## Contents

**Toolkit: For Organisations**

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A.
INTRODUCTION

This toolkit has been developed to assist organisations that are interested in engaging migrant volunteers and also those that are interested in promoting diversity and enhancing cultural awareness through volunteering.

Research has shown that civic activism by immigrants across Europe has increased in the last few years as the number of immigrants has also increased. Factors such as increased mobilisation, education and the specific immigration experiences of particular groups have contributed to the recent rise in civic activism among immigrants across Europe. Many immigrants are engaged in civic activism because they want to effect a change, challenge a law or policy they considered unjust, attract social and material support for self-development or simply out of boredom.

Research has also demonstrated how that mobilisation (and the development of their communities) constitutes a crucial element of the integration (as a two-way) process. Yet it also brings to the fore the ways in which the development of the social and economic ‘capital’ of immigrant/new minority ethnic communities is inextricably linked to that of all communities on the island, and to the cultivation of the national resources necessary for being a successful global actor.

With this in mind, it is one of the key aims of the GIVE project to provide a resource for organisations which seek to engage migrant volunteers having not previously done so.
B. BENEFITS OF MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS FOR ORGANISATIONS

Research from around the world, especially in multicultural societies found that managers of volunteer agencies and organisations identified the following benefits of involving volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds:

- Migrant volunteers bring potentially useful knowledge of specific cultures;
- There is a noticeable and marked improvement of organisational and staff cultural competence;
- Migrant volunteers connect the mainstream organisation with their home communities (this may be particularly desirable for organisations which operate in Diaspora communities or may seek to do so in the future);
- Migrant volunteers help widen the pool of volunteers;
- Migrant volunteers increase the awareness of different cultures within the organisation and society at large, which helps break down negative stereotypes;
- Migrant volunteers bring to the organisation language skills as they tend to speak more than one language besides English and this in turn provides the organisation with enhanced communication with clients from culturally diverse backgrounds;
- Migrant volunteers bring new perspectives to the organisation such as the increased awareness of the way of life, beliefs and values of different cultures, leading to improvements in communication and program design, and more culturally sensitive service delivery;
- Migrant volunteers bring new and varied life experiences which add to staff and other volunteers’ knowledge;

- Migrant volunteers provide a readily available pool of qualified candidates for future staff openings;
- Migrant volunteers’ involvement promotes mutual respect and understanding of mainstream British society, which is also of benefit to the wider community;
- Migrant volunteers encourage and facilitate the creation of an accessible and inclusive volunteer programme that reflects the diversity of the community.
- Migrant volunteers can bring the varied skills into the organisation which otherwise are not possible to identify and recognise.
C. TIPS FOR RECRUITING MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS

It can be daunting for organisations without previous intercultural or cultural diversity experience to know how to best engage with local culturally diverse communities. The following list of suggestions provides a good foundation for developing strong recruitment processes for migrant volunteers.

Research
Research of local population demographics should be conducted by organisations in order to learn more about the regional ethnically and culturally diverse community groups and to build relationships with them. Often the best way of making initial contact with such communities is through relevant community leaders or migrant resource and support groups.

Migrant led strategy development
From the onset, it is advisable to recruit a well-integrated migrant volunteer or a team of volunteers from different cultural groups to assist the organisation in developing a culturally diverse volunteering strategy for the organisation.

Face-to-face Communication
Widely accepted as the most effective way of disseminating information to different ethnic-minority communities, face-to-face communication is often regarded as being more trustworthy when a ‘person’ rather than an ‘institution’ delivers information. To gain the requisite level of trust, there are no better ambassadors for volunteering than those migrant volunteers who have already been recruited.

Advertising Opportunities
It is vitally important to advertise local volunteer opportunities and general information on volunteering in local ethnic community newsletters. Such publications are often widely read within the different ethnic minority community groups.

Translation
Where possible, it is recommended that the organisation translate promotional materials into the language(s) of local ethnic minority communities.

Streamlined recruitment
To avoid putting off any potential migrant volunteers, it is recommended that the volunteer recruitment process be streamlined to make it easier for prospective volunteers to get involved. For example, this could involve reducing the amount of application paperwork required.

Networking
It is worthwhile creating linkages and establishing networks with other migrant resource centres or support organisations who have already established the trust of migrant communities.

Terminology & Presumptions
Definitions and concepts of volunteering differ across the world and it is therefore important to be aware of terminology and presumptions – the concept of volunteering can be interpreted and understood in different ways. Alternative ways should be found to explain in uncomplicated language, what it means to be a volunteer. For example, using phrases such as ‘helping your community’. This is where the migrant community leaders or migrant resource centres and support organisations can assist the recruiting organisation by providing valuable feedback on information materials from a non-English perspective.

Overall Objective
It is important to remember that volunteering is a three way process that needs to support the organisation, the individual volunteer and the client or beneficiary of the service you are providing. Therefore, it is essential that the organisation is very clear about what it can offer volunteers and ensures that this information is advertised and promoted accordingly. What the organisation may consider to be obvious may not be so to people unfamiliar with its operations.
**OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER**

Ensure organisational culture embraces and is inclusive of diversity, and that this is reflected in organisational policies and procedures.

Where necessary and possible, organisations should provide cross-cultural awareness training to staff, both paid and volunteer.

No assumptions should be made that all cultures are the same, especially concerning gender differences.

