IMProVE
Inclusive Methods in Professional Volunteering in Europe

MANUAL
FOR CARETAKER AND FOR CAREGIVER

MANUAL

FOR SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS WITH DISABILITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

2022

JAUNUOLIŲ DIENOS CENTRAS

Project title	IMProVE 2:0 – Inclusive Method in Professional Volunteering in Europe
Lead partner organization	Jaunuolių dienos centras (JDC) Lithuania
Partners	Dobrovolnické centrum, z.s. Czech Republic
	ASSOCIAZIONE UNIAMOCI ONLUS Italy
	Gemeinsam leben und lernen in Europa e.V. Germany

CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS
PWD – people with disabilities
JDC – Jaunuolių dienos centras
VIOS – volunteers friendly organizations
NGO – non-governmental organization
E2R – easy to read language

INTRODUCTION

This publication has been produced by the project Inclusive Method in Professional Volunteering in Europe.

The overall objective of the project is to empower people with physical, mental, intellectual, and learning disabilities, and mental health problems to volunteer and to use volunteering as an important pathway to social inclusion in their local community and society in general.

The objective of the manual for the caregiver is to create a tool for caregivers to enable people with disabilities to volunteer and take an active part in the volunteering system.
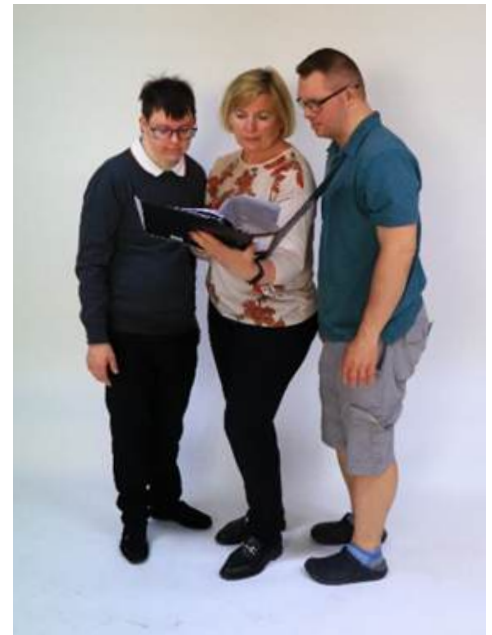
- **Caretaker** - in this manual is a person who protects, cares for, and helps. This can be parents, family members, or other persons appointed by the court.

- **Caregiver** – in this manual is understood as one that gives physical or emotional care, support, and teaching to people with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues.

- **Volunteer** – in this manual is understood as a person with an intellectual, and mental health issues, and complex disabilities. Later in this publication, these individuals will be referred to as PWD volunteers and volunteers with mental health issues.

- **Organization** – in this manual is understood as an organization, selecting, motivating, preparing, and supporting the PWD and mental health issues volunteers.

Despite the differences in traditions, culture, and living standards, the number of volunteers in modern European countries is growing. Higher education requires young people to be introduced to volunteering. Volunteers are active citizens and contribute to civil society in Europe. Democracies thrive from the engagement of their citizens, theiand r readiness to help in society, to feel a part of it, and to take over responsibility. In other words: democracies need volunteers! There are remarkable differences in volunteering between the European countries, influenced by their tradition, politics, and history.

Volunteering is a powerful means to engage people to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and an environmentally sustainable, peaceful world, free of poverty, hunger, and inequality where no one is left behind.

However, a person with a disability feels excluded from society, day-to-day life, and volunteering. Given these significant trends, more than ever, strategies are needed to **identify, train, and engage** PWD volunteers in the volunteer mission.

Who can use this manual and how should it be used?

This guide is for people interested in contributing to the well-being and social inclusion of citizens, reducing poverty and socio-economic disparities between people, and ensuring equality for all opportunities. The target group is **staff** working with people with disabilities or mental health issues and **parents** of people with disabilities or mental health issues.

R – recruiting and selecting PWD volunteers

F – finding out the volunteer's strengths and weaknesses, skills, and interests

A – assisting PWD in identifying volunteering goals and learning objectives

M – motivating volunteers with disabilities to get involved in volunteering and continue this process for a long time

M – matching PWD volunteers with the volunteering places

P – preparing and training PWD volunteers

S – supporting PWD volunteers throughout all their volunteering process

E – evaluating and providing feedback to all stakeholders

R – recognizing volunteering

C – celebrating and rewarding achievements

The manual consists of 3 chapters:

Chapter 1 will provide information on what knowledge, actions, and skills are needed to prepare people with disabilities and mental health issues for successful volunteering.

Chapter 2 will provide information on how to empower caregivers and caretakers to initiate inclusive volunteering. How to make volunteering successful and long-term.

Chapter 3 will provide policy recommendations and tips. A policy recommendation is written policy advice prepared for caregivers or person that has the authority to make or influence policy decisions, whether that is a governmental, a local authority, or other public body. Policy recommendations serve to inform people who are faced with policy choices on particular issues about how sharing the best practice and evidence can help to make the best decisions.

The e-book/guide will also provide lots of practical tips and tools for caregivers to use in their daily life.

The manual will be made publicly available to everyone through the websites of our project partners and other relevant stakeholders.

CHAPTER 1

HOW DO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING?

Inclusive volunteering starts with the planning of the activities. The caregiver should plan not only the activities but also gather information about the volunteers. Individual work plans or individual profiles are important tools in planning volunteer activities for volunteers with disabilities. Assessments can be formative and summative. An assessment should help to distinguish a person's strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, they can help to form the program and to monitor all the processes and see the progress taking place. Dynamic assessment forms, as well as various assessment tools, are used by specialists to get information about a person's cognitive and affective state, physical impairment level, and sensory dysfunctions. There are a few forms of assessment that everyone working within the inclusive model should use. These include observation, conversation, and some simple special tests.

1.1. Understanding and supporting the empowerment of PWD and mental health issues

A strong culture of volunteering and the promotion of volunteering are key to building a sustainable and civically responsible society. People who volunteer:

- are better appreciation of their civic power;
- are more responsible members of society;
- are better able to integrate into society;
- are better able to adapt to change.

People who volunteer are more empathetic to the problems of their neighbours or community members, more involved in local or national societal problems, and more likely to look for innovative systemic solutions. It is therefore essential to involve as many disabled people as possible in voluntary activities.

- Over 1 billion people live with some form of disability.
- The number of people with disability is dramatically increasing. This is due to demographic trends and increases in chronic health conditions, among other causes.
- Almost everyone is likely to experience some form of disability – temporary or permanent – at some point in life.
- People with disability are disproportionately affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disability refers to the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g., cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g., negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation, public buildings, and limited social support).

The number of people experiencing disability is increasing due to a rise in chronic health conditions and population aging. Disability is a human rights issue, with people with disability being subject to multiple violations of their rights, including acts of violence, abuse, prejudice, and disrespect because of their disability, which intersects with other forms of discrimination based on age and gender, among other factors. People with disability also face barriers, stigmatization, and discrimination.

Disability is extremely diverse.

1.2. How to empower PWD or mental health issues to become a volunteer?

The first step is to identify the needs of the volunteer with a disability to prepare him/her for volunteering. This includes observation, an interview, and some simple specific tests. The information gathered can help to plan volunteering activities and assign tasks according to the volunteer's needs and abilities. It is important to identify the following basic needs:

1. Identify the motivation to volunteer.
2. Identify the support person' needs.
3. Identify the ability to learn and learning styles.
4. Identify the communication needs.
5. Identify the autonomy in the volunteering place.
6. Identify the ability to solve conflicts and problems.

1. Identify the motivation to volunteer.
- ☐ Do you have volunteering experience?
- ☐ Have you ever been asked to stop your volunteering activity?
- ☐ Have you not been able to accept a volunteering offer? Why?
- ☐ How satisfied you were with your previous volunteering?
- ☐ Why do you want this particular volunteering place?
- ☐ What could be your volunteering status: full-time, part-time, or seasonal?
- ☐ What would be the perfect volunteering place for you?
- ☐ What advice would you give to people who do things wrongly at their volunteering place?

2. Identify the support person needs
- ☐ Do you need help accessing written or electronic information?
- ☐ Do you need help in navigating a volunteering place /or learning new tasks?
- ☐ Do you need help identifying volunteering place dangers?
- ☐ Do you need help getting to a volunteering place via public transport?

