

UPRAISE

Youth participation for social change



Managing Active Citizens' Initiatives

with young voluntary coordinators and young volunteers



Erasmus+



Introduction

UPRAISE: Youth Participation for Social Change is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Youth. It aims to create tools for youth professionals to support active participation among young people.

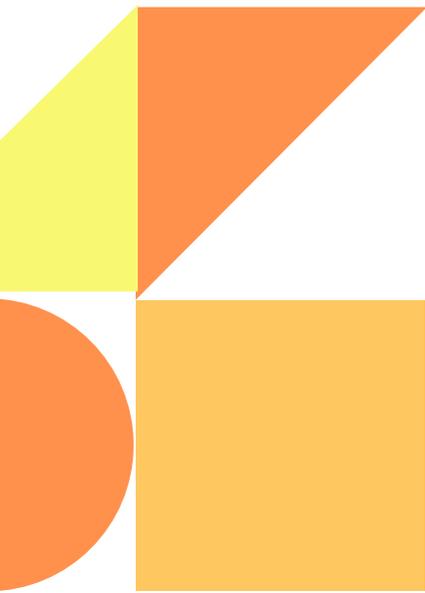
The project partners are:

- [Gemeinsam Leben & Lernen In Europa E.V.](#) - Germany
- [Social Innovation And Cohesion Institute \(Fifty- Fifty\)](#) - Greece
- [Arista Deka](#) - Cyprus
- [Centrul De Voluntariat Cluj-Napoca](#) - Romania

The direct target group of the project is youth professionals such as youth workers, youth trainers, mentors of European Solidarity Corps' volunteers, and others working with youth such as social workers and educators. The end beneficiaries of the project are young people.

The topics of the project UPRAISE are:

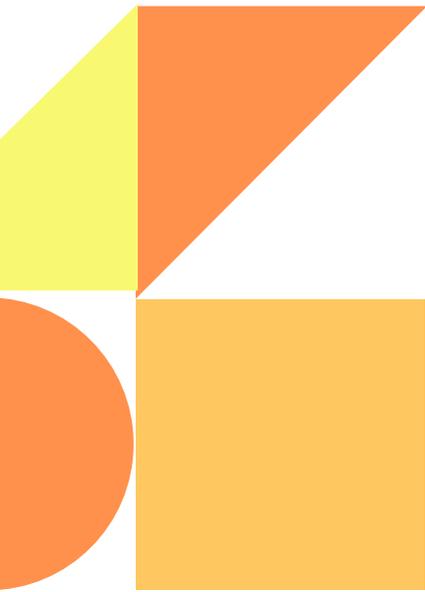
- Democracy & Human Rights
- Fighting Anti-Semitism & Anti-Islamism
- Gender Equality & Rights To Sexuality
- Climate Change



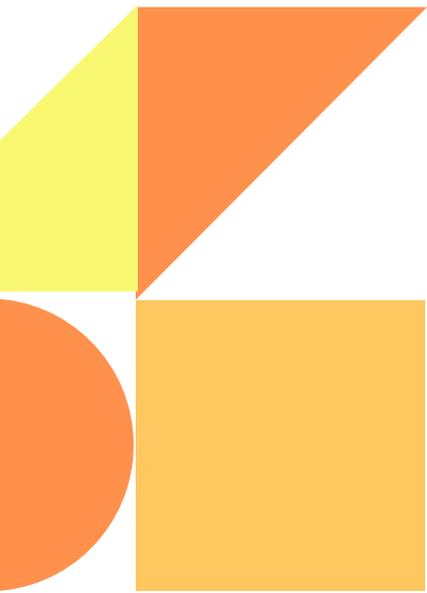
The main intellectual outputs/ results of the project are:

1. Research Study: **"European Training Strategy and the Trainer Competence Model: The political dimension of the work of youth trainers in Germany, Greece, Cyprus, and Romania"**.
2. Handbook **"Managing active citizenship initiatives with young voluntary coordinators and young volunteers"**. This is the document you are reading here.
3. **"Upraise Training Toolkit"** to be used by youth professionals to enhance youth participation with methods that are attractive to young people with fewer opportunities:
 - a. Lego® Serious Play®
 - b. Photovoice
 - c. Theatre of the Oppressed
 - d. Kahoot! Quizzes
4. **"Upraise Toolkit for Successful Online Campaigns and Petitions"**.

During the needs analysis phase of the project, the partners expressed their intention to support the development and implementation of European Citizens' Initiatives, by involving volunteers on certain causes the young people care about. As a first



step, the partners identified the need to standardize their procedures for the design, implementation, and follow-up of voluntary projects for social change so they could create a Handbook of good practices and tools. The handbook focuses on **Human Resource Management of Volunteers** when implementing **European 'Citizens' Initiatives**.



INTRO TO THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

The **European Citizens' Initiative** (ECI) is a very important tool for increasing the participation of citizens in the decision-making process within the European Union. It represents the ideals of participatory democracy in the European Union, by allowing a minimum of one million EU citizens residing in at least one-quarter of the Member States to invite the Commission to submit a proposal for a legal act, relevant to the implementation of the EU Treaties. The ECI is thus an entry door to the future of participatory politics. This is the reason why the ECI is not just another petition but it is more of an everyday citizens' activation right regarding the next issues to be put on the agenda of the European Institutions[1].

In essence, through ECIs the **citizens of Europe can help set the agenda of the Union**. The ECI program is primarily overseen by the European Commission, the executive governing body of the EU. When an ECI is registered, it is the Commission that reviews the proposal and decides whether or not to take the matter forward. In other words, a successful initiative with over 1 million signatures is not binding. Even though the European Commission is not bound to bring the issue

[1] <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/eptac/en/european-citizens-initiative-guide.html>

forward to be discussed in the EU parliament, the matter is taken seriously. This can be seen in Table 1 below, where the acceptance rate for the years 2012 to 2017 has been 76% on average [2].

Requests	Submitted	Registered	Refused	Registered (%)	Refused (%)
2012	23	16	7	70%	30%
2013	17	9	8	53%	47%
2014	10	5	5	50%	50%
2015	6	6	0	100%	0%
2016	3	3	0	100%	0%
2017	6	5	1	83%	17%
Total	65	44	21	76%	24%

Table 1: ECI Requests, Facts and Figures

It should be noted that the European Commission can only work on those ECIs in which it has the competence to propose legislation. This should not be discouraging as the European Commission can recommend legislation in a broad area of subjects, such as environment, agriculture, transport, international trade and the custom unions [3].

[2] <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/eptac/en/european-citizens-initiative-guide.html>

Areas where the Commission and the EU, in general, may not propose or draft legislation include public health, industry, culture, tourism, education and training, youth and sport, civil protection and administrative cooperation. In these areas, the Commission only has what is known as a supportive function. This means that though it may not pass legislation, it may support, coordinate or complement the action taken by member states. As such, ECIs which directly touch or affect these areas will be refused by the Commission from the start, as these will be considered to fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of member states.

Historical background

The concept of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is linked (4) to **EU citizenship**. It is considered that the EU citizens can petition the EU parliament to act on a specific issue in which their member states, collectively have given the EU powers to act on.

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/what-european-commission-does/law/areas-eu-action_en

[4] <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/149/european-citizens-initiative>

The concept of EU citizenship was introduced for the first time by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which was however not implemented until 2009, through the Lisbon treaty. In 1996, Austrian and Italian foreign ministers proposed that such initiatives should be introduced into the legal order of the EU. Even though the issue was revised during the preparation of the draft of the Constitutional Treaty of the EU and accepted as Article 47(4), following immense pressure from various interest groups, having first been rejected by the conference, the treaty itself that would have contained such provisions failed to be ratified. This was because the treaty was defeated by the national referendums of France and the Netherlands. In the EU legal order, no treaty can be enacted unless ratified in whole by all the member states. The idea of ECI nonetheless survived. In 2009, through the treaty of Lisbon, provisions similar to the ones initially included in the Constitutional Treaty were

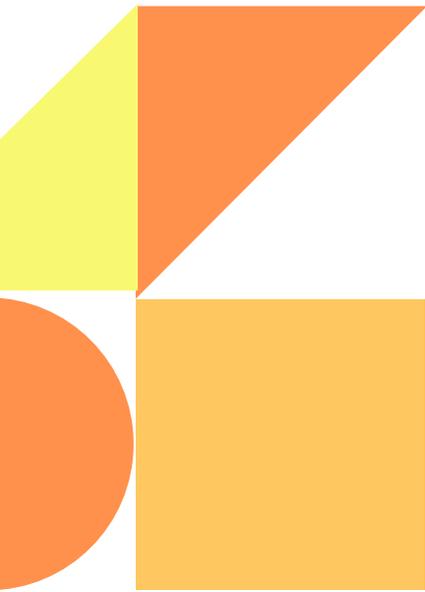


European Citizens' Initiative - Timeline

2009	The Lisbon Treaty (introducing the European Citizens' Initiative) enters into force. The EU institutions start working on creating the rules and procedures for this new instrument.
2011	European Parliament and Council adopt the citizens' initiative: Regulation (EU) No 211/2011
2012	The rules on the European Citizens' Initiative enter into force.
2015	Commission adopts the first report on the application of the Regulation on the Citizens' Initiative and launches a review of the rules.
2018	Commission adopts the first report on the application of the Regulation on the Citizens' Initiative and launches a review of the rules.
2019	European Parliament and Council adopt the new rules.
2020	On 15 July 2020, the European Parliament and the Council adopted temporary measures to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the European citizens' initiative. The new rules allow for an extension of the collection periods of citizens' initiatives affected by the pandemic. New rules on the European 'Citizens' Initiative enter into force – Regulation (EU) 2019/788.

Table 2: History of ECI

The concept of EU citizenship was introduced for the first time by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which was however not implemented until 2009, through the Lisbon treaty. In 1996, Austrian and Italian foreign ministers proposed that such initiatives should be introduced into the legal order of the EU. Even though the issue was revised during the preparation of the draft of the Constitutional Treaty of the EU and accepted as Article 47(4), following immense pressure from various interest groups, having first been rejected by the conference, the treaty itself that would have contained such provisions failed to be ratified. This was because the treaty was defeated by the national referendums of France and the Netherlands. In the EU legal order, no treaty can be enacted unless ratified in whole by all the member states. The idea of ECI nonetheless survived. In 2009, through the treaty of Lisbon, provisions similar to the ones initially included in the Constitutional Treaty were



As of now, ECI exists under two treaties. That is article 11(4) of the TEU- **Treaty of the European Union** and Article 24(1) of the TFEU- **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**. Article 11(4) reads [5]

Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties. The procedures and conditions required for such a citizens' initiative shall be determined in accordance with the first paragraph of Article 24 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

In turn, Article 24 (1) [6] of the TFEU reads:

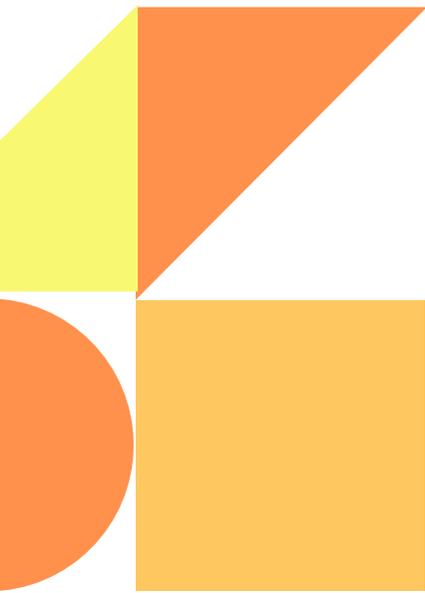
The European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall

[5] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:0013:0045:en:PDF>

[6] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E024>

adopt the provisions for the procedures and conditions required for a citizens' initiative within the meaning of Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union, including the minimum number of the Member States from which such citizens must come. Every citizen of the Union shall have the right to petition the European Parliament in accordance with Article 227. Every citizen of the Union may apply to the Ombudsman established in accordance with Article 228. Every citizen of the Union may write to any of the institutions or bodies referred to in this Article or in Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union in one of the languages mentioned in Article 55(1) of the Treaty on European Union and have an answer in the same language.

The treaty provisions have since then been implemented as main legal acts. That is Regulations (EU) No 211/2011 and 2019/788 and Rules 222 and 230 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure. What is also important here to note, is that under the EU legal order, the commission must present a report on the implementation and functionality of these regulations once every three years. Until now, 6 ECI have been successfully implemented in the EU. That is around 10% of all ECIs ever filled, with more than 70% of them discussed in parliament. The message is clear. The EU listens.



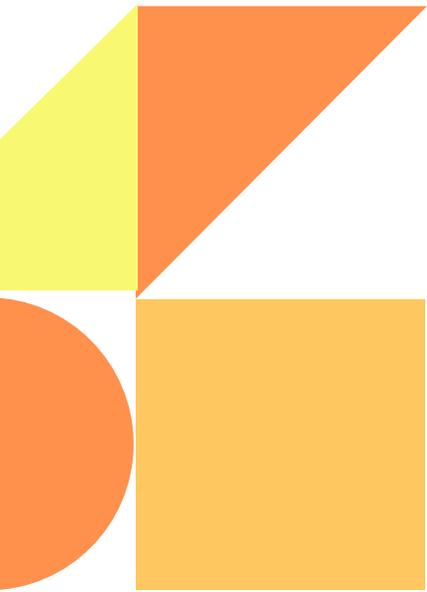
Differences from Referendums

A European Citizens' Initiative is a **direct call to action from the people** to the EU Instruments. So long as the parameters are met and the process followed - this is explained in detail, later on, the parliament must meet and discuss the issue. In essence, this allows the people of Europe to directly set the agenda of the Union in the manner they wish it to be framed. Referendums, on the other hand, work mostly on the reverse, meaning the EU or member states present their issue to the people. Another key difference is that through referendums citizens are asked whether they ought to accept or reject a law, while ECI asks the EU to create a law and may not ask to reject one. Referendums also take the form of a Yes or No question, thus disallowing the framing of the issue in any other way than as the EU intended.

