



Working with e-volunteers

Practical instructions about effective organization of work with e-volunteers.

This publication has been prepared by usage of different sources during implementation of the “E-volunteering as a tool for building common future” project co-financed within the framework of Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund from the grants of MEN.

Members of the team working on the document:

Adolfo del Cacho Egea, Aleksandra Mamcarz, Anna Gawrońska, Anna Lewczyńska, Jurij Balcevič, Karolis Poškus, Klaudia Kozak, Krzysztof Sierański, Marius Butkus, Monika Melgieš, Rimgailė Savickaitė, Viktoras Kirila, Viktorija Kirilovaitė

Developing and editing: Monika Drąg

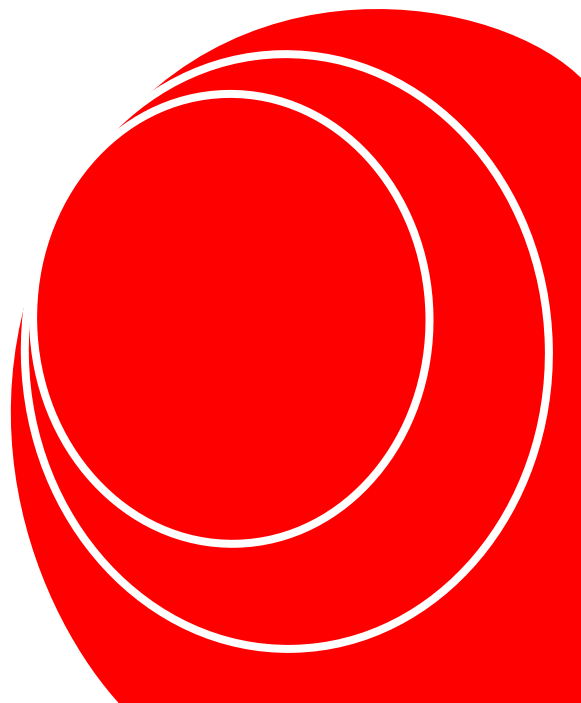




Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	3
What is e-volunteering?	3
Advantages of work with e-volunteers.	5
How your organization should prepare for working with e-volunteers?	8
CHAPTER 1 E-VOLUNTEERS' RECRUITMENT PROCESS	11
How to plan the involvement of online volunteers?	11
How to write announcement about looking for e-volunteers?	13
How to publish the job description?	15
E-volunteer applications	17
Selection of candidates	20
CHAPTER 2 FIRST STEPS WITH E-VOLUNTEER	22
First contact	22
Descriptions of tasks	27
Signing legal documents	30
Starting work	31
CHAPTER 3 Working with e-volunteers	32
Motivating	32
Supervision	34
Feedback	36
Contacting	38
Supporting	39
Tips which can help you to manage your virtual team	41
Safety issues	43
CHAPTER 4 PROJECT HAS JUST ENDED – WHAT TO DO NEXT?	46
Thank E-volunteers	46
Evaluation of work	49
Staying in contact after the project	50
SUMMARY	51



INTRODUCTION

What is e-volunteering?

E-volunteering is a volunteer work conducted via the Internet. It is often called also virtual volunteering, cyber volunteering, digital volunteering, online volunteering, but it always refers to work where an online system (accessed through a computer, a mobile device, etc.) plays a key role in recruitment, facilitating access to tasks, and conducting that tasks¹.



E-volunteering, as the name suggests, has a lot to do with the traditional volunteering. To become a virtual volunteer, one needs the same motivation which is helpful in the real life: a want to involve oneself in social matters. Volunteering on the Web, similarly to “the real one” bases on altruism, the want of helping other people, improvement of the surrounding space and readiness to involve our time and skills selflessly. Nonetheless, e-volunteering brings new quality due to the fact of being virtual. Using the Internet in volunteering brings new perspectives: it allows to defeat constraints of time and space, opens new areas and ways of cooperation and adds a global dimension to the work².

¹ <http://ict4empl.wikispaces.com/Definitions+of+Internet-mediated+Volunteering?responseToken=b4057d1c1a6f2cd6af1f6379e5f9e4ce>
² <http://www.old.e-wolontariat.pl/en/e-volunteering-whats-that/definition/item/362-what-is-e-volunteering>



Advantages of work with e-volunteers.



Online technologies provide an excellent way to augment an organization's volunteer recruitment methods, such as registering with a local volunteer center or sending announcements to civic groups. The Internet can also provide new ways to involve e-volunteers, and to involve e-volunteers who may not be able to participate in your traditional opportunities. However, online methods will not replace traditional volunteer recruitment methods, nor traditional ways of involving volunteers. There are many great reasons to recruit and involve volunteers via online technologies³

Flexible schedule

Many people want to contribute to the mission of the organization but are unable to venture overseas due to work and family commitments. Some have very limited schedules and may not be able to volunteer in person as they do not have multiple days or consecutive, multiple hours to give. As e-volunteering can be performed anytime, anywhere, it can be undertaken by a wider range of individuals wanting to help out in some way⁴.

Blended service

Some people may be able to spend a couple of months overseas but cannot commit to longer periods of time. With blended volunteer service options, volunteers can spend part of their time overseas working with a program partner followed by a pre-established amount of

³ <http://www.serviceleader.org/virtual/vvbenefits>

⁴ <http://www.cusointernational.org/docs/default-source/publications/Training-Resources/e-volunteering-toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



time post-placement working from a distance⁵. This gives the possibility of implementing even long-term projects with the same people as volunteers. This will guaranty stability of projects.

Wide range of tasks

Through e-volunteering, program partners will benefit from a wider range of expertise generated from being able to tap into a larger e-volunteer base. Online volunteers may have better computer equipment and software than the organization they are assisting Online volunteers may have sophisticated software or programming skills your organization cannot afford to purchase, and may be willing to use these resources on your behalf.

Creative projects

Through the use of technology there are numerous ways that e-volunteers can contribute their expertise to a project. Contributions can be peer to peer or e-mentoring-based, or task-based. E-volunteers are encouraged to be creative in their approach in supporting their program partner⁶. Having flexible hours of work e-volunteers can work in the most suitable time and environment. This always results in more creative solutions.