3. Identify the ability to learn and learning styles
- ☐ How fast do you learn new skills?
- ☐ Do You prefer learning by using pictures, images, and spatial understanding?
- ☐ Is it ok for you to work in a noisy environment or do you need silence?
- ☐ Do you like to repeat things a few times to remember them better or do you prefer using logic, reasoning, and systems?
- ☐ Do you prefer to receive information in speech or writing?

☐ Do you prefer to learn in groups with other people or to learn alone with self-study methods?

4. Identify the communication needs.

☐ Do you have difficulties speaking in public?

☐ Do you have difficulties in writing or reading?

☐ Do you have difficulties reading and understanding official papers like your volunteering contract?

☐ Do you use social media as a communications tool (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.)?

5. Identify the autonomy in the volunteering place.

☐ Do you like to have lunch alone or together with other people?

☐ Do you need assistance during your lunch break?

☐ Do you need a special diet?

☐ Do you need assistance in using the bathroom?

☐ Do you have reliable telephone access, and can I call you if I need to give you information?

6. Identify the ability to solve conflicts and problems.

☐ Can you stay alert and calm in stressful situations?

☐ Can you control your emotions and behavior?

☐ Can you recognize and respect differences?

☐ Can you avoid disrespectful words and actions?

Practical task
Each caregiver identifies the 3 most important needs of the volunteer with a disability in order to prepare him/her for volunteering.
And explain your decision.

1.3. Inclusion and open-mindedness are aspects of a strong society

People with disabilities seek the same opportunities as people without disabilities. Inclusion means that people with or without disabilities can participate in an activity and interact on an equal basis.

The inclusion of people with disabilities in everyday activities involves practices and policies designed to identify and remove barriers, such as physical, communication, and attitudinal barriers that hamper an individual's ability to fully participate in society in the same manner as people without disabilities.

People with mental health issues also face a range of human rights violations. Their rights to work, to education, to live in the community, and to be free from exclusion and discrimination are violated. Mental health is not talked about enough, and it is still a rather taboo subject, both in public discourse and in private circles, where it is not usual and acceptable to talk about it openly, without fear or judgment. But it touches everyone, and mental health should be accepted as a part of everyone's daily life.

Inclusion means:

➲ non-discrimination.

➲ equal rights and equal duties.

➲ modification elements, procedures, or systems so that people with disabilities can use them independently.

➲ adaptation of the physical environment for maximum use (universal design).

➲ elimination of the idea that people with disabilities are less able to do something (stigma).

Many people perceive people with disabilities as the ones in need of service. However, people with disabilities are a key part of civic engagement across Europe.

> Inclusive volunteering means that a person with disabilities or mental health issues can be a volunteer and learn new skills,
> even if he/she has severe or complex special needs.

1.4. How to prepare a person with disabilities or person with mental health issues to become a volunteer?

A positive attitude towards people with special needs and people with mental health issues is crucial in preparing for volunteering. This will also have an impact on them. The person will have the opportunity to learn new skills experience, greater respect, friendship, and a sense of as part of the community, as well as develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Caregivers working in a team with a person with a disability or mental health issues should:

➲ Be a positive role model. Modeling is one of the most powerful ways in which people learn. A person learns from others by observing how someone else responds to a particular situation, and how someone relates to another person. A caregiver should be a role model for the person he/she supports and also for the wider community.

➲ See the person first. All people are individuals – and to define a person by their disability is to imply that they are the disability first and a person second. An example of this is saying the "Downs youngster". This defines the youngster by his disability. It is preferable to say a "youngster with Down Syndrome". Remember - the person first and their disability second.

Address people in a respectful manner. Avoid using language that is demeaning, childish, or patronizing. Include the person in conversations that are about them or that are taking place around them. Introduce the person you are supporting to the people you are speaking with and include them in the conversation. Be respectful when introducing the person to someone else.

- If the volunteer agrees, offer to shake his/her hand when you are introducing yourself and when you are saying goodbye.
- Speak directly to the volunteer; do not speak through an assistant or a person who is helping.
- Gain the volunteer's attention.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice. It is a big mistake to speak to a volunteer with a disability in a sweet voice like when talking with a small child.
- Always use the volunteer's name.
- Be polite and patient.
- Speak with the volunteer in an easy-to-understand language. Give a short and clear message or information. Be specific.
- Try not to talk too much.
- Wait for the volunteer to finish speaking.
- Avoid crowded, busy, and noisy places. Move to a quieter place.
- Some people may use speech that is difficult to understand. If you are communicating with a person with speech and language difficulties, it is ok to ask short questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no" (by nodding or shaking the head). Never pretend that you understand if you do not. Ask the volunteer to show you what he or she means.
- If you are communicating with a volunteer wheelchair user, ensure the communication takes place at eye level. Sit down so that you can be at the same level. This helps the person feel equal in the conversation and avoids them getting pain in the neck.
- If you are communicating with a volunteer with a visual impairment, then identify yourself. If you are meeting for the first time you could describe how old you are, what you look like, how you are dressed, etc.

Avoid giving hyper-care. The caregiver should provide only as much assistance as is necessary, i.e., neither too little nor too much. The caregiver should:

- do not hyper-focus on the disability of the volunteer;
- do not assume that Volunteer is not competent enough to handle his one task;
- encourage the volunteer to underestimate his/her capability and push harder before asking for help;
- to support and encourage volunteers with disabilities to feel good and to take part in every situation at the volunteering place;
- to help the volunteer with disabilities to achieve the most from their volunteering work;

- to ensure that the system is adjusted to meet the volunteer's needs, rather than expecting a volunteer with disabilities to "fit" into the system;
- to ensure that the volunteer with disabilities shall have the same rights and benefits as their colleagues who do not have disabilities;
- to have a support person available to support a volunteer with disabilities in doing his/her volunteering jobs;
- to ensure the equality of a volunteer with disabilities in the volunteering workplace;
- to pay extra attention to empowering a volunteer with disabilities;
- to prepare and give flexible tasks to volunteers with disabilities.

➲ Use easy-to-read and easy-to-understand language. Easy-to-read information is important for people with intellectual disabilities. Easy-to-read is a method to adapt content, language, presentation and pictures for a target group who has difficulties in reading and understanding information. Easy-to-read information is easy to find, read and understand. It is information that has a clear and logical structure. The text is written with common words. The sentences are short and simple to read and understand. The text is presented with an airy layout and with pictures that help the reader to understand the content. To make information easy to read you must know your reader, his/her knowledge, and interest in the topic. You also must know your subject.

⟳ Protect the personal data of the volunteer. The caregiver is not permitted to:

- Tell another person the personal information about the person he/she supports.
- Discuss the person he/she supports with another worker, family member, or acquaintance.
- Leave notes of a personal nature about the person he/she supports.
- Leave personal files in an area where they can be accessed by someone else

> Remember, the person with a disability or mental health issues is the expert in his/her impairment and may have a different way of doing a task.

1.5. Assessment of the main obstacles in the volunteers with disabilities' daily life

People with disabilities face many barriers in their daily lives, so caregivers need to find solutions to help them overcome these barriers.

Attitudinal barriers

People with disability commonly report experiences of prejudice, stigma, and discrimination.

Many people have limited knowledge and understanding of the rights of people with disability and their needs and have inadequate training and professional development about disability.

Many public services do not have policies in place to accommodate the needs of people with disability. Such policies could include allowing longer and flexible appointment times, providing outreach services, and reducing costs for people with disability.

People with disability are rarely asked for their opinion or involved in decision-making.

Physical barriers

Public services and activities are often located far away from where most people live or in an area not serviced by accessible transport options.

Stairs at the entrance to buildings or services and activities located on floors that do not have elevator access are inaccessible.

Inaccessible toilets, passages, doorways, and rooms that do not accommodate wheelchair users, or are difficult to navigate for people with mobility impairments, are common.

Fixed-height furniture, including examination beds and chairs, can be difficult for people with disability to use.

Public facilities and other venues for activities are often poorly lit, do not have clear signage, or are laid out in a confusing way that makes it hard for people to find their way around.

Communication barriers

A key barrier for people who have a hearing impairment is the limited availability of written material or sign language interpreters at public services.

Main information may not be provided in accessible formats, including Braille or large print, which presents a barrier for people with vision impairment.

Important information related to the person is presented in complicated ways or uses a lot of jargon.

Information should be available in easy-to-follow formats – including plain language and pictures or other visual cues – which can make it easier for people with cognitive impairments to follow.

Financial barriers

Over half of all people with disability have low incomes.

Many people with disability also report being unable to afford the costs associated with traveling and paying for services, learning, cultural programs, etc.

