



Skills acquired through
Volunteering in Sport

V4V PARTNERS WORKING TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL TOOLS ON SPORT VOLUNTEERING

- V4V Full Partner Meeting, 20-21 April 2023 -



The 13 partners in the EU funded V4V project “*Skills acquired through volunteering in sport*” gathered for their fifth Full Partner Meeting in the City of London as guests of the UK’s Sport and Recreation Alliance.

Coordinated by EOSE, this two-day event gave the partners a full opportunity to review and approve the final draft of the project’s key research report *A Comprehensive Mapping of the sport volunteering workforce in Europe*, to continue their detailed work on two practical online toolkits and to plan how the project’s outputs can go forward after its conclusion in December 2023.

>> **Comprehensive Mapping of the Sport Volunteering Workforce in Europe**

Led by EOSE and the Hungarian University of Sports Science (HUSS), this report is probably the first and certainly the most up-to-date study of sport volunteering across Europe. Combining literature reviews of the countries and sports represented in V4V, interviews with 57 sport volunteers and a massive survey of 2 723 sport organisations, the report strongly confirms what we have suspected for some time – sport in Europe, especially at the grassroots, simply could not exist without the support of the estimated 12m citizens who freely give their time and energy to the sector.

When professionally designed for publication in June 2023, the *Comprehensive Mapping* will make fascinating reading for anyone who wants to know more about the size of the volunteer workforce, its

demographic profile, existing volunteer roles, national and cultural differences, inclusion and diversity, the impact of COVID on volunteering, incentives and barriers to sport volunteering and the many challenges in terms of recruitment, retention, management and training, and a series of conclusions which point to potential solutions.

>> Practical and innovative support for sport organisations and volunteers

V4V is not just a research project. The partners are currently using the key findings from the *Comprehensive Mapping* to build two practical online tools for sport volunteering:

- One specifically designed for sport organisations to self-assess their own effectiveness in engaging and deploying volunteers and providing access to a rich repository of good practice guides, case studies and learning materials.
- The other digital tool aimed at sport volunteers themselves so that they can reflect on the duties/tasks, skills and personal qualities they potentially have gained through their sport volunteering experiences and make these more visible in a way which will help them to enhance their CVs for example for job applications and career development.

The meeting in London consolidated all the hard work which the partners have been putting into developing the structure and content of these innovative tools, and partners were delighted to view a live demonstration of the sport organisation online toolkit and discuss further improvements.

>> Sustaining the project outputs into the future

With the project reaching its conclusion in December 2023, the meeting also considered how V4V's innovative outputs can be sustained and used after the funding period ends. Led by the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth (IPDJ) and the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA), the meeting began to work out the structure, potential recommendations, targeted audiences and key priority actions of a plan to ensure the ongoing dissemination and maintenance of the products and practical activities to embed them into the work of international, European and national sport federations and their huge networks of clubs.

>> Networking and cultural exchanges

Full partner meetings also offer informal opportunities for colleagues from so many countries to find more about the cities they are visiting and strengthen their transnational relationships, mutual interests and professional networks. This was more than satisfied by a dinner and evening walking tour, led by Martin Lindsey of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, which contrasted the gleaming skyscrapers of London's financial district with historic sites such as the Tower of London, Tower Bridge, the River Thames and its famous South Bank.

>> Reflections

Reflecting on the two-day event, Aurélien Favre, EOSE Executive Director said, "*We are convinced that the Comprehensive Mapping Study will make an important contribution to the body of knowledge around sport volunteering and will be of great value to sport stakeholders at every level and in every country. Work on the practical toolkits is progressing really well. By December, we will have a suite of products which this partnership will feel genuinely proud of and will want the world of sport volunteering to know about. What*

is perhaps most impressive about this project is the tireless dedication of the partners, their great teamwork, energy, creativity and determination. In so many ways, they exemplify the spirit of the sport volunteers they are working to support.”

About V4V

This three-year EU Erasmus+ Sport cooperation partnership aims to provide practical solutions to some key challenges in the world of sport volunteering. There is substantial evidence over many years that volunteers are vital to sport. They give freely of their time and energy, but they also gain much informal learning through their voluntary work. One of V4V’s founding principles is that, if there is a way to make these skills and competences visible, this could be a powerful incentive to engaging more volunteers. As appropriate to the ambitions and needs of individual volunteers, making their skills and competences visible could also ease their transition into paid employment, help career progression and begin to address some of the sectoral skill shortages which other research, such as EOSE’s ESSA-Sport project has revealed. Another challenge is that sport volunteering is in decline, and it is vital we do more to care for and retain sport volunteers and make better use of what they can contribute.

With the support of 13 high profile expert partners from the European sport sector, V4V aims to provide the following outputs:

- > *A comprehensive mapping of sport volunteer workforce*
- > *A digital toolkit for volunteer recruitment, retention and management*
- > *An online competency-based self-assessment tool so volunteers can identify and showcase skills and competences gained through volunteering experiences*
- > *The first ever European Sport Volunteering Skills Summit*

Full list of partners:

- > *European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE) - France/ EU*
- > *International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) - Denmark / Global*
- > *European Volunteer Centre (CEV) - Belgium / EU*
- > *World Rugby - Ireland / Global*
- > *International Judo Federation Academy Foundation (IJF) - Malta / Global*
- > *Romanian Football Federation (FRF) - Romania*
- > *Finnish Athletics Federation (SUL) - Finland*
- > *Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) - United Kingdom*
- > *Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth (IDPJ) - Portugal*
- > *Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information (FSEI) - Estonia*
- > *National Institute for Sport Research (NISR) - Romania*
- > *Hungarian University of Sports Science (HUSS) – Hungary*
- > *Leeds Beckett University (LBU) - United Kingdom*

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