SAFEPLACE

GUIDELINES FOR VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION SKILLS FOR VOLUNTEERING IN THE ART/MUSIC FESTIVAL CONTEXT

SAFEPLACE - “Safe And Fair cultural Events: imProvement of voLunteers' skills in communicAtion for inClusion Enhancement”
2020-1-IT03-KA227-YOU-020637

ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Safe And Fair cultural Events: imProvement of voLunteers' skills in communicAtion for inClusion Enhancement" is a strategic partnership for creativity project supported by Erasmus + programme Italian Agency with the reference number 2020-1-IT03-KA227-YOU-020637.

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

AGENZIA NAZIONALE PER I GIOVANI

European Commission

These guidelines were one of products of the strategic partnership project "SAFEPLACE".

The specific objectives of the project were:

- to promote empowerment and sense of initiative among young people in order to ease their integration into the labor market and increase their professionalism
- to develop a transnational learning path focused on non-formal and informal learning aimed at increasing young people's knowledge about several aspect of cultural sector by empowering creative attitude and transversal skills
- to develop an effective methodology for the recognition and validation of their competences and skills
- to share good practices at European level and strengthen transnational cooperation among partner organizations

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1.1 DEFINITION OF VALIDATION

Validation is, first, about making visible the diverse and rich learning of individuals. Going through validation helps a learner to 'exchange' the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning for future learning or employment opportunities. The process must generate trust, notably by demonstrating that requirements of reliability, validity and quality assurance have been met. These elements of visibility and value will always have to be taken into account when designing validation arrangements, although in different ways and combinations.

Validation also includes recognition of social and civic competences as well as soft and life skills gained in informal and non-formal settings, and through activities organised by the third sector (i.e. volunteering). Recognition is acknowledging the efforts of participants. It can take many forms, from formal galas to a simple, timely thank you. One of the widespread forms of recognition is Youthpass, which helps to identify and document the learning experience.

1.2 FOUR PHASES OF VALIDATION

The purpose of validation is to produce proof of learning, potentially to be exchanged in future learning and/or work. This requires identification, documentation and assessment of the learning in question to refer to an agreed and transparent reference point or standard.

Identification

Validation necessarily starts with the identification of knowledge, skills and competence acquired and is where the individual becomes increasingly aware of prior achievements. This stage is crucial as learning outcomes differ from person to person.

Documentation

Documentation will normally follow the identification stage and involves provision of evidence of the learning outcomes acquired.

Assessment

Assessment is normally referred to as the stage in which an individual's learning outcomes are compared against specific reference points and/or standards. Assessment is crucial to the overall credibility of validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Certification

Certification of the results of the assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the form of a qualification, or credits leading to a qualification, or in another form, as appropriate.

1.3 DEFINITION OF A VALIDATION FOR THE SECTOR OF MUSIC FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL EVENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF VOLUNTEERING

Music festivals and cultural events heavily rely on dedicated and passionate volunteers to ensure their sustainability, both socially and economically. Among the diverse range of music festivals and cultural events, SAFEPLACE specifically focuses on small festivals, often referred to as "boutique" festivals. These festivals are distinct from multinational or franchise events as they emphasise selective artist bookings, personalised event curation and an overall unique spirit. The community organising such events grows organically, not only through top down decisions in a production chain, therefore setting them apart and providing attendees with a special experience that fosters a sense of belonging.

While larger events also involve volunteers, small music festivals stand out due to the extensive variety of volunteer roles available, ranging from basic manual tasks to mid- or even high-level management responsibilities.

Creating a skill standard for validation in this context poses a significant challenge, requiring careful consideration of several factors:

- The timespan of volunteering in music festivals can vary from a few hours to months or even years.
- Volunteers at festivals are involved in a wide range of work, including catering/drinks, merchandise sales, parking lot and traffic coordination, campsite management, logistics and travel, administrative assistance, accounting, programming, ticketing, stage and production management, and artist liaison.
- Motivations for volunteering are diverse, ranging from a passionate escape from reality to social engagement and the potential for professionalisation through learning-by-doing and networking.
- Volunteers' responsibilities may differ but are never executive in nature.
- Therefore, there is a need to develop a validation process that is specific, efficient and closely aligned with the reality of festival volunteering.
- The validation process takes into account that, in the music industry, association with a brand (in this case, the event or festival) and a positive letter of reference can be equally or even more effective as door-openers for future engagement and professional growth through volunteer sponsorship.

Within the SAFEPLACE program, three different types of training have been developed for validation:

Validation of Skills after In-Depth Training (Transnational Mobility)

Highly motivated volunteers participate in in-depth training courses designed specifically for the purpose of the project which is capacity building, training and education within the field of small and medium festivals. These courses, conducted in Tallinn, aim to provide practical and social skills necessary to work in medium-sized organisations. As part of the Erasmus+ programme, Youthpasses can be issued to acknowledge the skills acquired.

