

COMMUNITY BUILDING MANUAL

A Practical Guide to foresting, collaboration, trust and
shared purpose for stronger communities.

2025

MANUAL

Authors: Oltiana Rama

Harold Koxha

This manual is conducted in the framework of the project” ICON - Capacity building for the IVS movement in impact assessment, communication, and community building “ implemented by INEX, PVN, CCIVS and GAIA Kosovo, with the financial support of the European Union.



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Glossary

- **Community Building:** The process of creating and nurturing connections among individuals with shared interests, values, or goals to foster collaboration and mutual support.
- **Community Engagement:** Active participation of community members in events, decision-making, and shared activities to strengthen belonging and ownership.
- **Civil Society Organization (CSO):** A non-governmental, nonprofit group that operates to promote public interests, often focused on social change, development, or advocacy etc.
- **International Voluntary Service (IVS):** Programs and movements that involve international volunteers contributing to social, environmental, or cultural projects across borders.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthening the abilities, skills, and resources of individuals or organizations to perform effectively and sustainably.
- **Community Manager:** A person responsible for developing, guiding, and maintaining an active and healthy community, ensuring engagement and inclusion.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring all community members, regardless of background or identity, feel welcomed, valued, and able to participate equally.
- **Outreach:** Activities aimed at attracting and involving new members into a community, often through promotion, partnership, or events.
- **Volunteerism:** The practice of offering time and skills freely for the benefit of others, often within community development or social impact initiatives.
- **Digital Platforms:** Online tools and spaces (e.g., Slack, Facebook, Zoom) used for communication, collaboration, and community engagement.

- **Social Impact:** The effect of an activity or organization on the well-being of a community or society at large.
- **Sustainability:** The ability of a community or project to maintain its activities, services, or impact over time without relying on temporary solutions.
- **Gamification:** The use of game-like elements (e.g., points, badges, leaderboards) to motivate participation and engagement in non-game contexts.
- **Mentorship:** A relationship in which a more experienced individual supports the personal or professional development of another person.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Tools and processes used to collect opinions, suggestions, and evaluations from community members to inform decision-making and improvement.

INTRODUCTION



Introduction and summary

This manual is developed to help International Volunteering Services (IVS), civil society organizations, community and youth centers etc, on reflecting and building communities, strengthening communities in case they already exist, and how to keep them active, connected, and revitalized. In addition, this manual presents some strategies that might inspire organizations to reflect and use the new ways and methods on building and strengthening the community. Furthermore, this manual could be useful for international and local volunteers, community members, community leaders, and other community stakeholders toward a resilient community.

Community building refers to the process of forming, developing, and nurturing a community in which individuals are connected by common interests, goals, or values. It's about creating an environment where people can interact with each other, build relationships, and develop a strong bond with the community. Building a strong community can have many benefits, such as fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing overall well-being. Whether it's a neighborhood, an online group, or a shared interest community, community building plays a vital role in creating a sense of unity and shared purpose. In a changing world to build and keeping stronger communities is challenging, even though the impact and importance of the communities are much needed. In this manual, we bring some inspirations and suggestions on how to build and how to keep strong communities.

Civil society organizations, volunteers, community members, etc, play a pivotal role in fostering community cohesion, advocating for positive change, and ensuring the well-being of citizens. Strong communities are vital for the success of voluntary organizations, including the benefits of engagement, support, and sustainability.

The manual is organized into 8 parts, including this intro. It starts with the introduction of the topic and the manual, a summary of the overview of community building, and the main principles. It follows different strategies aiming to build, grow and sustain f communities and track behaviour of our key players. The 4th part of the manual is bringing overview of the community building tips. The next session summarises the resources for online community activities , how to be effective. The following part in the 6th part lists the good examples and resources of community building activities. The 7th chapter presents the real world examples of community building activities. The last part is dedicated to some piloting community building activities organized by 4 participating consortium members (INEX, PVN, CCVIS, GAIA) for inspiration.

This manual is produced within the framework of the project ICON - Capacity Building for the IVS Movement in Impact Assessment, Communication, and Community Building, implemented by INEX, PVN, CCIVS, and GAIA Kosovo, with the financial support of the European Union.

The project's aim is to enhance the quality, impact, and reach of volunteering activities (including their inclusivity and environmental sustainability) by increasing the organisations' capacity in impact assessment, external communication, and community building. Its results will ensure long-term sustainability of the activities by setting up a new strategic approach for effective gain and use of financial and human resources, and strengthen international cooperation and transfer of experience to other organizations working with international volunteering.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Overview of Community Building

Defining community building

A community is a group of people with common characteristics, such as background, ambition or interests, who come together physically or virtually to talk to each other or do things together. In a community, you share your knowledge and information, there is reciprocity. There is also a common interest: a clear reason or purpose for coming together.

