



# WORKBOOK

## Volunteering and Community



# Volunteering & Community Development



This resource aims to give participants information on how to access opportunities within their communities which will assist in skills development and networking. There are suitable volunteering roles in a variety of different areas, ranging from animal welfare to community welfare, for anyone who wants to build on prior experience, learn new skills and interact with more people.

## Benefits of Volunteering



Some might consider volunteering as giving your time and energy for free, but there are numerous benefits associated with volunteering or becoming active in your community. As well having the 'feel good' factor of assisting an organisation or improving your local area, you can gain a greater awareness of your locality, increase your social circle, share skills and develop new ones, and improve your employability credentials. Volunteering has also been proven to positively impact on one's mental health.

What are you passionate about?



So where do you start if you are new to volunteering or community development?

Think about the areas of volunteering that interest you. They might be working with a particular group, for example: children, youth, special needs, lgbt or migrant communities, or, they might be particular causes such as human rights, animal welfare or homelessness.

## What skills do you have?



Make a list of the skills you have to offer. These might be practical skills but also should include soft skills, which are the personal attributes that help you to interact with people effectively. These are a huge asset when working in the voluntary or community development sector.

## Other things to consider...



Available  
time?

New skills?

Transport?

Team work or  
solo?



Consider factors such as the time you have available, access to transport, if you prefer working on your own or with others and if you are interested in acquiring new skills or would prefer to work in your area of expertise.

Once you have decided what cause or group you would like to work with, what skills you have to offer and what suits your particular circumstances you can then begin to research the opportunities that are available.

## Online Resources



Many non-government organisations and community groups have websites. If there is a particular organisation that appeals to you, check their website as they will often advertise volunteering roles online.

There are volunteering organisations and websites in most countries which advertise any volunteering opportunities and often promote information or training events for those interested in becoming a volunteer.

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, host organisation as well as volunteering group pages which often advertise positions or provide information on volunteering. You will also find community pages where you can inquire about local volunteering opportunities.

Community forums are a good place to post queries about volunteering opportunities or to get information about the charities or community organisations that are active in your area.

## Online Resources



It is very important not to give personal information to unknown individuals online, and particularly in an open forum, to avoid any form of abuse or identity theft.



## Community services

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There are a number of places in your local area where you can access information on opportunities to engage with the community.

## Local Library



Libraries are a free and useful place to link in with people and to find out what is happening in the local community. Most community libraries will have a directory of local organisations with their contact details, and often facilitate meetings and workshops for those groups. You can phone, write, email or drop in to the organisation to inquire about volunteering opportunities. It is useful to have a CV or a list of skills that you can offer. Some libraries have a community information board where positions are advertised.

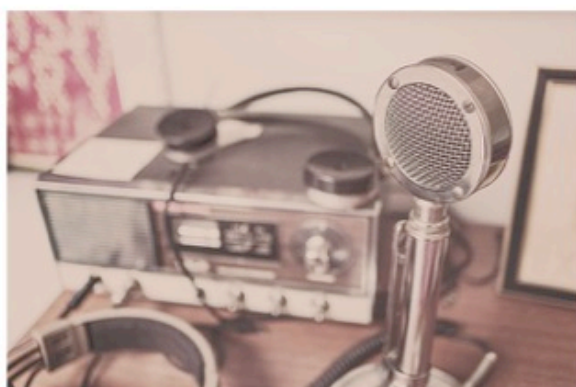
## Adult Education



Check your local schools and colleges for any adult education community or personal development courses that are on offer. These are an ideal way to link in with like-minded people and to learn skills that can help in finding voluntary or paid employment in the community development or NGO sector.

## Community Media

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Local newspapers, community newsletters and radio stations are good sources of information on community activities and groups. Many of these also operate on a voluntary basis so, as well as providing information on groups that might be looking for help, they might also be looking for volunteers to staff their own services.

## Community religious centres



Community centres, health centres and churches are good contact points for community information and are often useful to link in with in order to meet people and get involved in local activities.

## Benefits for everyone



Engaging in volunteering or contributing in any way to your local community is fulfilling and beneficial for everyone.

# Thanks!

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