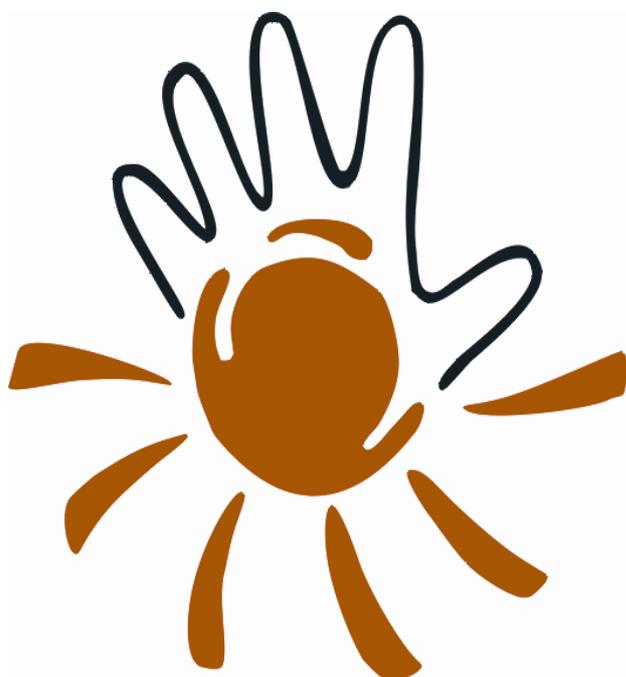


**Assessing Voluntary Experience
in a Professional Perspective**

**VOLUNTEER'S
PORTFOLIO**



The Volunteer Centre

ul. Nowolipie 9/11
00-150 Warszawa
tel. 48 22 635 27 73

www.wolontariat.org.pl

VOLUNTEERING

A FEW WORDS ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is an activity undertaken consciously and of the volunteer's own free will, performed for no financial payment and being of benefit to people other than the volunteer's own family and friends.

Voluntary work can be performed by everybody, irrespective of their age, gender, race, education or financial status.

The volunteer can work for non-government organisations (associations and foundations) as well as public institutions. It is forbidden however to use volunteer's support in commercial establishments.

Volunteers can perform a variety of activities. In fact, to define the catalogue of the potential voluntary functions one should multiply the number of volunteers by the number of the organisations and institutions in which they can offer their help.

VOLUNTEERING AND PAID WORK

When asked about their motivation to volunteer, most people would say that they want to help others. Nevertheless, besides the satisfaction coming from assisting other people, the volunteers can master certain skills as well as acquire qualifications and professional experiences that can help them find a paid job.

VOLUNTEER'S PORTFOLIO

VOLUNTEER'S PORTFOLIO – WHAT IS IT?

The Portfolio is a tool to collect information on the experiences, skills and qualifications acquired by the volunteer during his or her voluntary experience.

On the one hand, it is a kind of a diary – the volunteer writes down what s/he did in the organisation, when s/he did it and what skills s/he developed by doing the job. Thus, the volunteer goes through self-exploration.

On the other hand, the activities performed by the volunteer are confirmed in the Portfolio by the organisation or institution s/he is involved in. The organisation issues a certificate with a definition of the functions performed.

The Portfolio belongs to the volunteer. While talking to the potential employer, the volunteer can show an appropriate part of the Portfolio – a single page summary of the voluntary experience – a document that is clear, easy to read and understandable for somebody who knows little about volunteering.

Every volunteer has one Portfolio and can use it throughout his life, irrespective of how many organisations s/he works for and what functions s/he fulfils there. It is an open document – new information on the tasks performed or organisations served can always be added to it.

The Portfolio layout has been developed in the Leonardo da Vinci programme, the AVE project – Assessing Voluntary Experience in a Professional Perspective. The project was participated by 7 EU countries, Poland being one of them.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PORTFOLIO

On the one hand, the Portfolio is supposed to make the volunteer think about what s/he is doing and what benefits come from the voluntary assignment – what the volunteer actually learns, in what direction does s/he develop, etc. Often, working as volunteers for a long time, we do not really reflect on what we do and in fact self-exploration can have a great value.

On the other hand, the Portfolio should systematise the experiences and skills acquired by the volunteer, which can be useful at the time when the volunteer applies for a paid job. The Portfolio will show the potential employer what the volunteer did in the past and what s/he has learned. The information is confirmed by a specific organisation or institution.