Different people

E-Volunteering provides an opportunity to engage a greater and more diverse population who are not able to commit to an overseas placement. Alumni, community selectors, diaspora partners, youth, corporate and institutional engagement, work with partners where security situations prohibit the placement of volunteers, and persons with disabilities are some of the population areas that may be more willing to e-volunteer.⁷

⁵ <http://www.cusointernational.org/docs/default-source/publications/Training-Resources/e-volunteering-toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

⁶ <http://www.cusointernational.org/docs/default-source/publications/Training-Resources/e-volunteering-toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

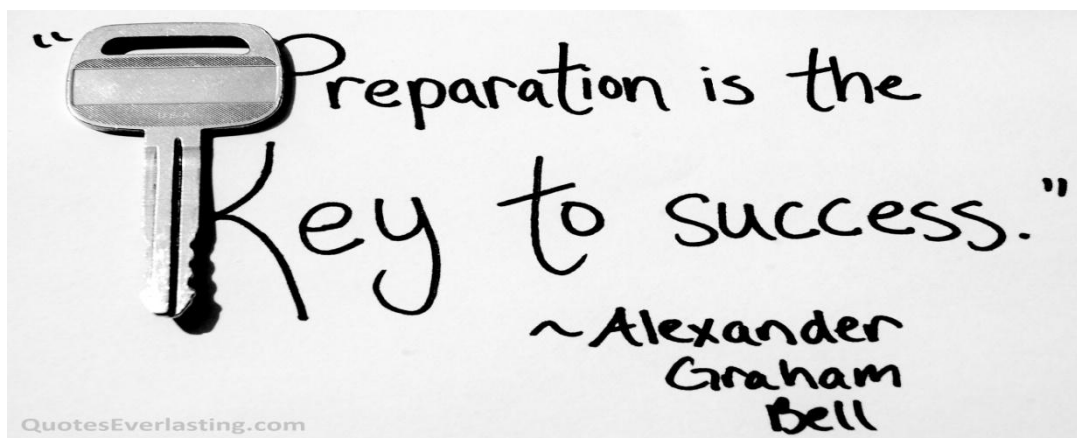
⁷ <http://www.cusointernational.org/docs/default-source/publications/Training-Resources/e-volunteering-toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



Easy communication

Some people prefer to communicate via online means. Dashing off an e-mail or filling out an online sign-up sheet is quicker and, for some people, preferable to calling an organization. E-mail provides a quick and easy way to communicate with current e-volunteers. E-volunteers can network with each other via the Internet. E-volunteer managers can use online discussion groups (either via e-mail or via a live chat to allow volunteers who provide onsite, face-to-face service to interact with each other online -asking each other questions, offering advice, etc. And you have a written record of all interactions, which can be helpful in program reports, grant proposals, etc. (with permission from participants, of course).

How your organization should prepare for working with e-volunteers?



Before you start to work with e-volunteers, you need to consider certain, important issues:

Decision

Decide if the this kind of work will fit into the profile of your organization.

You would need to decide if such a program based on work of online volunteers will fit within the organization's mission; how will this program be an extension of the goals of your organization? You will need to be able to answer this question before beginning any steps to set up such a virtual volunteering program at your organization.

Experience

Assess the ability of your staff to take care of e-volunteers.

You would need to think about the knowledge, skills and experiences of your staff in the field of working with e-volunteers. Do your colleagues have experience facilitating groups, managing a mentoring or tutoring program, or other face-to-face volunteer program? Again, you will need to have this offline expertise in-house before beginning any steps to set up a direct contact virtual volunteering program.



Ability

Assess the ability of your staff to work with e-volunteers.

You need to decide if you have proper equipment needed during work with e-volunteers. You would also need to check if people who will work with e-volunteers have necessary knowledge about technologies which they will use. If your staff finds reading and responding to e-mail "bothersome", and even avoid using it, then managing an online mentoring is not going to be right for your organization at this time.

Groundwork

Set the Groundwork.

Once you've determined that your organization is ready for virtual volunteering, it's time to build the internal groundwork: becoming experienced in online communications, getting staff buy-in and participation, developing an implementation plan, training staff and e-volunteers, etc.⁸⁸

Plan

Plan the whole work.

When all above steps are fulfilled, and your organization is ready to start cooperation with e-volunteer, one of the most important thing that you need to remember about id proper planning! You should decide what activities and responsibilities you will give to e-volunteers, and what results do you expect. You need to prepare detailed description and schedule of work of e-volunteer. Proper work plan will make your further job much easier.

⁸⁸ <http://www.coyotecom.com/vv/direct/first.shtml>





CHAPTER 1

E-VOLUNTEERS' RECRUITMENT PROCESS



How to plan the involvement of online volunteers?

Clerly define tasks

An important step is to gain clarity on how e-volunteers can support your organization. Make sure to break down your needs into well-defined tasks. An assignment focusing on one distinct task will increase your chances of finding qualified e-volunteers.

Start small

Start with just one or two short-term, simple assignments to get used to working with online volunteers. When you feel comfortable with the process of managing them, you can expand to more, longer-term and complex assignments.

Prepare yourself

E-volunteers apply at a time when their personal and work schedule allows for their e-volunteering activities. They are usually ready to start their collaboration with your organization immediately. You should be aware of that and prepare yourself to start work with them as soon as they are ready, or at least to answer them immediately.



Set up a schedule

A rough schedule outlined in the description of the project that you are planning will help interested online volunteers decide whether they can commit to the task. It will also help you during later stages of work.

Ensure sustainability

To enable your organization to continue benefiting from your e-volunteers' knowledge well into the future, consider each assignment as a learning opportunity. Ask e-volunteers to document the methods they use and the actions they undertake to complete an assignment and ask them to teach you how to do it yourself⁹. Remember also about planning steps which need to be done after your project is over, so that to stay in touch with people that you worked.

⁹ https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/org/resources/opportunity_planning.html



How to write announcement about looking for e-volunteers?

Well written description shows that your organization is professional and well organized. Also, it is a good way for you to think even more clearly how many e-volunteers you need and what specific tasks are you going to give them.

The following guidelines will help your organization attract e-volunteers with the right profile and interest to support your organization's development initiatives:

Title

Choose a title that clearly mentions the task you wish the e-volunteer to perform and, where possible, the development topic. For translations, be sure to include the required languages in the title. For example: "Translate HIV/AIDS brochure from English into Kiswahili". This will enable e-volunteers to instantly discern whether they are interested in finding out more about this task.

Task description

Make your task description clear, detailed and concrete. E-volunteers will be in a better position to judge whether or not they have the required profile **before** they apply. This will help ensure that they complete the task to which they commit themselves.