Validation of Skills after Crash Course Training

A short crash course, lasting approximately 2 hours, has been developed for volunteers with diverse backgrounds and experiences. This course provides basic knowledge about festival organisation, principal stakeholders and volunteering best practices. It addresses social topics such as inclusive team and audience management, accessibility, social awareness and language considerations.

Validation of Skills after Festival Volunteering

Festival volunteering offers immediate rewards by allowing volunteers to feel part of something bigger and share experiences with others. It can also provide valuable work experience that leads to quick professionalisation. To address the needs of this type of volunteering, a new certificate has been developed to validate the skills acquired through festival volunteering.

By implementing these validation processes, SAFEPLACE aims to recognise and support the diverse skills and experiences gained by volunteers in music festivals, facilitating their future engagement and professional development in the industry.

2.1 IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Validation is a complex process that requires the involvement of many different actors with different responsibilities and functions.

	Who is involved?	Example of main functions
European stakeholders	• EU Commission and Council • EU agencies, Cedefop and the European Training Foundation • European programmes • European social funds • European social partner organizations • European employers • European projects • European non- governmental organizations • European youth organizations	• provide common guidelines • provide common EU tools for validation • support transparency and portability • support policy learning and best practices transfer
Public national stakeholders	• ministries (of education, labor, etc.) • education, training and qualification authorities • national projects • public employment services • social services	• provide adequate legislation • establish procedures • determine role and responsibilities • coordinate institutional actors • provide national guidelines • establish quality assurance mechanisms

Public regional and local stakeholders	• regional public authorities in education and training, labor and social services, etc. • public regional and local stakeholders • local public authorities in education, employment and social services • regional and local projects	• provide support to institutions • establish procedures. • adapt guidelines to the local environment • coordinate among regional actors • provide information and support • carry out identification, documentation, assessment and certification
Education and training institutions	• vocational schools universities • private education institutions • assessment centers and specialist recognition centers • projects	• carry out assessment and certification • provide support for identification and documentation, including information and guidance support individuals
Business sector	• enterprises • sector or branch associations • trade unions • employer organizations • chambers of commerce and industry • projects	• provide information • carry out assessment and certification • carry out identification and documentation of competences
Voluntary sector	• non-governmental organizations • projects	• provide information and guidance • carry out assessment and certification • carry out identification and documentation of competences

2.2 IDENTIFICATION AND INVOLVING OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CONTEXT OF MUSIC FESTIVALS AND CULTURE EVENTS (I)

In music festivals, several key players are involved:

- **The artist and their representatives:** This includes agents, promoters, managers and labels, who work closely with the artist to manage their career and bookings.
- **The organiser:** This individual or group takes on the risk of investing time and money to pay the artists and service providers. They also involve volunteers and local communities in the event.
- **Local institutions:** These institutions may or may not have a direct interest in the event but are responsible for issuing permits, ensuring public safety and other regulatory aspects.
- **The audience:** The audience attends the event and typically purchases tickets unless the event is subsidised by institutions or private sponsors.

These four elements form the foundation of music events, and their involvement often leads to the engagement of a broader range of stakeholders, such as local businesses, media outlets, tourist boards, other arts institutions and the travel economy.

Local stakeholders hold significant importance, even in the globalised music sector. They provide practical problem-solving skills, have a wide local network, assist with obtaining relevant permits and engage with public safety authorities like the police and firefighters. Without support from the community and local institutions, organising events can be extremely challenging, as seen in the case of Italy's Rototom Sunsplash festival, which had to relocate to Spain due to conflicts with parts of the local population and institutions.

Many small festivals, driven not only by business ideas but also by values and activism, aim to create opportunities and perspectives for the local community, both professionally and socially. This is where SAFEPLACE comes into play, as it focuses on creating a safespace, whether physical or temporary (like a festival), where attendees, organisers, and other stakeholders feel secure and where individuality is unconditionally accepted.

2.2 IDENTIFICATION AND INVOLVING OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CONTEXT OF MUSIC FESTIVALS AND CULTURE EVENTS (II)

From a professional standpoint, SAFEPLACE aims to provide knowledge, education, and potentially infrastructure in geographically decentralised areas. The goal is to make these remote areas attractive for young people to live and establish businesses, considering that a significant portion of the music industry is often concentrated in or around major cities like Milan in Italy. However, the term "local" needs to be redefined and interpreted in a contemporary context, allowing for a more open meaning. In this context, "local" should not only refer to individuals with residency, ancestral ties, relatives or employees in a specific town. It can also include people who have a lasting emotional, private or personal relationship with the place and its people. For example, volunteers who did not grow up in the town but have chosen to get involved and contribute should be considered part of the local community.

In synthesis, the most important local stakeholder is the community, both the people that actively participate in the festival as well as the ones that support it passively. By letting the festival happen and by welcoming the guests to be part of their community, they provide an irreplaceable experience, creating something that money can’t buy.

