



TOOLKIT FOR ORGANISATIONS

involving volunteers in language learning



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*In this Toolkit
you'll find*



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Interested in the involvement of volunteers in language learning?

WELCOME!

Welcome to the toolkit for organisations. This guide is aimed at language teaching organisations that want to work well with volunteers. It's particularly aimed at organisations working with refugees, but much of the content will be relevant for groups delivering language support to migrants of any kind.

There are many reasons why volunteers can benefit your organisation and improve the language teaching you're providing. This can be about the support they offer teachers and in this toolkit we explore what suitable, well-managed volunteers can bring to the classroom. Volunteers can also be invaluable beyond formal classroom settings with informal language support of many kinds including conversation cafes and one-to-one buddying. This support outside the classroom is often combined with exploration of shared interests, relationship building and/or the development of other skills for students.

Additionally, volunteers who have a good experience with your organisation can become supporters or advocates for your organisation more broadly. Some organisations interviewed in our research found volunteers later became donors and fundraisers for their work.

In other words, the relationship building that happens when volunteers connect with your organisation can produce unexpected positive results and cross pollinations. It can help embed your organisation more firmly in the community where you work, and in doing so can potentially offer opportunities for your students to link up with more expert language speakers in their area. Volunteers bring their own networks so can also connect students to other institutions, opportunities and groups that will benefit them.

Finally, volunteering can be an important and beneficial experience for the volunteers themselves. At a time of increasing anti-migrant rhetoric and sentiment, the experience of working closely with refugees may strengthen the volunteer's commitment to working with migrants to defend their rights and improve society more generally.

This said, many of the benefits described above are largely dependent on effective volunteer coordination. This is where this guide comes in. Taking on volunteering does come with risks. We hope that this document will help you navigate them so that both your organisation and your volunteers can

benefit from collaboration. The toolkit is mainly aimed at organisations with sufficient resources to have an appointed volunteer coordinator role (even if this role is not full time). However, we do also include tips for smaller organisations operating on tiny budgets.

Careful selection methods are essential to make sure

volunteers are placed according to their skills, capacity and suitability to the roles on offer. Good communication with teachers will help make sure their needs are met by the volunteers they're working with - and they know what action to take if problems arise. This toolkit also offers lots of suggestions for how to support your volunteer and help them get the most out of their placement.

We emphasise the potential benefits that volunteers can bring - but not as replacements for properly trained and paid language teachers, who can offer a depth of consistency, professionalism, expertise and commitment and should be remunerated accordingly.

This toolkit has been written by a partnership of five language teaching organisations from across Europe. As well as a first hand experience of delivering teaching and working with volunteers, we've spoken to a range of other language teaching organisations across the continent, some of which are featured as case studies in this toolkit. The content of our guide is informed by this research.

This guide will

- Run through how to recruit and select volunteers
- Help you with volunteer induction and training
- Give tips on how to retain volunteers
- Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of working with volunteers
- Suggest ways to monitor and manage volunteers day to day

CONSIDERATIONS

before you start

If your organisation has not involved volunteers in language learning before it's worth gaining clarity about what you're looking for before you begin recruitment in earnest. Here you'll find some points for reflection.

Why do we need volunteers?

Where does this need come from? Is it coming from students? Is it from your organisations' teachers? Or perhaps you are responding directly from demand from potential volunteers themselves? It is important to consider the need as this will help you to articulate why you're involving volunteers to the various stakeholders. You are not just introducing volunteering in your organisation because it's the done thing!

What do we want the volunteers to do?

Describe the activities in written form as job or role descriptions. Clarify within your organisation (in most cases with the teachers) whether you have a common understanding of the volunteer role. Job descriptions should include:

- The activities volunteers will do
- The volunteers' expected areas of responsibility
- What skills and experience you are looking for in volunteers

How many volunteers will we need?

Do you want to start small and create a pilot in one small area of your organisation, or do you have many teachers who all want to collaborate with volunteers? If you have limited experience and resources for the recruitment and management of the volunteers, it might make sense to start small.

What are the risks when involving volunteers?

Doing a risk assessment of working with volunteers can help you plan. This can be led by the volunteer coordinator but should really involve those responsible for the management of your organisation. A risk assessment should list the possible risks of involving volunteers, rank how likely they are to occur and how severe the consequences would be and then put in place some steps to mitigate the risk. Aside from a more formal risk assessment, engage in open dialogue with teachers around this and listen to and address their concerns.

Who do you want as volunteers?

You may want volunteers with particular skills, experience or characteristics. Who is the 'target group' you want to attract as volunteers? Be clear about this from the beginning – it will affect how you recruit. It might make sense to focus on finding volunteers:

- With specific languages
- Who live in a certain area
- Who have experiences of migration, seeking asylum or language learning
- Who come from a particular ethnic or religious background
- Who have particular skills or areas of knowledge

Writing a role description and person specification (see above), as you would do for a paid role, can help you establish your target group(s). You may want to be explicit about some of these requirements when you advertise volunteers. For example, it will be essential that volunteers are able to give a certain amount of time to volunteering and have sufficient language skills to support others to learn. Thinking about your target group will also affect where you advertise. For example, if you want volunteers from a specific institution (e.g. parents at a specific school, members of the local

Some potential benefits for volunteers in language learning:

- Work experience
- CV references
- Placements or references for trainee teachers
- Learning about language teaching and acquisition
- Making a difference
- Relationship building and interaction with students
- Feeling part of the community
- Working to support refugees and migrants

mosque) it makes sense to contact this institution directly and advertise through them.

What can our organisation offer volunteers?

It can be useful to articulate this in advance so it can inform how you communicate with volunteers throughout the recruitment process. The benefit for volunteers can include basic things like insurance during their placement sessions, training or development support. But for most volunteers there are other things that count, for example:

- Being part of a team or community
- learning opportunities
- respect and gratitude.

In order to get an idea of what aspects could be interesting for your volunteers, consider your target group of volunteers and their interests and needs. If you're looking to involve volunteers from the local area, you might emphasise community, solidarity and the difference they'll make. If you want to recruit volunteers from teacher training you might design your volunteering placements as development opportunities where they can receive mentoring and references from teachers.



CRITICAL REFLECTION

before you take on volunteers

The politics around volunteering in language learning for migrants and refugees are not straightforward.

On the one hand, it's a marvelous thing that ordinary people are rising to the challenges presented by the arrival of large numbers of people who do not yet speak the local language by offering to help in one of the most practical and useful ways.

On the other hand, it may be argued that in an environment where many states across Europe are reducing state spending, and especially state spending on migrants and refugees, the use of volunteers to do what should be a statutory job is playing to this cost-cutting agenda. In the UK for example, funding for English classes (ESOL) has been cut by around 60% in the last decade and at the same time the government have invested a fraction of this money into programmes that encourage volunteers to plug the gap. It is a good idea for your organisation to have a discussion about this tension before inadvertently getting into a situation where you may be open to criticism from allies and perhaps supporting policies that you don't necessarily agree with. What is your organisation's stance on volunteering in language learning? What roles are acceptable and which should be the reserve of paid, qualified professionals? What is the teaching union's (if you have one) stance and do you wish to support it? To what extent (and how?) do you wish to challenge government cuts to adult language education and campaign for more funding?



Recruitment

When it comes to recruiting volunteers, there are organizational, but also important material issues that need to be addressed from the start. What needs we have in the organization and what tasks can volunteers take on? Who is the contact person in the organization? Where can I find Volunteers, and what can an application process look like? The sooner you ask yourself these questions, the more successful can the hiring process become.

First steps

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Who in your organisation will be involved in the recruiting? Who will be responsible for what part of the recruiting and induction process? It is not easy to distinguish between the tasks around recruitment, induction, training and day-to-day volunteer coordination. Defining and distributing tasks from the very start can help create clarity.

Before beginning to work with volunteers, it can be helpful to think through the entire volunteer experience from recruitment right through to when the volunteer leaves your organisation. The best volunteer coordination involves care at every stage of a volunteer's 'journey' - and this is made much more likely if you consider each stages of this process



in advance. Although it is desirable to have long term volunteers, it's important to consider that all volunteers will leave your organisation one day. If you facilitate 'good endings' with volunteers you'll be better able to gather useful feedback from them and increase the chance that departing volunteers might one day return.

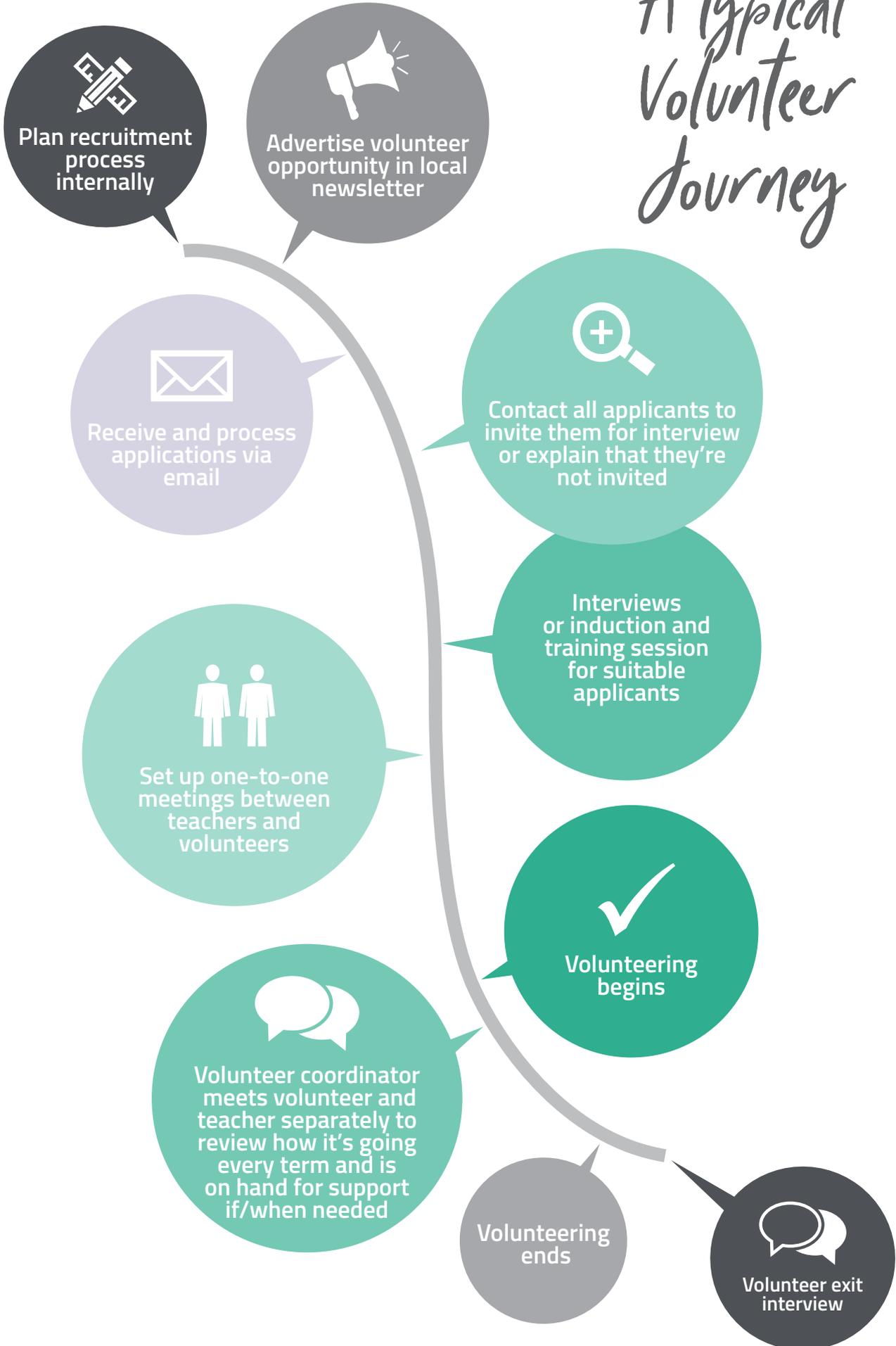
TIP

In the following text **WHAT TO COVER IN THE INDUCTION** (page 16), you will find a long list of possible topics and items. You can use the list as a check-list for your induction process and a reference for division of tasks in your organisation. Much of the processes outlined below can overlap or combine with recruitment, induction and training processes. For example, finding out about volunteers' motivation or communicating the time commitment involved in a volunteering process can happen at the recruitment stage. Conveying to volunteers how to support teachers in the classroom or how to work with refugees could happen in a training. Therefore it's useful to have close coordination between induction, recruitment and training processes for volunteers, and ideally the same person overseeing all of these stages.

Many organisations will have an ongoing turnover of volunteers and therefore have to do ongoing work to bring volunteer's involvement to an end and recruit new volunteers. Volunteers do not stay in the organisation forever: they move away, find a job, get tired, lose interest or have other occupations. It's realistic to see recruiting and inducting volunteers as part of your organisation's daily operations if you are hoping to work with volunteers in the long term. For an example of a typical volunteering journey please see next page.



A typical Volunteer Journey





INITIAL COMMUNICATION

Recruitment usually involves advertising your need for a volunteer, receiving applications and then choosing volunteers from the applications.

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A typical recruitment process might involve:

1. Advertising the role, responsibilities involved and essential and desirable qualities
2. An application process that involves filling out an application form or writing a cover letter that addresses a number of questions and/or
3. An initial screening, meeting or interview

Advertising your need for volunteers will mean providing some information about your organisation and what you're looking for. The recruitment process should also give you a chance to gather information about would-be volunteers. It advisable to plan this initial communication carefully so that you communicate key information and make requests for the information you need. There's no point getting to the stage where you are meeting would-be volunteers, only to discover that they're not free at the times you need or lack a basic skill that is required for the role! Any information that you can gather at initial stages that will help filter applicants helps avoid wasting your time and theirs.

If you are recruiting through some kind of advertisement or call, you may well have limited space for information. When people react and show interest, you can then provide more extensive information - though it's still a good idea to keep this as specific as possible. Having an application form ready which you send out to the interested people can be time efficient. Even better if it's available online and people can download it themselves. Don't waste people's time by asking for information in the form that is not relevant to your specific volunteer vacancy. You want to make the application process as easy and swift as possible for would-be volunteers while getting the information you need! It's worth making sure you explain why you're asking for particular pieces of information, how you will handle applicants' data and make the surrounding text (including website copy and emails) as friendly as possible. You can also ask people to fill out the form to the best of their abilities and return it even if not all questions are answered.

TOP THREE TIPS

for setting up the first volunteer advert

1. Be precise, aim high and describe exactly what you are looking for. If you need volunteers on Friday and Monday write it. If you need volunteers with a certain background write it.
2. Think about where you advertise in order to attract the volunteers you want.
3. Advertise in more languages if you need volunteers with skills in that language.



Recruitment methods:

WHERE AND HOW TO ADVERTISE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Choose your recruitment method based on the number of volunteers you need and the particular skills, experience and attributes you're looking for.

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Processing large numbers of applications will create a lot of work for your organisation! If you think that high application numbers are a risk, consider how to reach the right people whilst avoiding being overwhelmed. Be specific about who you want and limit the reach of your advertising or call out - at least at first. Word of mouth recruitment and physical (rather than online) advertisements can limit the number of respondents. You could also consider finding volunteers through the supporters already in direct or indirect contact with your organisation. This can also simplify your induction process as volunteers may already know about your work.

You can recruit broadly if you need a large number of volunteers with less specific qualifications. That does not necessarily mean spending money and making a big effort.

Some useful methods to reach potential volunteers:

- **Word of mouth:** If volunteering is a new thing for your organisation, you could spread the news in your

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organisation first. Encourage your staff to put the word out that you are looking for new volunteers! If you already have volunteers in your organisation, encourage them to recruit others. If you have the capacity, you could organise a "bring a friend" day for volunteers with time for socialising. Ask your volunteers to post your posters in other institutions they're part of, and don't forget to invite your own friends and contacts.



- **Posting on social media:** In social media you can spread the news about your volunteering opportunities at minimal cost. You can post to specific interest groups to reach certain audiences. And again, get volunteers and staff to share posts with their friends and followers.
- **Ads and articles in local newspapers:** Depending on your budget, local newspaper advertisement might be a



good way to reach people. If you choose the publication well you're likely to reach the people you want to involve in your volunteer's network. People who have time to spend, are engaged in the community and want to help others.

If you know a journalist, it can also be worthwhile to pitch a story to them about your organisation and the volunteering opportunity. Journalists are always on the lookout for interesting stories. Perhaps you can invite them when you have activities with the volunteers or a photogenic event. An article on the organisation's volunteers is free publicity.

- **Teacher training courses:** new teachers who are doing their initial training are a good source of potential volunteers. These trainees may need some teaching/ classroom experience to complete their courses, or they may simply want to practise some of the theory they are learning. Volunteers from teacher training programmes tend to be highly knowledgeable, skilled and motivated. On the other hand they are often looking for paid work and may not be able to volunteer for long.
- **Posting flyers:** Grocery stores, coffee shops, college campuses, laundromats, schools, and civic buildings often have bulletin boards where you can post announcements. The benefit of posting flyers is that you can target a very specific neighbourhood. Choose the places you put them carefully and think of the kind of people who might see it there. Are these the volunteers you have in mind?
- **Using volunteer databases:** A lot of organisations find their volunteers on specialised websites. Have a look at the existing websites and publish your vacancies. You can also contact your local Volunteer Center (if there is one) and make them aware of your need for volunteers. They can then help spread the word.

Make sure it is as easy as possible for applicants to get in touch with you. An easy email address and a page on your homepage or downloadable document with all the information they need can help pave the way.

AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN: RECRUITMENT & INDUCTION MEETINGS

It might or might not make sense to separate recruitment (the process of finding suitable volunteers) and induction (preparing volunteers for their task) in your organisation - the specifics of your requirements can inform your judgement on this. An alternative to processing application forms, holding interviews and induction is to hold an open meeting for all would-be volunteers. Some organisations run these open meetings for prospective volunteers at regular intervals throughout the year and signpost all volunteer applicants to the forthcoming meeting.

This meeting could be used to provide applicants with more information about the role, and even double-up as an induction training that will help volunteers work well with you. It could also be a chance for you to meet would-be volunteers and get a sense of them. If applicants are still interested after attending this meeting, they could then fill out an application form or sign a volunteer agreement and leave the meeting ready to get started.

