



Erasmus+

ACT
YOUTH IN MOVEMENT

VOLUNTEERING: A RELEVANT ANSWER TO THE EU'S CURRENT CHALLENGES

Recommendations brochure of
ACT Youth in Movement project



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This recommendation brochure has been developed in the framework of the Erasmus + KA3 project ACT.

The ACT project is a KA3 project which aims to create innovative citizen pathways for young people with fewer opportunities, by providing them the opportunity to realise a volunteering project with migrants or refugees in Greece or Italy. The project involves 54 youngsters from the deprived neighbourhoods of Roubaix, Liverpool and Brussels and from Greece and Italy in volunteering projects supporting vulnerable migrants.

THE OBJECTIVES ARE TO

- Develop volunteering projects to promote the inclusion and integration of unemployed young people at risk of exclusion or victims of discriminations and potential radicalization,
- Allow young people to get involved with newly arrived migrants in order to develop values of citizenship, solidarity and tolerance,
- Disseminate the good practices of the project and success stories of these young people and to make their experience known in their sending communities, and especially in the deprived neighbourhoods they come from. The objective of the project is thus to attract other young people towards volunteering projects and to fight against the risks of isolation and violent radicalization.

This recommendation brochure targets youth, youth workers, policy makers, institutional, and finally every people who would be interested by solidarity projects. ACT project shows a good practices example of actions of engagement and solidarity to face current challenges in Europe.

CHAPTER 1

ACT Youth in movement framework



ADICE Association, in partnership with Dynamo International (Belgium), Per Esemplio (Italy), Meryside (United Kingdom), United Societies of Balkans and KANE (Greece) has developed a project within the framework of the support policy reform (Erasmus + programme, Key Action 3).

The project aims to create innovative citizen pathways for young people with fewer opportunities, by providing them the opportunity to participate in a volunteering project with migrants or refugees in Greece and Italy.

THE PROJECT MEETS THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE PARIS DECLARATION AS IT

- Involves young people in an active process of participation encouraging the emergence of a **European citizenship in movement**,
- **Fights against exclusion, discrimination and the risks of extremism of young people** with fewer opportunities by allowing them to participate, be committed and be integrated through volunteering,
- Is part of a **strategy to combat unemployment** and exclusion in vulnerable neighbourhoods through volunteering as it contributes to the emergence of new capacities in terms of autonomy, openness to other cultures, linguistic and socio-cultural learning and integration into an international project and teams.

The project has been developed taking into consideration the difficulties faced by young people from the deprived neighbourhoods of Roubaix, Liverpool and Brussels, such as unemployment, discrimination, lack of resources, lack of jobs in the area, cultural marginalisation, urban violence and dissatisfaction towards the current politics, lack of skills and certification.

ACT Youth in Movement was based on good practice developed by ADICE during 20 years of experience in the field of international mobility and has been proposed to the participating communities as a solution to some of these difficulties, raising awareness about volunteering amongst young people and decision makers.

The project allowed 45 young people from France, Belgium, United Kingdom, and 9 young people from Greece and Italy to participate in volunteering projects supporting migrants and refugees.

Today, there are 20.8 million non-EU nationals residing in the EU, making up 4.1% of its total population (Eurostat, 2015). The migration phenomena has made the headlines for the last years all over Europe. Failure to realise the potential of people migrating into the EU represents a considerable waste of resources, both for the individuals concerned and more generally for the EU economy and society. The EU has demonstrated its desire to step up a gear not only in managing migration

flows, but also when it comes to integration policies for third-country nationals. In the meantime, Member States have developed their own integration policies depending on their national contexts, supported by the EU. However, despite these actions, TCN (Third countries nationals) continue to fare worse than EU citizens in terms of employment, education and social inclusion outcomes. EU countries have understood the need to develop effective integration strategies, especially in times when discrimination, prejudice, racism and xenophobia are rising.

THE ACT PROJECT'S 4 MAIN OBJECTIVES

- **To develop volunteering** projects to promote the inclusion and integration of unemployed young people at risk of exclusion or victims of discriminations and potential extremism,
- **To allow young people to get involved** with newly arrived migrants in order to develop values of citizenship, solidarity and tolerance,
- **To disseminate the good practices** of the project and success stories of these young people and to make their experience known in their sending communities, and especially in the deprived neighbourhoods they come from,
- **To attract other young people** to undertake volunteering projects and to fight against the risks of isolation and all type of extremism.

TARGET GROUP AND KEY ACTORS

The project aimed to have a significant impact on all the key actors involved, including:

- **Young people:** they have gained work experience and developed intercultural competences and improved their soft skills including self-confidence. The majority of them have initiated a search for job in the third sector, and some of them have already found employment,
- **Migrants and refugees:** they have met different people other than professionals with whom they could share their stories and cultures. Volunteers were bridges between the migrants and the host community,
- **Local organisation in the host and sending communities.** Indeed, volunteers have brought their enthusiasm, motivation and experience in both communities. Some of them, have had fundamental role in referring potential participants.

VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

The volunteers achieved mission of 2 and 6 months in Italy and Greece in 3 hosting organisations. The participation has been accessible to young people interested in volunteering in a solidarity project with migrants and refugees, or in mission to raise awareness of migration, regardless of their skills and qualifications.



Per Esempio Onlus (Italy)

Volunteers have been involved in the activities of different organisations, shelters and associations which deal locally with migrants and the integration of refugees.

Some of them have been involved in childcare activities within the “Giardino di Madre Teresa” a multi-ethnic kindergarten in the city centre of Palermo. Others gave support in two different shelters for unaccompanied minors and refugees: one is the first reception centre called Elom and Azad, and the other ones are the second reception centre “Il Gabbiano” and the shelter for refugees Astalli. Moreover, they also collaborated with Per Esempio in project design, implementation of youth exchanges and trainings on the topic of migration, organisation of awareness raising events to promote migrants’ inclusion inside the local community (Mediterraneo Antirazzista).



KANE (Greece)

In Athens the project allowed direct involvement with refugees at the City Plaza hotel, an abandoned hotel that is now taken by activist groups and used to host refugees. The volunteers were helping here by providing workshops and supporting in the organisation of the place. In Kalamata, the role of the volunteers was different, as it involved mostly awareness raising activities as well as support to integration activities: cultural activities for migrant children, which are complementary to the Greek lessons, video making workshops. They helped to organise the street Festival socio-artistic installation and the cooperation with the Second Chance School.



USB «United Societies of Balkans» (Greece)

The volunteers were working in 4 different structures: an unaccompanied refugees’ shelter, a warehouse, a care centre and a women’s centre.

