ThessVolunteer

Everything you need to know about volunteering

(A guide for volunteers)

ThessVolunteer

SOLIDARITY NOW

This is our common ground

Development and design
Athanasia Papingi
Georgos Tsitiridis

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Introduction

The guide was created in the framework of the project “ThessVolunteer” which is being implemented with the support of the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation.

This guide aims to encourage young volunteers to take initiative by offering their time and help to make a difference in their community.

Discovering Volunteerism

At a glance

Volunteerism

Traditional and contemporary/new forms

Nowadays, “volunteerism” can include many different actions. Traditional forms include volunteering in existing opportunities in several structured initiatives and institutions. New forms of volunteerism, however, allow volunteers to take initiative, promote the flowering of new ideas, and strengthen communities.

Volunteerism

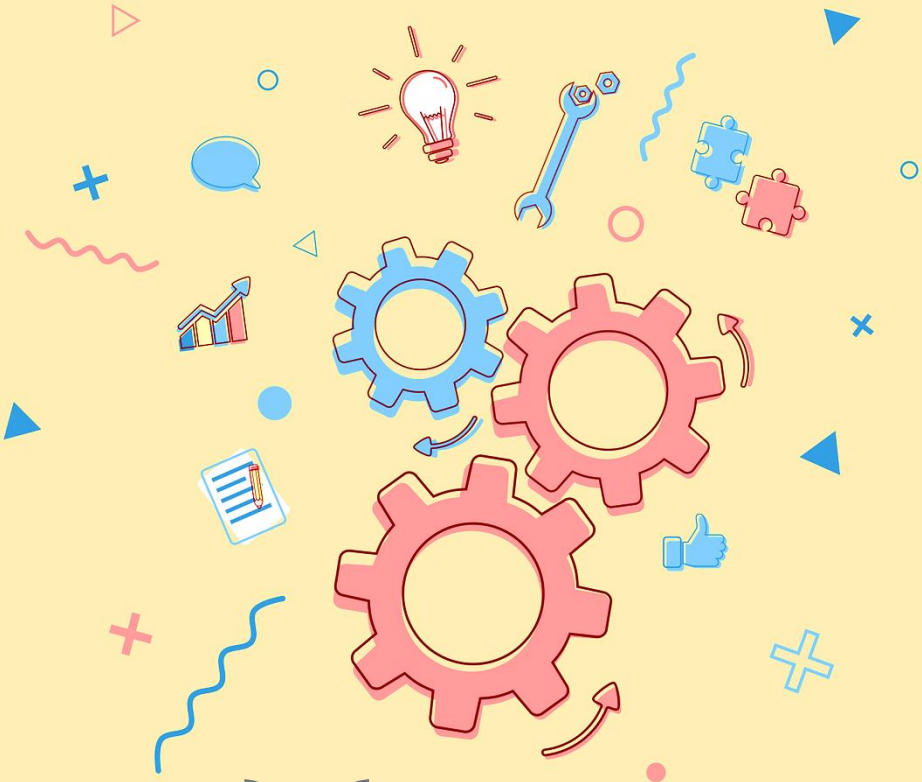
Volunteering in already available initiatives

- **Structure and Guidance:**
  - There is a defined structure and organizational framework.
  - Volunteers are provided with clear guidance and training.
- **Duties and Roles:**
  - Duties and roles are prescribed.
  - The volunteers perform specific and defined tasks.
- **Stability and Continuity:**
  - It guarantees stable and continuous activity in the organization.
  - Most of the time, there are established procedures and practices.
- **Feedback and improvement:**
  - There is an established feedback mechanism.
  - The volunteers contribute to the continuous improvement of the initiative.

Implementation of New Initiatives/Ideas

- **Innovation and Creativity:**
  - A high level of innovation and creativity is required
  - New ideas are formed
- **Independency and Autonomy:**
  - There is more independence and flexibility.
  - More freedom.
- **Adaptation and Flexibility:**
  - The activities can be adapted and evolved.
  - Constant adjustment and updating of the plans.
- **Experience and Learning:**
  - Opportunities to acquire new skills and experiences.
  - Dealing with unforeseen events, challenges, and problems.
- **Risk and Uncertainty:**
  - Greater risk of failure and uncertainty.
  - More willingness to take risks is required.