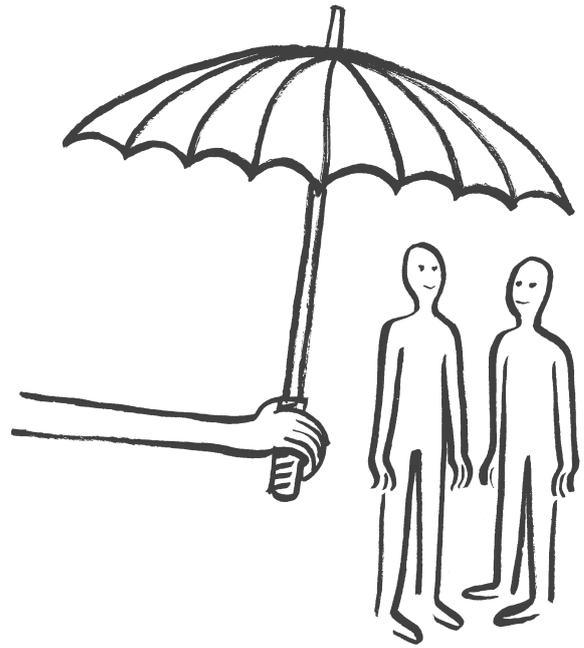
HOW TO REFUSE VOLUNTEERS

If you're clear from the start that your volunteering opportunities are contingent on selection it's much easier to turn applicants away - even further down the line.

Use wording like: "Apply now!" instead of "Sign up!" in your communication.

When you send out an initial questionnaire or application form, point out that the selecting process is meant to prevent disappointments on both sides. ("Please give us an idea of why you want to volunteer and what you'd like to get out of it. This will help us work out whether our opportunities on offer would be a good fit"). If you've stated this early on in the application process, it's much easier to say "thanks, but no thanks" later on. Using application forms in your selection process can definitely help with selection.

Whenever you turn people away it's courteous to let them know your reasons. Be fair and honest and give them a brief explanation. Sometimes a fairly generic explanation will suffice - you're currently looking for people with skills in X; you've received many more applications than you have vacancies etc. If applicants don't ask for further information you don't need to go there! Of course, if you can offer alternative volunteering opportunities in your organisation that will make rejection easier for applicants. So be honest about whether you want a candidate to volunteer in your organisation or not.



SAFEGUARDING

Criminal records and sex offender's registry check

In most countries it is standard practice to carry out some kind of criminal record check on volunteers as part of recruitment. Be upfront about the fact that this is part of the recruitment process. You can also share your policy around how having a criminal record will affect recruitment - certain types of criminal record may not exclude applicants from volunteering with you for example. However, other types of criminal record such as being included on the sex offenders' register for your country will make someone ineligible to be a volunteer. Even if your volunteers are always accompanied by a teacher, education is based on trust. You have to be aware of the fact that a volunteer at your organisation is part of your team.

HOW WE GOT STARTED WITH VOLUNTEERS IN OUR ORGANISATION

CVO VOLT, Belgium

Two years ago CVO VOLT had two volunteers assisting the teachers in the Dutch for foreigners classes. The teacher in this class and the volunteers were all happy with the arrangement, but nonetheless, volunteers' involvement in the wider language school was still limited. Most other teachers didn't know about this volunteer involvement.

At CVO VOLT, we felt the volunteers did a good job and were a big help to the teachers but we also knew through interviews with the teachers that their work related stress was high. Teaching newcomers involves big classes (up to twenty-five in one classroom) as well as handling learners with different levels of motivation and learning pace.

The first challenge we had to face was recruiting more volunteers in order to set up a volunteers' network. We launched a campaign including an

ad in the local cinema, ads in the newspapers, a newsletter to the learners from other departments and posters. CVO VOLT has over 7000 learners in many departments and Dutch for foreigners is only one of them. It felt obvious to us that the best option was to recruit volunteers who themselves were - or had been - learners in the school. However, after a wider recruitment drive, many volunteers responded to the ads without knowing the school or having been there before. After the intake interviews the volunteers were assigned to a teacher, according to their own choice and availability. In a few months our volunteer community grew from two to around thirty five volunteers. Whilst some of them have now left the school because they've found a job or had other commitments, each month new volunteers turn up wishing to contribute to the Dutch classes.



Induction

Our research has revealed that a successful induction process is one of the most important things that organisations can do to help volunteers and teachers work well together. Induction can take time, but it's worth the investment - it can save a lot of energy further down the line by clarifying questions in advance and making volunteer retention more likely. A good induction process will mean that volunteers enter the classroom relatively clear about the organisation's values, what is required of them and how the volunteering will work. The induction process should also make them feel supported and valued for the contribution they're making



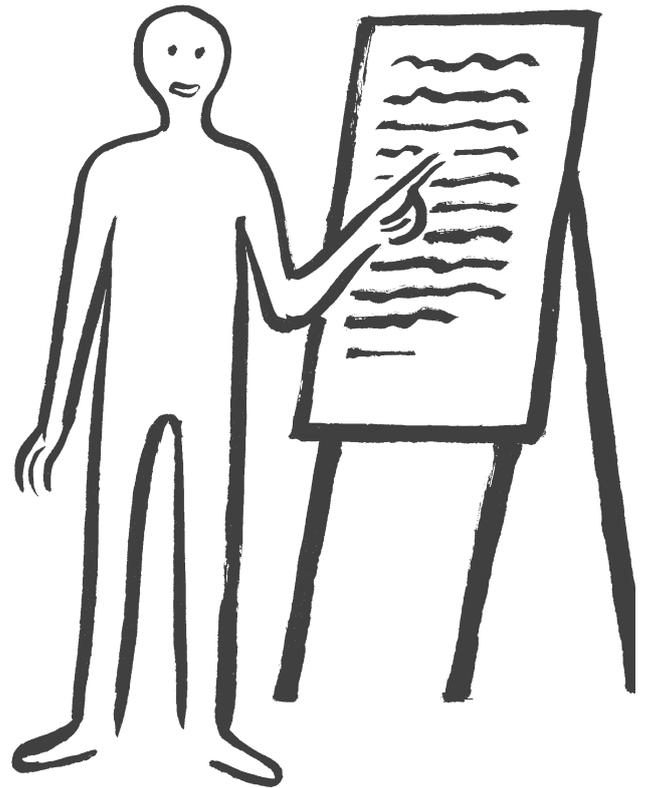
*Teacher, volunteer coordinator
or fellow volunteers?*

WHO SHOULD DO THE INDUCTION?

Volunteer induction can be undertaken by a teacher or volunteer coordinator. The advantage of having a coordinator is that they can act as an independent support to both teacher and volunteer in case of difficulties. Additionally, successful recruitment, induction and volunteer training and support requires dedicated time which teachers cannot be expected to have without significant expansion to their roles. A dedicated and skilled volunteer coordinator can therefore help volunteer collaboration work well and avoid overburdening teaching staff.

Even where a volunteer coordinator oversees induction, it is still important that teachers get a chance to meet with volunteers - ideally before they enter their classroom - to provide information about methodology, grading, classroom climate etc. This is also an important part of relationship building between the volunteer and teacher and establishing how they will work together well. If the teacher needs extra paid time to do this meeting it's worth building this into budgets and funding applications in advance.

There is guidance for teachers in our Toolkit for Teachers on how to conduct these one-to-one meeting. The guidance is aimed at teachers undertaking induction without the support of a volunteer coordinator so you may want to adapt this resource to make them relevant to your induction process.





WHAT TO COVER IN THE INDUCTION

Below are some suggestions for what you could cover with a volunteer in the induction process. Not all points will be relevant to your context - pick and choose what is helpful. Whilst all of this could be covered in conversation, it could also be communicated via documents for the volunteer to read, before or after the meeting.

It's also worth noting that whilst this section includes a long list of points for consideration this should not be a replacement for human warmth and there should be space and license for you to use your gut instinct as well. Getting a sense of someone and building a relationship is not an exact science. It could also be very off putting if you approach the one-to-one meeting with too much formality and reliance on a check-list for guiding conversation. As well as clarifying expectations, the main purpose of this meeting is to make the volunteer feel supported and valued for their contribution.



Items that may be better off covered by, or repeated by, a teacher are starred.

What you should find out about the volunteer

- Finding out about the volunteer: their skills, experience, motivation, needs and expectations*
 - What has drawn the volunteer to volunteering?
 - What do they hope to get out of it?
 - What do they know about our field of work/ organisation?
 - What is their professional background?
 - What volunteering or teaching have they done in the past?
 - What aspects of volunteering do they think they'll enjoy the most?
 - How can the organisation support you them to get the most out of their time volunteering?
 - Do they have any needs or particular requirements that we (the organisation) need to know about to support them to volunteer? e.g. accessibility

"If I do something wrong, I have confidence in the teacher to tell me how I should do things differently. That confidence and trust is important to make the corporation work."

**Volunteer,
Denmark**

Information the volunteer needs from you

- *Explanation of organisational approach to teaching and learning**

If your organisation has a particular approach to any of the following, you can explain this to the volunteer. Teachers may have their own different approaches within your organisation - in which case, this may be best covered by the teacher themselves. This could include:



- how the organisation conceptualises the role of the teacher, learner and volunteer
- how the organisation create a safe and welcoming learning space for students
- the organisational attitude to the use of other languages in class
- how classrooms are generally laid out
- the kind of activities that generally take place in classes or extra curricular sessions
- the organisation's attitude toward error correction

■ *Information about the group they'll be volunteering with: level, needs etc**

This is where you can outline the learners' language and literacy level, their general character and give a sense of their particular needs e.g. any disabilities which should be taken into account.

■ *Information about the organisation: history, values, how it works*

It can be useful to outline the organisation's story and any relevant information about its culture. You can also give the volunteer a sense of how your language class fits in with the wider operations of the organisation and other volunteer activities within it.

■ *Explanation of your national language learning context: how classes in your organisation fit into wider educational and governmental structures*

For example, do students gain qualifications through your classes or activities? What do these qualifications allow them to do? Are students required to achieve these qualifications in order to qualify for residency? Is participation in your classes funded by or mandated by the state in some way?

■ *Explanation of volunteer's and teacher's role and responsibilities**

Establishing what is and what isn't the role of the volunteer is very important to avoid misunderstanding. This can be further delineated by outlining what the teacher's role and responsibilities will be – and the role of any paid teaching assistants, where relevant. It can be useful to explain who will be responsible for and involved in:

- Planning lessons
- Deciding lesson content
- Error correcting
- Participating in activities

■ *Building a healthy relationship with students*

Healthy relationship with students could also be explored in more in-depth training for volunteers. Think about some aspects to cover in order to promote mutually

respectful relationships with the language learners and discourage paternalistic or patronising attitudes amongst volunteers. This can also be outlined in your overview of your organisation's core values (above). Some other ideas for how to encourage respectful attitudes:

- Emphasise to volunteers that it's useful to remember that students are 'beginner language learners, not beginner thinkers'
- Refer to the fact that 'refugee' status has all sorts of connotations around it, but in your organisation's experience you can't assume what students' feelings, experiences or preferences will be – advise volunteers to keep an open mind and, if in doubt, ask learners themselves or the teacher
- Emphasise that the role of the volunteer is to be warm and friendly and that getting to know students and finding common ground is encouraged
- Refer volunteers to the Toolkit for Volunteers which includes sections on working with refugees.

■ *Practicalities*

- *Logistical information about the class or sessions: time, place, access to the building etc.*
- *Guided tour of the building or facilities*
- *How to claim expenses /stipend*
- *Insurance*
- *Who the volunteer should refer to in case of:*
 - absence
 - doubts regarding the scope of the volunteer work
 - a need to discuss "sensitive" information about students
 - disagreements between teacher and the volunteer
- *Any criminal or police record checks the organisation will need to carry out on the volunteer and the documents that will be required*
- *Make sure the volunteer is familiar with your safeguarding procedure etc*
- *Confidentiality agreement around students' disclosure*
- *Data protection of the volunteer's details*
- *Volunteer welcome and support*
 - *What training and support they'll be offered*
 - *How they can meet other volunteers to share experiences*
 - *How the teacher and/or organisation can support them to get the most out of their placement*
 - *Summary of ground rules/agreement*
- *Summarise what you've covered and check that it's all understood and agreed*
 - An expression of appreciation for the volunteers' time



commitment and the difference the volunteer will make

- An opportunity for the volunteer to ask any other questions

Agreements to be made

- *Agreement about ongoing check ins/evaluation: when and how will this take place.*

You may want to schedule a meeting or a phone conversation with the volunteer after their first lesson or session to see how they found it. You may want to have another meeting with them after a term, six months or a year has passed. It's up to you (and your organisational procedure) how and when you evaluate how the volunteering is going, but it can be useful to make this clear at this early stage.

- *Agreement between volunteer and organisation about time commitment.*

Clarify when and for how long they'll be able to give their time. You may want to have another meeting with them after a term, six months or a year has passed. It's up to you (and your organisational procedure) how and when you evaluate how the volunteering is going, but it can be useful to make this clear at this early stage.

- *Agreement between volunteer and organisation about time commitment.*

Induction Resources

You may want to point your volunteer to additional resources that they can read in their own time to support their development. Your organisation may have its own teaching resources or documentation that you would like your volunteer to look at. There are also additional resources available that are aimed at volunteers:

- **Our Toolkit for Volunteers:**
aimed at volunteers supporting teachers in classroom (formal) settings and leading activities beyond the classroom in informal or non formal learning environments.
- **Language Support for Adult Refugees Council of Europe Toolkit:**
www.coe.int/en/web/language-support-for-adult-refugees/guidelines - aimed at volunteers providing language support so not all sections will be relevant to volunteers working in formal settings.

INDUCTION TRAINING DAY

"This is a concept used by some organisations which can potentially save time by doubling up training, induction and even recruitment

Prospective volunteers are invited to an introductory training session. If you have large numbers of volunteer applicants, training sessions can happen every few months. Those who apply can be invited to the next forthcoming training session before they enter the classroom.

Recruitment screening can happen before or after this training. Screened volunteers can be invited to the training once you have met them. Or prospective volunteers can be invited to apply after the training if they still feel volunteering is for them.

This training session can provide an introduction to the organisation and clarity about the volunteer role and requirements. It could also include basic training about how to best support teachers and students."

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TEACHER

for volunteers working in a classroom setting

Each teacher will have their own preferences about how they want a volunteer to support their work. A volunteer Coordinator can either discuss the needs of the particular teacher with them beforehand, or make sure that this conversation is covered (or repeated) between teacher and volunteer.

Below are a few generalities which you may want to mention in the induction of new volunteers. You can also refer volunteers to any training your organisation offers and to our toolkit for volunteers (or specific parts of it), which contains more information for volunteers about how best to support language acquisition.

Supporting the teacher

Explain that first and foremost the volunteer's role is to be responsive to the teacher, listen to what they need and support them in what they're trying to do in the lesson.

The volunteer is supporting the teacher, not behaving like a teacher. It should be clear from the start that the teacher will always be the one who decides what kind of method will be used, who needs help in the classroom and which tasks are fit for the volunteer. Teachers shouldn't be afraid to make this clear and volunteers should be encouraged to ask questions if they feel awkward about their role in the class. The presence of the volunteer will only be beneficiary to the learners if the volunteer and the teacher work together as a team.

Flexibility

Many teachers will want to plan the lessons themselves and may not have time to communicate lesson content with volunteers in advance. They'll ideally want the volunteer to turn up and take instruction on the spot about how to support each activity - sometimes as a participant, sometimes working with certain groups or students one-to-one, sometimes circulating round the room to answer students' questions.

Confidence building and creating a warm, welcoming space

It can be useful to underline the important role the volunteer will play in making students feel welcome and safe, building their confidence and making their learning more enjoyable.

Authentic dialogue

Sometimes volunteers can speak very slowly or distort their language around learners. Whilst 'grading' ones language can be useful when done well, generally it's useful to emphasise that the role of the volunteer is to speak in authentic language with the students so that the student is able to:

- Try out authentic dialogues
- Practise rehearsed dialogues
- Get to know the volunteer and benefit from their skills and knowledge

Listening

It can be useful to tell the volunteer about the importance of listening and leaving space for students to speak. Language learners often need time to formulate what they want to say, so allowing silence is very important.

Error correction

Many teachers prefer volunteers to avoid error correction unless specifically asked for correction by the students or teachers. You could encourage the volunteer to give (genuine) positive feedback instead.

Grading speech

Explain to the volunteer that it's helpful for them to speak authentic/naturally and pronounce words as they would in their daily life. However, it's also useful, where possible, to speak simply - especially with lower level students. This means using short sentences and less complex vocabulary. In some languages, it can mean using international vocabulary that learners are more likely to recognise instead of more colloquial and country specific lexis.

Consistency

If the volunteers' consistent attendance will enable the teacher to do more in your lessons (or conversely, if inconsistent attendance will disrupt their lesson plans and cause problems) then it's useful to let them know this impact now and ask for agreement about consistent attendance..

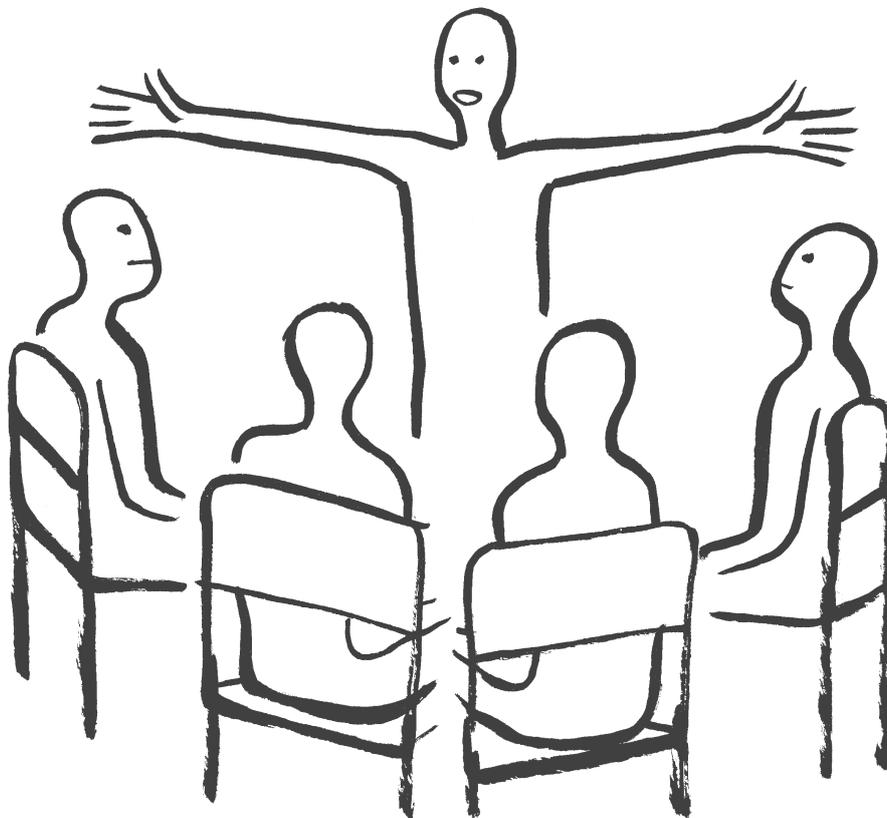
INDUCTION AT CVO VOLT, BELGIUM

"When a potential volunteer contacts me we try to make an appointment. During this meeting I explain what we do in our school and how they can participate. At the appointment, the volunteer introduces themselves and discusses their expectations. We also show prospective volunteers a video we made about our classes. This gives an overview of the different activities we do with volunteers. The volunteer fills in a form with their details: personal information, times when they are available, their work or other relevant experience and a statement about their motivation. After that we complete the volunteers' contract, which is a formality for the insurance.