Task description

Find out how much time can e-volunteers give per day/week/month on voluntary work via the Internet. Also, specify deadlines and assignment duration.

Background information

Provide details on the project to which the e-volunteer will be contributing and describe how their contribution will integrate with your organization's objectives. This will allow them to decide whether or not they are interested in supporting your organization in a particular task.



Objective

Clarify how your organization will use e-volunteers' contributions and what you aim to achieve. If you tell them how their support will impact on your organization's development initiatives or benefit the communities you serve, you will receive more applications from qualified e-volunteers. Clear objective will also help you to choose proper people to cooperate with.

Requirements

Provide details on the skills, knowledge or experience your organization's ideal e-volunteers should have in order to perform the task. This will enable them to submit more targeted applications, making it easier for you to select those with a suitable profile.

Benefits

Make sure they know what kind of experience they are going to gain. Give information about all the training which are going to be provided. Let them know if e-volunteers will work with some experts. This will help you to encourage them to join to your project team.

How to publish the job description?

The Internet



As you are going to work with e-volunteers, the best place to put your offer is the Internet. If some people want to work from home, it is nearly 100% sure that they will use this source to look for offers of cooperation. Internet gives you many possible places, where you can put your offer, and if you put your announcement in proper place you have great chances that you will find proper people.

There are many ways to publish the job description of a e-volunteering program. There are many websites dedicated to e-volunteering and specialized in connecting e-volunteers with organizations. You may add your offer at one of such pages. This is free option – what is a big advantage if you don't have many resources that you can dedicate to activities related with looking for e-volunteers.

Other option for you is registering on the forums of groups dedicated to e-volunteering. People who are active there are mostly experienced in this kind of activity so they may be interested in your offer or give you some tips about places where you can add your offer.

You can also add your offer to newsletter prepared by your organization and send it to people who may know other people interested in e-volunteering.

You may also send a message to your friends, business partners, co-workers etc asking them if they know anyone interested in the project that you are preparing. You can also ask them to spread your offer around. The big advantage of this kind of looking for e-volunteers is that you can get recommendations from your friends about given person who wants to work with you, and personal recommendations are far much better than any CV.



Physical methods

More traditional ways of advertise your program are newspaper, radio and TV ads, although they are in disuse. Posters, however, are a relatively cheaper and still powerful alternative, collocated in strategic places depending on what kind of people you are looking for. This places can be high schools and universities (think of their campus career centers) and also churches, youth centres, libraries and etc.

Face to face

However, the main way people get involved in e-volunteering activities is personal contact with current e-volunteers, the old word of mouth. Asking your current volunteers to spread the word in other organizations or to their friends is a powerful way of enlarging your workforce¹⁰.



¹⁰ <https://hr.ucr.edu/recruitment/guidelines/process.html#step3>

E-volunteer applications

Why is it important

Designing a simple form for applicants will help make sure the recruitment of e-volunteers is taking account of equal opportunities and diversity policy. Where appropriate ensure different languages or inclusive images are used. You also need to be conscious about accessibility for people with disabilities.

Preparation of application is also important from the point of view of administrative issues related with work with e-volunteers. Having the applications you can prepare database of people who answered to your job offer. So, next time instead of giving announcement you can use this database.

It is also worth to do the selection process before you start to work with e-volunteers. It looks more serious that starting cooperation without any selection. E-volunteers will appreciate more the job to which they need to fulfill some tasks.



Application

The application form will give you the first information about people who want to work with you as an e-volunteers. That is why you need to remember that you should request only for information which are important for you. For example if you are looking for someone to translate documents, then you don't have to ask about experience in the field of development of web-pages etc.



Preparing the application questionnaire you should remember about asking for at least the following information:

1. Personal data, contacts
2. Experience with similar tasks or issues
3. Motivation for joining your project
4. Personal interests
5. Specific questions related to the task/your organization (optional)

You can also ask potential e-volunteer to attach some documents confirming his/her experience:

1. CV
2. Motivation letter
3. Recommendations from previous companies

This is just example of general requirements. Remember that depending on the project the required information and skills will vary¹¹.

¹¹<http://hiring.monster.ie/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/screening-job-candidates/what-is-the-process-of-making-a-job-offer-ie.aspx>



Tools for creating an application/questionnaire

There are several ways of composing an application form. Some of the most comfortable and easy ones are¹²:

Tool	Strenght	Price
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google form • Wufo • Jotform • iformbuilder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free forms • Robust reports • Fast to prepare • Mobile form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Free for 3 forms & 100 entries • Unlimited forms & 100 entries • 10 forms & 100 entries free

¹² <https://zapier.com/learn/ultimate-guide-to-forms-and-surveys/best-online-form-builder-software/>

Selection of candidates



You will most likely get more applications than you need. Therefore, a further filter must be applied in order to reduce the number of candidates and choose only those who are the fittest for the job and especially those who are the most motivated.

The recruitment process can be either simple and direct or take multiple stages depending on your project's requirements. Here's a sample multi-stage recruitment model:

- **Stage I:** Applying online through a form, sending a resume and/or motivational letter. The online application form can also test applicants' skills related to the project tasks (e.g., how well they know spreadsheets).
- **Stage II:** Troubleshooting a problem related to the project or a case study (e.g., replying to a fictional letter from a person requesting help in a social help program).
- **Stage III:** Online interview¹³.



Now it is the time to interview the candidates and select them. The first step is contact those who best fit the necessities of the project. This can be made via email, and then arrange, if possible, a phone or video call to make an interview. Remember to give them some time between your information about interview and organization of the meeting. They need to prepare themselves. The interview should not be too formal, for it will not be a job interview.



Make sure the e-volunteer role is understood and give time for the applicant to raise any questions or concerns. Also, you need explain any requirements that need to be met before appointment and the support that will be available¹⁴.

Take as much time as you need. This interview is very important both for you and for people you are talking with. You have the first chance to know them, and they have chance to get more details about job that they want to do.

¹³ <http://e-volunteering.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/evolunteering-handbook.pdf>

¹⁴ https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/recruiting/copy_of_process



Feedback

Once the final selection had been done, you need to communicate the candidates the results. Those who have been chosen, should be contacted via video call, if possible, (even if it is time consuming) and if not, via email. You have also got to break the bad news to the unsuccessful candidates.



Remember!
Give the feedback also to those
who were not selected!

