



Matching strategy:

How to match volunteers with disabilities and inclusion buddies

Introduction

The IMProVE matching strategy is willing to find the best synergy among volunteer - inclusion buddy - hosting organizations, able to ensure a satisfying experience for all the involved parties.

It is a four levels strategy, based on:

1. Self-evaluation by the volunteer with disability
2. Face to face individual interviews among the coordinator and the volunteer and among the coordinator and the inclusion buddy to figure out the match
3. Identification of the appropriate hosting organization
4. Informal meeting for the inclusion buddy-volunteer couple

1. Self evaluation by the volunteer with disability

The first level of the IMProVE matching strategy consists in the filling of a self-reported questionnaire by the person with disability wishing to volunteer.

The self-reported questionnaire will allow the coordinator to collect the volunteer's contact details and some information about the volunteers' life situation, preferred volunteering areas, preferred tasks to be performed as a volunteer, weekly time availability, interests and skills, type of disability and needed support.

The suggestion is to deliver the questionnaire at the end of the info-session for the potential volunteers or it could be uploaded on the web-site to be freely accessible to anyone wishing to volunteer taking the advantage of your organization's volunteering support programme.



In both cases the self-reported questionnaire can be a module (in paper or PDF or a google module) to be filled and delivered to the coordinating organization.

We offer 3 options for the self-reported questionnaire:

- Annex 1: Questionnaire - Be a volunteer!
- Annex 2: Easy to read and to understand questionnaire - Be a volunteer!
- Annex 3: Easy to read and to understand questionnaire - Be a volunteer! - short version

It is possible to print out the annexes and directly deliver them to the potential volunteers or use them as a prototype for the creation of google modules to be filled online. The annexes can be even considered as a general model to be personalized according to the features of your community, the features of your potential volunteers, the kind of information you are looking for and the ones that are not relevant for an effective coordination of the programme.

Annex 4 - Questionnaire and 5 - Easy language questionnaire, are an example of the flexibility of the questionnaire, that could even be used as a grid for an interviewer, to collect the needed information.

2. Face to face individual interviews

To better know and understand who is in front of you is very important in every type of workplace. The volunteering world is open to everyone and inclusive but, to make a good match between an inclusion buddy and a person with disability who wants to do volunteering, could be a challenge.

2.1 What does it mean “to match”?

This kind of activity is necessary to pair a person who will be an inclusion expert with a person with disability who wants to do volunteering. “To match” consists in knowing



their story of life, their skills, their limits and their traits and personality and to find how their efforts can be complementary.

For example: if the inclusion buddy has a past story with boundaries' issues, it will not be right for people with disabilities with borderline or psychotic mental disorder.

If the inclusion buddy is solid and in force, could be a good choice for a person with a wheelchair or with physical disabilities.

- Background checks can be a beneficial part of the screening process primarily as a method of managing safeguarding and security risks.
- You have not to give them a personality test but to know a theory could be useful during your interview with them. A very simple theory, largely used in the enterprise world, is the Big Five Model. The Big Five is a trait-based model of personality that proposes that human personality can be measured across five broad personality traits.

It was proposed by McCrae and Costa, two behavior psychologists.

These 5 traits are:

<p>Openness</p>	<p>This trait makes people appreciate life and everything that comes with it. According to studies, candidates who are open to experience are more curious, intellectual, and willing to try new things as compared to those who are not.</p>
<p>Conscientiousness</p>	<p>This trait showcases self-discipline and self-gratification. Candidates with this trait are considered to be stubborn and</p>



	result oriented.
Extraversion / Introversion	This personality trait determines engagement with the world. People are of two types: extroverts and introverts. Extroverts are those who like to engage with people as much as possible, whereas introverts are the opposite. According to Hans Eysenck, most people are a mixture of extraversion and introversion.
Agreeableness	This trait displays the different concerns regarding social harmony. Agreeable persons are kind-hearted and soft whereas disagreeable persons are stubborn and hard to work with.
Neuroticism	Neuroticism is the tendency of showing anger, anxiety, and all other kinds of negative emotions. People with high levels of neuroticism are more aggressive and tend to have less mental stability as compared to people with less neuroticism.

- You should know how they face issues. With the questions suggested below at point 2, you can discover if they have problem solving skills which are complementary or opposite.



- It is relevant to discover the way they cope with stress. In Fact, you can't match someone with low coping skills and easy to go in burn out to a person with a disability with the same characteristics.
- At the end you should be very clear and honest and ask them what kind of person they prefer with them. Some of them have clear ideas about what is better for them and they can drive you in the matching process.