Community Organizing and building emphasizes empowering community members to collectively address issues that affect them. It involves building relationships, organizing grassroots movements and campaigns, and advocating for change through collective action. It involves creating a sense of belonging, trust, and shared purpose among community members.

Foundations of Effective Community Building

Core Values and Vision

The foundation of a strong community lies in clearly defined core values and a compelling vision. Organizations should articulate their mission, principles, and long-term goals to ensure alignment among community members. These values and vision act as a guiding framework, fostering a shared sense of purpose and direction, which helps to unite members and sustain engagement.

Inclusivity and Diversity

Building an effective community requires a commitment to inclusivity and diversity. This means actively seeking to involve individuals from various backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. Embracing diversity not only enriches the community but also ensures that all members feel valued and respected. Organizations should develop practices that promote equitable participation and address any barriers to inclusion.

Building a thriving community requires intentional strategies and practices. The next chapter delves into effective methods for recruitment, engagement, communication, and capacity building to foster a vibrant, interconnected community.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

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Building Communities

Communities are constantly being formed and eventually they fall apart. They may fall apart because the enthusiasm ebbs away or because the community has achieved its objectives. Some communities last a long time, while others are short-lived.

Sometimes a community evolves organically, but you can also play an active part in starting one. If you make sure that a number of preconditions are met, it is not difficult to get a new community up and running.

Before starting a community, it's helpful to consider the following questions

- Who are the people in the community and what is their role?
- How can I effectively reach and engage my target audience?
- Which platform or space is best suited to host and support our community?
- What is the overarching strategy for building, sustaining, and growing the community?

This chapter provides practical approaches to recruiting, engaging, and developing community members while fostering strong connections and effective communication.

Strategies for Building Communities

a) Recruitment and Engagement

Identifying Target Audiences

- *Understanding the Audience:* Begin by defining who your ideal community members are based on their interests, needs, and demographics. To make sure your community grows, you need to be able to give a clear reason why people should join. What advantages can new joiners expect from the community?
- *Matching capacities with needs:* Assessing the skills, resources, and strengths present within the community, including individual talents and existing infrastructure. Identifying areas where community capacities align with identified needs, ensuring that interventions are sustainable and

driven by local expertise and resources. Facilitating partnerships and collaborations between local stakeholders (community members, local NGOs, and institutions)

- *Outreach Strategies:* Use targeted outreach methods such as social media campaigns, partnerships with other organizations, and local events to attract potential members. Organise meetings at set intervals and maintain this frequency. If you are consistent, you create patterns of expectation and the members of your community are more likely to stay engaged. To avoid gaps in community activity, it is advisable to draw up a monthly or yearly content calendar. This lets people know in advance which topics and activities will be covered. Make sure there is room for ad hoc planning if you notice a need for specific content. Think carefully about how you want to reach your target audience. Be selective and purpose-driven when sending invitations by email. Traffic and the Marketing & Communication department can provide feedback and ideas to help you find the right approach. A PR consultant from your faculty or service department can provide input on which resource mix would be most effective. Ask people in your network if they know anyone who might want to join the community. You can also post a message on the staff or student portal

Engagement Methods

- *Establish Objectives:* Clearly define the purpose of the community. What are you aiming to achieve? This could be networking, knowledge sharing, support, or advocacy.
- *Events and Activities:* Organize events, workshops, and social gatherings that align with the interests and needs of your community members. These can be virtual or in-person.
- *Interactive Platforms:* Utilize platforms like forums, chat groups, or community boards to facilitate ongoing interactions and discussions.
- *Recognition and Incentives:* Recognize and reward active members through acknowledgment programs, certificates, or small incentives to maintain motivation and participation.

Volunteering Opportunities

- *Creating Roles:* Develop a variety of volunteer roles that cater to different skills and interests. Clearly outline the responsibilities and benefits of each role. To make sure that you get the right leaders in the right positions in the organization, you will need to do some organizing ahead of time. Instead of coming to a meeting and asking who wants to volunteer to be chair of a committee, you will talk to people ahead of time about who would be best for this role. You will get that person to agree to be chair before the meeting, and then have a number of leaders prepared to support that person's nomination at the meeting. Often, the person most willing to volunteer to take on roles in the organization
- *Skills Matching:* Match volunteers to roles that align with their skills and passions to ensure fulfilling and productive contributions.
- *Training and Support:* Provide necessary training and resources to help volunteers perform their roles effectively and feel confident in their contributions.

b) Communication and Connection

Effective Communication Channels

- *Choosing Platforms:* Select appropriate communication tools based on the preferences of your community members. Options include email newsletters, social media, and dedicated community apps.
- *Consistency and Clarity:* Maintain regular and clear communication to keep members informed and engaged. Ensure that messages are consistent with your organization's values and goals.
- *Two-Way Communication:* Encourage open dialogue by creating spaces where members can share their thoughts, ask questions, and provide feedback.

