



# Community Guide

## for volunteering

AUSTRIA





#### Contact information

Andrea Ben Lassoued | [andrea.benlassoued@suedwind.at](mailto:andrea.benlassoued@suedwind.at)

Sonja Jochum | [sonja.jochum@suedwind.at](mailto:sonja.jochum@suedwind.at)

Téclaire Ngo Tam | [teclaire.ngotam@suedwind.at](mailto:teclaire.ngotam@suedwind.at)

This publication was created as part of the STIRE: SUPPORTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE RESETTLED project. The project is funded by the Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration of the European Union. The content of this publication represents only the views of the author and is the sole responsibility of the author.

The European Commission is not responsible for the use made of the information contained therein.



# Index

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Target group and content .....	6
<b>1. Volunteering .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Why volunteer? .....	7
Do you want to volunteer? .....	7
Identifying your purpose .....	8
What kind of volunteer work are you looking for? .....	8
What amount of time to dedicate for volunteering? .....	8
To whom do you want to dedicate your volunteering experience? .....	8
Where to look for volunteer opportunities .....	9
Where can you do volunteer work in Austria? .....	9
Emergency services where you could volunteer .....	10
Social organisations offering volunteering opportunities .....	11
You can also ask your municipality .....	11
How to act when you volunteer? .....	12
Experiences & examples of volunteering initiatives by TCNs in Austria .....	13
Testimonials .....	16
<b>2. Organisation .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Before .....	19
During .....	20
After .....	21
Barriers to volunteering .....	22
<b>Diversity management .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Checklist .....	24
<b>3. Communication .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>27</b>

# Community guide

## for volunteering

### Introduction

TCNs<sup>1</sup> lose their social and human capital when they immigrate and settle down in a new country where the language and culture are quite different from their own. Volunteering helps TCNs to develop their social and human capital, and acquire other manifold benefits.

Human capital includes the skills and knowledge we gather in formal and informal learning.

TCNs hold relatively less human capital and often face difficulties in transferring their skills into the labour market of the host country.<sup>2</sup>

Volunteering helps to build human capital by enabling TCNs to informally learn new skills and also to get acquainted with the work culture of the host country.

Social capital, built through meaningful interactions between people, facilitates the learning and use of these skills and knowledge. Social capital, therefore, promotes active and sustainable learning.

The networks, trust and shared values of social capital bring to life our human values, skills, expertise and knowledge. Social capital results from effective communication.

---

<sup>1</sup> Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union within the meaning of Art. 20(1) of TFEU and who is not a person enjoying the European Union right to free movement, as defined in Art. 2(5) of the Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code)

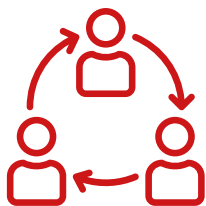
<sup>2</sup> Bassilio, L., Bauer, T. (2010). Transferability of Human Capital and Immigrant Assimilation: An Analysis for Germany. Discussion Paper No. 4716.

Social capital provides the social infrastructure support for our lives in a web of elastic networks related to home, work, learning, leisure and public life. Social capital constructs the meaning around the visible picture we present to the world. It tells the world who we are and what we are like.<sup>3</sup>

Volunteering and civic engagement, participation in social life and associations between and for migrants play a crucial role in the integration of immigrants in the host country because these are exercises of citizenship.<sup>4</sup>

There seems to be not enough evidence pointing at the importance of volunteers building up their skills and competences through volunteer placements. This is an important step towards sustainable employment.

Personal development involves the strengthening of skills which are considered essential such as communication, organisational and team-working skills, and many other so-called soft skills, many of which are not developed through formal education.



The guide is approached from a communitarian side as we believe that we can build a society in which people can benefit from mutual exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences. Volunteering, in this case, offers an opportunity to take part in local civil society, to work and socialise with local people from a wide range of backgrounds, to learn about the systems and culture of the host society, to put existing skills into good use and to learn new skills that may facilitate their active participation in the labour market.