Well-established communities will differ from new and emerging communities in the issues they face, their level of English proficiency, and their experiences with the wider British society.

Be flexible in the management and support of migrant volunteers. This may include the need to provide extra support to these volunteers such as establishing a mentor or buddy system.

Ensure that all volunteers are matched to a suitable volunteer role and are given a clear position terms of reference with agreed upon duties and levels of responsibility.

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**D. ATTRACTING MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS INTO FORMAL VOLUNTEERING**

Although the concept of volunteering exists in virtually all cultural groups around the world, some cultures do not necessarily recognise formal volunteering. In such societies, providing help or assistance is seen as a fundamental part of life and consequently they do not define informal volunteering as volunteering.

In some cultures accepting volunteer services has a negative connotation in that it is seen as begging or asking for charity. In such instances, there are implications that those in need of help do not have family or are outside of mainstream society.

It is also very important to understand that in many migrant communities the concept of volunteering does not exist as they are struggling with their daily survival.

If we are encouraging the migrants into volunteering then it is good to start from informal volunteering for them to understand the concept and importance.
WHAT WOULD ATTRACT POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS INTO FORMAL VOLUNTEERING?

- Provision of comprehensive training and instructions for volunteers to increase their confidence;
- Organisations to provide reassurance and support to volunteers, and ensure that the organisation is fully responsible and liable for all activities undertaken by the volunteer;
- Organisations to ensure that volunteers are not out-of-pocket;
- Organisations to cultivate a culture of belonging and being part of a special team;
- Organisations need to acknowledge good work undertaken by volunteers. Volunteers need to be encouraged and appreciated on a regular basis.
- Small volunteering assignments with flexible working options can be the best way to attract more migrant volunteers rather than getting a long term commitment.

- Once the Migrant Volunteer acclimatises to the working environment of the newly migrated country, through the use of flexible options they are more likely to commit themselves to a longer period of voluntary service.
- Assigning tasks that match or link to their educational qualification, the likelihood of retaining the volunteer for a longer period increases.

HOW TO ATTRACT MORE PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES INTO MAINSTREAM VOLUNTEERING?

- Organisations need to be more proactive in delivering promotional material to ethno-specific and multicultural groups, for example, networking with their organisations, associations and societies;
- There needs to be more communication in ethnic media outlets;
- Organisations should personally deliver information sessions to groups in a variety of languages;
- Organisations need to provide volunteer coordinators to train and support incoming migrant volunteers;
- Need to provide support structures to instil confidence and allay fears;
- Good communication about what volunteering in the UK involves, for example convey the value placed on volunteering in the UK;
- Clearly outline the benefits of volunteering and what individuals can get out of it (e.g. skills, networking, socialising or work experience);

Migrants are generally proud of their country of origin and its culture. Encouraging the already involved Migrant Volunteers to organise activities around their culture and giving them ownership of the event can set a good example and encourage other migrants to get themselves involved in future activities.
E. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS

Organisations can often feel that it is too complicated to involve volunteers from non-British backgrounds. Outlined below, are some of the most common concerns and ways to overcome them.

People from migrant backgrounds do not want to volunteer for mainstream organisations

– Research from around the world has shown that migrant volunteers often seek ways to connect with the wider community and to access skills and pathways to employment.

– As such they are interested in volunteering opportunities that allow them to make a genuine contribution, rather than being made to feel a token participant from a migrant background.

Involving volunteers from migrant backgrounds is too demanding on organisational resources

– Organisations should consider that creating an environment that is inclusive of diversity and supported by organisational policies and procedures is a vital component of best practice in volunteer management.

– Networking – particularly consulting with the local community (both mainstream and ethnic-specific organisations) is important as they may have already developed internal organisational policies and strategies to assist in their support and management of Migrant Volunteers. These organisations may be willing to share such resources, and permit them to be used as a guide for your organisation’s own policies and processes.

Language barriers are too difficult to overcome. How to communicate with Migrant Volunteers

– Organisations can ensure that volunteer orientation includes a considerable amount of face-to-face communication, and that enough time is set aside to go through each aspect of the organisation such as internal policies and procedures. While it is advisable to have information provided in a written format as well, it is important to remember that people have different levels of literacy.

– It is important to understand that some migrants are hesitant to ask too many questions, in case they are seen as being impolite. Organisations should attempt to confirm volunteers’ understanding of the information they have been presented with through seeking verbal acknowledgement.

Language is a barrier. But if both parties share mutual interest then they can find multiple ways to communicate such as use of an internet translator or obtaining the help from other volunteers/employees who may have basic knowledge of the language to be interpreted.

Another form of communicating with volunteers would be to incorporate the use of symbols and/or graphics into the information orientation e.g. for occupational health and safety issues, a picture showing the correct way of how to lift can be used rather than a written explanation.

– Remember to use simple language avoiding the use of jargon and acronyms, and that the most important framework on which to base all communication is one of mutual respect.

– Remember to use alternative words or phrases when explaining something for better understanding and later summarise it.
In conclusion, it is well worth noting that organisations that effectively involve volunteers from migrant communities are often successful because:

- **They get to know migrant communities within their local area;**
- **They recruit volunteers from these communities;**
- **They recognise and respect diversity and educate themselves about the benefits different cultures can bring to an organisation;**
- **They have policies that are inclusive of diversity.**

For example, if a volunteer was to work on a project involving children and young people they should then undergo child protection training before working with this group. In particular situations, it may be necessary with migrant volunteers to provide other types of training such as understanding British society and culture, organisational values and ethos.