If you genuinely believe there may be an opportunity in the future for some of the candidates to re-apply for a role with your company, ask if they will allow you to retain their details. It could save you a lot of time and effort in the future, or if you are newly hired employee does not perform as well as expected.

CHAPTER 2

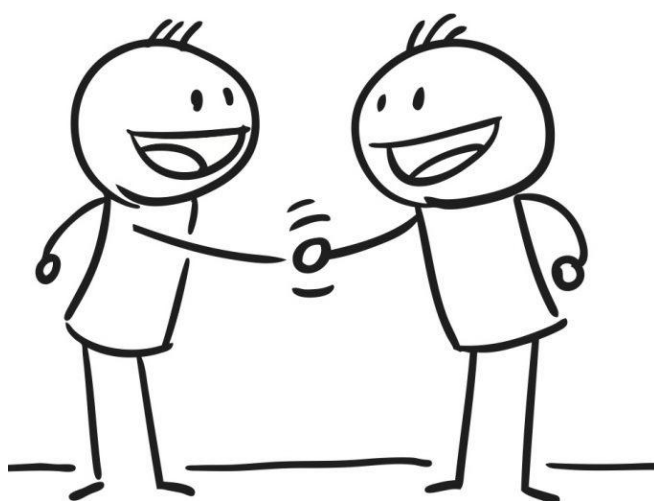
FIRST STEPS WITH E-VOLUNTEER

First contact

After selecting e-volunteers who will join your team, you need to get to know them a little better.

Why is it important

You will probably work with e-volunteer for a given period of time. You would give him/her tasks important for you and work which you do. So it is crucial for you to know them as good as you can. Knowing your e-volunteers will give you many benefits and will help you to organize your work and cooperation in most efficient way.



Getting to know

There are few ways to know if e-volunteer will fit you:

Read his/her profile in social media and/or see feedbacks

Interview him/her in a smart way

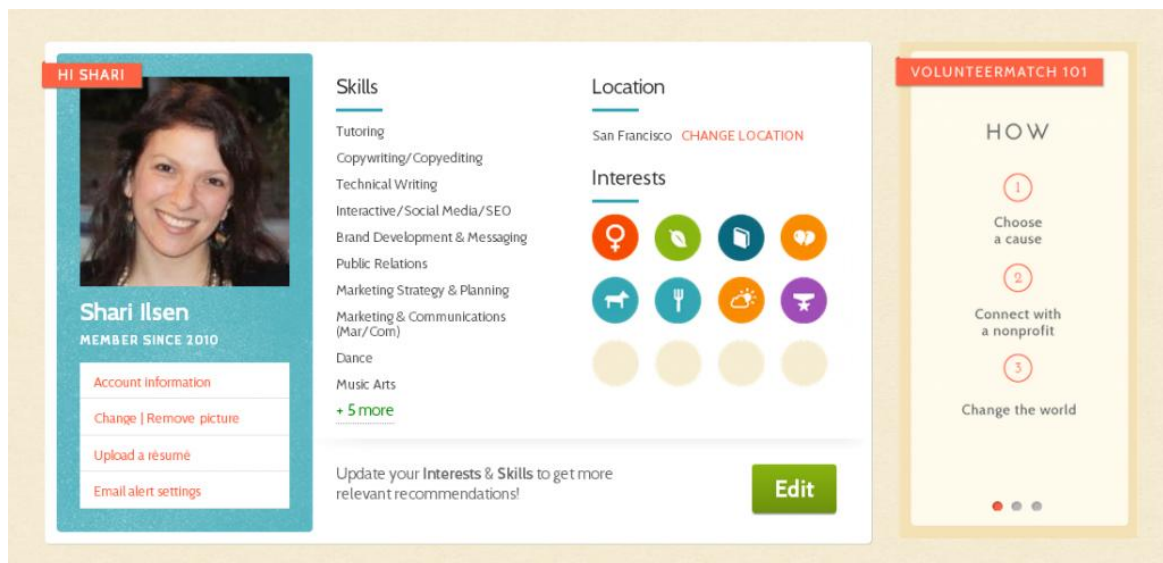
Profile and feedbacks could give needed information and make first impression about the person.

But this is not the way you could always find out if the person's skills will suit your needs. One of the quickest ways to pre-qualify e-volunteers is through a simple online survey asking

them about their skills, experiences, goals, and, if necessary, the hours per week they can commit. [Google Forms](#) is a great (and free!) way to collect this information.

Most of these information you will get during the recruitment process, but at this stage you may ask for more detailed information.

Source of the above picture: <http://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2013/06/11/its-a-brave-new-volunteering-world-now-with-personal-profiles/>



Filling forms is a good idea, however they have done that during the recruitment process so it may look unprofessional if you ask them once more to fill in some forms.

That is why a good interview is crucial. It could give you more concrete view about potential e-volunteer. An interview with a potential e-volunteer is a critical step in the total e-volunteer involvement programme.



Some tips for a good interview

Be prepared

Have the completed e-volunteer application, an e-volunteer interview form/schedule and various e-volunteer job descriptions. Be prepared to respond to questions and have any supportive information close at hand.

Be clear

During the interview, be clear regarding your expectation for the e-volunteer position. Smile and make the potential e-volunteer feel comfortable. Review the application to be sure you and the e-volunteer are clear regarding the information contained in each section. Discuss personal and training needs. Explain, step by step, the role the e-volunteer plays, including dates, deadlines and other appropriate details regarding the position. It is generally advisable to follow the same rules and guidelines that apply to paid employment interviews when interviewing e-volunteers. In some settings, managers of e-volunteers may need to be aware of and follow non-discrimination policies in the interviewing and selection of volunteers¹⁵.

¹⁵ https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/org/resources/online_collaboration_tips.html



Take notes

After the interview, make notes and place them in the potential e-volunteer's file. This helps to document information as it is gathered. If you are required to obtain references and /or check backgrounds for all e-volunteers or certain categories of e-volunteers be sure to explain the policy to the applicant, so that he/she knows what do you need these information for. Having such a notes, you can prepare proper files for each e-volunteer. Such a database will make it easier for you to manage their work.

All e-volunteers should go through the same application, background check and interview process. Gathering background information requires additional time¹⁶.

Ask questions

You may wish to ask them additional questions and test their skills. Some tests are welcome. For instance for a translation assignment, you could ask candidates to translate a short paragraph before deciding whether or not to involve them in your project. In this case you can find out how quickly and accurately (or punctually) a person can complete the task given.