<sup>3</sup> Falk, I. (2000). Human Capital and Social Capital: What's the difference? Adult Learning Commentary, (28). <https://ala.asn.au/public/commentaries/Falk1810.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Marelli, P. (2017). Solidarietà e impegno civico. Quando fare volontariato è un esercizio di cittadinanza. Vdossier, (2). <https://www.csvlombardia.it/milano/post/solidarieta-e-impegno-civico-quando-fare-volontariato-e-un-esercizio-di-cittadinanza/>

# Target group and content

Those working in organisations focused on research, recruitment, training, support and evaluation of volunteers and for potential volunteers that want to engage in the volunteer experience.

The guide is divided into three sections:

## 1. Volunteering

The first section is focused on the volunteers: in this section, most of the challenges and goals awaiting the volunteer are listed, explanations of the different types of existing volunteering activities and volunteer opportunities for TCNs are provided. In addition, the first part offers practical information about voluntary work, working hours and some tips about how to carry out a volunteer role.

## 2. Organisations

The second section is more focused on the NGOs and associations willing to host volunteers. A list of things the organisation needs to consider before hosting TCNs as a volunteer during his/her staying and once the volunteer experience is over.

Diversity Management: it is focused on how to manage diversity, in order to avoid misunderstandings and foster communication and engagement ensuring an inclusive environment.

## 3. Communication

Finally, the guide includes a section for Communication with examples for good and effective communication and solutions to challenges that may arise.



# 1. VOLUNTEERING

## Why volunteer?

- **Opening new horizons:** contributing to the local community and improving your role
- **Volunteering allows you to acquire new skills:** you will have the chance to learn new skills and to understand what you are good at: who you are, what you want and what you are capable of. Whether it's a new language, a new job or a new skill, you're sure to learn a lot. The skills you will acquire will enrich you and be useful in your life, work and relationships with others.
- **Volunteering as a job opportunity:** volunteering can turn into a great opportunity for work and study. Getting to know other people and becoming part of such a cohesive social network creates very strong human connections. While you are helping others, you enhance your career.
- **Volunteering is being part of a community:** When you help others, you're not alone. You are part of a community; being part of a community of people means, first of all, finding your social identity, integrating yourself.

## Do you want to volunteer?

Here you can find some helpful information and useful steps in order to know *"How to find the right opportunity for you!"*

## Identifying your purpose



A certain affinity between the volunteer and the “spirit” of the association that proposes a volunteer program is crucial, in terms of values, working style, aims. Without this affinity of interests and values, it is not easy to achieve good results for both the organization and the volunteer. First step: think of your skills – both practical and professional skills – before starting your volunteering experience!

---



## What kind of volunteer work are you looking for?

You can choose among different opportunities, depending on your preferences: ecological, artistic, archaeological, social, emergency response & disaster relief, human rights, sport and recreation, vulnerable groups, tourism, nature and animals, education, health, children and young people, the elderly, translation, administration, etc.

---



## What amount of time to dedicate for volunteering?

Most volunteering programs require volunteers to stay on a certain amount of time to ensure a positive impact on projects. General conditions such as working hours, coverage of expenses and duration of projects vary in these cases from the responsible organisation.

---



## To whom do you want to dedicate your volunteering experience?

You can work with people (elderly, adults or children) or in your town (such as activities of urban regeneration, working with animals, cultural exchange, etc).



## Where to look for volunteer opportunities



### **Word of mouth**

Exchange of information among people who already have carried out voluntary experiences



### **Social media**

Using social media platforms (e.g. Facebook groups dedicated for volunteers) to find the right opportunity for you



### **Centres/organisations**

If you have already identified the right centre or organisation in which you want to carry out your voluntary experience, you can join them in order to receive updates regarding new opportunities for volunteering. Moreover, thanks to them, volunteers can be updated on all the opportunities other organisations can offer.

