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**BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**  
SELF-GOVERNING REGION

# *GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS IN INTEGRATED CENTRES OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE (ICSHS)*

*Methodology for Staff of ICSHS*

Project co-funded by the European Union under the programme  
EaSI (Call VP/2019/003/0152, Agreement number VS/2020/0274).

*JANA ŠOLCOVÁ – ALŽBETA BROZMANOVÁ GREGOROVÁ*

2023



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SELF-GOVERNING REGION

## METHODOLOGY FOR STAFF OF ICSHS

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### GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS IN INTEGRATED CENTRES OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE

1ST EDITION - BANSKÁ BYSTRICA: PLATFORM  
OF VOLUNTARY CENTRES AND ORGANISATIONS, 2023.



#### **EDITOR:**

Mgr. Šolcová Jana, PhD.

#### **AUTHORS:**

Mgr. Šolcová Jana, PhD.

doc. PhDr. Brozmanová Gregorová Alžbeta, PhD.

#### **REVIEWERS:**

Mgr. Hradiská Dominika

Mgr. Cochová Silvia, PhD.

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## **1. PREPARING THE ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING THE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM**

Preparing the organization and planning the volunteering are interlinked or – in our experience – can happen simultaneously. For the outcome to be successful, these two areas should be addressed.

### **1.1 PREPARING ICSHS FOR VOLUNTEERING**

ICSHS preparation aims to enable its management, staff, service beneficiaries, and family members of clients to support the volunteerism (directive, program) operating under a particular ICSHS.

During staff training at ICSHS, we strive to eliminate concerns of staff regarding volunteers, mostly related to:

- Reduced quality of service.
- Unreliable volunteers.
- Possible legal issues.
- Job loss.
- Necessity to manage volunteers with no previous experience.
- Losing control over clients' work and safety (McCurley, Lynch, 2000).

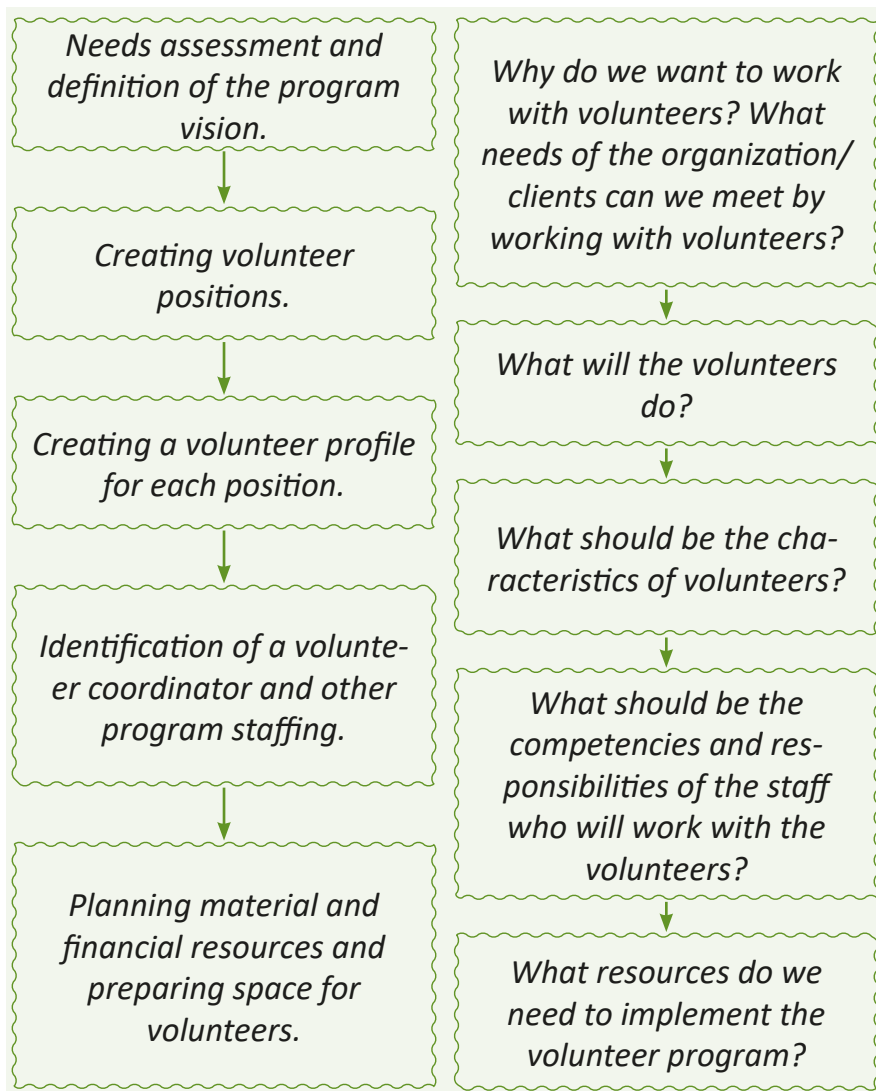
During the preparation process, we consider informing the clients and their family members about the volunteering intention important. Apart from informing these groups, we can also involve them in the development of the volunteer program. We can build on clients' plans and focus on needs that are not being sufficiently met. Alternatively, we can ask clients about their hopes and dreams – these may reveal gaps in the services provided. At the same time, the discussion is a precursor to recruiting volunteers.