The volunteers participated in creative work and language teaching for the underage refugees; providing the necessary support to the refugees, visiting the centre related with hygiene issues; supporting female-refugees with basic female needs and working in the kitchen, sorting out the food that was to be delivered. Apart from the structures the volunteers had an active engagement with social media where they were disseminating their activities as much they possibly could, in order to increase the visibility of the project and raise awareness.

CHAPTER 2

Volunteering management: preparation, follow-up and evaluation



CHAPTER 2



The pedagogical approach implemented in the project was based on ADICE's good practice in the management of mobility projects for young people with fewer opportunities.

The young people, during the whole experience, became familiar with new contexts, habits, traditions, new people and new points of reference. They might have lost their own and needed to define new references in relation to the cultural processes they have experienced until now. To prevent the volunteers withdrawing from the project at the first sign of difficulty, it was very important to set up the volunteering management throughout of the project.

THE VOLUNTEERING PROJECT CAN BE DIVIDED IN THREE PARTS:

- 1) **Preparation** (before the departure),
- 2) **Deployment** (on the field), and
- 3) **Evaluation** (on return in their sending countries) of the volunteering project.

The sending organisations have had an important role in not only the preparation and evaluation of the volunteers, individually and in groups, but also during the project, supporting the volunteers in case of need.

The hosting organisations followed the volunteers and planned their activities during the project. Each organisation defined at least one person to be the mentor for each volunteer during the whole duration of the project.

2.1 Selection of the volunteers: motivation as the main criteria for the selection process

ADICE has shared with the partners its way of se-

lecting the volunteers. It consisted in a **construction of the project** together with the volunteers. The aim was to allow to each participant, regardless their knowledge, skills and experience to participate in the ACT project. The selection has been based mostly on the **motivation of the participants** in the project, but has also taken into consideration the added value of the project to their future career or personal project.

The partnership agreed that the main criteria should be the motivation of the volunteers, as well as their **understanding of the project values** and what it entailed. This kind of 'selection' also gave the opportunity to participate in the ACT project to those who cannot afford to undertake a volunteering project at their own cost, for different reasons, such as cultural, economic, educational, social or geographical obstacles. On the other hand, a little bit of competition in terms of motivation, attitudes, interests towards the project may be helpful to give more value to the project itself and make the candidates to feel more engaged when joining it. For this reason, a skype meeting is organised with the hosting organisation and an application is prepared with the sending organisation (CV and motivation letter).

Priority should not be given to qualified young people, who have different grants and opportunities to undertake a mobility project. Indeed, these kinds of experiences are very useful for their personal and professional growth, which may represent an important access to the labour market, as well as to society.

2.2 Preparation: to understand the project and its environment

The project emphasised the important role that the sending organisations play in a volunteering project, especially for the participants facing socio-economic difficulties, or coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, who volunteer with vulnerable people.

The sending organisations have named a sending tutor who prepared the volunteers both individually and within a group. The role of the tutor was to support the volunteers with the application to the project, to explain the role and the objectives of the project; to evaluate the volunteers before, during and on return from the project, to assist and support in case of emergency or difficulties.

The volunteers had to set objectives for their voluntary projects with the support of a tutor from **the sending** organisation and understood the project added value on long term, personally and professionally.

During the preparation phase, the volunteers had also to out researches on the hosting country and on the hosting organisation and to prepare working papers checked by the sending organisations.

The objectives of the pre-departure training were to:

- Help the volunteers to **express their fears and their expectations**, to encourage them to begin reflection about this and support them to find the most appropriate solutions,
- **Minimise risks** (volunteers participate in a security and first aid training) and cultural shock,
- Help the volunteers to understand the aspects of the volunteering project and **their role**, as well as their tasks, responsibilities and rights,
- Understand the migration phenomena.

2.3 ACT Youth in Movement training: the specific training course on migration

The development of the specific training course has been led by Merseyside Expanding Horizons. It has been developed in the framework of the project with the jointly contribution of each partner.

The training, delivered by the sending organisations (ADICE, Dynamo International, Merseyside Expanding Horizons), aimed to give participants an understanding of:

- **the global context** of the migrant situation,
- **human rights**, including migrants and refugees' rights,
- **EU policies** and international actors,
- how to **identity the actors** of the conflict and the asylum procedure,
- **the role of NGOs working** in the fields,
- intercultural communication,
- The situation in Greece and Italy,
- evaluation activities.

The training is divided in two parts: before the departure and on arrival in the project.

This training manual is a practical tool to prepare the volunteers to work in an unfamiliar context with refugees and migrants. It should not be considered as an alternative to existing training such as pre-departure training on health, safety, administrative procedures and language preparation, but it must be used to supplement and strengthen this preparation in a specific field in order to raise awareness and to minimise the risks. It is strongly recommended to encourage the volunteers to keep themselves informed about this ever-changing phenomenon and to study other topics not covered in this manual, such as migration and the media, conflict resolution, political strategies, interests economic etc.

THIS TRAINING MANUAL IS AVAILABLE ON THE PROJECT'S WEBSITE:

<https://youthinmovement.com/the-training/>



The added value of a specific training according to the participating organisations



DYNAMO: From the beginning, it seemed very interesting and even fundamental to set up a training on migration. Indeed, given the hype around the issue, everyone has an opinion on the subject.

However, young people quickly realize that their knowledge is incomplete and that they did not necessarily understand the issues. This is the return we got from the majority of young people as a result of the training. Our tools helped to fight against stereotypes and prejudices about this population.



KANE: The training is very useful in terms of assisting the volunteers get familiar with the activity and the situation in the hosting countries. Having a complete structured tool for the preparation of the volunteers was important to go deeper in the subject. Given the circumstances of the diverse information the young people in Europe are receiving by the media, the training was important in order to clear the confusion of the information as well as to become aware of the reality. Training is creating a good balance between awareness, breaking stereotypes and offering solid information.



PER ESEMPIO: The training was very important because it gave the opportunity to the volunteers to deepen the migration issue in the country where their volunteering project took place. They could be aware

about migrants' legal status and the related problems migrants and refugees faced, the daily obstacles they should overcome, their stories of migration etc. Moreover, this training facilitated their involvement inside the centres and their relation and approach towards migrants and refugees hosted in these centres.



UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS: The training was relevant because the volunteers learnt useful information regarding the migration topic. The volunteers had workshops related to human rights, intercultural understanding and they gained useful insights which enabled them begin their volunteering activities. The aim of the project is to engage young volunteers with fewer opportunities to support refugees and migrants in the local community in Thessaloniki. In order to do so it was necessary to be trained in the relevant topics that meant they were prepared to work in the field.