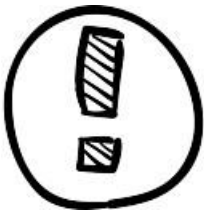
¹⁶ https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/org/resources/online_collaboration_tips.html



Pay attention

Also important is to find out if a person is motivated.

1. Observe any signs of disappointment or discontent by the potential e-volunteer. Such signs may provide a clue to problems or indicate that the interview is covering topics that seem embarrassing or uncomfortable.
2. Provide the prospective e-volunteer with sample opportunity to tell their story. Let them speak freely without interruptions.
3. Sometimes potential e-volunteers are referred by a social worker, doctor or therapist, who believes e-volunteer work would be a good therapy for a client. Ask the interviewee if you can contact the referring partner for further information so that you can make the best possible placement.
4. If you are uneasy following an interview or if reference or background information is incomplete or causes you concern, a good risk management procedure is to gather more information and input from others before accepting the e-volunteer. If you are working with children or vulnerable populations (aged, disabled, etc.) you are required to ensure the safety of your client with thorough and extensive screening of potential e-volunteers¹⁷.



You need to remember that with all of it's pros has its specifics, based on communication, so you should have this in mind.

¹⁷ https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/org/resources/online_collaboration_tips.html

Descriptions of tasks

Why is it important?

The e-volunteer will work on your project. You are the person who knows the project the best. People who work with you need clear instructions telling them what to do. The instructions given by you will be the only instructions which they have. So you are the person, who needs to make sure that instructions will be as clear as possible. This is one of the most important things, sometimes deciding if your project is succeed. The more clear instructions your co-workers have, the more effective they can work.

The ground rule for effective online communication is sending messages that are concise and to the point. Online communication carries the risk of misinterpreting what the other person may have written down. So the tasks should be given in written form!

It is also important to be aware of cultural differences and language constraints. Personalizing your messages, expressing interest in your online volunteers and sharing information about yourself will help you overcome the anonymity of the Internet.¹⁸



**Remember! Tasks should be as clear
and understandable as possible.**

And it's great if after receiving a task e-volunteer will retell it to you in the way he understands it so you'll have a clear view of his understanding.

Proper description



It is essential to explain e-volunteers their tasks. They will work remote, so they will not have a chance to knock to your office every time when they will have some doubts about their work.

So before you give the task to e-volunteer, write down a detailed description of work that he or she will be responsible for. You can use so-called 'atomisation' process. Atomisation is a graphic method that usually helps us to estimate what we will need to implement a project. But it might be also very useful in setting e-volunteers' scope of responsibility.

You are planning someone's job, so you need to imagine how the goals that you set may be obtained. You need to remember that to obtain those goals they will not only need the description of task, but they also need to be given necessary tools.

If there is more than one of the person responsible for e-volunteers, you should precisely describe what they are responsible for. E-volunteers need to know whom they should contact in concrete crisis situations. For instance, whom they should inform about possible delays of their work, and whom if they would have technical problems in implementing their tasks.

Safety issues

At the start of an volunteering program, the e-volunteer must also be informed of any potential health and safety hazards connected to the undertaken tasks and how to protect against them (for example, how to use computers and the Internet safely). So, you should not forget about that.



**Remember to describe ways of communication
with coordinators of e-volunteers**

And finally! The dead line terms must be discussed as well! Without it your tasks could last forever.



Remember that you have to give all of those information to e-volunteer before he/she will start to work. He or she needs to be aware what kind of tasks belongs to his/her responsibilities.



Signing legal documents

Working with e-volunteers, starts from sourcing out the people and getting required documentation. Remember that before you start to work with e-volunteer you need to fulfill some legislative obligations.

Documentation, which need to be completed in connection with work with e-volunteers varies from country to country, you should check with your local authorities or legal advisor in order to get to know what document should you sign while starting your cooperation with e-volunteer.





Starting work

All e-volunteers have been selected, and all formalities have been completed.

Now you are only one step from launching the collaboration in full: preparing the e-volunteers to start the work. Remember that they are starting something that is new for them, so you are the person who need to provide proper preparation. They were chosen on the basis of the skills they have, but it does not mean that they are prepared for everything. You may of course look for professionals but it is more likely that you will find just ordinary people who are motivated to work and willing to learn new skills.

Depending on the nature of your projects and the tasks to execute, make sure to provide your volunteers with comprehensive seminars, e.g.:

1. Seminars on the topics related to the project. The seminar can end with an aptitude test.
2. Technical seminars on how to use applications for delegating and sending completed tasks. The seminars can of course be continued in the future.

As part of your motivational program, you can offer e-volunteers to partake in specialist courses, including soft skills and communication training and project management courses. Training can be conducted onsite or online in the form of a webinar, videoconference or e-learning course. They may naturally be cyclical and ongoing¹⁹.

¹⁹ <http://e-volunteering.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/evolunteering-handbook.pdf>



CHAPTER 3

Working with e-volunteers

Motivating

One of the most important elements of working with people via Internet is motivation. We cannot meet our e-volunteers in an office, so the contact between us is limited. In order to support our e-volunteers in staying motivated, it's crucial to follow a few steps:



1. **Remember to stay in constant touch with your e-volunteers.** They need to know that there's always someone to help them and whom they can ask for tips anytime.
2. If it's possible, **try to call your e-volunteers instead of writing** them e-mails or messages. That way you will be able to share emotions with each other.
3. Whenever you contact your e-volunteer, **stay as positive as possible**. Nobody wants to talk to a tired and depressed person, especially when that person is your leader.
4. Keep in mind that **they need to feel appreciated**. Try to find time not only to give negative feedback, but also to admire your e-volunteers.
5. **Show them how crucial their work is.** Even if they are given a simple task, it's still something that you need and they are the ones helping you. Do not ignore their effort.
6. **Promote your e-volunteers.** If they succeed in the tasks you've given them so far, then do not hesitate to promote them. Try to share more demanding pieces of work with them and make sure they develop properly.
7. It's recommended to **make your e-volunteers feel like a member of one team**, not only individuals. Perhaps you can meet your e-volunteers with each other, make



group calls or send small gifts for their birthday. That way you will create a small family via Internet.

8. **Give them small rewards from time to time.** If you have information about some training, events or other things which may interest them- let them know. If you have possibility to get tickets for something in their city – give it to them.

Supervision

What is supervision?