2.2 Interviews

For an appropriate matching, it could be useful to fix some appointments for an individual conversation of mutual knowledge, focused on learning *more about Inclusion Buddy and volunteers with disabilities*'. You could organize a first interview with the inclusion buddy to get to know him, to pay attention during the training with careful observation and to organize a second meeting for the match.

For the volunteer with disability, it is better to organize a first meeting to reassure his insecurities and start to know his skills and preferences. During the training you will know him better and better, so pay the same attention and start to think which kind of person could be perfect for him/her. At the end, organize a second meeting, in which you will ask about his coping and problem solving abilities and preferences about inclusion buddies. Annex 6 - Evaluation grid for supervisors, will support you during the interview and the following matching analysis.

1st meeting

With the inclusion buddy:

The first meeting is to get to know each other. The suggestion is to ask about their background history and personal experiences. Ask them to tell you briefly in 5 minutes something about their life: their experiences, their schools and old hobbies. You have to check their ID documents, if they have some criminal records, their employment/volunteering story and experiences and their professional competences. Some questions you can ask:



- Tell me in 5 minutes about your past experiences in volunteering or workplaces.
- What is your biggest strong point?
- What can make you vulnerable?
- Have you ever worked/assisted/supported someone with physical/cognitive disability or mental issues?
- When are you available for volunteering (days of the week, timing)? - Explore their availability in detail and record the findings in the Evaluation grid for supervisors as it is a relevant indicator to consider to make an effective match.

With the volunteer with disability:

During the first meeting with the volunteer with a disability you should make him comfortable about volunteering and get to know him. In the same way you will do with the inclusion buddy, make a little assessment about his background and past experiences. You could ask something about his family situation about assistance, his special needs, his skills and experiences.

Some questions you can ask:

- Talk to me about your family members. Who is actually living with you? What kind of education/ culture and occupation do they have?
- Which kind of help do they usually give to you?
- Tell me about your past experiences in volunteering or at your workplace.
- Tell me about your strengths and limits.
- When are you available for volunteering (days of the week, timing)? - Explore their availability in detail and record the findings in the Evaluation grid for supervisors as it is a relevant indicator to consider to make an effective match.

Observation of both inclusion buddy and volunteer with disability



During all the activities of the training, we suggest you pay attention to their performance, their interests and above all, their behavior with other participants to the training session. It is very important to focus on their social and emotional skills and for this reason we provide you a grid that you can fill for each inclusion buddy/volunteer with disabilities to get to know better the results on important areas and to compare the results.

Socio-emotional skills	0	1	2	3	4
Creativity					
Sense of responsibility					
Dedication to work					
Motivation					
Curiosity					
Self-reflection					
Self-confidence					



Empathy					
Integration skills					
Communication skills					
Teamwork skills					
Self-organize skill					
Self presentation skill					
Problem solving skill					
Decision making skill					
Stress management skill					

If you already know the volunteer with a disability or if you understand which are his skills during the training, you can also fill this grid.

It will be useful for matching with the hosting NGO.



Specific skills	0	1	2	3	4
IT and ICT literacy					
English language knowledge					
Other foreign languages knowledge					
Artistic skills					
Manual skills (e.g.:handicraft)					
Reading and writing abilities					
Understanding and oral communication					



Volunteer's specific skills

2nd

interview

With inclusion buddy:

Now you know more about your inclusion buddy. To refine your match it is important to know more about his:

1. *Problem solving skills*
2. *Coping mechanisms*
3. *Preferences and expectations*

1. *Ask them how they would solve a specific problem.* This seems like a “skills” question, but it’s so much more. Problem solving is not just a skill, but rather the approach each person takes with specific problems.

If you already have some ideas about the match, you can ask him to find a solution to a problem inspired by the volunteer with disability who comes to your mind.

This is a great possibility to settle your doubts!

Ex: Paolo has a mental disorder and a physical disability. Usually he is very talkative and open to the new but some day he is in a bad mood and becomes very aggressive, he tries to offend everyone by



yelling bad words and making activities very difficult. You are with him in a NGO really important in the field of environmental volunteering and today he has to help them answer the phone but it is a bad day for him, so he starts yelling to another volunteer called Sara, who is not so aware of this type of mental issues. Sara is offended and talks back badly. So, the situation worsened and Paolo doesn't want to do volunteering anymore for today.

But someone has to answer the phone...

Solutions: ...

You could meet more open people: they usually focus on the outcome and they think of creative solutions. This kind of inclusion buddy is a good match for people with disabilities who need to be stimulated and active. They could prepare a good and inclusive environment for them. Usually the "Open" type of inclusion buddy instead of feeling distressed by the question, they quickly find ways to understand the problem deeper and are more proactive. They typically are extraverted and agreeable too and they can have a good impact on introverted people with self esteem issues. There are people focused on the problem itself, they are more analytical and they prefer a traditional approach to the issue. Usually this type could be introverted and very self-disciplined. They might seem the perfect match for people with the need of someone strong and solid, that stands with them and supports them in a familiar way. It is a good match for people with mental health issues or people with disabilities who are not so easy to deal with.