2.2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Involving local stakeholders in the organisation of cultural events and festivals is crucial for ensuring their success and to make sure these events are important for the community and respond to its needs. Local stakeholders, such as community groups, businesses, local NGOs, schools, universities and government agencies, can offer valuable insights into the needs and interests of the community. They can also provide support in the form of funding, volunteers, visibility and other resources. By involving local stakeholders, event organisers can ensure that their events are relevant and meaningful to the community and that they reflect the unique culture and traditions of the area. In addition, involving local stakeholders can help build community spirit and foster a sense of pride and ownership in the event. This can lead to increased attendance, positive media coverage and a lasting legacy for the event. Ultimately, involving local stakeholders is a key ingredient for organising successful cultural events and festivals that benefit everyone involved.

2.2.2 LIST OF POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND TYPOLOGIES (I)

The category stakeholder could be divided into internal stakeholders – which for an association could be, for example, members, staff, collaborators and volunteers – and external stakeholders.

The external stakeholder could be divided in different groups:

- Key stakeholders (public entities, private entities, non-profit associations)
- Collective stakeholders (local residents, artists, volunteers)
- Social stakeholders (business community)
- Stakeholders of culture (Academies, Universities, Cultural institutions, media)

Given that, analyzing the stakeholders, it is important to understand if they are: essential, attractive or weak.

Essential stakeholders, i.e. those who need to be involved because they have high interest and high influence with respect to the reference issue and, therefore, strong capacity for intervention.

Attractive stakeholders, i.e. those who should be involved because they have low interest but high influence. This category can be represented by influencers and opinion leaders.

Weak stakeholders, i.e. those with high interest but low influence. This category is represented by subjects who do not have the means and tools able to express their interests in a strong and homogeneous way.

2.2.2 LIST OF POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND TYPOLOGIES (II)

Starting from this, it is possible to create a matrix to recognise the various types of stakeholders.
List of possible stakeholders:

Starting from this, it is possible to create a matrix to recognise the various types of stakeholders.

List of possible stakeholders:
1. Inhabitants of the territory
2. Academies
3. Local cultural associations
4. Associations of official guides
5. Trade associations
6. Volunteer associations
7. associations of protected, widespread or collective administrative interests
8. National associations
9. Business community
10. Savings banks
11. European Commission
12. Municipalities
13. Cultural institutions
14. Executors of works, supplies and public services
15. Music labels
16. Festivals
17. Artistic and cultural foundations
18. Bank foundations
19. Galleries
20. Media
21. Ministries
22. Ministries of culture in particular
23. Museums
24. Cultural hubs
25. Presidents and bodies of the regions, provinces and municipalities in which cultural and landscape asset exist
26. Regions, municipalities, provinces
27. Public and private entities, non-profit associations
28. Self-managed project spaces (artistic and curatorial spaces)
29. Users of the cultural and landscape heritage area (scholars, researchers, students, trainees, tourists, hikers)

2.2.3 HOW TO APPROACH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

There are several ways event organisers can connect with local stakeholders mentioned in the previous section, depending on the ones that are most appropriate for the kind of event you're organising.

- One approach is to reach out to local community groups, such as neighbourhood associations, cultural organisations and advocacy groups, to introduce yourself and your event and to ask for their support. You can also attend local meetings and events to get to know people in the community and learn about their needs and interests. If there are no such communities, or together with this strategy, it could be useful to reach out to local institutions to communicate about the event and the openness of the organisers to connect. An additional way is to connect with schools and universities, to ensure the youth are aware of the events organised.

- Social media can also be a powerful tool for connecting with local stakeholders, allowing you to reach a large audience quickly and easily. Additionally, consider partnering with local businesses, government agencies, and other organisations to leverage their resources and expertise. Local businesses are extremely important to get financial support, while government agencies are needed to ensure the respect of all rules and processes in place in the city or region where the event is organised.

2.2.4 HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Here are some tips for communicating with stakeholders of your event, once you have identified them and ensured their support:

Communicate clearly and effectively

When communicating with stakeholders, it's important to be clear and concise in your message. Use simple language and avoid industry jargon or technical terms that your stakeholders may not be familiar with.

Be responsive

Respond promptly to any inquiries or concerns that your stakeholders may have. Make sure to provide timely updates and keep them informed about any changes or developments related to the event. Most of all, do not make false promises to get them onboard and change during the organisation of the event.

Listen to feedback

Listen and take the stakeholders' opinions into consideration. This can help you to identify areas for improvement and make adjustments to ensure the success of the event, or to better plan the following edition of the event.

Provide opportunities for engagement

Offer opportunities for your stakeholders to engage with the event. This could include sponsor activations, vendor booths, or meet and greets with performers.

Plan ahead

Plan ahead and anticipate any potential issues or challenges that may arise. This can help you to be proactive in addressing any concerns and to ensure a smooth event.

By following these tips, you can help to ensure effective communication with stakeholders and make your cultural event or music festival a success.

3.1 VALIDATION TOOLS

Validation tools and methods should strive for clarity and precision and be as unambiguous and non-judgemental as possible. All these qualities are important in generating trust and they lie at the heart of the validation process. Volunteers often have difficulty communicating to an employer what knowledge and key qualifications they have acquired. That's why volunteers need meaningful documentation? about their expertise.