*A large part of the group of seniors aged 60+ is characterized by activity and autonomy. They are looking for active leisure activities. In this context, volunteering is also a form of activation and social rehabilitation.*

## 1.2 PLANNING THE VOLUNTEERING SERVICE

Planning consists of several important steps that will help you achieve effective volunteer management. The time spent in the planning and preparation phase greatly reduces the problems that arise later. Figure 1 presents a sequence of activities that will help in planning how you work with volunteers in ICSHS. The figure also offers questions that we need to answer in each step (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, and Šolcová, 2019).

**Figure 1: Steps for planning work with volunteers in ICSHS**



Source: Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Hradiská, Šolcová, 2022

## **A. Needs assessment and definition of the vision for volunteering in ICSH**

If you are starting a new volunteer program or starting to work with volunteers, it is important to remind yourself why your ICSH wants to involve volunteers in the first place and define what exactly it wants to achieve. Having a clear vision and understanding of how your center can benefit from volunteers will help you determine how to support, engage, and coordinate them on an ongoing basis (Volunteer Ireland, 2017).

The formulation of a vision for volunteering should be closely linked to the assessment and definition of needs related to the integration of volunteers into the organization. Volunteer activities in ICSH should respond to the specific needs of the center and its clients. This will ensure that the volunteer program or directive is authentic and based on the reality and specificities of the given micro-region. Ideally, you should involve both ICSH staff and clients in identifying the needs.

### *Examples of an organization's vision*

*„We understand the great importance of the work of volunteers. Our organization would not do without them. That's why we focus on volunteer management development.“*

*„Our mission is to strengthen social cohesion and improve the quality of life in society. Our organization has made a conscious decision to work with volunteers. Volunteers are an added value in achieving our organization's goals. Without them, we would not be able to offer our services and products. Volunteers contribute to the integration of our services and products into the community and create a network that provides information to the community about our organization.“*





Needs of clients/beneficiaries: .....

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Needs of potential volunteers: .....

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## **B. Creating volunteer positions**

The needs assessment is directly linked to the identification of specific tasks that volunteers can perform.

Volunteering in organizations has its limits and constraints. These rules must be respected when working on volunteer positions and their descriptions:

- Volunteers should not replace the work of paid staff but can complement it appropriately, thus helping to maximize the effect of staff care.
- The essential boundaries of voluntary assistance shall be set so that they comply with the legislation in force.
- Volunteers should not perform activities that “nobody wants to do”.
- Creating a range of activities for volunteers is an ongoing and open process and volunteers should be given the space to be creative (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).



**The goal of the volunteer program.** The goal should be achievable and have an impact on your ICSH and its clients.

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**Proposed Activities.** List of tasks/activities of the volunteer according to the needs of ICSH and the clients.

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**Location.** Where will the volunteers work? Transportation to the location. Outdoor or indoor activities?

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**Collaboration.** Collaboration with staff or other volunteers? Group or individual activity? Will it link multiple services in the city? Collaboration with the municipal office? Do you require the ability to work independently or in a team?

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**Benefits for volunteers.** Training, insurance, reimbursement... and any other benefits relevant to the specific position. What does the position offer to the volunteer or what it does not offer? Can volunteers develop personally and professionally? What will they learn/what will it give them?

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**What knowledge and skills should they have?**

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**What attitudes, and qualities should they have? What kind of person should they be?**

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*Example of a volunteer profile from a volunteer program:  
SENIORS VOLUNTEERING AT THE LIBRARY*

- 2 to 4 hours per week
- a responsible approach to the assigned activities and tasks
- adherence to the agreed time regime
- polite, helpful, and communicative towards library users
- no criminal record
- basic computer skills are a plus.

