



# **GUIDANCE**

## RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF LEARNING IN VOLUNTEERING





## This guidance is for

- **Organisations** who plan to develop (or to enhance) their own recognition and validation strategy
- **Volunteers** who want to reflect and show what they have achieved in volunteering
- **Employers** to explore the hidden potential of (future) staff

*The measures organisations take to acknowledge, assess and make transparent what a volunteer has gained through volunteering depend on many things. A validation and recognition strategy cannot just be copied.*

*This guidance may help to get the process around recognition and validation **(R+V)** started.*

### What do we understand by recognition of learning?

Acknowledgement of new and existing skills and knowledge developed

### What do we understand by validation of learning?

"Validation is based on the assessment of the individual's learning outcomes and may result in a certificate or diploma" ([www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu))

## Why is it useful for **volunteers** to work on R+V?

Recognition of learning can bring different benefits to volunteers, for example:

- personal development
- higher quality of their volunteer activities
- capability to move into other kinds of volunteering
- part-credit for (vocational) education/qualification
- improved position in the labour market



## Why is it useful for **organisations working with volunteers** to have an R+V strategy?

Recognition of learning can:

- contribute to the way the organisation rewards the volunteers
- attract new volunteers
- help to develop partnerships with other stakeholders
- improve volunteer management





Also **employers** can benefit from recognition of learning in volunteering!

It can help employers to:

- Become aware of the value of volunteering
- Discover hidden talents of their employees
- Find new employees who can offer something special
- Encourage and benefit from “employee volunteering”
- Promote Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

There is evidence that volunteering enhances people’s competencies: A research study of the City of London ([www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)) on learning and development of 546 volunteers working in schools and colleges shows that volunteers reflect development of skills and competencies across a broad range of business-relevant areas, e.g.

- Communication skills, including the ability to communicate clearly and concisely with a wide range of people and listen actively.
- Ability to help others, set individual performance goals, coach and counsel, provide training and development and evaluate performance.
- Adaptability and ability to be effective in different surroundings and with different tasks, responsibilities and people.
- Influencing and negotiating skills, including persuading others, resolving conflicts and negotiating agreed solutions.





## **Things to consider**

How to develop an R+V strategy

### **Why do we want it?**

More accreditation of volunteering? Development of competences? Feedback? Raising employability? Self-Assessment of Volunteers? Enhance volunteer management?

### **Who wants it?**

The volunteer? The organisation? Politicians?

### **Who are our target groups?**

Potential employers? Wider Society? Politicians? Volunteers? What are their wishes and needs?

### **How to make the tool more attractive?**

### **Which resources are available?**

People? Time? Financial resources?

**.. and finally: Which tools and methods should be used?**

## Examples for tools and methods to recognize and validate learning in volunteering

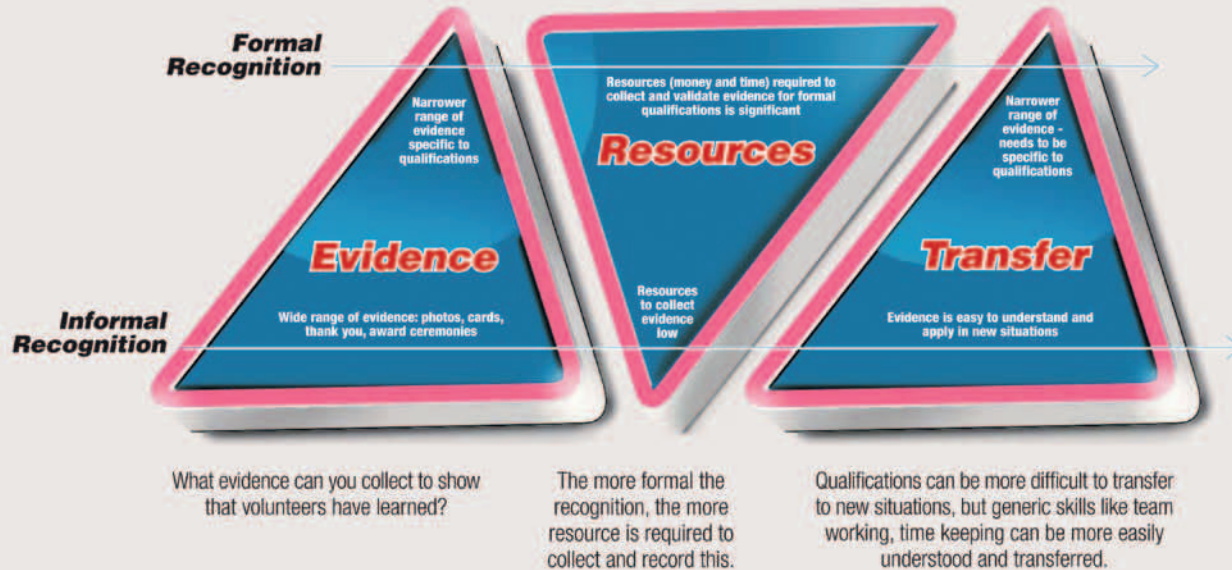
### Get inspired!

- Testimonies
- Awards
- Events
- Benefits
- Certificates
- Accreditation for formal learning
- Competence assessment
- Training
- “Thank you”
- Continuous support
- Presentation opportunities



### What do you want to achieve through recognition:

- to provide a qualification for volunteers?
- to show employers what volunteers can achieve?
- to help volunteers to understand what they have learned?
- to attract more volunteers to your organisation?
- to develop partnerships with new organisations?





## Recommendations

- Maintain the “unique value” of volunteering
- No rating of instruments
- R+V is complementary to other support forms
- Individual solutions instead of predefinition of standards
- R+V on demand only - no devaluation if people do not see a need to do this
- Certificates make only sense when they are approved
- Be aware of the effects of R+V on the volunteers
- Create transparency of R+V strategies to all concerned
- Consider the effort



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*Volunteer Development Scotland (United Kingdom)*

*CARDO (Slovakia)*

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