



# Be a Volunteer!

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The Be a Volunteer! project aims to develop and strengthen the skills of young people (aged 16-30) with disabilities, enhancing their employability and active social participation through volunteering activities.

The project will utilise non-formal educational methods for the training of young individuals, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Throughout the project, skill-building programs will be designed and used to support volunteering coordinators and people with disabilities to participate in inclusive volunteering activities.

This is the second Be a Volunteer! newsletter, through which we want to keep you informed about the progress of the project.



## TRAINING IN ITALY

This three-day volunteer training was hosted by Associazione Diversamente in Sardinia, Italy, and centred on inclusion, communication, and hands-on activities.

On Day 1, participants were welcomed and introduced to CSV Sardegna's mission and activities. This helped participants to have a better understanding of CSV's commitment and impact in the region. After the brief presentation, participants engaged in practical activities aimed at fostering mutual knowledge and collaboration, such as team-building exercises and a Workshop on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to support inclusive communication.



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Day 2 focused on more in-depth training on methods for inclusion and support for people with intellectual disabilities.

Professor Roberta Fadda gave a lecture on the characteristics of the autism spectrum and provided practical advice to foster inclusion, such as the importance of dividing participants into smaller groups, creating quiet rooms, or suggesting the use of earplugs to limit noise exposure. Practical activities equipped volunteers with tools to support individuals with intellectual disabilities, particularly through a Workshop on visual communication tools (checklists and visual schedules).

Day 3 was entirely dedicated to a hands-on volunteer activity, designed to raise awareness and actively engage participants in supporting the community's most vulnerable members. The delegations were welcomed by Caritas, which hosted the initiative on its premises and coordinated each phase of the intervention. Divided into small groups, participants collaborated in various stages of preparation, from cleaning vegetables to cooking meals, setting tables, and arranging the dining hall. For many, it was the first opportunity to work in a community kitchen, and the experience allowed them to learn basic techniques but, above all, understand the importance of teamwork and cooperation.

These training days offered participants a mix of theory and practice, providing ideas to promote inclusion and strengthen the communication and collaboration skills which are essential in the volunteer sector.

## FORMACIÓN EN MACEDONIA DEL NORTE





As part of the Be a Volunteer! project, several activities were conducted to enhance its visibility locally and beyond. About 30 organizations from Macedonia working in the field of inclusion shared their Positive Inclusive Practices, with three of them selected for publication in the project's upcoming Handbook. Through various communication channels, these organizations were introduced to the project's goals and planned activities. Additionally, three participants with disabilities and two supported persons attended the training in Sardinia, Italy, where they gained valuable skills for volunteering.

Locally, dissemination activities took place in Valandovo and Strumica, with presentations at the secondary schools "Goce Delchev" and "Jane Sandanski", respectively, to engage and inform young students about the project.

## THE HUNGARIAN NEVER GIVE UP FOUNDATION ATTENDS TRAINING IN ITALY



As part of the international Erasmus+ project Be a Volunteer, the Hungarian Never Give Up Foundation took part in the volunteering training held by Associazione Diversamente in Sardinia, Italy. The participants shared key takeaways from their experience.



During the program, we learned many interesting things. For instance, from the presentation on autism by a local university psychologist, we discovered a communication tool developed for non-verbal individuals with autism. This tool can be downloaded onto a computer and automatically transforms typed text into pictograms.



We practiced public speaking in front of a large audience – both in Hungarian and English. We learned how to use Google Lens for translation, enabling everyone to understand projected presentations without the need for a translator.

We also volunteered at an Italian Caritas centre, working in a canteen that provides meals for those in need. We helped out in the kitchen and participated in food distribution. People with autism, individuals with intellectual disabilities, and wheelchair users all worked together in this activity. We experienced that, yes, we can all help others – and how good it feels to help. After the practical experience, we discussed the conditions for inclusive volunteering as part of the training.



## BE A VOLUNTEER ON THE MOVE

The Belgian partner, EASPD, co-hosted an international Conference in Athens, Greece, on 17-18 October 2024. The conference focused on “Opening Doors: how can disability support services unlock the open labour market?” and was attended by stakeholders from pan-European organisations, businesses and policymakers.

During the conference, a Project Desk was set up to present EASPD’s running projects, including Be a Volunteer, and the flyers were distributed to the participants.