It is important and also good practice to offer all volunteers the same training opportunities as paid staff especially where both operate in the same environment or carry out similar roles.

**This helps:**
- Volunteers to feel valued;
- Volunteers to develop in the same way as paid staff do;
- Create a sense of ‘team’ - putting the employment versus volunteer status to one side;
- Promote consistency in the standard of service delivered.

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**F. TRAINING FOR MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS**

Training should be offered to all volunteers, to enable them to deliver the service required and to invest in their personal development. In some instances, there may be a need for some training to be compulsory for the placement.
G. RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS

A major reason for volunteers leaving volunteer placements is a perceived lack of support. There are simple steps to follow that can reduce or eliminate this perception:

- Ensure there is a designated person (could be a volunteer coordinator although not all organisations will have such a position) who ensures that volunteers are supported. Research has shown that volunteers who were satisfied with their experience cited volunteer coordinators or volunteer development officers as playing a major role in their development, as well as management.

- Make sure that migrant volunteers have a go-to person if they wish to raise any issues relating to their volunteering experiences. It is essential that these issues are taken seriously by the organisation and that the volunteer receives appropriate feedback around their issues.

- If possible have a volunteer succession plan in place which allows potential new volunteers time to think about the commitment and, ideally, to shadow the person who is currently in the position.

- Create regular opportunities for current volunteers to meet new volunteers.

- Ask current post-holders to identify potential volunteers who might be interested in taking over from them. Encourage them to involve others throughout the year, to let people find out what is involved, but without any commitment.

- Where possible, introduce mentoring systems, which have proven to be very popular and effective around the world. The advantages are that it will provide a hand-over period from one post-holder to another, new volunteers can learn on the job and not be pushed in at the deep end, it provides a degree of continuity for the organisation, it offers the opportunity to try the job before making a final commitment and it encourages current post holders to feel happier about handing over their position because they can influence their successor’s approach to the job.

"What organisations can do for migrants is a good incentive for migrants to come and volunteer for that organisation. When communities know you can do good work for them... if they can ‘sell’ the volunteering like an experience building and doing good for the ethnic communities, this is very good! It is better than one manager comes and talks to you and bore you with things you barely understand" — MIGRANT VOLUNTEER
Exit Interviews are a good way of finding out if there are any issues or areas that need improving with the way your organisation works with volunteers. It is also a useful tool for monitoring the use of volunteers and to ascertain their views on:

- The way they were treated
- How they were welcomed by other staff
- Training received
- If they felt valued
- What they did or did not enjoy
- What improvements could be made to the way they were supervised?

Exit interviews can be conducted either with a questionnaire or by an informal discussion, although the volunteer may be more forthcoming with their views if their line supervisor is not present.

- Even if they are leaving due to a change in personal circumstances, gaining an insight into their experiences will help you improve your induction, training and supervision of other volunteers.

- It takes a huge amount of time and resources to recruit new volunteers whereas improving retention can sometimes be overlooked.

- Try to ensure that the ending is as positive as possible. There may be one particular reason why the volunteer is leaving or a combination of several factors.

**GOOD EXIT CHECKLIST**

- Hold an exit interview
- Draw up a skills analysis - an agreed list of skills, achievements and experience that the volunteer has gained during their time with you
- Ask the volunteer about future plans - refer them to places of possible assistance
- Present a certificate
- Hold a farewell event - if volunteer is in agreement
- Act as a referee
H. UNDERSTANDING & VALUING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Over several decades, British society has become culturally diverse; However this does not necessarily mean that British society is not without cultural misunderstandings.

- It is advisable that organisations interested in recruiting long term volunteers also identify a person from a migrant background to assist in the formulation of culturally inclusive policies and procedures;
- These organisations should then include statements a) valuing diversity and b) concerning the organisation’s commitment to providing the resources needed to support diversity;
- It is important to forge partnerships with migrant organisations and ethnic minority led organisations who may be called upon to deliver cross-cultural training;
- It is also important to use cross cultural knowledge of new volunteers, which is one way of making volunteers feel immediately valued and appreciated;
- It may be useful to the organisation to introduce general diversity statements into organisational documents to help it become normal practice;
- The policies should relate to diversity in general, rather than be necessarily culturally specific. Since needs and sensitivities of different cultures can vary significantly, it is perhaps more advisable to keep policies and procedures relating to diversity as generic and adaptable as possible;
- Culturally inclusive policies and procedures should be evolving documents that can be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Listed below are the benefits gained by organizations who invested time and resources in developing active diversity policies according to: The European Commission’s 2003 report *The Costs and Benefits of Diversity*.