Building Relationships

- *Personal Connections:* Foster personal relationships by encouraging one-on-one interactions, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities.
- *Community-Building Activities:* Plan activities that promote

bonding and collaboration among members, such as team-building exercises, collaborative projects, or casual meetups.

- **Trust and Respect:** Build trust by being transparent, reliable, and respectful in all interactions. Address conflicts constructively and uphold community standards.

Feedback Mechanisms

- **Surveys and Polls:** Regularly use surveys and polls to gather feedback on community activities, satisfaction, and areas for improvement.
- **Suggestion Boxes:** Implement physical or digital suggestion boxes where members can anonymously submit ideas and concerns.
- **Responsive Action:** Act on the feedback received to show that member input is valued and to make necessary adjustments to improve the community experience.

c) Capacity Building

Training and Development

- **Workshops and Seminars:** Offer training workshops and seminars on relevant skills and topics to enhance the capabilities of community members and leaders.
- **Online Courses:** Provide access to online learning resources and courses to accommodate varying schedules and learning preferences.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship programs where experienced members can guide and support newer or less experienced members.

Leadership Development

- **Identifying Leaders:** Recognize and nurture potential leaders within the community who demonstrate commitment and skills.
- **Leadership Training:** Provide leadership training and development opportunities to prepare individuals for roles of greater responsibility.

- *Empowering Leaders:* Delegate responsibilities and empower leaders to take initiative, make decisions, and drive community projects.

Resource Sharing

- *Knowledge Exchange:* Encourage members to share their expertise, experiences, and resources through workshops, discussion groups, and collaborative projects.
- *Toolkits and Templates:* Develop and distribute toolkits, templates, and guides that members can use for various community-building activities.
- *Support Networks:* Create support networks where members can seek advice, share best practices, and collaborate on common challenges.

Key players in community building

Who can build the community, and what is their role?

Anyone with a shared purpose, vision, or interest can contribute to building a community. Whether you're an individual, a group, or an organization, community building involves fostering connections, creating a sense of belonging, and working collaboratively. Some key players in community building are:

- Individuals

Passionate individuals who care about a cause or want to connect with like-minded people can initiate community-building efforts. They can organize events, start online groups, or engage in local activities.

- Local Leaders

Community leaders, such as neighborhood organizers, educators, or activists, play a vital role. They mobilize people, facilitate dialogue, and create spaces for interaction.

- Nonprofits and NGOs

Civil society organizations (CSOs), nonprofits, and non-governmental organizations actively work to build and strengthen communities. They provide services, advocate for change, and engage with citizens.

- Businesses - CSR

Some businesses invest in community development as part of their corporate social responsibility. They sponsor events, support local initiatives, and collaborate with residents.

- Government Agencies

Local, regional, and national governments contribute by creating policies, funding projects, and ensuring infrastructure development. They play a significant role in community well-being.

- Educational Institutions

Schools, colleges, and universities foster community by organizing events, promoting student engagement, and connecting alumni.

- Online Platforms

Digital platforms, social media, and forums enable virtual communities. Online influencers, bloggers, and content creators also contribute to community building

- Community manager

A community manager is the person responsible for launching, growing, and maintaining the community. The community manager leads the members in their pursuit of knowledge by concentrating on what connects people. The community manager's job is to create the right environment and ensure that participants are encouraged and rewarded; it is not to be the primary actor. The community manager's success is measured by the activities of the community members. A good community manager has empathy, daring, and patience. Above all, a community manager must be passionate about their role. Without passion, the community manager will fail. It is also crucial that the community manager realises that their job is to serve the members' needs. If the community experience is not focused on fulfilling the needs of the members, they will not participate.

The Role of International Voluntary Movements

Voluntary organizations are uniquely positioned to foster communities due to their mission-driven nature and commitment to social impact. These organizations often bring together individuals motivated by shared causes, creating a natural foundation

for community development. By leveraging their values and networks, they can build vibrant communities that support their mission and amplify their impact.

The international voluntary movement plays a significant role in building communities, both locally and globally. Here's an overview of how this movement contributes to community building:

Fostering Global Solidarity

By bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds who share common values and goals, the international voluntary movement fosters a sense of global solidarity and interconnectedness. Volunteers from different cultures and regions collaborate, share experiences, and learn from each other, enriching the community with diverse perspectives and practices.