Transportation barriers

Transport is a problem for people with disabilities, as they are often unable to travel on their own and have to travel to/from the volunteering location to volunteer.

People with disabilities face problems with bus stops, bus timetables, and bus ticketing and the buses themselves are not accessible. Although the public policy is to make public places as accessible as possible for people with disabilities, this is not yet the case.

There is also no provision for how people with disabilities will pay for transport services if they need them (e.g. shuttle service, social taxi).

When a caregiver works with a volunteer with a disability, he/she needs to assess and take into account all these barriers and find the best solutions.

Practical task

Each caregiver identifies the 5 most important obstacles in the volunteers with disability daily life and explains why they are important.

1.6. How to overcome the obstacles and support volunteers for PWD or mental health issues?

Volunteers with a disability or mental health issues inevitably face obstacles on their volunteering journey. Caregivers help them discover ways to overcome the barriers of disability. One of the most important qualities for people with disabilities or mental health issues is to be positive and to bring out their best.

⮕ Caregivers need to help people with disabilities or mental health issues learn to focus on the positive rather than the negative things. Positivity is key.

⮕ To teach not to give up. If a person with a disability is looking for a job and cannot find it, offer volunteering as an alternative. Perhaps one day a person with a disability will find a job that will be suitable and will please.

⮕ Caregivers need to encourage to try new things every day. It's a challenge for a person with a disability. If certain challenges don't work immediately, encourage them to try again and again. Eventually, you will succeed.

⮕ Every day, PWD should ask themselves if they are happy. If they are unhappy about something, caregivers can help them find a way to change it.

⮕ Help to learn PWD not to compare themselves to others and to take time to celebrate their small achievements.

⮕ Help them learn to be polite to unpleasant people and stay calm. Also, help them learn to accept people as they are.

⮕ Help PWD to learn to accept their disability. Also support and encourage them to understand that there are things they cannot do, but many other things they can do well. To help them discover their strengths.

⮕ Help, encourage, and support a person with a disability or mental health issues to achieve his/her personal goals.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO EMPOWER CAREGIVERS TO INITIATE INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING?

2.1. How to find and acquire PWD or mental health issues-friendly volunteering places?

The caregiver must help the volunteer with a disability or mental health issues to find friendly volunteering places, taking into account:

- The volunteer's disability and abilities.
- The organization (which volunteers with
   disabilities accept).
- What kind of volunteering PWD and mental health issues are interested in?
- The adaptability of the volunteering placement.
- Accessibility/mobility.

The caregiver needs to find out what specific area VWD or mental health issues want to volunteer.

The caregiver looking for a volunteering placement needs to know and be familiar with the volunteers with disability (visual difficulty, hearing difficulty, hearing difficulty, mobility difficulty, mental health difficulty, wheelchair user, cognitive (intellectual) difficulty, emotional/behavioral difficulty, social skills difficulty). It will be very useful to use such a questionnaire. On this website, you can find the questionnaire.

„APPLICATION FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS (with PWD – people with disabilities)".

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z8Jar7j-_I-C3wj0FuM-9KUzI76_iqPWYjugRstBlS8/edit

The caregiver needs to know whether volunteers with PWD or mental health issues will need the help of an assistant, or whether they will be able to volunteer without one.
The caregiver needs to know how often volunteers want to volunteer (once a week, once every 2 weeks, once a month, occasionally).

The organization (which volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues accept).

The caregiver should have researched and gathered information about organizations that accept volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues. These are organizations that are friendly to volunteering (VIOS). The caregiver should also find out whether the organization accepts all volunteers or only those with a particular disability.

The caregiver will work with the caretaker to identify the best volunteering placement, taking into account the wishes, abilities, and capacities of the volunteer with a disability or mental health issues.

The places for volunteering could be found in these fields:
- 🔴 Health area
- 🟠 Environment
- 🟡 Social area
- 🟢 Human and equal rights
- ⚪ Refugees
- 🔵 Culture
- 🟣 Education
- 🔵 Animal rights

> Remember. It is important to find out what the volunteer like to volunteer in, so that they feel responsible, needed, and confident.

Volunteering can take many forms - volunteering and voluntary service, local, national, and international volunteering, specialized activities, age-specific activities, and short-term and long-term activities. Each form has its advantages, so it is important to choose not only the topic but also the form that suits the needs of PWD or people with mental health issues.

Accessibility/mobility.

Caregivers can help volunteers with a disability to find volunteering opportunities using the map. You can use the city/region map that has been created, which shows VIOs (Volunteer Friendly Organisations). To help the volunteers it could be made interactive map to find the easiest.

We have made a map of our city, where institutions and organizations accept volunteers with disabilities. The caregiver helps a volunteer with a disability choose a volunteering placement and contact and arrange an initial visit to the volunteering place.

"VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL PANEVĖŽYS COUNTRY" - Google Maps.
Web site:
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/edit?mid=1mu6vpckY-BiqrECvxC5CAxatIBwKQJ8&ll=55.73942699763241%2C24.30075906000985&z=13
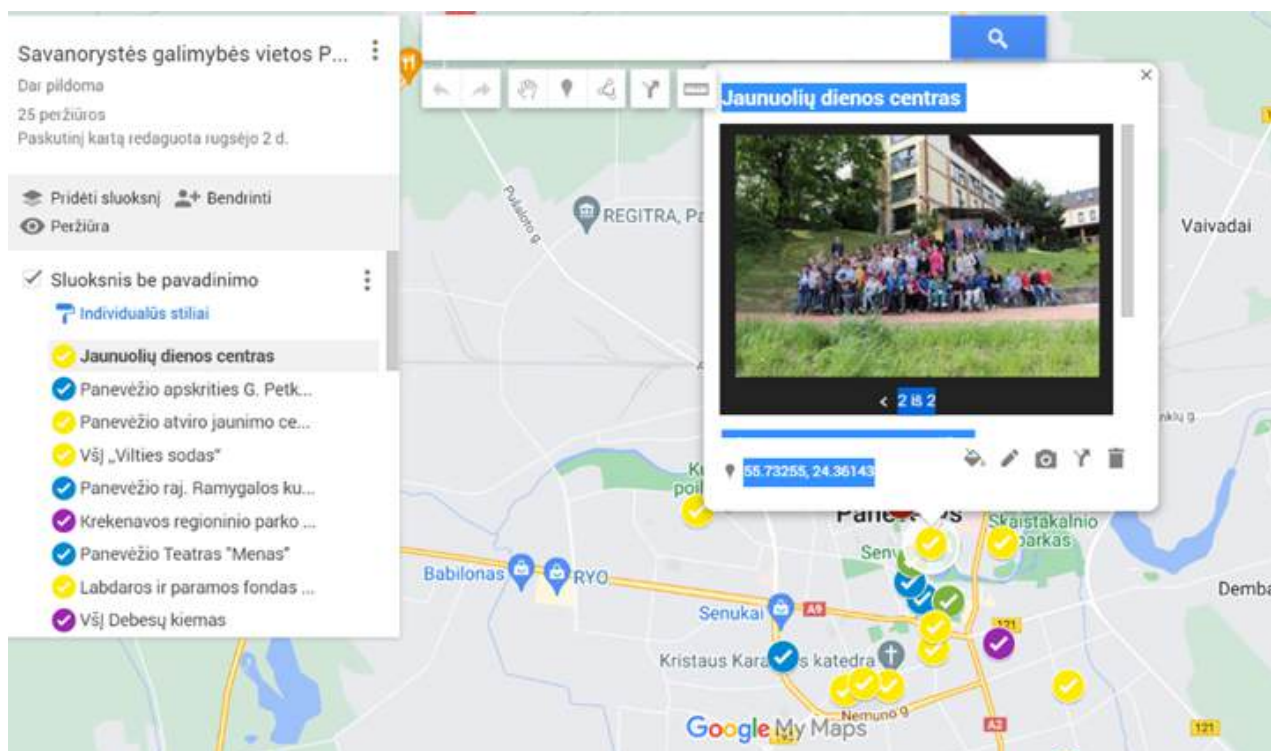
2.2. How to find and acquire PWD or mental health issues willing to volunteer?

Why volunteering is good?

A strong culture of volunteering and the promotion of volunteering are crucial for building a sustainable and civically responsible society. People who volunteer are better able to appreciate their civic power, are more responsible members of society and are better able to integrate into society and adapt to change. They are more empathetic and responsive to the problems of their neighbours or community members, proactive in solving local or national public problems and seeking innovative solutions to systemic problems. It is therefore very important to involve as many people with disabilities as possible in volunteering activities.