- ATTRACTION AND RETAINED HIGHLY TALENTED PEOPLE, IN EITHER VOLUNTEER OR PAID EMPLOYMENT CAPACITIES;
- IMPROVED MOTIVATION AND EFFICIENCY OF EXISTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS;
- STRENGTHENED DIVERSE CULTURAL VALUES WITHIN THE ORGANISATION;
- ENHANCED CORPORATE REPUTATION AND POSITIVELY OUTWARD LOOKING ATTITUDE;
- IMPROVED INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY AMONG STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS;
- ENHANCED SERVICE LEVELS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION;
- OVERCOME LABOUR SHORTAGES;
- REDUCED LABOUR TURNOVER;
- LOWERED ABSENTEEISM RATES;
- IMPROVED ACCESS TO NEW MARKET SEGMENTS;
- AVOIDED LITIGATION COSTS;
- IMPROVED GLOBAL MANAGEMENT CAPACITY.
I. CULTURAL MEDIATION

Closely linked to understanding and valuing cultural diversity is the practice and discipline of cultural mediation. This is a dynamic, continuous process through which a third party acts as a cultural broker between two parties, and assists both of them in reaching a common understanding and interacting in a more satisfactory way. Cultural mediators solve, and especially help prevent conflicts caused by cultural misunderstandings. In addition they contribute to the creation of a new social reality.

AIMS OF CULTURAL MEDIATION

- To facilitate communication between the organisation and migrant volunteers when necessary.
- To assist both parties to reach a common understanding and interact well.
- To help the organisation to understand, and be aware of culture specific practices.
- To establish a relationship of trust and confidence between organisations, migrant volunteers and service providers.
- To support and encourage migrant volunteers to voice their views and concerns.
- To help migrant volunteers gain a better understanding of services provided by the organisation.
- To create a space for mutual understanding and in turn prevent potential conflict between service providers and migrant volunteers.

CULTURAL MEDIATOR’S CODE OF PRACTICE

- Maintain confidentiality and boundaries.
- Remain neutral (outcome).
- Behave impartially.
- Maintain a high level of performance (mediation techniques, professional attitude and cultural awareness).
- Facilitate accurate information.
- Work separately to service providers.
- Reject cases which cannot be undertaken in a professional manner.
- Respect an individual’s cultural and religious values.
- Avoid abusing their power or authority.
- Establish a relationship of trust and confidence with clients and service providers.
- Do not accept any form of payment from clients.
J. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TIPS

Working across cultures is a new experience for many people. Intercultural communication can be a dynamic and creative affair but occasionally, due to the inability to interpret people correctly, it can be a challenge. Building an understanding of other people’s cultures, communication styles and behaviours can go a long way in improving relationships and being more successful in an intercultural environment.

It is possible to implement some basic principles to help improve one’s intercultural communication skills, even without trawling through lots of books, articles or even taking part in an intercultural communication workshop. The following intercultural communication tips are provided to help people working in international and multicultural environments. These tips offer some basic insight into dealing more effectively with people without letting culture become an issue.

Source: Kwintessential’s Intercultural Communication Tips. Retrieved from kwintessential.co.uk

BE PATIENT

Working in an intercultural environment can be a frustrating affair. Things may not get done when expected, communication can be tiresome and behaviour may be inappropriate. Patience with yourself and others helps move beyond such issues and helps address how to avoid similar incidents in the future.

ESTABLISH RULES

Sometimes if working in a truly intercultural team it may be necessary for all to take a step back and set down some ground rules. i.e. how do we approach punctuality, meetings, communication, emails, disagreements, etc? It is always a good idea to try and develop the rules as a group rather than have them imposed.

ASK QUESTIONS

When you don’t understand something or want to know why someone has behaved in a certain way, simply ask. Asking questions stops you making assumptions, shows the person questioned you did understand them and helps build up your bank of intercultural knowledge.

RESPECT

The foundation of all intercultural communication is respect. By demonstrating respect you earn respect and help create more open and fruitful relationships.

THE WRITTEN WORD

Those whose mother tongue is not English may read more proficiently than they speak. It is a good idea to always write things down as a back-up.
TIME
Not everyone in the world thinks “time is money”. Understand that for many people work is low down on the priority list with things like family taking a much higher precedence. Do not expect people to sacrifice their own time to meet deadlines. It is good practice to leave a bit of spare time when considering deadlines.

HUMOUR
In an intercultural environment one man’s joke is another’s insult. Be wary of differences in humour and the acceptability of banter in a business environment.

ALWAYS CHECK
The easiest way of minimising the negative impact of intercultural communication is to check and double check. Whether agreeing something or giving instructions, a minute spent double checking all parties are ‘reading from the same sheet’ saves hours of work later down the line.

BE POSITIVE
When faced with incidents of an intercultural nature, steer clear of blame and conflict. Stay positive, analyse the problem areas and work as a team to build strategies and solutions to ensure conflict is prevented.

SELF REFLECT
A good intercultural communicator not only looks outwards but also inwards. Take time to reflect on your own communication, management or motivation style and see where you can improve as an individual.

Research into the area of intercultural communication and working in a multicultural environment continues to show that the culturally diverse team is usually the most inventive and vibrant. However, unless businesses and individuals start to address the area of intercultural communication as a serious business issue, this potential will not be realised.
K. ORGANISATIONAL CHECKLIST FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY & AWARENESS

Organisations, especially charities and NGOs, continually face the challenge to develop the capacity to provide opportunities to volunteers with limited English language skills. While being aware of the growing needs of diverse communities, such organisations struggle to meet their needs due to limited resources.

Organisations interested in integrating a multicultural component into their volunteer programmes, or to help assess the effectiveness of existing volunteer programs in being open and welcoming to people with limited language skills, can utilise a self-assessment tool. This tool provides a framework used to assess the organisations’ ability to accommodate volunteers with limited language skills, and to suggest what changes could be made to more effectively serve migrant volunteers.