## Where can you do volunteer work in Austria?

In Austria there are numerous possibilities to do volunteer work. Depending on your interests you can do volunteer work in social organisations (working with children, young people elderly, homeless, handicapped, mentally affected, poor, people, refugees) or for emergency services, for environmental organisations (protection of nature and/or animals), for the municipality, for sport associations and even for the fire brigade. Some refugees were also very innovative and created their own organisation to help other refugees. One example is Abdulhamid Kwieder who came to Austria as a refugee and founded his own organisation. You can find his and other stories in the following chapter.

- If you are looking for an organisation to do volunteer work, you can find notified vacancies here: <http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/de/nuetzliches/freie-stellen>
- If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer in Vienna, you can look for one here: <https://wien.volunteerlife.eu/home/freiwillig>
- **WHERE2HELP** is a Viennese platform that provides an overview of where and when your help is needed: [https://www.where2help.wien/?locale=de#home\\_help\\_now\\_header](https://www.where2help.wien/?locale=de#home_help_now_header)
- If you are looking for a specific organisation and information about it, you can find them under this **list of organisations** and contact them directly to ask if they need volunteers: <http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/node/2544>

## Emergency services where you could volunteer

### **Austrian Red Cross**

Nottendorfer Gasse 21, 1030 Wien

Tel: +43 5 0144

Web page: <https://www.rotekreuz.at/mitmachen/mitarbeit/freiwillige-mitarbeit/>

### **Samaritan League**

Michael-Walz-Gasse 18a, 5020 Salzburg

E-mail: [office@die-samariter.at](mailto:office@die-samariter.at)

Tel: +43 662 81 25

Web page: <https://www.die-samariter.at/ich-will-helfen/>

### **Johanniter Unfall Hilfe**

Ignaz-Köck-Straße 22, 1210 Wien

Tel: +43 1 470 70 30 2251

Web page: [https://www.johanniter.at/ehrenamt\\_609/gc/6/](https://www.johanniter.at/ehrenamt_609/gc/6/)

### **Austrian Mountain Rescue Service**

Schelleingasse 26/2/2, 1040 Wien

E-mail: [office@bergrettung-nw.at](mailto:office@bergrettung-nw.at)

Tel: +43 1 5057057

Web page: <https://bergrettung.at/jetzt-unterstuetzen/bergretter-werden/>

## Social organisations offering volunteering opportunities

### **Caritas**

Albrechtskreithgasse 19-21, 1160 Wien

E-mail: [office@caritas-austria.at](mailto:office@caritas-austria.at)

Tel: +43 1/488 31-0

Web page: <https://www.caritas.at/spenden-helfen/freiwilliges-engagement>

### **Diakonia Austria**

Schwarzspanierstraße 13, 1090 Wien

E-mail: [diakonie@diakonie.at](mailto:diakonie@diakonie.at)

Tel: +43 1 409 80 01

Web page: <https://diakonie.at/node/5470>

### **Jugend Eine Welt**

Don Bosco Aktion Österreich, Münchreiterstraße 31, 1130 Wien

E-mail: [einsatz@jugendeinewelt.at](mailto:einsatz@jugendeinewelt.at)

Tel: +43 1 879 07 07 - 0

Web page: <https://www.jugendeinewelt.at/engagement/freiwillig-in-oesterreich>

## You can also ask your municipality

Sometimes they need volunteers for several different sectors (with elderly people in retirement residences, with children or with young people).

Some municipalities have their own fire brigade or mountain rescue service if you are interested to volunteer in this sector.

Many municipalities have lists with all the sports associations in case you want to volunteer in sport activities.

# How to act when you volunteer?

It's important for the volunteer to know some tips before starting his/her volunteering in order to have a positive experience:



## Communication

Before starting, talk to your host organisation and ask questions about working hours and what your accommodation will be if you need one. Be clear about any expectations you have and be transparent and honest from the start. It is important to ask for relevant policies (for example safeguarding or policies regarding data protection) and regulations of the organization. While you're volunteering, it's also very important to talk about any problems that may arise or anything you're unhappy with. Keep in touch with the Coordinator regularly.



## Commitment

Paying attention to your work schedule, being on time and completing your assigned tasks in the most productive way possible. Being proactive during your work exchange is fundamental. Each organization has its own rules that every volunteer must follow: do only what you agreed. Stick to an agreement about the time because people and the organization will count on you. Treat everyone respectfully and correctly, regardless of their situation and position.