Activities that we offer include: assisting in our 'Dutch for foreigners' class, as well as in classes in

foreign languages, mathematics or physics; helping out at our café; organising the giveaway shop; buddy projects; activities outside the classroom.

When the volunteers want to assist in the Dutch classes the coordinator and I try to find a suitable match with the teacher. Once a volunteer and teacher are matched, the volunteer goes to the class and observes the lesson. This way volunteers get familiar with the teaching style, the level of the learners and they get a sense of what their role will be. They discuss the lesson with the teacher after class and make plans for the next lesson when the volunteer will help the teacher in the classroom. This is how their work together gets started.





The teacher's perspective

TEXT Teachers can be wary about working with volunteers. It is useful to understand teachers' reservations so that your organisation can work to support teachers' needs and also make the case to teachers as to why volunteers can be useful to them.





TEACHERS' RESERVATIONS

Teachers may be right to have concerns about volunteers entering their classroom. An ineffectual volunteer can:

- hinder learning with unnecessary error correcting
- dominate conversations with learners
- make lesson planning difficult through their inconsistent attendance
- undermine the safe space of the classroom and put off students from attending with inappropriate behaviour
- take up teachers' time and energy with recruitment, induction, training and classroom management. Teachers may not be paid for this time or may already feel overstretched
- make the teacher feel self-conscious or judged about their teaching.

- Acknowledge the risks around volunteering openly and explain how you're going to mitigate these risks
- Outline how the recruitment and induction process within the organisation will help address these risks by screening volunteering and training them on how best to support the teacher
- Emphasise to teachers that the volunteers' role is to support their work and that you want to make sure that happens
- Outline the safety mechanisms that will allow teachers to get support if they have a volunteer they are finding difficult to work with, and ultimately get rid of volunteers that they're not finding helpful
- Make sure teachers are properly supported and have time to induct volunteers and evaluate with volunteers regularly
- Establish organisational procedures to support teachers to evaluate with volunteers and feedback to their volunteers what is working and what could be improved (see page 26)

"My volunteer was great. In the classroom, we had an elderly couple and one of them had hearing difficulties so whenever we were doing group discussion it was really hard for him to join in. The volunteer spoke their language and was able to work with them separately and involve them in a separate discussion at times and just generally make sure they were ok. It was honestly so useful having her there."

Teacher, UK

Recommended resource: Toolkit for Teachers

Our toolkit for teachers is designed to support teachers to work well with volunteers. It includes information about the benefits volunteers can bring to lessons as well as a large variety of classroom activities which put volunteers to good use.

"The only time it was hard for me was when the person had ten years experience teaching [language to migrants]. And even though she didn't say anything or do anything [...] I just felt intimidated by that."

Teacher, UK

How to reassure teachers

There are many things you can do to answer teachers concerns. Here are some ideas:

- Make the case for the benefits of volunteering (outlined below). Even better, get other teachers in the organisation who are positive about volunteering to explain how it has helped them.



THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT *for teachers*

The following is an outline of the benefits that good volunteers can bring for teachers.

Volunteers can:

- Give students more attention and opportunities to talk
- Help manage classes with mixed levels and/or complex needs
- Offer knowledge and experience of the local area / country
- Build supportive relationships with students

Support and attention to students

Firstly, volunteers can help students learn better. This has to be a huge positive for all good teachers. How do they help? Volunteers can augment and support the language teaching that paid teachers are able to provide. They can act as an extra listening ear, giving more students more talking time, support and attention. They may be able to help with practical support when teachers need a spare pair of hands, like setting out chairs or collecting photocopies. Where mixed level groups are unavoidable, volunteers can help the teacher make the lesson accessible to a wider range of students by working with a separate group

Sharing knowledge

Language learning groups of any kind have many benefits beyond just language learning – they are an opportunity for people to make connections and exchange knowledge and experience. Conversations may arise about how the school system works, or how to access medical care, for example. Volunteers may have knowledge and skills to share in these kind of exchanges. They are likely to have lived in the country for some time themselves and be able to support with navigating bureaucracy, accessing services or answering questions about how things work.

“It is our first job to make the students feel noticed in the classroom, and with help from the volunteers it is easier to consider every student and give them a feeling of being paid attention to.”

Teacher, Austria

Class community

The class will also, hopefully, act as a supportive community where people enjoy their time together. Volunteers can add to this sense of community as a warm, welcoming presence. They may have things that they have in common with students - perhaps they live in the same area, speak some of the same languages or come from the same cultural or religious background. The teacher may be able to facilitate activities in class which reveal other shared interests, hobbies or experiences. These connections between learners and those in a teaching or supportive role help build the community in the class.





Coordinating volunteers

Coordinating volunteers can either be done by a full-time Volunteer Coordinator or by a teacher with a certain amount of time designated to the coordination. Some teachers, however, will prefer to have coordination managed by an independent third party for the added support and accountability that this provides.





MATCHING VOLUNTEERS AND ACTIVITIES

The matching of a new volunteer with an activity or task depends both on where their interests lie (what tasks they want to do) and their availability (when and how often they're able to give their time). Experience and skills also are a factor here.

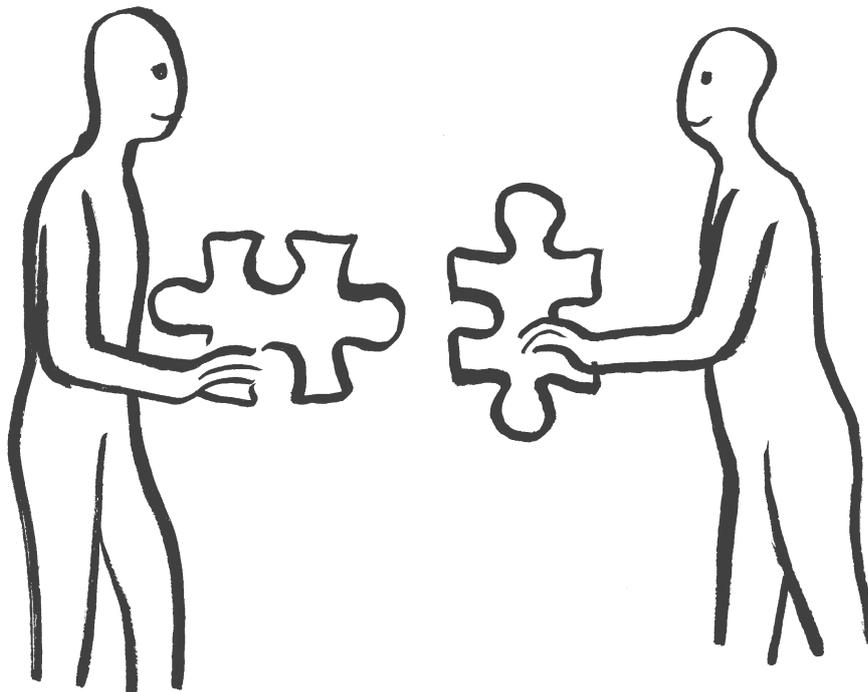
One-to-one language support

If the volunteer is interested in being matched one-to-one with a refugee it is preferable that the volunteer is experienced (perhaps the volunteer has already experience with one-to-one meetings or has participated in a conversation club) as they will be alone with the learner. Personal factors can also be important for making a good match, especially where volunteers will be working

Classroom support

If the new volunteer is interested in classroom support, then the match between the volunteer and the teacher is important as the teacher and the volunteer are going to work closely together.

Volunteers' involvement as classroom support should always be based on the wishes of the teacher. The process starts by the teacher asking the coordinator for a volunteer



closely with individuals. The volunteer's gender, religion, age, interest, study and or work experience may play an important role when matching. The next step in matching volunteers with learners one-to-one is a face-to-face meeting between the volunteer, the volunteer coordinator and the learner, where the volunteer gets introduced to the learner and the structure and ground rules or principles for future one-to-one meetings are established.

or expressing enthusiasm for the idea. The coordinator then needs as much information as possible from the teacher about the class (day, time, level, the volunteer's role). The coordinator can then find a suitable volunteer who is available at the time required.



Once a potential class is found for the volunteer, the coordinator can then organise the first meeting between the volunteer and the teacher.

Job clubs and conversation clubs

For those volunteers interested in supporting job seeking, it's preferable to find people with up-to-date knowledge of the job market and how to apply for jobs.

For both job and conversation clubs, it's worth involving a variety of volunteers (in terms of gender, age, work experience) in order to reach a varied target group.

No relevant opportunities

If no match is possible at the time that an otherwise suitable volunteer applies, the volunteer coordinator might want to stay in touch with the prospective volunteer, as they may be available to do volunteer work in the organisation when other opportunities arise. It is therefore important that the coordinator makes as many notes about the volunteer as possible so the coordinator knows who to contact when the need for a new volunteer arise.

Think about what data you need to collect from your new volunteer for your coordination and how this will be stored and accessed. As well as the contact and background information you'll have likely gathered in the recruitment process, you will need to keep records on which volunteers are active in the organisation. This can include what task the volunteer is doing, day and time they attend, when they joined. An overview of the volunteers' coming and going in the organisation is important for organisation, accountability and for contacting volunteers en masse.

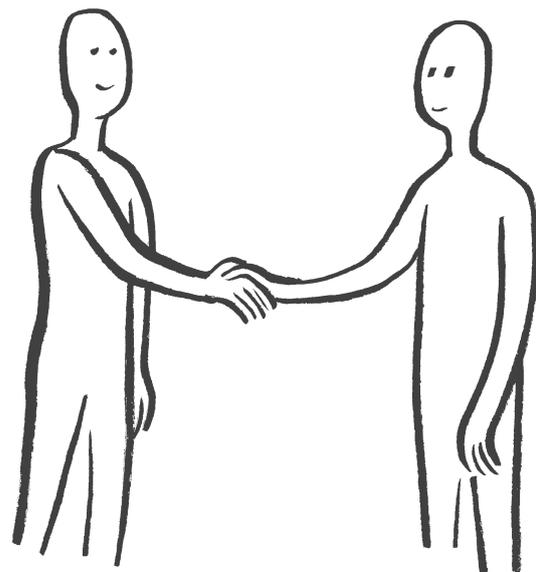
Supporting teachers

There may be teachers who have experience of working with volunteers and therefore need less support to get started. However, there may also be teachers who want to work with a volunteer but aren't sure how best to involve them. This is where the volunteer coordinator's support can be particularly helpful. You can also refer the teacher to our Toolkit for Teachers for guidance and ideas for classroom activities that make good use of volunteers.

HOW TO ASK A VOLUNTEER TO LEAVE

Most Volunteer Coordinators have experienced it: Despite a good recruitment and induction process you experience a volunteer with values so different from the organisation that you don't want them to work with you. But how do you go about asking to leave without hurting the volunteer while being fair and as considerate as possible?

At The Danish Refugee Council (DRC)'s language school, the first step is to search for alternative activities/tasks where the volunteer can be put to use. If no such activities exist (or if their values are such a poor fit) they are then asked to leave. The process mirrors that found in employment and the same "ground rules" apply. Therefore the organisation is always specific in its evaluation of the volunteer's performance. Which specific situations were unacceptable and why? If the coordinator believes that the volunteer can change his behaviour a fair warning can provide a solution. Again DRC is always specific in the changes it requests and sets up objective criteria for evaluation and a date for a new evaluation-talk. In any case the organisation makes sure that employees act professionally and take all possible steps so that the volunteer can use the feedback constructively.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Formal and informal ways?

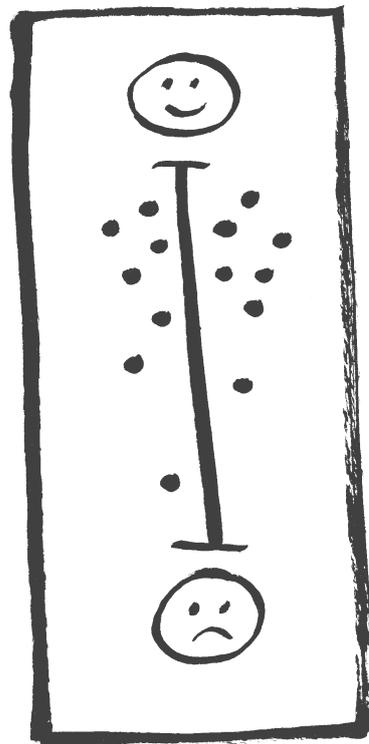
Make a plan of how you want to check that volunteering is progressing well - ideally before taking on volunteers so that you can communicate this plan to the volunteers and teachers at induction stage.

Depending on the size of the organisation, the volunteer coordinator can check in about volunteering whenever they meet the volunteer/student/teacher in the organisation.

Alternatively, the volunteer coordinator can do this by email or phone. Depending on the volunteer activity, evaluation meetings could be set up every term or at regular intervals such as every quarter. Some organisations assign volunteers for limited time periods (e.g. one term) so that there is an opportunity to review and, where required, to reshuffle volunteers regularly.

In terms of checking in with the teacher, this can be done simply through a regular conversation between the volunteer coordinator and teacher about what is working. The coordinator can then feed this back to the volunteer.

Another approach would be to ask teachers to have a conversation with their volunteer every term about what has been helpful and where things could improve. This could be supported by a sheet with questions to structure the conversation. The benefits of implementing procedures at organisational level is that teachers may feel nervous initiating and structuring these conversations on their own. Presenting it as part of organisational procedure, with an accompanying sheet, can give them a useful premise to request and structure this conversation with their volunteers.



Ideas to handle

VOLUNTEER TURNOVER AND RETENTION

Of course, some volunteer turnover is likely and shouldn't be seen as a failure on the part of either organisation or volunteer. Volunteers have good reasons to leave: health issues, a new job, career opportunities, family matters, etc. However, when a volunteer leaves the organisation it's useful to hold an exit interview to evaluate their experience and gather useful feedback. What can be improved? Would the volunteer consider coming back if certain things changed? You can also ask if the volunteer is willing to be contacted for occasional activities with the learners even if they can no longer commit on a regular basis.

For those organisations that are struggling with volunteer retention, here are some questions you might want to reflect on:

- Do the volunteers know who to go to when there are difficulties? Do they have an appointed contact person a supervisor or coordinator? Does this person check-in with them regularly about how they are?
- Do volunteers receive adequate training to feel comfortable and confident in their new roles? Do they have the right tools for the job? What other tools and support can you offer?
- Is their work designed to be efficient with minimal bureaucracy and roadblocks to progress? Do you report and celebrate with volunteers goals attained, as well as key learning, on a regular basis?
- Do you ensure that new volunteers are fully integrated into the larger group? Do you actively work against the formation of cliques and "insider" groups? Do you keep everyone in the loop with emerging information? Do you address volunteer-teacher relations issues proactively?
- Do you have a supportive feedback system in place to help volunteer improve the way they're working?

1

MAKING VOLUNTEERS AN INTRINSIC PART OF THE ORGANISATION AND RETENTION

Hold regular meetings or gatherings with the volunteers in order to collect feedback and find out about their wellbeing. What can be improved? What kind of needs do they have in order to perform better as a volunteer? Suggestions can be followed up in various ways with both volunteers and teachers. For example, you could run seminars, trainings or workshops to meet the needs identified by volunteers. This will build their skills and show how much their role is valued by your organisation. Volunteers will definitely be more committed when they feel recognised and when they are part of a community. An informal lunch with senior management and teachers for instance can build the engagement and motivation of the volunteers.

2

SAY THANKS

- send them a card for Christmas or send them a text during the week
- name the volunteers in speeches
- ask the teachers to send them an email at the end of the school year
- put a 'thank you' picture on your social media
- if you have the budget gifts can include chocolate or merchandise with you organisation's logo like a cup or pen

3

PARTIES AND EVENTS

- organise a small party to thank the volunteers. Ask them what they would like to do.
- combine it with a training event - it's useful and creates a community feeling
- recruit new volunteers at these kind of events. They can meet the other volunteers and make up their mind if they would like to be part of the organisation



4

BUILD A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

Once you've started working with volunteers and have enough volunteers involved, you may want to create a volunteer community. This is some kind of space where volunteers can come together, get to know each other and even exchange knowledge and experience related to their involvement in your organisation. For many volunteers, making new friends and feeling part of a community is an important part of why they're volunteering in the first place. Creating a sense of a volunteer community will help make your organisation a welcoming place where volunteers feel at home and valued for their contribution.

To get a volunteer community off the ground, organise small, enjoyable social events for the volunteers, with or without the teachers they assist. This could be something simple like a shared lunch or coffee. The key thing is to frame it around the shared role as volunteers of the organisation. The meetings can be informal social occasions without a set agenda, or they can include a topic for discussion or relevant input from a trainer or speaker. Volunteer community events can be organised by paid staff or you can hand over the running of them to the volunteers themselves.

5

NEWSLETTER

Newsletters are a useful tool for communicating with the volunteers and keeping them informed about what's going on in your organisation. During the intake interview ask them to register for the newsletter or send them one so they have an idea of the content. Don't overdo it: once every two or three months might be enough. The content must be related either to the organisation or the volunteer's role. Possible items are: testimonials from volunteers, interviews with learners about having a volunteer in class, calendar with workshops for volunteers, report on extra curricular activities with volunteers, volunteer of the month. For low resource settings an email every now and then that fills volunteers in on the organisation and thanks them could be a good substitute if you're not able to do this face to face.

6

FACEBOOK OR WHATSAPP GROUP

A social media group is a place where people interact. A group is a form of online community. Volunteer groups are usually closed, with only members of the group allowed to view and make posts or add new members. Volunteers can share pictures, experiences and ask each other questions. Facebook or Whatsapp Groups have proven to be a cost-effective and efficient way to communicate with volunteers. These groups do not replace traditional methods of direct mailing, phone calls, face-to-face interactions, and texts, but supplement them, reaching volunteers using the platforms that they're familiar with.

7

A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- share pictures of volunteers receiving a gift on Facebook
- change your Facebook profile picture where relevant. In Belgium for instance there's a 'week of the volunteer'.

Highlight the volunteers in your organisation by changing your profile picture.

- tag the volunteers
- make a poster and ask the volunteers to post a selfie

8

PICTURES AND VIDEOS

- make a picture of all the volunteers together at a 'thank you' moment
- make an original video with some volunteers, ask them for ideas

9

ARTICLES

- put an interview with a volunteer on your organisation's website
- ask a journalist from a local paper to be present during an event with volunteers
- write an article about the volunteers in your organisation and send it to the local press



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

A training session, where you develop volunteer's skills and understanding of your organisation, can be helpful in a number of ways. It can make volunteers better able to contribute to your activities and it can also feel rewarding for your volunteers – they get a chance to meet each other and are being offered the chance to develop their skills.