Initiatives



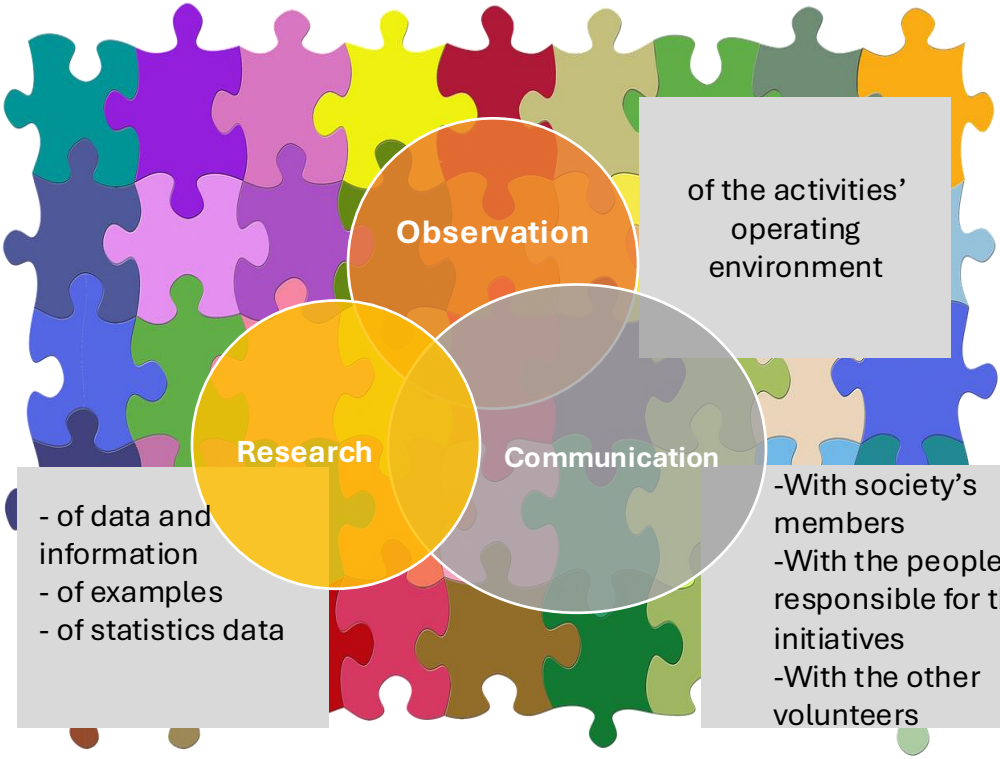
Why is it crucial to take initiative?

Which social skills are being developed through initiatives in volunteering?

- Leadership skills
- Communication skills
- Taking responsibility and decision making
- Building motivation
- Problem solving
- Trust and respect
- Development of interpersonal relationships
- Empathy
- Self-esteem
- Flexibility
- Time management

Steps for Taking on Initiatives

1. Needs assessment



Needs' assessment is the first and most important step in taking on new initiatives. That is because this step provides the basis for all subsequent actions. Through this process, volunteers can comprehend the community's real needs, ensuring that their actions are targeted and relevant. Finding out what these needs are, helps prioritize issues, increase the effectiveness of the initiatives, and ensure that needs and efforts are focused on where they can have the greatest impact.

2. Design – Planning

Once the needs have been identified, design and planning play a vital role for the initiatives to be successfully implemented. These steps ensure that the activities are well organized, with clear goals and a methodical plan of action. Through careful planning, volunteers can identify the actions needed, assign responsibilities, and ensure that the necessary resources are available.
Planning makes implementation more efficient and successful by helping you anticipate potential challenges and develop strategies to address them.

Setting Goals

Set clear and measurable goals for your initiative. The goals must be specific, realistic, and have a time frame.

Development of an Action Plan

Create a detailed action plan that includes the steps that must be followed, the responsibilities of the team members, and the timeline for the implementation .

Securing Resources

Identify the resources needed, like funding, equipment, and human resources.

Seek ways to secure these resources through sponsorships, donations, and collaborations.

3.Implementation

Implementation of the action plan is the phase during which the ideas and planned actions become a reality. It is the moment when the volunteers apply the strategies and steps they have developed to produce tangible results and changes in the community or the organization.
Effective implementation ensures that the efforts and resources are used in the best way possible to achieve the goals set. Moreover, successful implementation of the plan increases the credibility of the volunteers and the organization, creating a positive impact and boosting the group's morale.

Action plan implementation

Constant team communication

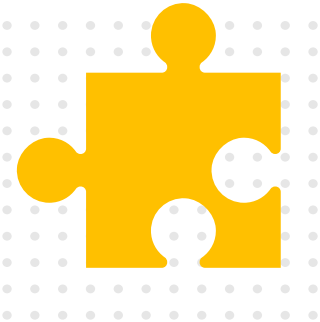
Adaptation and problem-solving

4. Evaluation – Feedback

To identify the successes and weaknesses of the initiative, evaluation and feedback at the end of the action plan are essential. Evaluation allows volunteers to measure the effectiveness of their actions relative to the original goals. At the same time, feedback from participants and beneficiaries provides valuable information about what went well and what needs improvement. This process promotes learning and development, and allows for adaptation and evolution of future actions, thus ensuring that each initiative is more effective and efficient than the previous one.

