

Pre-departure training for humanitarian volunteers

Specifications document



Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection



ADICE



IN VIA

THE INITIATIVE OF THE EU REGARDING HUMANITARIAN VOLUNTEERING

The European Commission is developing a global initiative that will create opportunities for some 10,000 people from 2014-2020 to volunteer worldwide in humanitarian operations. This initiative directly follows on from the Lisbon Treaty, which foresees the setting up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, with the objective «to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations for the Union» (Art.214.5 TFEU).

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative will provide a path for Europeans eager to help practically where help is most urgently needed. The number of natural and man-made disasters in the world has significantly increased over the last years and this trend is unfortunately likely to continue. Humanitarian organizations need more well-prepared people to support them helping communities struck by disasters.

Most existing volunteer schemes have a national focus. 'EU Aid Volunteers' will bring volunteers and organizations from different countries to work together in common projects. European standards in this field will provide a quality label denoting proper training for volunteers, recognizable by interested citizens and organizations, which increase the impact of humanitarian aid.



WHAT IS A HUMANITARIAN VOLUNTEERING PROJECT ?

What is humanitarian action ?

(from the Statement on the European Consensus on humanitarian aid – 2007)

EU humanitarian action not only includes assistance, rescue and protection operations, aiming at saving and protecting lives during humanitarian crises or just after them, but also actions aiming at facilitating the circulation and the access to aid to populations in need. EU humanitarian action is provided to face human crises and natural disasters.

Disaster risk reduction, including preparation and rehabilitation operations, is also of high importance if we want to save lives and to allow populations to increase their resilience. Capacity building activities to prevent disasters, to reduce their consequences and to improve humanitarian response are also part of EU humanitarian action.

What is a volunteering project ?

(from the European Volunteering Charter, by the European Youth Forum, supported by the European Commission and the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, and from the International voluntary service training kit by the Youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe)

A volunteer is a person who carries out activities benefiting society, by free will. These activities are undertaken for a non-profit cause, benefiting the personal development of the volunteer, who commits their time and energy for the general good without financial reward. Volunteering activities are undertaken by volunteers. The activity is undertaken for a non-profit cause and does not replace paid staff.

Volunteering activities can be framed in a voluntary service project, which constitutes in this case a structured activity during a fixed period of time, based on an agreement that provides all the parties involved with an appropriate framework of rules and procedures that inform all the partners about their duties and rights.

A humanitarian volunteering project

As a result, a humanitarian volunteering project is a structured activity during a fixed period of time, based on an agreement that provides all the parties involved with an appropriate framework of rules and procedures that inform all the partners about their duties and rights, and undertaken for a non-profit cause, benefiting the personal development

of the volunteer, who commits their time and energy for saving and protecting lives during humanitarian crises or just after them by participating to assistance, rescue and protection operations, as well as disaster risk reduction, including preparation and rehabilitation operations, without replacing paid staff.



A TRAINING FOR WHAT ?

Humanitarian organizations need more well-prepared people to support them helping communities struck by disasters.

These people should be prepared not only to be deployed in a humanitarian context with all the specificities it implies in terms of security rules or particular objectives, but also to hold a

volunteer position, as opposed to an expatriate staff position for instance.

The training will also contribute to the creation of a network of EU Aid Volunteers, so they can interact with and support each other before, during and after deployment.

A TRAINING FOR WHO ?

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THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

Main objective	Skills/ competences/ knowledge to gain
Preparing the volunteers to be deployed in a humanitarian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● knowledge about humanitarian action history, actors, concept, current stakes... ● ability to react when safety and security conditions are threatened
Making the volunteers appropriate their role of volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● social skills: leadership, autonomy, initiative, responsibility, flexibility, adaptability, auto-evaluation...
Preparing the volunteers to fulfill a mission in a developing country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● intercultural skills: intercultural communication and dialogue, adaptability to a different working context ● technical skills: how to transfer competences in a developing country, what position to take in a local NGO, how to evaluate the impact of the action
Creating a European corps of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● knowledge about Eu Aid volunteers and the EU initiative ● knowledge about other volunteers

THE PEDAGOGICAL CONTENTS OF THE TRAINING: LIST OF TOPICS TO TACKLE

Humanitarian aid and cooperation

- Definition of humanitarian aid, development, emergency, the “grey zone” or principle of LRRD
- History and evolution of humanitarian intervention- evolution of the “development” paradigm
- Actual tendencies and takes: national cooperation policies, actors of humanitarian intervention and grants
- Project Cycle Management
- Appropriation of volunteers’ missions and concrete tasks; further reflection on possible challenges (SWOT Analysis)

