

## Concept: Info session for potential inclusion buddies

It is a good idea to organize an information event for all interested inclusion buddies before the start of the training series so that all questions and uncertainties can be clarified in advance. This makes it easier to plan how many participants really want to take part in the training and who had other ideas and therefore would rather not take part. It can either be organized as a joint info session for several interested volunteers, or as individual face to face consultations for each volunteer. Below we will shortly present concepts for both options and provide some additional information material that can be used during the sessions.

### Info session for inclusion buddies

The first option is to invite several interested people to a joint information session. For this you have to organize a room, where people feel comfortable and welcome. Provide some beverages and snacks.

The info session should not last longer than one hour so that there is time for questions and the participants do not get too much information at once. In addition, it should be ensured that not too much of the training content (especially from the first module) is already anticipated in the information session.

We recommend the following agenda:

1. Introduction of the organization and responsible persons  
*Optional: Icebreaker game to get to know the interested volunteers*
2. Information about the aims and structure of the project
3. Information about inclusion buddies: Briefly explain what the tasks of a buddy will be (especially time responsibility!). Find out more about the participants: Have they worked with pwds before? What are their expectations? How much time can they invest? Do they have any restrictions (allergies, no car available, ...)
4. Explain the content of the training briefly so that participants know what to expect
5. Explain the framework conditions of the project and the “contractual” regulations
6. Clarifying next steps: find out how many people are interested in becoming an inclusion buddy and which dates for the training would suit most of them.
7. Time for participants’ questions. Be able to clarify important questions, e.g. about insurance cover.

## Face to face consultation with volunteers interested in becoming inclusion buddies

As an alternative to joint info sessions, individual face to face consultations can be held. This option is more time consuming, but allows you to get to know the interested volunteer on a deeper level. You can address the questions and needs of each person individually, and you get a much better understanding about the person and his/her needs and personality, which will make matching a lot easier.

The face to face consultation takes place in a more conversational setting. It should not last longer than one hour so that there is time for questions and the participants do not get too much information at once. In addition, it should be ensured that not too much of the training content (especially from the first module) is already anticipated in the information session.

It is important to make the potential inclusion buddy feel welcomed. Offer him/her something to drink, be friendly and respectful.

The recommended agenda is similar to the one used for joint info sessions:

1. Introduction of the organization and responsible persons
2. Information about the aims and structure of the project
3. Information about inclusion buddies: Briefly explain what the tasks of a buddy will be (especially time responsibility!). Find out more about the participant: Has he/she worked with pwds before? What are his/her expectations? How much time can he/she invest? Does he/she have any restrictions (allergies, no car available,...) ?
4. Explain the content of the training briefly so that participants know what to expect
5. Explain the framework conditions of the project and the “contractual” regulations
6. Clarifying next steps: if the participant is interested in becoming an inclusion buddy, find out which dates for the training would suit the participant.
7. Time for the participant’s questions. Be able to clarify important questions, e.g. about insurance cover.

## Information material

### Information about the aims and structure of the project

People with disabilities often remain excluded when it comes to volunteering because they do not know that they are also needed or non-profit organizations cannot imagine that people with disabilities can get involved with them.

The project "Improve 2.0 – Inclusive Methods in Professional Volunteering" wants to change this: it stands for **inclusion and equality** and shall **enable people with disabilities, impairments or mental problems to get into voluntary work**. They should be given the opportunity to volunteer and benefit from volunteering on a personal level. To reach this goal, we offer trainings, consultation and support for people with disabilities, their caretakers and volunteer organizations. For example, we train voluntary inclusion buddies, who support volunteers with disabilities in any form they need it.

### Information about inclusion buddies

So-called **inclusion buddies** can support them as needed and accompany them in their volunteer work. In order to remove further hurdles, we also offer information events, consultations and training for parents, caregivers and professionals in disability work, but also for non-profit organizations.

The task of the inclusion buddy is to **accompany people with impairments well and safely in their volunteer work**. They are also to ensure that **communication and cooperation** between the people with impairments, their place of residence and their workplace runs well and smoothly. In addition, they can thus **contribute to the reduction of resistance, fears and apprehensions** on the part of the organizations, parents, caregivers, etc.

The inclusion buddies have an eye on whether everything is going well, and intervene only when necessary. It is important that they have a supportive role only; they are just the back-up for the person with disability. If the volunteer and the organisation get along well and neither of them needs the inclusion buddy anymore, it was a great job.

### Information about the inclusion buddy training

The preparation for becoming a conclusion buddy consists of a four-part training provided by the host organization. The host organization also provides materials and information that can be used in cooperation with people with disabilities. There also is a central contact person, who assists the inclusion buddies with any questions or difficulties that may arise and will organize regular exchange meetings.

Contents of the training:

1. Module A: Introduction to "Inclusive Volunteering" (approx. 3-4 hours).

- Why is it useful and important to involve people with disabilities in volunteering in society?
- Empowerment of people with disabilities
- Expectations of the Buddies and what the Buddies can expect from us

Module B: Better understanding the living environment of people with disabilities (approx. 3-4 hours)

- Legal framework
- Basic knowledge about types of disabilities and how to deal with emergencies
- Important terminology in working with people with disabilities

Module C: Communicating and working well together (approx. 3-4 hours)

- Basics of good communication
- Active listening
- Simple language
- Basics for good cooperation

Module D: Boundaries and freedoms within my volunteer work (approx. 3-4 hours)

- Feeling boundaries and setting limits; boundary situations
- Duty of confidentiality vs. duty to report
- How can I make the interaction and my volunteer work more enjoyable?