MERSEYSIDE EXPANDING HORIZONS: The training helped the volunteers to develop a vocabulary regarding migration (e.g. the difference between migrant and refugee) and to get acquainted with certain notions, such as the Dublin Agreement or the asylum seeking process. The aim was not only to develop the knowledge of the participants, but also to raise their awareness about the situation where they were going to volunteer. It is in fact necessary that the volunteers have a positive and understanding attitude. Even more important, through the training we aimed to develop critical thinking, to nourish the curiosity to go more in depth and to diversify their sources of information instead of taking the first explanations shared by mainstream media.



ADICE: The volunteers were very keen to have specific knowledge about the migration topic and to better understand the situation in Europe. Some of them have already worked locally with migrants, for other this subject was quiet new, but still of interest for them. During the training the volunteers learnt the different types of migration. The exchanges between volunteers were very interesting. We saw the high motivation to be engaged.

2.4 Follow-up to ensure the success of the project

The hosting organisations facilitated the integration of the volunteers within the new environment (country, staff, work, local community, etc.) and regularly ensured that the volunteers felt safe and secured in both the living and working environment.

The integration of the participants should be done through a special on-arrival training in the receiving country with two main objectives:

- to present the rules and advice on **“How to behave in the host organisation and host country”**: habits and traditions, health and security, legislation of the country, financial accounting, necessary information about emergency contacts and addresses, general rules of the receiving organisation and in the accommodation,
- to know **“How to succeed the volunteering project”**: process and quality of the project (training, tasks, everyday life, etc.), rights and duties, follow up and evaluation.

The hosting organisation had to define a mentor to monitor the volunteers all along their project. The mentor was in charge of supporting the volunteers in their everyday life and in their project activities.

The mentor must be available at any time all along the project in case of any emergency or difficulty faced by the volunteer.

In addition to the daily support, the mentor can do specific weekly or monthly meetings with the volunteers to review all the volunteering project aspects (living and working conditions, integration, relationship with the team and the other volunteers, difficulties, planning of the activities, feedbacks...).

2.5 Evaluation for capitalizing the experience for future





CHAPTER 3

Testimonials of the volunteer

The sending organisations organised the final evaluation with the volunteer in order to evaluate their learning process. The evaluation targeted their skills and integration, but also the quality of the projects. It gives volunteers the opportunities to express themselves individually and in-group.

This is fundamental from the point of view of the sending organisation, because it helps in understanding the difficulties that occurred in the field and any improvements that could be implemented. Moreover, evaluation enables learning about the volunteer's experience and if they have a different perspective regarding the phenomena of migration.

This evaluation meeting had the following objectives:

- To discuss the activities, outputs and results,
- To have a **feedback about their global integration** into the local community and everyday conditions,
- To check the learning progress and **achievements of the volunteers**,
- To help the volunteers to be able to have **self-reflection** about their achievements,
- To prepare the volunteers to **plan their future projects**.

During these meetings the volunteers were encouraged to share ideas and opinions and they were discussing future steps.

In order to obtain the best results of their project, it is important to carry out an evaluation of competences and skills before the departure. It helps identifying gaps in skills and creating a plan for enhancing the weak areas during mobility.

The evaluation can be carried out individually, but we recommend to carry out the evaluation within the group. It is an exercise for the volunteers to speak in front of a group, but it also allows them to share their achievements with other people who lived similar experiences.



CHAPTER 3



3.1 Emelyne, French volunteer, 6 month in Italy



I decided to take part in ACT - Youth in Movement project because I have been interested in the migration topic for years and I have some experience in this area as a social worker.

I have chosen Sicily because it is one of the places mainly concerned by migration in Europe and I already speak some Italian. I wanted to know more about this phenomenon and how European migration policy is applied.

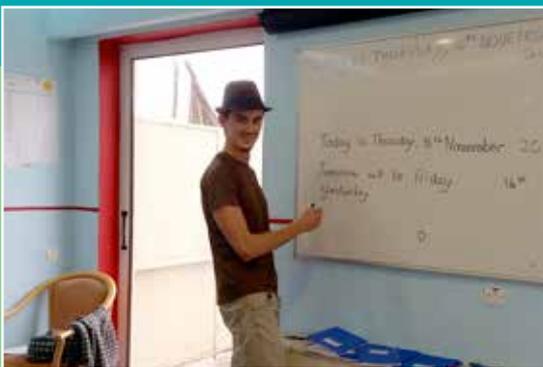
In Palermo I have worked in three different hosting centres for migrants. One of them, Centro Astalli, allows migrants to have breakfast, take a shower, learn Italian and others languages, do different activities, receive support to look for a job. I really enjoyed my time here, welcoming people

at the front desk and helping children with their homework.

I have also worked in two centres for migrant minors (Elom & Azad and Il Gabbiano). It was very interesting to discover the everyday life and the organisation of these centres. I could also realise the troubles the centres have to face due to the lack of budget and the financial aid delay (that impacts directly on migrants' pocket money and staff salaries).

I think that the most important thing I will remember of my time here is the chance I have had to meet migrants, Sicilians and European volunteers. I really enjoyed Palermo's intercultural life and I think that it represents a huge source of knowledge and richness for this city.

3.2 Ioan, French volunteer, 6 month in Greece



As soon as I arrived in Athens, I started to volunteer in a squat for refugees, «City Plaza». Here there are 400 people from different countries and cultures, which coexist peacefully in this fascinating and unique world.

I started giving English classes for French speaking adults of sub-Saharan Africa and French for adults from various countries. I have also participated in artistic and sportive activities with children: football, pottery, painting, gardening, and also theatre.

For myself, the simple fact that the workshop continues

after several weeks is a success as I have managed to gather a small group of motivated kids. All this experience definitely gave me confidence and developed my skills in group management and animation. (...)

After the first moments of uncertainty and adaptation, the exercise turns out to be rewarding and interesting. I can apply and develop my teaching and linguistic skills while trying to find new ways of teaching, and adapting my teachings to each different audience.

Another part of my European volunteering that I want to highlight is the personal adventure. Living in a new country for several months is a real opportunity: visiting the country, spending time with the population and discovering the local culture, meeting people. There is no doubt that I will grow from this experience and become better surrounded.

I obviously recommend this experience to everyone, warning that EVS does not make the experience on its own but that it gives it the opportunity. Once embarked on the adventure, it's up to you to take the helm!

3.3 Veronika, Belgium volunteer, 6 month in Italy



In the last few years we have been hearing about the refugee situation in Greece and Italy, about the flow of migrants crossing the sea to reach Europe.

This phenomenon is usually presented as a threat for Europe by the media, the main source of information we have in our daily life, that has a deep influence on people's opinions.

Media can be a dangerous tool for it controls the way most of the people see the world. Instead of highlighting human values, touching the human side of people and principles such as the acceptance of others and solidarity, media sometimes spread panic and a feeling of self-protection from the "others", the "invaders".

The truth is that those people, who are fleeing from their countries, are all searching a chance for a better life, for an easier and safer one, that is what each person has a right to pursue.

