



Volunteering in times of COVID-19

NOTE: *"Text translated in the context of a Translation Work Experience module by students in the School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ UK".*



Although a lot of people have been forced to stay at home due to lockdown measures imposed by the government to slow [the spread of Covid-19](#), they have in no way prevented those who wish to help from doing so remotely. *"With telephones, Skype or other online tools, we can do so many things!"* confirms Amélie Arcile, cofounder of [Benevolt](#), a platform that puts associations in touch with volunteers, which was created in [Nantes](#) (Loire-Atlantique) in 2017 and has now been rolled out all across France. *"Last week, I did some teaching and doing quadratic equations via Skype is entirely possible."*

Varied tasks

There are numerous tasks that can be carried out remotely, such as tutoring, calling elderly isolated people, or even helping associations with their logistics.

Amandine, a 26-year-old student in lockdown near [Rennes](#) (Ille-et-Villaine), wished to lend a hand with the [Léa association](#), which offers telephone conversations to parents who have disabled children. *"I thought it was important for me to offer my help during this lockdown period"*, explains the young woman, *"lots of people are isolated and I thought that it must be hard for them. So, I'm going to help them over the phone."*

Since the start of lockdown, Benevolt has opened up its platform to volunteers of all ages, more specifically to retired people, a large part of whom are considered high-risk and have had to stop volunteering.

Fighting against isolation

In one week, the platform received more than 500 requests from people wanting to give their time to help others. They have a real desire to make themselves useful. We can see a

closeness being created between people even though they are far apart geographically. *“We have volunteers in Normandy who are going to help an association in Ile-de-France, for example”*, said Amélie Arcile proudly, while going through lists of individuals registered on the platform. Volunteering from home is also a way to fight against isolation. We are seeing a great deal of solidarity initiatives flourishing, for example La Turbine, which is a book club where everyone has been meeting via video conference to discuss their readings.

Whether telephones, Skype calls or emails, digital tools are a real asset during this health crisis and are perfect for communication. *“It’s more crucial than ever to maintain a social connection. Being in lockdown in 2020 is being in lockdown in the digital era... Which is actually an asset for not feeling alone”*.