Training can include:

- A chance for volunteers to get to know each other
- More information about your organisation
- Skill development for volunteers
- A chance for volunteers to explore specific areas that they're finding challenging

Training overview

Introduction/relationship building

Get everyone to go round, introduce themselves and say where they're volunteering in the organisation

Pair work:

Place two pieces of flip chart paper on different areas of the wall in preparation for this exercise. On one piece write the title 'enjoying...' or draw a smiley face. On the other, write 'areas for improvement'.

Ask volunteers to talk in pairs with someone they've not met before. Distribute a few post-it notes to each pair. Ask volunteers to write down (and share with their partner) one thing they're enjoying about volunteering and one area they'd like to improve). After they've shared their responses, volunteers can stick these reflections on the appropriate flip chart paper.

You can look at these flip-charts later and learn from them about what's going well and what volunteers are finding challenging.

Alternatively, you can look at the areas for improvement and try to address any common themes during the training - either in specific activities or an open Q & A / discussion slot at the end.

Presentation about your organisation

Although volunteers who have been in your organisation for some time and who've been through your induction process may already know a fair amount about your organisation, you can make opportunity in your training to dig deeper into an aspect of your organisation you think is important. This could be your values, your origin story or something specific

about the way you work that volunteers may not be aware of such as your safeguarding policy.

Skills and language learning input

It can be useful to give volunteers a presentation about the language learning approach at your organisation, especially if this hasn't been covered in depth during induction. This can include

- How you handle error correction – you may favour the communicative approach to language learning which will mean not correcting errors in all instances, especially where activities are focused on speaking/listening. Explain the approach and why it works – it won't be familiar or intuitive to all volunteers.
- Your approach to the use of other languages in class. Research increasingly shows students other linguistic resources (e.g. the other languages or bits of language that they speak) can be used to support learning new language. Again, this may be counter-intuitive to volunteers. Either way, it's useful to clarify your position and explain the rationale behind it. Suggest to volunteers what they can say to respectfully encourage or discourage the use of other languages.
- Where your class content and materials are from – Do you use a particular set curriculum? If so, what is it and what is the ethos/rationale behind it? Or perhaps classes are planned based around the interests of the students?

Volunteers' Skills development

As well as giving input to volunteers and a chance for discussion and questions, you can also develop their skills in a more practical way.

Grading language

Give volunteers a colloquial or complicated text. Ask them to read it, and then put the text down and explain to a partner what the text was about in 'graded' language that would be understandable to a lower level language speaker. The challenge is to use simple but authentic, natural language.

Error correction

Give volunteers a few extracts of students work or writing. These could be written texts, audio recordings or videos. Give some context to each item – what exercise it was part of and what the language learning focus was. Ask volunteers to jot down positive examples from each piece of work – examples of useful vocabulary, good sentences or other exemplary uses of language from the student. Teachers will often find it more useful for volunteers to collect positive, rather than negative, examples.

Error correction part 2

Using extracts of students' work or speech which contain a number of errors, ask volunteers to identify one error that they would correct. This can be a useful exercise to discuss how to give feedback and which errors to prioritise. Volunteers should prioritise errors which:

- Relate to the target language the exercise seeks to develop e.g. if the exercise is designed to practice

vocabulary around food, don't focus on errors related to misuse of the past tense.

- Is level appropriate: if students are trying things that they haven't covered yet in class, don't worry too much about correcting these. It's great they're trying new things – this is a good sign!
- Correct commonly used language before unusual language

Ending the training

To end the training, reassemble the trainers and participants in a circle. Go round and ask everyone to comment on the training – what they enjoyed and what was missing for them. This can give you ideas about what to cover next time.

To end on a positive note, you could ask volunteers to comment finally on one thing they'll be taking with them from the training into their volunteer work.





Financials and Infrastructure

Involving volunteers in language learning require resources. Resources that are almost always limited. How to get support for volunteer involvement? What company policies are relevant and where should you focus?



VOLUNTEER WORK IS NOT FREE



It is important to bear in mind that whilst volunteers are not paid for their work, making good use of volunteers is not cost free.

Firstly, there are costs for the volunteers themselves. Volunteers may be turning down paid work elsewhere in order to commit their time. There may be costs for them to travel to and from the place of work and often volunteers will expect to be reimbursed for these 'out-of-pocket' expenses.

For the organisation it is important to factor in the costs associated with recruiting, training, supporting, coordinating and monitoring volunteers. Sometimes the sheer scale of the expressions of interest from potential volunteers can be overwhelming for a small or already stretched organisation. It is important that an organisation invests time into getting to know the volunteers, their skills, experiences and expectations.

In addition to time spent recruiting, training and coordinating the volunteers, there may also be additional demands on teachers (or other professional, front-line staff), who will need to communicate with volunteers outside of class time (or activity time).

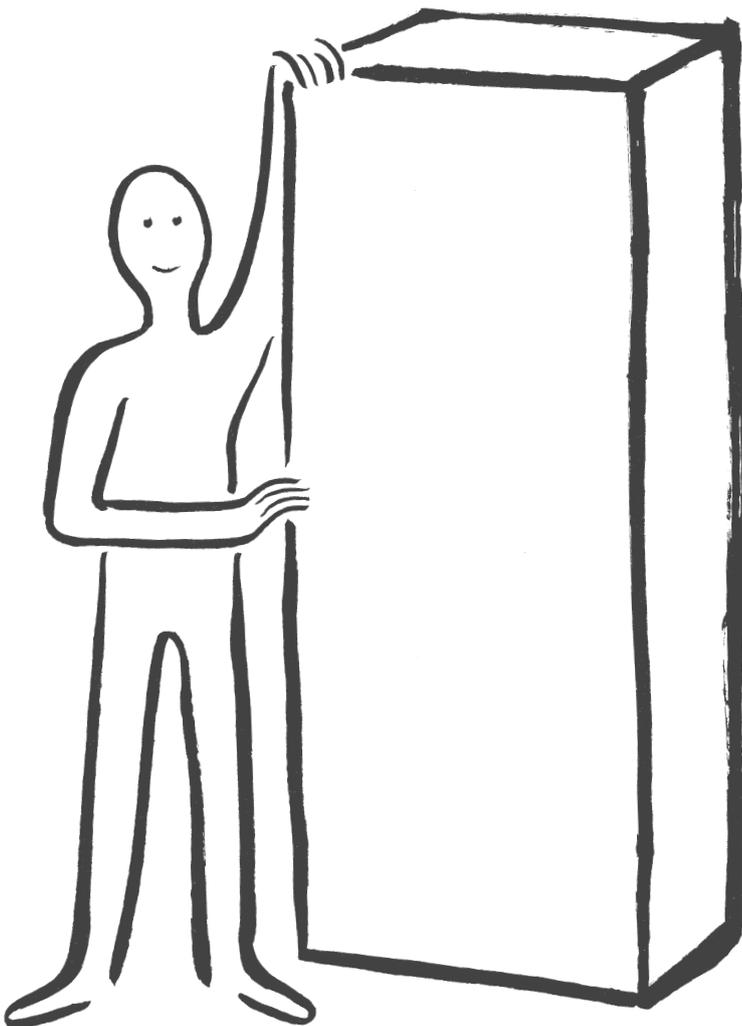
HOW TO GET SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Applying for funding for volunteering can be daunting because it is often perceived that funders, especially trusts and foundations, are unwilling to fund this kind of infrastructure work and prefer to fund projects that directly benefit the defined beneficiaries. However, this is not always the case. Some funders particularly value volunteering and are happy to fund volunteer coordination work, especially if the case can be made that it genuinely improves the experience of the organisation's main beneficiaries.

Some funders will provide 'unrestricted' funding or 'core' funding i.e. funding that does not have to be spent on

specific projects. It may be worth applying for this kind of funding and then spending at least a proportion of the money on volunteering.

Another tip is to include volunteering costs into project budgets. Work out how many volunteers will be contributing to the project and then divide this by the total number of volunteers in the organisation to find out what kind of proportion of a volunteer coordinator's salary it would be reasonable to include. You can also include the volunteers' travel expenses, training costs and any additional time given by the teacher or other paid staff.



CHECKLIST

of relevant company policies

- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Health and safety
- Volunteering
- Whistle-blowing
- Equal opportunities
- Data protection
- Complaints
- Financial Management
- Equality and Diversity
- Staff development
- Staff induction

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

on a shoestring

If your organisation has little time for volunteer coordination it can be hard to prioritise tasks. When working on a shoestring budget, we recommend the following.

If you have got
 **1 hour a week**

- Respond to volunteer enquiries thanking people for getting in touch, explaining that the volunteer coordinator has very limited capacity and reassure the potential volunteer that you'll be in touch in due course. You could even set up an automated email to explain this when people get in touch.
- Ask potential volunteers to fill out a form about their skills, experiences, relevant qualifications, availability and motivation.
- Read volunteer forms in order to find a suitable placement
- Connect potential volunteers with host colleagues (eg. teachers)

If you have got
 **3 hour a week**



In addition to the above:

- Organise a volunteer induction/training day. You can put this on when you have around five-ten new starters
- Apply for some funding for volunteer coordination

If you have got
 **5 hour a week**



In addition to the above:

- Get in touch with volunteers after their first session to see how it has gone
- Keep regular contact with teachers (or other colleagues) who are working with volunteers to assess how it is going
- Monitor the impact of volunteering on the organisation's students

SHARING THE TASK OF VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

For a small organisation it can be a really good idea to work with other organisations in order to share the costs of volunteer coordination and benefit from economies of scale. In this way, written policies and trainings do not need to be replicated. The workload for a small organisation might not add up to a decent part-time job and therefore joining up with other organisations may enable the creation of an attractive part-time or even full-time package. Similarly it might be a good idea to share volunteers. Some potential volunteers may want more work than your organisation alone can offer or they may want a variety that benefits from supporting more than one group.

How to select a partner for these kinds of collaborations? It may make sense to work in the same sector i.e. in our case migrant/refugee support and/or adult education. That way policies and procedures

are likely to correspond and volunteers will be happy to be working towards similar objectives. It is also important that the organisations share values as this should reduce the risk of disagreements down the line. To a certain extent there is a reputational risk when you enter into a partnership and the more similar the organisation's values the smaller the likelihood of one partner threatening the reputation of the other through its actions or communications. Another risk is that you end up competing for volunteers if interest declines.

It is important to create a Memorandum of Understanding between the two partners to define the extent and limits of the partnership and the circumstances that it would be brought to an end. This can seem bureaucratic and untrusting but having a clear agreement can prevent a lot of trouble in the future.





Case Studies

This section contains case studies of good practice involving volunteers in language learning. The cases studies are designed so that they can be easily copied. As such, we've arranged them under a number of headings: Project description, Strengths of the project, How to set it up and Support and coordination of the volunteers. Lastly, the Three top tips provide behind-the-scenes knowledge.





MUTTER KIND DEUTSCH

Language learning among babies and toddlers

The project “Mutter Kind Deutsch” (Mother Child German) shows that it is possible to conduct a language course for women with babies in the same room. The women and the facilitating teacher were supported by several volunteers in order to create a suitable learning environment. The volunteers were flexible and able to move between helping out with child care and supporting learners with partner work.

Women who have to care for very small children and who can't count on support from their families can become isolated if they don't speak the local language. Childcare programmes in Austria often start at the age of three, and even then some mothers don't feel comfortable handing over their children to childcare workers who they can't communicate properly with.

This course was set up so that children would stay in the same room with their mothers during the entire class.

The aim was to establish a learning context that met the needs of this specific target group. So learning took place on the floor, with rugs and pillows to make it suitable for children. Desks were removed and the only traditional classroom items that remain were the flip chart stand, clipboards, paper and pens. There was a play zone for those children able to play independently, but children also stayed with their mothers, got nursed, lay in the middle of the learning circle or slept in their buggies within the classroom.

Sessions were led by a German teacher and volunteers were involved both to help take care of the children and to support activities related to language learning such as group and pair work. The course was attended by six-eight learners per group (plus their babies and the supporting volunteers), meaning that there could be up to twenty people in the room. The course took place for two hours, twice a week.

Lessons were based both on plenary sessions and a lot of partner work. This meant that lessons could be adapted to

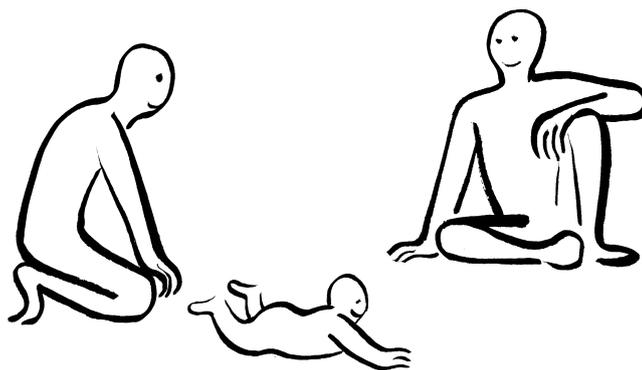
the diverse needs of the women and were flexible if one of the women was badly needed by her baby.

The course involved at least two volunteers per session. Having three or even more volunteers in the room was even better. The volunteers were not involved in lesson planning and were able to respond, moment to moment, to the needs of the group. Flexibility with the volunteers' roles paid off in this project. Volunteers naturally tended towards the tasks that suited them best - some focussed more on rocking/playing with the children and some showed more interest in supporting the mothers' language learning. Nonetheless, volunteers were expected to be flexible to move around to where they were needed most.

The project also highlighted the benefit that non-native speaker volunteers could bring to language support. These volunteers modelled how to achieve language learning and overcome barriers, showing that one does not need to know everything in order to speak with confidence.

“If I'm lucky, some children go to sleep and I can form small groups

with a volunteer in each group”, said Jana, the teacher, during the project. Jana had previously also worked in Kindergarten to give specific children language support, so she was not afraid of chaos with small children. At planning stage, the idea of involving the children more in the language course was considered. They could sing songs and work with nursery rhymes in German. But neither the children nor the mothers showed interest in these elements of the class (or



were too shy), so the teacher didn't continue with these activities.

Stength of the project

The fact that this project is focused on women and supported and conducted by women had several benefits. Nevertheless there were also some men involved in administration and translation. For the volunteers, it was very rewarding to be able to support other women in a potentially challenging stage of their lives and have the opportunity to directly connect with them.

From the very beginning of the project, the participants supported each other by taking care of each other's babies.

One of the groups had significant diversity in terms of the age of the women and their educational background. Stronger group members in this cohort tried to motivate and encourage the other participants.

Set up

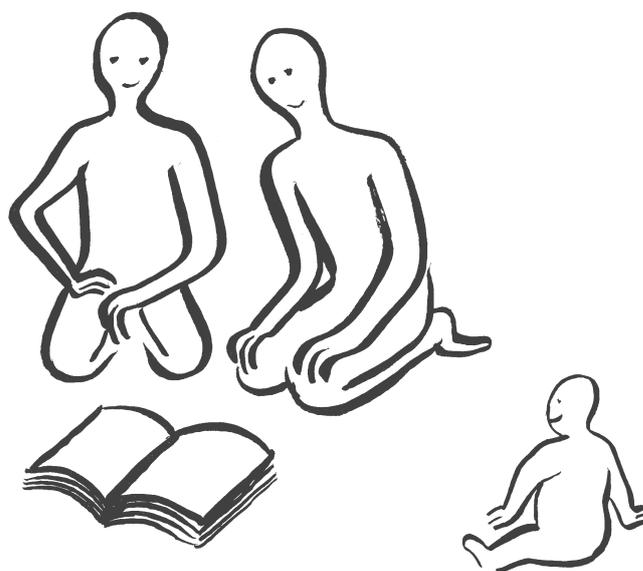
Before starting the first two regular courses, there was an eight week pilot course. Women with children up to the age of three could sign up. The main learning from these eight weeks was around the involvement of the children. The first insight was that the age group was too wide. In the following course the decision was made only to take in children younger than a year old, so none of the babies had learnt to walk at the beginning of the course. The course could definitely be conducted with two year old children as well, but every age group has its very specific needs connected to the children's ability to move around and communicate. During the pilot course some volunteers found it very challenging to attend to the older kids without being able to communicate with them through a shared language.

Another interesting learning: During the pilot course many women's attendance was very inconsistent. This turned into a serious problem with session where there were more volunteers than learners in the room, which was very bad for the motivation of the volunteers. It was also a shame as some women had initially been turned away from the course since, based on signups, it had reached capacity. And last but not least, the funding body requested specific numbers of participants.

To address this inconsistent attendance, all applicants for the first four month courses were invited to come to a meeting to sign in. Everyone had a brief one-to-one conversation in their first language about the course expectations. During this conversation the ten ground rules of the course were explained (in their first language) and applicants had to sign a document to show that fully understood these rules. The ground rules contained simple standard like no telephone calls or texting during class, and that no unexcused absence

would be accepted. Some of the participants that had taken part in the pilot were slightly shocked by this new policy but nobody declined to sign and the impact on attendance exceeded our expectations.

In the pilot course we felt uncomfortable being so strict, because the target group had enough burdens to be dealing with. But faced with so many women applying to the course, we felt that we had to take action to be fair to those who could not attend because of the limited capacity.



TOP THREE TIPS

1. If you're working with total beginners, be sure you have someone to translate when they sign in. It is important that there is no misunderstanding concerning the ground rules and expectations. This is an unusual educational setting after all.
2. If you're including children who can already walk make each mother responsible for their child or children so as not to overburden the volunteers. The volunteers support, but they don't take total responsibility for childcare.
3. Working on the floor seems suitable, but this means the classroom needs to be arranged in advance, which is extra work. We were lucky to have a volunteer to help us with the set up every day. All volunteers brought toys, but we got the impression that these weren't really needed.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

This entire project was also established to offer untrained volunteers a way to support language learning as there were many people who were interested in volunteering at that time. The basic idea was that the teacher would be the person providing continuity in person and ensuring the quality of teaching.

Following an initial brief screening (filling out a questionnaire about previous experiences and motivation), each volunteer met with the volunteer coordinator. Those who seemed suitable and were interested to support this specific course came to their first class twenty minutes before the start of the course in order to get to know the teacher. This seemed to be sufficient to be supportive in this setting. After each lesson the teacher had five-ten min. reflection about the sessions with the volunteers.

Some volunteers were very committed and could support several times a week and others were only available once a week. There were also some turnover of volunteers over the entire course of the project as people left and new people joined. The presence of the volunteers made a big difference to the lessons, so the volunteer coordinator made sure that several volunteers were present for each session. With four sessions a week (two course with two sessions each), ensuring that there were enough volunteers was occasionally challenging.

There was dedicated time for the teacher to meet with the volunteers, but none of these meetings took place. It seemed that there was no real need for it because there was always sufficient time to talk before or after the lessons.



BITE IN YOUR FREE TIME

At the pitch we're all equal

Bite in your freetime (Bijt in je vrije tijd) is an initiative that aims to get migrants involved in sports and cultural organisations in Leuven, Belgium. During the months of October and November migrants can participate for free in over fifty different activities. During these activities, they have the opportunity to speak Dutch with other participants. They can choose activities to get involved in according to their interest and their language level. There are also activities they can do in a group or with their family. Although most participants are linked to the local language schools some of them come from migrant organisations or are sent by the social organisations that offer support to newcomers.