THE FOLLOWING SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM THAT DESIGNED BY VOLUNTEER OTTAWA IN CANADA (WWW.VOLUNTEEROTTAWA.CA) AND CAN BE USED BY ANY ORGANISATION THAT SEeks TO SELF-ASSESS IF IT IS READY TO WORK WITH MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES AS A WHOLE:

EACH SELF-ASSESSMENT AREA INCLUDES A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS. CHOOSE THE ANSWER THAT MOST CLOSELY REFLECTS THE SITUATION IN YOUR ORGANISATION. FOR EXAMPLE:

Do the staff members receive any orientation/training about working with volunteers?
- If most of the staff in your organisation receive orientation/training...Answer YES
- If only a few staff in your organisation receive orientation/training...Answer NO

The questions are scored differently to reflect the impact of each issue.

That said, there is no value assigned to Don’t Know. Please record your answer anyway. You may find that the Don’t Know answers offer your organisation a handy guide to key areas that need consideration and may be otherwise be overlooked.

To self-assess the opportunities in your organisation, you will need to find the answers to all the questions. Use this toolkit as a check list.
### The Staff

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<tr>
<td>Are there staff members who speak languages other than English in the organisation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do the staff members receive any orientation/training about working with volunteers?</td>
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<td>Do the staff members receive any orientation/training about working in a culturally diverse workplace?</td>
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<td>Do the staff members receive any orientation/training to help them overcome communication barriers due to language?</td>
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### The Organisation

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<tr>
<td>Are you aware of the demographic changes in the region and have they affected your organisation or the services it provides?</td>
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<td>Are the current clients, staff and volunteers representative of the community or area your organisation serves?</td>
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<td>Does your organisation have anti-racism, equality or access policies?</td>
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### The Specific Volunteer Opportunity

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<tr>
<td>Would fluency in a language other than English be an asset?</td>
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<td>Would the volunteer provide some specific expertise, which would not be available otherwise?</td>
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<td>Are there staff members whose mother tongue is not English in the department/area where the volunteer would work?</td>
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<td>Are there other volunteers whose mother tongue is not English in the department/area where the volunteer would work?</td>
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<td>Would it be possible to provide the volunteer with the appropriate orientation/training to perform the specific functions of the position?</td>
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<td>Would limited knowledge of English from the volunteer cause excessive additional work to the staff or other volunteers?</td>
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<td>Would there be any additional resources available to support this volunteer placement?</td>
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<td>Would there be any significant risk of irreparable harm due to miscommunication?</td>
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### The Volunteer Room

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<td>Is the outreach/recruitment process suitable for potential volunteers with limited English language skills?</td>
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<td>Is the intake process suitable for volunteers with limited fluency in English?</td>
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<td>Is the orientation process suitable for volunteers with limited fluency in English?</td>
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<td>Is the integration process to fit volunteers into the day-to-day work routine suitable for volunteers with limited fluency in English?</td>
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<td>Are the language fluency requirements routinely assessed for each volunteer opportunity?</td>
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<td>Would most clients/patients accept a volunteer with limited knowledge of English?</td>
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<td>Have there been any prior successful placements of volunteers with limited fluency in English?</td>
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<td>Is there a process to match every volunteer with a ‘buddy’?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you were to weigh on a balance the resources used to integrate a volunteer with limited fluency in English against the specific benefits generated by the placement, would you find that it is worth the investment?</td>
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TOOLKIT

FOR MIGRANTS SEEKING TO VOLUNTEER IN THE COMMUNITY

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A PATH TO INTEGRATION

Migrants Volunteering in the Community

A.
INTRODUCTION

This toolkit has been developed to assist you if you are interested in volunteering. It is aim of the GIVE project to provide you with information on how you can volunteer in the United Kingdom. We hope that your participation as a volunteer will further facilitate and enhance your integration in British society.
B. WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

There are many different definitions of volunteering, depending on a variety of cultural factors. It is important to distinguish between “informal” and “formal” volunteering.

1. Formal Volunteering refers to activities organised through some sort of organisation, be it a small community group consisting entirely of volunteers, or major organisations such as national voluntary organisations.

2. Informal Volunteering which can be one component of social capital, refers to different kinds of mutual help and co-operation between individuals within communities, for example babysitting for a friend or checking on an elderly neighbour.

“I want to get work experience to be able to get a paid job after I finish college and I know that college is not giving me the straight chance to get a job after I finish studies in this recession. That’s why I volunteer in two very different places, to get as much experience I can and to build up on my skills.”

– Migrant Volunteer, Ipswich

Volunteers are people of all ages from all walks of life. What they have in common is the desire to make a difference in their community – and in their own life – by giving their time. Volunteers are involved in virtually every aspect of society including health, education, social services, youth, sports and recreation, culture, the arts and the environment.

“Volunteering as care worker in a local care centre for old people helped me to understand better how Irish society is looking after their elderly people. In my own country, we do not have such places, but family is somehow traditionally obliged to look after their old relatives. When starting to volunteer, I was like an open blank book, but now I learned a lot and I consider getting a career in this area and learning more in college about care work or nursing.”