*[www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk](http://www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk)*

## **D. Identification of a Volunteer Coordinator and other program staffing**

Having a Volunteer Coordinator position is very important if ICSH wants to work with volunteers responsibly to fulfill all the tasks and responsibilities related to their involvement. The Volunteer Coordinator is a key figure in the volunteer program and a good program cannot do without them, as they accompany the volunteers from the beginning to the end of the collaboration. In general, these are the main areas of activities in which the Volunteer Coordinator should be involved:

- goal setting
- planning and organization
- communication
- personal development
- support
- monitoring
- evaluation and recognition (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Hradiska, Šolcová, 2022).

## **E. Allocation of material and financial resources, preparing premises for volunteering**

Although volunteering has a non-compensatory nature, it is vital to note that even a volunteer program needs certain material and financial support. Material and financial resources for volunteering or a specific volunteering program may include, for example, various tools and materials for the implementation of activities, clothing for volunteers, working tools, reimbursement of expenses incurred (travel costs), financial costs associated with the coordination of the program, financial remuneration for trainers, remuneration for the supervisor.



## Create a spreadsheet of your volunteer program expenses:

Activity	Details of expenses	Calculation	Amount
Recruitment of volunteers	Advertisement		
	Print		
	Postage		
	Refreshments		
	Meeting space		
	Staff time		



## 2. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Finding volunteers for an organization is not a one-off process.

Recruitment can be divided into three main steps:

- *Recruitment preparation and planning.* As part of your recruitment preparations, look back at the profile of who you are looking for. This will greatly influence the actual focus of the recruitment (selecting target groups based on the work descriptions), the development of the recruitment timeline, and the preparation of the process (creating the offer, selecting recruitment techniques, identifying the resources and people involved).
- *The recruitment itself.* This means implementing the strategies proposed in the preparation and planning phase.
- *Recruitment evaluation.* It is important to note what worked and what didn't work for you. The evaluation can be done together with the overall evaluation of ICSH volunteer management (Adolfova et al., 2016).

When looking for new volunteers, you can use several techniques and recruitment activities, which can be divided into direct and indirect sources of conveying information. An effective form of recruitment is a combination of both types of information sources (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Hradiská, Šolcová, 2022).

**Indirect sources of information:** distribution through various media (newspapers, magazines, television, radio), websites (social institutions, volunteer database sites, and portals), posters, leaflets, and promotional materials.

**Direct sources of information:** mediation of volunteer offers and information through direct contact; via close people with whom one is regularly in personal contact and whom one trusts;

from friends, acquaintances, and relatives. Several volunteers have also been approached directly by active volunteers or staff of the organization that needs help.

### **Recruitment activities**

- o Distribution of leaflets and brochures about the organization and recruitment, indicating where potential volunteers can find out other important information about the volunteer program (notice boards in town offices, dormitories, churches, lecture rooms, clubs, waiting rooms, job centers...).
- o Publication of an advertisement/article/image in print media (organization, city, region).
- o Promotion of ICSH and its volunteer program online, and in social media.
- o Promotion within volunteer portals, for example at [www.dobrovolnictvo.sk](http://www.dobrovolnictvo.sk) or in databases of volunteer centers (for Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region: [www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk](http://www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk)).
- o Sending out an email invitation. Ongoing promotional plan.
- o Throughout the year, the media can occasionally be approached. Press releases, articles, and interviews can be written to let potential volunteers know about the organization and volunteering there.
- o Involvement in national or community volunteering events and campaigns such as Volunteering Week, Heart on the Palm, etc.
- o Presentation of the organization and the offer for volunteers in other institutions and organizations (various clubs, community centers, etc.) (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Hradiská, Šolcová, 2022).



**Introduction.** Describe the project or activity in which you will involve the volunteer. Describe what is special and attractive about the project or activity.

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**Motivation.** Describe why your facility wants to work with volunteers. Invite the reader to become a volunteer.

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**Application.** Describe how volunteers are to express their interest and in what timeframe. What will the recruitment process look like? Who can provide them with further information?

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**Conclusion.** Call to action.