The reason why 'Bijt in je vrije tijd' was created is because migrants are frequently looking for opportunities to talk Dutch outside the classroom but have difficulties finding the way to cultural or sporting organisations. Furthermore, many organisations try to reach migrants in order to diversify their audience but seldom succeed. The City is attempting to build a bridge between migrants and organisations so they can meet each other. Therefore they ask organisations to give free access to migrants for this short period. The cultural and sporting activities are put together in a brochure which is distributed in the language schools, cultural centres etc.

In order to lower the threshold for participation, induction days are organised in collaboration with language schools. Several organisations come to the schools and offer a set of activities during the classes so that students can participate in a familiar, comfortable context. At that same time these visits allow students to meet buddies (volunteers) and make an appointment to do an activity together. They can also ask to be set up with a buddy via email. Registration can be done online or face to face via the teacher.

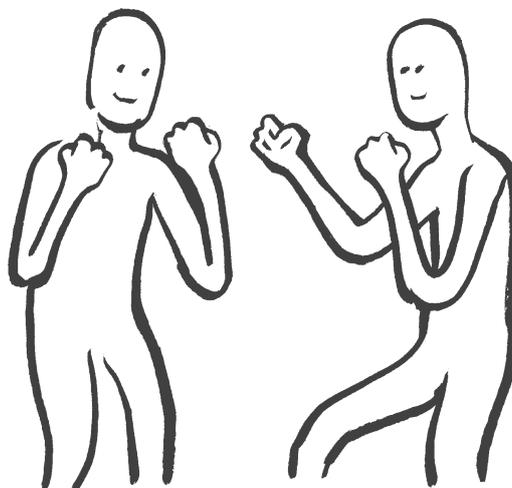
The teachers help the migrant learners to find the right course. For some courses the knowledge of Dutch is more

important than for others, but course selection is primarily based around learners' interests. Teachers talk about the activities in their classes and teach relevant language, such as vocabulary to talk about sports, hobbies, free time in general.. The involvement of the teachers is very important for encouraging the learners. Sometimes, when young migrants are concerned (in what's called the 'OKAN classes'), the mentor of the youngsters will accompany them and they go to a sporting facility together. OKAN offers foreign students a one-year, focused study of the Dutch language through an intense training of the four key language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. These studies

enable students to smooth the transition into secondary education. OKAN stands for OnthaalKlas voor Anderstalige Nieuwkomers (Reception Class for Newcomers with another native Language). Learners must be at least twelve years old and have not reached the age of eighteen when signing up. and have been living in Belgium for less than 1 year.

For many migrants who don't speak the language it's crucial to have a familiar person introducing them and supporting them to persevere.

The collaboration and the motivation of the buddies is therefore essential to the success of 'Bijt in je vrije tijd'. One month long volunteers





accompany migrants, adults and youngsters, to the cultural or sporting events. They spend a few hours a day (or evening) with the migrants and help them to find their way to the event, to register, ... They also make them feel at home in the club. The buddies are the perfect mediators. There are fewer obstacles between the migrants and the buddies since they are not being assessed as would have been the case in the classroom. The buddies should have a keen interest in communicating with other people and try to overcome language and cultural barriers. To prepare them for this job they get a training offered by the City. Sometimes the volunteer accompanies a small group to the activity but it also might be just one person. It all depends on the availability of the volunteers and the wishes of the migrants.

'Bijt in je vrije tijd' is a fine example of how language learning and community building come together. Each year many organisations, such as language schools, cultural and sporting organisations, the integration office and the city council work together and it's always a huge success.

Strength of the project

This project has been running for quite some time. Most of the organisations involved are familiar with the planning in October and November: language schools adapt the curriculum and offer space and time for leisure organisations to come to the language centre and present the activities. Similarly, the leisure organisations know beforehand what

kind of activities to present to the migrant learners. The number of participating organisations increases each year. Since the project answers to many needs from different parties, its major strength is the close cooperation between various partners. In class for instance, migrants can have a look at the website, choose an activity they like and discuss the language level required. There are four different language levels, from beginners to well advanced. Migrants who live in Leuven for quite some time and speak the language fluently can try more challenging activities such as theatre, creative writing, ... If you have a limited knowledge of the language you can opt for activities where a basic knowledge of the language is sufficient. Last year 30% of the participants returned to the organisation after the free activities. 52% mentioned they would have liked to continue but blame lack of time or bad timing of the activity for not doing so.

Another strength is the incredible variety of activities on offer. You can learn how to ride a bike, practice sports or join a crafting group. Young people can have a look at one of the local scout's groups, make a radio program, do a theatre workshop or go to the museum.

Set up

Bite in your free time is an large scale project that involves many organisations. But you can start small. It's sufficient to have a language centre with migrant learners and some leisure organisations, a museum, companies prepared





to offer a tour or whatever. All learners, of any level, can participate at the events.

Preparation

Present 'Bite in your free time' to the local organisations. Depending on your national context, local organisations may meet together in local alliances or community boards where you can communicate with a number of organisations at once. Contact the adult education providers in the region as well and agree a timing for the activities. Use specific communication channels to reach a broad audience, not just learners who already take part in language courses.

Make sure all the stakeholders have enough information: make a flyer, a powerpoint presentation and involve the local press.

Timing

Make sure the timing suits all the stakeholders. Avoid holiday periods or examination periods.

Involvement

Choose ambassadors in the language centres who will promote the events with colleagues.

Communication

Bite in your free time in Leuven involves thirty-one leisure organisations, three language centers, the City Council and about ten smaller organisations (like migrants communities). They meet three times a year. If you want to set up a similar activity, communication is really important, especially if you don't know all the stakeholders. Once the period and the program are set, make a leaflet, posters, an updated Facebook page and a website with all the information. Ask the organisations involved to actively recruit buddies. The actual buddies sometimes have participated in previous years, so they really know the structure and can convince others to come and join in.

Each organisation indicates a buddy who is responsible to welcome the learners at the start of the activity. The buddy is the bridge between participants and organisations and helps to eliminate barriers. Buddies accompany non native youngsters and adults to the leisure or sports' activity. They support the participant in the first contacts with the organisation. Afterwards they help the participant where needed to enrol, to get a discount ... Buddies are also ambassadors of the project, one of the faces of Bite in your free time. Depending on how much time a buddy can spend they might be asked to promote the project in schools and partner organisations.

Buddies are recruited through the volunteers' organisations and the language schools. Especially buddies with a migration background are precious facilitators as they have been on the

Bite in your free time was a one-month project for more than five years. To assure the continuity the City Council decided to expand the project. During summer buddies will take groups of newcomers and accompany them for small excursions. In October - November there will be free sample sessions in the language schools.

other side of the language barrier.

Buddies get a training (two and a half hours) provided by the City and have a buddy coordinator who matches buddies and participants and who is responsible for the follow up. The coordinator will check with the buddy how things are going and meets with the buddies after Bite in your free time. The buddies fill in a questionnaire and do suggestions about how their activity can be improved and what are the difficulties for them.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Good communication is essential since many partners are involved. If you are the organisation responsible for setting the project up make sure you communicate well in advance. Go and talk to the council, the leisure and sports' organisations and explain what you're going to do
2. When talking to organisations taking part in the project one of the issues seems to be the continuation. Try to set up a sustainable collaboration and make sure the participants are welcomed and part of the group also when the project is finished.
3. Make sure the language levels are well defined and clear to all partners. Language levels differ depending on the kind of activity. Use icons to make clear what language level is needed per activity.

BABEL'S BLESSING

Advanced learners act as volunteer teaching assistants

Babel's Blessing runs several ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses across London at a range of different levels. They are a small charity with a low budget.

They run language classes that students pay for (Spanish, Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish) in order to generate income and cover the costs to run free ESOL classes. They are particularly interesting because they have developed a big reputation in London for their innovative pedagogical approach and innovative funding model. They also have volunteer teaching assistants who are refugees.

Volunteers work as teaching assistants, supporting other students on a one-to-one (or small group) basis during the lessons. The ESOL classes are informal, often drop-in. They are run by a paid, qualified teacher and supported by volunteers who are often refugees.

Project description

Babel's blessing's English classes were started in response to funding cuts for language classes in the UK. Free classes are increasingly hard to find, especially for migrants who have 'no recourse to public funds'. They partner with organisations already working with migrants, drawing on these partners' knowledge of the areas and target group to ensure they're meeting genuine need.

Babel's blessing use an informal classroom style that is focused around functional communication and practical skills. Some of their classes are run at 'Initial Assessment' accommodation for asylum seekers asking for support because they are destitute. The people in these centres are recently arrived in the UK and have nowhere to stay while their claim is initially being assessed by the Home Office. People are only supposed to be at these Initial Assessment centres for two weeks. While many end up staying for much longer, this inevitably means that Babel's Blessings classes in this setting are transient with a regularly changing group of students.

Strength of the project

By using refugee volunteers as language assistants, Babel's blessing gives work experience (albeit unpaid) to refugees as well as providing a progression route for advanced English learners. There are classes for refugees through a support charity (situated at the organisation's premises) and through residential immigration centres (where

people arrive before their applications are processed). The volunteers are recruited from the centres or the charity (just like the students).

"Here every student is a teacher and every teacher is a student. Even though each course has a facilitator, we work according to the principles of critical pedagogy – everyone is actively involved in shaping the learning process."

Hannah
project co-ordinator.

At Babel's Blessings, volunteers are also migrants who have been through the process themselves of learning the language. In fact, many of them are former students from the same class or organisation. The shared experience with the students can be very helpful. It's also helpful that many of the volunteers share languages with students (Arabic and Farsi mainly). It can be motivating for students to see



volunteers from a similar background who have advanced language skills.

Volunteers support language learning by giving students more opportunity to practice in small groups and get feedback. Furthermore, they often interact with students outside of the class and help them with forms, reading letters and using computers/websites.

Set up

Babel's Blessings was set up in 2015, inspired by Israeli organisation This is Not an Ulpan (www.thisisnotanulpan.com). Babel's Blessings grew out of London-based radical Jewish collective Jewdas. It has a low budget and an innovative funding model. By positioning itself explicitly as a 'migrant solidarity project' it attracts paying students to its evening classes who appreciate that their payments will help fund classes for refugees and migrants. Money is also raised through individual donations and fundraising events.

The organisation manages to run on a tiny budget (less than £15,000 turnover in 2017/18). It does this by working with partner organisations who provide space and resources for free and by working with teachers on a freelance basis.

One possible pitfall of this model is that because volunteers come from the beneficiary community the organisation may not hold them accountable in the same way. Unhelpful interventions from volunteers may be tolerated because the volunteer is a direct beneficiary rather than someone who is judged by their capacity to help. In one instance, there was a volunteer who was very critical of the teacher and made the teacher feel uncomfortable. It went on for a long time before the teacher eventually sat down with the volunteer and explained how his behaviour was making her feel. Things improved subsequently - but the teacher might have taken action sooner if the volunteer had not also been a beneficiary.

Support and Coordination of the volunteers

Volunteers and students are recruited for Babel's Blessing's ESOL classes in the Initial Assessment accommodation

centre through the charity that operates there. Partnering with organisations that are connected to the beneficiary group the charity wants to reach helps with recruitment.

At Babel's blessing, volunteers are recruited from classes, so they're already known to teachers. Coordination happens through email discussion between teacher and volunteer before/after the class. The organisation run termly training sessions for teachers and volunteers together. In these trainings teachers and volunteers learn different elements of ESOL and especially 'participatory ESOL' such as initial assessment, finding topics, facilitating group discussion, developing writing skills etc.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Recruiting from amongst people already connected with your organisation: if you're small enough this means it'll cut down on time taken to get to know prospective volunteers
2. Making volunteer opportunities for advanced language learners consolidates and improves their language and work experience while benefiting lower level students. For a case study of the benefits these volunteers can bring see p. 57 of the Toolkit for Teachers.
3. In the transition from student to volunteer, support the teacher to clarify ground rules and expectations with the volunteer and have regular reviews so that it is as easy as possible for them to give constructive feedback to the volunteer.



TAALVLOER

Volunteering and learning a job

In this project it's the language learners who work as volunteers in social enterprises and community organisations, such as childcare, recycling shops, community centres etc. They are supported by a language coach who is trained by the local employment centre. It's a unique possibility to combine language learning with work and aims at enhancing the migrants' language, professional and social skills.

Project description

Taalvloer started in 2017 as a social project by the City Council of Leuven and OCMW (Public Social Welfare Office). At the beginning four social organisations were involved, as well as the VDAB (the Flemish Employment Exchange and Vocational Training Service) who offer the training for the language coaches. In each organisation about ten to fifteen migrants are involved as volunteers. Later in 2017 OCMW started the individual Language Floors - smaller organisations such as a childcare centre or a nursing home - where one volunteer can go to work.

The volunteers work at least two half days and five half days at most. Language schools announce the Language Floor in the Dutch for foreigners classes. If the learners want to volunteer, they get in touch with the OCMW and there's an intake to see which activity matches the volunteer, how much time they can give etc. The learners must have acquired level A2. The Language Floor provides an extra opportunity to practice the language outside the classroom. Migrants combine the volunteering with language learning. They can volunteer until they find a paid job or enroll in further education or training. Filimon Measho Tewelde (Eritrea) puts it like this: 'I participate in Taalvloer because I like to work. Really. I like my colleagues and my language coach Bieke, they do a great job'. Filimon volunteered in the cleaning company 'Allround'. He liked to be part of the group and made sure everybody felt ok.

The language coach has been trained by VDAB over six months to support the volunteer and to improve the volunteers' language skills. A language coach will emphasise specific vocabulary, e.g. vocabulary linked to warehouse tasks or fruits and vegetables if the volunteer is working at a farm social enterprise. The role of the language coach in the individual Language Floors is taken up by two language teachers from Open School (Centre for Basic Education). The language coaches in the other organisations support fifteen volunteers per months. It's a full time job.

The project is unique in Flanders. There have been other local OCMW who are interested in this project but right

now the one in Leuven is the only one. Although the focus is on language learning, the project has had some other beneficial side effects: migrants grow more self-confident, they improve their social skills and they get out of isolation. At the moment there are fifty-eight migrants working as a volunteer on a Language Floor in Leuven. All partners involved are satisfied with the project. Each month there's a meeting between all the Language Floors. Every six months there is an evaluation with all the partners, the project will be financed until the end of 2019.

Strength of the project

This project gives an answer to the pressing question expressed by many migrant learners: how and where can I practice Dutch? Even if the Dutch courses are quite intense (twelve or six hours a week), learners feel the need to learn outside the classroom. At the same time many learners also want to prepare themselves for a paid job or occupy themselves and develop a social network.

The project was a huge success from the start due to high demand and the fact that the partners involved were prepared to offer training and finances. There's also a cross-pollination between the stakeholders in this project. In the conversations with the language coach the volunteer sometimes talks about poor housing, childcare problems or medical issues. The language coach passes this information to the social worker who takes up the problem with the volunteer. Volunteers are thus better screened and supported.

Set up

The project Taalvloer definitely started because there was a huge need, identified by all the stakeholders. If you want to start a similar project it's important:

- to be able to provide training to the language coaches. The VDAB (the Flemish Employment Exchange and Vocational Training Service) provides this training for six months.
- to inform the organisations involved in the project about



what they can expect from the migrant learners. They are volunteers and not paid employees. From the start it should be clear what the volunteer can and cannot do. Find organisations that have experience working with migrants, volunteers and marginalised groups and an understanding of their needs.

- Find funding. This project started in 2017 and has funding to the end of 2019. Despite the success continuation depends on political decisions and social policy of the partners. You could consider collaboration with language schools to provide the language coaches if the cost of the training is too high.
- volunteers sometimes drop out of the project because they have found, or are seeking, paid employment. This is something to bear in mind.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

The volunteers are sent by the language schools, both the Centres for Adult Education and Open School (Basic Education). They should have language level A2 to participate. They want to take part because they 'd like to develop their language skills and are looking for speaking opportunities. You are only eligible to take part in this project if you are part of a Dutch for foreigners course or a professional track established by the VDAB.

The language coaches are employed by VDAB or Open School and receive six months of training to prepare for the job. The Language Floors, the companies involved in this project, already have experience with migrant workers, volunteers and long term unemployed people. There is no specific volunteers' coordinator in this case, because the learners are the volunteers and they meet each time they come to work with the language coach. There are meeting between the language coaches (one a month) and between the other partners (twice a year) in order to evaluate the project and adapt where necessary.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Inform the language schools about the progress of the project. Tell them if you need more or less learners. Go there and present the project to the migrant learners in person.
2. Make sure the group of volunteers in one organisation is not too big (max. fifteen volunteers)
3. If the language coach is faced with other issues (such as housing problems) this should be followed up by a social or support worker of some kind.



CONVERSATION CIRCLES

Language Learning in the Library

The Conversation Circles are groups for migrants with different language levels and conditions run by volunteers. It takes place in three different groups for different speaking skill levels (Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced). There are also offers set for groups with particular needs, for example for parents who have no child care. The needs and goals of participants are as diverse as their backgrounds. Some are enrolled in English classes at local community colleges or non-profits, but want more conversation practice. Others are still looking for jobs. Some are newly arrived, some are here for extended visits and some have been here for over twenty years. The age, background and country of origin of the participants vary widely. What connects them is a desire to better navigate their daily lives at work, at home, in social situations, at the doctor's office, at the grocery store and at their children's schools.

Project description

Migrants often find it hard to navigate their new country while they do not speak the language, but a language course on its own doesn't change that situation. In the beginning, people are often not very confident in their pronunciation and need the opportunity to practice the new language. But in courses there is often not so much time to speak and to build confidence through practice. The project of the Peabody Library tackles this problem by offering a free and low-threshold accessible format with their "conversation circles".

The library aims to build participants' informal knowledge about the country and culture as well as giving them the opportunity to try their language skills in a safe environment and thus build their confidence around communication in everyday life. At the same time, the library can also promote library services to new readers through the project.

The coordination of the project is handled by the library. The volunteers run the conversation circles. There are no requirements that have to be met by volunteers. Each volunteer designs their conversation circles according to their own ideas. The background of the volunteers is very different; there are educators involved as well as neighbours.

The library produced a great repertoire of material and provides it to the volunteers for their work. They have bilingual picture dictionaries, activity books, online language learning subscription (Pronunciation) and teacher guides available. But they also developed a 12-unit curriculum

for new volunteers. Volunteers can pick and choose which materials they use, so each circle has its own tone and focus.

The program started with three circles and at the time of writing there are seven weekly groups meeting for English practice. Over the past four years, they had over one hundred language learners participate in Conversation Circles. Their English speaking abilities ranged from beginner to advance. Volunteers are usually quite successful at sustaining a small weekly group meeting once over six - twelve months. There are six month or nine month sessions. Most of the volunteers conduct their conversation circle about forty-six weeks a year. For example, there is a family circle for parents who do not have daycare for children up to the age of six years old. This circle combines spoken English practice with playtime for children and family literacy (story time at the end of each circle). Other groups, for example, deal with knowledge about the world of work and expand their vocabulary around this topic.