### Challenges and ideas

- Building trust between volunteers with disabilities and their inclusion buddies can take time; they often rely on someone they already know better to communicate with the organization/work place in the beginning. It can be a lengthy process to establish the bond.
- Finding inclusion buddies who already have experiences in working with people with (physical) disabilities is challenging. It shouldn't be mandatory but a training before working with them on their own should take place.
- Certain volunteers with physical disabilities may not require an inclusion buddy but rather an assistant for physical tasks. Experience in handling wheelchairs is vital during matching.
- Exploring digital volunteering proved beneficial. One volunteer for example promoted activities from home without requiring support. Considering the potential for digital volunteering could be advantageous as coordinators can directly engage with volunteers.

### Detailed information for inclusion buddies

(In case the potential inclusion buddy has any questions. The info session should not go too much into detail, as this is part of the inclusion buddy training).

<p><b>Goals or outcomes of the position</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accompany people with disabilities (=PwD) in their volunteering well and safely, that people with disabilities feel taken care of, recognized and valued because they can make a meaningful contribution to society</li> <li>• Ensure that communication and cooperation between people with disabilities, their place of living and place of work goes well and smoothly</li> <li>• Contribute to the reduction of resistance, fears and anxieties on part of the organisations, parents, caregivers, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Field of activity</b> (max. 5 main tasks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good and ongoing communication with people with disabilities as well as with their environment (caregivers in institutions, parents, etc.), organization and project coordination</li> <li>• Identify difficulties and problems and find individual solutions for them</li> <li>• Participate at the trainings/introduction session the accompanied volunteer gets in his/her work</li> <li>• Preparation and follow-up (training workshop, debriefing/reflection meetings)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Area of responsibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In distinction to full-time employees</li> <li>- Responsibilities</li> <li>- Number and function designation of the subordinate co-workers/inside and/or honorary ones</li> <li>- Substitution of and/or by ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If volunteer can't do it him-/herself, report potential problems or difficulties to the organisation/the project coordination and approach possible solution</li> <li>• Responsible for the volunteer as long as he/she works voluntarily</li> <li>• Responsible for making people with disabilities feel safe</li> <li>• Be the contact person for PwD</li> <li>• Attend a training for inclusion buddies</li> <li>• Coordinate and organize the transport</li> <li>• Ensure communication between all parties involved (e.g. in case of cancellations) and that communication structures are clear and transparent</li> <li>• Keep an eye on whether everything is going well and only intervene when necessary</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who could be interested in becoming an Inclusive Buddy?</li> <li>- Which group of people is particularly suitable / possibly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who regularly have free time</li> <li>• People who are already active in this field or people who are willing to become active</li> <li>• National and European volunteer service holders</li> </ul>

<p>not suitable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retired people</li> <li>• People who are currently doing a traineeship in the field</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• People who are interested to help somebody</li> </ul>
<p><b>Requirements profile/ prerequisites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education &amp; Qualification</li> <li>- (professional) experience</li> <li>- special knowledge (e.g. computer skills)</li> <li>- personal requirements (e.g. good networker, communicative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have sense of responsibility</li> <li>• Respect the desires and needs of the PwD</li> <li>• Be able to communicate well</li> <li>• Meet at eye level</li> <li>• Be able to take a step back (PwD should be centre of attention)</li> <li>• Be able to endure certain situations</li> <li>• Be able to set appropriate boundaries respectfully and empathetically</li> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• Willingness and motivation to reflect</li> <li>• Participation in trainings to further educate oneself about specific requirements of Buddy</li> <li>• Outgoing, must be able to approach people</li> <li>• Longer term commitment</li> <li>• Punctual</li> <li>• Reliable</li> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Extended police clearance certificate</li> <li>• At least 18 years old</li> </ul>
<p><b>Time frame ...</b> ...of the engagement (preparation, organization, assignment, travel time, follow-up)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term commitment (at least one year / 3 months per year)</li> <li>• At least 3 hours per week</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contact person from the organisation</b> main responsible person for buddy when it comes to organizational issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be appointed by the organisation</li> <li>• Inclusion buddy should get contact details of contact person</li> <li>• Possibility to talk regularly</li> <li>• Initial address for problems and other organizational issues (e.g. when buddy is sick)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supervisor from the organisation</b> (can be the same person as contact person)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be organised by organisation</li> <li>• Buddy must get his/her contact details</li> <li>• Contact person for in-depth matters and problems</li> <li>• Also checks whether buddy is working correctly and well</li> <li>• Responsible for matters related to professional</li> </ul>

	competence, assistance and controlling
<b>Insurance</b> Liability and accident insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DE: Must be provided by the organisation</li> <li>• IT: Buddy is asked to provide insurance for him/herself → depends on the country</li> </ul>
<b>Reimbursement</b> e.g. travel expenses, reimbursement of expenses, honorary flat rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general: no reimbursement payments</li> <li>• In case of regularly upcoming costs individual solutions will be found</li> </ul>
<b>Education/training</b> How can the Inclusion Buddy be supported professionally? What kind of qualification can be offered to him/her?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training as an integration facilitator through project coordination before the project starts</li> <li>• New competences through special training</li> </ul>