## Focus

Cultural diversity is what makes the world so special. While volunteering, remember that every culture needs to be treated with respect. When it comes to culture, there is no right or wrong, just differences. Live the experience: volunteering can be a great experience for sharing cultures, tradition, learning languages, developing new skills and meeting people from all over the world.

# Experiences & examples of volunteering initiatives by TCNs in Austria



## NEUER START

<https://www.neuerstart.at/>

"New start" was launched in 2010 by refugees from Afghanistan for Afghan young people in Austria. The aim was to enable Afghan young people to integrate as smoothly as possible. In the meantime, the association offers all refugees, regardless of their origin, with or without a family in Austria, support in the areas of integration into Austrian society, the labor market and education, etc. on.

This work is strengthened and enriched on the one hand through cooperation with well-established organizations such as IOM or UNHCR, and on the other hand through the commitment of volunteers who do a lot in the activities related to languages, awareness-raising, awareness raising, values and religions. "New start" promotes intercultural dialogue and the opportunities for young people with migration experience to help them get off to a successful start.



## SCHWARZE FRAUEN COMMUNITY

<https://www.schwarzefrauencommunity.at/>

The association Black Women Community was founded by black women from different countries of origin who are living in Austria.

Our activities reach from women counseling, women groups, psychological counseling, gender sensible girls groups and boys groups, a youth project for youngsters from 14 to 20+, anti-discrimination workshops, parental lectures, cooperation projects with other black communities national and international, to the organization of camps.

All our activities aim for the empowerment of Black women and their families in Austria and the growth of the intercultural competency for everybody living in Austria to improve the quality of living for all people in Austria.



## AFRICAN DIASPORA YOUTH FORUM IN EUROPE (ADYFE)

<https://www.adyfe.eu/>

The African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe (ADYFE) is a platform of nearly 110 youth organizations of the African Diaspora present in 31 countries of the Council of Europe. One of ADYFE's main purpose is Peace and Development in all its forms. We aim to achieve this through the 3 pillars of action: Entrepreneurship, Employability, and Civic Engagement.

### **Entrepreneurship**

We connect all local and diaspora players of the African innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Accelerated Africa Hub enable entrepreneurs; investors; policy makers to network; discover; connect and learn from each other.

### **Employability**

Career Expo aims to be an inclusive and global event, offering training and booths where exhibitors / companies promote their vacancies, the job fair provide a platform for discussion, networking and exchange of information and opportunities.

### **Civic Engagement**

Boost a more diverse political representation by allowing young Europeans, of foreign origin, to become more involved using non-formal education, developing regular interaction with local and European representatives through citizens tables or web.tv [VAS Österreich - <http://www.vas-oesterreich.at> is member of ADYFE]

## ALODO

<http://www.alodo.org/>

The non-profit association ALODO-Helping Hands was founded in Togo in 1987 and in Guntramsdorf, Lower Austria



in 2004. ALODO - Helping Hands regards the coexistence of all people as a supporting platform where encounter, dialogue, openness come together in the form of diversity instead of simplicity.

The goals of the association are education and information as well as systemic and sustainable education for development without restriction for all people, but above all for future generations. The declared educational goal is to strengthen one's own identity.



## IKEMBA

<http://www.ikemba.at/>

IKEMBA was established in 2007 with the aim of reaching out to and connecting migrant communities with the mainstream society. The Intention is to promote intercultural dialogue among communities and to facilitate the integration of migrants in the Austrian society. Ikemba offers low-threshold services in health, education, and social sectors. Our concept is based on the EMPOWERMENT approach (self-reliance). Above all, we work with partners in other countries (Nigeria), sharing knowledge on youth education and development.