Differences from Petitions

Both Petitions and ECIs are routed in the same philosophy. They also take their legal validity through the treaties and ECI Regulation (EU) No 2019/788 which repealed Regulation (EU) No 211/2011. However,

they differ in many ways. The most fundamental of this is that petitions are private in nature while ECIs are public. This is why a petition, unlike an ECI, must affect the petitioner personally. They do not need to gather the same signatures and are directed to the Parliament and not to the European Commission.



THE PROCEDURE OF AN EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

An ECI passes through a number of stages. This involves the formulation of a Citizens' Committee, Registration, Collection of statements of support, Verification, and certification and finally the Submission and examination of it. All the stages [7] are reviewed below.

Citizens' Committee

All ECIs must have a **governing body**. It is so because they are or could be large initiatives involving complex issues that could bring many consequences to the European Union as a whole. Thus, they must feature a consenting committee of a **minimum of 7 people from seven different member states**, irrespective of whether they are all of the same nationality, as the residence is what matters here. These seven people must also be eligible to vote in the EU elections. From this committee, a representative and a substitute must be appointed as the point of contact for the initiative. Though these people must be at least 18 years old, member states can individually lower this to 16 if

[7] <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/149/european-citizens-initiative>

they wish.

Registration

The committee must then **register the initiative** before the Commission. The basis of an application must be its title, subject matter, short description, legal basis, information on the committee members as well as sources of support and funding for the initiative in question. These are the minimum requirements and the committee may, if they wish, provide additional evidence and support. The commission then has 2 months to decide whether or not to register this initiative. An initiative to be registered must meet some **procedural requirements**:

1. To be within the Commission's areas of competence to propose legislation,
2. Not to be frivolous, abusive, vexatious, or contrary to the EU values described in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union.



Collection of Support Statements

If the initiative is allowed to be registered, the committee may begin its gathering of signatures. The requirement of **1 million signatures** must be **accomplished within 1 year** and these can be collected in paper form or electronically. The commission maintains a website[8] for the electronic gathering of signatures, linking ECIs with nationally certified collection systems. It is expected that a central system may come into operation at the EU level in 2021. It should be noted that this collection of support needs to start within six months since the ECI has been registered. There is no demand on the EU level for ID cards to accompany the signatures, but some member states may require so. Furthermore, Regulation (EU) 2019/1799 also requires member states to provide contact points of support to the ECIs' organizers, including by providing legal advice.

Citizens' Committee

The **verification and certification** of the successful collection of the necessary signatures follow. This is carried out by the competent

[8] https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/_en

national^[9] authorities of the member states. The authorities include ministries, electoral commissions and population registries. This verification and certification process from national authorities must be carried out in three months' time.

Submission and Examination

Once all the steps previously mentioned have been completed, the ECI may now be **submitted and examined**. The committee will be asked to submit the certificates from the national authorities to verify the number of supporting statements collected. It will also be asked to **declare any source of funding received**, usually contributions in excess of 500 euros. The commission will then publish the ECI and meet with the organizers providing them a chance to go over its details and then are invited to present it to the Parliament. Parliament may then hold a debate and adopt a resolution helping the ECI gain political support. The Commission may prepare a legislative proposal to be presented to the Parliament and from then on, the usual practices of how legislation is passed in the EU are followed.

[9] <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/authorities-verification>

CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

So far, 6 initiatives have been successful and 14 are currently ongoing. In this section, we will present these initiatives and the factors that led to their success.

Right2Water

[Website](#)

[Commission response](#)

This ECI was the first in EU history to become successful. On May 7 2013 it had reached the minimum of 1 million signatures required and totaled 1.857.605, million signatures upon which point it had reached its 12 months allowed period. In December 2013 it was submitted to the Commission and presented to Parliament in February 2014. As a response to the initiative, the 2015 Roadmap for the evaluation of the Drinking Water Directive was published by the Commission. The initiative now^[10] invites the European Commission to propose

[10] <https://www.right2water.eu/>

legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation as recognized by the United Nations". This ECI was mainly organized by European trade unions and aimed at ensuring that private investors' purchasing of water sources across the Union did not infringe or compromise the people's right of free access to drinking water.

Results of the ECI

The Commission responded by promising actions with respect to:

- Ensuring better quality and more accessible water,
- Ensuring neutrality as regards the provision of water services,
- Increasing Transparency,
- A more integrated approach for development assistance,
- Promotion of public-public partnerships,
- Rio+ 20 Follow-up.

The Commission[11] further promised to take action that it:

- Will reinforce the implementation of its water quality legislation, building on the commitments presented in the 7th EAP and the Water Blueprint;

[11] <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2014/EN/1-2014-177-EN-F1-1.Pdf>

- Will launch an EU-wide public consultation on the Drinking Water Directive, notably in view of improving access to quality water in the EU;
- Will improve transparency for urban wastewater and drinking water data management and explore the idea of benchmarking water quality;
- Will bring about a more structured dialogue between stakeholders on transparency in the water sector;
- Will cooperate with existing initiatives to provide a wider set of benchmarks for water services;
- Will stimulate innovative approaches for development assistance (e.g., support to partnerships between water operators and public-public partnerships); promote sharing of best practices between Member States (e.g., on solidarity instruments) and identify new opportunities for cooperation.
- Will advocate universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a priority area for future Sustainable Development Goals.



One of Us

Website

Commission response

This ECI reached 1,896,852 signatures on 28 February 2014. Its public hearing was held on 10 April 2014 and led, on 28 May 2014 to the European Commission Communication on the European Citizens' Initiative "One of us". The initiative aimed at the enactment of EU legislation that would limit stem cell research in the Union. This ECI has thus far gathered the strongest support in terms of collected signatures. However, the commission did not respond fully to the ECI which led to its supporter appealing to the European Court which sided with the commission. To this day, the commission has not submitted a legislative proposal.

Result of the ECI

The Commission[12] decided not to submit any legislative proposal thus effectively denying the Initiative's request

[12] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_14_608

Stop Vivisection

Website

Commission response

This was the third successful ECI of Europe. By the end of its twelve-month period, the initiative had gathered 1,326,807 signatures. Its presentation to the EU parliament took place on 11 May 2015 and led to the Commission's Communication on the European Citizens' Initiative "Stop Vivisection". The initiative aimed at securing legislation prohibiting the use of animals in medical research. This goal was nonetheless not attained.

Result of the ECI

The Commission[13] responded by promising action with respect to:

- Accelerating progress in the Three Rs through knowledge sharing,
- Development, validation, and implementation of new alternative approaches,

[13] <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2015/EN/3-2015-3773-EN-F1-1.PDF>

- ·Enforcement of compliance with the Three Rs principle and alignment of relevant sector Legislation,
- ·Engaging in a dialogue with the scientific community.

The Commission however will not submit a legislative proposal. The existing Directive 2010/63/EU is already aimed at the eventual phasing out of animal studies.

Ban glyphosate and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides

Website

Commission response

According to its organizers, this European 'Citizens' Initiative (ECI) calls on the European Commission to propose to member states a ban on glyphosate, to reform the pesticide approval procedure, and to set EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticide use. Submitted^[14] to the Commission on 6 October 2017 it had gathered 1,070,865

[14] <https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative-forum/sites/default/files/2020-01/SEC-17>

signatures. The initiative led to the Commission agreeing to submit a legislative proposal to increase transparency and quality in the evaluation of pesticides and independence of the relevant scientific studies used in their assessment while promising to revise the Implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive of the Commission.

Result of the ECI

The Commission[15] responded by promising actions with respect to:

- Transparency related to studies that are used for scientific evaluation,
- Commissioning of studies by public authorities,
- Allocation of Member State conducting the initial assessment,
- Reducing the use of pesticides,
- Setting mandatory reductions targets for pesticide use,
- The Commission declined to put forth legislation banning the use of glyphosate.

[15]<https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2017/EN/C-2017-8414-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

Minority Safepack

Website

Commission response

This initiative was rather controversial as 2 of its 11 proposals were blocked by the Commission. Its aim was to improve the protection given to people of national and linguistic minorities while overall strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity. The initiative[1] was submitted to the Commission in January 2020, having gathered 1,123,422 signatures. Its public hearing with the Parliament took place in October 2020 and a relevant Parliament resolution led to a Commission communication and a wide range of measures[17] taken with respect to it.

Result of the ECI

The Commission[18] responded by promising actions with respect to the initiative's proposal. Specifically, the Commission will:

[17] <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=list&cotelId=3&year=2021&number=171&version=F>

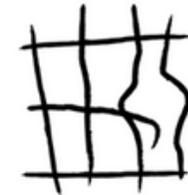
- ·Closely monitor the implementation of a number of EU initiatives adopted since 2017, which include aspects mentioned in the Citizens' Initiative,
- ·Continue to monitor projects involving regional or minority languages and analyze their potential impact on policies in the countries concerned,
- ·Maintain and develop cooperation through the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages, as well as providing Commission support to the Member States,
- ·Launch a stakeholder dialogue with the audiovisual sector in order to discuss concrete ways to foster the circulation of audiovisual content and improve the consumers' access to it,
- ·Regularly monitor the application of the rules on the promotion of European works, based on reports from the Member States,
- ·Continue to provide guidance, should Member States face difficulties in making their intended measures to promote the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and their culture.

The commission did not feel a legislative act was necessary.

End the Cage Age

[Website](#)

[Commission response](#)



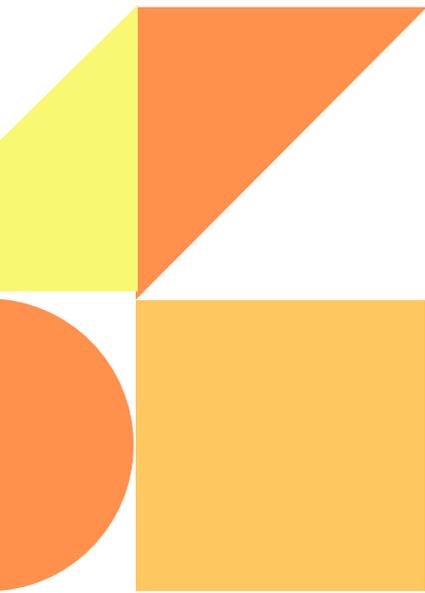
According to the organisers, over 300 million farm animals in Europe suffer in cages. This is cruel, unnecessary and has no place in Europe. The aim of the initiative[16] is to enforce a ban on caged farming in the EU. The initiative collected almost 1.4 million signatures in 2020. A meeting between the organisers and the Commission took place on 30 October 2020, followed by a public hearing in the European Parliament on 15 April 2021.

[16]https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2018/000004_en

Results of the ECI

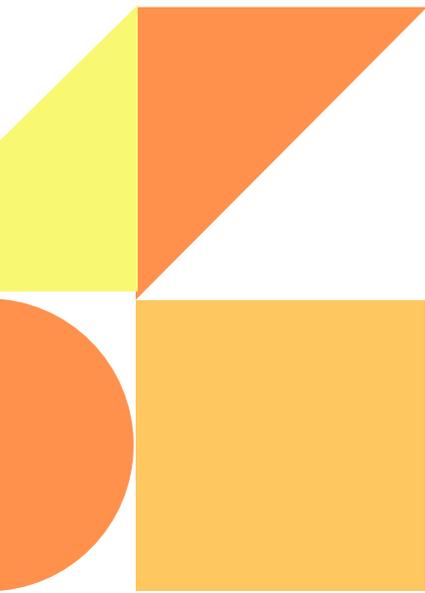
The Commission[17] reacted and promised the following measures:

- By the end of 2023, a proposal to revise animal welfare legislation should be made by the Commission. The Commission has committed itself to this proposal. As part of this revision, a gradual abolition and eventually an absolute ban on caging for the species or categories of animals mentioned in the initiative is to be implemented.



- There will be an impact assessment (results expected by the end of 2022) and several EFSA (European Food Safety Authority; results expected early 2023) assessments that will be used to decide on transition periods and accompanying measures for the abolition of caged farming.
- Comprehensive transitional or accompanying measures will be adopted or debated as part of the revised animal welfare legislation to support farmers in the transition to cage-free farming and to provide incentives for an earlier transition.
- There is to be a review of the extent to which products imported into the EU must comply with the same (or equivalent) rules. Also possible is the introduction of an EU-wide animal welfare labelling system, which could also apply to imports.

