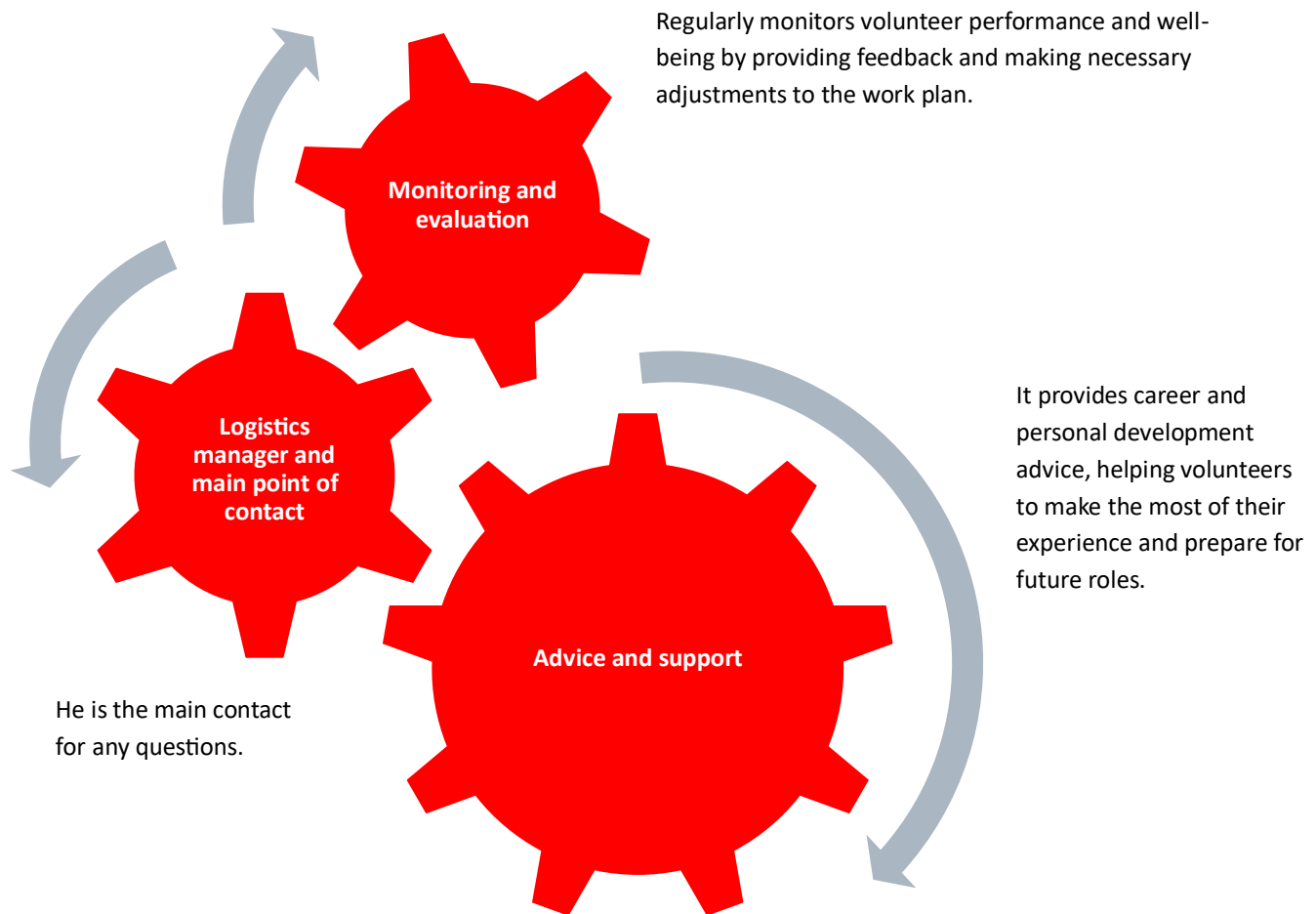
Mentors and staff involved in the management of volunteers must develop and update competences and skills to support young people on issues such as: emotional and conflict management, development of personal skills (communication, teamwork, expectation management...), stress management techniques, among others.

One of the great challenges for organisations is to define and implement internal training programmes for their staff on an ongoing basis, focused on addressing the various obstacles faced by young people and providing them with the right support. It is also a major challenge for mentors to be able to allocate the time and attention to participate in training in an organisational environment that promotes holistic practices, emotional intelligence and self-care.

The benefits of **training and strengthening the support organisation's mentor** are manifold, some of the most important of which are:

- ✓ Facilitates practical problem solving
- ✓ It ensures a positive experience.
- ✓ Ensures that volunteers are aligned with the organisation's mission and vision.
- ✓ Encourages continuous personal and professional growth.