Tests and examinations

Tests and examinations have the advantage of being familiar and socially recognised as valid and reliable. Tests are also relatively cheap and quick to administer, when compared to some other methods. Tests and examinations can be linked to education standards more straightforwardly than some other methods.

Dialogue or conversational methods

Conversational methods of assessment are divided into two main types: interviews and debates (or 'discussions').

Observations

Observation as a method means extracting evidence from candidates while they perform everyday tasks. The validity of observations can be high and can give access to competences difficult to capture through other means. Observations have the advantage that sets of skills can be assessed simultaneously and measurements are valid.

Simulations

In simulation methodologies, individuals are placed in a situation close to real-life scenarios to have their competences assessed.

CVs and individual statement of competences

CVs are probably the most common way to document individual knowledge, skills and competences.

Third party reports

Third party reports for validating non-formal and informal learning can adopt various forms. They can include reference letters (or audio/video declarations) from supervisors, employers and/or colleagues and performance appraisals by companies.

Portfolios

Portfolios are one of the most complex and frequently used methods to document evidence for validation purposes. Portfolios aim to overcome the risk of subjectivity by introducing a mix of instruments to extract evidence of individuals' competences and can incorporate assessments by third parties.

3.2 TOOLS THAT FOCUS ON THE VALIDATION OF VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF MUSIC FESTIVALS AND CULTURE EVENTS

Without the commitment of the many volunteers, boutique festivals and cultural events, especially in peripheral regions, would not be possible. Due to the high costs for the venues, the technical infrastructure as well as the artists, and especially due to the shortage of skilled workers and the pandemic, it is necessary to have these volunteers who accompany and support the set up and dismantling as well as the operation of the events. Therefore, the goal of getting them involved, and thus the goal of validation, should always be to foster volunteers' identification with the event and the team behind it.

For these goals, formal validation methods have only limited applicability. For identification and its validation, it is crucial to offer responsibilities and tasks for helpers that meet their abilities. Then, they feel comfortable with their work, are part of the team and thereby offer their own contribution to the event. Subsequently, the focus here is less on evaluating the work as such, but rather on how the individuals in the team worked together. Flat hierarchies are crucial here.

With this perspective, communication and the associated **non-formal methods of dialogue** - especially **discussion** - are the central tools of validation. In this way, questions and tasks can be clarified in advance so their execution can be evaluated and discussed in the group after the event. So, in essence, this is about training soft skills that, starting from the individual, can positively change the entire event.

Digital means are also increasingly helpful to organise the helpers and their tasks. These include a common portal, an app and social media to simplify communication and create clarity.

If it helps volunteers better frame their role and work in the cultural event, a **letter of reference**, issued by the supervisor, for example, is a personal quality reference that can be presented to interested employers.

Regarding the tools of validation, in summary, two points are particularly important. Participation at a cultural event should originate out of a desire to become part of that event. Validation methods that are too strictly prescribed can create a sense of constant control.

Satisfaction from participating in an event arises primarily through good communication and teamwork. The validation of that succeeds through the group itself (acceptance, inclusion, reaching goals, fun, group spirit), however there are certain pre-regulations and structures that can be activated (portals, discussion rounds, evaluations and reference letters).

4.1 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

Recognition provides individuals with an opportunity for self-assessment, reflection and rewards to motivate and increase their self-esteem in all settings. Recognition is acknowledging the efforts of volunteers. It can take many forms, from formal galas to a simple, timely thank you. It shows appreciation for the work that volunteers do for your organisation and provides them with a sense of belonging and contribution.

Recognition of the skills and competences of volunteers usually happens through the awarding of certificates. One of the most widespread certificates of recognition is Youthpass.

WHAT IS YOUTHPASS?

Youthpass

Youthpass is a European recognition instrument for identifying and documenting learning outcomes that are acquired in projects under the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes.

- Youthpass promotes individual reflection and awareness about learning and helps to make learning outcomes visible for the learners themselves, as well as for others.
- It aims to reinforce reflective practices in youth work and solidarity activities, thereby enhancing their quality and recognition.
- It also supports the continued pathways of young people and youth workers, and raises visibility of the value of European engagement.