How can we blame a person who wants to escape poverty, uncertainty and fear about his/her children's future..?

To really understand this phenomenon, I think everybody should live it. Thanks to ACT project I have the opportunity to see and live it through my own experience, and volunteer with migrants in Palermo. Now I can tell for sure that it's the best way to learn and understand the phenomenon of migration, because Palermo represents a privileged point of view.

In lots of cases migrants are living in unhealthy conditions in the reception centers, the procedure to get the documents takes much more time than it should in theory and usually it is not a pleasant experience for them.

Besides, while they are living in difficult conditions and are constantly waiting for their papers, they are excluded by the society. They don't have real chances to be inte-

grated and to start a normal and healthy life. They are rejected for very long periods of time and are not treated equally.

I had the chance to get to know better some young migrants arrived in Palermo few months ago. Listening to their stories has really touched my heart and my mind. When I think we are nearly the same age, but I have the chance to study, to enjoy the freedom to travel and to have many different experiences, I feel a sense of inequality and powerlessness.

While they are telling me about how much they'd like to study and travel or just feel free to make their own decisions about their life, I just realize how lucky I am and how many obstacles and limits laws and society put in their way.

I really hope that more and more people will understand the importance of active participation and will try to do something around them, to awake more and more our human side, and make things going forwards.

Without any doubt, my experience in Palermo made me richer. All the people I had the chance to meet and all the things I've learnt about the world have made me a better person. I am glad I had this opportunity and I am grateful to all the people who have made it possible.

I'll keep searching for experiences such like this, that I warmly recommend to everybody!



3.4 Sam British volunteer, 6 month project in Italy

I decided to take part in this programme because I've always been concerned with helping others, particularly those less fortunate than myself.

This is probably due to my mother being incredibly doing throughout my childhood, however, I've wanted to do more since I spent a holiday in Kos, Greece during the summer of 2015. I had seen the negative portrayal of the migrants escaping war torn lands in the media and I struggled to believe how anybody could view them as a threat.

After all, if your home was being destroyed surely you'd want to escape too?

Once I got to Greece and saw the situation there I realised that almost everything the British media was saying was wrong. I had no need to be wary of these people, they were simply human beings just like you or I.

They were scared families who needed help and it broke my heart to see them being looked down on by most of the people walking past them on the street. I realised that they need as much help as possible and this programme is the perfect opportunity for me to be able to do that. Back then all I could do was offer some food and a smile, but with this opportunity hopefully I will be able to actually make a difference to people's lives on a more long term basis.

Prior to being here I expected it to feel much more like a job, although I knew it would be rewarding I didn't expect it to be this easy after being showed the ropes; it goes to show that the biggest obstacle to getting started and helping is taking that first step! I feel like I've developed good relationships with all the guys at Elom & Azad as well as the children at Il Giardino di Madre Teresa, and developed skills within myself just through developing these relationships, not least the level of my Italian!

I would wholeheartedly advise other people to try to do something similar to this, I feel much more well-rounded as a person already, and as I'm starting a project design course this week, I'm sure things are only going to improve.



CHAPTER 4

Volunteering: a relevant answer to societal challenges

The project has included young people with fewer opportunities coming from rural areas or disadvantaged neighbourhoods, some of them having themselves a migration background, or facing socio-economic difficulties.

Through ACT project, the sending organisations managed to approach young people who, some of them, were having a first volunteering experience abroad. Participating in a structured project made them more responsible, participating in a structured preparation with the sending organisation before the departure, respecting deadlines and engagements, participating in the pre-departure and ACT training.

The impact of volunteering on the young people encountering societal challenges can be noted on several levels:

4.1 Civic participation

The volunteering opens a door to young people to get involved in causes they care about without necessarily having previous experience of work in that field. The ACT project allowed, for example, young people (some who do not have a strong educational background) to be involved in concrete projects and carry out the activities in an international context.

As such, this provides a unique experience and civic engagement becomes not only a duty, but also an opportunity for them to participate as **active citizens**. It is a way to work in a collaborative manner to engage with the civil society and make a positive change for the community. To this extend volunteerism is a way to fight against social isolation.

The project encouraged people **to volunteer**, allowed them to discover more opportunities and build a network which can further encourage the civic participation of themselves and families and friends.



4.2 Expanding one's vision of what is possible

Volunteering is an opportunity for cultural and social encounters and discovery of other ways of living that may provide new responses related to some areas of interest, motivations and values. It is a way of highlighting other possibilities that they had not considered before and of opening up to new choices.

In a different environment **people look at themselves in new and different ways**. Taken out of their usual environment, the volunteers will have the possibility to have a new beginning in a totally different context. The young people have to test their limits in another country, which gives them the courage to believe in themselves, do things that they never thought they were able to do before.

4.3 Consolidating the professional project

The lack of professional opportunities and social confinement lead young people to want to emancipate themselves from the common rules of life and social norms. Frustrated by the supposed lack of consideration of the rest of society, these young people tend to take refuge in their community, their neighbourhood and find economic solutions on the spot through the informal and / or illegal sector. In fact, these young people find themselves even more on the margins of society and cannot feel citizen and get involved in the life of the community.

Volunteering is a concrete experience or immersion that lets participants **test out an idea or professional project** and at the same time to give it a go, in order to confirm her/his choices or discover other opportunities or new motivations.

4.4 An opportunity to develop various skills

Volunteering also makes it possible to develop or reinforce personal resources that constitute general or multidisciplinary skills that are essential for any professional project and in any employment situation.

Young people confirmed that the volunteering was the opportunity to people to participate in different actions which allows **them to develop soft skills** (open-mindedness, independence, self-confidence), **professional/organisational skills** (team work, technical and linguistic skills) and **intercultural skills** (discovering a new country, a new environment, accepting differences, sharing an experience).

These competences are increasingly required in professional life and are useful for a fulfilling social life. While the volunteering experience is more centred on socialization, the acquisition of organisational skills remains important.

Thanks to the participation in the ACT project, the volunteers could also easier overcome a lack of schooling, skills and diplomas that has been one of the reasons for their exclusion.

Finally, the volunteers also gain self-esteem, feeling useful in the society and appreciated.

4.5 To develop at personal level

Working with people who are excluded, have fewer opportunities and perspectives or suffer of not being able to find a place in the society, such as migrants and refugees, may stimulate volunteers' understanding regarding their problems and needs.

The volunteering can play a role in promoting their **personal development** as a human: working in a team, building trust, respect, tolerance, increasing self-confidence, empathy, coping with uncertainty, decision making, solving conflicts and managing crises, etc.), **cultural development** (coping with diversity, working with different social groups, learning new traditions, values, styles, organizing cultural events and activities, etc.) and **civic engagement** in order to implement positive social changes.