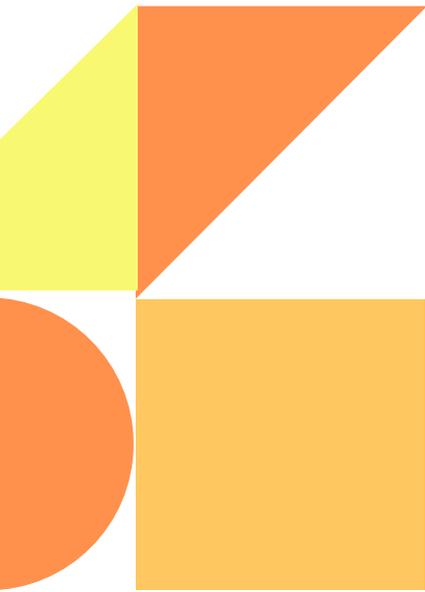
[17][https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C\(2021\)4747&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C(2021)4747&lang=en)



Critique of the ECI

The ECI is indeed a very useful tool for **active citizenship**. It allows the people of the European Union to feel more empowered. Linked to the idea of EU citizenship, it connects them together to a shared goal, guaranteeing at the very least that their voices will be heard. Even if not answered the way it was expected to, the sheer political pressure of 1 million signatures from across the EU informs the institutions and executive positions of the EU and the Member States of impending change and expectations of their people.

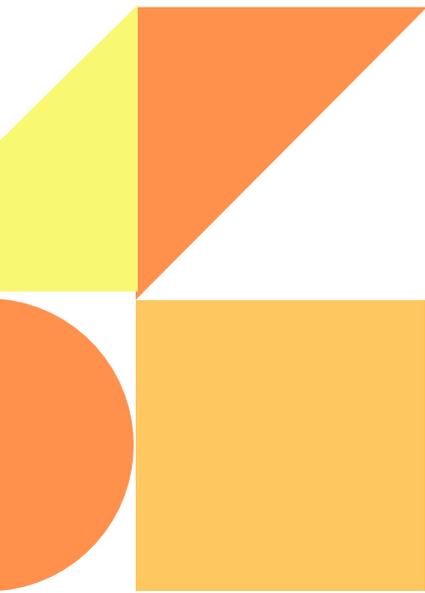
The ECI is not without its faults, however. The main theme seems to be that *people don't feel it reaches deep enough in effecting change especially considering the vast effort required to bring about a successful ECI to completion*. The project partners reached out to some of the organizers of successful and ongoing ECIs to take their views on the matter. An introduction of the project and its goals was made with responders asked to fill in a questionnaire on the issue. For Schwartz, the European coordinator of Stop Glyphosate the issue is clear. According to David:



In my opinion, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a volunteer-led initiative without very significant funding to succeed in collecting the needed signatures for a successful ECI. Further, I believe very strongly that the ECI has turned out to be a fairly pointless tool, that basically engages European citizens to take massive effort that is guaranteed nothing more than an acknowledgment from the Commission... On the recent successful Minority Safepack ECI, the Commission will take no action whatsoever.

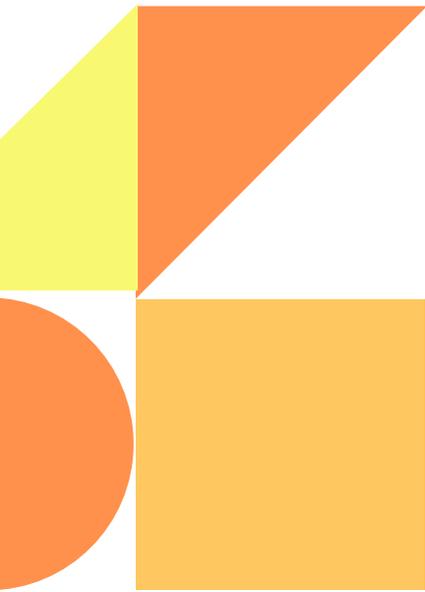
For Benoît Marcoux, organizer of the ongoing Voters without Borders ECIs still serve a function. According to Benoît even if not successful, an ECI is still a valuable tool in the arsenal of those people that wish to bring change. It is not the only one however and just by stating an ECI a lot of people, influential as well, work together to bring about that change through different channels. Moreover:

We are trying to build a coalition of volunteers, regular citizens, civil society organizations, politicians, institutions that advocate for the same rights and values that we promote. Thanks to these alliances (the subject of our initiative is quite popular in the Brussels bubble and



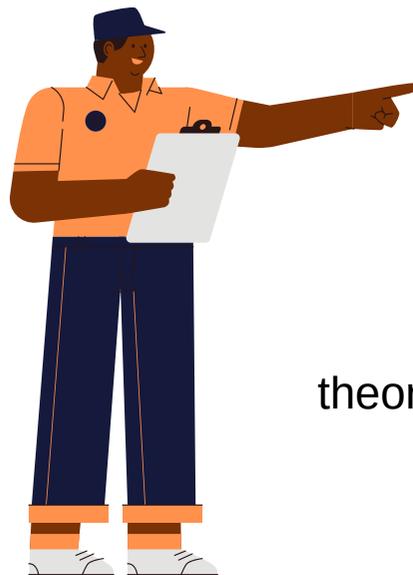
the support of influential people or groups) we have been to put our initiative on the agenda and create a debate on the right of Europeans to vote in their country of residence... Another thing is to know your objectives. 1M signatures is a long way, but there are other ways to put your proposal on the agenda. It is necessary to assess the best ways to obtain results sometimes it is by reaching the million, sometimes it's not.

The issue is indeed one of many interpretations and opinions. Regardless of your position, however, a few things remain clear. The ECIs do build a momentum of collaborative change. They are also relatively new and still evolving. As such their effects remain still to be fully understood.



COORDINATING AN ECI WITH VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT

Coordinating a European Citizens' Initiative is a complex project that requires a **sufficient amount of human resources** to prepare for its implementation. One of the most demanding phases in an ECI is the collection of statements of support. As previously stated, the organizers of such initiatives must raise a minimum of 1 million signatures within one year, from at least a quarter of the EU members states. This requires a great network in order to be successful that can be done with the support of volunteers. To be effective, a collaboration with different organizations can be initiated, that can support the project by providing volunteers.

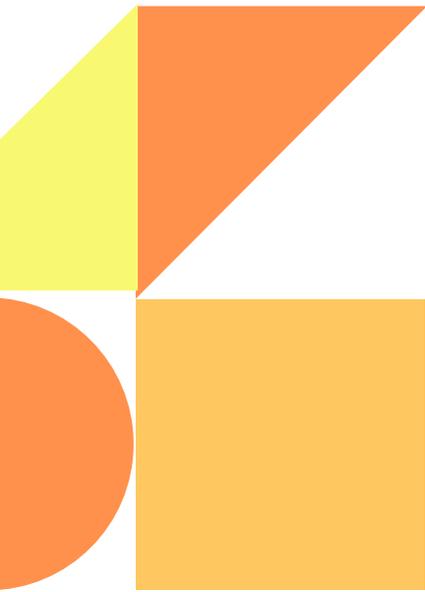


The next chapter will present how such organizations should be working with volunteers, focusing on the management theory "**Volunteers' Management in 9 Steps**".

1. Preparation of the organization for volunteer involvement

The **preparation of the organization** before starting coordinating a European Citizens' Initiative that involves volunteers is an essential aspect, representing the foundation for the next steps and it is important to allocate resources for the successful completion of this phase. However, the practice has shown that taking all the necessary measures for proper preparation will help reduce later risks.

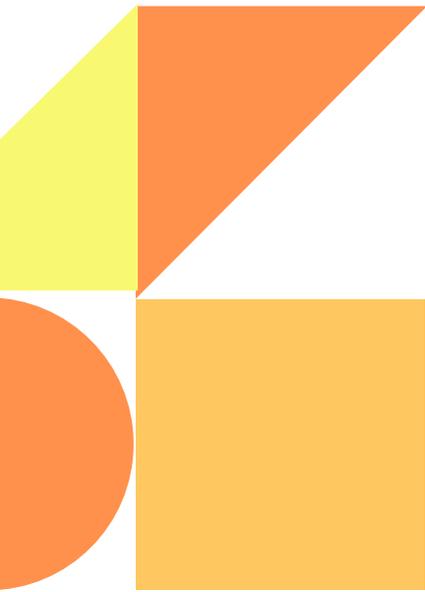
As the initiative aims to tackle a need or a problem within the society, while the organization's resources are limited, it leads to limitations in achieving its mission. Involving volunteers in its activity helps the organization achieve its objectives and benefit from the expertise and the time availability of the people who decide to volunteer for their cause. Thus, the initiative's mission, vision, and values must be clear, as they are considered to be an essential factor in recruiting volunteers. The **mission** is a statement that describes its purpose, a statement of its ultimate goal, while the **vision** describes in an enthusiastic manner, the desired future state of the problem or the need tackled by the initiative. The **values** are the core elements of the



people behind the initiative, something everybody identifies with and guides them throughout their activity.

The organization needs to identify how engaging volunteers contribute to achieving the objectives set when launching such an initiative. Once this is set and clear for the members, they can look at the next elements, such as analyzing potential costs and risks, as well as the benefits involving volunteers, would bring.

The costs to be considered are the financial ones with the organizational support for the volunteering activities (covering the materials needed to implement the activity, the transportation costs to and from the location of the activity, and sometimes food and beverages), the costs with the personnel involved in the 'volunteers' coordination, and the time dedicated to the management of the initiative. The most frequent risks associated with 'volunteers' management are the lack of motivation or experience, as well as potential ineffective management and communication. However, good preparation and planning during this phase allow the organization to overcome these risks and succeed in managing the costs inquired. As for the benefits of involving volunteers in coordinating an ECI, these

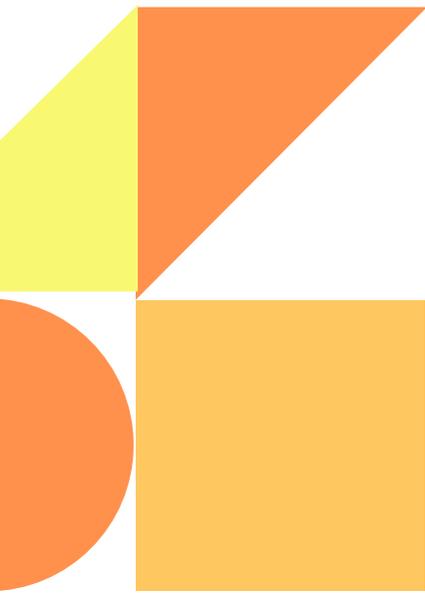


are: engaging a more diverse range of skills, experience, and knowledge, reaching more supporters, collecting signatures more effectively and efficiently, promoting the initiative among different communities, etc.

I. Needs analysis and resources available: refers to the identification of the needs of the organization (including the needs to involve volunteers), and also for the resources available in the organization (financial, know-how, etc.). This step serves as a starting point for the identification of the ' 'volunteer's future tasks.

To start a European Initiative you need to analyze in a systematic way what is needed. Concerning the vision and objective of your initiative, you need to analyze and determine: what is the present state on this issue and how it should be in the future. Meaning: what will be different, if your European Citizens Initiative is successful. At this step, an evaluation of the s' 'organization's current performance should be conducted, while questioning aspects such as the capacity to reach supporters on its own.

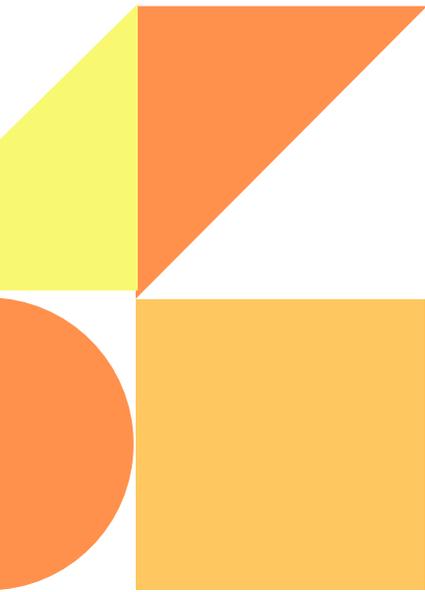
Afterward, the expectations towards the elements analyzed should be



set. Once this step is completed, a comparison between the current and desired state of the organization is performed, identifying the causes related to the potential differences. If it is wanted to increase capacity, to improve the quality of the work delivered, or to enable staff to focus on more important tasks, the organization may consider involving volunteers in its work, as part of coordinating an ECI. If this is agreed by the management, it is important then to evaluate the resources available within the organization that can support the program. The following aspects should be considered:

- assets made available for the volunteers - includes materials, electronic devices, software applications, and room to carry out their activity;
- available personnel - for coordination, support, and know-how transfer.
- financial resources - to support eventual organizational costs.

II. Clarifying the volunteering program: includes establishing the mission, the **objectives** and the **action plan** for the initiative, the job descriptions for the volunteers, and for the volunteers' coordinator. An effective volunteering program starts with setting up its mission and objectives. The program's mission should address meeting a need or



solving a problem as part of the cause supported. It should include the general scope of the initiative, the means (actions, services) that would lead to its success, followed by the set of values on which it is based. In accordance, several objectives related to the program should be developed, as it allows the organization to evaluate its effectiveness, during the closure phase. The objectives should be formulated in a SMART manner, and start from the problem & need analysis. They should underline the beneficiaries and the added value of the program and refer to aspects such as the recruitment of the volunteers, type of activities, or organizational development, etc.

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-bound



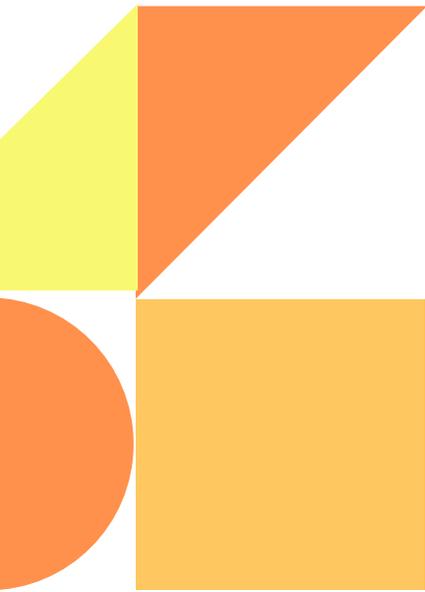
Structure: To (positive verb)... (concrete object/data)... (details)

Positive verbs: enhance, empower, improve, support, increase, decrease, grow, etc.

