

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Reference Center on Volunteering | Centro de Voluntariado
Centre d'information sur le volontariat | مركز معلومات عن التطوع


1 Why volunteering matters!

There is a vast array of notions, definitions and traditions concerning volunteering. However, what is common throughout Europe is that wherever people engage together in activities to help each other, support those in need, preserve our environment, campaign for human rights, or to initiate actions to help ensure that everyone enjoys a decent life - both society as a whole and the individual volunteers benefit and social cohesion is significantly strengthened.

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2 Recruiting volunteers and connecting to opportunities

You have carefully thought through the work that needs to be done. You have organized that work and laid a solid foundation for volunteer engagement. Now, you are ready to recruit people for the opportunities that you have created. While there are many ways to promote your volunteer opportunities, always remember that the number one reason that people volunteer is because they were asked! The resources and links in this section provide information about creating effective recruitment campaigns and helping you with the all important "ask".

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3 The right volunteer in the right job: when well placed, volunteers are self-motivated

In one chapter of her 2008 book, *Visionary Leadership in Volunteer Programs*, Marlene Wilson, says that motivation is not something you do to someone. Motivation comes from within, and we have to understand what people like to do and don't like to do in order to match them to the right jobs. Wilson uses a scheme developed by McClelland and Atkinson, two Harvard researchers, who found that people generally fall into three distinct motivational types: Achievers, Affiliators and Power (or Influence) People.

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4 Generation V: Young people speak out on volunteering

The study, commissioned by the Home Office to inform the work of the new Russell Commission on youth volunteering, found that whilst many young people have positive views of volunteering - seeing it as an opportunity to gain skills and experience and put something back into society - a minority dismiss it as being boring and 'not cool'. The study found that many young people remain unaware of the opportunities for volunteering which exist and how to access them. Other barriers cited include lack of time, negative peer pressure, lack of confidence, and cost, which was held to work against the involvement of young people from less financially secure backgrounds.

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5 Placing, supporting, and supervising volunteers

Volunteers deserve quality support and effective supervision. Each volunteer should know where to turn to have questions answered when they are confronted by unexpected challenges or are navigating rocky terrain. Supervision also provides volunteers with feedback on whether they are meeting expectations. To help volunteers, the volunteer manager should facilitate channels to offer assistance, feedback, and recommendations.

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6 Volunteering and intercultural dialogue

The conference was focused on "Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue", CEV's contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. Speakers and participants were exploring and defining the meaning of "Intercultural Dialogue", its different aspects, specially the ones related with volunteering. During the opening panel, the invited speakers, among whom were Suzzane Monkasa, president of the Council of African Communities in Europe and in Belgium, and Jacques Küntziger, Counsellor on volunteering within the Ministry of Family and Integration in Luxembourg explored and defined the meaning of Intercultural dialogue.

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7 Doing good is great for you

More than two-thirds of those who volunteered in the past year report that volunteering has made them feel physically healthier. What are the other health benefits of making a difference? A new study from UnitedHealthcare and VolunteerMatch takes a fresh look.

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About volunteering

National Red Cross societies recruit volunteers to carry out tasks that directly or indirectly help vulnerable people. Volunteering within national Red Cross societies is carried out by people who are committed to the fundamental principles and motivated by their own free will without the expectation of material or financial gain. Our volunteers serve vulnerable people and work towards a more humane and peaceful world.



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The News_service has been produced by the Spanish and British Red Cross organizations as part of the Reference Centre on Volunteering project. Contact: rcvolunteering@cruzroja.es.