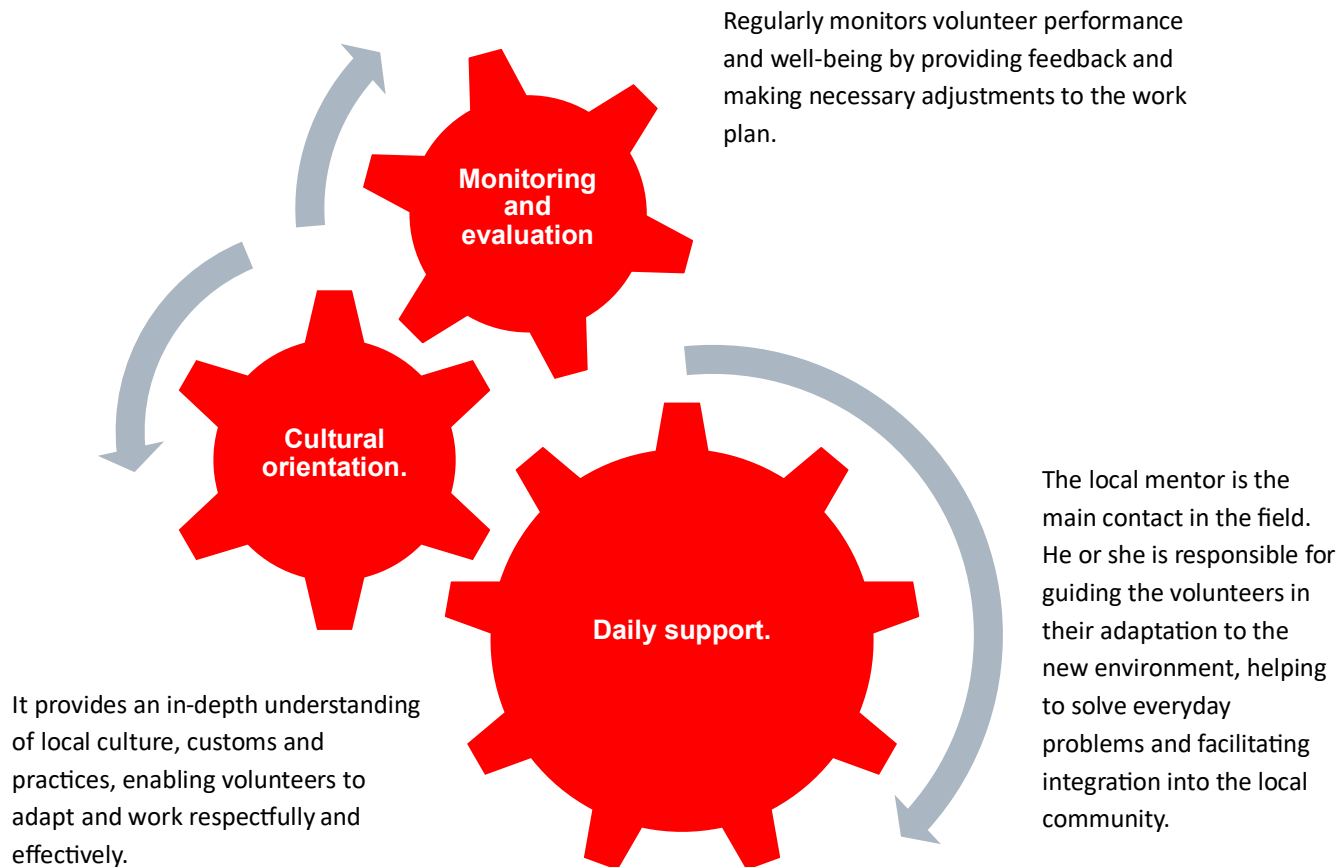
Role of the support organisation mentor



Training and strengthening the host organisation's mentor has many benefits, among them:

- ✓ Improves the volunteer's adaptation to the local environment.
- ✓ It facilitates practical and cultural problem solving.
- ✓ It ensures a positive and productive experience in the field.

Role of the organisation mentor



3.1.3. Networking (including preparatory visits)

Networking with other organisations and groups that address inclusion and diversity issues is very beneficial in improving the support provided to young people with fewer opportunities.

Networking provides various forms of support, such as training sessions, peer learning experiences and opportunities for professional exchanges, visits, learning by observation, among others.

One tool that can strengthen networking on inclusion issues is preparatory visits, which foster knowledge of each other as well as of the context, and promote joint actions for the identification of needs, the identification and implementation of inclusion strategies, as well as the strengthening of training pathways (including practical actions).

Networks should transcend a specific project and consortium, be open and include national and transnational partners.

3.2. BEFORE DEPLOYMENT

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Prior to deployments, organisations should make every effort to ensure that opportunities reach as many young people as possible, and prioritise those who have the most difficulty accessing information.

In addition, they should provide support to participants with registration procedures, documentation, reports, etc. And ensure inclusive selection processes, generating pleasant environments conducive to the participation of young people.

Finally, at this stage, organisations should ensure that they have a welcoming process that provides the training, language support and cultural preparation necessary for young people to approach missions with confidence and trust, understanding what is expected of them, what the channels of communication are and who are the people they can turn to in case of any need or difficulty.

3.2.1. Dissemination of opportunities

Organisations should ensure that available vacancy information reaches people with fewer opportunities in their personal environments, tailoring the approach to their specific information needs.

It is recommended to map organisations of interest. For example: migrant associations, youth associations in rural areas, institutions serving young people with disabilities, etc.