To find volunteers caregivers need to:

⮕ Create branded volunteer interest forms:

- Publish targeted volunteer interest forms on your website, emails, and social media.
- Go to organizations and ask about volunteering, and whether there are people with disabilities willing to volunteer.
- Do actions of promotion.
- Organize the sharing of the good experience days.
- Send targeted emails to potential volunteers about specific volunteering opportunities.
- Finding and organizing websites where potential volunteers can be found. For example:

Germany	Czech Republic	Italy

How and where to find volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues to volunteer?

Caregivers can look for volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues to volunteer:

- by sending requests to organizations with volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues;
- distributing leaflets at events;
- distributing posters in various institutions;
- using social media (Facebook, Instagram);
- cooperating with NGOs, VIOS, and governmental institutions that care for the benefit of people with disabilities or mental health issues.

Volunteering can take many forms - volunteering and voluntary service, local, national, and international volunteering, specialized activities, age-specific activities, and short-term and long-term activities. Each form has its advantages, so it is important to choose not only the topic but also the form that suits the needs.

Best tips to attract volunteers with PWD or mental health issues to your organization.

- Word of mouth is still top of the list as one of the most successful ways to attract volunteers by spreading information.
- Involve volunteers in as many ways as possible. Try to be as flexible as possible. Be upfront about the specific tasks, skills required, and time commitment.
- Allow volunteers to try the volunteering position to decrease fears about long-term involvement.
- Attract volunteers by providing an effective and friendly experience. Make sure potential volunteers get a quick response and don't keep them waiting.
- Make sure your volunteering activities are fun, engaging, and stimulating.
- Suggest ways in which people can volunteer, increasing your chances of attracting a large number of volunteers (short-term, long-term, per event, etc.).
- Can you accept teams or groups? Encouraging the opportunity to volunteer with friends and family can also help attract people.
- Promote the positive impact of volunteering on volunteers. If you offer training or other opportunities, promote them too.

2.3. How do encourage, teach, guide, and support PWD or mental health issues to volunteer?

After the needs of a volunteer with a disability have been determined, it is possible to start preparing the volunteer for voluntary activities.

Volunteering requires the acquisition and possession of special skills. We choose the skills based on the Youth Pass competencies: Multilingual competence; Personal, social, and learning-to-learn competence; Citizenship competence, Entrepreneurship competence, Cultural awareness, and expression competence, Digital competence, Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering, Literacy competence, Other specific skills.

How to help a volunteer with a disability who lacks basic skills?

Multilingual skills

- teach the volunteer new words and new expressions that may be important during volunteering;
- teach the volunteer to be confident in speaking in person and public. Encourage him to express his opinion;
- find out if the volunteer always understands others;
- teach the volunteer to explain what information he did not understand (presented in writing, orally, or n visual form);
- encourage the volunteer to ask questions.

Personal, social, and learning to learn skills

- to teach the volunteer to set individual goals and objectives for volunteering;
- to find out what are volunteers good at;
- to find out what volunteers work when they work together with other people;
- to find out what volunteers find challenging when working with other people;
- to find out how to use the already available competencies and experience of a volunteer and what new things a volunteer can learn;
- to find out how a volunteer with a disability can motivate himself and what helps him to be more self-confident;
- plan special time for volunteers with disabilities for learning new things;
- develop a regular learning routine;
- figure out what type of environment is best for volunteers ever to learn, white noise versus absolute quiet;
- figure out if your volunteer learns better alone or if she/he needs others around to make studying more interesting and help him stay on track;
- teach the volunteer to make notes and review notes and review information frequently – this is the way information is stored in long-term memory;
- encourage volunteers to use movements in the learning process (reading, underlining, writing in margins, highlighting, stimulation, and conversation (reciting information out loud), to remember information seasonally;
- teach volunteers how to present his/her the volunteering activity;

- teach how to evaluate the outcomes of the volunteering activity and his/her progress;
- give tips and tools to volunteer how to solve volunteering problems;
- teach volunteers to understand what is troubling other people;
- teach volunteers to understand themselves, including what could troubling him/her;
- show self-motivation strategies.

Citizenship skills

- encourage the volunteers to be active as a citizen at the local level – trying to assess and solve some local problems, answer some needs of people living around;
- teach volunteers constantly evaluate personal and interpersonal development (as working in a team, building trust, respect, tolerance, increasing self-confidence, empathy, coping with uncertainty, decision making, solving conflicts, managing crises, etc.);
- find out how the volunteer approach problems, and how the volunteer could foresee potential problems and overcome them;
- find out how the volunteer could cope with new and unexpected situations in the volunteering;
- encourage the volunteer to cope with diversity, work with different social groups, learn new traditions, values, and styles, organize cultural events and activities, etc.;
- give to volunteer the knowledge about structures, values, and rules of civic society;
- encourage the volunteer to learn about their n culture, tradition, and cultural heritage.

Entrepreneurship skills

- teach volunteer to plan, manage, and evaluate his volunteering actions and time;
- encourage the volunteer to be creative and innovative in realizing volunteering activities to discover new talents and future development ideas;
- together with volunteers find out which interests, passions, and talents volunteers can develop during volunteering. What can stimulate volunteers to act;
- together with the volunteer to elaborate on his/her future professional life ideas;
- Give the information to the volunteer on the financial conditions and regulations concerning the volunteering project.

Digital skills

→ teach the volunteer to search on the internet for information about volunteering initiatives;

→ encourage the volunteer to use the internet, online communication tools, mobile phones, digital cameras, and other IT means for realizing and documenting the volunteering and also for disseminating the volunteering work;

→ teach the volunteer a critical approach to information on the Internet;

→ give tips on how a volunteer can confirm the reliability of information sources.

Literacy skills

→ teach the volunteer to communicate clearly and effectively;

→ prepare and give tips on how a volunteer can express themselves in writing and orally, and how can a volunteer adapt their language to the different people they are talking to

Mathematical skills, and skills in science, technology, and engineering

→ teach the volunteer how to keep the volunteering place clear of mess;

→ train the volunteer to use a daily planner to write down all important tasks/activities for the day. Teach the volunteer to start each day with a list of what needs to be done. And finish the "to-do" list each day. Stick to the plan and avoid distracting activities;

→ teach the volunteer how to prioritize goals and how not to procrastinate;

→ give tips to the volunteer on how not to overbook and overschedule;

→ teach the volunteer how to organize volunteering time with space for breaks, rest, exercise, social time, and meals;

→ train the volunteer to be realistic about how long things will take;

→ train the volunteer to break down large tasks into small components and put these in the planner. A large task may feel overwhelming however when it is broken down into small parts each component is quite manageable.

Asking for help skills

⮕ teach the volunteer how to develop a relationship with the personal assistant and discuss personal needs openly;

⮕ establish a habit to contact the personal assistant immediately if any problem arises;

⮕ teach the volunteer to first try to cope with his problems and only then to ask for help, that is, to be as independent as possible.

Practical task

Please, choose the 3 competencies which you consider the most important for volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues. Please, explain why you think so.

2.4. How to match interested volunteers with volunteers involving organizations?

Volunteer matching - is the process of pairing volunteers with roles that match their desires, skills, and abilities in the volunteering location.

- If the volunteer is satisfied with his or her volunteering placement, it will stimulate interest, need, and commitment to his or her volunteering activities
- This is very important because if the volunteer feels engaged and happy, the results of his/her volunteering will not only make him/her happy but also the others who benefit from his/her help.
- Volunteers will see the changes they have brought about as a result of their work, which will boost their self-esteem and confidence. They will feel useful and happy that their knowledge and skills are being put to good use and that they are adding value to volunteering locally in the organization.
- Caregivers can find out about the need for volunteers in certain institutions by carrying out a community assessment to see what help or support is missing. Volunteers will then be directed to the institutions where they are most needed and useful.

How to match volunteers with opportunities according to their skills and desires? Caregiver's steps on how to match volunteers.

- Check your volunteers (personal interview and biographical background checking).

- Conduct a questionnaire on the volunteers' preferred volunteering location based on their interests and skills.

- The caregiver works with the volunteers to find places where the volunteer can volunteer and discusses the responsibilities and duration of the volunteering, and how the volunteering will benefit them.

Let's help all volunteers do the best job they can.

2.5. The most common barriers faced by caregivers and caretakers

There are many challenges along the volunteering path for both volunteers with disabilities or mental health issues, and caregivers, and caretakers. If we all work together, we can achieve the common goal of improving volunteering for all people. Our project team worked in groups and shared their insights.