## SOMM

<https://www.somm.at/>

The Self-Organization by and for Migrants and Muslims (SOMM) is a non-profit organization that was founded in Graz in 2007. SOMM women are committed to combating racism, Islamophobia and all forms of violence against women and are committed to social participation and equal rights for women and migrants. Through paid and voluntary activities, projects and events, the self-organization promotes the access of migrants and refugees to education, work, health and social services, offers concrete help and makes contributions to promote health. As women, migrants and Muslims, SOMM members want to encourage each other to develop their identity independently.

## Testimonials



**Abdulhamid Kwieder,**  
Syria

*If you have good ideas, you shouldn't keep them to yourself, but share them with others. In the end, this not only helps others but ultimately yourself.*

*I came to Austria in 2015. I had already fled from my home country Syria in 2011, and I spent the time in between in Saudi Arabia, where I volunteered for Syrian refugees together with others. My first time in Austria was not easy, I felt alone and strange. But then I took heart and used the experience I had gathered before and my organizational talent. Among the over 300 refugees in my accommodation (who did not yet have access to the labor market), I looked for people who could and wanted to support others. We organized volunteers under the name "Refugees for Refugees": hairdressers, cooks, tailors and translators, etc. All of them offered their services, I took care of the coordination. Then I founded the "Association for Refugee Aid Austria" together with others and successfully established our concept in other refugee accommodations. At the moment, I am responsible for the Arab community in the Documentation Center for Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism (in addition to my work as a programmer). I translate at workshops and trainings, give lectures and take part in international conferences. In addition, I develop theatre plays, teach Arabic and look after my YouTube channel. Through my commitment, I get to know a lot of new people and feel a sense of belonging.*



**Nour Eddin Jehad Hussari,**  
Syria

*Nobody should only live and work in this world for themselves. Everyone can do something for other people.*

*When I left my home by boat in 2015, I became a refugee. At that time everyone was talking about refugees: there was constant reporting in the news, in the newspaper and on the radio – but rarely did we refugees have a say. I wanted to change that, and I was in a good position to do so because I was a radio host in my home town of Aleppo. Today I work in a new medium, television. With the Nour Show at the participatory television station Okto in Vienna, I try to build bridges between Austrian society and the Syrian community living here, because it includes more than 40,000 people. With my show I give an insight into their living environment.*  
<https://www.okto.tv/de/sendung/nourshow>





**Tamador Omar,**  
Syria

*Austria has helped the refugees in Syria a lot; now it's our turn to help and give back some of the aid we have received in the past.*

*I fled to Austria 5 years ago. In my home country Syria, I have already advised people in various situations as psychologist and psychotherapist. In Austria I soon became involved as an interpreter for refugees and gave lectures on a wide variety of topics from job search to conflict resolution in the family. In collaboration with the Women's Health Centre (Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Hospital) and the Austrian-Arab doctors and pharmacists association I founded the initiative "Hope Without Borders" with two other Syrian volunteers. Through a hotline, we are now available in 6 languages (German, English, Turkish, Russian, Arabic and Serbian) for medical and psychological questions and are currently primarily advising people from the COVID 19 risk group. A team of volunteers also provides food, medical supplies and interpreting.*

Photo: Stefanie J. Steindl - UNHCR



**Durra Chiban,**  
Syria

*Social cohesion in society is very important to me. This is why I support refugees on their way to start studying in Austria.*

*I fled to Austria with my family in November 2016. My first time in this new country was difficult: I waited almost a year for a German course for beginners. After that, I started to improve my language skills through self-study so that I was finally able to take the pre-studies program in autumn 2017, which is a prerequisite for starting a degree in Austria. Two years after my arrival in Austria, I had achieved my first goal: I was able to start studying process engineering at the Vienna University of Technology.*

*From my own experience, I know how difficult it can be to find your way in a new country. For a year I didn't know whether it was even possible for me to study in Austria. During this time, I was desperate and didn't know what to do. In order to save other young refugees from this experience, I decided to produce videos in my mother tongue Arabic, in which I explain the Austrian education system or life in Austria in general. I also support beginners with advice and action, because social cohesion in society is particularly important to me.*



## 2. ORGANISATION

Offering the opportunity to volunteer within an organisation/association can be crucial to help TCNs to feel part of a new reality, to gratify them on a personal level and give them the opportunity to help others, thus creating a “circle of solidarity” in which those who have been helped, in turn, will help others, while helping themselves.