It is proposed:

- ✓ Specific publications and promotional material in the relevant languages, and appropriate formats according to the specific audience.
- ✓ Use of clear and understandable language in information and communications, avoiding abstract language and unnecessary complexity and using images as far as possible;
- ✓ Include testimonials from former volunteers, preferably with fewer opportunities to share their own experience.
- ✓ Hold face-to-face events to present the opportunities, in the settings where young people are located and which are identified in the above-mentioned mappings.

3.2.2. Inclusive selection procedures

The selection process should be transparent, fair and efficient, offering equal treatment to all interested parties and ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and should include the establishment of criteria to ensure equal assessment of all those who have applied.

It is not always possible to identify or know who the people with fewer opportunities are in the selection process, but it is highly recommended to share information about the organisation's inclusion

strategy for young people with fewer opportunities in interviews. Volunteers do not always share information about their barriers and obstacles, but they may be more open if they know how the organisation addresses these issues.

It is also important to inform those who have not been selected by providing information that values the candidate's profile and explaining that there is another person who is a better fit, and/or that the candidate will not find what he/she is looking for in the organisation.

3.2.3. Induction processes aimed at providing support and accompaniment

Volunteers should receive personal training prior to their deployment, including close accompaniment and support with administrative formalities (visas, vaccinations, etc.). The induction should also make it clear who a volunteer can turn to in case they need training, administrative and personal support during activities

The reception is not just an event, but a process that should be used to get to know the young people better and to identify possible barriers to their effective participation

Before deploying volunteers to a project, it is essential to anticipate and address potential difficulties to ensure an effective and positive experience for both volunteers and the community. It is therefore suggested that they be discussed during the induction process:

A. Cultural and social adaptation challenges

Culture shock. Identify significant differences in customs, values and forms of communication that volunteers may face. Lack of preparation for these differences may lead to misunderstandings or tensions with the local community.

Language and communication. Identify language barriers that may hinder effective interaction and relationship building. Lack of language support can negatively impact volunteers' ability to understand local needs and collaborate effectively.

B. Clarity in expectations and roles

Expectations. Ensure that volunteers' expectations are aligned with the reality of the project. Otherwise, this can lead to frustration and demotivation. This includes the amount of work, the type of tasks, and the expected results.

Roles and responsibilities. Provide a clear description of roles. Volunteers may feel lost or unsure if they are not clear about how to contribute and what is expected of them, which affects their effectiveness and satisfaction.

C. Logistical and organisational challenges

Infrastructure. Ensure that basic resources such as accommodation, transport, or working materials are available and that volunteers are fully briefed on these and understand where they are going and what basic services will be available.

Communication and coordination. Provide detailed information on coordination channels ensure proper planning and organisation in time management, task allocation and communication among the team.

D. Security and welfare risks

Personal security risks. Young people may be exposed to security-related risks in unfamiliar environments, especially in areas of social or political instability. They should be specifically trained to recognise and respond to these risks. Organisations should ensure that volunteers are aware of and agree to work within the framework of security plans and measures.

Stress and burnout. The emotional and physical commitment of volunteers can lead to stress, burnout and exhaustion, affecting both mental and physical health. Organisations should warn volunteers of this situation and provide information on support measures to prevent such situations.

E. Resistance or lack of commitment from the community

Communities in which the volunteer will be integrated. Organisations should prepare volunteers to work in complex environments, even when a local community is resistant or distrustful. Volunteers should be clear about the contribution of their presence and establish a relationship of respect and collaboration.

F. Need for specific support and continuous monitoring

Need for constant supervision. Identify whether the volunteer requires continuous follow-up (enhanced mentoring). Without continuous monitoring it is difficult to identify problems in time and to provide the necessary support to volunteers.

G. Need for specific support measures.

According to their particularities and specific needs, specific support measures should be assessed to guarantee the overcoming of barriers to access opportunities, as well as their inclusion and non-discrimination.

A very important aspect of the induction session that allows a better knowledge of the volunteer is the presentation of the **YouthPass** as a tool to identify the development of key competences. Key competences are those that all people need for personal fulfilment and development, as well as for employment, social inclusion and active citizenship and for leading a sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

The reference framework established by the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union limits the key competences to eight, which are interconnected and develop each other: multilingual competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, citizenship competence, digital competence, competence in cultural awareness and expression, entrepreneurial competence,

mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, and literacy competence.

Proposing a first approach to the volunteer to define goals in the framework of YouthPass can bring specific challenges to light. For example, difficulties in literacy or numeracy may provide information about learning difficulties. Of course, a young person who faces a barrier or obstacle to full inclusion does not necessarily have to have difficulties in reflecting on the competences he/she wants to develop.

The YouthPass is a tool that will allow you to get to know much more about the volunteer and identify additional support needs.

3.3. DURING DEPLOYMENT

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During deployment, in order to work towards the inclusion of volunteers with fewer opportunities, it is crucial to implement a functional system to ensure

- ✓ **Ongoing accompaniment.** The appointment of mentors in both the supporting and host organisation provides ongoing support on issues such as cultural adaptation, task performance and problem solving is crucial for young people who face barriers or obstacles that exclude them.
- ✓ **Early identification of problems.** By having mentors who provide ongoing accompaniment, potential problems can be detected and addressed before they become crises. This includes operational difficulties, cultural barriers or personal problems that volunteers may face.
- ✓ **Quick and effective reaction.** In the event of difficult situations, tutors are in an ideal position to offer quick and appropriate solutions. Their knowledge and understanding of the dynamics allow them to act efficiently, ensuring that problems can be resolved effectively.