2. Ask them about the most stressful situation encountered at work (or daily life if they don't work) and how they dealt with it.

Did their "most stressful" situation echo a position they may be in regularly at some NGO with volunteers? Did they stress themselves out, or did the situation actually call for high levels of stress? How did they handle the situation? Consider all of these



questions as you listen to candidates' answers, and determine whether or not their ability to cope with the stress will be right to make them a good match.

With the volunteer with disability:

We suggest you to go deep in the same areas for a better match:

1. *Problem solving skills*
2. *Coping mechanisms*
3. *Preferences and expectations*

1. With people with disabilities who want to do volunteering you have to discover if they have good problem solving skills. *For this reason we suggest you create some problem solving cards inspired by the volunteering world to discover their problem solving style.*

Ex: You start to work with children in a leisure center next to your house. Your job is to help them to make art activities with watercolors but the coordinators have forgotten you have a wheelchair and they organized the activity in a room very small with not so much space.

Solutions: ...

In the end, these questions will help you determine how open your inclusion buddies and volunteers are and whether or not their analytical and decision making processes are a fit for the match.

2. Ask them about the most stressful situation encountered at work (or daily life if they don't work) and how they dealt with it.

- Have you ever had a stressful situation in your life?
- And in your work/volunteer life? Tell me about it.
- During this period, how did you understand that you were stressed?
- How did you handle it, if you did it?



***You can change your question. They are an example about how to conduct the assessment phase.**

****The problem solving activity should be appropriate to the volunteer's skills and the preference she/he has expressed.**

The important rule is to pair an inclusion buddy with a good coping strategy to a volunteer who is lacking.

Be curious about what types of people annoys them, and how they deal with them.

Common to both inclusion buddy and volunteer with disability:

No matter what, inclusion buddies will have to work with someone with disabilities and vice-versa. Whether it's dealing with them, it's important to understand who annoys them and how they approach interaction with those people. In other words, this question helps you gain insight into what is suitable for a volunteer or not. Be open and honest and ask them: With which kind of person do you prefer to work? A male or female? Older or younger? With which qualities and abilities? Which has to be their interests?

Identification of the appropriate hosting organization:

how to match volunteers with disabilities and hosting organizations?

You have found organizations that will host volunteers with disabilities.



You gave them a questionnaire to fill in, including their field of activity.

You found disabled volunteers and asked them what they can do, what they would like to do and if you noticed any particular skills, you wrote it down.

Now it's time to create the match!

How to do that?

Your volunteer has already expressed a preference regarding the activities she or he prefers.

To let the volunteers know what kind of volunteering opportunities are available, you could organize a pool of volunteer taster session event, or present them the pool of volunteer positions on local level that you have collected: in this way the volunteers can have clear ideas about what the available organizations actually do.

The simpler action could be:

1. Ask your volunteer the name of the organizations that she or he prefers (first and second choice)
2. Check the availability of the organizations (if they already have volunteers, if the structure has architectural obstacles, if the volunteer has the skills required) making a phone call or a Zoom meeting.
3. Organize an informal meeting.

or

1. After the evaluation meeting with the volunteer, you will have clear ideas about who he is, what he wants to do, and what he is capable of doing.
2. Check the pool of volunteer positions and look for the field of activity more suitable for the volunteer. It could be possible that you will have more than one possibility to propose to the volunteer.
3. Call the volunteer and briefly show the most suitable organizations.
4. Ask your volunteer the name of the organizations that she or he prefers (first and second choice)
5. Check the availability of the organization (if they already have volunteers, if the structure has architectural obstacles, if the volunteer has the skills required) making a phone call or a Zoom meeting.



6. Organize an informal meeting.

3. Informal meeting for the inclusion buddie-volunteer pair

On the basis of the collected info, you can set the inclusion buddie-volunteer pairs and organize a meeting among each pair members to allow them to get to know each other informally in view of the first day of volunteering.

In case you are matching several Inclusion Buddy - volunteers pairs at a given time, you could even organize an informal meeting for all of them, where to break the ice with some knowledge games and then proposing them to look for their table to have a coffee with their volunteering partner (you should organize as many tables as the pairs are with placeholders). Make sure to properly observe the participants during the group knowledge games, to verify if the matching you planned seems appropriate, according to the participants interactions, or if it is necessary to make some changes before the coffee break meetings.