This section has three different parts. Each of them connected to a certain moment of the volunteering experience: 1) before, 2) during and 3) after. It offers advice which would support the responsible person in organisations.

In order to fully exploit the contribution of volunteers in order to improve the quality and social impact of organisations and make voluntary action a real experience of growth, and professional, it becomes crucial to adopt strategies and tools for the management of volunteers. This makes it possible to:

- meet the aspirations of volunteers and the needs of the association;
- clearly identify the characteristics required of a volunteer for a certain task;
- understand the motivations behind the choice of volunteers and how to turn them back in case of disaffection;
- promote the involvement of volunteers in the organisation and a sense of responsibility;
- improve the overall work of the organization!


In fact, in order to create the most positive experience possible for a volunteer, a designated person within the organisation should be responsible for the volunteer. This includes support during the orientation process, overseeing the volunteers' tasks and helping the volunteer to overcome any problems or challenges they face.

The mentor will be a point of reference for the volunteer. S/he is responsible for providing him/her personal support. S/he should be: a good listener, reliable, attentive, understanding, etc.





## Before

### **Needs assessment:**

- identify previous skills and knowledge required for the role
- establish goals for orientation
- identify volunteer abilities and accomplishments
- define goals and objectives which specify what a volunteer will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity
- develop a timetable
- prepare materials
- pre-volunteering logistics: location, transportation

 **N.B.** ensure that there is a designated person who accompanies volunteers on his/her path if they wish to discuss issues relating to the volunteering experiences.

# During

-  **Welcome**  
During volunteering, the organisation should offer volunteers the opportunity to exchange experience with other volunteers.
-  **Set Rules**  
It's important to set the rules at the beginning of the volunteering, to avoid misunderstandings between participants and the hosting organisation (e.g. working hours or respect for the location). Moreover, it is important to give volunteers clear and comprehensive role descriptions, regulations, policies in place, complaints mechanisms.
-  **Mission and objective of the Organisation/Association**  
Explain clearly the mission and objectives of your organization to make volunteers aware of their tasks and roles.
-  **Being precise about the role and task**  
It is important to offer all volunteers the same training opportunities as paid staff, especially where both operate in the same environment or carry out similar activities.

# After

## EVALUATION



After volunteering, a feedback round with the leader of the organization and the volunteer should be organized in order to exchange views and personal impressions on the experience of the whole process.

## FOLLOW-UP (next steps)



Individual coaching in order to define future planning with the volunteer. At the end of the experience it would be better to have a moment in which volunteers and the organisation staff share their experiences, thoughts and information in order to find good job opportunities or to plan the future of volunteers.

## CERTIFICATION



After the experience of volunteering, the leader of the organization should issue a certification attesting that the volunteering experience was successfully concluded.

# Barriers to volunteering

Lack of participation of TCNs in voluntary work may result from the following factors:

- Being involved in voluntary work usually requires great effort, both in time and money. Some TCNs are simply not in the position, economically or socially (e.g. difficulties in arranging childcare), to become active in voluntary work.
- Some TCNs are not able to participate in volunteering activities of their hosting country, that may lead to cultural misunderstandings and racism.
- TCNs can, like local volunteers, have prejudices about working with people from different cultures and have difficulties in overcoming barriers.
- In some countries TCNs are not allowed to volunteer, or lack insurance. In other countries, references are needed in order to become a volunteer. TCNs with a limited social network cannot always come up with the needed references
- Lack of consideration and sometimes belief – by officials, voluntary organizations and agencies that promote volunteering – that TCNs could be potential volunteers.<sup>5</sup>
- TCNs are sometimes not aware of the possibilities to do voluntary work, because they lack information on the national activities
- TCNs often lack information of the way in which volunteer associations work (i.e. selection procedures, working hours, education possibilities and responsibilities) and may therefore be hesitant to participate in it.
- Lack of effort on the side of NGO's with regard to the diversification of their recruitment process giving more opportunities to TCNs to actively participate in all aspects of NGO work.
- Migrant organizations, local and national government, volunteer-involving organizations and organizations that promote volunteerism should make every effort to increase the demand for and supply of volunteering opportunities for TCNs to promote the social and economic inclusion of TCNs.