The ACT volunteers mentioned in evaluation that the whole experience changed them as individuals. Some found out what they want to study, some **learned how to be humble and down to earth** and some were **deeply affected on a very personal level**.

The minor refugees from the shelter were deeply sad when the volunteers had to leave and that goes to the volunteers themselves when they had to leave behind the young people they were supporting during the pro-



ject. For all of them it was very sensitive experience, which changed their lives.

4.6 *Feeling more at ease in relations with others*

During their project, young people found themselves in situations where they have more opportunities to hear new opinions and to consider different viewpoints. They learnt to listen, debate, to ask for support, and express their own opinion.

Some of the ACT volunteers felt changed “for the better” when they return home. They acquired new resources or reinforced their self-confidence for **more open relationships** that will be useful when they return in their social and professional life.



4.7 *To create a personal new network*

The lack of contact with others can have a variety of adverse effects on society and on individuals. Through the project participation, the young people met people from the sending and hosting organisation, other European volunteers, the migrants and the local community, but also other local organisations and stakeholders. The volunteering experience allows them to create a “EU contact book”.

Through contact with the volunteers, people can improve their social and communication skills and, thus open themselves to new possibilities and potentials.

CHAPTER 5

Impact to local community and to migrants



CHAPTER 5



The project has gathered local and European volunteers, interacting with migrants and refugees from different countries: Afghanistan, Syria, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Congo, Cameroun, Guinee, etc. thought different educational, cultural, and sportive activities. The project has allowed volunteers and migrants to share their culture and experiences.



5.1 Support the integration of migrants in the local community

The refugees and migrants, especially when they are living in “closed” communities, find it hard to look outwards from their place and feel accepted in the host communities. The volunteers supported the integration of the migrants in the local community by, for example, implementing common activities between the migrants and the locals, helping the migrants to de-

velop communication and intercultural skills necessary for interacting in their new environment.

An important added-value of volunteering with migrants was to give the migrants the chance to meet young people from other countries, most of them their peers, from other European countries. Indeed, most of the migrants and refugees were just arrived in the city. Some of them have had a little contact with the local community, others are just hosted in the shelters for a while, waiting for their documents in order to move to northern European countries.

Having contact with international volunteers helped them to:

- **Improve their communication skills** in French and English (some of the volunteers organised language lessons for migrants and refugees),
- **Develop friendships** with other young people, besides the educators who work on a daily basis in the shelters,
- **Understand other European cultures** and be aware about cultural diversity and different views,
- **Take part in leisure activities**, organized by volunteers, to invest their free-time in a better way.

For the volunteers, their participation in the project helped them to be more **aware of what the situation of the migrants/foreign** in other European countries based on **real experiences rather than what is shown in the media**.

5.2 Learn to accept the differences and ways of living

Volunteering with migrants represented for the volunteers to interact with a relatively unknown environment. In fact, for the most of the young people taking part in the ACT project was the first time when they interacted with migrants.

By connecting young people and migrants, the project enables young people **to discover the reality of a country in crisis** and to learn to understand and **accept differences in opinions**, beliefs and lifestyles. These young people were immersed in a new culture, in direct contact with refugees and migrants.

Some of the volunteers had formed their opinion on the migration phenomena only on what they heard from the media or from their surroundings. Meeting them makes it possible to change opinions, to overcome the prejudices, often conveyed by the media, to better perceive the reality and be open to other perspectives. It also develops curiosity and a real understanding of the stories, contexts, languages, customs of others. The project allowed the volunteers to understand what it means to be humble and how it feels to look at the world through the eyes of people that are considered “minorities”.

5.3 Relationship between volunteers and migrants

Moreover, volunteering with migrants allows the participants to

- **acquire knowledge on human rights** they may give for granted and understand their importance,
- **understand better the situation of the migrants**, as well as the challenges and difficulties that they are facing,
- **develop intercultural skills**, coming into contact with people from very different cultures, and mentalities than their own

The volunteers interacted at different levels with the migrants and refugees: personally and professionally. For some, the contact was restricted to the professional setting, while others have had further interaction with them by creating links outside the structures.

Despite this difference in the experiences of young people, the evaluations showed that this exchange had a lot to offer to the volunteers.

Indeed, living, working and interacting with migrants help to deconstruct certain stereotypes but also to question our society, our way of life and unequal relations between countries. This helps to awake in some of the volunteers an awareness and interest of current societal issues.



KANE: “The communication between the volunteers and the migrants was hesitant at first, as it was expected, but it has constantly improved.

The local volunteers were supporting the communication. It [the project] allowed the social inclusion, the development of intercultural competences, as well as fostering values such as tolerance and understanding.”



PER ESEMPIO: “In all volunteering missions that took place in Palermo there were always a direct contact between volunteers and migrants both inside and outside the centres. This was facilitated by the activities planned by the hosting organizations.

Generally, these contacts were pretty good: they interacted among each other, they easily communicated thanks to the languages they have in common (French or English), they established good relationships and in most of the cases strong friendships.

In some cases, volunteers faced also some obstacles in the relationship with the migrants. In particular, they

found difficult to involve migrants in leisure activities due to their living conditions and lack of motivation.”



UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS: “The volunteers not only had no problem communicating with the migrants/refugees, but they managed to have an actual impact on them and vice versa.

They managed to make shy children talk, participate and interact. They were able to make children trust them and mothers thank them for helping them out.”



MERSEYSIDE EXPANDING HORIZONS: “the most common words used by young volunteers to describe the experience are: challenging, life changing, interesting, fascinating, different, impactful, emotional, which are words that really explain the impact given by migrants and by the whole experiences to the youth.”

The volunteers had also well communicated and developed trust when interacting with migrants and refugees. Some of them have been invited to dinner by some of the refugees, mixing cultures and traditions. Having the doors open to them by the refugees has been great honour for the volunteers which inspired them to continue their work and to support refugees and migrant’s integration in Europe. In particular, one of the volunteers will return to Greece, getting an employment contract after his participation in the project.

Considering the interviews and testimonials of the volunteers it was possible to understand that the participants felt well and integrated not only in the small community formed by volunteers and hosting organisation’s team, but even more in the local community. Volunteering with migrants has attracted also the local community’s interest and the volunteers had also a great impact on locals.

The language may be an obstacle at the beginning, but the short training in local language (Italian and Greek) and the personal commitment of the volunteers in learning can help in the integration with the community. This is why it is very important that the volunteers, especially those with fewer opportunities, who face learning difficulties, to have **face-to-face language courses** to increase their participation and the exchanges with the communities and therefore to increase the impact of the project.

CHAPTER 6

Shared values that help to cope with the current migration phenomena

Volunteerism is in itself an act that promotes social development and fosters European values, such as human dignity and human rights, democracy and equality. Especially when it comes to volunteering in activities that support vulnerable groups, this can have a major impact on the lives of the people concerned, volunteers or target groups.