Supervision is online chat with e-volunteer about their role and how they are getting on. It is a good way of managing e-volunteer's work and evaluating their performance. Supervision can help the e-volunteers feel valued and gives you chance to make sure they are enjoying their role. Just remember that supervising is more about helping them and checking their progress, not about controlling them.



Appoint Time For Supervision

Appointing time can help you to relieve your own and e-volunteers workload. It would be easier to work if you discuss about frequency of your contacts.

How often you contact e-volunteers depend on your time and the type of work e-volunteer is doing. If it is emotionally demanding or complex work, you may want to offer a regular slot.

Before online supervision you need to ask yourself 3 questions:

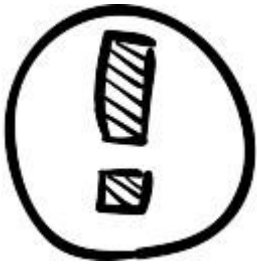
What exactly do you want to say in your supervision?

Think about a time when it seemed to go wrong. What could have been done in other way?

Think about a time when supervision went well. What factors contributed to this?



Things to have in mind:



- Make sure the e-volunteer knows the purpose of the contact.
- Do not be very formal during the supervision. Ask the e-volunteer if he likes his task, if he feels motivated.
- Review your expectations of each other and the e-volunteer's role description from time to time. Write notes while the conversation is taking place and what was pointed out, and offer the e-volunteer a copy.
- Do not forget that e-volunteers get involved for different reasons. Some want new challenges while others are happy to do the same tasks every time.

Be Assertive

There may be times when you will need to be assertive to deal with inappropriate behavior, conflict management, and poor performance. Be positive, firm and fair and always refer to the policies held in your organisation, your e-volunteer's role description and the agreement you entered into with them when they started.²⁰

²⁰ <https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/keeping/supporting-volunteers>

Feedback

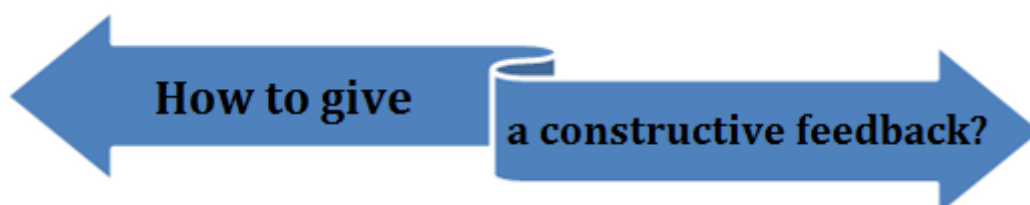
Why it is important?

Feedback is one of the most important element in e-volunteering. Giving feedback is a task you perform again and again as a manager or supervisor. It lets e-volunteers to know where they are and where to go next in terms of expectations and goals. Feedback is a useful tool for indicating when things are going in the right direction or for redirecting problem performance.



When you need to give a feedback?

- Someone asks for your opinion about how they are doing.
- Unresolved problems persist .
- Errors occur again and again.
- A e-volunteer's performance doesn't meet expectations.



1. If you can't think of a constructive purpose for giving feedback, don't give it at all.
2. Focus on description rather than judgment. Describing behavior is a way of reporting what has occurred, while judging behavior is an evaluation of what has occurred. *For example: "You demonstrate a high degree of confidence when you answer customer questions about registration procedures, "rather than, "Your writing skills are good."*
3. Focus on observation rather than inference. Focus on what the person did and your reaction. *For example: "I suppose you give all forms out that way!"*
4. Provide a balance of positive and negative feedback.



5. **Be aware of feedback overload.** Select two or three important points you want to make and offer feedback about those points²¹. *For example: "You have prepared that newsletter very good. All information are perfectly presented And now you should focus to whom you should send it, as 15 people which you found is a little to less."*



²¹ http://hr.tsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/giving_effective_feedback.pdf

Contacting

Contacting

Choose one way to communicate with your e-volunteers. It's better to keep everything in one place, instead of three different applications. For example, exchange e-mails while working and use other applications (like Facebook, Whatsapp etc.) for non-formal conversations.

Make sure you can contact your e-volunteers in different ways. If you need to contact them immediately, then writing an e-mail would be useless. Instead, you can call them or write on a messenger.

Try to be neutral in contacting your e-volunteers. They should respect you as a leader and not be scared while talking with you. Also, being overly friendly might cause lack of commitment, which may lead to unsatisfactory results.

Keep everything simple and clear. Don't assume they know what to do. Explain every detail you think that is necessary.

Try to call them from time to time to stay in a closer touch. For example, once a week/month make a phone call or Skype call to talk about the current state.

If you contact your e-volunteer in a different language than your national ones, make sure they can speak that particular language well enough to understand the tasks.

Make sure your e-volunteer knows when to contact you. Tell them about your schedule and ask for their preferences as well. For example, nobody likes to be called on Sunday at 5 am, unless they ask you to.



Supporting



Why is it important?

Why it is important to support e-volunteers?

E-volunteers need support to keep them focused and enthusiastic about their work. Remember that they are working on your project, so they need to feel that you are interested in their work, that you care of what they do, and that they can count on you in case of any problems. They need to feel that they are important.

If you take the time to provide proper support in the good times, you will have reserves of good will as well as better-trained people to see you through challenging times²².

²² <https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/manage-your-volunteers/supporting-and-supervising/ways-to-support-volunteers>
<https://reachskills.org.uk/knowledge-centre/support-charities/how-manage-skilled-volunteers/providing-support-and-resources>



Benefits

How supporting helps for your relationship with e-volunteer?

- E-volunteers work more effectively.
- E-volunteers care about the charity and their role.
- Support given to your e-volunteers will improve quality of your work.
- Prevent burn out.
- Wise support will improve communication between you and e-volunteers.
- Show your e-volunteers that you care about them.

How to do this?

- Incorporate e-volunteers into your group.
- Give e-volunteers access to services: e-volunteers should be treated like paid staff and given the opportunity to access all of the services available to paid employees.
- Contact with them as often as you can. Just to ask how they are going. Not controlling them!
- Ask them about any difficulties and problems. If they have any – help them. Just remember about giving advices about solutions not to force to use your advices.
- Organise regular catch-ups with the e-volunteer coordinator²³



²³ <https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/manage-your-volunteers/supporting-and-supervising/ways-to-support-volunteers>
<https://reachskills.org.uk/knowledge-centre/support-charities/how-manage-skilled-volunteers/providing-support-and-resources>

Tips which can help you to manage your virtual team



As you can't meet with your e-volunteers regularly, it is important to introduce smart management techniques during your work.