BARRIERS TO CAREGIVERS:	BARRIERS TO CARETAKERS:
Extra work.	Better to earn money directly.
Too full a program.	Extra work, time, money, and energy, for support.
Competition between caregivers' program (feeling volunteer org. as a concurrency).	Overprotection, over care, patronizing.
They don't think is valuable for volunteers, they can volunteer, but they are overprotective.	Parents closed in communication.
Depreciating volunteers' abilities.	

THE SOLUTION TO CAREGIVERS:	THE SOLUTION TO CARETAKERS:
Offering support.	General: campaigns invite parents to participate
Education for staff – training – volunteering is part of our work.	Convince parents and explain its positive for volunteers to contribute to society.
Good examples, personal stories of PWDs about their volunteer work (and motivation).	Built trust between parents and us as an organization, use of open-minded parents for info sessions.
Make clear: there are different levels of volunteering.	Convince parents by examples, explaining our support (a concept with IB - Inclusions Buddies), and the benefits for volunteer.
There are suitable tasks for everyone.	Parents could be IB for other volunteers.
	Empowerment includes volunteering little by little, in small steps.
	Connect them with a self-help group of caretakers. (Caregivers can help them).
	Caregivers could be available to support them during this process.
	Ceremony events, where parents were invited and were volunteers (PWD or mental health issues) are shown in action (in the video, slide show) and get an award/medal.

2.6. Success factors of inclusive volunteering

If we want to find out what the success factors for inclusive volunteering are, we first need to know what the potential barriers are. Here are some examples of what the volunteers have to face. Our project team worked in groups and shared their insights.

- Low self-esteem (of a volunteer with a disability).
- Missing info in a way they understand/have access to.
- No role models to look up to.
- Transport organizing and availability.
- Not a barrier-free environment.
- People who do tasks for the volunteer.
- Depending on living (e.g. guardianship).
- Caregiver's obstacle to the volunteer's independence.
- Disability of mental health issues and VIO's or NGO being afraid of taking somebody with them.
- Facing discrimination.
- Getting in contact with new people.
- To fear having regular obligations.

Solution:

- Promote role models with talks by volunteers, photo books, and deals with newspapers to publish info periodically.
- Group sessions and the support of inclusion buddies, focus on abilities and wishes about volunteering.
- Pool of volunteer positions in E2R language and available in various ways.
- Using professional services, support of caregivers/parents/inclusion buddies, and training to take public transport. Support environment (ask for help).
- Asking for help from people.
- Being creative.
- Training for the Inclusion Buddies and tips for the volunteers themselves.
- Work/info sessions/training for legal guardians and caregivers, caretakers.
- Training for the NGOs, VIO's.
- Training for volunteers about how to give funny answers/react, nonbeing the victim.
- Information sessions in schools about volunteering and inclusion, not accepting discrimination by anybody and if it happens - to stop it immediately.
- Inclusion Buddy support.
- Clarify and specify tasks of PWD, possibility to cancel appointments beforehand (if PWD is not feeling well or capable of doing the task).

2.7. How to evaluate and monitor the volunteering of PWD or mental health issues?

Organizations record the number of volunteers, who volunteers, and where they come from. Also how long they volunteered, what activities they did, how they did, etc. This information is useful to improve volunteer programs and spotting inaccuracies and shortcomings.

Why monitor and evaluate the Volunteer Programme?

- To assess what kind of volunteers the organization is looking for, and for which specific activities.

- To determine the quality of the volunteer experience in your organization.

- To determine the impact of volunteers on your organization, their contribution, and achievements.

- Identify areas of your volunteer program that may need improvement.

- Identify achievements and how the quality of life has improved.

2.8. How to organize recognition and reward for volunteer work?

People with disabilities or mental health issues get a lot out of volunteering: new experiences, knowledge, skills, a larger circle of friends, more opportunities for socializing, and, most importantly, a feeling of being useful and needed. Personal assessment is also very important, as volunteering should be recognized and rewarded.

- Organize appreciation events for volunteers.
- Organize trips, excursions, and journeys as a reward for volunteering.
- Rewards for volunteers could be concerts, cinema, theatre tickets, etc.
- Receiving a certificate of appreciation for volunteering, provided by the institution that hosted the volunteer.
- Getting a Youth pass. Fill in "Self-assessment assistant" - it is a tool to assist you in assessing the ability of the improved or newly acquired knowledge during the project.
- Getting certificates of approved competence in Blockchain system.
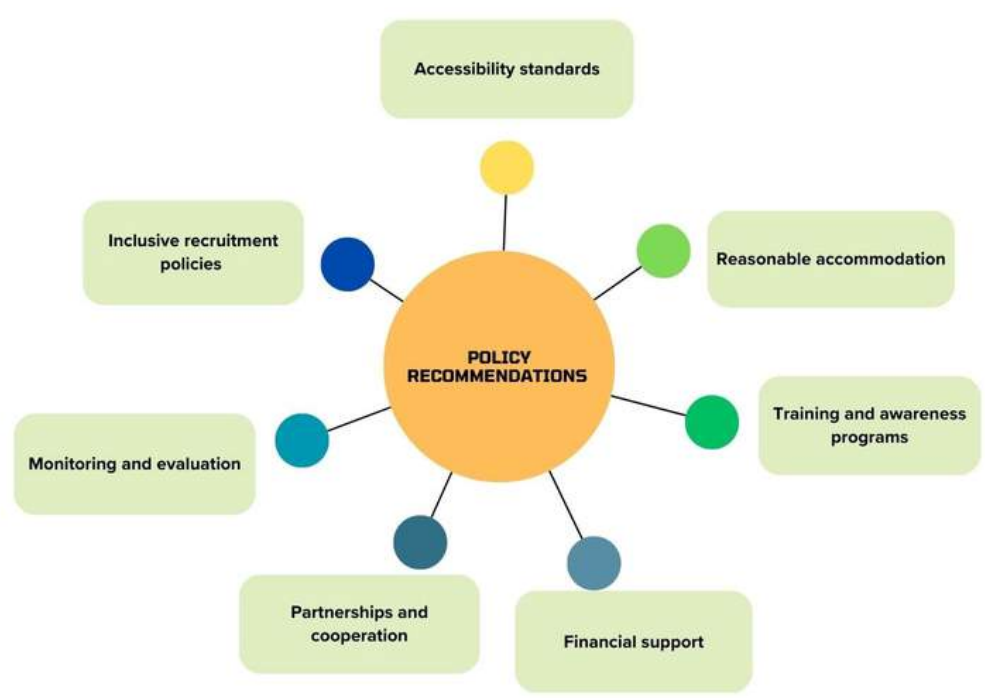
CHAPTER 3

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIPS

Promoting and supporting inclusive volunteering for people with disabilities requires a multifaceted approach, covering different aspects of policy, practice, and awareness. Below are some policy recommendations to achieve this:

- ➡ *Inclusive recruitment policies:* implement policies that actively promote volunteering by volunteers with disabilities in various services. The next step after volunteering, is related to employability. This may include setting targets for including volunteers with disabilities and allocating certain resources to targeted recruitment efforts.

- ➡ *Accessibility standards:* to set accessibility standards for volunteer programs for volunteers with disabilities to ensure that support services' facilities, materials, and communication methods are accessible to volunteers with disabilities. This includes physical accessibility of facilities, providing information in alternative formats, and using assistive technology where appropriate.

- ➡ *Reasonable accommodation:* ensure that organizations provide reasonable accommodation for volunteers with disabilities, as provided for in the legislation on the rights of people with disabilities. This may involve specialized training, modification of tasks or work environments, or flexible schedules.

- ➡ *Training and awareness programs:* develop training programs for staff and volunteers to raise awareness and understanding of disability issues, including best practice on how to support and work with volunteers with disabilities. Training should cover topics such as etiquette, communication strategies, and the rights of people with disabilities.

- ➡ *Financial support:* to provide funding or grants specifically for support service organizations to implement inclusive volunteering initiatives. This may include funding for accessibility improvements, staff training, recruitment efforts, and adaptation.

- ➡ *Partnerships and cooperation:* promote partnerships between support service organizations, disability rights groups, and volunteer recruitment agencies to share resources, experiences, and best practices in promoting inclusive volunteering. Collaboration can help to mobilize joint efforts and reach a wider range of potential volunteers with disabilities.

- ➡ *Monitoring and evaluation:* developing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive volunteering policies and practices. Collect data on the participation of volunteers with disabilities, the level of satisfaction, and any barriers or difficulties encountered.