Once this is finished, the program responsible should start working on an action plan that includes all the activities required, following their logical and chronological order, from the program's preparation to its evaluation and closure. It should assign the responsible person(s) to take over these activities, as well as the results expected, their duration, and costs generated.

At this step, it is important to decide upon the 'volunteers' coordinator. This person can be someone from the organization, or recruited from outside of it, depending on the 'program's size and which are the financial resources available for its implementation. The volunteers' coordinator will be the main responsible for their management and includes tasks such as:

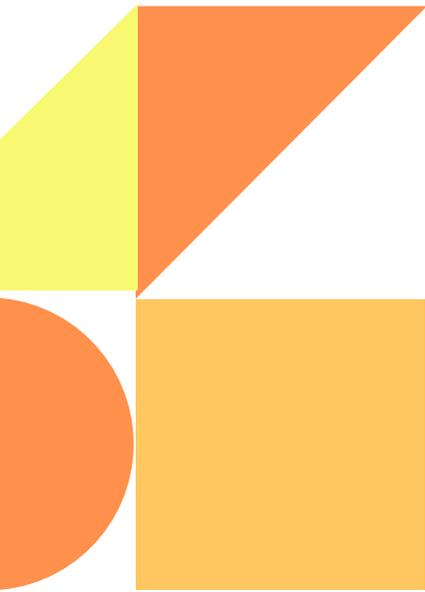
- recruiting and selecting volunteers;
- ensuring appropriate support and training for volunteers;
- ensuring constant coordination of the volunteering activities (preparing, supervising, monitoring, evaluating the activities carried by the volunteers);
- communicating with relevant stakeholders (inside and outside the organization);
- offering advice and information to volunteers through face-to-face



- managing budgets and resources, including the reimbursement of expenses;
- keeping up to date with legislation and policy related to volunteering;
- maintaining databases and undertaking any other administrative duties;
- informing the volunteers about the progress of the initiative.

Once the volunteers' coordinator has been selected, together with the program responsible, they will be working on the job description of the volunteers. They will be deciding upon the activities, as well as on their duration, of the voluntary work and come up with a document that will serve both in the volunteers' recruitment, but also in signing up the volunteering contracts. It will include:

- the name and the position of the volunteer;
- the purpose of the position created;
- the main responsibilities of the volunteer;
- to whom does the volunteer report;
- requirements (knowledge, skills, previous experience required);
- evaluation (means of evaluation for the results achieved);
- training (what competencies will the volunteer develop);

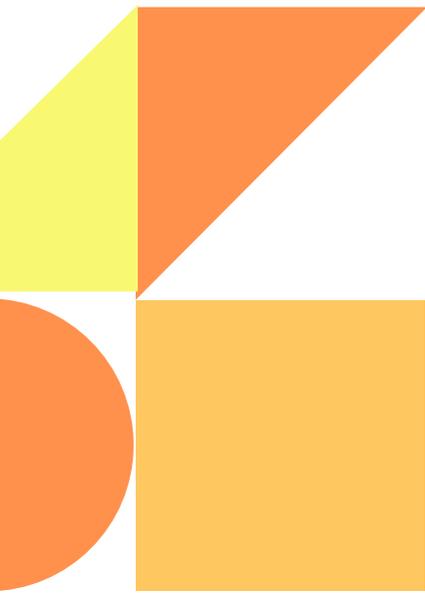


- duration of the contract and time required weekly;
- the 'volunteer's schedule (for the volunteering activities);
- benefits (what will the volunteer get out of this experience).

III. Preparing the organization's members for involving volunteers (employees, board)

Before moving forward, the members of the organization should be prepared and learn how to work with volunteers, what their needs are and how they can support them. The relationship between the volunteers and the paid staff is essential to determine the results obtained and building a strong connection between them is an important aspect to be considered by the 'volunteers' coordinator. Therefore, good preparation includes also understanding the attitude of the members of the organization towards the involvement of volunteers in the organization's activity. This can be performed either through an interview, or a questionnaire, and should refer to the following aspects:

1. The members' experience in working with volunteers:
 - if they ever supervised volunteers before;



- if they ever worked together with volunteers before;
- if they were involved personally in voluntary activities before;

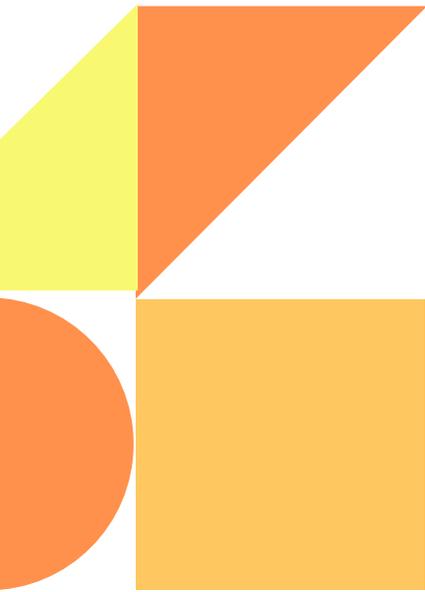
2. The members' attitude towards the 'volunteers' involvement in the s' 'organization's activity:

- the activities, or tasks, they believe volunteers 'shouldn't be involved in. Why?
- the type of training, volunteers should participate in, before starting their activity within the organization.

3. The members' potential fears regarding the 'volunteers' involvement in the organization:

- potential difficulties are foreseen (related to taking responsibility, quality assurance);
- potential fears related to losing one's job.

Once their attitude has been evaluated, the program manager should consider preparing the organization's employees in order to welcome the volunteers and integrate them within their work. Their preparation can be done through different means: from simple individual discussions to meetings or training, either way, the members of the



organization should be at least familiar with:

- What is volunteering? Volunteering law;
- Most common reasons why people decide to volunteer;
- Most frequent benefits, sought by the volunteers;
- Benefits and risks for the organization;
- Motivation techniques;
- Understanding the differences between a paid staff member, and a volunteer;
- The organization's procedures related to voluntary work.

Afterward, it is important to consult fellow colleagues in regard to the potential tasks of future volunteers. Making them part of this process provides everybody a better understanding of the 'volunteers' role within the implementation of the ECI and involves them in the decision-making.

IV. Preparing the organization culture (policies, procedures, forms: volunteer job description, contracts, timesheets, safety & security procedures, etc.)

Efficient volunteer management requires preparing the organization

to welcome the volunteers, after developing a set of documents, rules, and procedures that would help everybody understand their role, as well as their rights and responsibilities. They increase efficiency, by making sure that each volunteer understands what to do in certain situations, or whom to address. Presenting the procedures, as well as your expectations towards the volunteers, can be done through formal discussions, presentations, a brochure, or an online guideline.



2. Recruitment of Volunteers

Once the organization's needs have been identified and the job description developed, the very next step is the volunteers' recruitment. According to the needs identified and the context, the recruitment strategy approach may be different in various situations, but having the same goal: finding the most suitable people for the position available. While doing this, the person in charge of the recruitment process needs to make sure that both the organization's and the volunteer's needs are met. An effective volunteers' recruitment does not focus on convincing the people to do something they are not interested in, but rather to show the opportunity to those who already have the motivation to get involved.

People decide to volunteer for many reasons, which are different based on their motivation. When we start planning our recruitment strategy we should address in our communication most types of sources of motivation people may have. These include:

- to have a positive impact in society;
- to socialize and to make new friends;
- to get to know important people in the community;

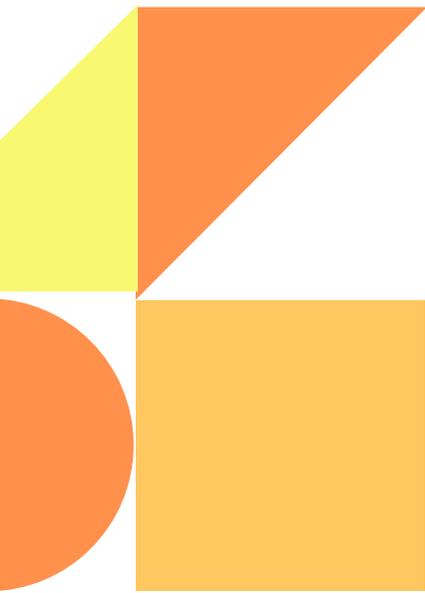
- to develop or practice skills;
- to earn experience that would help them get a job;
- to test the waters before making a career change;
- to get out of the house and escape boredom;
- to feel part of a group;
- to express a religious or philosophical belief;
- others.

Volunteering can be considered a leisure-time activity, similar to a game, therefore, in order to attract and keep volunteers, their involvement should bring them similar achievements: satisfaction, challenge, reward, or accomplishment. Moreover, in order to maintain their motivation over the program, volunteers seek the following aspects, important to be taken into consideration while designing their position:

Ownership - a sense of personal responsibility for something;

The authority to think - the ability to be part of the decision-making process;

Responsibility for results - making sure that the volunteers are held responsible for achieving the results expected, not only performing

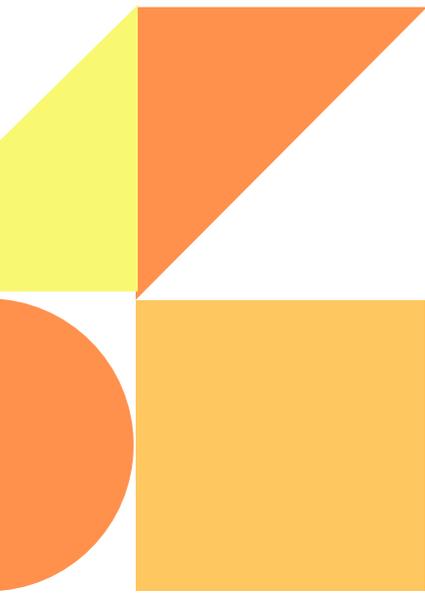


various tasks given by their superior;

Keeping Score - measuring the volunteers' performance and providing rewards.

The organization's first contact with the volunteer is done during the recruitment phase. Special attention given to its preparation leads to better results. For example, a proper position design focused on the volunteer's interests has more chances to attract motivated people. Professionalism is an important aspect most would find important when searching for a volunteering offer. It is first suggested through the job description the organization proposes, which should include at least: title, purpose, results expected, suggested activities, monitoring, supervision, qualifications needed, time frame, location of the activities, benefits, and information about the organization and about the cause supported through the European Citizen's Initiative. Creative and attractive communication also increases the chances for a more effective recruitment campaign.

The approach the organization decides to use when it comes to recruiting volunteers may be different, as different **techniques** may be used:



Warm body recruitment - It is effective when the volunteering activities do not require special skills or involve skills that anyone can be taught in a small amount of time. The strategy focuses on reaching as many people as possible, through different channels. It can be used for recruiting volunteers to support collecting signatures.

Targeted recruitment - It is used when the position requires certain specific competencies or knowledge. This type of recruitment focuses on searching for the right people, in the right places. It can be used to recruit people responsible for graphic design, communication, and public relations, etc.

Concentric circles - This is based on the assumption that the people who are already connected with the organization are the best target group for the recruitment campaign (as candidates, or for spreading the announcement).

Ambient recruitment - Consists in developing a volunteering culture among the members of the community where the organization is present and directing the recruitment campaign to a certain group of people.



Brokered recruitment - It connects the recruiting organization to another one that will act as an intermediate in the recruitment process

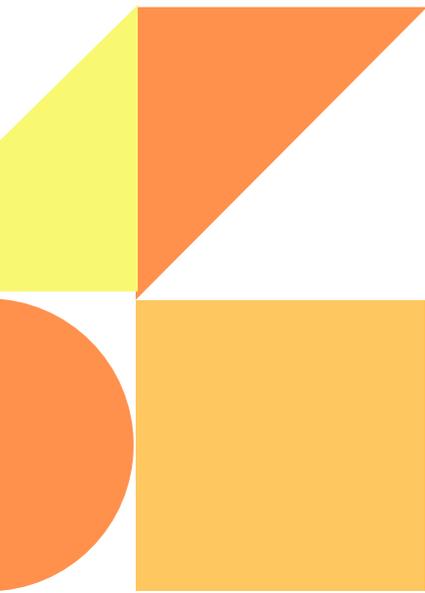
In order to establish which recruiting strategy would be the most effective, a set of questions should be addressed:

- What is the job that needs to be done?
- Who are the volunteers needed? What kind of competencies should they possess?
- Where can be found the most suitable candidates?
- How should the communication with them be? But the message transmitted?

In the communication with the potential candidates, important attention should be given to the **message created**, in order to increase the 'campaign's effectiveness. The message should include at least 4 elements:

The need - detailing the need identified within the community to which the volunteer will contribute to resolving.

The position - describing the role of the volunteer and what is their



The fears - addressing the potential fears the candidate may have towards their job.

The benefits - mentioning what the volunteers gain from getting involved and addressing potential needs they may have, relevant to their involvement in the program.