6.1 Promotes European values

The project is bringing volunteers face to face with issues such as discrimination, racism and exclusion and allows them to develop skills (communication, social, interpersonal) that will help them to better understand and act upon these situations.

The actions of the volunteers can help to **break barriers** and taboos in the host communities and foster the spirit of equality and the beauty and importance of cultural differences.

Volunteerism promotes democratic values, solidarity and makes people become socially involved. Projects which are bringing young people together from different countries all over Europe, with different backgrounds and experiences bring these people closer and make them feel united. In that sense volunteering project are promoting the idea of European integration. Through this experience the volunteers gain an intercultural understanding and they **feel European citizens**.

In particularly the **respect of human rights** is essential in volunteering with migrants, as human rights



are pivotal topics in this field. The necessity to deal with people, who were deprived from their rights, is a chance for the volunteers to realise and learn about the importance of such rights and to share it in their local community. Therefore, **volunteering and European values are mutually linked**: while volunteering can be an opportunity to share European values, European values are the basis for people to volunteer and be active in the European life.

6.2 Encourages civic engagement

According to the participating organisations, with long-term experience of hosting/sending volunteers in mobility projects, **volunteering encourages civic engagement**. By being involved in voluntary activities that benefits the local community and foster the inclusion and the development of different target groups, volunteers are learning that even small actions can have a major impact and that active participation and civic engagement can lead to change. This is why, many times, the volunteers, after acquiring some volunteering experiences, wish to design and run campaigns to raise the awareness of the public on specific issues.

Then, by living this experience with social workers, rubbing shoulders with migrants every day and being aware of their living conditions, the young volunteers often questioned the tutors about the inequality in the society. The volunteers become better informed of the needs and challenges of the society and acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to act upon these issues.

The volunteers become **more interested in participating in social, civic and working life**, and able to deal with people coming from different social and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, they become more active and sensitive towards the needs of local communities.

6.3 Helping to understand different ways of living

Normally, prejudices and stereotypes are based on preconceived opinions coming from our education,



values, cultural and social background. “Intercultural learning”, in the case of ACT through preparation trainings (informal learning) and volunteering missions (learning by doing/experimental learning), can be relevant tools to understand the complexity of the World, by understanding the others and ourselves a bit better in order to fight prejudices and overcome stereotypes. Moreover, it can be one of the keys to **open the doors into a multicultural society**, new perspectives and points of view.

Intercultural learning may enable young people to better face the challenges of current realities, to be more open minded. It can be understood as empowerment not just to cope personally with current developments, but to deal with the potential of change, which can have a positive and constructive impact in the society.

In this context, intercultural learning is a personal development process with collective implications.

The knowledge of people with very different cultural backgrounds helps young people to be aware on their own and others’ cultures, thus fighting prejudices and stereotypes. Indeed, the volunteering missions of the project ACT gave the participants the opportunity to live in another country for 2 and 6 months, to have direct contact with migrants and refugees from Africa and Middle East but also with volunteers from other European countries. It allowed them to understand better and concretely the migrants’ situation and life conditions, to develop interrelation and intercultural skills, to experience directly the integration process in a new community/society.

On long term, the volunteers returning from the project can encourage other young people from their entourage **to participate in a similar project in their country** or abroad, the volunteers will be **more open minded towards other cultures**, they will be **more adaptive to different work places, flexible and mobile to change cities to find a job** - a first step to fight stagnation.

Learning a new language opens new work and study opportunities abroad or in their countries. Volunteers will increase their employability as the project allows them to develop new skills, including communication - **feeling more comfortable to discuss with foreigners or in front of a (intercultural) group**.

6.4 Understanding the society and current challenges

Through volunteering the young people become more aware for the problems of the modern society. They choose to go against social prejudices and popular opinions and they do whatever they think it needs to be done to change things for a better world.

The ACT volunteers were able to analyse the situa-

tions they were confronted with and realise that poverty, exclusion and racism are common points shared by a large number of countries. The volunteers are more aware of these challenges and they are able to understand them reflecting at their own experience.

That is why **volunteering in contact with refugees is a chance for young people**, and especially for young people with fewer opportunities **to perceive the real meaning of European citizenship**, through activities shared by volunteers from different countries, with common objectives of solidarity and active participation. This project allowed the volunteers to connect with people they would have never met in their country. The principle of **social mix is very important here, so people overcome economic and cultural barriers**.

The ACT project allowed the partnership to take these young people out of their context, **to interest them in social issues** (refugee situation), to make them respect certain rules of life that they understand and integrate (rules of the association, rules of life of the roommate) allows them to change their lives, to compare their previous way of life with their current way of life, **to feel involved and integrated in a particular context** and to reinforce their skills acquired only during such intercultural experiences (inclusion, autonomy, self-confidence...).

6.5 *Fighting against extremism through intercultural learning*

Engaging with different cultures will help the volunteer to break down prejudices and stereotypes regarding migrants. This is more evident in situations where volunteers and target groups have to work together as a team to create things and implement different activities

European projects also help participants to **build a common European identity based on solidarity and unity**. The development of tolerance and the understanding of diversity through intercultural dialogue is very important. Volunteering, and especially when it involves people from different countries, is very beneficial for both the local community/target groups as well as the volunteers.

Using cultural differences as tools (through different activities, workshops, discussions and the everyday life), both volunteers and target groups have the opportunity to broaden their horizons and develop a **feeling of mutual understanding and tolerance**.

In addition, **volunteers can bring back their experience in their community and help developing a constructive dialogue regarding migration issues**. Intercultural learning allows the volunteers to re-evaluate their vision of the world and develop a more complete perspective on certain topics.

CHAPTER 7

ACT project lessons and perspectives



7.1 Thematic volunteering as good example for The European Solidarity Corps and other civic programs in the EU

Volunteering is an integral part of the ACT project both in activities and in philosophy.

Thematic volunteering allows the young people to volunteer in projects that they are really interested in for personal and professional reasons, for which they believe they have a lot to offer. Specific volunteering allows the volunteers to develop skills and gain experience in a specific field that they can valorise in their CV.

Specific volunteering also gives the possibility to:

- **Better identify the candidates** who are really interested in the project.
- **Make a specific preparation** of the volunteers where the volunteers can share common values and good practices,
- **Acquire knowledge** and skills in a specific sector. This may make volunteers more competitive in the labour market,
- **Understand volunteers' attitudes and interests** related to a specific field.

Thematic volunteering is recommended because the volunteers are more prepared and they know in advance with what they will do. When the volunteering is not thematic there is a risk that the volunteers will have a false understanding of what they will do and their expectations will not be met.