3.3.1. Identification of each volunteer's needs

It is essential to have information about the needs and difficulties of the volunteer. To this end, it is proposed:

- ✓ Engage in an open dialogue with the person to understand their situation in depth. This includes learning not only about the difficulties they face, but also about their strengths, their personal resources, and their expectations about the support they will receive.
- ✓ It is key to create an atmosphere of trust, where the person feels safe to express their concerns, worries and needs. Often, difficulties are not only of a practical nature, but may also include emotional, social or psychological aspects that need to be dealt with sensitively.

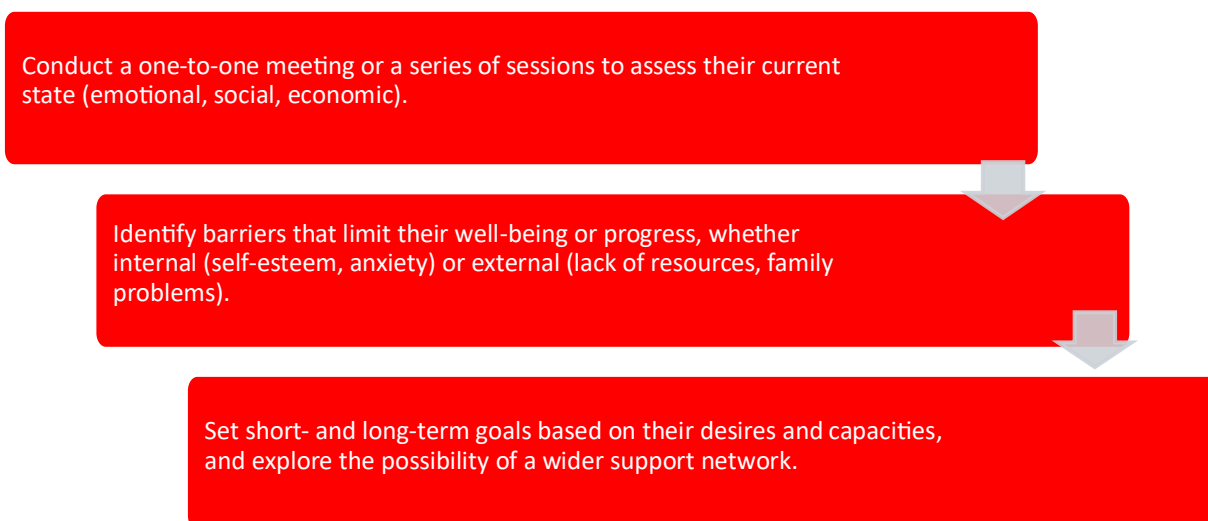
It is recommended to involve mentors from sending and hosting organisations in identifying the needs of each volunteer, as working closely together they can provide deeper and more practical insights into daily challenges.

The identification of needs should cover:

- Analysis of mood and difficulties. It is crucial to encourage the volunteer to verbalize emotions and feelings. Verbalization can help clarify difficulties and create an atmosphere of trust where the volunteer feels free to share his or her experiences.
- It is essential to identify the difficulties faced by the volunteer and the motivations behind these issues. This allows for the development of personalised strategies to address specific challenges and promote the emotional well-being of the volunteers.

- It is essential to collaborate with the volunteer in exploring possible solutions to their difficulties. This approach not only values the volunteer's opinions, but also promotes a sense of responsibility and involves the volunteer in the decision-making process.
- Propose the support of other professionals who can help create a stronger support network for the volunteer. It is important to analyse how the volunteer reacts to this proposal and whether they find it useful. For example, introducing the possibility of receiving more intensive psychological support can be an important resource, but it is essential to consider the volunteer's reactions to this idea. Assess whether they feel comfortable receiving professional help and how this may influence their volunteering experience.

In summary, in this first phase of identification of the volunteer's needs, it is proposed that:



3.3.2. Developing tailor-made strategies

Once the necessary information has been gathered, it is important that managers and mentors can create, together with the volunteer, a tailor-made strategy that not only addresses immediate needs but, as far as possible, offers long-term solutions.

This strategy must be tailored to the reality of the volunteer, the context, and the capacities and constraints of the organisations. A good strategy needs to be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances of any kind.

This proposal considers that personalised strategies to promote the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities should include at least five basic aspects:



It is important that each personalised strategy considers the sustainability of the support, i.e. how it will be maintained over time, even after the end of the young person's volunteering period.

a. Enhanced tutoring

They are those that provide closer and more tailored attention. This involves more frequent interactions and more time dedicated to each volunteer. Mentoring is tailored to the unique needs of the individual, whether in terms of skills, knowledge or personal barriers.

- ✓ Establishing a minimum number of follow-up sessions ensures regular and continuous contact with participants and allows for constant monitoring of their progress, identifying any difficulties early and adjusting support strategies as necessary.