The message must be suitable for the **communication channel** used for spreading the call. The channels can be divided into 2 main categories: online and offline. Nowadays, communication has been mostly moved to the online environment, however, for some specific target groups (elderly people, people with no access to the internet), using offline means of communication can be as well a solution.

Online means of recruiting:

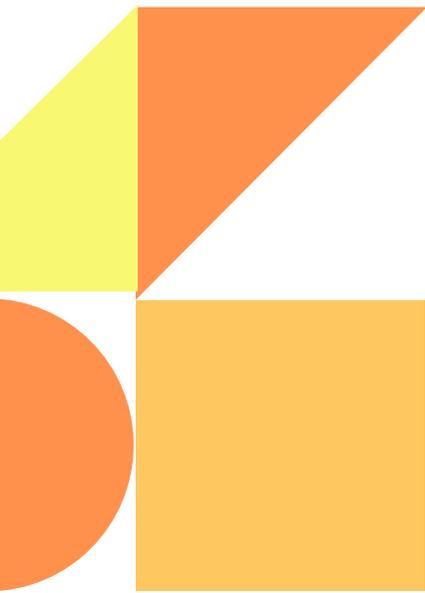
- Social Media posts and advertisements;
- Creating website posts and articles;
- Making use of newsletters and volunteers databases;
- Using online mass media;



Offline means of recruiting:

- Spreading brochures, flyers, and posters;
- Using local newspapers, or the radio;
- Receiving recommendations from other organizations;
- Volunteering fairs;

Constant recruiting is a practice used mostly in the corporate sector, however, it has been proved as a good practice. This implies keeping track of potential volunteers, those who express their interest to get involved, but for any reason, the organization receiving their request cannot engage them at that moment. At the time when a position is available, those who express their interest must be the first ones to be contacted. Constant recruiting can be done by collecting CVs on various occasions (e.g. volunteering fairs, during the organization's public events), or through an online form for contact data, which can be filled in by those interested, visiting the organization's website or social media accounts.



3. Selection of Volunteers

The selection process is based on a different strategy when it comes to volunteers, compared to paid staff, according to the literature, taking into consideration that volunteers put their time, knowledge, and abilities to the benefit of others, without expecting any financial rewards. Therefore, it is more relevant to talk about a matching process, through which the candidate is matched with one of the roles available within the organization. When this is done, aspects related to the candidate's motivation, time availability, values, required knowledge, abilities, and attitudes should be taken into consideration. It is important once the selection is finished, that the organization's needs and interests are met, while the volunteer feels comfortable with the role assigned, and their characteristics (personality, behavior, working style) match the organization's working environment.

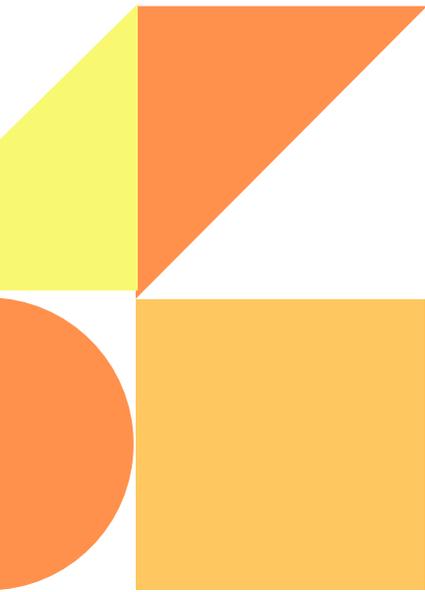
In the selection process, there is a variety of tools and methods one can use in order to choose the most suitable candidate. They can be used individually or a combination of them, and include:

Application forms: represent a structured way of collecting the infor-

mation about the candidates, in a centralized manner. When used individually, it is mostly due to a need for a big number of volunteers (e.g. for collecting signatures, for organizing an event) or when the volunteering position is time-limited and has a short duration. When it is wanted to have a better perspective over the candidates, the application form serves as a filter before scheduling an interview.

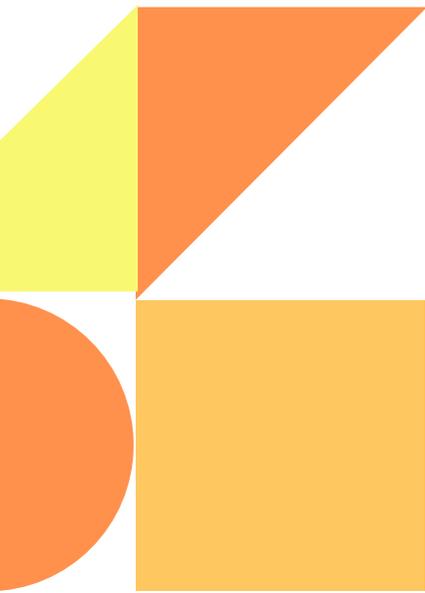
Motivation letters: through this method, one could understand the motivation of a candidate to apply for a certain position, as well as relevant information about their previous experiences. Since it is a subjective way to relate things, it is recommended to ask for a CV in addition to the motivation letter, in order to better understand the 'candidate's background.

References: represent recommendations received from a trustworthy third party (former, or current volunteers, staff members, other organizations) who has a professional relationship with the candidate. It is useful when a volunteer is needed for a short time activity. The method can be used in combination with application forms, or selection interviews.



Selection interviews: is the most complex selection method used in this process, which allows the organization to obtain a comprehensive set of information about the candidate. At the same time, it offers the person interviewed the chance to better understand the organization and its requirements, as well as the vision of the volunteering program. During a selection interview, the interviewer is expected to collect relevant information about the candidate: their education and training, experience, knowledge, abilities, skills, values, and qualities, as well as about their expectations from the volunteering program and from the organization. This method is useful when a volunteer with extraordinary skills or knowledge is needed for a position, or when the volunteer is selected for a long-term program.

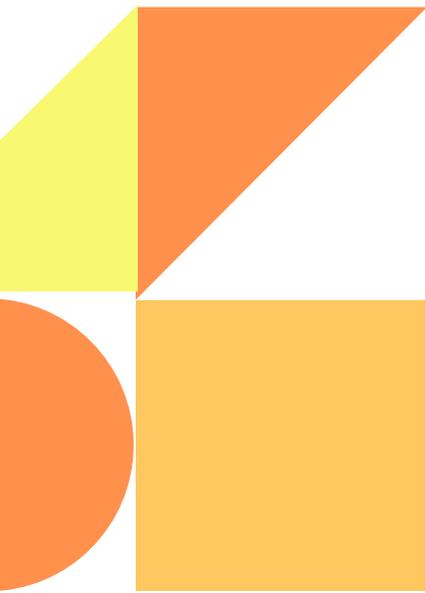
An interview needs great preparation and resources involved. It all starts with assigning a person, or a group of people, responsible to conduct the interview. Unless there is a person in the organization in charge of the human 'resources' management, the interviewer should be the person coordinating the volunteers. It is preferable to have two people taking the interview: one to lead the discussion with the candidate and one to take notes. The interviewer(s) should consider the following aspects when preparing for an interview:



1. Pre-interview preparation: the interviewer should pay attention to the interview site (making sure that it is accessible, creates a comfortable atmosphere and has enough privacy). They should be ready to answer any questions regarding the organization or related to the volunteering program and the positions available. The interviewer should also prepare a list of questions (informative and open-ended ones) before meeting a candidate. If the candidate has filled in a form, sent their CV, or a motivation letter, the interviewer (or the committee) should take a look at them and build up some questions based on the information already known about the candidate.

2. Opening the interview: the interview should start with making the candidate feel welcomed and providing background information about the organization and the volunteering program.

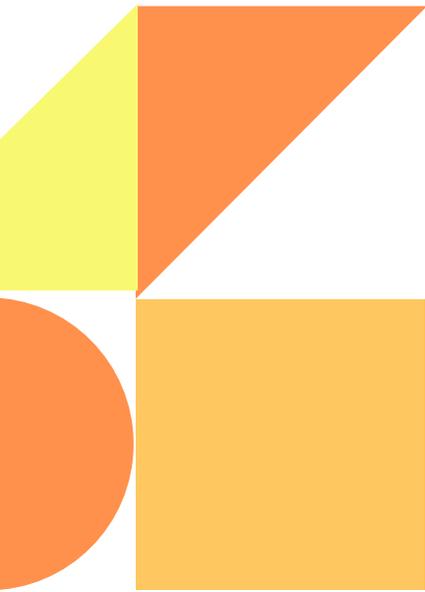
3. Conducting the interview: it is the time to learn more about the applicant (knowledge, abilities, attitudes, motivation) and to discuss the position(s) available, trying to make them understand what their role would be, as well as their responsibilities. The interviewer should clarify the organization's requirements from the volunteer and explain the potential benefits.



4. Closing the interview: at the end, the candidate should be explained the next steps, when should they expect an answer from the organization, and be allowed to ask for clarifications, or for further information.

5. Follow up: making a decision and communicating it to the candidate. In case of a positive answer, the volunteer should be contacted to discuss the next steps, including details about the working hours, volunteering contract, etc.

Rejecting a volunteer: it is not always easy to say no to a candidate, especially when it comes to someone who decided to volunteer, but sometimes, due to different factors (the candidate's lack of time, potential incompatibility with the position, or with the organization, the organization's insufficient resources) it is preferable to refuse someone, rather than risking to create dissatisfaction or frustration on either side. Ideally, even in case of a negative answer, the candidate should be contacted to be informed about the final decision and given feedback and recommendations on what to improve in the future. Before rejecting a candidate, the applicant can be proposed to be put on a future contact list or to be redirected to another organization.

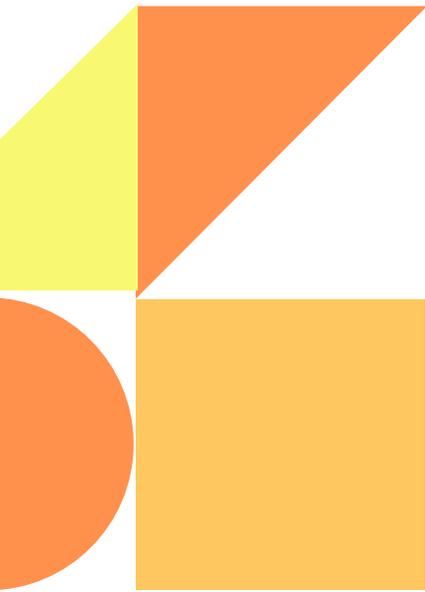


4. Orientation and Training

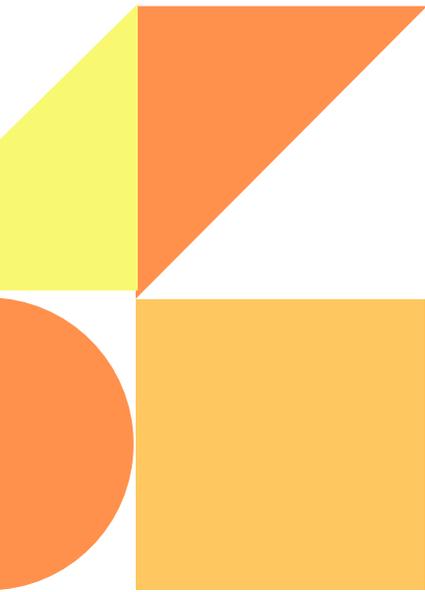
As stated by the literature, orientation and training represent one of the key aspects in the **retention of the volunteers**. Both activities require a systematic and thorough preparation, in order to successfully equip the volunteer with the information and skills required to perform their activity within the organization, in the benefit of the European Citizens' Initiative coordinated.

Orientation, also known as induction, represents the process of preparing the volunteer for a clear relationship with the organization and the ECI team and project. It should help the volunteer better understand the organization, the ECI, and the team behind it, but also their role within it and should provide them a comprehensive understanding of the organization's background, as well as practical knowledge about it. This activity should allow the volunteer to answer the following questions:

- **"Why should I be working here?"** The volunteer should learn about the history of the organization and about the target group it serves. They should understand the problem and the causes addressed through the ECI, as well as its core values. They should

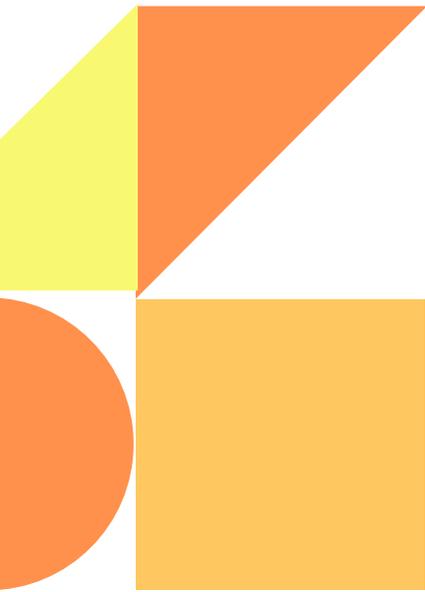


- understand the problem and the causes addressed through the ECI, as well as its core values. They should learn about other programs, projects, and services the organization implements, or will be implemented in the near future.
- **How will I be working here?"** At the end of the orientation, the volunteer should be able to understand the structure of the organization and how it works, its internal rules and procedures. They should be presented with the requirements, as well as the potential benefits. During the orientation, the volunteers should be introduced to the facilities and equipment they have access to. At this step, an introduction to their position should be delivered, in order to better understand their activity within the organization, or how they can get involved.
- **Where do I fit in with everyone else?"** During the orientation, it is important that the volunteer is welcomed and introduced to the whole team, including the leadership of the organization and the ECI team. They should be presented with any kind of elements specific to the organization's culture.