Thematic volunteering is strongly relevant because it allows young participants to commit and enhance their knowledge about a specific topic.

Moreover, focusing on a specific theme can help the volunteers to define a professional orientation in a field that maybe they were not aware of or they were not having the requested skills to integrate.

7.2 Competences+: a model of support for young with fewer opportunities

ADICE implements and recommends a structured educational support called Competences + to identify the

participant's profile and thus guide them to a suitable mobility programme more effectively. Preparation for a mobility project is thus organised in 5 modules and extends with a 6-month follow-up.

ADICE's objective is to make mobility a way to improve the participants' employability. ADICE considers mobility to be an opportunity to learn and change which allows them to broaden their values and resources and acquire useful skills which can be applied in both personal and professional projects.

Module 1

Designing the Project and Preparing the Mobility Passport: This module, which takes place in an individual meeting between a project manager and participant, aims to identify the challenge of mobility within the participant's individual and professional pathway. For this purpose, they have online access to the mobility passport, where they have to fill in cards related to their profile and project.



Module 2

Confirmation of the Mobility Project: This module, which is both individual and collective, is a crucial point as the participant signs the mobility agreements with ADICE. The participant receives a “mobility portfolio”, continuing the mobility passport cards.

Module 3

Preparation module. Preparation module. The future volunteer or trainee who has participated in training initially set up by ADICE, Module 3, with all the other participants. The objectives of this training module are to ensure safety in the location and to put their mobility project in intercultural contexts.

Module 4

Project finalisation. This module, more administrative, should allow the participant to understand the reality of their project as concretely as possible, by participating in the implementation of their project and to the means of its success. The contracts are signed and the project leader explains the final logistical details as well as monitoring methods during the project.

Module 5

Capitalising on the project: On his or her return, the volunteer or trainee receives group or individual evaluation time, feedback and sharing of experiences. The objectives are to encourage the participant’s involvement in a self-evaluation process and to allow them to be a contributor throughout the rest of their pathway.

ADICE HAS DEVELOPED 3 SPECIFIC PLATFORM FOR MANAGE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY PROJECT

Platform: mobilitycompetences.com

Theme: managing a mobility project. It has been designed for organizations and project managers working with young people; its purpose is to provide the knowledge and skills needed to manage a mobility project, from the beginning to the participant’s return.

It provides educational tools, tips and advice and a self-assessment that should help you prepare your own tools and methods, especially for working with young people with fewer opportunities

Platform: yourcompetences.com

Theme: value of skills. The aims of mobility experience capitalisation platform is to capitalise on formal and non-formal skills as well as personal and professional skills acquired during a mobility experience with the goal of strengthening each person’s employability.

On the website, there are various capitalisation tools for participants and project managers such as an online booklet of skills to evaluate, verbalise and contextualise skills, tools to value the project at every stage (before, during and after), a glossary of skills which could easily be included in a CV or cover letter.

Platform: mentorcompetences.fr

Theme: welcoming volunteers. The website allows them to discover good practices for welcoming volunteers before, during and after their mobility project. Videos summarise and illustrate practices and methods to use to ensure quality volunteer projects. Visitors can also download documents and additional tools and fill out descriptions of the volunteer projects they offer online, by editing a PDF which they can send directly to their partners.



7.3 Good conditions for implementing a successful thematic volunteering project

The idea relying behind this project was also to identify the good conditions for a successful volunteering project and to set up good practice sharing among organisations dealing with thematic volunteering projects and young people with fewer opportunities.

Collective mobility experiences can be a first step for less autonomous participants and the volunteers can identify themselves with a project sharing common values, expectations and sometimes needs. Nevertheless, the mission and the mentoring must be adapted to the needs and profiles of each participant. Although sent in a group, each volunteer benefits from individual preparation and mentoring:

An individual and a group approach for a successful project

- There must be clearly defined and transparent criteria for the selection of participants,
- The volunteering must be constructed in the framework of a personal and professional project,
- Volunteering must be constructed according to the needs and profiles of the participants,
- The objectives of the stay have to be clearly defined and written down by the sending organisation and the participant, particularly the aptitudes to be developed and the competencies to be acquired,

- The participant has to be guided by the mentor to evaluate their pathway and to build the project,
- The participant needs to receive help to build their CV and cover letter,
- The participant must be active in the construction of their mobility project: it must find information on the host country cultures and attitudes and on the host organisation by themselves.

A dynamic partnership

- Quick communication must ensure the success of the mission: feedbacks on the candidacy of a participant has to be made within a week,
- There must be good coordination between the four actors of a volunteering: the sending organisation, the hosting organisation and the participant,
- The participant must be an actor of his or her project: the sending structure has to ensure the engagement of the participant not to make him too passive in the process,
- Strong communication must be established between all actors through regular Skype and phone meetings,
- The project manager must ensure that the missions of the participant during his or her stay abroad match his or her needs,
- Follow-up during the stay will be ensured by the 4 actors of a mobility project.

Organise specific trainings for specific volunteering project

- To understand the global context of the topic based on researches,
- EU policies and international actors,
- The role of NGOs and other stakeholders working in that particular field.

A good follow-up and evaluation

- A person in the sending, the coordinating and the hosting organisation must be appointed as the mentor and supervisor of the mobile learner, available 24/24,
- The objectives of volunteering must be formalized and validated by all the actors,
- Objectives have to be reminded just before departure in order to guide the project,
- Monthly follow-up between the sending organisation and the participant must be established through a liaison form with questions on the integration of the participants, his or her objectives at this stage, professional competencies acquired,
- An evaluation meeting of evaluation between the sending organisation and the participant has to be organized once returned to see how the objectives set have been reached,
- The evaluation meeting can be individual or collective to allow participants to share their experience

and put words on which competencies they have acquired,

- The participant must be guided after their mobility experience towards employment/return to training/ entrepreneurship.

During the ACT training, the volunteers were also informed about potential organisations working with refugees and migrants in their own countries, that they could contact on their return.

Anticipating difficulties

- Participants must be prepared to worst-case scenario during their pre-departure training,
- The participant must be provided with template to look for information and the culture of the host country,
- Testimonies of former participants must be set up during the pre-departure training to help participants anticipate difficulties. This can also be through a mentoring system between former and new participants,
- A checklist of things to do in anticipation of the mobility must be given to the participants,
- A tutor must be appointed in the sending and hosting organisations,
- Support at all-time must be provided in case of a problem: new accommodation, new internship, etc.,
- Language training must be provided,
- The participant must receive logistical and accommodation support,
- Transport from the airport to the host structure or accommodation must be explained to participants,
- The need for mentoring and preparation before departure, the partnership strongly underlines the need to the sending organisations, especially for the deployment of young people with fewer opportunities.