---

<sup>5</sup> Münz, A. (2006). INVOLVE – Involvement of third country nationals in volunteering as a means of better integration. INVOLVE project.

# Diversity management

**Managing diversity** can enable an organization to achieve unexpected efficiency and goals, simply thanks to some daily attention and actions. Diversity is a very broad concept and also very delicate to deal with. Each individual has a different perception of things and a different view of the world. In human relations there is no universal approach, because human beings in their attitudes and behaviours are different.

## Why diversity matters?



Diversity fuels innovation and creativity, improving all problem-solving processes, making new ideas emerge more quickly

Diversity reduces conflicts between groups and improving collaboration at the workplace. Moreover, working together helps also to reduce stereotypes and prejudices for people from different cultures

The aim of Diversity Management is to give every worker the opportunity to bring out potential and skills that reflect the gender, the race, the nationality; managing cultural diversity<sup>6</sup> is the heart of Diversity Management. A worker/volunteer worker free to express herself/himself at workplace will have a different conception of the work and the environment, being more efficient and more productive.

An important step in the process of introducing diversity in an organisation, is changing its working culture. This process of diversity management should result in a situation in which every member of an organisation is able to perform his potential while maintaining his cultural values.

The aim of this process should therefore not be to assimilate different cultures into a dominant one, but to create a dominant diverse culture.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2001, November). Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID%3D13179%26URL\\_DO%3DDO\\_TOPIC%26URL\\_SECTION%3D201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID%3D13179%26URL_DO%3DDO_TOPIC%26URL_SECTION%3D201.html)

## Checklist

**1.**

Introduce a policy statement making explicit your commitment to diverse human resources and how you intend to improve the representation of TCNs at all levels.

**2.**

Emphasise the benefits of diverse human resources and encourage everyone to be committed to make it work.

**3.**

Be critical towards traditional practices and procedures. Stay open for diversity and new opportunities.

**4.**

Communicate with staff and volunteers, develop a more open exchange of good practice within the organisation, give TCNs themselves an opportunity to contribute.



**5.**

Provide training in working in a multi-cultural setting to the staff at all levels, including the board level.

**6.**

Promote TCNs to managerial positions and provide them with access to personal support.

**7.**

Offer proper working conditions and equal advantages to all employees and volunteers.

**8.**

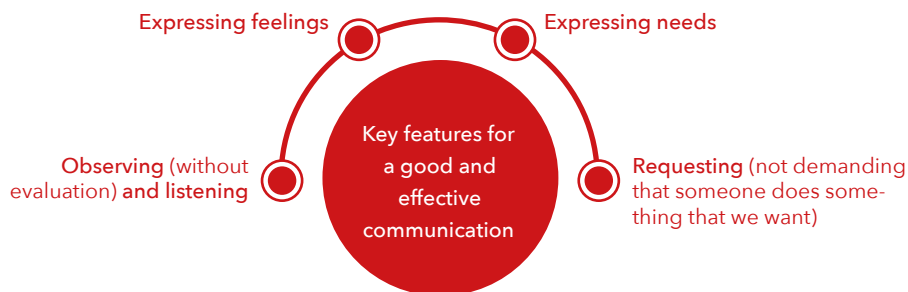
Migrant organizations, local and national government, volunteer-involving organizations and organizations that promote volunteerism should make every effort to increase the demand for and supply of volunteering opportunities for TCNs to promote the social and economic inclusion of TCNs.