Promoting Social Impact

International voluntary organizations work on issues such as poverty, education, health, and environmental sustainability. Their efforts address critical global challenges and contribute to positive social change. By partnering with local organizations and communities, international volunteers help build local capacity, support grassroots initiatives, and empower communities to address their own needs.

Enhancing Collaboration and Networking

The movement facilitates the creation of networks and partnerships between organizations, communities, and individuals across borders, enhancing collaboration and resource sharing. Through joint projects and initiatives, international volunteers strengthen ties between communities, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.

Supporting Capacity Building

International voluntary organizations often provide training and educational resources to local communities, enhancing skills and knowledge that contribute to long-term development. They help mobilize resources, including funding, expertise, and technology, which support community development projects and initiatives.

Encouraging Civic Engagement

By offering diverse volunteering opportunities, the international voluntary movement encourages individuals to engage in meaningful activities that benefit communities worldwide. Volunteers often take on leadership roles within projects and organizations, developing skills that benefit both their own communities and the broader global network.

Promoting Cultural Exchange and Understanding

Volunteers immerse themselves in different cultural contexts, fostering mutual respect and understanding across cultures. The movement helps bridge cultural and geographical gaps, creating a more inclusive and empathetic global community.

Advocacy and Awareness Raising

International voluntary organizations raise awareness about important issues affecting communities around the world, advocating for change and mobilizing support. They often engage in advocacy efforts to influence policy at local, national, and international levels, supporting systemic changes that benefit communities.

Creating Sustainable Impact

The movement focuses on creating sustainable solutions that address the root causes of issues rather than just providing temporary relief. By supporting community-led initiatives and fostering local ownership, international volunteers help build resilience and self-sufficiency in communities.

Encouraging Best Practices

The international voluntary movement facilitates the exchange of innovative ideas and best practices, helping communities adopt effective strategies and solutions. Volunteers often test and refine new approaches to community development, which can be scaled or adapted to different contexts.

The international voluntary movement plays a crucial role in building and strengthening communities by fostering collaboration, promoting social impact, supporting capacity building, and encouraging cultural exchange.

Role of International Volunteers in Building Communities

International volunteers play crucial roles in building communities across the globe. Their contributions extend beyond borders, fostering positive change and sustainable development. International volunteers are a powerful force for community building, promoting peace, and advancing sustainable development.

International volunteers can significantly contribute to community building through their actions and engagement. Here are some ways they can make a positive impact:

Cultural Exchange and Understanding

International volunteers bring diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds. By interacting with local community members, they foster mutual understanding and appreciation. They can organize cultural events, language exchange programs, and workshops to promote cross-cultural learning.

Skills Transfer and Capacity Building:

Volunteers often possess specialized skills (such as teaching, healthcare, or technology).

Environmental Conservation and Sustainability

Volunteers can participate in environmental projects like tree planting, waste management, or water conservation. By promoting sustainable practices, they contribute to the long-term well-being of the community.

Healthcare and Education

International volunteers can assist in healthcare clinics, schools, and community centers.

They provide health education, conduct workshops, and support educational initiatives.

Community Events and Celebrations

Volunteers organize community events, festivals, and celebrations. These gatherings strengthen community bonds. They can collaborate with local artists, musicians, and performers to create memorable experiences.

Social Inclusion and Empowerment:

Volunteers engage with marginalized groups (such as refugees, the elderly, or disabled individuals). They advocate for their rights, provide emotional support, and empower them to participate actively in community life.

Infrastructure Development:

International volunteers can contribute to building infrastructure (such as schools, libraries, or community centers). Construction projects enhance community resources and create spaces for interaction.

Promoting Peace and Tolerance

Volunteers engage in dialogue sessions, conflict resolution workshops, and peacebuilding activities. They encourage open communication, respect, and tolerance among community members.

Networking and Partnerships

Volunteers connect local communities with global networks, NGOs, and other organizations. Collaborations lead to resource-sharing, knowledge exchange, and innovative solutions.

Advocacy and Policy Influence

Volunteers can raise awareness about social issues and advocate for policy changes.

Their voices amplify community concerns and contribute to a more just and equitable society.

Along with the strategies and the role of each key stakeholder, it is important to prepare, use and apply some tips which might be helpful for more effective community building activities. The following chapter presents some tips which have been proven useful in diverse realities of volunteering.

COMMUNITY BUILDING TIPS

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Community Building Tips

With the hectic pace of modern life and advancements in technology, society finds itself lacking and craving community more and more. Human connection is an essential part of life, and it is important to build back these systems in new ways. While more traditional communities may be lessening, people are gathering in new ways, such as online and within the workforce.

Community-building activities are a way to guide this process. These exercises are ways to build more meaningful connections and uncover common ground that may not be immediately obvious. These methods encourage interaction and build support systems, resulting in more positive cultures and increased loyalty and engagement. Not to mention, these activities add variety and excitement to everyday life and the regular routine.