HOW TO FILL THE PORTFOLIO IN?

The Portfolio is developed for the volunteer and s/he has to fill it themselves. Obviously, the volunteers' coordinator can always be asked for assistance.

Every volunteer has one Portfolio and the size of the Portfolio can vary. When more space is needed, new pages can be added to the Portfolio.

MAP OF TASKS AND SKILLS

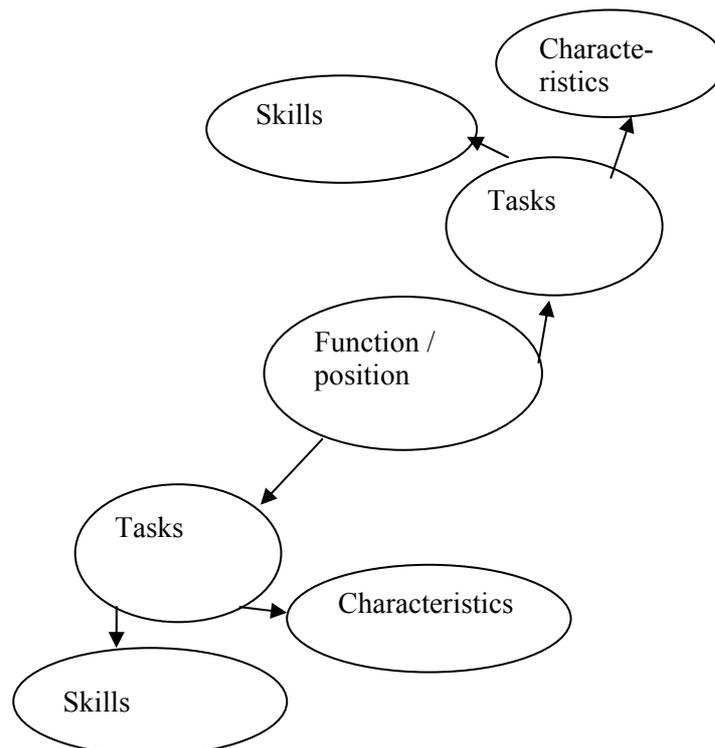
There are as many tasks and activities as there are volunteers. You should make a description of what you do and what skills you develop in the process. You have to use 'the Map' that will help you fill in the Portfolio. The Map is meant to encourage you to think about what you do when you work as a volunteer. In the following part of the Portfolio your thinking shall acquire a more structured form.

Fill the Map starting from its centre – write down your position, function or role in the organisation. If you cannot find the right word for what you do – ask your coordinator. The coordinators usually keep records and your position or function must have been already given some name.

Next, write down the tasks that are associated with your position/function and give some examples of them. Try to cover everything that you do, even those things that may seem rather simple or insignificant.

Now, think about the skills, qualifications and characteristics that are needed to perform every one of the tasks and mark them in the map.

Example:



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORGANISATION / INSTITUTION

This part of the Portfolio is devoted to the organisations or institutions whom you volunteer for. In case you do not know something about your organisation – ask your coordinator or an employee of the organisation. When you change the organisation or start your voluntary assignment in a new place – simply add new information.

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

Having drawn the Map – a preliminary picture of what you do, you can start defining the details. This part of the Portfolio refers to the activities performed in your voluntary work. Read the following list of tasks and choose the activities performed by yourself. These are only some examples – if your activity is not included in the following list, do not worry – there are as many tasks as there are volunteers so you can always add your tasks to the list.

EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEER'S TASKS	ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH FULFILLING THE TASK
Helping somebody directly – a senior citizen, a disabled, blind or sick person, etc.	Spending time together; assistance in shopping; going out for walks; helping at the post office or in some other institution; assistance at home – some cleaning, making meals, etc.
Working with children and the youth	Childcare; organising leisure activities for children: sport, arts, theatrical activities, etc.; assistance in doing homework, etc.
Organisational activities	Assistance or coordination of events, projects: festivals, picnics, concerts, congresses, contests, etc.
Office and administrative work	Document filing; data recording; mail service; phone answering; office equipment usage – fax, photo-copy machine; etc.
Accountancy and finance	Keeping the books of the organisation: invoices, payroll; financial reporting, etc.
Fundraising and donation collection	Looking for sponsors and donors; establishing cooperation; coordination of donation collection, etc.
Foreign language usage	Translating texts and conversations, etc.
Editorial work	Article writing; proofreading, text editing, etc.
IT	Working with a computer – web site development; software application, computer service, etc.
Consulting, advice	Offering information or advice in a certain area (e.g. legal issues, medicine); hot line service, etc.
Training	Organisation and conduction of training, meetings, workshops, classes, etc.
Human resource management, group leadership	Organisation of team work; recruitment and releasing of paid employees and volunteers, etc.
Programme and project coordination	Project management, writing and coordination
Physical work	Helping in a renovation, cleaning; working in a warehouse, etc.
Working with animals and plants	Help in an animal shelter, zoo; animal care; working in a botanical garden – plant care, etc.
Other ...	