– Migrant Volunteer, Ipswich

C. REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING?

The following list outlines some common motivations for volunteers. If you are a volunteer, you might want to:

- Give something back to the local community or society that has welcomed you.
- Gain valuable training and experience which may help when seeking paid employment.
- Make use of your special interests and talents.
- Learn new skills and/or develop new interests.
- Improve your language and communication skills.
- Meet new people with similar interests.
- Gain work experience.
- Find out more about an area of work you are considering as a career.
- Have a chance to take responsibility and make decisions.
- Make new friends and acquaintances.
- Get to know your local community and to feel at home.
- Be an active citizen.
- Make a difference.

Source:
Thinking of Volunteering?: A step by Step Guide. Volunteer Ireland www.volunteer.ie
There are countless ways to volunteer and thousands of organisations across the UK looking for help. There are, however, a number of other factors that may influence the type of volunteering which you choose to do, including your current commitments and responsibilities. The following questions will help you focus on what you would like to do in the time you have to offer:

**TIME AND LOCATION**

- How much time can you spare for volunteering? For example, one day a month, one hour a week. It is important to factor in your other commitments, such as family and employment and try not to over-commit yourself.
- Are your personal circumstances likely to change in the near future?
- What period of time can you commit to volunteering? For example, one day, one month, or six months?
- Some voluntary projects may require you to stay for a minimum period of time, so check before you decide on a project.
- What times of the day or what days of the week are you available?
- Do you have your own transport? If not, is it easy for you to use public transport to get to your place of volunteering?

"I decided to volunteer first of all because for me this was a perfect way to build up on my work experience. The more I work with these organisations, the better it is for my personal development and for my CV."

**MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH**

"It was unbelievable how lonely I was sitting at home between the four walls...the only chance I had was to volunteer and I took it as it helped me to get in the open and face the people and the country I became to live in."

**MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH**

"It was unbelievable how lonely I was sitting at home between the four walls...the only chance I had was to volunteer and I took it as it helped me to get in the open and face the people and the country I became to live in."
WHAT TYPE OF VOLUNTEER WORK DO YOU WANT TO FIND?

- In what ways do you feel you can best contribute?
- What are your particular skills and interests? What do you really enjoy doing?
- Do you prefer to work with people or on your own?
- If you prefer working with people is this on a one-to-one basis, or in a group?

- Do you prefer to do something practical, i.e. with your hands?
- Would you prefer to do something you have done previously, utilising skills you have already acquired, or would you prefer the challenge of doing something new?
- Many everyday skills are useful when volunteering. Make sure you don’t underestimate skills such as letter writing, decorating, talking, listening, DIY, driving, reading, shopping, sport, leisure and outdoor activities, entertainment, gardening etc.
- If you want to work with people, have you identified a particular group of people with whom you would like to work?

"I helped in the local charity shop for more than 6 months. This helped me to get a character reference and a work reference from an Irish organisation. This also helped me to get a better job - a paid job actually."

MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH

"My voluntary work is not matching my qualification. It is very basic...I am volunteering for unqualified work, but still, I’m doing something instead of doing nothing... and this is not going to be for a long time anyway. But still, I hope this is going to help in my future career."

MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH
ASK QUESTIONS

Once you have identified where you want to volunteer, it is worth asking the organisation you plan to volunteer with the following questions:

- Can you give me a clear description of the role I will be expected to undertake?
- Who will show me what to do and supervise/support me in my volunteering? Will I be formally supervised or will supervision occur less formally?
- What about expenses? Volunteers should not be out of pocket for the work they do. Although it won’t always be possible, ideally, an organisation should cover basic expenses such as travel and lunch.
- What about insurance? (For example, if your volunteering opportunity requires you to drive, do you need to tell your car insurance company.)
- How often will I be expected to do voluntary work and for how many hours each time?
- How long is the volunteering role likely to last?
- Who do I tell if I can’t make it one week?
- Is there a minimum time commitment I am required to make (some organisations will require you to make a commitment of one year or more).
- Is training required?

"They (organisations) need to publicise themselves more. I know about so many people that are waiting, hoping to be useful somehow. I think other volunteers that work in organisations could come and spread the good work they have done as volunteers. They should show how good it can be for migrants to come and volunteer for their organisation. Volunteers who have had good experiences in an organisation can go and ‘sell’ the volunteering experience to others in their community."

MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH
E. CHALLENGES OF MIGRANT VOLUNTEERING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Existing research into migrant volunteering suggests that there are a number of factors that may dissuade migrants from volunteering. Emotional and behavioural reasons, lack of knowledge and practical barriers may all exist for third country nationals (Lewis and Wilson, 2006).

BARRIERS

- Language barriers
- Lack of confidence
- Inhibitions
- Underestimating their own capacity
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of suitable opportunities
- Cultural Barriers

As outlined elsewhere in this toolkit, if you are volunteering with children or vulnerable adults, you should expect to be DBS checked.

- Organisations are entitled not to accept a volunteer if they feel a volunteer might not be suitable for the work of the organisation.

- Many organisations require references for prospective volunteers before they commence volunteering. This is especially the case for volunteers who have contact with children or vulnerable adults.

- You should not be alarmed by such requests – every volunteer will be asked in the same way and it really is best practice. Remember that it’s important, both from the perspective of the organisation and the volunteer, that the match is a right one.

- When asked to identify referees, you should think about who knows you well and can confirm that you are reliable and trustworthy. Usually a referee should be someone who has known you for some time and who is not related to you. This could be a previous employer or someone who you have volunteered for, a social worker or key-worker, a doctor, health visitor or probation worker, someone who has taught you recently, a landlord or landlady, or a colleague or friend.