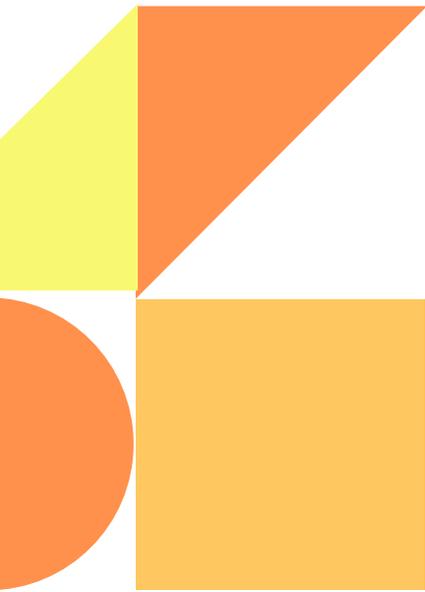
When preparing for the orientation activity, it is important to understand that the whole process is meant to make the volunteer feel more comfortable with the organization. Thus, the information should be delivered in a way that actively engages the volunteers in the activities prepared, so that the intellectual, practical, and emotional bond between them and the organization is established. For example, non-formal education-based methods can be used in order to allow an interactive and fun experience, such as ice breakers, get to know each other activities, treasure hunts, teamwork activities, quizzes, etc.

Training represents the process of providing volunteers with the ability to perform specific types of work. During training, the volunteer can develop new skills, improve the ones they already have, or learn about the organization's work specifications. When designing a training activity, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: the attitudes, skills, and knowledge one needs in order to successfully perform their work. The training should meet the requirements of the 'volunteer's position, but also their learning needs. Training activities can be delivered not only at the beginning of the volunteering program, but also during it, so it gives the chance to the volunteers to learn new things, or to improve what they already know.



The training content can be delivered in different manners, including a variety of techniques and methods.

- **Formal training** aims to equip the volunteer with the required attitudes, skills, and knowledge in order to perform their job. The information can be presented using different methods, such as lectures, readings, discussions, field trips, videos, panel discussions, demonstrations, role-playing, case studies, simulations, etc. Formal training allows the volunteer to understand what they have to do and how to perform.
- **On-the-job training** gives the volunteer a hands-on experience, by actually trying out a task after participating in a demonstration and receiving feedback afterward. Analyzing the results and the experience is an important step in the learning process when using this training format.
- **Counselling** gives the volunteer the opportunity to be assisted in doing a task and solving a problem (whenever it pops up), by taking responsibility for a potential improvement in their work. When doing so, the volunteer, together with their supervisor, should identify the problem and its cause, identify potential alternatives and the best solution to the problem and learn from the experience.



5. Supervision of Volunteers

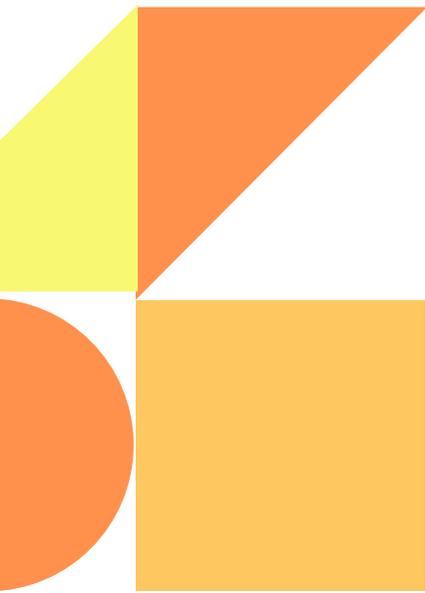
The **purpose of the supervision** process is to empower the volunteer to become more autonomous and independent. It is crucial for an effective and efficient learning process of the volunteer as well as for the achievement of the ' 'program's results and objectives. Supervision has three main functions: managerial, educational, and supportive. It helps the organization preserve the quality work standards and achieve the results expected from the initiative. It is also focused on the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the individual, by constantly providing feedback and consultancy to the volunteer. On the other hand, it addresses the emotional aspects of volunteering work. The organization must create a safe space where the volunteers are able to share their feelings about their work, or any issues around it, and support the volunteer to overcome the eventual difficulties.

In general, the volunteers' coordinator will be the main person responsible for supervising the volunteers. For this, they need a set of special competencies related to the communication process, such as active listening, assertiveness, empathy, and being able to offer useful and meaningful feedback. It is important that the coordinator under-

stands the needs of each volunteer and provides them constant and custom support. The most important aspects the volunteers expect from their coordinator are:

- to set the standards,
- to provide consultancy and guidance,
- to answer questions,
- to evaluate their performance,
- to give them feedback.

Supervision is a **continuous process** which, if done properly, grows significantly the 'volunteers' work satisfaction. Supervision can be done in a group, or individually. The group meetings are more efficient and useful when the entire team is involved in the same activities, allowing the coordinator to analyze the group's performance and work strategy. It is recommended that at the end, the coordinator is available for individual discussions if requested. Otherwise, individual meetings allow the discussion to be more detailed and create a better connection, but it is more costly for the coordinator, in terms of time and energy invested. It is useful to have periodic supervision meetings, focused on the current activities and events.



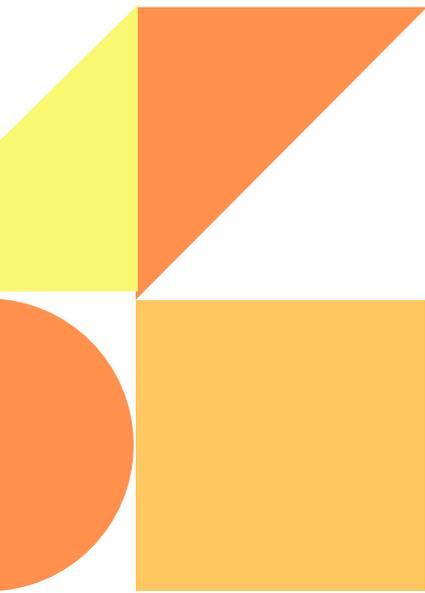
During a supervision meeting, the volunteer coordinator discusses with the volunteer, or with the group of volunteers, based on a set of predefined questions that will help them understand the potential challenges the volunteer encounters. The coordinator does not only have the role of a facilitator, but it is useful for the volunteer to hear their opinions and advice. In a discussion, the coordinator will first listen to the ' 'volunteer's opinion, will guide them through questions to help them have a better understanding of the situation, followed by a discussion involving both sides about the next steps. The questions addressed have different functions, based on their use:

Questions for clarification

- How do you feel about your volunteering activity in general?
- Are you satisfied with your role? How do you feel about your tasks?
- How do you feel within the team and the organization?
- What are the main aspects you enjoy about your activity? What about the things you do not like in your work?

Questions for evaluation

- How would you evaluate your performance?

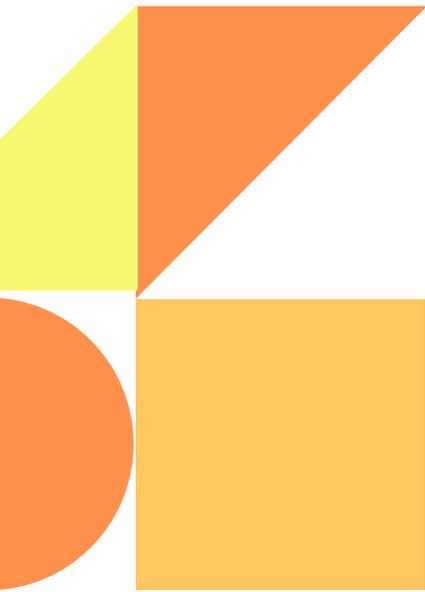


- Are things going as planned? Why?
- How can the program be improved?
- Did you receive adequate training and support?

Question for planning

- What can you do better in the future?
- What are your main learnings from this experience?
- What obstacles may you encounter in your activity?
- What strategy can you follow to overcome these obstacles?
- If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

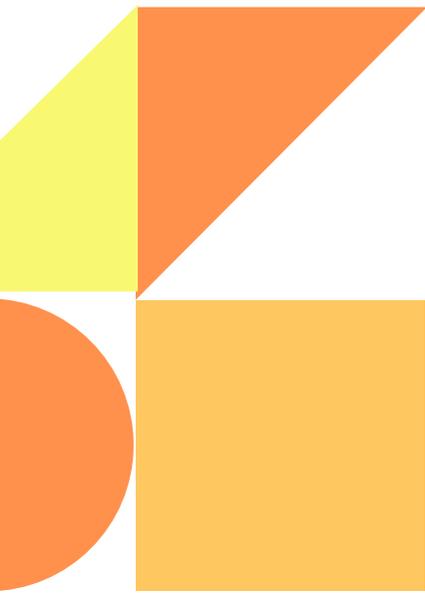
The role of the supervision meetings is to support the volunteer in identifying the potential problems and offer the help needed to overcome them successfully. The coordinator should be open to discussing the emotional aspects of the volunteering work that the individual deals with. Communication is an important aspect that the supervision process helps with. A good supervisor makes sure that relationships based on equality and collegiality are built between the volunteers, as well as between the volunteers and the employees. Their role is to address communication issues or to solve potential conflicts. During the supervision meetings, the coordinator should



provide constructive feedback to the volunteer, as well as show gratitude for their efforts. One of the feedback techniques the supervisor may use is the Key-Start-Stop method. This way, the volunteers understand what are the positive aspects of their work (what to keep and continue doing), what they should improve (or start doing), and what actions or behaviors should stop. The supervisor should not be afraid to communicate negative feedback, if 'one's actions and behaviors affect the 'results' accomplishment, or have a negative impact on the team. It is very common that the volunteer is not aware of the 'others' perspective and understanding it will only help them grow and improve their work and relationships. A supervision session may end by congratulating the volunteer for the great things they have done, or by reporting some mistakes and building up a plan that will help the volunteer be in control in the future in order to improve their performance and relationships.

The support and supervision should reflect the following principles:

Climate: It is vital to foster a climate that allows the volunteers to ask for help. A point of contact for support should always be available.

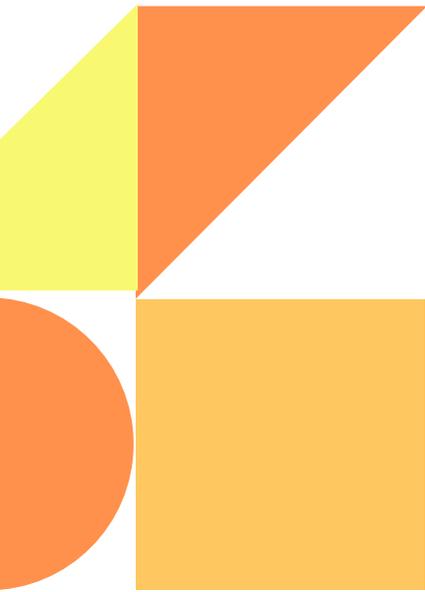


Equally, supervision must be seen as a part of the volunteer experience and not something that only happens when there is a problem.

Accessibility: Support and supervision must be provided at appropriate times and places for volunteers.

Flexibility: This is the ability to accommodate the needs of individual volunteers.

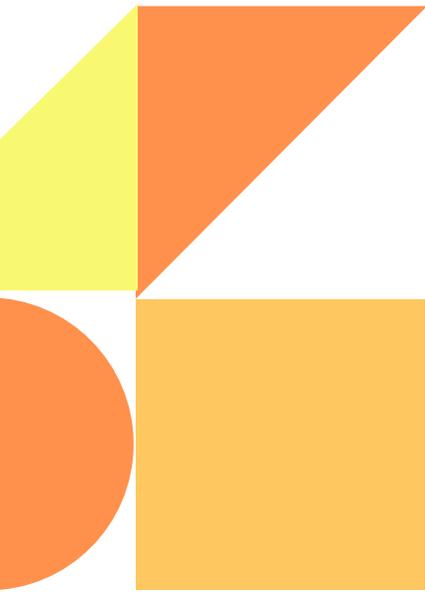
Appropriateness: The support given must bear some relationship to the work that volunteers are being asked to do as well as being obviously helpful for them.



6. Monitoring of Volunteers

Monitoring in volunteer management is defined as a **continuous assessment of the volunteer's activities** to ensure they are **on course** and **on schedule** in meeting the program's objectives

Monitoring involves observing the volunteer's work and identifying potential problems in order to bring the program back on track by taking required corrective actions. Unlike supervision which represents a proactive approach, by constantly supporting the volunteer in conducting their work, monitoring is focused on the activities already implemented, by comparing the results obtained with the indicators set when designing the program. As in comparison with the evaluation phase of the volunteer program, monitoring represents an ongoing process whose purpose is to improve efficiency and adjust the work plan, while evaluation helps with the assessment of the program in order to improve effectiveness, evaluate the impact and results of the program and support future planning. It is important to constantly check the volunteer's work, in order to make sure they are making progress towards the target, rather than waiting until the end and finding different results than expected.



Proper monitoring constantly **analyses the indicators** set in order to measure whether the program is successful or not. Through monitoring, it is observed the degree of implementation of the volunteering work plan, throughout the program, as well as the progress in meeting the program's objectives. Indicators are measurable and are represented by a percentage or a number that will allow the comparison between the desired objective and the current situation, at any moment of evaluation.