List all the tasks performed by you as a part of your voluntary assignment – write them down in the adequate places in the table. To each task add the activities performed by yourself.

Afterwards, try to evaluate your current level of proficiency in performing the tasks in the area. The four levels of volunteer's proficiency:

- Beginner: first experiences in doing the task, basic skills acquired recently
- Development stage: mastering of the competences acquired before, self-improvement, e.g. through training
- Advanced stage (professionalism): theoretical knowledge and practical experience
- Expert: teaching others

COMPETENCES

Having made the list of tasks and activities associated with your voluntary work, start analysing the competences acquired through your voluntary engagement.

The competences can be divided into two groups:

1. **Fundamental competences.** They are useful not only in one's voluntary or paid work but have general **social meaning**, they can be useful in life. Such competences are not associated with the situational context, thus it does not matter whether you volunteer in an orphanage or in an ecological organisation.

FUNDAMENTAL COMPETENCES	DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES
Written communication skills	Writing official documents, reports, applications, minutes or official letters
Oral communication skills	Efficiency and grammatical correctness in oral communication; public speeches;
Budget making – expense planning	Book keeping, invoice settling; cost analysis;
Linguistic skills	Communication in a foreign language, conversations, translations
Computer skills	Computer literacy, IT, basic software usage – Word, Excel; Internet
Interpersonal skills	Working with people; ability to listen and communicate; team work
Organisational skills	Comprehensive or partial project, event, action or contest organisation, etc.
Decision making skills	Ability to quickly react on changing situations and independent decision making;
Time management skills	Ability to make work time plans; punctuality

2. **Specific competences,** depend on the tasks performed as well as the area of your operation. Very many of these things are associated with the organisation's sphere of the activity. It is hard to transfer these competence to other areas.

SPECIFIC COMPETENCES	DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES
Know-how in the specific area of the organisation's work	Familiarity with the organisation's area of activity, relevant issues; legal regulations, etc.
Conducting meetings and training	Making public speeches, workshop giving, facilitation
Leadership, human resource management	Team building, leading a group, managing time and work of other people
PR skills	Internal and external communication; promotion
Problem solving skills	Ability to detect the cause of the problem, looking for solutions and convincing others
Negotiation and mediation skills	Conflict mitigation, negotiations, mediation between groups
Research making skills	Research conduction, preparation and writing questionnaires, interviews, etc.
Fundraising skills	Ability to find and come into contact with potential donors, establishing cooperation with them

Consulting skills	Consultancy, advice offering in various fields
Therapeutic skills	Providing therapy, support group management
Specific skills associated with the function	Specific functions: coach, animator, therapist, rehabilitation specialist
Manual skills	Application of artistic skills; manual work, etc.
Others ...	

In the adequate parts of the table, write down your skills and examples of activities that help you develop these skills. Mark your current level of proficiency (four levels: Beginner; Development sage; Advanced stage; Expert – level definitions, see: the part on Volunteer’s Tasks).

CHARACTERISTICS

Read the character features listed in the following table. Think which of them are developed by you through the voluntary experience. Define the activities that help you develop these characteristics. If you develop some characteristics that are not included in the list, just add them.

TRAINING

List all training, workshops, conferences and meetings that you have attended as a volunteer in the organisation. If you have received a diploma, certificate or proof of participation, you can attach them to the Portfolio.

ATTACHMENTS

You can attach the following documents to the Portfolio:

- Certificates
- Proofs of participation
- Recommendations of the organisation in which you volunteer.

You can also add some material concerning the organisation – leaflets, brochures, etc.

The certificate of voluntary work should include the information on the place of work, time of assignment and the tasks performed. It should be stamped and signed by an employee of the organisation.