- ✓ Providing a structured but flexible framework that facilitates the detection of problems and the implementation of timely solutions allows participants to feel a sense of constant support, which can be motivating and reassuring.

For these meetings to be effective, it is important to define clear objectives for each session and provide an open space for feedback

It is important to leave space for flexibility to allow volunteers to address the issues they consider necessary. Allowing room for flexibility recognises the importance of autonomy and self-regulation. Allowing participants to identify and address the issues they feel are relevant fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own development.

b. Psychological support

It is very important to recognise that there are situations, problems or needs of a volunteer that exceed the support capacities of the organisation and therefore the support of a professional psychologist is required to ensure that the volunteer receives an appropriate intervention for their emotional and psychological needs, ensuring a professional and ethical approach.

Working in coordination with a psychologist helps to create a holistic intervention plan that addresses the specific needs of the volunteer, facilitating proper monitoring and assessment and providing more comprehensive and effective support.

Providing adequate psychological support contributes significantly to the overall well-being of the volunteer, helping them to better manage stress, anxiety or other emotional problems that may arise during their experience.

By recognising and acting on more complex emotional needs, the organisation demonstrates its commitment to the well-being of volunteers, which can enhance their experience and retention.

It is important to ensure that all procedures strictly follow the rules of confidentiality and professional ethics, protecting the privacy and rights of the volunteer.

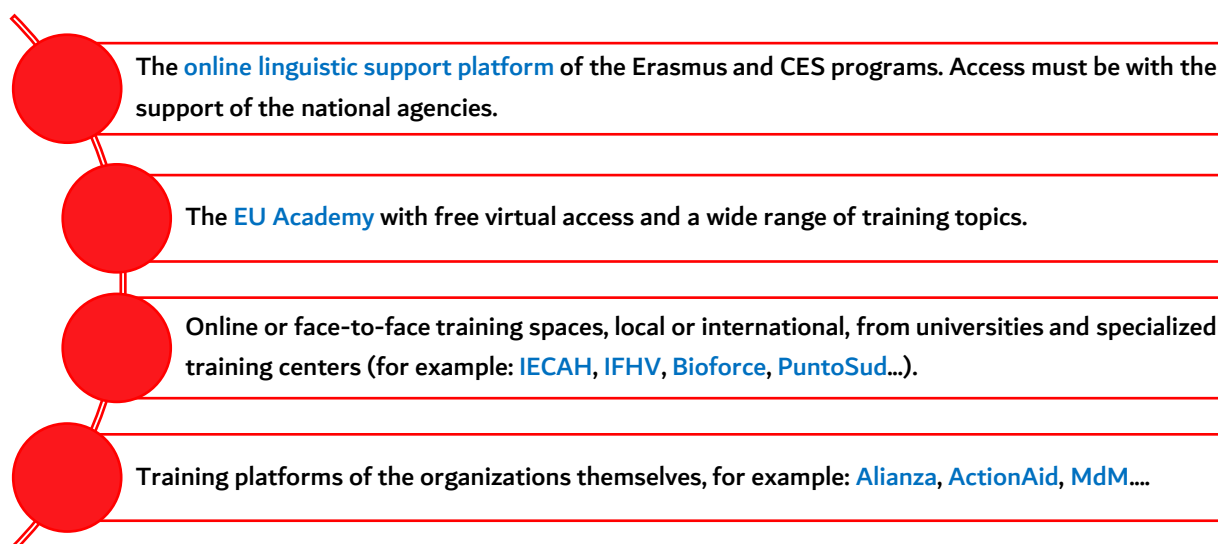
In cases where more intensive psychological support is valued, i.e. as therapy for a profound mental situation, it is necessary to establish a clear protocol to coordinate the support, and above all to have the agreement of the volunteer and/or his/her family.

c. Training (including language support)

Identifying and designing a personalised training plan for young people with fewer opportunities guarantees the strengthening of their capacities and the development of practical tools to improve their personal and professional skills.

This training plan should be carried out based on the identification of needs and difficulties described above, and involving each young person in order to define together which training is the most appropriate and motivating (contents, duration, online or face-to-face format, etc.).

Organisations should allocate funds specific and personalised training for volunteers with fewer opportunities. In addition, various training spaces should be made available online sometimes free of charge:



In all cases, linguistic support is important and essential to support young people in their adaptation and inclusion in the cultural contexts to which they will be assigned in their volunteer missions.