Strength of the project

The project not only focuses on the thematic needs of the participants but also on the living conditions, for example by enabling them to participate in a conversation circle with small children.

The strength of the project is also the coordination of the project, which not only takes care of organisational matters, but also systematically tries to further develop the material for volunteers. Through this approach, new volunteers have the advantage of being able to build on existing knowledge.



Using the library as a venue means that the project is able to draw on educational resources that would not be freely available outside of this institutional context.

Set up

When organising the project, think about which elements can be provided. An organisation like the library can provide space for free and also may be able to take on project coordination. You can recruit language learners via more formal language classes.

It's probably useful for volunteers to exchange knowledge among themselves as well as with a coordinator. In this way, knowledge can be exchanged, but also documented in order to be able to work more efficiently in the future and to be able to find out the difficulties but also the needs of the participants.

In working with the volunteers, it is very important to find out the respective skills and needs in order to support them and make the best of their experience and capabilities. If there are volunteers who have little knowledge of teaching or education, they can focus on individual topics relevant to everyday life and can primarily understand themselves as a conversation group that enables low-threshold access. Educationally trained volunteers can try to lead higher-quality group conversations. It is important to find out about volunteers' qualifications and resources right from the start to help ensure sustainability and make it likely that the course will take place over a longer period of time.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

In addition to the exchange with the coordinator and a short informal and casual training, the volunteers have the opportunity in the initial phase to share their experiences with other volunteers and also participate as observers in the units. This allows the volunteers to gain insight into the practice and to answer their questions through exchange with each other. In addition to this approach, there is a well-developed curriculum in which they can also orientate themselves for their sessions. In dealing with the material provided, they can acquire knowledge and do not have to think up everything themselves. The documentation and

the creation of material simplify the involvement of new volunteers but also the training period. The engagement with the volunteers is essential, as it increases the quality, but also the appreciation towards the volunteers.

Important for the organisation is the coordination of the sessions with the schedules of the volunteers. It is also advisable to create a waiting list for learners in order to be able to contact them when new courses are set up.

The volunteers are reached through different networks. The most successful recruitment of volunteers and students has been through networking with local agencies that offer similar services - such as anti-poverty agencies, social and human service agencies, Adult Basic Education programs, community colleges, career centres, etc. If there is such a network in your area it is highly recommend that you work with them. Ideally, find volunteers who have a good knowledge of English grammar and English language skills as well as knowledge or experience of language learning. But also the right attitude to work with people who have recently settled and have limited language skills in the target language.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. The library as a public place is very relevant at the conversation club, because it gives people access to this place and is also able to provide rooms and resources
2. The informal setting plays an important role in this project, because it allows the participants a pleasant atmosphere and ideal learning conditions
3. The library has independently produced material for the volunteers, so new volunteers can benefit from the knowledge of the previous volunteers (multilingual material, curriculum, etc.).



XENIA

Informal women's conversation group for language learners and expert speakers

Xenia runs informal women-only conversation workshops attended by migrant language learners and expert speakers (migrants and non migrants) every week. It's purpose is to help women migrants to learn English and feel welcome in their communities (integrate). The workshops and the whole organisation are run by volunteers. Xenia is an interesting case study because of its focus on community building, what it manages to do on a very low budget and its open door policy to participants. An interesting element of this project is that they don't distinguish between expert speaker participants in their workshops (who others might call the 'volunteers') and the participants with lower levels of English (who others might call the 'learners'). The emphasis is on sharing and conversation

Project description

Xenia was started by a small group of women to support migrant women to improve their language skills. They are motivated by a desire to be welcoming to migrants and create a fairer, society. They see proficiency in English as a vital tool for navigating everyday life in the UK. Their workshops are women-only and their website states: "research has shown that migrant women often face greater barriers to accessing English classes than migrant men.

"A report recently published by the Wonder Foundation recommends providing single-sex provision as well as 'empowering community spaces where women feel welcome and safe' as steps to breaking down some of these barriers"

Xenia runs weekly three-hour workshops at Hackney Museum in East London. Hackney is a diverse, inner city borough of London with high levels of deprivation and a high percentage of migrants. The venue for workshops is provided for free by Hackney Museum - a good example of how clever partnerships can support work with low budgets.

There are about thirty people present at each workshop - a mix of English language learners and expert English-speaking women from the local area. The workshop might have a specific focus, like cooking or home or children etc. Bringing everyone together in a women-only space allows some women to attend who might not be comfortable learning in gender-mixed spaces. Language is developed through practice and informal feedback rather than through explicit language tuition or instruction

Workshops are run by volunteer facilitators who are involved in Xenia in a more formal, committed way. The group of

facilitators support one another to develop their skills. New facilitators are selected by the existing organising team and often come from the participant group (particularly the expert speakers).

Strength of the project

An interesting element of this project is that they don't distinguish between expert speaker participants and the participants with lower levels of English. This could be seen to challenge the idea that volunteers give to the learner 'beneficiaries', but not the other way round. It means learning and teaching can be more on a continuum. Arguably this makes it easier for participants to transition from learners to conversation leaders as their English improves.

Another strength of the project is their emphasis on relationship development. Workshops are advertised as a place where friendships can form. The informality of the setting and the loose structure lends itself well to relaxed conversation and relationship building between participants across linguistic and national differences. Accessibility is also prioritised: travel expenses can be paid and children are looked after by volunteers in the same venue where workshops take place.

Set up

Xenia began with a single stand-alone workshop which was so well attended and received that the organisers decided to make it a regular occurrence. The first workshop was part of an annual event called the AntiUniversity but this is coincidental - it could be reproduced in partnership with any civil society institution (library, school, museum, faith organisation) or at a festival or cultural event. What



is key is having small team of committed facilitators and a mechanism to attract participants (ie. links to migrant/refugee support group or advertising effectively on social media).

Starting with a stand-alone workshop is a great testing ground. Xenia got the space for free thanks to Hackney Museum and contacted a local language education provider to advertise the session to migrant learners.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

Xenia has a management group which is predominantly volunteers. They have one paid member of staff who was elected from this group. Xenia distinguish between 'volunteers' who perform staff functions in the management group and volunteers with high levels of English who take part in their workshops (who they call 'participants' along with language learners).

In terms of recruiting participants to the workshops, anyone who wants to take part (language learners and advanced speakers) can register for workshops online or just drop in without registering.

Participation relies on making the workshops fun for expert speakers. Each workshop is run by a volunteer facilitator who guides the group discussion. Conversations focus on shared interests and participants benefit from building relationships with new people in their area.

Xenia workshops are not attempting to be formal language lessons or replace formal educational provision. They are more focused on relationship building and creating 'language rich' environments for learners to practice their speaking. However, the reliance on mutual support and training by volunteers does sometimes put strain on individuals involved. At workshops, The volunteer facilitator who are often relatively untrained, "relies on personality" and high level language participants' ability to talk well. New participants can turn up every week and Xenia has run into problems with expert speakers using "inaccessible language".

Beyond taking part in the workshops, participants can become management group volunteers (see above). Xenia organises non-hierarchically as far as possible. In order to recruit volunteers, a call goes out to participants at the workshop and an initial meeting is held to discuss the role in the organisation. Individuals are told clearly what the current volunteers are looking for in terms of skills and time commitment and volunteers can forward accordingly. Again,

these opportunities are open to all participants if they fit the role requirements, disrupting any concept of workshop 'beneficiaries' and 'volunteers'.

Because nearly everyone at Xenia is a volunteer, volunteer training, support and accountability happens in a very mutual way at Xenia.

"we realised that several of us needed more support and the new volunteers were often calling on those of us who had been in the project from the beginning and there was no way set up for those of us who had been with the project from the beginning to find support from the others and we tried to create a more genuinely circular way of each supporting each other"

Volunteers now organise themselves in two groups: volunteers that facilitate workshops and volunteers that do 'back end' functions such as monitoring, evaluating and communications. Skill sharing across the two 'circles' also happens – so facilitators share their skills with the other volunteers and vis versa.

At the time of writing Xenia are recruiting their first trustee board (trustees are all volunteers) and transitioning towards becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. In informal, low resource settings volunteers can support and skill-share with other volunteers
2. A way round resource-intensive volunteer recruitment is to run sessions that anyone can turn up to without vetting. Obviously this comes with risks and should be framed accordingly. If you want to run open sessions that anyone can come to think about how the facilitator can set expectations and ground rules at the beginning of each session. Regular attendees who 'get it' will also help promote group norms.
3. Think about what practices (including what language you use) can disrupt the idea that volunteers only give and language learners only receive. How can you promote the idea that learning is a two-way street?



TALDANSK CAFÉ

Practicing language in an informal setting

The language café Taldansk Café takes place every Friday 9.30-12.00 where students meet volunteers to talk and get help with homework. Language cafés is a good way to start involving volunteers in language learning as it is relatively easy to manage and coordinate. The activity greatly improves the students' understanding and oral language by conversing with volunteers in a different way than in formal classes. At the same time students overcome their uncertainty about making contact with strangers in the new language.

Project description

The language café Taldansk Café takes place in an informal setting in the language school's library. The school provide coffee, tea and biscuits. The volunteers come every week. The activity is accessible not only for refugees, but for all students of the language school: The students are adult refugees, international employees, spouses and international students at all levels. They come voluntarily to:

- Enhance their communication skills
- Prepare for tests and final exam
- Get help with various things such as homework, understanding letters and call to authorities etc.

A language teacher is always present to help and guide the students as well as the ten-twelve volunteers. The teacher introduces students to all the learning possibilities at the school's library and guides them to suitable learning resources. The teacher also guides volunteers in how best to help and support students either one-to-one or in small groups. The Volunteer Coordinator at the school support with ongoing dialogue with volunteers and a range of practical issues.

The volunteers in the Taldansk Café are mainly retired teachers, retired social workers, retired lawyers, but on-and-off young Danes studying at the university also volunteer at the café. The volunteers come every week when their schedule allows. A lot of

empathy and patience is needed to be a volunteer in order to provide good help without stressing or just doing the work for the student. The teacher knows both students and volunteers and can facilitate good matches between help needed and available volunteers.

Strength of the project

Taldansk Cafe give the students the chance to train in a relaxed setting and learn how the language is used in everyday life. They meet Danish culture and hear how expert speakers pronounce the words. Even more important they practice in different environments and through different methods (small talk, games, pictures, introduction to movies) and thus get more courage to speak Danish.



Combining classroom instruction with conversation practice creates a good dynamic between formal learning and informal practice. The teacher often introduces the Taldansk Café as a part of classes and thus guides the students to further learning possibilities.

Set up

For setting up a language café you of course need to recruit and train volunteers. When recruiting bear in mind the target group and try to ensure the volunteers reflect that group and the primary purpose for the café. It's definitely preferable if a teacher coordinate the café. Volunteers will come and go but the coordinator will be the central figure and promote recognisability, togetherness and a good volunteer community. You might find volunteers who can take over some of the tasks in coordination, for example assigning days to volunteers. However, a paid coordinator is preferable.

It is also preferable that the coordinating teacher is present in as many language cafés as possible. They will then build strong relationships with both students and volunteers and can then facilitate good matches and positive learning possibilities.

Matching the students' learning needs with a suitable volunteer can take many different forms. Some language cafés work with a schedule where the students "queue up" for fifteen -thirty minutes of volunteer time by writing their name on a blackboard. That way all students can get access to volunteers. Other cafés work with the coordinator being the "matchmaker" assigning students to volunteers.

Despite rigorous induction and training there is always the risk that the volunteers "misinform" learners about grammar and pronunciation rules. This makes the coordinating teacher even more important as such misinformation can be addressed and learned from.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

The induction of new volunteers can be handled by the coordinator of the language café or the Volunteer Coordinator for the whole school. Depending on intake the induction will be one-to-one or in a small group. It consists of an introduction to language learning and the different language tests that the students undergo. The daily help and guidance is provided by the language café coordinator who follows up on the subjects from the induction. The volunteers are furthermore invited to courses hosted by the Volunteer Department in Danish Refugee Council elaborating on language learning for adult refugees and migrants.

In the day-to-day operations or the café there is regular interaction between the coordinator/teacher in the language café and the students' teacher. This makes sure that the coordinator knows in-depth about the learning needs of the student. Otherwise the coordinator will always ask the individual student about their level, so that the volunteer knows the student's needs from the beginning.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Optimize the schedule for the language café to match the formal classes of the target group, for example so that students can practise at the café either before or after classes. This way you provide convenient learning options.
2. Secure volunteers of diverse background, skill-set, age and gender thus always having a suitable volunteer on hand to suit different students' needs.
3. A paid teacher coordinating the café gives you many advantages and ensures quality. Do prioritise this if possible.



TALK ENGLISH

Befrienders' Scheme

A national buddying scheme where volunteers provide one-to-one support to migrant language learners for two hours per week

The Talk English Friends Scheme involves hundreds of volunteers across the UK. The learners are beginner English speakers - both migrants and refugees. The volunteers can be anyone as long as they have Level 1+ English skills and E3+ computer skills. Volunteers attend Talk English conversation clubs and support. Then they are paired with individual learners or small groups to meet outside of formal activities to visit places of local interest, sign up to local services, or just meet and talk. A lot of this is one-to-one.

“A marvelous opportunity to help people from different walks of life to develop their English skills and integrate into the local community”

volunteer befriender

Project description

Talk English is a UK government-funded project that was initiated in 2014 to provide volunteer-led classes, online practice opportunities and a befriending scheme. There are two possible ways to volunteer.

1. As a 'teacher' delivering the Talk English sessions
2. As a befriender.

We are focussing on the second as a more sustainable and ethical way to organise volunteering as we believe that teachers doing teaching should be paid.

Talk English was created out of a consortium of organisations in the UK who received money from the Department of Communities and Local Government for

innovative approaches to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).

The volunteers are people familiar with and living in the local community. They are asked to give two hours a week. So the students get an extra two hours of practice opportunity or practical support outside of their course. This gives opportunities for speaking and listening practise and confidence building for learners. Volunteers can support the learners with any activity they want. In practice, this often includes developing ICT skills and introducing learners to services and facilities.

Strength of the project

Buddying gives useful support to language learning. It is really motivating to practise with a sympathetic person especially if you develop a friendly relationship. Learners have an authentic and urgent need to communicate and are encouraged to speak fluently and not to worry about making mistakes.

Another of the big strength of the project is its scale: Talk English is a national network with lots of opportunities for getting involved. There is a national website where would-be volunteers and learners can easily sign up. There is investment in the training of volunteers. Volunteers can work as part of a team with other volunteers in their local area. Befriending and helping people to access local services can be transferred to any context.

Set up

Although there are benefits of scale which are hard to replicate for smaller organisations, buddying can work in many contexts to supplement formal educational provision.

When setting up a buddying scheme, consider how volunteers and prospective befrienders submit their information and are matched together. Talk English uses a Google form (which you can set up for free) to collect information from prospective volunteers, including what times they are available to volunteer. Submissions can be



saved directly to a spreadsheet and filtered for specific availability or characteristics.

The main weakness of the whole organisation is that it can be perceived to be undermining the professionalisation of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in the UK. This critique is strengthened by the fact that the project was funded by the British government that was making massive cuts to ESOL and adult education at the same time as funding alternative, cheaper provision. The Talk English Friends programme is less vulnerable to this criticism however as they are not 'teaching' - they support outside of the formal courses and this kind of volunteering would be totally compatible with regular ESOL delivered by paid professionals.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

As discussed above, volunteers can apply via the website either by filling out an online google form or contacting a regional volunteer coordinator directly. Volunteers then become part of a local network that receives training both before they start and during the placement. They can also attend the Talk English courses (which are delivered by volunteer teachers), access a website for Talk English volunteers and attend Talk English events (like social events or films clubs).

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Language learning can be fruitfully combined with skill sharing around other competencies and activities such as ICT or visiting local facilities. This can add extra benefit for learners and bring language learning to life by connecting it to real life activities that are relevant to the learners' needs and interests.
2. There are benefits of scale: if an organisation is dealing with large numbers of volunteers they can develop ongoing practices around recruitment and training. Volunteers can also be connected through a network with each other. If your organisation is small think about partnering with other like-minded organisations to coordinate volunteers collectively.
3. Be explicit about necessary qualifications and time commitments (e.g. two hours per week) before volunteers sign up to make sure expectations are clear before you invest time in their recruitment or training.

JOB CLUB

Volunteers help with searching for job and courses

The Job Club helps with all aspects of searching for job and courses. Volunteers help with job applications, resumés and knowledge of the labor market. All participants are welcome and no specific language level is required. The main challenge is to find volunteers with the skills needed. If this is achieved the Job Club is easily transferred to other contexts.

Project description

The aim of the Job Club is to help migrants of all kind of migrants to search for jobs and courses. The volunteers help write applications and creating resumés. They prepare applicants for job interviews, and they inform about the Danish job market and about how to expand their job-related network. More specifically the volunteers help with:

- Job applications
- Resumés
- Guidance in how to use Jobnet, which is a computer system that job seekers use when they get information from the municipality and where they register their job seeking activities
- Practising job interviews
- Guidance in choosing and enrolling on a course

The volunteers are both young people who study, people who are working and senior citizens. The volunteers have varying work experience.

All kind of migrants are welcome - not only course participants at Lærdansk Odense. The typical age of the people we help is from twenty-five to fifty.

The participants don't need a certain language level to participate/get help. They try to speak Danish but if it's not possible for them they are welcome to speak English or another language that the volunteer can understand. Sometimes the participant's friends can translate for them.

The Job Club was initiated by Lærdansk Odense on request from Odense municipality as a response to a lack of guidance and help in English and basic Danish.

Strength of the project

The purpose of the Job Club is clear and in the interest of the participants, who join voluntarily based on their own motivation. The help given is centered around the individual's needs with plenty of time to help.

The participants practise their new language in a different setting, and their job-related vocabulary is expanded. They also overcome any uncertainty and dare to make contact with strangers in the new language and hopefully help them enter the Danish job market or study.

Set up

The main challenge in setting up a Job Club is finding volunteers with the right skills and knowledge to guide with job-related issues. The skill set can vary across volunteers but it is recommendable to have at least a few volunteers with background within human resources, as social worker etc. They are then knowledgeable experts within the group of volunteers and can be asked when needed.

The Job Club requires more specialist knowledge than some voluntary supportive roles and the volunteers should be supported by templates and supporting material. If the municipality uses a template for resumés this should be available as well as an introduction on how to use it.

In Denmark supporting job hunting is a mandatory task of the municipality or local authorities. A close cooperation with the municipality can greatly improve the quality of the advice given and ensure that the advice points in the same direction.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

The volunteers help the participants according to their own experience. The volunteers also train the new volunteers and make them feel welcome. In the Job Club we have a meeting four times per year where we talk about the work in the Job Club and make a six-months schedule so we all know who is working at any specific day. The school's volunteer coordinator is the contact person if there are any problems or if someone is ill.