4.1 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

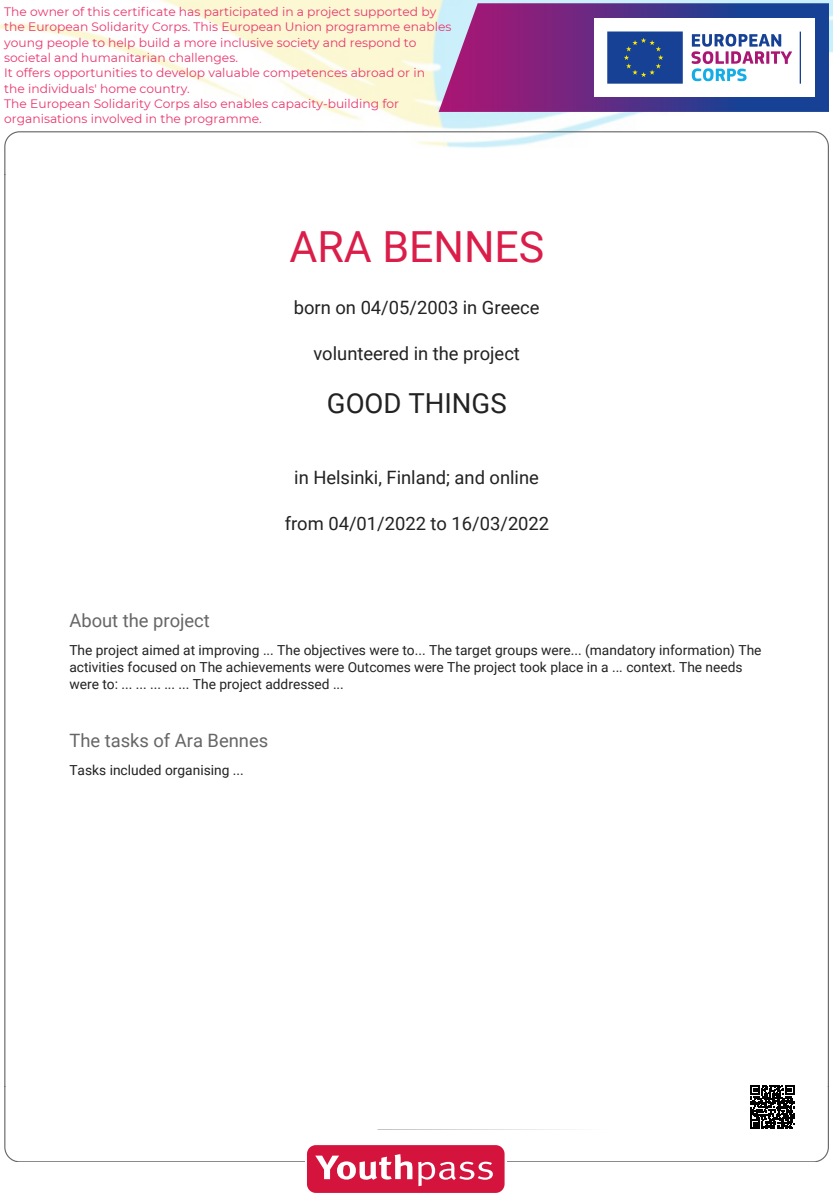
WHO CAN USE YOUTHPASS?

Youthpass certificates are available for all types of projects and activities within the Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

All participants of the projects approved within these frameworks are entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate, and thus recognition for their non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

The responsibility to issue the Youthpass certificates to the participants, in case they wish to receive them, lies with the organisation that signs the contract for the grant.

Through the Youthpass certificate, participation in projects can be recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal and informal learning. Youthpass foresees a process applied throughout the project life-cycle to support participants' learning. It also serves as a strategy that improves the recognition of non-formal learning in Europe.



The owner of this certificate has participated in a project supported by the European Solidarity Corps. This European Union programme enables young people to help build a more inclusive society and respond to societal and humanitarian challenges.
It offers opportunities to develop valuable competences abroad or in the individuals' home country.
The European Solidarity Corps also enables capacity-building for organisations involved in the programme.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

ARA BENNES

born on 04/05/2003 in Greece

volunteered in the project

GOOD THINGS

in Helsinki, Finland; and online

from 04/01/2022 to 16/03/2022

About the project

The project aimed at improving ... The objectives were to... The target groups were... (mandatory information) The activities focused on The achievements were Outcomes were The project took place in a ... context. The needs were to: ... ... The project addressed ...

The tasks of Ara Bennes

Tasks included organising ...

Youthpass

LEARNING CONTEXT

A European Solidarity Corps Volunteering Project offers an informal and non-formal learning context for volunteers to engage in a community or help overcome societal challenges. The tasks and responsibilities volunteers assume within the project, along with a new cultural context, help them develop new and strengthen existing competences. This process is supported by mentoring provided by the hosting organisation as well as a cycle of training and evaluation activities.

COMPETENCES DEVELOPED BY ARA BENNES

The following summary is the result of a reflection and self-assessment process which took place during and after the project in dialogue with the mentor Art May.

Multilingual competence

Learnt to better express herself in English

Personal, social and learning to learn competence

Learnt to manage a team of peers

Citizenship competence

...(Optional)

Entrepreneurship competence

...(Optional)

Cultural awareness and expression competence

...(Optional)

Digital competence

...(Optional)

Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering

Managed a budget of 1000€

Literacy competence

...(Optional)

LEARNING CONTEXT AND
COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Other competences

Learnt how to issue news bulletins

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following resources provide further context and evidence for the learning process and outcomes of Ara Bennes.