Capitalization of the experience

- Supporting the participants to identify the competences acquired during the project,
- Supporting the participants to write an updated CV and cover letter,
- Providing the participants with a reference letter,
- Giving to the participant a certificate attesting he/she volunteered with your organisation,
- Encouraging the participants to write about his/her experience, to keep a blog and to use social networks
- Encouraging the participants to engage in different solidarity activities in home country,
- Allow the volunteers to keep in contact through a specific page of the project: Forum or Facebook in order to share good practices throughout project implementation, support each other in the preparation for departure, increase their network.

CHAPTER 8

Tools to increase the visibility of a project

In order to increase the visibility of a project and to share its results and impact at local, national and European level, it is recommended to use leaflets, newsletters, webpage, Facebook page dedicated to project, video.

In the case of ACT project, sharing existing good practices related to sending and hosting volunteers provided innovative solutions to social isolation of young people from disadvantaged areas, which can be presented to the political decision makers in the participating countries and local communities.

Each partner of ACT has also organised different events during the project involving volunteers, locals and migrants.

ADICE has organised a final conference of the ACT project where more than 30 different nationalities have participated. During the event the partners have presented the results of the project and volunteers have testified on their volunteering experience.

8.1 Videos as support for promotion

During the project, 3 promotional videos were created. ACT videos follow the volunteers from their preparation before the departure, through the experience abroad till the end of the project. The videos are very useful to show the effects and impact of the experience. The volunteers share their own stories which makes it more interesting and touching.

Thanks to the promotional videos, it is expected to raise awareness. Videos and pictures make the whole project more personal. When watching the video people may feel more connected towards a cause or a project. **Videos are the best way to show** that something that is happening in one area or community can motivate other people in other community or country. Finally, it allows for easy understanding of the activities that the youngsters have carried out abroad and their contribution. A video nowadays has more impact on local community, stakeholders, decision makers, and youngsters than other dissemination tools. Through



the power of images, it is possible to concretely show the different realities, what the volunteers do and how they feel about their volunteering projects.

Indeed, the video, through the volunteers' testimonials, stimulates other young people to undertake an experience abroad, promotes the active citizenship and engagement, as well as the sense of belonging to the European Union and its values.

Project partners believe that visual dissemination, as long as it is created in an attractive way, can be the most effective way to get the attention of different kinds of audience and have an impact on a variety of people. A short video can catch the eye of the audience through images while providing clear and specific information about a project/action/activity.

8.2 Website and Facebook dedicated to project

ADICE and the partners have created a dedicated website and Facebook page for the project with the aim of promoting ACT, but also to involve the volunteers to communicate on their own project.

The website <https://youthinmovement.com> gather information on:

- The project and its philosophy,
- The methodology,
- The specific ACT training developed during the project,
- Testimonials of the volunteers,
- Videos and pictures,

The specific Facebook pages was created for the project ACT Youth in Movement - Erasmus+. The Facebook page is tracking pictures and information on the pre-departure training and ACT training, as well as events implemented by the hosting organisations in Italy and Greece. The Facebook page is user-friendly. It also allows the partnership to see the number of viewers and followers of the posts.

8.3 ACT creates a common volunteer identity

The volunteers participated in intercultural groups gathering volunteers from France, Belgium, United Kingdom and of each hosting country. The difference with other individual volunteering project was that the **volunteers felt completely integrated** and associated them with the ACT project, as "ACT volunteers". Arriving in the project at the same time, helped them to create a group, starting from the same basis. This

helped the volunteers with social difficulties because they learnt simultaneously with others and did not feel excluded. It gave the target group a better sense of community and belonging.

From different countries and with different life experience, they were sharing similar points and the same aim: **to succeed in their mobility project and fight for the same goal - supporting migrants from Italy and Greece.**

Some of the volunteers have experience in volunteering with migrants at the local level, which is an important part when dealing with refugees in another country. Although they already had experience before, they really felt part of the ACT project as they were working together within a group sharing ideas and resources, success and challenges. In this case, the volunteers are clearly identified for the ACT project.

Even, if others have not had any experience before engaging as an ACT volunteer, the experience has led them to an increased awareness about the topic and to a willingness to participate in civic engagement and personal commitment. Regardless of their lack of experience, they succeeded to integrate well in the project with the support of the other volunteers and the daily work of the ACT mentors.

In both cases, the consequences are positive, young people finishing their volunteering experience with an additional knowledge and more competencies, which will be useful not only in further volunteering but also in their future employment.



CONCLUSION

The current situation for young people in Europe, facing social exclusion, at risk of marginalisation, facing socio-economic difficulties, cultural barriers and discriminates due to their origins, religion or skin colour, increases the need to deliver innovative and efficient tools to address the complex issues they face to access the labour market.

The ACT project allowed the volunteers to be engaged in a cause, promoting participation and civic behaviours, while developing professional and personal skills.

The project has supported youth empowerment and European values such as democracy, peace, solidarity, cultural diversity, citizenship and was developed as an innovative solution to social isolation of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

ACT project allowed 46 young people from France, Belgium, United Kingdom, and 9 young people from Greece and Italy to participate in volunteering projects supporting migrants and refugees.

Considering ACT positive's results, the partnership recommends thematic volunteering as it allows young participants to engage and enhance their knowledge about a specific topic, increasing their expertise in a specific field. It leads to an improvement of youngsters', suffering from social exclusion and at risk of professional stagnation, capacities and competencies related to the theme and also to the general management and everyday life, such as the soft skills.

The ACT project gives a good and successful example of how young people can become active citizens by volunteering in a thematic volunteering project. The ACT project model gets people involved in concrete projects and to carry out activities in an international context.





THE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT ALLOWED VOLUNTEERS TO:

- better understand the situation of the migrants,
- interest them in social issues,
- develop a feeling of mutual understanding and tolerance,
- avoid develop extremism ideas,
- develop personal, profession and inter-cultural skills,
- build autonomous life project, increasing their employability,
- promotes integration and civic engagement,
- perceive the real meaning of the European citizenship.

The ACT project can be considered as a good practice for the new programme: European Solidarity Corps, sharing an efficient methodology of preparing, following and evaluating the volunteers and showing successful results



THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Project coordinator: ADICE - Terje Kølameets, Elena Popescu

Editor: Merseyside Expanding Horizons - Nicola Daley, Anna Bellan

Partners

- **Dynamo International** - Antoine Louyet, Julien Ribaudou
- **KANE** - Fotini Arapi, Filaretos Vourkos
- **Per Esemplio** - Sara Paolazzo, Claudio Arestivo
- **USB** - Aristodimos Paraschou

<https://www.facebook.com/ACTYouthinMovement/>



42, rue Charles Quint
59100 Roubaix FRANCE
T. (+33) 03 20 11 22 68



Erasmus+

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PARTNERS

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