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***An example of an article about a volunteer program in a local newspaper.***

*Reading Valley... intergenerational volunteer program*

*Twelve volunteers from senior years took part in the Reading Valley in Banská Bystrica. One of them is Mrs. Angela Mušková, whom the children call Mrs. Muška ("Lady Bee"). She was motivated to join this long-term volunteer program not only by her love for children but also by her love for books. And even though her children are long grown-ups, on her way to the Kindergarten at Profesora Sáru 3, she will surely remind herself of how she used to go there with her child.*

*This volunteer program aims to improve intergenerational understanding between preschoolers and seniors in the city. Reading is just an activity to help us do this slowly, and gently. Besides, it can also bring about the development of children's relationship with reading and books or provide positive adult role models for children. Our volunteers go to the kindergarten to read to the children at their rest time regularly, once a week, in agreement with the kindergarten teachers.*

*YOU can try to join in the Reading Valley, too! Volunteers who are to read to the children should be available in the morning. For more information, send email to [citankovo@centrumdobrovolnictva.sk](mailto:citankovo@centrumdobrovolnictva.sk) or visit [www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk](http://www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk).*

*Volunteering Centre team*

### 3. SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS

The selection of volunteers is closely linked to the recruitment process and based on how the organization defines potential roles for volunteers and profiles leading to the selection of candidates (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Hradiská, Šolcová, 2022).

The first meeting with interested parties can be described as “informative” – the aim is to provide basic information. We talk about the mission and history of the organization, in particular about the importance and scope of the work of volunteers. The organizational team and the Volunteer Coordinator will be introduced. Questions from interested parties follow.

The personal interview is one of the most important tools for quality volunteer management, as the success and effectiveness of the volunteer program depend on it. The interview should be conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator with another member of the team who will be working with the volunteers, ideally a psychologist and another staff member. The goal of the first meeting is to assign the right person to the right position. The more accurately both parties describe their expectations at the beginning of the collaboration, the less risk of disappointment in the future (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

During the first meeting or initial interview, you should define the following as precisely as possible:

- o Expectations about volunteering on the part of ICSH and the prospective volunteer.
- o Perceptions of volunteering on both sides.
- o Obligations arising from cooperation.
- o Rights and duties related to volunteering.



- o The volunteer's work description.
- o How the tasks are performed.
- o Working hours (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

## *SAMPLE STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEW WITH A VOLUNTEER*

### ***Introduction***

- *Make sure the volunteer feels relaxed.*
- *Introduce yourself.*
- *Inform the candidate about the structure of the interview.*

### ***The main part***

- *Inform the candidate about the interview.*
- *Provide a realistic description of the volunteer's work.*
- *Provide information about the specific position.*
- *Ask the candidate for information according to the selection criteria/requirements.*

### ***Conclusion***

- *Ask the candidate if they need further information.*
- *Inform them of the next course of action or reject the candidate and give a clear explanation for your rejection*





## 4. TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

When training or preparing to volunteer, you can ask these helpful questions:

- o What information do volunteers need to do their work successfully?
- o What skills do volunteers need to do their work successfully? (McCurley, Lynch, 2000)

The preparatory process, which helps volunteers to familiarize themselves with their work within ICSH, can be divided into two parts:

- Orientation: the process of preparing the volunteer so that the volunteer learns about the mission of ICSH and its activities (also known as initiation).
- Training: the process that prepares the volunteer to perform volunteer activities for ICSH (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

For the orientation and training of volunteers, you can source inspiration from the individual parts of the volunteer training developed by the SOVOL project: <https://sovol.wordpress.com/outcomes/publications-in-slovak/>.







## 5. CONTRACT CONCLUSION AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

In Slovakia, the general legal regulation of volunteering is enshrined in Act No. 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts, as amended. The Act defines volunteering; the rights and obligations of the volunteer, the sending organization, and the recipient of the volunteering activity; and the basic elements of the volunteering contract. The Act also regulates information regarding the Volunteering Contract. A model contract is available at: [www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk](http://www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk) (downloadable documents).

In other organizational aspects of working with volunteers, it proved beneficial to keep a record of **a)** volunteer recruitment minutes; **b)** signed consent to the processing of personal data; **c)** signed contract/affidavit or code of ethics; **d)** log or record of hours, feedback from volunteering or report, etc.

Registration of volunteers in ICSH:

- enables contact with volunteers;
- provides clear information on the number and workload of volunteers;
- simplifies the evaluation of the volunteer program in your center.