•Project website: http://www.salto-youth.net

REFERENCES

Grace Dune
Local authority
222-222

Ara Bennes
Volunteer

Bonn, Germany, 31/03/2022

Art May
Mentor

Bonn, Germany, 31/03/2022

The competence description in Youthpass is based on the European Union framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: **https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality-equity/key-competences-lifelong-learning**

Youthpass

Makes your learning visible

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

PROJECT DETAILS

The project Good things consisted of several activities. Ara Bennes participated in the following:

Preparing for Helsinki

Preparatory Visit | 04/01/2022–06/01/2022 | in Finland

Main activities: Meetings between partners and volunteers, getting to know, initial task sharing

Main outcomes: Final programme of the volunteering project, agreements

Par tners: Municipality of Helsinki, NGO Cycling for Good

Group: 10 participants from Austria and Belgium

Volunteering in Helsinki

Individual volunteering | 06/02/2022–16/03/2022 | in Helsinki, Finland; and online

Main activities: The volunteering activity included meetings, tasks and ...

Main outcomes: 25 workshops delivered, 3 events organised...

Hosting organisation: SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre

Par tners: SALTO ID

Group: 24 participants from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria and Croatia

The working languages of the project were Croatian, Czech and Danish.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

FURTHER PARTICIPATION DETAILS

Length of involvement in the project

15 working days

Related training activities

Training on intercultural competences and ...

Further information about the Erasmus+ programme can be found here: **https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en**
More information about this project can be found in the Erasmus+ Projects Results Platform:
https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/projects_en

Youthpass

Makes your learning visible

4.2 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION IN THE CONTEXT OF FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Volunteers have become common contributors to festivals and cultural events. There are long-time volunteers who continue to volunteer year after year for various reasons. Then there are those who choose volunteering as an option to earn access to the festival to see their favourite artists, as they may not be able to afford a festival ticket. Volunteering is an experience that benefits both the volunteers and the events. Many festivals and cultural events could not take place without the contribution from volunteers, as it would not be financially feasible to pay everyone a salary. However, it is important that festivals and cultural events don't treat the volunteers as a free work force and actually find ways to appreciate and value them. In the following pages, different ways to recognise volunteers are explored. The text is accompanied by comments from volunteers at Taksirat, which takes place in North Macedonia.

Volunteers might function like partial employees, but in leisure contexts: they also consume the experience to which they contribute. A qualitative study conducted at a French music festival reveals that volunteers' experience involves three new consumption dimensions: community, privilege and pride. (Sohier et al, 2023) Because they are producers in the first place, they are insiders with behind-the-scenes access, which ultimately defines their experience. In their role as producers, volunteers gain privileged access behind the scenes, which transforms their experiences when they become consumers. From a managerial standpoint, the recruitment and retention of volunteers remain critical issues in many sectors (Garner et al, 2011, Harp et al, 2016), so understanding the added value that insider status brings to volunteers when they consume and live the experience that they have contributed to creating might reveal additional and persuasive motivational levers.

"Every D Festival edition gives me the sense as if I'm in a dream. Remembering the one in 2021 when we were still in the core of the pandemic, it was the music and the friendship that encouraged me to give in and enjoy after a long time. I finally had the opportunity to hear some of my favourite artists and I met people that remain friends to this day."

- Martina, 23

While Sohir (2023) suggests the volunteer experience revolves around the dimensions of community, privilege and pride, it may also be suggested that it can take the forms of personal advantage, mutual advantage and self-appreciation. Personal advantage involves improving both soft skills and organisational skills and using them in daily life, while also providing the experience of gaining access to desired areas or people (seeing the backstage, meeting important people, etc.). The mutual advantage relies on learning from each other (festival managerial level from volunteers and vice versa) and maintaining a healthy relationship, where both sides see the benefit of working together.

Self-appreciation, on the other hand, allows the volunteers to feel the importance of their role and contribution – a feeling of achievement and accomplishment.

Events rely extensively upon short-term labour and making sure the volunteers are being appreciated and thanked is one of the easiest strategies an organisation can use to convert more people into long-term supporters. Thanking volunteers has also been shown to improve retention rates through the process of engagement. According to several independent studies, one of the top reasons that volunteers discontinue their commitment to an organisation via volunteerism is the lack of feedback and inadequate recognition.

Even though volunteers are not compensated monetarily, the festivals should definitely consider rewarding and recognizing them in other ways. Effective rewards can include such simple, no-cost things as reserving parking spaces for volunteers or providing them with meals during their time of commitment. As far as actual tasks are concerned, volunteer jobs can be designed in hierarchical levels, allowing a volunteer to advance over time and acquire a higher "status," which to some volunteers may be a form of recognition. With each level, the festival can allow for increases in self-direction and decision making, which shows trust between the volunteer and the festival. Not only will the added responsibilities make the volunteer feel "promoted," but they will also feel more engaged. Volunteer coordinators may also want to reward well-proven volunteers by allowing them to train or mentor new recruits or by assigning them special projects.

"I know that the experience is perfect, you meet a lot of new faces, make a lot of friends and it's definitely worth the time."

- Nina, 17

Reward and recognition programmes are meant to be fun. Making volunteerism fun can challenge volunteers, build relationships and have a positive effect on the bottom line. Deploying gamification can help to achieve this goal. Festivals can use gamification to challenge volunteers, reward them for opportunities served and create incentives for retention. The possibilities for how to use gamification are endless.