Here are helpful hints to boost the community-building efforts.

Stick to a schedule and regular rhythm

Community building requires ongoing effort. Keeping the community active and engaged means regularly planning activities and facilitating discussions, otherwise, the group you worked so hard to build may go dormant, and members may drop off.

When community happenings regularly occur, then folks are likely to save room in their busy schedules to participate. Events do not necessarily need to be on the same day or time every month, however, you should host happenings on a predictable schedule and aim for consistency in the number of interactions each month. This approach gives a sense of normalcy, dependability, and momentum, and ignites energy.

Make conscious efforts to foster inclusion

Some team members are bound to be shier than others, especially if your group does not interact often in person. As a leader, be ready to play matchmaker and make connections between outliers and the more outgoing members of the group.

Of course, also champion diversity and make the group a safe space to express different ideas and perspectives. Community means everyone gathers together, but do not expect that mingling will happen naturally. Bear in mind that members may need a nudge to step outside of their comfort zones, get to know new people, and

mix with others in the group, especially as your community grows larger. Be ready to shepherd the group and take steps to ensure that everyone feels included.

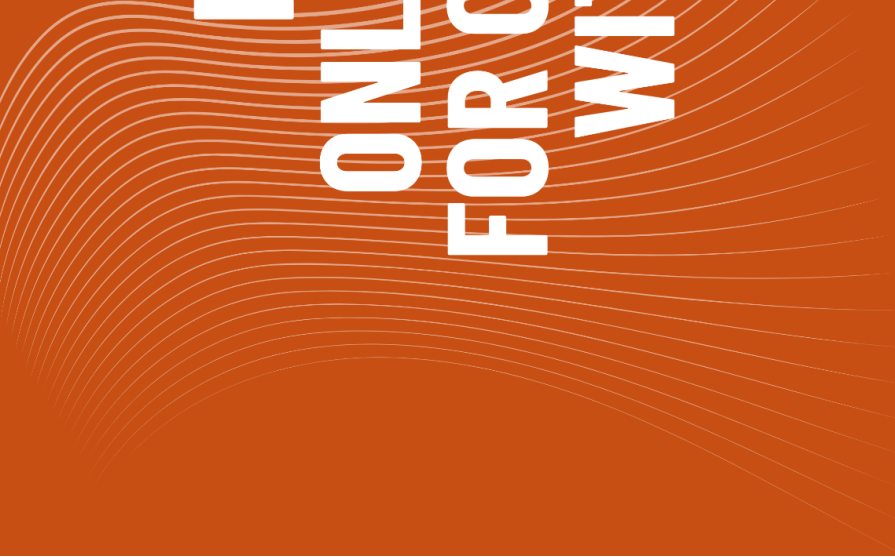
Pick activities with mass appeal

Community relies on the discovery of common ground. While it is ok to go more niche every now and then and explore areas of more specific interest, the point of community building is to find activities that the whole group can enjoy. Picking activities with mass appeal tends to result in better turnouts and higher rates of participation, which in turn means more shared experiences and chances for connection within the group. Planning widely beloved programming helps foster a sense of togetherness and unity, and helps members benefit from the full scope of the community.

Let the community shape the programming

Good community organizers build community around group members' interests, rather than pushing their own agenda on members. These leaders take feedback and suggestions from members, and allow group members to take the initiative and lead and organize events from time to time. Remember that the community exists to serve its members. Communities are a collaboration, and community members should have a voice

As your community begins to grow and thrive through intentional activities and inclusive practices, it's important to support that momentum with the right tools. Effective communication plays a central role in maintaining engagement, organizing events, and fostering meaningful connections—especially in digital spaces. The next chapter explores a range of online platforms and resources that can help you sustain and strengthen your community through clear, consistent, and accessible communication.

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RESOURCES AND ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR COMMUNICATION WITHIN AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

Resources and online platforms for communication within an online community

Effective communication is the backbone of a thriving online community. To support meaningful interaction, collaboration, and engagement among members, it is essential to leverage the right digital tools and platforms. This chapter presents a curated selection of resources—ranging from social media and community management platforms to collaboration tools and survey systems—designed to meet diverse communication needs. Whether building a professional network, managing community projects, or gathering feedback, these platforms can help foster connection and sustain vibrant, inclusive communities.

Here's a list of resources and online platforms that can help facilitate communication within an online community, tailored to various needs and preferences:

Social Media Platforms

- *Facebook Groups*: Ideal for creating private or public groups with discussion threads, events, and media sharing. Suitable for both small and large communities.
- *LinkedIn Groups*: Great for professional and industry-specific communities. Provides discussion forums, event management, and networking opportunities.
- *Twitter*: Useful for real-time updates, announcements, and engaging in conversations using hashtags.