There are five volunteers and one paid staff member involved in the Job Club. The volunteers help the participants when it comes to job applications, resumés etc., while the paid staff coordinates the volunteer's work schedule, the



groups meetings and send e-mails to the volunteers with new information.

New volunteers are mainly recruited by the Volunteer Department at Danish Refugee Council which due to name and reputation attracts many volunteers. The volunteers choose from a range of activities and the ones with the right profile are made especially aware of the Job Club. If they choose the Job Club they get a short introduction from the volunteer coordinator and a more detailed introduction from the other volunteers. All volunteers have access to an online folder with templates, contact information etc.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Recruiting volunteers with HR or other relevant background will greatly improve the quality of the advice/help given
2. Market the Job Club to relevant target groups on a regular basis but make sure that the volunteers are ready to take the extra participants
3. Create an online folder with relevant templates, contact numbers, work schedule etc. - make it easy to do a good job as volunteer

AKWABAA

Informal volunteer-run classes as part of a weekly social space

Akwaaba describes itself as a 'social centre for migrants'. It's run on Sundays out of a school in Hackney, London. Akwaaba is rooted in the activist community in London and is an explicitly an anti-racist organisation, proudly stating 'no-one is illegal' on their website.

The space is volunteer-run. As well as place to socialise and rest, a range of activities are on offer including informal English and literacy classes. It exists to provide social activities for migrants and their children and challenge prejudice and discrimination. The language classes are aimed at improving students' language skills in an informal setting.

Project description

Akwaaba's language provision is open to all migrants who need to improve their English skills irrespective of nationality or immigration status. They are particularly welcome to undocumented migrants or migrants with no recourse to public funds. Their strong political stance in favour of equality and human rights makes Akwaaba very popular with volunteers, especially anti-capitalist and anti-racism activists. There is also a collaborative, non-hierarchical organising ethos which is attractive to volunteers and participants alike. The holistic support and activities make it attractive to participants (students). Volunteers take a lead organising fun and games for kids (and adults), co-ordinating the food sharing (where everyone brings a dish if they can), all sorts of classes and learning activities in addition to the English classes. These additional learning opportunities are helpful because participants identify a range of things they want to learn and do in addition to language.

"I love Akwaaba! It's the best, most diverse, more caring social centre for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in London. Get involved and be part!"

**Emilia Teglia,
Volunteer**

The English classes are for small groups of five or six and are separated by level. They also provide one-to-one support for advanced learners and absolute beginners. The classes are responsive to the students and there is no predetermined external curriculum or exams. This is because a) the classes are drop-in so lack the regularity of attendance necessary to do exams and follow rigid syllabuses and b) because they want the classes to be as responsive as possible to the individuals in the group. For example, the group may decide they are interested in discussing the theme of housing in the next lesson and the volunteer will prepare discussion questions and relevant material to read (or watch / listen to) together.

Strength of the project

Akwaaba positions itself effectively to reach language learners and volunteers alike. Its English classes are intended to supplement, not replace, formal ESOL classes. In fact, Akwaaba deliberately build links with nearby ESOL providers so that they can help learners to access more formal provision.

Akwaaba's politicised approach to migrant solidarity and education means that learners feel that they are valued and respected. They are motivated by the volunteers' manner, inclusiveness and shared values.

English sessions focus around meaningful communication and building confidence. The focus on authentic, meaningful conversation allows volunteers to offer support on a range of issues beyond language learning:

"perhaps something will come out of that conversation, it will turn out that [the English language learner] don't know that you can access free prescriptions for example, and that there is a way that we can help them"



Set up

Volunteers are recruited through word of mouth, the website and social media. Because Akwaaba is clear and explicitly about its values, volunteers who share these values tend to get involved. To get started they come along to the social centre to get to know the team. Subsequently they are invited to support specific groups of activities depending on the skill of the volunteer and where there is greatest need. One challenge is finding people who are able to volunteer consistently.

To start a comparable activity, the most important thing is to work with an appropriate host and have good relationships with the local community so that people hear about the activities and start attending. Good relationships with student groups and activist groups can help to provide a steady supply of committed volunteers who share the ethos of what you are doing.

Akwaaba set up as a deliberately voluntary organisation in order to organise horizontally without creating a separation between those with and without the right to work in the UK.

“Paid staff creates a separation between those who are able to take up those roles in this country and those who do not have a right to work ... we don't want to create barriers like that”

Although initially the social centre began based around a shared lunch, activities have sprung up based on participants' interests and needs. Consider allowing for your project to evolve based on the input of the community you want to reach.

The English class happens in an informal way after lunch and there is an attempt to integrate it with other activities and conversations that are happening in the space. People are not encouraged to attend the English class and then leave straight after - its intended to support the community-building aims of the wider project.

Like Xenia, Awkwaaba have received space from a sympathetic host institution that is accessible to the communities they want to reach. Their model can work in any cultural context, as long as there is a willing host organisation with space. The types of activities on offer can vary from context to context.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

There are no professionals at Akwaaba. It is entirely volunteer-run. Around ten to twenty volunteers are involved each week and there are more in the network (around fifty). Some work one-to-one with students and some (the ones with more teaching experience) run the group sessions.





Other volunteers get involved in the social activities and advice work, such as housing rights advice and benefits advice.

At the English classes, there are no 'teachers', only volunteers. There are at least three group English lessons each Saturday plus several one-to-one sessions. There are generally around four - five volunteers in each English session at the social centre, which takes the pressure off any single volunteer to hold the entire class. There are sometimes as many volunteers as learners and learning typically happens in small group conversation with limited input from the volunteers on language.

Akwaaba is clear that it is not intending to replace formal educational provision. Therefore volunteers are not expected to have teaching qualifications. In fact Akwaaba have found that the best volunteers aren't necessarily best qualified but are the people best connected to the aims and ethos of the wider project. This is reflected in the fact they don't require qualifications of their volunteers. Instead they select volunteers based on their demonstrable commitment to migrants' rights and willingness to commit to the community for a year or more.

Volunteers communicate together before and after the sessions and at management meetings. They support one another with planning and delivery, sharing experiences between each other. They are encouraged to get involved in the management of the organisation to have a say, share the work of running Akwaaba voluntarily and encourage commitment.

In terms of training, Akwaaba is plugged in to a range of social justice organisations from housing rights to migrants' rights. There are workshops delivered by external partners at the

social centre, which can be of interest to volunteers as well as participants because volunteers may have similar needs to the participants. The volunteers support participants to understand the workshops and help them to ask questions of the facilitators. Volunteers are also encouraged to access free training and professional development around language learning with external organisations like English for Action.

The risks of Akwaaba's model can be the quality of the classes. There is little support or training offered to the volunteer teachers, so their success depends largely on the experience of the volunteers themselves. It's good to have small groups though so that the job of the facilitator/teacher is easier.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Networks build resilience and allow resource sharing: link with like-minded organisations to share training, signpost volunteers and learners and even find spaces to run your activities
2. In terms of recruiting volunteers, communicate who you are and what you believe on your website and in your volunteer recruitment literature. Akwaaba takes a strong position very explicitly and prioritises commitment to the project over qualifications. This means it won't appeal to everyone but it attracts lots of committed volunteers with similar values.
3. When you're expecting volunteers to run sessions, smaller groups are best.



HET BEGINT MET TAAL

Everything starts with knowing the language

Het begint met taal is a national platform for Dutch language coaching based in Utrecht (Netherlands), which covers the whole of the Netherlands. Presently 165 organisations pay a fee in order to receive the services provided by the organisation. Their members are libraries, refugee councils, small and local social organisations ... The staff consists of five people who get funding on a project basis, for instance from the Ministry of Education, financial institutions Het begint met taal offers various services such as courses (Dutch in the health sector, How to give feedback, Lesson ideas for a first lesson), coaching, e-learning to their members and any kind of language support in order to have well prepared volunteers. Each week they connect 16.069 language volunteers with 31.991 migrants.

Project description

Language schools who organise Dutch for foreigners are private institutions. Migrants must follow an integration course, including a language course, when they arrive in the Netherlands. Recognized refugees don't have to pay a course fee. Other migrants can obtain a loan which they'll have to pay back to the government. Het begint met taal works for volunteers' associations who offer language support in an informal way. They provide the following services:

- ten to twelve trainings per year for language coordinators
- study books developed together with the University of Amsterdam for language coordinators with practical ideas on how to set up a conversation, specific vocabulary for specific situations ...
- language café, group coaching
- exercises on the extranet
- tool for language coaching (online monitoring tool to register and match volunteers and learners)
- webinars (8 x/year)
- start to coach program (twenty weeks)
- in suit trainings for coordinators
- coaching

How does it work?

The volunteers' organisation pays a fee to the Het begint met taal, depending on how many paid employees are occupied with language coaching. In exchange they get either a basic package or, if they pay more, an elaborate package with services. Language coordinators (volunteers or paid staff) follow about forty language coaches (volunteers), mostly in a one-to-one situation. For instance, the language coach has a weekly appointment with one migrant and they have a conversation in Dutch. The language coach can get study books, support etc from the language coordinator. Het begint met taal mostly has contacts with the language coordinators from the organisations, less with the language coaches. They count on the language coordinator to pass the material which is developed by the Dutch for foreigners department at the University of Amsterdam. In these study books daily language is essential. You can find items on 'healthy language' (hospital, visit to the doctor, speaking about illnesses) or ideas for trips. The main goal for Het begint met taal is to have well prepared volunteers. They also offer trainings at the volunteers' organisation, which cost about 500€ each. Subjects are for instance how to give feedback, how to define borders, cultural differences ... The language coaching is complementary with the formal language education, tailor made and usually limited to one year. Formal education offers a theoretical frame, learners practice the language thanks to the language coaches.



Thanks to their membership the organisations get to meet in so called regional meetings, where they learn more about the new integration law, how to recruit volunteers ...

Strength of the project

In the Dutch educational context, where all language courses for adults are privatized and the volunteers' work is well organised, the project *Het begint met taal* is useful and rather necessary. The project covers the whole country, thanks to a wide network of associated organisations. It means they can supply the same language support and thus make sure the quality of the courses is guaranteed. The project helps language coordinators to organise, monitor and support the language volunteers. Thanks to *Het begint met taal* they share the existing knowledge and experience and they never feel alone. One of the language coaches says: 'Thanks to *Het begint met taal* I exchange information with other language coordinators. I've started a Language Café, the volunteers are really enthusiastic.' *Het begint met taal* also wants to address specific groups such as young newcomers, with special programs. *Het begint met taal* has a collaboration with professional coaches who are willing to spend time and share their experience with the language coaches. A professional coach helps the language coach to gain insight in the qualities and pitfalls thanks to assignments. This training takes two to three months and is freely available but not used enough.

Set up

Het begint met taal is quite specific but it's perfectly possible to start a platform that aims at supporting language coaches on a national level. The costs are completely covered by funding, *Het begint met taal* is project based. A good partnership with a university or a language school is essential in order to develop the material. Depending on the national context the needs will differ from one country to another. Maybe the material already exists and the need for a coaching platform is bigger in one country, while in another the fact that the platform is national and offers a place to

exchange experiences, tips and ideas is more important. If there is already a national volunteers' organisation it makes sense to sit together and identify the needs their language coaches have on the field. Any material, such as study books or e-learning platforms, can be developed according to the results of the needs analysis. It's also interesting to find language ambassadors, newcomers who give language learning a face. Some tools are more successful than others. The trainings on location for instance, who used to be free, are less popular since the organisations have to pay for them. For small organisations the fee might be quite high (starting at 250€ /year for a small organisation with no paid employees).

Support and coordination of the volunteers

Het begint met taal has mainly contacts with the language coordinators, not with the language volunteers. In some organisations the coordinators might be volunteers as well, in other they're paid staff. The language coordinator has an intake conversations with the language volunteer and makes sure there's a match with a learner. The language coordinators themselves are recruited by the volunteer's organisation. They get regular feedback about the needs of the coordinators during the regional meetings, they adapt the offer of webinars and training according to these needs.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. Good communication between the associated organisations and the platform makes sure the language volunteers' needs are being met
2. Collaboration with language schools or universities is essential for the linguistic and educational input
3. Check existing networks of volunteers' organisations and map the needs they identify



LÆRDANSK ODENSE

Volunteers within formal language classes

At Lærdansk Odense students develop their communication skills by having authentic dialogues with volunteers as part of formal language classes. Teachers have shared good practice compiled into an internal catalogue of exercises and methods for involving volunteers. The catalogue has been quality assured to maximize learning output and uphold professional boundaries. Involvement is voluntary for both teacher and volunteer and the cooperation is closely monitored by a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator.

Project description

Involving volunteers in classes began as part of practical workshops that trained volunteers for the module tests. It however soon expanded into involvement in a number of ways mostly centered around practice of oral language. As of late 2018 approximately twenty volunteers are involved in classes and as much as 500 students have come across volunteers participating in classes during the second part of 2018.

An example exercise for students with little or no experience in formal education:

Topics: Presentation, my family, my home, my everyday, my internship/work, my hobbies, my life in my home country, individual life stories.

- Day 1, lesson 1:
Oral questions are formulated by the students and discussed focusing on reading and pronunciation. Students and teacher participate.
- Day 1, lesson 2:
Dialogue in the classroom between the volunteer and the students. The teacher observes.
- Day 1, lesson 3:
Individual conversation between one student at a time and the volunteer.
- Day 2:
Follow up from the previous day. What did students hear and understand? What did the teacher hear and see? What should the teacher take into account in future classes?

Involving volunteers in formal classes provides a range of direct benefits for the students:

- Opportunities to practice authentic dialogues from everyday life in a safe learning environment
- Insight into the life and thoughts of a wider range of people from the area
- Feeding their interest in speaking Danish and communicating with Danish speakers
- Developing the student's identity and confidence by mastering the spoken language

For the teacher involving volunteers is a possibility for linguistic and behavioral observations, and to incorporate these observations into future classes.

Strength of the project

Involving volunteers in formal classes also provide a range of more subtle benefits for the students, for example:

- Realising the differences between their own and Danish or local culture(s)
- Increasing motivation to learn the Danish language by connecting this with participation in wider Danish society and active citizenship
- Minimising the inequality between the student and the expert Danish speaking volunteer by helping the volunteer the Danish language.

The students put it best themselves:

- "It is important to hear different dialects, different language, speed and pronunciation."
- "I get extra practice because I do not speak Danish outside the language centre."



- I get to speak in a more free and relaxed way than when I speak with Danes outside the language centre.”
- “I get more confidence to speak Danish in everyday life.”

Students at Lærdansk Odense

Set up

Involving volunteers in formal classes can be scaled to availability of volunteers, wish from teachers and the time available for coordination. When all three aspects are in place a match can be made and the volunteer/teacher cooperation can begin. A good relationship /understanding between the teacher and the volunteer is very important to the success of the practise. The volunteer has to know and accept that the teacher is the professional who sets the frame for the volunteer’s contribution/“work” in the classroom.Vice versa the teacher should always set the frame for the volunteer and guide the volunteer. Lastly the roles should be clear to the students especially that the volunteer is not a replacement for the teacher.

A pitfall is a bad match between volunteer and teacher where either personalities clash or where the volunteer cannot fit classes into his/her schedule. A Volunteer Coordinator can then make a new match to another teacher with a better “fit”.

Support and coordination of the volunteers

The induction of volunteers for involvement in the classroom is done in three steps. First the volunteer is recruited and introduced to their role by the Volunteer Department at Danish Refugee Council. Secondly the volunteer is given a more in depth induction by the Volunteer Coordinator at Lærdansk Odense. A match is made and the final induction is given by the teacher.

The teacher prepares and evaluates with regular intervals with both volunteer and students.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. GA Volunteer Coordinator from the teacher group will both know the volunteers and the teachers. He/she will thus be able to make/extend good matches based on first-hand experience of compatibility.
2. Make sure that both volunteers, teachers and students know that the volunteer is there to support the teacher-led sessions. Clear roles benefit all.
3. Volunteers in the classroom are best suited to train oral language skills and an authentic dialogue



TRAINEE PROGRAMME OF INTEGRATIONSLOTSSEN

*All in One: Support of refugees in matters of
social life, law, culture and language*

The Integrationslotsen program run by IBIS E.V. in Oldenburg is a training and support programme in which volunteer guides are given thorough training in order to support refugees where they live. In 2019 language learning was explicitly added to the Integrationslotsen programme. This addition is seen by IBIS as a gain for both, volunteers and refugees.

Four years ago IBIS e.V. started a partnership with Flüchtlingshilfe Oldenburg (Refugee Support Oldenburg) by training so-called Integrationslotsen (guides).

The guides invite refugee (individuals or families) in their new home to meet regularly and help them to navigate their new situation. Usually working one-to-one, guides support the refugees to participate in cultural and social activities, at work and with language problems. They can accompany them to doctors' appointments, to the local authorities and meetings with preschool, kindergarten and school. This situation provides mutual learning and understanding.

The basic training course which volunteers undertake to become guides takes 50 hours. It covers prerequisite information and social and communication skills. Topics include:

- reasons for seeking refuge
- conflicts
- asylum law
- social security system
- skills around cross-cultural communication and understanding
- basic knowledge of Arabic, Yezidic and other cultures

Experienced guides, public sector workers and professionals from refugee support organisations give additional support.

Classes on the trainee programme are offered twice a year. There are 14 to 18 participants per class. Following the training, the guides commit to voluntarily accompanying

"Sometimes I join the mother at an appointment at the jobcenter, go with her to a parents' evening at school or to visit the doctor. If there are no appointments we learn German, play games or take a walk in the park, go for an ice-cream or scout the neighbourhood [...] To sum up I advise everybody who is interested to get involved and become a Integrationslotse (guide). Be open to new situations and experiences."

Anke A.
integrationslotse
volunteer

refugees about 2 to 3 hours a week (about 100 hours a year) for around 2 years.

Volunteers are found by advertising on facebook, in the local newspaper, the local radio station, the IBIS-Newsletter, and on university platforms.



The training is funded by the Land Niedersachsen (State of Lower Saxony). It is free of charge to the volunteer and refugee participants.

Language Coaching

Since 2019 language coaching by volunteers has become an explicit part of the trainee programme. There are two 6-hour units which deal with the following:

- What are the goals, expectations, possibilities, but also the limits of language coaching?
- What is the role of the volunteers? What is the task of the formal teachers? How can successful communication take place? How can both parties encounter each other respectfully and on terms of equality?
- What problems might arise and what skills are necessary to face them? e.g empathy, intercultural understanding, patience, creativity, ability to work as a team and collaborate.
- Aspects of language teaching (talking, reading, writing, grammar) are presented and put to use.
- General introduction to foreign languages as Arabic, Kurdish, Tigrini etc.
- The different levels of GER (Common European Framework) are explained and an overview on different teaching materials and books is provided.