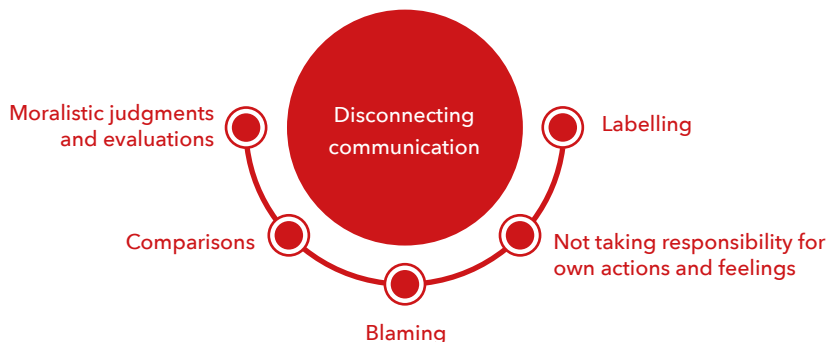


### 3. COMMUNICATION

Communication between the volunteer and the hosting organisation is crucial: it is important to establish a safe and accepting environment in which a person can open and express himself/herself honestly. When two different cultures meet, it may happen that there are misunderstandings.



On the other hand, disconnecting communication, from which the conflicts can arise is characterised by:



It is important to keep some points in mind when communication with people from different backgrounds. In many cases, language codes can differ greatly between language and cultures making communication more challenging.

During the voluntary experience other challenges can arise, regarding for instance the recognition of the institutional role of the operator or the expression of real expectations of volunteers. Regarding the recognition of the institutional role of the operator, especially if female operator, this issue is often linked to people's cultural background, but usually it can be resolved with time and with the consolidation of trust and mutual knowledge. Regarding the expression of real expectations, motivations, doubts: expressing clearly the purpose of the activities is crucial. Example: taking part in a training course can be experienced in different ways by trainers and students; for the trainers the aim is to train people for a future job; for participants it could mean that, after the learning part, trainers should take action to find a job vacancy. TCNs often experience fears and feelings of inadequacy and are reluctant to make their real expectations, availability, interests explicit.



Operators must be able to convey their respect for the culture and religion without making people feel inferior or judged. The trust is crucial: without it, people will be reluctant to share their true feelings. The role of the mediator is very important: the primary purpose of mediation is to foster contacts, exchanges and interactions between different cultures, while respecting diversity.



## REFERENCES

- Bassilio, L., Bauer, T. (2010). Transferability of Human Capital and Immigrant Assimilation: An Analysis for Germany. Discussion Paper No. 4716.
- Falk, I. (2000). Human Capital and Social Capital: What's the difference? Adult Learning Commentary, (28). <https://ala.asn.au/public/commentaries/Falk1810.pdf>
- Marelli, P. (2017). Solidarietà e impegno civico. Quando fare volontariato è un esercizio di cittadinanza. *Vdossier*, (2). <https://www.csvlombardia.it/milano/post/solidarieta-e-impegno-civico-quando-fare-volontariato-e-un-esercizio-di-cittadinanza/>
- Münz, A. (2006). INVOLVE - Involvement of third country nationals in volunteering as a means of better integration. INVOLVE project.
- Schugurensky, D. (2004). The tango of citizenship learning and participatory democracy. Lifelong Citizenship Learning, Participatory Democracy and Social Change.
- Schugurensky, D., Slade, B., Luo, Y. (2005). "Can volunteer work help me get a job in my field?": On learning, immigration and labour markets. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. University of Toronto.
- UNESCO (2001, November). Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID%3D13179%26URL\\_DO%3DDO\\_TOPIC%26URL\\_SECTION%3D201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID%3D13179%26URL_DO%3DDO_TOPIC%26URL_SECTION%3D201.html)
- Wilson, R., Lewis, H. (2006). A Part of Society Refugees and Asylum Seekers volunteering in the UK, A report based on case studies of ten organisations, Tandem Communications and Research Ltd, Leeds, U.K.



Südwind  
(Austria)



PATRIR  
(Romania)



Development Perspectives - DP  
(Ireland)



CPS - Center for Peace Studies  
(Croatia)



Rehabilitation centre for  
stress and trauma - RCT  
(Croatia)



Slovene Philanthropy - SP  
(Slovenia)



CESIE  
(Italy)