> By implementing these policy recommendations, support service organizations can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for volunteers with disabilities, thus improving the quality and accessibility of services.

3.1. Barriers and drawbacks of PWD volunteering

According to the World Health Organisation, as much as 15% of the world's population has a disability. People with disabilities are under-represented in the workforce. In legal countries, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is as much as twice as high as for non-disabled people, even though many people with disabilities are able and willing to work.

The biggest challenges faced by people with disabilities:

- **Unemployment and lack of employment.** Despite the thoughe fact that many people with disabilities are able and willing to work, they face high levels of unemployment and difficulties in finding employment. This indicates the presence of structural barriers or discrimination in the labor market.

- **Social integration and autonomy.** The lack of a supportive environment and the lack of appropriate tools is one of the barriers for people with disabilities to become more independent and to participate actively in the labor market and everyday activities.

- **Economic opportunities.** Although people with disabilities receive benefits to help them survive, these benefits may not be sufficient to ensure their economic independence and well-being. Measures need to be put in place to help people with disabilities integrate into the labor market and actively contribute to economic development.

➲ **The Need for European Union Policies.** The European Union needs to strengthen policies and measures for people with disabilities in order to facilitate their easy and positive integration into the labor market and society. This may include legal and regulatory mechanisms, support for integration into the labor market, improvement of infrastructure, and development of services.

➲ **Promoting autonomy.** It is important to develop and implement programmes and initiatives that encourage people with disabilities to become more independent, develop their skills and self-confidence in order to be more successful in the labour market and in their daily activities.

➲ **Inclusion in the Labor Market.** Businesses and organisations need to be encouraged to create an enabling environment for people with disabilities to enter the workforce and contribute to the overall functioning of the business.

> The process of overcoming these challenges is important to ensure fair and equal participation of all members of society in economic and social life, in line with the values and objectives of the European Union.

Strengthening and promoting volunteering is key to better integration into the labour market, given the challenges faced by people with disabilities. Through volunteering, people with disabilities discover their abilities, strengthen their communication skills, develop and improve their work skills, and enhance their independence and autonomy.

The main obstacles hindering the inclusion of people with disabilities, including their participation in voluntary activities, are as follows:

Physical Barriers.

Not all people with disabilities can access or utilize physical resources, making it difficult for them to participate in various volunteer activities. Many volunteer activities may require physical activity or mobility, which can be challenging or even impossible for individuals with physical disabilities. For example, people with mobility impairments may find it difficult to reach places where volunteer activities take place due to inadequate access to adapted transportation or inaccessible buildings. Additionally, some volunteer activities may be physically demanding, which can be challenging or dangerous for individuals with certain types of physical disabilities. These physical barriers can severely limit the opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in volunteer activities and contribute to community welfare. Therefore, it is important to ensure that infrastructure and public spaces are adapted and accessible to everyone, regardless of their physical condition or disability.

Social isolation.

Some people with disabilities or mental health issues may feel socially isolated or excluded from volunteering because of stereotypes, discrimination or lack of understanding of the needs of people with disabilities. These factors can have a negative impact on their willingness to volunteer. These challenges can discourage people with disabilities or mental health issues from volunteering and contributing to their community. Their disability may make them feel incompetent or unwanted, which may reduce their self-esteem and motivation to volunteer.

Financial limitations.

It can be difficult for people with disabilities to take part in voluntary activities due to financial constraints related to additional costs that arise from or are caused by, their disability or transport needs. Additional costs related to the care of their disability, medical supplies, or special equipment can be a significant burden on their budget. In addition, transport needs, such as the need to use adapted transport or pay for taxis, can also add to the costs.

Lack of Prestige.

Can be a serious barrier for people with disabilities or mental health issues who want to volunteer. Many members of the public may have a preconceived impression that people with disabilities or mental health issues are unable to contribute or are not competent enough. However, this is an unfair and discriminatory attitude. It is also important to ensure that organizations and voluntary groups in society are committed to the inclusion of everyone, regardless of disability, and to creating an environment where everyone feels valued and important. This can help to reduce the lack of prestige and enable more people with disabilities to participate in voluntary activities.

Rights and protection.

Sometimes there may be gaps in legislation or safeguards to ensure the legality and safety of participation in voluntary activities by people with disabilities. Lack of rights and protections can seriously affect their participation in volunteering activities. In the absence of adequate legal guidelines or safeguards, persons with disabilities may face discrimination, whether it is due to access to voluntary activities or lack of security when participating in them. In addition, inadequate legal protection can lead to feelings of vulnerability or insecurity, which can discourage participation in voluntary activities.

By involving people with disabilities in voluntary activities, we not only promote their self-esteem and integration into society, but also benefit from their unique skills and talents. People with mental health difficulties can bring new ideas and insights that can improve the performance of organizations or community services.

3.2. Strengthening volunteering for PWD at the community level

Encouraging PWD to take part in voluntary activities is about creating the right conditions and providing the right support.

Legal environment and regulation.
The legal environment includes the legal rules, laws, regulations, and other legal instruments that govern society's activities and relationships. It is the system of laws and regulations that sets out the rules, requirements and procedures by which society operates. It is important to ensure that the legal environment provides appropriate legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms that encourage and support PWDs to participate in voluntary activities. This may include the implementation of laws aimed at preventing discrimination, as well as accessibility and equity, especially when it comes to legal protection against discrimination, the provision of benefits, or accessible facilities.

Financial support.
Resources and financial support must be found for organizations that carry out voluntary activities with PWD to help them ensure accessibility and promote participation. This could include funding programs to ensure the accessibility of equipment or services. Financial support is assistance in the form of money or other forms of value, or support for programs designed to help organizations or individuals meet specific objectives or activities. Regarding volunteering activities for PWD, financial support can be provided to organizations that aim to ensure that PWD has access to appropriate resources and opportunities to participate in volunteering activities.

This support can come in a variety of ways, including:
- Funding programs: to promote organizations working with PWD, financial support can be provided through specific programs or funds to support voluntary activities or infrastructure development.
- Funding for equipment or services: support may also be provided for the purchase of a range of equipment or services to help organizations ensure that their volunteering activities are accessible to PWD. For example, this may include special equipment for PWD, or services related to their care and support.

Health Care and Support Services.
It is important to guarantee that PWD are provided with appropriate health care and support services to enable them to participate in voluntary activities. This may include adaptations to healthcare services, the provision of specialized support services, or appropriate medical and social support. To ensure that PWD has appropriate health care and support services to enable them to participate in voluntary activities. There are several important actions that could be implemented:
- Personalisation of healthcare: adapted to individual needs and abilities - this includes providing medical services in a person's home for convenience and accessibility.

- Provision of specialized support services - this may include social workers, nurses, or other professionals who help PWD to overcome everyday obstacles and to participate in voluntary activities.
- Adequate medical and social support: PWD must be provided with adequate medical and social support to enable them to participate safely and comfortably in voluntary activities. This may include medical advice, physiotherapy, psychological support, or other assistance to help maintain their health and well-being.
- Health and safety standards - all volunteering venues should meet appropriate health and safety standards to ensure that PWD are safe and comfortable to participate. This may mean ensuring that buildings and facilities are accessible, providing specific training for staff, or meeting safety requirements.

These actions will help to ensure that PWD is provided with the necessary health care and support services to enable them to actively participate in voluntary activities and contribute to community life. This is an important step towards ensuring inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

Raising awareness and education.

Another important factor is raising public awareness of the needs of PWD and volunteering opportunities. This can be done through education campaigns, various events, and seminars aimed at raising awareness and solidarity in society.

Raising awareness and education about the needs and opportunities of PWD to participate in voluntary activities is a key factor in creating equal opportunities and inclusion in society. Here are some actions on how this can be achieved:

- Organizing an education campaign to raise public awareness of the needs and abilities of people with disabilities. These campaigns can be designed to explain the challenges faced by people with disabilities and how society can be supportive and inclusive.
- Events and seminars - organizing events, seminars, or discussions on topics related to the rights, needs, and opportunities of people with disabilities to participate in voluntary activities. This can include discussions on legal barriers, examples, and good practices that could be used to promote inclusive volunteering.
- Raising awareness through the media to promote awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and the opportunities to participate in voluntary activities. This can include articles, reports, interviews with people with disabilities and their experiences.
- ·Working with kindergartens and schools to develop understanding and empathy from an early age. This can be included in kindergarten and school curricula, through special activities or themed evenings.
- ·Involving the community in various ways to participate in activities that raise awareness of people with disabilities and contribute to their inclusion. These can be joint projects, activities, or events where everyone can participate and learn from each other.