There are two ways in which the volunteers can work. Firstly, the refugees can be accompanied by the volunteer to their regular German class. Secondly, the volunteers can create additional opportunities to speak and experience the German language, for example by offering a form of Café or Get-together. These meetings could then lead to further activities like trips.

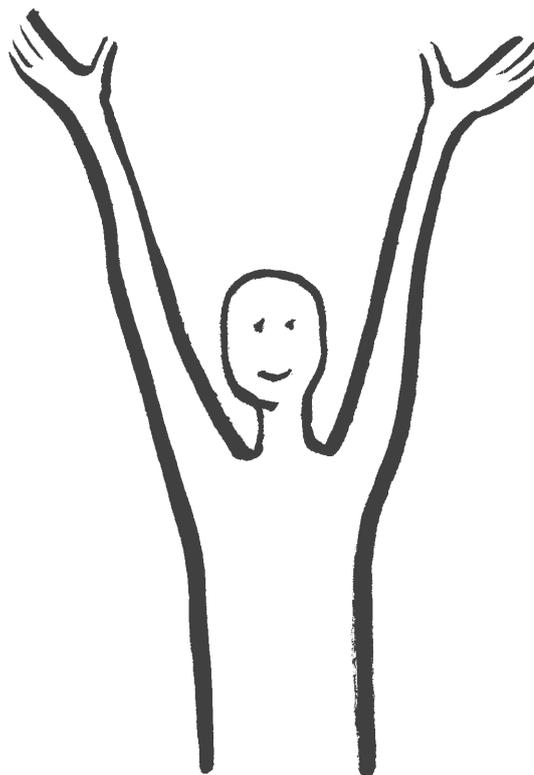
Strength of the project

The trainee programme offers the volunteers a qualification to work with refugees. They get a general knowledge of legal issues, ways of refuge, and ways of language coaching. They learn to reflect on their own biography and possible prejudices in regard to refugees. They come to know relevant local authority and public institutions and workers and understand what they do.

The trainee programme relates to everyday life and teaches a lot of important aspects of voluntary work.

During the course, participants develop bonds and are placed into pairs. This way they have peer support when the class is finished. At the beginning of the class, many participants are very insecure – they want to help but do

not know how. The trainee programme is a good start for them. It gives them confidence to meet the refugee and help them address their situation, problems and needs. Some obstacles of volunteer work can thus be anticipated and avoided – the volunteers are well prepared for their commitment.



How to set it up

To build up and coordinate the project as well as, for example, support a language cafe by a professional teacher – you need adequate funding. So you have to make an application – in Germany the federal state. In other places this work could be funded by trusts and foundations. Once the project is up and running and the results are documented, it may be easier to have funding renewed.

In terms of the recruitment of volunteers, this can be done via newspapers, social media, newsletter, websites, university portals and local radio & TV. Later further volunteers will join because of positive word of mouth. To set up a language project – or in classroom or extracurricular – a meeting with volunteers, teachers and coordinator is necessary to establish conditions, rules and course contents as well as discuss the wishes and expectations of the volunteers.



Support and coordination of the volunteers

During the training it is important that wishes, needs and questions of the volunteers are listened to, respected and addressed. After the training, a volunteer coordinator is needed to stay in contact with the volunteers to provide mediation and advice. In terms of the language training part of the course, language teachers are on hand to give volunteers input on teaching methods and answer their queries. If possible, offer regular meetings between teachers and volunteers for an exchange of thoughts and experiences as well as short ongoing trainings to share teaching methodology and ideas for language learning.

TOP THREE TIPS

1. The most important aspect of the guide's training seems to be giving volunteers an empathetic understanding of the refugees' situation.
2. Involve language learning in the training as well as matters relating to social life, law and culture.
3. Teachers and coordinator had to be continuous, ongoing and reliable partners and advisors for the volunteers through the duration of the programme.



Appendix





SAMPLE SAVEGUARDING POLICY DOCUMENT

The document below is an example of a safeguarding policy document which outlines how your organisation looks after the safety of vulnerable adults and children. Some of the legal context and definitions included may need to be altered for different national contexts.

Your organisation is likely to have its own Safeguarding policy - and if not, we recommend creating one before engaging volunteers. You may require volunteers to read and sign this document as part of their induction. Volunteers may help to look after the people you're working with by noticing safeguarding concerns that staff has missed. It's also important they understand what to look for and the safeguarding responsibilities that they are taking on when they volunteer with you.

[Insert Organisation Name here]

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Note: This policy must be reviewed annually at the beginning of the academic year.

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Reviewed and signed

Introduction

[Organisation name] is committed to creating an environment that enables children, young people and vulnerable adults to learn, develop, and express themselves in a safe, understanding and encouraging environment. We aim to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people participating in our activities, and of vulnerable adults we work with.

Vulnerable adults

An 'adult at risk' is someone who may be in need of help because they have care and support needs. They may be unable to stop someone else from harming or exploiting them. Abuse happens when someone hurts you or treats you badly. Abuse can happen once or continue over months or years. It can be accidental or deliberate. Abuse can take many forms, just because there is no injury doesn't mean there is no abuse. Neglect is when someone who is meant to look after you does not look after you properly. Self-neglect is when you neglect your own health, hygiene and surroundings and you may need support.

What forms do abuse and neglect take?

Domestic violence – including all types of abuse between family members or partners.

Discriminatory abuse – harassment or slurs due to someone's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or gender identity.



Financial abuse – including theft, fraud or coercion with regards to financial affairs.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within a care setting or in relation to care provided at home.

Psychological abuse– including emotional abuse, threats to harm, attempts to control, coercion, verbal abuse and bullying.

Modern slavery – including forced labour and people trafficking.

Neglect – failure to act or ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs. Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, unnecessary restraint or misusing medications.

Sexual abuse – including inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, rape, harassment, or any sexual acts the adult has not consented to.

Where can abuse happen?

Abuse or neglect can take place anywhere. Abuse could take place at home, at work, in hospital, in a nursing or residential care home or anywhere else in the community.

The right help in the right way:

[Organisation name] understands that not everyone wants the same kind of help and support to stay safe and aims to provide a flexible service. The six principles for Safeguarding Adults are:

- Empower – to support and encourage people to make their own decisions.
- Prevent – to take support people to take action before harm occurs.
- Respect – we will not intrude any more than is essential to keep people safe.
- Protect – when people need help, we'll do our best to support them.
- Work together – we work with our local communities to find the best ways to keep people safe.
- Explain – we will be clear and straightforward about what we do and why.

[Organisation name]'s designated vulnerable adults safeguarding officer is [insert name here] and can be contacted by email [insert email here] or telephone [insert contact telephone here].

What does the law say?

Please note: This is relevant to UK law

By law [insert organisation name] must:

- follow up any concerns about adults who need support and may be at risk of abuse or neglect and take action to protect them
- arrange for an advocate to support any adult who needs extra help during a safeguarding enquiry or review
- work with any other agencies involved in order to protect an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- have a Safeguarding adults protection officer.

How to recognise abuse:

Factors described below are frequently found in cases of abuse and/or neglect. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but must be regarded as indicators of possible significant harm. Such indications justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with the safeguarding officer, and may require consultation with and/or referral to the local authority adult safeguarding helpdesk. It is not the responsibility of those working for or volunteering with [insert organisation name] to decide that abuse to an adult at risk is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Indications that adults at risk may be experiencing abuse include the following:

1. The adult at risk appears frightened of the parent/s/peers/adults.



2. The adult at risk may display unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
3. The adult at risk may have an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
4. The adult at risk may demonstrate inexplicable changes in behaviour.
5. The adult at risk may demonstrate inappropriate sexual awareness.
6. The adult at risk may engage in sexually explicit behaviour.
7. The adult at risk may display an unusual distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
8. The adult at risk may experience difficulty in making friends.
9. The adult at risk may be prevented from socialising with other adults/young people.
10. The adult at risk may display variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
11. The adult at risk may experience inexplicable weight loss.
12. The adult at risk may appear increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It is not safe to assume that someone else will take action. You have a duty to take appropriate action. Recognising and coping with abuse is very stressful and the person reporting the concern will not have to cope alone.

What to do if you suspect abuse

If a person in our classes or organisation spontaneously talks of experiences which give cause for concern, you should:

1. Explain to the person that if they disclose information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will be unable to keep it confidential.
2. Listen to the person without questioning them. Be aware of your own reactions as showing disapproval may stop the person from continuing with their disclosure.
3. Do not try to stop the person from recalling events. Make a note of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present. (complete a log - found at the end of this document)
4. Inform the designated safeguarding officer immediately or if they are unavailable an appropriate senior member of staff immediately. If you are unsure of what action to take it would be appropriate to seek advice from the police.
5. The safeguarding officer will contact the appropriate authorities as soon as possible.

Allegations of abuse will be treated similarly whether the disclosure is relating to an individual from within or externally from [insert organisation name]. The information should be passed onto the designated safeguarding officer ([insert safeguarding officer name]) and handled in the same way.

Further Measures

The following extra measures will be adopted to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable adults in this organisation:

- We will ensure that recruitment of all staff and volunteers is conducted in a way to safeguard vulnerable people and undergo a standard criminal record check [DBS - Disclosure and Barring Service in the UK] as part of this process.
- All workers and volunteers will be given a copy of the policy and receive training as part of their induction to the organisation.
- We will work with our host organisations (especially schools) in order to understand and adhere to their safeguarding policies and procedures



Safeguarding Children

The Children's Act [This is UK law] makes it clear that the welfare of the child is paramount and it gives everyone involved in the care of children a responsibility for the protection of those children. It is also essential that we honour the trust of those who allow us to care for their children.

Therefore it is necessary that all concerned have an understanding of the issues involved and that procedures are in place and are understandable to anyone providing a service to young people and easy to implement.

[Insert organisation name]'s designated child protection officer is [insert name here] and can be contacted by email [insert email here] or telephone [insert contact telephone here].

What constitutes abuse?

Child abuse or abuse of vulnerable adults such as individuals with mental health problems is a difficult issue and presents challenges to all involved in providing services. It is not always easily recognisable but is generally divided into four categories:

1. Physical Abuse - Where adults physically hurt or injure children or vulnerable adults. Hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse. Giving alcohol to children, or inappropriate drugs or poison and attempted suffocation or drowning are also physical abuse.
2. Neglect - An adult may fail to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic needs, like food, warm clothing or medical attention. Children might be left alone unsupervised. Abuse in any form can affect a child of any age.
3. Emotional Abuse – Persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make both children and vulnerable adults nervous and withdrawn.
4. Sexual Abuse – this is where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity. This could occur through unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact or through suggestive comments or innuendo or include showing children pornographic materials.

How to recognise abuse

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her;
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour such as becoming very quiet; withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- Difficulty in making friends.

If you notice any social changes in the behaviour of a child, worrying marks or bruises or hear a child/children talking about things which give cause for concern then your first responsibility is to the child.

It is not safe to assume that someone else will take action. As an adult you have a duty to take appropriate action. Recognising and coping with child abuse is very stressful and the person reporting the concern will not have to cope alone.

What to do if you suspect abuse

If a child spontaneously talks of experiences which give cause for concern, you should:

1. Explain to the child that if they disclose information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will be unable to keep it confidential.
2. Listen to the child without questioning them. Be aware of your own reactions as showing disapproval may stop the child from continuing with their disclosure.



3. Do not try to stop the child from recalling events. Make a note of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present. (complete a log if you have one)
4. Inform the designated child protection worker immediately or if they are unavailable an appropriate senior member of staff immediately. If you are unsure of what action to take it would be appropriate to seek advice from either the police or social services department.
5. The child protection worker will contact the appropriate authorities including the Duty Social Worker in the area where the child lives as soon as possible.

Allegations of abuse will be treated similarly whether the disclosure is relating to an individual from within or externally from [insert organisation name]. The information should be passed onto the designated child protection worker [insert name] and handled in the same way. Social Services will also follow the same procedure as they do to investigate allegations of abuse for a family.

Further Measures

The following extra measures will be adopted to ensure the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults in this organisation:

- We will ensure that recruitment of all staff and volunteers is conducted in a way to safeguard young people and undergo a standard criminal record check [Disclosure and Barring Service in the UK] as part of this process.
- All workers and volunteers will be given a copy of the policy and receive training as part of their induction to the organisation.
- We will work with our host organisations (especially schools) in order to understand and adhere to their safeguarding policies and procedures

Protecting Leaders

- Never believe that "it could never happen to you"
- If you suspect that a young person is developing an inappropriate affection for you, discuss it with other leaders and explore constructive ways of dealing with it.
- If you develop an abnormal affection for a young person withdraw from the situation and discuss the matter with a trusted friend.
- Be aware that young people can fabricate stories that can place you in a bad light. Do not take any chances nor allow yourself to be in a situation where stories can be given credence.
- Always report and record any allegations made by children. Do not let them go unchallenged.

Behaviour guidelines for those working with young people

The aim of these guidelines is to ensure the safety and well being of all young people and to support in providing a safe, caring environment.

DO's

- Always be publicly open when working with children.
- Avoid being alone with children unnecessarily. Where possible avoid taking children alone on car journeys unless there is no other option and the child's parents have given permission.
- Where possible parents should take responsibility for their own children.
- Set an example of appropriate behaviour. Young people learn by example.
- Offer respect to the young person at all times and strive to be sensitive to their feelings.
- Good behaviour should be positively encouraged.



DON'TS

- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. Nor engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison.
- Never physically punish any young person.
- Do not deprive any young person of, or force any child to consume food or drink.
- Do not humiliate or frighten any young person.

Whistle Blowing and Complaints

Allegations against a member of staff

[Organisation name] will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child/ vulnerable adult protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated Child Protection worker or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organisation should initiate disciplinary proceedings

2. Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Child Protection worker, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk
- The Designated person will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- If the Designated Person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or Chair who will refer the allegation to Social Services

3. Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Designated Child Protection worker will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.



Reviewed and signed

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Date: _____ Review Date: _____

Name of young person or vulnerable adult

Date of birth

Date of completing form

Time of completing form

Your name

Your position

Your signature

Your organisation

Reasons for recording incident

Please record the following as factually as possible:

Who

What

Where

When

Offer an opinion where relevant (how and why this may have happend)

Substantiate the opinion. Please note the action taken, including the names of anyone to whom information was passed.



SAMPLE FORM FOR INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS

Name _____ Date of birth _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Experiences as a volunteer

Have you already volunteered for an organization? If so:

at the following organizations _____

if Caritas too: Is there an agreement with Caritas d.E. Vienna? yes no

Which areas/activities? _____

Educational Experience/Education

Are there previous experiences in the educational field (kindergarten, music school, school, Hort, adult education, etc.)? Which one? _____

Experience with teaching? In the private context (tutoring) or with which educational institution?

Are there experiences with German courses? Which one? _____

Which level (European Reference Framework A1, A1+, A2, B1, B2)? Or special course (grammar, conversation, ...)?

Which teaching material was used? And was this approved?

Motivation to teach German voluntarily/to support German language courses: Why exactly this and why you?



Own foreign language competencies

_____ Level: _____

_____ Level: _____

_____ Level: _____

_____ Level: _____

Availability:

once a week; 2 or more times a week? _____ (per appointment 2-3 h)

Mornings, lunchtimes, afternoons or evenings? Certain days of the week?

Are there any liabilities/children, etc. – how reliable can you always be? Would you like to do the course as a team?

Would you be interested in training (free) specifically for teaching German as a foreign language/or creative methods and games for teaching German?

yes, I am very interested.

It depends ... I would be interested in the following _____

I probably do not have time for such training.



SAMPLE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT



Volunteer Department
Danish Refugee Council
Borgergade 10, 3. sal
DK-1300 København K
+45 33 73 50 00
flygtning.dk/frivillig

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Name:	Date of Birth:
Address:	
Post code and Town/ City:	
E-mail:	Telephone:
Contact person in volunteer group:	Consultant at Danish Refugee Council:
Volunteer group and activity:	

The Danish Refugee Council's core values

The target group for volunteer work are refugees and others with ethnic minority backgrounds. The initiative is based on the Danish Refugee Council's set of core values, which are: Humanitarian Approach, Respect, Independence and Neutrality, Inclusion, and Honesty and Transparency.

The volunteer work at the Danish Refugee Council is built up around 10 principles:

1. As a new volunteer, you have the right to an introduction to the Danish Refugee Council and the local volunteer group.
2. Your volunteer efforts are based on the involvement of those you help, and always on an equal footing with them.
3. Your work must be independent of party politics, religion or similar interests.
4. As a volunteer, you may not enter into any financial arrangements with the target group, nor cover any of their personal expenses. Likewise, you may not have close relations with the target group (family relationships, romantic partnerships and any other similar relationships of a private nature).
5. As a volunteer, you have the possibility to contribute with new initiatives and to participate in the democratic process of the volunteer group.
6. As a volunteer, you must be aware of circumstances where you may need to refer to a professional who has official responsibility.
7. Always contact your regional consultant if in doubt, in the event of problems within the target group, DRC partners or internally within the group.
8. You are permitted to represent the local volunteer work, for example, in relation to the press, but you may not comment on the Danish Refugee Council's other work.



9. As a volunteer with the Danish Refugee Council, you have a duty of confidentiality, and may not disclose other people's personal information without their prior consent. This also applies if you stop volunteering for the Danish Refugee Council.
10. Your work is in compliance with the country's current legislation, including The EU General Data Protection Regulation.

Child Protection Certificate

If you are a volunteer at an activity where you are in the presence of children under 15 years of age, the Danish Refugee Council must check if there is any information about you on the Criminal Register of Offences committed against children under 15 years old. This is a very important part of our work to ensure a safe environment for all refugees and volunteers. **You must give your consent to this check at flygtning.dk/attest.**

Storing of your information

Your information is collected and kept at the Danish Refugee Council in order to organise the volunteer effort. We keep your record safe and delete it when you resign as a volunteer. Your information may be shared internally within the organisation and can be accessed by our network of volunteer coordinators. We may contact you about our annual Landsindsamling and other support to the organisation.

Signature of the agreement

This volunteer agreement must be completed, signed and handed over to the volunteer group's contact person. This agreement may be terminated in agreement with the volunteer group's contact person.

Date

Volunteer

Date

Contact person / Consultant

flygtning.dk/frivillig

On this webpage, you can find information about refugees and integration, your nearest volunteer consultant, a toolbox for volunteers, a course schedule and the contact information for all employees.



About the Volunteers in Language Learning for Refugees Project

www.volunteersinlanguagelearning.eu

This 2017 - 2019 research project aims to improve the quality of volunteer involvement in refugee language learning. The project is a collaboration between five organisations: Caritas (Austria), CVO Volt (Belgium), The Danish Refugee Council (Denmark), EFA London (UK) and IBIS (Germany). All organisations have firsthand experience of delivering language classes for migrants and refugees.

The research project aims to learn more about how volunteers can enhance refugee's learning and be put to best use by teachers and educational organisations.

The project will produce three toolkits for teachers, volunteers and organisations that will support good practice.

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