The first thing to understand when starting to think about volunteer appreciation is the importance of who the volunteers actually are (their background and motivation), as it allows us to find the most suitable ways to provide them with recognition that motivates and appreciates them. It's crucial to understand whether they come from your community or industry, what age group they belong to, the level of experience they may have, etc. However, it is also important to observe and evaluate both the volunteers and the activities proposed for appreciation as they may change over time. (Awardforce, 2022).

While the appreciation and recognition of volunteers may differ due to the variety of the size or nature of each festival organisation, the core idea remains the same: make sure the volunteers feel they are part of the organisation and their contribution is valued.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to recognise volunteers, and it is important for festivals to recognise the best, most suitable ways for them as an organisation and for their volunteers to be appreciated. Here are some practical ideas that can be used to show appreciation for the volunteers (Volunteerhub, 2021):

1. Express appreciation verbally, communicate and thank volunteers regularly.
2. Try to meet the wishes of the volunteers by being flexible when arranging their schedules.
3. Make sure the basic need of food is covered for the volunteers while they work and give them festival merchandise (especially if it's something that is only given to volunteers, which makes it more special) in exchange for their services but also to have a unified look while they work.
4. Organise events (networking, parties, etc.) for the volunteers to show appreciation but also to encourage them to interact with each other (community building).
5. Recognise the work of volunteers by giving them "higher positions" or more responsibility.
6. Involve the volunteers in decision-making processes by asking for their feedback and show them it is being heard.
7. Provide volunteers with letters of reference to assist in their career development.
8. Interact with the volunteers on social media and share their stories on the channels of the festival.
9. Work with local businesses or sponsors to provide them with discounts and freebies.
10. Make an effort to introduce volunteers to other volunteers to build friendships (community).

Sometimes it is easy to forget that the little things go a long way in effectively recognizing volunteers. Saying thank you, investing in getting to know your supporters and active communication are just a few small ways to show volunteers that your festival values them and their commitment. Lack of recognition is one of the top five reasons that volunteers stop filling opportunities, according to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). It is important to remember: being nice costs nothing, and it is the little things that count the most.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CERTIFICATE "P'ART OF ME" (I)

The "P'ART of me" certificate is an example of a certificate created within the framework of SAFEPLACE project. This certificate is specifically designed for art festival management groups to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of their volunteers. It serves as a personal and reflective document that captures the volunteer's experience and involvement in the festival.

The certificate consists of two parts. The first page contains the official information, including the volunteer's full name, the number of hours worked, the date and location of the volunteering and the signature of a member of the art organisation. This page serves as the formal recognition of the volunteer's participation.

The second page of the certificate is dedicated to the volunteer's reflection on their festival experience. It is structured into four sections, symbolised by the letters P, A, R, and T, each representing a different aspect for the volunteer to consider.

The first section, represented by the letter P, represents POWER. In this section, the volunteer is encouraged to reflect on their main strengths and personal qualities that were evident during their participation in the festival.

The second section, symbolised by the letter A, stands for ACTION. Here, the volunteer is prompted to describe their primary tasks and responsibilities, highlighting the specific actions they undertook throughout the festival.

The third section, denoted by the letter R, signifies REFLECTION. In this part, the volunteer is encouraged to share what they have learned from their festival experience and to draw personal conclusions based on their reflections.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CERTIFICATE "P'ART OF ME" (II)

The fourth and final section, represented by the letter T, stands for TRAININGS. In this section, the volunteer is asked to indicate whether they have participated in any capacity building or training activities during their involvement in the festival.

By guiding volunteers to reflect on their strengths, actions, reflections, and training experiences, the certificate aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the volunteer's contribution and personal development throughout their festival journey.

By integrating these reflective questions, the "P'ART of me" certificate aims to offer personalised recognition that goes beyond a simple acknowledgment of the volunteer's time. It allows each participant to express their unique perspective and highlights their individual growth and learning within the festival environment.

This certificate holds particular value in the festival industry as it saves time for managers who may find it challenging to create customised certificates for a large number of volunteers. Furthermore, it fosters a stronger connection between the volunteers and the festival management by emphasising their personal experiences and contributions.

P'ART OF ME

P - POWER
What was your main strength during the activity?

A - ACTION
What were your main tasks/responsibilities during the activity?

R - REFLECTION
What did you learn? Your conclusions of experience

T- TRAININGS
Have you participated in any capacity building training during the activity? If yes, please specify.

City, 22/03/2023

Name Surname

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CERTIFICATE "P'ART OF ME" (III)

Here are some benefits of using the "P'ART of me" certificate for art festival managers:

1. **Personalized Recognition:**
The certificate allows art field managers to provide personalised recognition to each volunteer. By including individual reflections and descriptions provided by the volunteers themselves, the certificate acknowledges their unique experiences and contributions, making the recognition more meaningful and personal.

2. **Time and Effort Savings:**
Creating personalised certificates for a large number of volunteers can be time-consuming for art field managers. The "P'ART of me" certificate streamlines the process by providing a structured template that incorporates individual reflections. This saves managers' time and effort in creating individual certificates while still offering a personalised touch.