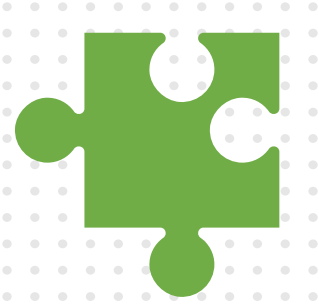
First meeting and trainings

Volunteering in Available Initiatives

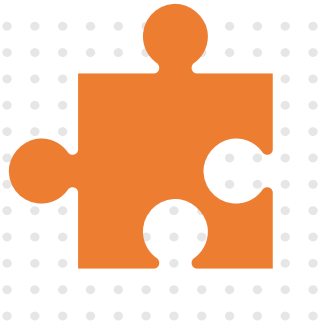


The first meeting is the moment when you, as a volunteer, can review the requirements that exist and ask any questions you have.

Then, trainings will help you feel more confident about yourself and prepare you for various situations that you are likely to encounter.

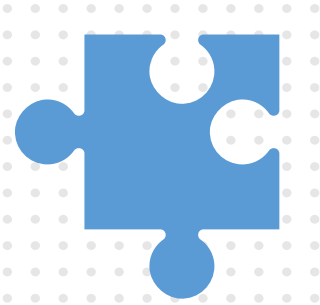


Implementation of New Initiatives



During the first meeting, you have the opportunity to share your knowledge, dreams, and desires.

Training will help you feel confident to implement or to participate in the implementation of your goals.



During volunteering

As a volunteer you should...

Respect and follow the rules and values of the program.

Be consistent.

Remember that every question is important.

Ask for help, whenever you feel that you need it.

Inform your supervisor of absences.

Be in a position to say “NO” if you cannot or do not want to do something.

Communicate with the staff if you notice any offensive behaviour.

Always ask for permission to take photos, especially when a minor person appears in the photo.

As a volunteer you should **not**...

- Arrange external meetings with the program's beneficiaries.
- Display any form of behavior that can be considered offensive.
- Accept or offer personal gifts of monetary value.
- Advise on a topic with which you are not familiar with, e.g., immigration and asylum procedures.
- Hide a mistake that you made. Remember, there are solutions for everything.
- Be incredibly upset if a beneficiary of the program discloses to you a personal story. Stay calm and share the information with the persons responsible.
- Promise to keep secret a serious issue that has come to your attention.

After Volunteering: Impact and Opportunities

Evaluation and feedback

- Gather feedback.
- Identify areas of success and areas for improvement.

Skills development

- Strengthened existing skills and acquired new ones.
- Recognition and recording of skills developed (e.g. leadership, communication, project management).

Networking and Career Opportunities

- Expansion of the professional network through the contacts that were established.
- Building on the experience for future career opportunities and partnerships.

Personal Satisfaction and Social Impact

- A feeling of personal satisfaction and success.
- Impact on the community and society.

Continuation of the Voluntary Activity

- Encourage continued participation in new volunteer activities.
- Explore future involvement with other sectors or organizations.

Dissemination of Experience

- Share experiences and lessons with others (e.g. through presentations, articles, social media).
- Encourage and motivate others to get involved in voluntary work activities.

The 5 Wh Words of Planning to Implement Volunteer Initiatives

Who

Who is involved in the initiative?
Who will lead the initiative?

What

What exactly are we going to do?
What objectives and goals have been set?
What resources and materials will be needed?

When

When will the initiative be launched and when will it be completed?
When will each stage be implemented? (Timeline)
When are the important dates and deadlines?

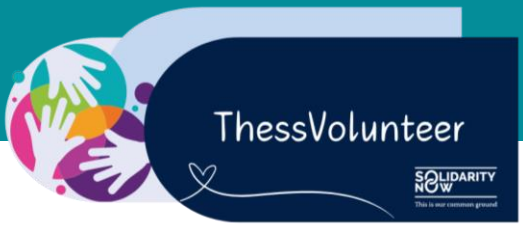
Where

Where will the action take place (location and venues)?
Where are the resources that will be needed?

Why

Why is this initiative important (cause, problems, needs)?
Why are you participating? Do you agree with the vision and mission of the action?

“Be the change that you wish
to see in the world”
Mahatma Gandhi



Implementation by

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