Community Management Platforms

- *Slack*: Offers real-time messaging, channels for different topics, file sharing, and integrations with other tools. Suitable for both small and large communities.
- *Discord*: Known for its robust voice and text chat features, as well as channels and roles for organizing discussions. Popular with gaming and tech communities, but also used in other sectors.

- Microsoft Teams: Provides chat, video conferencing, file sharing, and integration with Microsoft Office tools. Suitable for professional and educational communities.

Forum and Discussion Platforms

- Discourse: A modern forum platform with features like threaded discussions, notifications, and moderation tools. Ideal for structured discussions and community engagement.
- Reddit: Allows the creation of subreddits for niche communities with threaded discussions, voting, and moderation tools. Suitable for diverse interests and larger groups.
- Vanilla Forums: Offers customizable forum solutions with features like discussions, Q&A, and gamification. Suitable for building and managing online communities.

Collaboration Tools

- Trello: Provides boards, lists, and cards for organizing tasks and projects. Useful for collaborative projects and keeping track of community initiatives.
- Asana: Offers project management features with task assignments, timelines, and collaboration tools. Ideal for managing community projects and workflows.
- Basecamp: Combines messaging, file sharing, to-do lists, and scheduling in one platform. Suitable for project management and team collaboration.

Video Conferencing Tools

- Zoom: Popular for video meetings, webinars, and virtual events. Offers features like breakout rooms, recording, and screen sharing.
- Google Meet: Integrated with Google Workspace, it provides video conferencing with features like real-time captions and screen sharing.
- Microsoft Teams: Also functions as a video conferencing tool with integration into Office 365 and additional collaboration features.

Survey and Feedback Tools

- SurveyMonkey: Allows you to create and distribute surveys to gather feedback and opinions from community members.
- Google Forms: A free tool for creating surveys and forms to collect feedback, suggestions, and information from your community.
- Typeform: Offers interactive and visually appealing forms and surveys for collecting feedback and engaging with members.

Content Management and Sharing Platforms

- WordPress: A flexible content management system (CMS) for creating blogs, news updates, and other content for your community.
- Medium: Provides a platform for publishing articles and blog posts, which can be shared with your community.
- YouTube: Useful for sharing video content, tutorials, and live streams with your community.

Email Marketing Tools

- Mailchimp: Provides tools for creating and sending newsletters, managing email lists, and tracking engagement.
- Constant Contact: Offers email marketing services with customizable templates and tracking features.
- SendGrid: Provides email delivery and marketing tools with features for automation, analytics, and integration.

Community Engagement Tools

- Yammer: An enterprise social network that facilitates communication and collaboration within organizations and communities.
- Khoros Community: A platform designed for building branded online communities with engagement, moderation, and analytics features.

- **Tribe:** Offers customizable community solutions with features like discussions, gamification, and integrations with other tools.

These resources can help you facilitate effective communication, engagement, and collaboration within your online community, depending on your specific needs and the nature of your community. In the next chapter there is a list of some activities which can be used and combined with the above mentioned resources.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES & EXAMPLES

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Community-Building Activities & Examples

Shared Photo Albums

Shared photo albums are one of the simplest community-building activities. Simply add group members to a collaborative photo album, such as a Cloud album or a Google Drive folder. Then, encourage members to share pictures with each other.

You can give the albums a theme, such as family members, pets, food, or travel, or make the albums more general and occasionally throw out prompts like “show us the view outside your window,” or “what are you having for lunch?” Since participants can participate at different times from afar, this exercise is ideal for dispersed groups and makes for one of the better virtual community-building activities.

Monthly Meals

Monthly Meals are one of the top community-building activities for adults. Food has a way of bringing people together and encouraging conversation. Not to mention, food is universal— everybody eats. Plus, meals have cultural roots and emotional significance, and can serve as a powerful get-to-know-you activity. Holding group meals on a monthly basis makes the gathering feel more like a ritual and community activity than a one-off event. With recurring eating outings, participants can build upon past conversations and forge bonds instead of simply making introductory small talk.

There are many ways to structure monthly meals. For instance, the group can decide on a different restaurant or cuisine to try each meeting, organize a potluck, or elect a different team member to serve as the chef each month.

You can do monthly meals virtually, too. Simply schedule a Zoom call, have each team member order or prepare a dish, then gather together to eat and chat. Typically, employers give food stipends or reimbursements to cover the cost of these remote meals.