Records should also include the number of hours worked in the organization and the type of activity. Such records can be kept by the volunteer or by the volunteer coordinator (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

The following suggestion can also serve as inspiration:





Record keeping is also monitoring, which is the process of collecting facts and figures related to your volunteer program. It will include information such as:

- number of volunteers,
- demographic information (e.g., age, gender),
- records indicating how often and for how long people volunteer,
- the type of work volunteers do,
- the economic value of volunteers' contributions,
- the costs associated with the involvement of volunteers,
- the number of beneficiaries affected by the presence of volunteers (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

The collection of information for monitoring can be done daily, monthly, or quarterly. Monitoring helps you to check whether a specific activity has been implemented as expected. Collecting information helps you to see if something is not working or working better than expected and whether there are any changes needed in the program. Only specifying how many volunteers were available and how much training was provided does not convey or measure the overall effect nor does it tell you what changes were experienced by those involved. However, it is key information needed in the subsequent evaluation process (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

## 6. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR RECOGNITION

The leadership and support of the volunteer is a prerequisite for retention in ICSH.

The main support functions in the coordination of volunteers are linked to the role of the coordinator. Support for volunteers can be offered by the supervisor and other staff/volunteers or ICSH members (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

Support for volunteers can be provided in a formal/structured way (e.g., introductory training, training, one-to-one sessions, group meetings, provision of intravision/supervision) and in an informal/unstructured way (e.g., listening to and communicating with the volunteer when they need it because they have asked for it).

Support is defined as the interest, understanding, and care given to volunteers that help them to continue to work all the time and even in times of crisis, enabling them to meet their needs and the needs of others in the organization.

On the other hand, intravision/supervision is described as a way of reflecting on the performance of volunteers to help them benefit from their position. Ensuring that they adequately perform their roles, encouraging them in problem-solving, and providing guidance (Volunteer Now, 2012).

Expressing appreciation is a constant, integral part of any effective volunteer program and is essentially a tool to retain and motivate volunteers. Volunteers should be recognized for their contribution to the local community, the organization, beneficiaries, and staff. Recognition not only serves to meet basic human needs but also motivates volunteers to continue

their involvement. Expressing appreciation is acknowledging the efforts of volunteers by showing gratitude for the work that volunteers do for the organization. Recognition and appreciation provide volunteers with a sense of belonging, joy, and accomplishment (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).



### Go through the checklist and see what you can offer to ICSH volunteers to help motivate and retain them:

- ✓ Saying: "Thank you."
- ✓ Saying they did a good job.
- ✓ Contact with "another reality", an opportunity to gain a new perspective on the world, on oneself and others.
- ✓ An active and attractive way to spend leisure time.
- ✓ Fun, relaxation, new friends, and group.
- ✓ Sharing common values and a sense of meaningfulness.
- ✓ Environment with a pleasant atmosphere.
- ✓ New and useful information, experience, knowledge, and skills.
- ✓ Learning opportunity.
- ✓ Opportunity for feedback for personal growth.
- ✓ Self-realisation.
- ✓ Ground for the realization of one's ideas and visions.
- ✓ The experience of having done something (creation, organization, help), the opportunity to be visible.
- ✓ Feeling good about a job well done.

- ✓ Consciousness of one's necessity, meaningfulness, satisfaction of the need to help.
- ✓ Satisfying the need to belong somewhere.
- ✓ Satisfying the need to be valued/appreciated.
- ✓ Growth in self-esteem.
- ✓ Increasing one's value as a workforce.
- ✓ Wishes for personal anniversaries of the volunteer.
- ✓ Certificate of service in the organization, training, and learning.
- ✓ Recommendations for schools, jobs.
- ✓ Thank-you letter.
- ✓ Participation in new activities and events.
- ✓ Participation in events exclusive to volunteers.
- ✓ The possibility of a one-off reward, a gift that the volunteer cannot claim (e.g., a ticket, an invitation to dinner, etc.).
- ✓ Position of trainer of new volunteers.
- ✓ Public appraisal.
- ✓ Interview with the volunteer in the media, etc.

## 7. EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM AND VOLUNTEERS

The evaluation can be divided into two parts. The first part is focused on the evaluation of volunteers, while the second part is about monitoring and evaluating the management of the volunteer program and the work with volunteers.

We evaluate to:

- o correct the mistakes;
- o improve the quality of the organization's services;
- o present results to the public, media, and donors.

### **a. Evaluation of volunteers**

One form of volunteer evaluation is the evaluation meeting. The evaluation meeting should be a meeting where both parties are given space. You can talk about the volunteers' performance, express appreciation, or talk about suggestions for improvement. You can also use surveys or short questionnaires.

### **b. Evaluation of the volunteer program and work with volunteers**

The evaluation of the volunteer program is necessary for the coordinator to find out what can be improved in the volunteer coordination process, and how they can ensure a higher quality of volunteer coordination. Alternatively, what needs to be adjusted during recruitment, what not to forget during training, or what has been verified during support. Another reason for evaluation is the opportunity to present results to the public, media, and donors (Toshner, Sozanska, 2002).