3. **Enhanced Volunteer Engagement:**
The certificate's reflective nature encourages volunteers to introspect and share their thoughts on their strengths, tasks, learning and training experiences. This process fosters a deeper level of engagement and connection with the festival, as volunteers feel valued and recognised for their individual contributions.

4. **Valuable Feedback and Insights:**
The reflections provided by volunteers on the certificate offer valuable feedback and insights for art field managers. This allows them to understand the volunteers' perspectives, identify areas of improvement or success in volunteer management and make informed decisions for future events or activities.

5.**Professional Development Opportunities**:
The certificate's focus on training participation provides a platform for volunteers to showcase any capacity-building activities they have undertaken. This not only acknowledges their commitment to personal growth but also highlights the efforts made by art field managers in providing training opportunities for volunteers.

6. **Promoting a Positive Festival Culture:**
By using the "P'ART of me" certificate, art field managers promote a positive festival culture that values and appreciates the diverse contributions of volunteers. This recognition can motivate volunteers to continue their involvement in future festivals and contribute more actively, and attract new volunteers who seek meaningful engagement opportunities.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CERTIFICATE "P'ART OF ME" (IV)

For volunteers, the "P'ART of me" certificate offers the following benefits:

→ Personalized validation

The certificate validates the unique skills, experiences and contributions of each volunteer. It acknowledges their individual strengths and achievements, boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

→ Self-reflection

The certificate encourages volunteers to reflect on their festival experience, recognising their growth, learning and personal development throughout their involvement. This self-reflection fosters continuous improvement and self-awareness.

→ Tangible record

The certificate serves as a tangible record of the volunteers' participation and accomplishments, which they can proudly showcase on their resume or portfolio. It validates their experience and enhances their credibility in future endeavours.

→ Networking opportunities

The certificate can facilitate networking opportunities, connecting volunteers with industry professionals, potential mentors or like-minded individuals within the festival community. This networking can open doors to new opportunities and collaborations.

→ Motivation to continue involvement

The certificate acts as a motivational tool, encouraging volunteers to continue their involvement in future festival activities. It recognises their efforts and dedication, reinforcing their passion for volunteering and their commitment to the festival's mission.

Overall, the "P'ART of me" certificate serves as a valuable tool for both art festival managers and volunteers, fostering a positive and rewarding festival experience for all involved.

5.1 REALIZATION OF VALIDATION TOOLS (INTERVIEWS, QUESTIONNAIRES) AND INTEGRATION WITH YOUTHPASS

Prior to participating in the project, some participants had limited experience in volunteering at art and music festivals, while others had no prior experience.

After the training, we administered questionnaires to the participants, and the results were as follows.

The main motivations cited by participants for taking part in the training programme were personal development, acquiring or deepening their knowledge about music/art festivals, establishing an international network and making new friends. Following the programme, participants expressed that their expectations were met, and they were satisfied with the experience. Their active participation in online preparation meetings contributed to their readiness for the training programme.

Participants highlighted the following improvements resulting from their experience in the training programme:

Logical thinking and drawing conclusions (analytical skills): The training programme enhanced participants' ability to think critically, analyse information and draw logical conclusions.

Improved ability to explain their project learnings to others: Participants felt more confident and articulate in expressing what they learned during their project, effectively communicating their experiences to others.

Increased awareness of learning opportunities from festival participation: Participants became more aware of the diverse learning experiences available to them through their involvement in the festival. They recognised the value of actively seeking and embracing new knowledge and skills.

Enhanced awareness of personal learning during the festival:
Participants developed a heightened awareness of the knowledge and skills they acquired throughout the festival. They were able to reflect on their learning journey and recognise the growth they experienced.

Improved ability to cooperate with people from different backgrounds and cultures:
The training programme fostered participants' skills in collaborating and working effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. They gained a greater understanding and appreciation of different perspectives.

Increased open-mindedness and curiosity about new challenges: Participants reported a greater sense of openness and curiosity when facing new challenges. They embraced opportunities for personal and professional growth with enthusiasm and a willingness to step out of their comfort zones.

Developing ideas and putting them into practice:
The training programme helped participants refine their skills in generating and implementing ideas. They gained confidence in turning their ideas into tangible actions and projects.

Expressing oneself creatively: Participants found that the training programme encouraged and nurtured their creative expression. They felt more comfortable expressing themselves creatively and exploring their artistic potential.

Overall, the training programme provided participants with a diverse set of skills and personal growth opportunities, fostering their analytical thinking, communication abilities, cultural competence, openness to new experiences and creative expression.

Comments from participants:

"I now feel that the success of my community also depends on my competences and my ideas and on how able I am to shape them"

"Although working in a group of people can sometimes be challenging because of different experiences and knowledge I feel like after this experience I can better articulate my ideas in order to work towards a shared group goal"

These outcomes demonstrate the positive impact of the training programme on the participants' cognitive skills, communication abilities and reflective thinking.

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