Here are a few tips to consider²⁴:

Maintain a calendar

- **Maintain a Shared Calendar** – Use Google Calendar or other software to communicate when e-volunteers will, and will not, be working as well as task due dates. Also, send team meeting notices via email, so that e-volunteers can download to their personal calendars, if they so wish.

Use chat

- **Use Group Video Chatting** – Software like Skype and Google Meet Ups allow individuals and teams to view each other during meetings. This adds more interest than telephonic calls and allows participants to physically point to sections of documents as well as read facial expressions.

²⁴ <http://www.wildapricot.com/articles/virtual-and-mobile-volunteers>



Share your work

- **Use Screen Sharing** – To take it a step further, there are a number of free and fee-based screen sharing tools that can be used to share, and even collaborate on, documents in live time.

Give them e-mail

- **Set Up Separate Emails** – Instead of using their private email, have e-volunteers set up a free email address, such as Gmail or Hotmail so that their privacy is protected. This is especially important if they work directly with the public. If you are contacted by clients who receive assistance from e-volunteers, set up a general inbox that specific e-volunteers are assigned to check on specific days of the week.

Share documents

- **Store Documents Online** – Google Drive and Wikispaces are two platforms that allow approved users to post and view shared documents. Be sure to establish a file naming protocol the team will use to keep track of multiple versions and edits over time, as well as final documents. Make sure you store both documents that are in development and your basic assets, like your logo, mission statement, templates, etc. – as well as current team contact info – are stored in one, safe, well-organized place.

Have a system

- **Set Up A Project Management System** – Once you have your project plan decided and tasks assigned, have team members add their key milestones and tasks to the team calendar. If the calendar is integrated into a project management system all the better. There are several free options you can choose from, and all have integrated file sharing and management, project chat/email communications, a task tracking function, and a shared calendar.



Passwords

Remember that all the things prepared by you and e-volunteers will be transferred with usage of Internet. So, you need to take care of proper security of these information. Make sure that all of files, documents, mailboxes, sharing services etc. has passwords that only you and your e-volunteers know. Ask them not to reveal these passwords to anyone.

Smart storing

If you plan to use third-party services like social media sites, make sure it's not the only place where you store your content. If a social media site is your only communication channel, there's a risk the content is deleted without a chance of recovery or your account is permanently deleted. Besides running a profile on a social media site, you could for example set up an RSS feed for site updates (this feature is available in most CMS systems) or create a newsletter.

Smart communication

1. While using websites as a communication tool, you **should consider using an encryption scheme**. The use of SSL (Secure Socket Layer), a protocol for transmitting private data that ensures confidentiality and authenticity of transmissions (verifies the sender), is a good place to start. Some services allow users to log in to their accounts using SSL as a security measure. The username, password and all operations will be then additionally protected²⁶.
2. If your project involves transmitting confidential data, consider **implementing an additional encryption scheme** for incoming and outgoing emails: GnuPG (GNU Privacy Guard). You also need to remind your e-volunteers not to open the messages which even looks suspicious.
3. While sending a files or documents with important and confidential data consider **protecting them with a password** so that they cannot be read by unauthorized persons.

²⁶ <http://e-volunteering.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/evolunteering-handbook.pdf>



4. You should also [focus also on current legislation related to processing personal data](#) in your country: chances are that sending sensitive data in an unprotected file or putting such a file in the cloud is prohibited²⁷.
5. Remind your e-volunteer that **the passwords** which you will use **should not be sent together with the coded files**. Discuss the most safe way of sending password to person who receives files.

²⁷ As above

CHAPTER 4

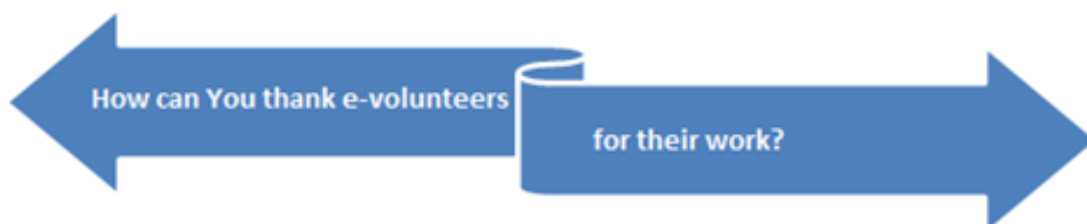
PROJECT HAS JUST ENDED – WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Thank E-volunteers



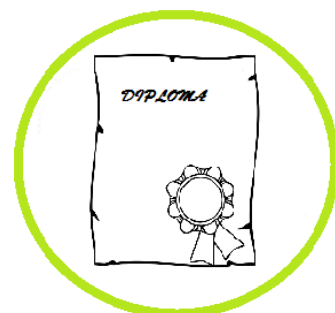
After the end of project you should thank e-volunteers. Show them how their work contributed to the realization of project. You should point that even when they have not been physically present, their involvement helped to accomplish the project. They need to know that whatever responsibilities they had, they have impacted to the final effect of the project.

This point is very important because you do not have a face to face contact with e-volunteers. This is a reason why it is more difficult to motivate them to work. Thank to the appreciation of their hard work, they are going to feel needed and will be more likely to involve into working with you in the future.



The simplest way to thank e-volunteers is saying 'Thank you' in person, or via an e-mail. However we recommend to do this in public. They will feel more appreciated if you thank them in public.

If it is possible, organize an event that will gather e-volunteers. It is better to get a certification, diploma, or another kind of acknowledgement in public, than in private. Thanks to this, e-volunteers will feel awarded and will see their impact on the project.



Another important factor of official event is to integrate e-volunteers. Remember that they probably do not know each other in person, so it may be first opportunity for them to meet. This kind of event will be a good chance to integrate and let them perceive that they are being a part of group. It may simplify their eventual future cooperation. This kind of event is also an opportunity for good fun and what is most important, a chance to celebrate your mutual success.



Another idea how you can thank e-volunteers is material awards, such as project gadgets, or just a gifts. Project gadgets are going to remind them of being part of the project and will also promote your organization in the future. It will be also a nice reminder of what they helped to create.



We also recommend to add e-volunteers to your professional networks, such as LinkedIn. You can describe there the project and add e-volunteers as the part of the team. In this way you can prove that they have cooperated with your organization. And they will definitely feel appreciated.

