

New European Guide Aims to Unlock the Hidden Value of Volunteering

Ever volunteered your time and skills, only for that valuable experience to go largely unrecognised on your CV? A groundbreaking new resource, the "Guide to the European Quality Standards in Validation of Learning Outcomes from Volunteering," has been launched, aiming to change just that. This free guide offers a clear path for volunteers, volunteer organisations, universities, VET providers, and employers across Europe to formally acknowledge and make the most of the crucial competencies gained through volunteering.

For years, individuals across the continent have dedicated countless hours to causes they believe in, developing a wealth of practical skills, from project management and communication to teamwork and problem-solving. Yet, translating this "on-the-ground" learning into something tangible that educational institutions or potential employers can easily understand has often been a challenge.

The eQval project, a European initiative co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme, has tackled this issue head-on. After extensive collaboration between partners from Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Romania, the newly published Guide provides a much-needed framework. It's designed to help everyone involved – from the volunteer organisations themselves to educators, businesses, and even policymakers – to effectively identify, document, and validate the skills and knowledge acquired during volunteering.

So, what does this mean for you?

If you're a **volunteer**, this Guide could be a game-changer. It offers ways to get your hard-earned skills officially recognised, boosting your employability and opening up new pathways for further education or career development.

For **organisations that work with volunteers**, it provides tools to better support your teams, showcase the impact of your programmes, and help your volunteers articulate their growth.

For **universities, VET providers, and other providers of formal and non-formal education**, the Guide offers a clear framework to better understand and integrate the learning gained from volunteering into existing educational pathways. This can help in recognising prior learning, awarding credits where appropriate, and ultimately making education more accessible and relevant to learners with diverse experiences.

Businesses and employers can benefit too. The Guide promotes transparent, EU-wide standards, making it easier to understand the capabilities of job applicants who bring rich volunteering experience. This can lead to more effective recruitment and a better understanding of the diverse talents available in the workforce. The guide even includes practical templates and real-world examples that can be implemented immediately.

The team behind eQval believes this initiative will not only empower individuals but also enrich communities by making the significant contributions of volunteers more visible and valued.

Want to learn more before diving in? The eQval project has also launched a new podcast episode that unpacks the Guide's key insights and discusses its potential impact. You can listen in on their Spotify channel: <https://open.spotify.com/show/6URektwmqPvYHGXXqRW92n>.

The full "Guide to the European Quality Standards in Validation of Learning Outcomes from Volunteering" is now available for free download from the official project website: **www.eqval.eu**. The creators encourage everyone to explore the resources and share them widely, helping to ensure that volunteer experience across Europe is consistently recognised for the valuable competence it truly represents.

The eQval project is an initiative of the Spanish Volunteer Platform (Spain) in collaboration with: CESUR (Spain), Munster Technological University (Ireland), Centre for European Volunteering (Belgium), CSVnet (Italy), the Portuguese Volunteer Confederation (Portugal), and Psitest (Romania).

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