By **setting regular checkpoints**, it is ensured that the volunteers make constant progress and last-minute, poor-quality work is avoided. A variety of methods may be used in order to record the information from the volunteers in a systematic and clear manner. For a good overview of the volunteers' progress, it is recommended to use a combination of different methods that allow both a quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The methods include:

Timesheets: illustrate the activities performed by the volunteer, together with the amount of time consumed.

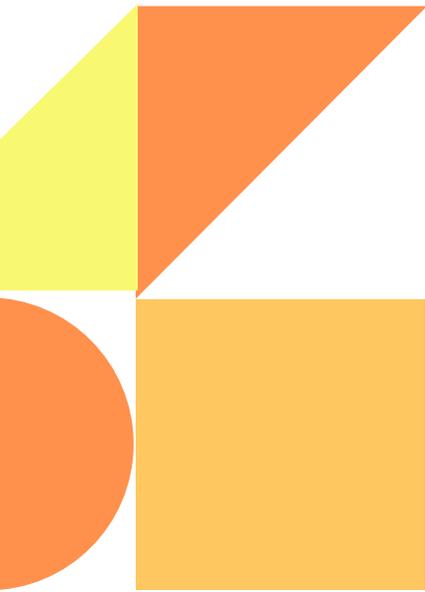
Questionnaires: it allows a centralised manner for collecting the vo-

lunteers' answers regarding their progress. They can be created both online, or on paper.

Progress reports: a comprehensive manner of evaluating one's work. The tool allows a better understanding of the volunteering performance, focusing rather on open-ended questions.

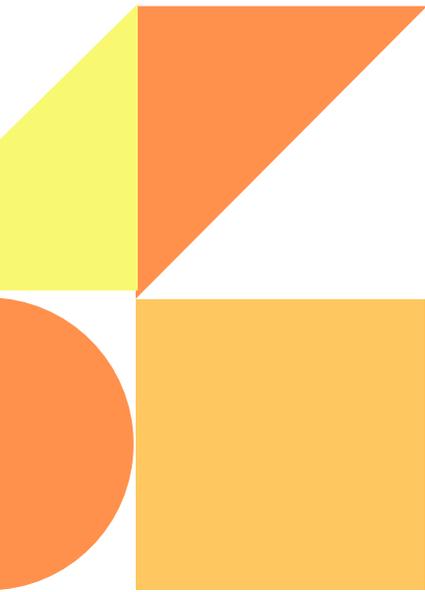
Interviews: represent discussions with the volunteer. The person responsible for monitoring prepares a set of questions and will guide the volunteer through them while taking notes. There can be group interviews or individual ones.

When conducting monitoring activities, it is also a good opportunity to request feedback from the volunteer, but also to give them feedback regarding their work. It is important to constantly request feedback from their side, to better understand what the organization can do to support them in being more efficient and productive. On the other side, the volunteers' coordinator should have a follow-up activity with the volunteers, letting them know the conclusions of the monitoring process, as well as the potential aspects to be improved. Possible decisions about work plan adjustments should be made together.

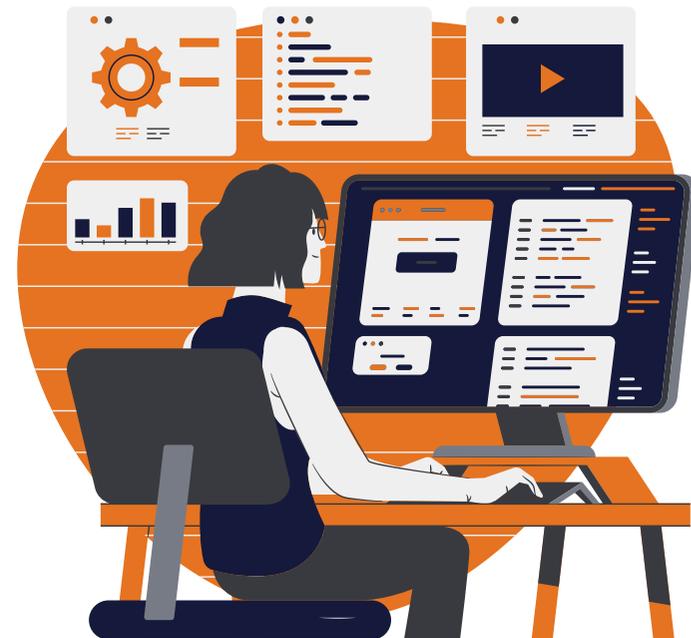


The standards expected from the volunteers must be discussed within the team, before the actual start of the volunteering activity. It is important to communicate the expectations, goals, rules, and procedures, as well as the checkpoints and monitoring methods used from the beginning. It is mandatory to refuse poor performance and rather encourage an open environment, where issues are openly discussed and combated through creative, flexible solutions, that allow each part to be satisfied and the work plan not to be affected.

Monitoring and supervising volunteers working remotely, especially in a volunteers-led European Citizens Initiative, may be challenging. The separation between the project team and the volunteers may lead to potential frustration, inefficient communication, and poor performance, as people are used to working in a shared environment. Under these circumstances, it is important that it is created a sense of connection and bonding between the team members. Volunteers work better if they feel connected to the organization and the other people they are working with. In order to approach this issue, it is important striving to achieve a sense of personal contact between the project team and the volunteers. This will allow also the individuals to trust more their coordinators and feel comfortable being supervised, or monitored. It is

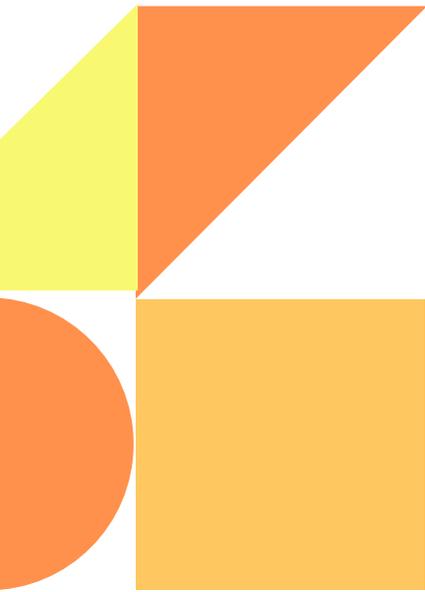


important that the bond is created from the very beginning, supported by a welcoming and inclusive environment. Frequent interactive meetings will also help the volunteers develop a sense of belonging. It is recommended to include ice-breakers and getting-to-know-each-other games in these meetings, in order to facilitate the connection process. Good communication must be encouraged, so it becomes natural for the volunteers to consult or to update their superiors more frequently.



7. Motivating Volunteers

Maintaining the volunteers' motivation is always the most challenging aspect in volunteer management and it is in fact not just one step or the 7th step chronologically. It is rather a **horizontal approach** and attitude towards the volunteers' involvement. It includes all the different initiatives taken during the whole volunteering program that in the end bring quality to the volunteer management process and ensure the motivation of the volunteers involved. Motivation represents the reason behind the actions of each of us. It is what gives one energy and directs their behavior. In volunteer management, the organization usually struggles in finding ways to keep the 'volunteers' motivation high, in order to benefit from their involvement, as they cannot be remunerated, or profit from other financial benefits, as in the case of paid staff. Motivating the volunteers should not be a reactive action to unmotivated individuals, but rather a set of actions undertaken by the organization through the whole volunteering program in order to prevent the volunteer from losing interest, or lowering the standards. Understanding what motivates each individual helps the coordinator not only to support the volunteer but to create an environment that fulfills the volunteer's needs. Keeping the volunteers'



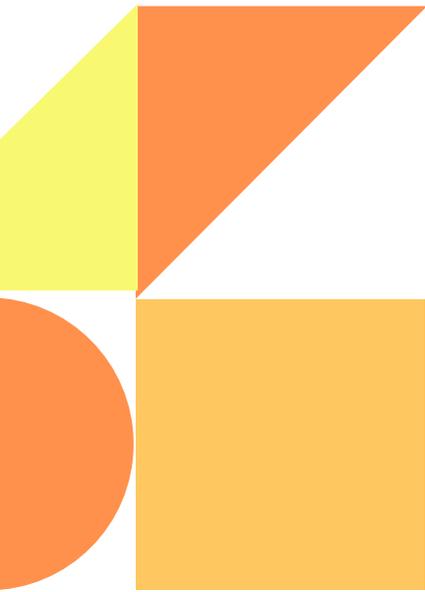
motivation high helps the organization with its retention, as it is more costly to have continuous recruitment, than working on motivating the current volunteers within the team.

When we address the volunteers' motivation, what we actually do is to identify each 'individual's needs and try to meet them through custom actions. There are different types of people based on the needs that have to be fulfilled in their work in order to keep them motivated:

The need for power: these people like to feel in control, or to have a sense of authority and influence over the other volunteers. They enjoy sharing their ideas, or giving advice and aim to gain a positive reputation or obtain an important position.

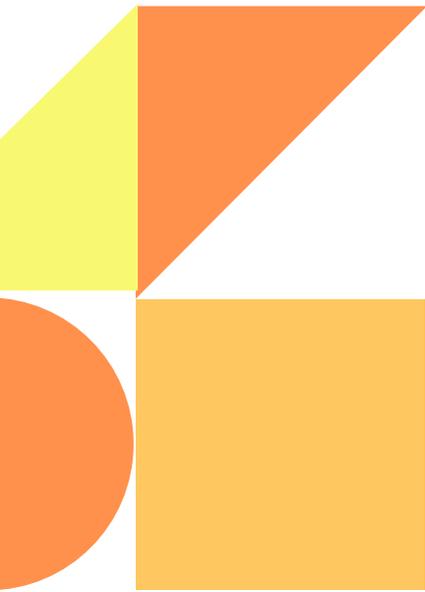
The need for achievement: these people are usually motivated whenever they successfully fulfill their responsibilities and others acknowledge their contribution. They want to achieve important objectives and reach concrete outputs.

The need for affiliation: these people need to feel accepted and liked by others. They enjoy interacting and working in a team while being concerned about how the other team members feel.

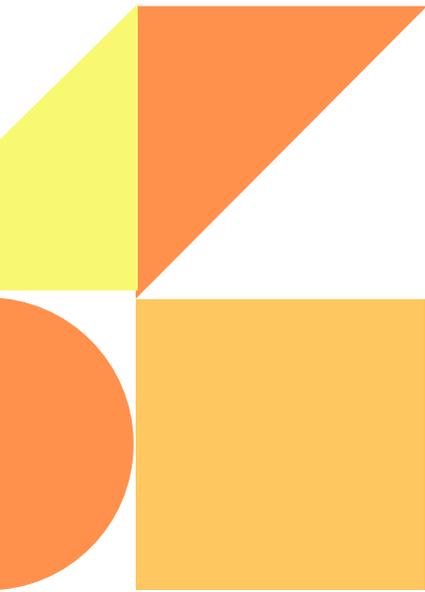


There can be also a combination of two or even three categories, but there is always one that is more prominent. The key to retaining volunteers is to make sure that they are getting their motivational needs met, through their volunteering experience. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the organization must ensure that the volunteers are motivated throughout their whole activity, and must take proactive initiatives to maintain it. This includes:

- creating a motivating role, that allows the volunteer to feel that they contribute to a cause in accordance with their values and beliefs;
- having a clear description of the tasks and setting realistic objectives;
- creating a motivational environment, with well-established procedures and rules, that allow the volunteer to be more independent. This helps them understand better their role within the organization, what to do, or how to react in certain situations;
- ensuring a positive working environment and relationship with the paid staff. Making sure that the employees treat the volunteers as equals;
- creating a motivating recruitment message, focused on the mission of the initiative, as well as on its benefits and development opportunities;

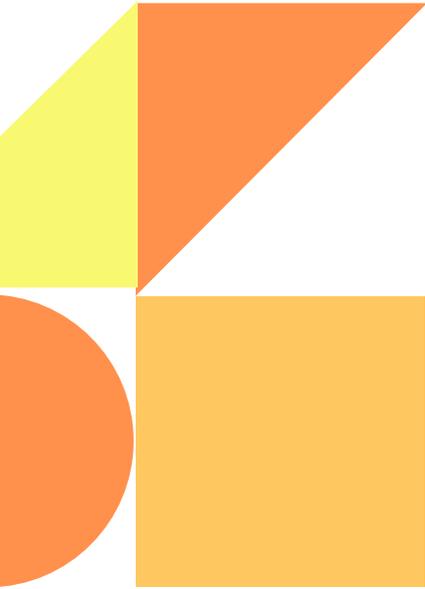


- maintaining transparent communication with the candidates, during the selection phase, offering space for potential volunteers to ask for feedback;
- congratulating the selected volunteers and making them feel welcomed in the team;
- offering orientation and training opportunities to help the volunteer integrate and learn about their role in the organization, as well as to develop or improve competencies related to their position;
- constantly giving constructive feedback and support;
- allowing the volunteer to be independent and providing a hands-on experience through their tasks;
- managing well the volunteer's time and talents;
- taking into consideration their feedback and suggestions;
- expressing recognition and appreciation.



8. Recognition of Merits

The recognition represents the **acknowledgment of the volunteer's efforts** and it is linked to their motivation. It represents the way of showing appreciation to the individual and rewarding them for their contribution. Recognition helps with the 'volunteers' retention, giving them a sense of accomplishment and belonging. On the other hand, it contributes to the volunteer's morale and work satisfaction, by ensuring the individual that their involvement is meaningful for the organization and for the cause the ECI addresses. Recognition of merits can be conveyed through numerous initiatives that combine both formal and informal methods.