- If you are finding it difficult to identify a referee, then it is best to discuss this with the organisational contact (usually an HR staff member) who has requested a reference or talk to someone at your local Volunteer Centre.

- Visit the organisation, take a look around and familiarise yourself;
- Fill in an application form;
- Supply references before you commence volunteering;
- You may be asked about your personal circumstances as some organisations need volunteers to stay with them for a particular length of time.

Some organisations may ask you more personal questions. They may ask about your health or criminal convictions, and some may have an age limit for their volunteers. This particularly applies to statutory agencies such as hospitals, probation or social services.

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"I speak a bit of English, but not enough to be able to ask for work or even voluntary work. My reading in English is not that good and I wouldn’t go to try to work, not even in voluntary position."

MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH

"When I started volunteering I barely understood English, but now after three months of volunteering I can say I understand a lot and I have the confidence to speak and answer in English. I am glad I had the courage to go volunteering."

MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH

"I wanted to volunteer to start understanding better how system works here and how is to be involved in the labour market, but because I have no papers, I am undocumented here, I was rejected. I am now afraid that since I am undocumented and I look for volunteer job this may jeopardise my stay in the country."

MIGRANT NON-VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH

"When I started volunteering I barely understood English, but now after three months of volunteering I can say I understand a lot and I have the confidence to speak and answer in English. I am glad I had the courage to go volunteering."

MIGRANT VOLUNTEER, IPSWICH

HOW ORGANISATIONS OR MIGRANT VOLUNTEERS CAN OVERCOME BARRIERS:

- Initiating volunteering activities with core volunteers
- Encouraging people to volunteer in a known comfortable environment
- Public appreciation
- Provide volunteering opportunities based on skills
- Raising awareness about the importance of volunteering opportunities
F. CASE STUDIES: VOLUNTEERS FROM A MIGRANT BACKGROUND

CASE STUDY 1: SUREKHA SRIPADA

MY VOLUNTEERING JOURNEY AT CSV MEDIA CLUBHOUSE IPSWICH

After I came to the UK, life was not easy as I knew nobody around me and was also badly missing all my friends and family. I also missed being associated with one of the best software companies for 5 years, missed my long working days, team mates, my team meetings, team lunches at cafeteria, team outings, my certifications and not to forget appreciation and accolades for my work. Everything disappeared as it was a conscious decision to leave my job and spend some quality time with my husband. After having a break for around half a year, I started looking for another opportunity where I could enhance my skills. In my search, I came to know about Community Service Volunteers through one of my friends and felt it might be the right place to learn new aspects and showcase my skills for the betterment of the community.

Firstly I had my IAG (Informative Advice & Guidance) session at CSV and I was very much impressed with the registration process and came to know about many free certified courses offered. I also came to know about the volunteering opportunity available which I thought would be my first step into integrating to the society.

VISION: The volunteering in society to integrate overseas nationals (vision) project is a CSV and EU funded initiative which is a women-only project targeting third country nationals (non-eea) who have been living in the uk for less than 10 years and have legal immigration status. Vision delivers activities and training to the women and encourages them to integrate into the local society.

When I was introduced to the team of the VISION project, they were extremely warm and friendly and made me feel right at home. I got an opportunity to enrol into ESOL, ITQ, Numeracy classes. Also in parallel, I started volunteering for the ESOL classes. Volunteering has given me immense pleasure and also the chance to mingle with different individuals from different nationalities. During volunteering for ESOL classes, I got an opportunity to know more about the British culture, heritage and history.

Having also completed Web designing and Digital Graphics course, I could contribute more to the project. Recognizing my technical interest, Gauri has given me an opportunity to develop posters for different events that VISION project is conducting and also for developing and maintaining website for VISION project. I just want to conclude saying a big thank you to CSV and VISION project for making me part of their team and encouraging me so far. I am very glad to have known CSV, which made me busy and active again.

"When I was introduced to the team of the vision project, they were extremely warm and friendly and made me feel right at home."
WHERE TO FIND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

You can find information about a vast range of volunteering opportunities across the UK through, amongst many others:

- **COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS** [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)
- **VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND** [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)
- **VOLUNTEER SCOTLAND** [www.volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk)
- **VOLUNTEERING WALES** [www.volunteering-wales.net](http://www.volunteering-wales.net)
- **VOLUNTEER NOW (NORTHERN IRELAND)** [www.volunteernow.co.uk](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk)
TYPES OF VOLUNTEERING CAUSES AVAILABLE

Generally, you should be able to find volunteering opportunities in any of these causes, and many others not listed below:

Addictions and Recovery: addressing the causes, reality and recovery options for a range of addictions.

Animals: animal welfare and animal training.

Arts, Culture & Media: using creativity as a means to help people express and enjoy themselves.

Carers: looking after children, the elderly and vulnerable people.

Children: from play-time to play therapy.

Community Development: building ties to ensure healthy communities.

Crime/Safety: creating a safer society for all.

Education/Literacy: equal access to education opportunities for all.

Emergency and Ambulance Services: the front-line of medical and rescue services.

Environment and Conservation: preserving our natural and built heritage for future generations.

Families/Parenting: addressing a range of family issues.

Health/Hospitals/Hospices: patient care and patient comfort.

Heritage/Museums/Galleries: promoting our cultural heritage.