SUMMARY

The summary table can be used during your job interview – it can be attached to your CV. You can shorten the table to show only those tasks and skills that may be applicable in the job that you are applying for. Adjust the format of the table to the number of tasks and skills acquired.

At the beginning, sign the table: write in your first and second name, address and contact data – phone and e-mail. In the first column, write the name and the address of the organisation in which you volunteer.

Next, write down your function/position/role in the organisation. In the third column, write down your main tasks. The next column is devoted to the skills that you develop by completing the above-mentioned tasks. In the last column mark the proficiency level for each skill mentioned (four levels: Beginner; Development sage; Advanced stage; Expert).

CONTACT

In case you have any doubts, questions or problems associated with the Portfolio, you can always contact:

The Volunteer Centre Association in Warsaw
ul. Nowolipie 9/11
00-150 Warszawa
tel./fax. 635 27 73
warszawa@wolontarit.org.pl
www.wolontariat.org.pl

MAP OF TASKS AND SKILLS

Draw your own map of tasks and skills that would include the tasks performed by you as a volunteer in the organisation as well as the skills and character features developed through completing these tasks.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORGANISATION / INSTITUTION

ORGANISATION / INSTITUTION'S NAME		YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	
ADDRESS OF ORGANISATION			
street		house no.	door no.
district	municipality	province	
zip code	city	phone no.	contact phone no.
e-mail	WWW site		
TYPE OF ORGANISATION/INSTITUTION			
<input type="checkbox"/> foundation; <input type="checkbox"/> association; <input type="checkbox"/> organisations united and registered as a Federation of Associations; <input type="checkbox"/> church organisation / religious movement; <input type="checkbox"/> educational/scientific centre; <input type="checkbox"/> branch of a foreign organisation -> what organisation?: <input type="checkbox"/> local government institution; <input type="checkbox"/> government institution; <input type="checkbox"/> other:			
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF OPERATION			
<input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL, in what region? <i>*type of establishment:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> dayroom, <input type="checkbox"/> information bureau, <input type="checkbox"/> residential care home, <input type="checkbox"/> day-care centre, <input type="checkbox"/> hostel, <input type="checkbox"/> other			
<input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL, <input type="checkbox"/> national branches, <input type="checkbox"/> network			
<input type="checkbox"/> INTERNATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> foreign branches, where?			
ORGANISATION / INSTITUTION'S MANAGER /title/			
ORGANISATION'S CHARACTER (mission, objectives)			
ORGANISATION / INSTITUTION'S SCOPE OF ACTIVITY:			
<input type="checkbox"/> rural areas, agriculture; <input type="checkbox"/> education; <input type="checkbox"/> sport, tourism; <input type="checkbox"/> international cooperation, European integration; <input type="checkbox"/> ecology, nature protection; <input type="checkbox"/> health care: hospitals, rehabilitation, hospices <input type="checkbox"/> prisons;		<input type="checkbox"/> homelessness; <input type="checkbox"/> senior citizen care and support; <input type="checkbox"/> culture, arts, historical monument and tradition preservation, <input type="checkbox"/> church, religious movements, <input type="checkbox"/> regional and local development; <input type="checkbox"/> <u>human rights</u> (national minorities, gender equality) <input type="checkbox"/> refugees, <input type="checkbox"/> assistance to the handicapped	
No. of members in the organisation			
No. of volunteers			
No. of paid employees			
Date of my volunteer assignment initiation			

VOLUNTEER'S TASKS

TASKS PERFORMED	ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TASKS	PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN TASK COMPLETION
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert

COMPETENCES

FUNDAMENTAL COMPETENCES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES	LEVEL
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert

SPECIFIC COMPETENCES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES	LEVEL
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert
		<input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Development sage <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced stage <input type="checkbox"/> Expert

CHARACTER FEATURES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
Altruism	
Openness towards others	
Creativity, innovativeness	
Reliability, involvement	
Responsibility	
Independence	
Adapting to new situations	
Self-confidence	
Security	
Social values	
Initiative	
Other, what...	

TRAINING

TYPE OF ACTIVITY: training, workshop, conference, meeting, debate, seminar	AREA, SUBJECT	TIME OF TRAINING: no. of hours, date	INSTITUTION PROVIDING TRAINING

First and second name:

Address:

Phone no.:

e-mail:

Name and address of the organisation	Volunteer's function/ position	Main tasks	Skills acquired and proficiency level	