Formal recognition includes giving awards, certificates, badges, access to extraordinary training or learning opportunities, recognition dinners, or showing gratitude during public events. On the other hand, **informal recognition** takes place on a daily basis, in the interaction between the volunteer and the organization, by simply showing appreciation or thanking the volunteer for their contribution.

The way to keep the volunteers engaged in the organization is to de-

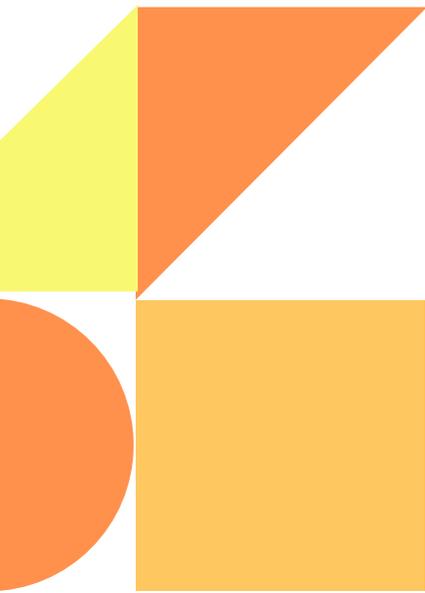
termine what motivates them and then recognize their merits based on their motivations. In order to be effective, the recognition should be personalized for each volunteer. Recognition of the merits, based on the volunteer's type of motivation should include:

For power-oriented volunteers

- impressive job titles;
- opportunity to be promoted;
- access to information;
- letters of recommendation noting their impact;
- being introduced to people with influence
- recognition from the people with authority within the organization;

For achievement-oriented volunteers

- tangible rewards
- additional training;
- more challenging tasks;
- letter of recommendation noting specific accomplishments;
- being included in staff meetings when appropriate;
- managing their time efficiently;



For affiliation-oriented volunteers

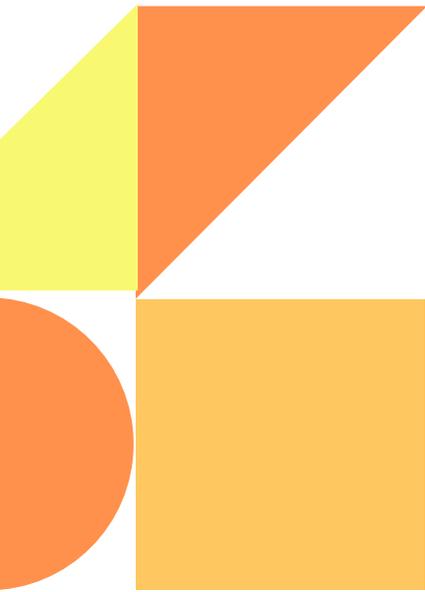
- public recognition;
- cards, gifts on special occasions;
- unexpected thank you notes/emails;
- personalized awards;
- group events and social outings;
- showcasing their work through pictures made available for the public;
- being considered to give input about the clientele.

Daily means of providing recognition include:

- saying "thank you";
- congratulating the volunteers when they did a great job;
- asking for their opinion;
- showing interest in their personal life;
- inviting them to informal activities;
- giving them compliments;

Intermediate means of providing recognition include:

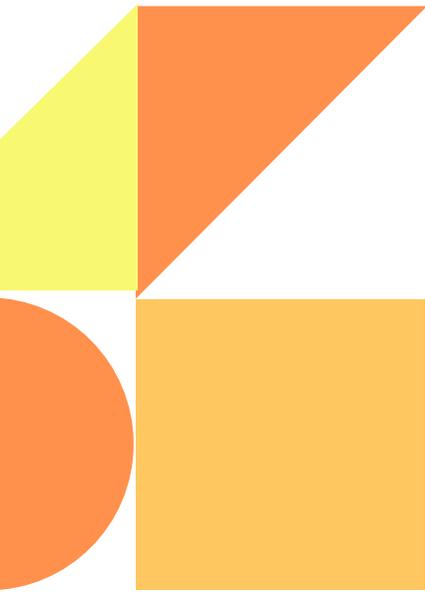
- writing a letter of recommendation;
- putting the volunteers in important task forces or committees;



- posting graphic displays, showing progress toward targets;
- mentioning major contributors by name in reports;
- inviting the volunteers to present their results;
- giving permission to go to seminars or other meetings;
- celebrating the volunteer's birthday;
- allowing the volunteers to represent the organization on important occasions;
- having the management write them a thanking message;
- celebrating the major accomplishments of a volunteer.
- including them in the organization's newsletter.

Major means of providing recognition include:

- creating personalized merchandise;
- networking opportunities;
- giving additional responsibilities and a new title;
- awarding the best volunteer, or best volunteer team;
- creating a suggestion and recommendation box.

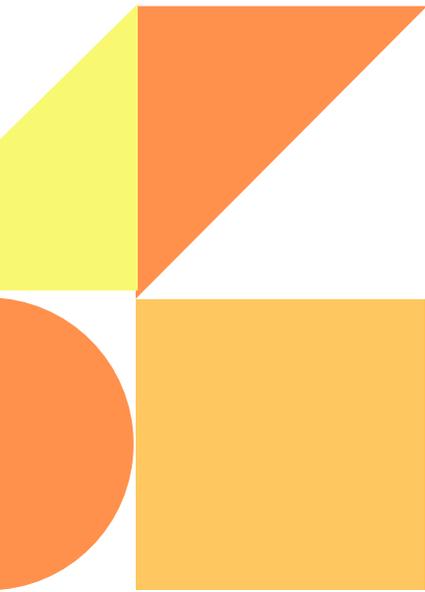


9. Evaluation of the program

Evaluation is obviously a key element in analyzing **whether or not a program was successful**. When evaluating a volunteering program, the organization also needs to look closely at the way volunteers performed, the way their involvement brought value to the organization and the cause supported, and also to the way they felt like part of the program. When evaluating volunteers, the organization should start from the 'volunteer's job description and get various points of view in order to reach a conclusion. This process helps assessing to what extent the goals of the program were reached and what has to be improved in the future,

There are different ways to evaluate whether the program was successful:

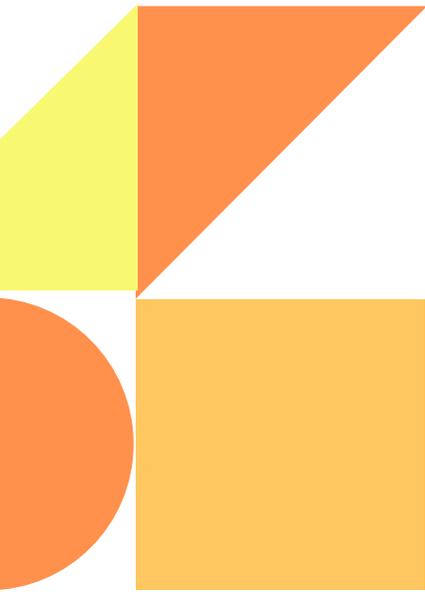
- **mission-based evaluation:** measures the impact of the volunteer program and to what extent the volunteers helped the organization achieve the goals set within the mission of the ECI;
- **output-based evaluation:** examines the results obtained within the program, by comparing them with the indicators set when designing the program;



- **standards-based evaluation:** evaluates the effectiveness of the volunteer program comparing it to the standards of operation;

In the evaluation phase, we put together all the results obtained by examining all monitoring documents (timesheets, progress reports, etc.). It is important however to allow the volunteers to self-evaluate their overall performance and learning experience, as well as to provide feedback about the program. This will help the organization gather very useful information which can be used to change and improve the program, or other future initiatives. When we measure the 'volunteers' performance, we basically formulate questions, collect and analyze data, modify plans and actions if needed. The evaluation can be done through surveys, reports, or interviews with the volunteers leaving.

The evaluation of the program should focus both on quantitative and qualitative indicators. From a quantitative perspective, the evaluation should address the results obtained, in comparison with the indicators set during the program design, the numbers of volunteers involved, volunteer hours and eventually the value of the volunteer time. The last one can be calculated based on a minimum wage system,



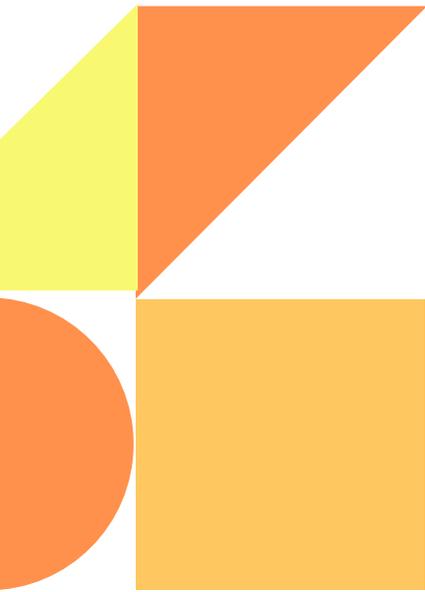
considering the number of volunteer hours multiplied with the minimum wage/hour in the state, the volunteer is established. The results can be framed in an infographic, in order to help the organization communicate the program's impact to stakeholders. From a qualitative perspective, the organization should evaluate:

The work of the volunteer:

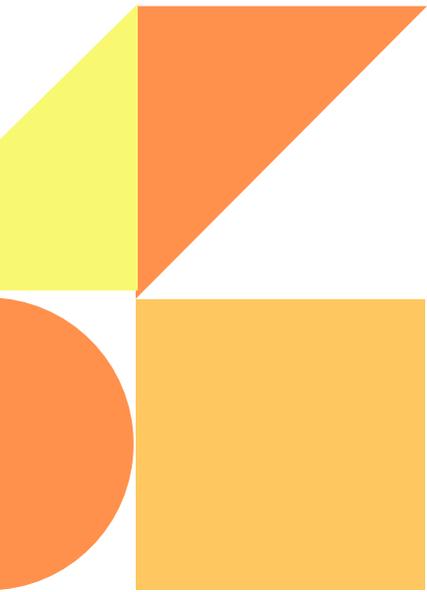
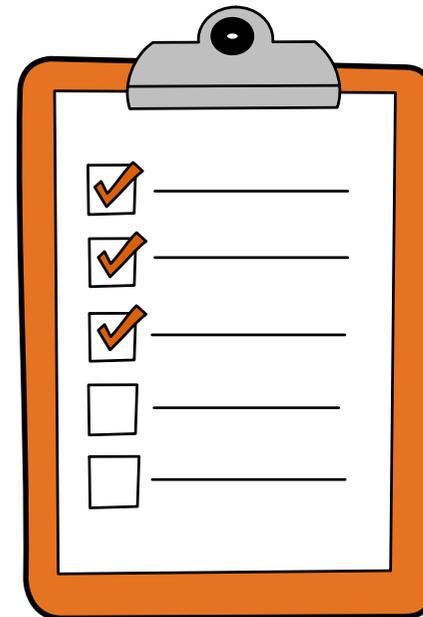
- How did the volunteer feel in their position and about the tasks delegated?
- Did they successfully complete the tasks given?
- Did the job meet the 'volunteer's expectations and reach their potential?
- Were there any obstacles in fulfilling their tasks? Were there any delays?
- Did they have enough support?

The personal growth of the volunteer:

- Did the volunteer achieve what they assumed in the program?
- Did the activities help them achieve their goals?
- Did the volunteer improve or develop new competencies?



Evaluation represents an important phase for the future of the initiative and for the organization. It represents a way to inspire and enrich the organization, and **improve the coordinators' and volunteers' performance**. Evaluation helps to measure the efficiency and the personal development of each individual. It also benefits the volunteer who should be provided constructive feedback to help them reach their full potential and grow further personally and professionally. This allows the volunteer to reflect on their achievements, strengths, and weaknesses. In the end, their efforts should be rewarded with a certificate, letter of recommendation, or other means that reflect their involvement in the program.



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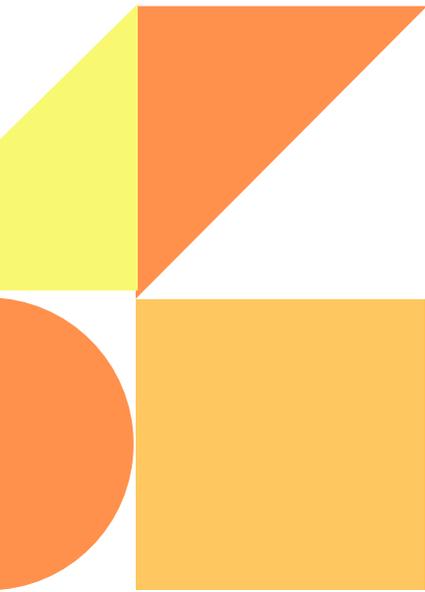
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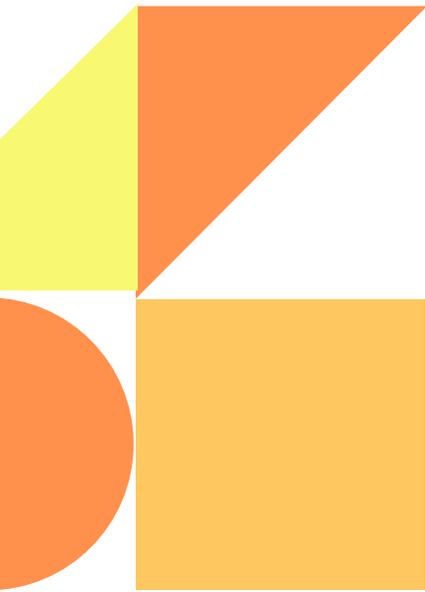


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