Homelessness/Housing: ensuring that everyone has a roof over their heads and assistance provided to those either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Human and Civil Rights/Equality: granting respect and dignity to every individual.

Intellectual/Learning Disabilities: recognising and encouraging the abilities of everyone.

Law/Legal Support/Justice: supporting victims through the legal system.

LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender): ensuring sexual equality.

Mens Groups: modern men and their issues.

Mental Health: mental well-being and ways to achieve it.

Minority Groups: addressing ethnic, cultural and racial issues.

Elderly People/Active Retired: age is immaterial if the right environment exists in which to thrive.

Overseas Aid/Development: volunteering abroad.

Physical Disability: recognising and addressing the needs of people with physical disabilities to ensure equal access to services.

Politics: safeguarding democracy.

Prisoners/Offenders/Ex-offenders: addressing the penal system and its consequences.

Refugees/Asylum Seekers: helping to ensure integration into Irish society and respect for cultural diversity.

Religion/Faith based: supporting the development and delivery of faith based programmes.

Social Inclusion: working with people who feel excluded from society.

Sports/Outdoor activities: promoting health, fitness and fun.

Unemployment: addressing both the societal and individual impact of not working in a formal setting.

Volunteering and Active Citizenship: actions/activities or organisations that seek to inspire or facilitate involvement of people in their community whether through volunteering or voting - lighting a candle to dispel the darkness.

Women’s Groups: modern women and their issues.

Youth: helping teenagers achieve their potential.

Sensory Impairment: recognising and addressing the needs of people with sensory impairment, such as blindness and deafness, to ensure that their needs are met in society.
I. TYPES OF VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

Generally, you should be able to find volunteering opportunities in any of these activities listed below:

**Administrative/Office work:** reception, typing, filing and (sometimes) accounts.

**Advice, information and support:** helping people find the right information on a range of issues.

**Advocacy:** acting for a person or cause to ensure their voice/perspective is heard.

**Animal Fostering:** taking an animal into one’s home and training it for a limited period.

**Architecture, Building, Construction:** building, repairing, restoring and cataloguing our built heritage.

**Arts (music/drama/crafts):** teaching, coaching, assisting with a range of arts and crafts from fine art to card making, playing guitar to singing and role playing to set design.

**Befriending/Mentoring:** becoming involved in the life of a person, either as a friend with interests/hobbies in common or as a trusted adviser.

**Campaigning/Lobbying:** supporting through positive actions such as writing to your local TD the development of a cause; a change in society’s ways of viewing and responding to situations.

**Catering:** from tea-making to slicing and dicing.

**Committee/Board Work/Management:** developing Volunteer Involving Organisations’ strategic and operational management systems through regular attendance at board/management/committee meetings.

**Computing:** teaching basic computing, developing a website, network maintenance and developing social media.

**Conservation/Gardening:** digging, planting, weeding, removing non-indigenous plants, preserving the land and landscape.

**Counselling/Listening:** from working as a qualified counsellor, to listening to a variety of individuals in need of comfort or advice.

**Disaster/Emergency Services:** responding to emergencies such as road accidents, floods, fire and mountain/sea rescue.

**Driving/Accompanying:** taking people to their appointments.

**Events and stewarding:** helping to organise, assist with and provide information at an event, such as a parade.

**Finance/Accountancy:** from bookkeeping to preparing annual accounts.

**First Aid:** from putting a plaster on a child’s knee at a parade to being a cardiac first responder.

**Fund raising:** helping to raise funds in various ways.

**Home-based/Virtual Volunteering:** providing one’s expertise from home via the internet.

**Hotel & Accommodation Work:** helping to run a clean, efficient accommodation service - anything from washing up to being on reception.

**IT Training:** from hosting a beginners computing class to training in the use of social media.

**Justice/Legal Assistance:** from accompanying someone to court to providing legal advice as a fully qualified solicitor.

**Languages/Translating:** from helping a student to translating brochures.

**Library:** from filing books to telling stories.

**Marketing/PR/Media/Journalism:** from designing brochures, to implementing a publicity campaign.

**Play-schemes/Preschools:** nursery rhymes and hand painting, ABCs and 123s.

**Practical/DFY/Gardening/Farming:** painting and latch replacing, digging, hoeing and fence mending.

**Research/Policy work:** from identifying primary sources to developing policy in reactions to changing circumstances.

**Residential volunteering:** living in and assisting with the day-to-day running of a residential home.

**Shops/Retail:** assisting and serving customers.

**Short term/seasonal/once off:** a commitment of a few hours or a day to complete an activity.

**Specialist/Technical Support:** from network administration to answering technical queries.

**Sports/Outdoor Activities/Coaching:** coaching, assisting and playing a range of games.

**Support and Key Working:** supporting an individual with special needs in both their daily tasks and the achievements of their social and personal goals.

**Teaching/Tutoring/Supporting Learning:** from literacy tutoring to leaving student support.

**Team and Corporate Volunteering:** team building exercises that benefit the VIO and the corporate team.

**Technology and the Internet:** from developing web-sites to opening Facebook accounts.

**Youth work:** from becoming a leader in a youth club to being a youth street worker.
IOM International Organization for Migration
17 Route des Morillons,
CH-1211 Geneva 19,
Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 717 9111
Fax: +41 22 798 6150
Email: hq@iom.int
Website: www.iom.int