Volunteering

- Definition of the status : regulations in the various countries, how many volunteers in each country
- Definition of the role/position: what a volunteer is and is not, what is the difference with expatriate staff or an intern, which position to adopt towards local staff
- Rights and responsibilities of a volunteer
- Motivation and expectations an individual has within his/her volunteerism and – in a second step – balancing that with the offer of the specific program/placement one has chosen
- The European dimension of the project and its policies towards humanitarian aid: the DG ECHO
- The sharing and practice of the European values of citizenship, solidarity and democracy

How to work with local communities

- Identification of challenges of the intercultural exchange: the intercultural communication
- Reflecting on different concepts : ethnocentrism, integration, assimilation...
- Interculturality in everyday life: the “cultural shock” and how to face it
- Interculturality at work: volunteering within a local organization with different working organization, hours, internal communication
- The mutual transfer of competences : local capacities building and sustainability of the action
- The stake of Local Development: impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries



Safety and Security

- What are the risks ? Analysis of the security evaluation and prevention tools
- How to behave and react in an emergency situation
- Explanations about the insurance
- Health checkup before departure and at return

Conflict and crisis management

- What can be the difficulties during the project and how to solve them
- Necessity to be flexible and to adapt
- Importance of auto-evaluation and monitoring: evaluation tools during and after the mission
- The stakes of evaluation: the whole evaluation process all along the project and its “toolbox”

Information on Coordination

- Explanation of specific roles of different organizations
- Knowledge of the project’s evolution steps
- Administrative follow-up (agreement, visa, ticket, vaccines, insurances)
- Contact list (contacts of sending organizations, hosting organization and other volunteers)

How to anticipate the return

- How to valorize the professional, social and personal competences acquired ?
- What other possible volunteering experience?
- How to create a professional insertion in the volunteer’s country or abroad ?
- Personal dimension: the re-entry syndrome and capacities of keeping a link with different environments

Testimonies

- Listening to the experience of ancients EU Aid Volunteers
- Listening to the several year experiences on the field of professionals of humanitarian intervention

NB: The specific details about each mission (administrative and logistic details, security and legal rules to respect in the country, information about host organization and the mission) should be part of a preparation/ briefing phase, more individual and separate from the training phase.



Methods to use

It is recommended to alternate different pedagogical methods, which fulfill different objectives.

Methods	Objectives
On-line training : theoretical contents to read, practical works to produce, and a forum to exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide theory; ● Actively involve the volunteers in their own preparation; ● Develop a network and a corps spirit
On-site training: lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide theory, specific and technical knowledge
On-site training: study cases and role plays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make the volunteers anticipate the reality of the field ● Make the volunteer anticipate their position and the behavior to have in a specific situation
On-site training: testimonies by former volunteers and/or professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make the volunteers anticipate the reality of the field and their role as volunteers
On-site training: restitution of work made by volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Involve the volunteers in the preparation of their own specific mission; ● Provide knowledge to other volunteers about specific contexts
On-site training: group works and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop social skills ● Create a corps spirit

Calendar and trainers

It is recommended to organize a collective on-site training which would last around 1 week. An on-line training can complete the on-site training, before or after.

The trainers should include professional pedagogical trainers and professionals from the humanitarian field. If possible, former volunteers should intervene. Ideally, people from sending and host organizations should participate.



Evaluation terms

The training should be evaluated by the volunteers, as it is a way to involve the participants in their mission; that is why it should be done at two key moments, which are just after the training, and after the return from the field, as volunteers sometimes realize the interest of some modules only once in the field. The host organizations could be also involved in the evaluation of the training, in order to express themselves on the level of preparation of the volunteers at their arrival.

To summarize

When ?	By who ?	Objectives
At the end of the training	The volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Orally and collectively, to reflect together about the benefits;● In writing and individually in a report for sending organization and trainers
At the beginning of the mission	The host organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reporting to the sending organization about the level of preparation of volunteers
After the mission	The volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● In writing and individually in a report for sending organizations and trainers● Orally and collectively, during a collective evaluation meeting

For more informations :

www.ec.europa.eu/echo
www.aidvolunteers.org
www.adice.assp.fr
www.solaridad.org
www.invia-koeln.de
www.copas.coop/

This project is co-funded by European Union as a pilot action towards the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