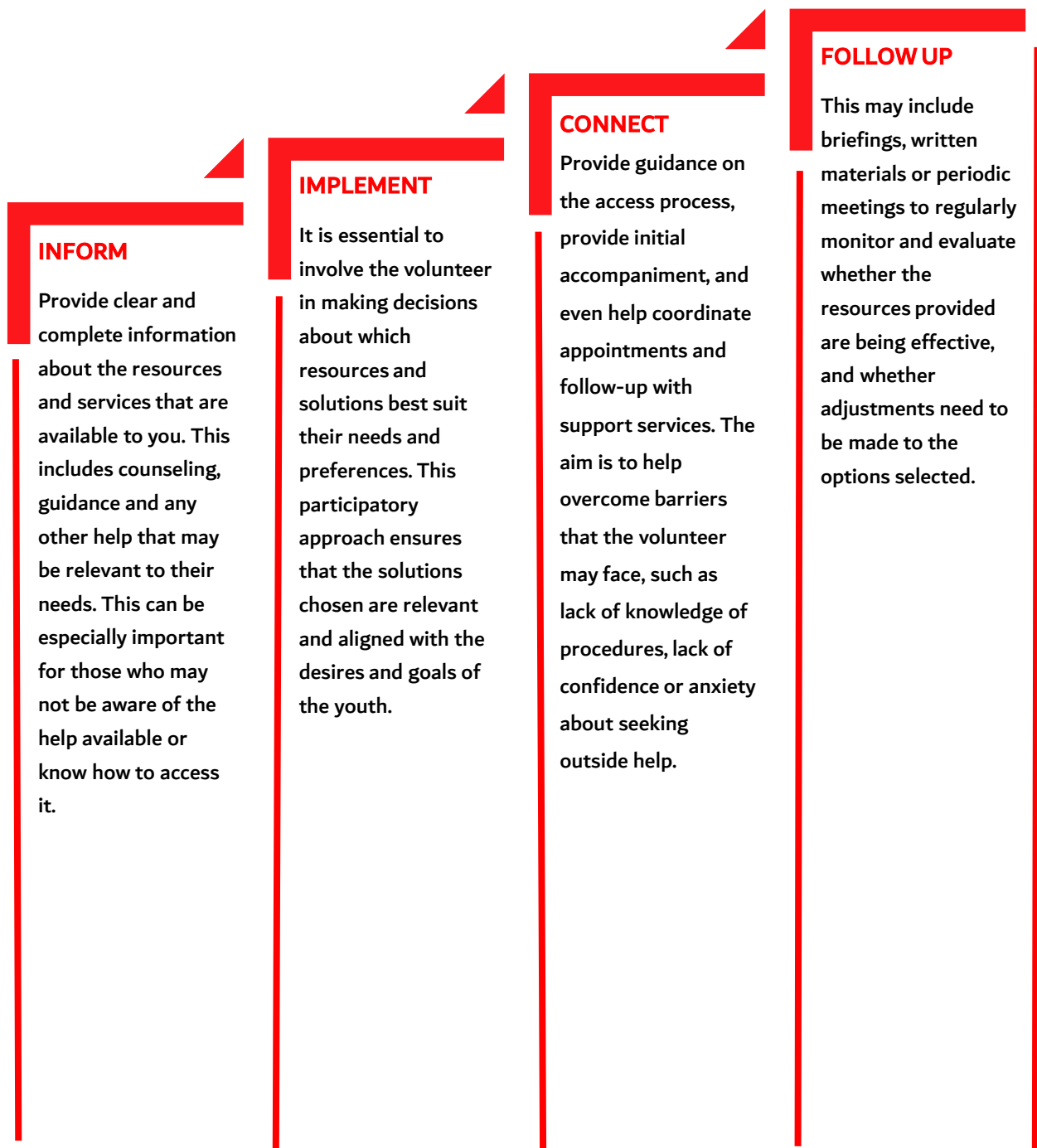
d. Connection to available resources

The resources available are all those that can offer a service or a support space oriented to the needs of the young person with fewer opportunities. For example:

- ✓ Employment guidance services for young people with difficulties in finding employment.
- ✓ Specialised medical or support services (e.g. bipolar associations, etc.) for young people with disabilities or health problems.
- ✓ Support groups for young people with social difficulties, etc.
- ✓ Migrant associations for young people with cultural barriers.

- ✓ Local LGTBI collectives for young people who suffer discrimination for this reason.
- ✓ They can also be less specialised spaces or services that can help integrate young people with fewer opportunities, e.g. cultural activity groups, sports, etc.

The design of a personalised strategy for young people with fewer opportunities should include: identifying, informing, involving, connecting and monitoring the resources available in the context and which are suitable to support them in their adaptation, integration and development of skills and abilities.



e. Strengthening networks

Youth exchanges provide the opportunity to build networks, establish future collaborations and support each other in overcoming common challenges. Specifically, they promote participation and stimulate the motivation of young people with fewer opportunities by focusing on mutual learning.

Listening to other young people talk about their own personal circumstances makes it easier to address issues that they did not want to/could not express, as well as to identify solutions to personal difficulties.

Exchanges with specific organisations and groups (women's associations, LGBTI, etc.) also support the knowledge of diverse experiences as well as professional areas of interest that can be strengthened.

Organisations should encourage virtual and face-to-face meetings between young people as part of strategies designed to support volunteers with fewer opportunities:



3.3.3. Promoting and supporting Community participation

A fundamental aspect for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities is the work they can carry out with the communities and populations benefiting from the projects.