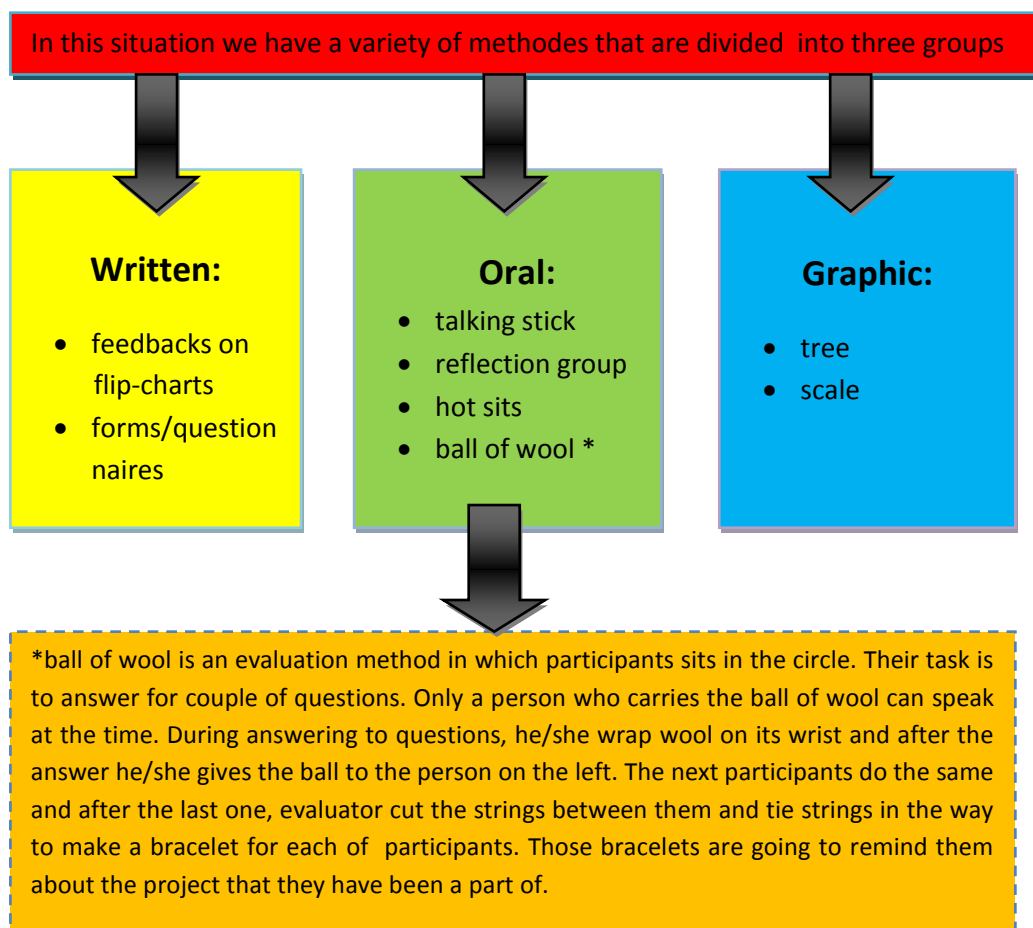
This platform gives also the possibility to endorse their skills. By clicking on their profiles what they are good in, you show their future employers that they are well skilled and trust worthy.

Evaluation of work

Evaluation of project where e-volunteers are involved is usually more difficult, than in the projects with 'traditional volunteers'. In the situation when you cannot gather e-volunteers in person, you can use written kinds of evaluations, such as on-line evaluation form, or Youthpass. Those methods do not require a physical presence of volunteer on the same time in the same place.

You can also evaluate the work of each e-volunteer by meeting each of them in person or via on-line tools, such as Skype, Google Hangouts, or via phone call.

If you have decided to organize an event to gratitude e-volunteers, you can use one of the well-know evaluation methods that we use in our usual work.





Staying in contact after the project

When you have already thanked e-volunteers and evaluated your work with them, there is a time for step number 3 – **Staying in touch after the project.**

This step is not time-consuming and you can do this meanwhile your daily work. To stay in contact with e-volunteers you can use tools that you have been already using during your cooperation, such as: mailing list, facebook group, or others online space that you have been using during the project in order to stay in contact with e-volunteers.

Let them know what's currently going on in your organization !

Add them to newsletter of your organization. Thank to this, e-volunteers will be updated with your current work and will know about the projects that you will organize in the future. They will get the information that they can still get involved into the work of your organization. They will also have a chance to feel as the part of the organization.

Recommend them to their future employers !

As we already mentioned, remember to add them to your professional or social networks, such as LinkedIn or Facebook. As it was already said in this part of guidebook, LinkedIn creates a space where you can endorse their skills and, prove that they have cooperated with you. There is always a good idea to show how you value their work and be updated with their future achievements.



SUMMARY

Online volunteering is not meant as a replacement for face-to-face volunteering, and most individuals and organizations don't choose it over onsite service. Online volunteering also is not meant to take away paid positions at an organization. Online volunteering is meant to help build the capacity of staff at an organization, as well as those that the organization serves. Online volunteering is just another way for people from various walks of life, all over the world, to connect with each other.

Online technologies have opened a completely new opportunities both for organization looking for volunteers and for people who would wish to do voluntary work. Online volunteering has eliminated the need for volunteerism to be tied to specific times and locations. Thus, it greatly increases the freedom and flexibility of volunteer engagement. Nowadays, when many people travel very often, possibility to work from any place and at any time is a great option. Having such possibility, people are normally more willing to work as a volunteers.

For organizations, possibilities of work with e-volunteers opens many new ways of work, and for sure broadens the areas of activities. Online volunteers may have skills and expertise that organization may not have, or e-volunteers may supplement the work of onsite volunteers in some areas (substantive as well as geographical). Online volunteers help organizations stretch their onsite resources even further and to serve more clients. These volunteers may have sophisticated hardware or software which maybe be great help for organization during some sorts of jobs. Online volunteers don't require physical accommodations, they do not generate extra costs, what is important especially for small organizations which can't allow themselves for a high costs of functioning (for example NGOs not having constant source of funding).

Also for e-volunteers such form of cooperation is very valuable. Possibility of working remotely allows for the participation of people who find onsite volunteering difficult or impossible because of a disability, home obligation, transportation difficulties or work schedule.

It is just very important to organize work of e-volunteers in smart and easy way and to take care of them properly during the whole period of cooperation.