Collages

Collages are one of the most hands-on community-building exercises for work. Each participant contributes pictures, and the result is a larger image containing the

smaller parts. Participants can use personal photos, magazine cutouts, printed images, or some combination of these materials. You can also make collages digitally by using Canva or a digital whiteboard app. It helps to give participants general instructions or themes for the collage, for instance, “where do you call home?” or “what is your life’s goal?”

When participants finish, have each team present the collage to the group and explain the significance of the images. Then, display the completed collages in a spot where all contributors and colleagues can admire them, such as in a communal break room or on an internal company blog.

For more visually-creative activities, check out this [list of online art classes](https://teambuilding.com/blog/online-art-classes) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/online-art-classes>)

Volunteering

Volunteering gives folks a shared mission and a sense of doing good for the world. Volunteer work not only connects participants to other group members but also to the wider community. The group can come together to raise funds, do a cleanup, read to children, write letters to soldiers, or seniors. There is no limit to the projects your team can get involved in, and there are always opportunities to do good in the neighborhood.

The best volunteering ideas for community building tend to be ongoing, so that the group can notice a change and take pride in the difference they are making together. Ongoing philanthropy work also gives participants more chances to bond with teammates and the people they are serving.

For inspiration, check out these lists of [group volunteer ideas](https://teambuilding.com/blog/group-volunteer-ideas) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/group-volunteer-ideas>), [online volunteer opportunities](https://teambuilding.com/blog/online-volunteering) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/online-volunteering>), and [fundraising ideas](https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-fundraising) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-fundraising>)

Give-a-minute, Take-a-minute

Give-a-minute, Take-a-minute is an activity inspired by the give-a-penny, take-a-penny dishes in grocery stores. This exercise operates on a pay-it-forward concept. Basically, this activity is a pool folks can talk into when they need extra help, only instead of spare change, requests get other group members’ time and assistance

The offerings can be quick work-related tasks, for instance, mailing a package, or a non-work favor, such as giving an opinion on an outfit. You can make a home base for requests, such as a Slack channel or an office bulletin board.

This activity normalizes asking for help and encourages teamwork, and gives a sense of community support. Give-a-minute, Take-a-minute can also facilitate introductions between team members who get few chances to interact otherwise.

Newsletters

A large component of being a part of the community is keeping updated on other members. Back before the internet existed, most clubs and communities sent out paper newsletters. The practice has since gone digital, with organizations sending out email newsletters.

Newsletters are a way to keep members informed about organizational happenings and other team members' accomplishments. Plus, group leaders can curate the content vs moderating it live, as in forums or group chats.

The message can feature regular columns and sections such as member shout-outs, group announcements, member profiles, and upcoming events. Content can be more playful or routine as well, for instance, featuring favorite quotes, objects members could not live without, foods members recently tried and liked, reading recommendations, and new discoveries. These fun features can engage the audience and help members grow more familiar with each other.

Here is a list of get-to-know-you [questions](https://teambuilding.com/blog/get-to-know-you-questions) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/get-to-know-you-questions>) to use to generate possible newsletter content.

Slack Clubs

Slack Clubs are one of the easiest virtual community-building activities. Within the larger community, members can branch off into subcommittees based on interests. For example, travelers, parents, musicians, or movie buffs. These clubs can give teammates a chance to chat and get to know each other better based on shared passions. Club members can even arrange virtual or in-person hangouts around these hobbies.

To create a Slack club, create a new Slack channel and announce in a companywide Slack thread. You can also allow community members to make their own clubs and committees.

Check out this list of [Slack channel ideas](https://teambuilding.com/blog/slack-channels) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/slack-channels>) for inspiration.

Decorate the Space

One of the most meaningful community-building exercises is to have members decorate the meeting space together. Simply ask each team member to bring a special decoration or accessory for the space. Examples might include posters, comfy throw blankets, plants, or cold brew coffee makers. Each team member adds a special element to make the space more personal and welcoming. You could even offer a modest stipend so that members can buy new items, and teammates can pool their stipends towards a larger purchase.

If decorating a room is not an option, then you can make a team bulletin board instead. You could also create a digital bulletin board together. Here are fun ideas for your [office bulletin board](#).

Lifestyle Challenges

Performing lifestyle challenges is a way to achieve a shared goal together. For instance, drinking more water, kicking unhealthy habits, exercising more, reading, or learning a language. First, decide on an objective, then set a time limit for the challenge, such as a month. Be sure to come up with a way to monitor progress and check in as a group periodically to update each other and cheer each other on. Acknowledging milestones along the way can boost morale and motivation, and you should celebrate the wins at the end of the activity. Even group members who do not complete the challenge or reach the goal will have made strides, and recognizing this progress can encourage participants to keep trying to improve.

Self-improvement is one of the best ways to build community, as growth often requires community support.