In this sense, organisations should encourage and facilitate spaces and activities for participants to get involved in local communities and civic participation activities. Some community outreach activities that can be undertaken by young people with fewer opportunities include:

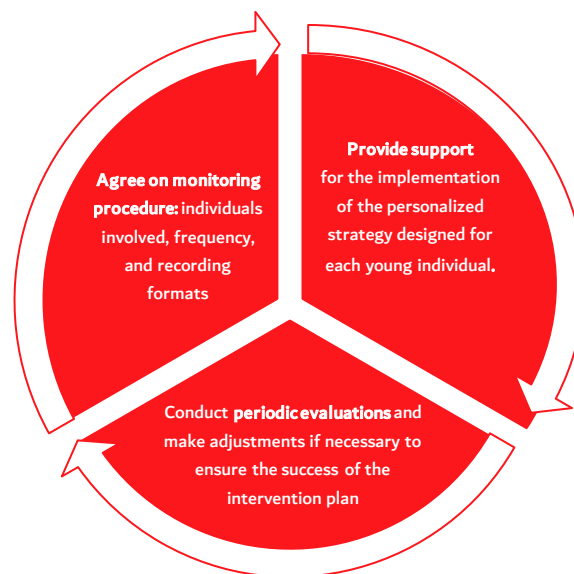


3.3.4. Continuous monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of the strategy to support each young person with fewer opportunities is essential to:

- ✓ Validate the adequacy of the actions identified and implemented.
- ✓ Promote and maintain open and continuous channels of communication with each young person.
- ✓ To know the progress and satisfaction of young people with fewer opportunities, including monitoring the development of their competences - YouthPass.
- ✓ Adjust the strategy when it becomes apparent that it is not relevant or when the context or circumstances of the volunteer are different.

In summary, for adequate monitoring, it is necessary to agree on a procedure with the volunteer, to carry out continuous accompaniment and to carry out periodic evaluations.



It should not be assumed that a seemingly good solution can be definitive. Therefore, continuous review and adjustments are necessary to adapt them to the evolving needs of the volunteers. To this end, it is important to:

- ✓ Regular communication. Establish effective and continuous communication channels between mentors and volunteers.
- ✓ Regular meetings. Organise regular meetings to review progress, discuss challenges and address new challenges or difficulties.
- ✓ Feedback and adjustments. Use feedback to adjust the strategy.

3.4. AFTER DEPLOYMENT

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The moment of disengagement of the volunteer with the organisation means the disappearance of the mutual obligations that were formally established in the volunteering contract, even if this does not mean the end of the relationship between the organisation and the young people.

For young people with fewer opportunities, it is very important that this closure is a space for joint reflection on the activities carried out, the learning, the competences developed and the future opportunities.

For organisations, it is a key moment to assess their efforts in implementing personalised strategies to support young people to overcome barriers and achieve greater inclusion. It is also an opportunity to offer young people other options to stay engaged in their activities and projects.

3.4.1. Assessment of participation

The final evaluation of a volunteer with fewer opportunities should be an opportunity to process the experience, to take a look at what the experience has meant, how it has transformed him/her, and what has been learned.

The assessment should be based on the need's identification process, as well as on the objectives of intervention and support strategies that have been jointly developed between the organisations and the volunteer.

The evaluation process analyses:

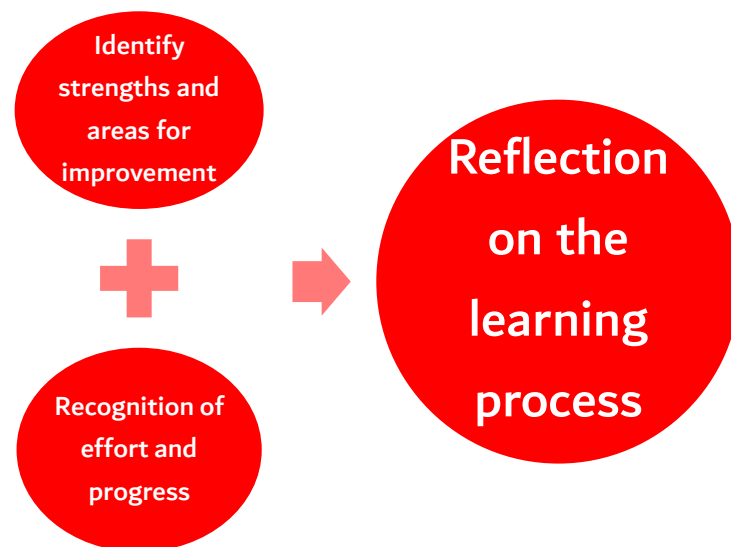
The assessment of the actions developed in the support strategy / intervention plan.	The quality of coordination and communication between the organisations and the young volunteer.	Substantial changes in relation to identified obstacles or difficulties.	The impact of training to overcome obstacles and develop competences.
The effectiveness and relevance of enhanced mentoring and counselling.	The capacity and effectiveness of connecting with available resources.	The benefits of exchanges with other young people and associations.	The contribution of volunteering to communities.

Evaluations ensure personalised feedback. Evaluations are a key moment to recognise and value the work that volunteers have done. Feeling recognised for their progress motivates volunteers to continue their efforts and gives them confidence in their development.

A mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation are recommended:

- ✓ **Mid-term evaluation.** This moment not only serves to acknowledge the work done so far, but also provides an opportunity for mentors to provide constructive feedback to the young person. The mid-term evaluation is a time to highlight strengths and areas for improvement, further stimulating the volunteer's learning process. Mid-term evaluations allow for the timely identification of the competencies included in the YouthPass that volunteers have developed most successfully and those that require more attention. This allows volunteers to improve and adjust their approach before the end of the programme.
- ✓ **Final evaluation.** At the end of their assignment, volunteers have the opportunity to reflect on their learning process through a self-assessment, comparing the results achieved with the initial objectives, including the YouthPass competency framework. In addition, tutors can provide an external evaluation that will highlight the progress made. This feedback, aimed at being constructive, will represent an opportunity to recognise the work done by the volunteers and will contribute to their personal and professional development.

Although the benefits of an evaluation are diverse, the following are highlighted



3.4.2. Closure and recognition of volunteerism

Organisations have the responsibility to run specific sessions for the closure (post-deployment) of volunteers, including specific spaces for young people with fewer opportunities. These spaces can combine individual and group sessions.

Closing sessions should be geared towards a person with fewer opportunities:

- ✓ Assess the support and relevance of the customised strategy that the organisation has provided to overcome the obstacles identified.
- ✓ Evaluate your personal and professional learning process.
- ✓ Receive recognition for your volunteering work: Professional recognition (validation of YouthPass competences, professional certificates, etc.) and social recognition (such as communication actions to thank you for your support and promote your commitment once your mission is over).

3.4.3. Identification of new opportunities (employment, education...)

Returning home presents a challenge of re-encountering a reality with which people may no longer identify or may simply be disengaged. This challenge may be more relevant for young people with fewer opportunities.

Organisations have a responsibility to provide support to volunteers, through guidance, sessions and documentation, to ensure that the return home is a positive process for young people. This support is most important for people who face barriers to inclusion.

It is therefore advisable that organisations can offer other activities upon return to allow volunteers to remain connected to the organisation, maintaining a connection with them and encouraging their participation in various activities.

Organisations can foster long-term relationships with volunteers through:

- ✓ Systematise the collection of CVs. Create an organised archive to collect and keep volunteers' CVs, ensuring that they do not get lost. In case of vacancies, recommend volunteers for internal positions.
- ✓ Maintain contact with volunteers. Establish regular communication with volunteers to propose internal roles that may be appropriate to their skills and interests.
- ✓ Post-volunteering collaboration. At the end of the voluntary service, inform participants about opportunities for voluntary collaboration, so that they can continue to be involved with the organisation.
- ✓ Invitations to events and demonstrations. In case of events or demonstrations, always make sure to invite former volunteers to stay involved and maintain their connection with the organisation.
- ✓ Give space for new ideas. Often, former volunteers can come up with new ideas or initiatives. It is important to give space for creativity and encourage innovation.
- ✓ Continue to offer training. If the organisation is involved in training, encourage volunteers to continue training, including online training, with programmes offered by the organisation.

- ✓ Create a list of former volunteers. Maintain an updated list of all people who have participated in the volunteer programme, in order to invite them to future events or training sessions organised by the organisation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

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Organisations working with '*young people with fewer opportunities*' in volunteering deployments should undertake a process of internal review and updating of their processes and procedures to ensure that they can provide appropriate and personalised support to each young person, according to their situation. While there may be young people facing the same difficulty, each situation will be unique and will require a personalised strategy to promote inclusion.

Of course, this customisation does not preclude the identification of common aspects of organisational preparedness. Throughout this guide, a number of recommendations have been put forward, which, while not exhaustive, are intended to improve the capacity of organisations to meet the challenge of working with young people with fewer opportunities.

As essential aspects, the following have been identified:

- ✓ the need for an in-depth analysis of the context in which the volunteering will be deployed, identifying the challenges it may bring for each young person and
- ✓ internal analysis of the organisation's capacities and needs to identify strengths and challenges to adequately support young people with fewer opportunities

To this external and internal analysis, a detailed study of the needs and particularities of each young person must be added in order to identify the difficulties that could arise during their deployment.

Based on this information, it is proposed to develop a personalised and agreed strategy with each young person, which integrates among other actions: reinforced tutoring, psychological support, specific training, connection with existing resources and strengthening of networks, as well as promoting the relationship with the communities and continuous monitoring that includes the development of competences - YouthPass.

This personalised strategy does not exclude the implementation of actions throughout the entire volunteer management cycle, with the aim of ensuring inclusion and equal opportunities for all young people, especially for the most vulnerable.

Organisations should anticipate the deployment of volunteers with fewer opportunities by developing or strengthening their inclusion strategies, and by providing appropriate training for staff.

Equally, before, during and after deployment, each step of each phase has to be reviewed to adapt and focus on working with young people facing various barriers and obstacles, thus avoiding the risk of exclusion and providing them with opportunities to integrate with full guarantees.

This guide hopes, beyond providing some practical aspects or useful recommendations, to generate a reflection within organisations that motivates them to identify the challenges of working with the most vulnerable young people, and to promote concrete actions for improvement in order to provide greater opportunities and make progress in the fight against discrimination and exclusion.

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A guide to promoting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities

The aim of this guide is to facilitate the establishment of measures to remove obstacles for young people with fewer opportunities in programmes.

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