⮕ **Cooperation/partnership with other organizations of the PWD.**

Another important aspect is working with other organizations and groups of PWD to better understand their needs and provide appropriate support. Partnerships with these organizations can also help identify potential projects and initiatives to promote volunteering.

Cooperation with organizations of people with disabilities is an important step to ensure appropriate support and to promote inclusive volunteering. Here are some ways this can be done:

- Understanding needs through engagement with organizations of PWD allows us to better understand their unique needs and challenges. This helps to tailor volunteering programs to be accessible and useful for people with a range of disabilities.
- Support - working with these organizations can help provide tailored support and services to meet specific needs. This can include emotional support, practical help with everyday activities, or information support.
- Identification of projects and initiatives - in partnership with organizations of people with disabilities, it is possible to identify specific projects and initiatives to promote volunteering among PWD. These can be special events that encourage participation or programs that aim to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in various activities.
- Solidarity in civil society, civil society is strengthened through cooperation with disabled people's organisations and contributes to the promotion of civil society solidarity and equal opportunities. This not only helps PWD to participate in voluntary activities but also raises public awareness and understanding of their needs and contributions.

Cooperation with organizations of PWD is key to ensuring that volunteering activities are accessible and beneficial to all, promoting inclusion and solidarity among all members of the community.

> These policy recommendations can help create a favorable environment for PWD to participate in volunteer activities and contribute to community well-being. This is an important task that will contribute to building a more equitable and inclusive society.

3.3. Success factors of inclusive volunteering

The success factors of the Improve 2.0 project are linked to the various stakeholders who are involved and interact with each other, creating a strong network of support and cooperation:

1. A clear mission and goals: the success of Improve 2.0 is closely linked to setting clear and inspiring goals. When all parties understand and agree on a common goal, it fosters cooperation and support.
2. Shared interests and objectives: each stakeholder has its interests and objectives, and successful cooperation is based on shared goals that everyone is working towards. A successful project must be able to bring together different interests and maintain a common vision.
3. Clear communication channels: successful cooperation depends on transparent and effective communication between all stakeholders. Involving different parties requires appropriate communication channels to share information, suggestions, and feedback.
4. Equal opportunities: successful cooperation depends on each party feeling valued and participating equally in the project development process. It is important to ensure that all interested parties are involved and their views are valued.
5. Reducing the lack of buy-in: successful cooperation may be reduced if some parties or interest groups feel that their views or contributions are less valued or ignored. It is therefore important to create an environment where everyone feels valued and could contribute.
6. Clarity of legal protection and liability: it is important to ensure that all stakeholders are protected by legislation and agreements. This includes clear agreements on liability, assets, intellectual property rights, etc.
7. Constant updating and evaluation: the cooperation network must be flexible and adaptable to changes and new situations. Periodic evaluations and updates will help maintain effective cooperation and ensure that all parties continue to work together towards common goals.

Effective involvement of PWD in the development, promotion and maintenance of a volunteering network is essential to ensure that they have the opportunity to participate and contribute, regardless of their disability.

⮑ People with disabilities (PWD):

Which key conditions/interfaces need to be taken into account or can be used to attract participants?

- Volunteering is compatible and compatible with their busy schedules.
- Vulnerable Groups (care program in an institution).
- Individual budget.
- Let the participants decide for themselves what kind of volunteering they would like to do.
- The choice of the volunteer determines the efforts of the facilitators.
- Transport to the volunteering activity often needs to be organized.
- Form of disability/limitation determines the possibilities of use and limitation.
- Role of the facilitator in volunteering.
- 'Duty of care' applies.

➲ Look for participants in the residential area:

Who or where can I find participants?
- Parents, department management, staff.
- Inpatient medical facilities.
- With parents.
- Partial inpatient facilities.
- Living alone.
- Assisted living alone.
- Money for subsistence.
- Money for care services (institutions need to be more flexible).

➲ Volunteer Positions:

What are the requirements to work there?
- Specific description of the task.
- Willingness to get involved, especially in management activities
- Strong local contacts.
- Why is it useful for my institution to be inclusive or to have volunteers with disabilities?

➲ Inclusion buddies:

What is important for your volunteering to be successful in inclusive volunteering?
- It must take into account the volunteer's wishes and needs, i.e. it cannot give instructions.
- Must not take over the volunteering tasks of a volunteer with a disability, but only enable him/her to do them.
- Is an enabler but is not subject to any 'instructions' from the disabled volunteer or the volunteer's workplace.
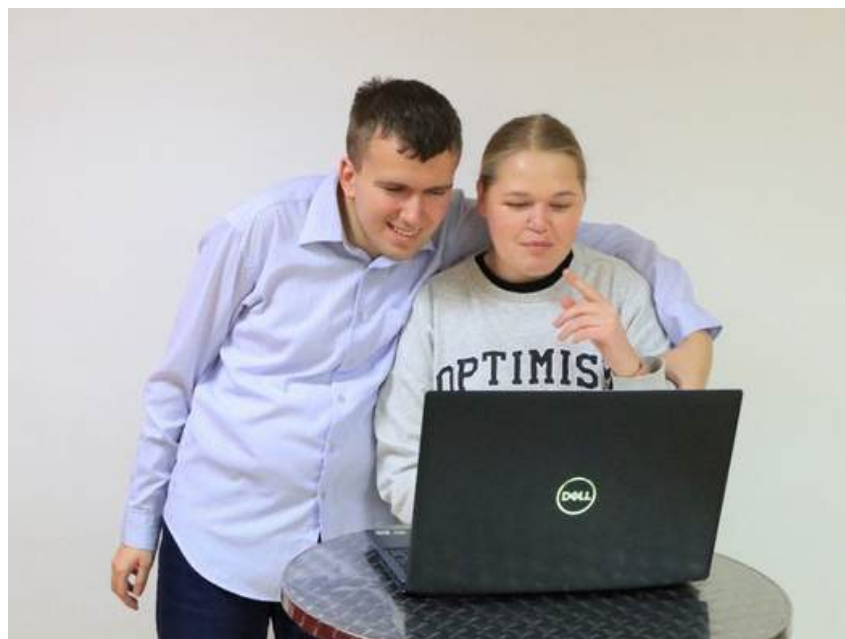
Inclusive volunteering can be successful if organizations and communities can understand and implement various important factors. Inclusive volunteering depends not only on the PWD themselves or the staff member preparing the volunteer but also on the organization receiving the volunteer.

- *Promotion of Diversity.* Promoting diversity in volunteering is a crucial factor that helps create an inclusive and dynamic community and enhances the volunteer experience. It is important to encourage diversity among volunteers, including people of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and disabilities. Including groups with diverse experiences, perspectives, and abilities can enrich volunteer activities and help organizations achieve various goals.
- *Ensuring accessibility:* organizations should strive to ensure that volunteer activities are accessible to all individuals with disabilities. This means not only removing physical barriers but also ensuring that information and resources are accessible to all potential volunteers. By ensuring accessibility, organizations can create an environment where all potential volunteers can participate in activities regardless of their physical or intellectual condition. This helps promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all.
- *Inclusion from the beginning:* successful inclusion begins with actively involving and empowering volunteers right from the start. Organizations should ensure that volunteers are actively engaged in activity planning, organizing, and implementation, allowing them to feel valued and important to community members. Inclusion from the outset of volunteer activities is a critical factor that helps create a strong and inclusive volunteer community. By ensuring volunteers are included from the beginning, organizations can cultivate a committed volunteer community that works effectively towards common goals and contributes to improving community well-being.
- *Open and supportive environment:* it is important to create an environment where volunteers feel safe, respected, and supported. This includes open communication, interaction, and support among volunteers, organization members, and leaders. Establishing an open and supportive environment is a key factor in successfully including and empowering volunteers. A supportive environment fosters volunteer participation, smooth cooperation, and a sense of community, contributing to successful volunteerism and organizational activities.
- *Training and development opportunities.* The aim is to enable PWD to grow and excel in their roles. This can involve training sessions, seminars, mentorship programs, or other activities designed to help volunteers develop their skills and knowledge. Providing learning and development opportunities for volunteers not only helps them grow as individuals and professionals but also enhances their contribution to achieving organizational goals and community well-being.

- *Evaluation and recognition of responsibilities:* it is important to evaluate and recognize volunteers' contributions and achievements. Organizations should encourage responsibility and commitment in volunteers' activities and acknowledge their contribution to community well-being. Evaluation and recognition of responsibilities are crucial factors in motivating volunteers and encouraging their continued participation in organizational activities. By creating an environment where volunteers feel recognized and valued, an organization not only boosts their motivation and dedication but also ensures long-term collaboration and community welfare.