***The questionnaire for volunteers can include the following questions:***

- *To what extent were your expectations before the first meeting fulfilled?*
- *Which task/area was the most challenging for you?*
- *What would you like to see in your volunteering? What would be helpful for you?*
- *How do you rate the communication and cooperation with the Volunteer Coordinator and/or supervisor? What change would you like to see?*
- *What did you find most helpful or necessary in your meetings with the supervisor?*

***The questionnaire or interview with the beneficiaries/target group may include:***

- *What is it that you don't like about volunteers?*
- *Is our program important to you?*
- *If so, in what sense is it useful to you?*
- *Do you trust volunteers?*
- *What would you change about the volunteers?*
- *How would you rate them (e.g., from 1 to 10)?*
- *Would you recommend volunteers to other beneficiaries/clients of another organization/institution? Why?*
- *Are the volunteers reliable?*
- *Did they always arrive at the agreed time?*

## 8. TERMINATION OF COOPERATION WITH VOLUNTEERS

Termination of cooperation with a volunteer may occur:

- *During the initial interview:* finding out that the motives or expectations of either party do not match. Parting is especially painful when volunteers themselves do not see a problem, but the specific volunteering activity is not suitable for them.
- *After a certain time:* after the first days or weeks. It is often only when the volunteer experiences the volunteering activity that they get a more realistic view of the nature and scope of the volunteer work they have chosen and discover their limits. Many fears can be overcome by consulting with supervisors. In some cases, it may be sufficient to change the activity, the client, other times it is better to terminate the activity.
- *After a long period:* changes might occur in the personal or professional life of a volunteer. These changes might limit their capacity, mostly their free time. Gradually, the volunteer stops functioning in the organization, does not fulfill their “duties” or “fails” to fulfill them due to important personal reasons (e.g., change of residence, leaving school, marriage, pregnancy, the birth of a child, illness...) (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

*When saying goodbye,* it is important that the coordinator acknowledges the volunteers and highlights their positive qualities and activities in front of other volunteers and colleagues. At this point, despite the various reasons for the volunteer’s departure, the coordinator shall say a “thank you” in appreciation.



*When a volunteer is terminated* for any reason, it is important to thank them for the work they have done for the organization and inform all staff involved of the reason for the dismissal (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019).

Within the recommended duration of volunteering for a single volunteer, you will encounter a variety of scenarios: **(a)** irregular volunteering (volunteering linked to one-off and occasional ICSH activities); **(b)** seasonal and time-limited volunteering (limited by the school year – volunteers in schools, by weather conditions – working in forest, park, garden); **(c)** regular volunteering/volunteering program (volunteering program usually lasts for a year – when we adjust the duration of the Volunteer Contract so, it will make the evaluation step easier).

### ***Tips for terminating cooperation with volunteers***

- ✓ *Final picnic of volunteers with the beneficiaries of volunteering.*
- ✓ *Goulash party in the village, with the participation of volunteers, beneficiaries, and other ICSH clients.*
- ✓ *Issuance of a volunteering certificate and thank-you appraisal.*
- ✓ *Invitation to the Christmas get-together.*
- ✓ *Final interview and feedback.*
- ✓ *Recognition by nomination for the regional volunteer award “Heart on the Palm”*  
*([www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk](http://www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk)), etc*

## CONCLUSION

Several years of experience as coordinators, lecturers, and publishers on the topic of working with volunteers and creating volunteer programs taught us that starting the process of working with volunteers and creating volunteer opportunities in its initial/preparatory stage takes a lot of time. The ICSH Volunteer Management Steps will initially be your reference point in the process of working with volunteers.

However, you – as well as all parties involved, will gradually see the benefits of volunteering in support of integrated social and health care for seniors at the community level in your region.

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The platform of Volunteer Centres and Organisations:  
[www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk](http://www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk)

Volunteering Centre (volunteering in Banská Bystrica  
Self-Governing Region): [www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk](http://www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk)



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## **GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS IN INTEGRATED CENTRES OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE (ICSHS) Methodology for Staff of ICSHS**

**AUTHORS:** Mgr. Šolcová Jana, PhD.  
doc. PhDr. Brozmanová Gregorová Alžbeta, PhD.

**REVIEWERS:** Mgr. Hradiská Dominika  
Mgr. Cochová Silvia, PhD.

**EDITOR:** Mgr. Šolcová Jana, PhD.

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