These factors can help create an inclusive and successful volunteering environment that promotes diversity, cooperation and community development.

3.4. How to promote inclusive volunteering among caregivers training volunteers with disabilities

Promoting inclusive volunteering and supporting the preparation of individuals with disabilities is an important process that helps them integrate and become valuable, full-fledged members of society. In this process, the role of employees is crucial and encompasses various aspects aimed at enhancing and expanding the participation of individuals with disabilities in voluntary activities. The organization's role in encouraging employee involvement includes:

- Create specific volunteering programmes: an organisation can create specific volunteering programmes for employees to take part in activities in which they have an interest or skill set. These can range from community service to environmental projects.

- Provide incentives and recognition: your organisation can provide incentives, recognition and rewards for employees who actively participate in volunteering activities. This can include financial incentives, additional vacation time, or special awards for extraordinary achievement.

- Create the right context: It is important to create an enabling environment for employees to participate in volunteering activities. This can include flexible working schedules, special leave, or even company-sponsored volunteering projects that can take place during working hours.

➲ Create partnerships with voluntary organizations: an organization can create partnerships with local or international voluntary organizations to help employees find volunteering opportunities that match their interests and time availability.

➲ Be a role model: a manager can be a role model by encouraging his/her team members to participate in volunteering activities. They can set examples by participating in the activities themselves or by supporting and encouraging their staff to participate.

➲ Organise volunteering days or events: your organisation can organise volunteering days or special events to promote volunteering among employees. These can be one-off events or regular activities for employees to participate in together.

> By promoting inclusive volunteering among employees, the organization not only contributes to community well-being but also enhances its reputation as a socially responsible company. This effort encourages employee commitment to community welfare.

3.5. How to promote inclusive volunteering among and through caretakers?

Encouraging volunteerism among individuals with disabilities and their caregivers is important because it can help integrate individuals with disabilities into the community and strengthen the bonds between them and their caregivers, making both parties feel valuable and significant. Promoting inclusive volunteerism among caregivers involves creating a supportive environment that encourages and sustains their willingness to participate and support individuals with disabilities. Employees who train volunteers with disabilities for voluntary activities should organize training sessions and motivate caretakers, as working and acting together can achieve a lot. It is important to present clear and inspiring volunteer goals and benefits to caretakers. This can be related to their personal growth and satisfaction, the opportunity to help others, and contribute to community well-being. Here are a few ways to achieve this:

- Support and training provision: organize training and provide support for both individuals with disabilities and their caretakers to feel prepared to participate in volunteer activities. These training sessions can include providing information about volunteer opportunities, strengthening communication skills, and developing abilities to work with people with diverse needs.

- Partnerships with other organizations for people with disabilities: work with organizations that work with people with disabilities and use their experience and expertise to create inclusive volunteering programs for people with disabilities and their caretakers.

- A personalized approach: understand that each person with a disability and their caretaker may have different needs and abilities. Give them a personalized approach and offer volunteering opportunities that suit their needs and abilities.

- Encouraging creative activities: organize creative or artistic volunteering activities involving both people with disabilities and their caretakers. These activities can be music, art, handicraft, or theatre classes, which help to promote cooperation and creativity.

- Regular support and follow-up: ensure that regular support and follow-up is provided to both persons with disabilities and their caretakers when volunteering. Allow them to discuss and share their experiences, as well as support them in their participation in activities.

→ Communication and information: actively communicate with people with disabilities and their caretakers to inform them about volunteering opportunities, events, and happenings. Give them clear information on how to get involved and the benefits it can bring.

→ Promoting inclusive volunteering among people with disabilities and their caretakers is about creating an open and supportive environment where they feel recognized, valued, and able to volunteer. This can be a fun and rewarding way to collaborate, while at the same time strengthening links between different members of the community.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

- Involving caretakers in the planning and implementation of the care process is important to promote volunteering by PWD. This may include the opportunity to be involved in a range of care activities, and issues related to their experience or decision-making.

- Providing training and support for foster caretakers, which can include training on fostering techniques, psychological first aid courses, or even emotional support from experienced foster caretakers.

- Community promotion and recognition, which can be done through public expressions of gratitude, awards, social media campaigns, or special events to celebrate the contribution of caretakers.

- Supporting individual needs: it is important to take into account the individual needs and preferences of disabled people when involving caretakers in volunteering. This can mean flexible working hours, access to a range of activities, or even individual help and support.

- Communication and cooperation: it is important to foster regular communication and cooperation between the caretakers and the organisation. This helps to create an open and supportive environment where caretakers feel valued.

The concept for caretakers can be found by clicking on this link. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VriV3d5MfrgzKDGPjHIhIoK2OXYTLavW/edit#heading=h.gjdgxs

You can find the questionnaire form to assess the effectiveness of caregiver training by clicking on this link.

Caregivers and caretakers are the main sources of support and assistance in promoting volunteering for PWD. To understand how caregivers and caretakers can be important sources of support and assistance, their contribution to various aspects should be assessed:

Advice and guidance: experienced caregivers and caretakers can provide advice and guidance to PWD, helping them to find suitable volunteering opportunities and adapt to their needs and abilities.

Support and motivation: caregivers and caretakers can provide emotional and practical support to PWD, encouraging them to participate in voluntary activities. Their dedication and assistance can provide the necessary motivation to participate and contribute to the community.

Community integration: caregivers and caretakers involved in community activities can act as a bridge between PWD and others in the community. Their involvement can help create a diverse and inclusive environment.

Practical assistance: caregivers and caretakers can provide practical assistance by helping with organizational issues, logistics, or simply being a source of support when assistance is needed in participating in voluntary activities.

Expansion of voluntary activities: caregivers and caretakers can contribute to the development and promotion of voluntary activities within an organization or community. Their contribution can help create favorable conditions and encourage more people to get involved and participate.

Caregivers and caretakers not only provide direct assistance to PWD but also play a significant role in promoting and supporting voluntary activities in this field. Their contribution is valued not only at a practical level but also at an emotional and social level.

LITERATURE AND REFERENCES

1.Europos Komisijos 2021-2030 m. neįgaliųjų teisių strategija | Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija (lrv.lt) https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/socialine-integracija/europos-komisijos-2021-2030-m-neigaliuju-teisiu-strategija

2.Social participation and integration statistics https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Social_participation_and_integration_statistics

3.A Plan of the Action synthesis report on INTEGRATING VOLUNTEERING INTO THE 2030 AGENDA in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/POA_UNECE_Synthesis%20Report_2019.pdf

4. Explaining the Varieties of Volunteering in Europe: A Capability Approach (2021) https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11266-021-00347-5

5. 49% of Disabled People Feel Excluded from Society (2018) https://eachother.org.uk/49-of-disabled-people-feel-excluded-from-society/

6.World Half organization (WHO) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health

7.Easy to read https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read/

8.Easy to read https://www.puzzle-project.eu/index.php/en/puzzle-resources/how-to-write-text-easy-to-read-en

9. Darbo vadovas el .formatu anglų kalba chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://pvkc.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LETS-DO-IT-TOGETHER.pdf\

10. Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro 2006 m. balandžio 5 d. įsakymas Nr. A1-92 „Dėl Socialinių paslaugų srities darbuotojų profesinės kompetencijos tobulinimo tvarkos aprašo bei Socialinių darbuotojų atestacijos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo" https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/f41b2bd2ebed11eb866fe2e083228059?jfwid=m9nn4ykkp

11. Psichikos sveikata: nėra jokio „mes" ir „jie". Yra tik „mes visi" – Mano teisės (manoteises.lt) https://manoteises.lt/straipsnis/psichikos-sveikata-nera-jokio-mes-ir-jie-yra-tik-mes-visi/

12. https://www.zodynas.lt/terminu-zodynas/g/globejas

13. https://www.galaxydigital.com/blog/matching-volunteers#:~:text=How%20to%20Match%20Volunteers%201%201.%20Screen%20Your,5%205.%20Suggest%20Opportunities%20and%20Target%20Communications%20

14. Praktinis-vadovas-„Kaip-atpažinti-ir-bendrauti-su-žmonėmis-turinčiais-negalią".pdf file:///C:/Users/Irma/Desktop/Praktinis-vadovas-%E2%80%9EKaip-atpa%C5%BEinti-ir-bendrauti-su-%C5%BEmon%C4%97mis-turin%C4%8Diais-negali%C4%85%E2%80%9C.pdf