The Chain

The Chain is one of the most fun community-building games. The point of this exercise is to reveal similarities between group members. To play this game, participants stand in a large circle. A leader starts the game off by standing in the

center of the circle and making a personal statement. For example, “I have traveled to Africa.” Any participants who share this trait rush to the center of the circle. The first person to reach the speaker and link arms becomes the next section of the chain and must continue the game. The exercise goes on until all players are part of the chain.

This game can uncover surprising similarities and show links between team members. Plus, the game promotes unity and shows that members are part of something larger than themselves.

Prompt of the week

The prompt of the week involves asking a series of thought-inspiring questions for team members to answer publicly. Every week, simply post a prompt and ask team members to weigh in via reply-all email, forum, in-person discussion, or Slack thread. Respondents can react directly to the question and also to team members’ responses.

You can even create a poll out of the most popular responses for lively conversations, and settle the debate via vote. These prompts can foster conversation during times when there is no community business to discuss, and can help peers learn more about each other outside the scope of the work.

Barter Board

The barter board is an in-office classifieds where teammates or volunteers can exchange objects and services. For example, homemade desserts, language lessons, spare desk organizers, tickets to shows, or offers to help clean a messy desk. Participants can also post reasonable requests in this space or just initiate random trades for fun. In the spirit of community, barter boards give members the ability to share expertise and resources and help each other out, plus give members extra opportunities to interact.

Recommendations and Reviews

Word of mouth is one of the major benefits of belonging to a community. Folks tend to trust suggestions from peers over advertisements. Offering up recommendations and reviews is one way to foster a sense of community among a group, as these suggestions provide value for other members. You can structure your review board into different categories, such as books to read, places to visit, and activities to try out. Trello is a great medium for this format, however, you can also make a social

media group or Slack channel. Team members can write about their impressions and experiences, or can share reviews directly from sites like Yelp and Google.

Traveling teammates tend to benefit most from this exercise by getting recommendations for their next destination, making this idea one of the better hybrid community-building activities.

Water Cooler Chats

Every community needs a space to meet and chat, such as the proverbial water cooler that acts as a gathering place in offices. You can create a water cooler space for your group, such as a breakroom, group chat, or recurring meetup, where folks can gather and banter. If meeting in a physical space, then provide drinks and snacks as well as optional activities like board games. If you are meeting online, then be sure members have access to communication platforms such as Slack or a contact list to add new members to group texts.

To encourage conversation, you can occasionally post prompts such as “what TV shows is everyone watching right now?” or “what fun fall activities do you have planned?” It also helps to have guidelines so that team members know if any topics or posting times are off-limits.

Coffee Breaks

Not every community meetup needs to have a structure. In fact, informal gatherings can inspire more natural interactions and build better bonds. Casual meetups like coffee breaks give team members the chance to relax together and talk about whatever topics naturally arise. These 1:1 meetings provide face-to-face time with fellow group members in a casual setting, and can improve group dynamics overall. Members getting to know others individually in more intimate settings strengthens the group as a whole.

Group leaders can use an automated matching tool to randomly pair up members, and those pairs can plan a time to grab a coffee together and chat.

Game Nights

Game nights are one of the most fun community-building activities. These events allow members to gather, compete, and spend time together. Focusing on the game helps to eliminate awkwardness between unfamiliar individuals, and playing the game together can break the ice and provide a fun foundation for the relationship.

To host a game night, simply invite attendees, gather supplies, and provide snacks and drinks. You can either play the same games together, or if the group is larger, then you can offer a variety of games and let attendees choose their own.

For more ideas, check out this [guide to online game nights](https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-game-nights) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-game-nights>) and these lists of team-building [board games](https://teambuilding.com/blog/team-building-board-games) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/team-building-board-games>) and [virtual board games](https://teambuilding.com/blog/online-board-games) (<https://teambuilding.com/blog/online-board-games>)

The background is a solid orange color. In the bottom left corner, there are several thin, white, wavy lines that curve upwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES

Real-world examples of successful community-building initiatives through volunteering.

This session brings some examples that demonstrate how various organizations leverage volunteer efforts to build and strengthen communities. They illustrate different approaches and highlight the diverse impacts that effective community-building initiatives can have. Including these case studies can provide practical insights and inspire other organizations to develop their successful community-building strategies through volunteerism:

Global Brigades

Overview

Global Brigades is an international non-profit organization that mobilizes volunteers to address health, economic development, and education needs in underserved communities across Central America, West Africa, and other regions.

Initiative

Volunteers participate in "brigades" that include medical, dental, and public health missions, as well as projects focusing on water, sanitation, and economic development.

Success Factors

- *Integrated Approach:* Combines multiple disciplines to address comprehensive community needs.
- *Local Partnerships:* Works closely with local communities and organizations to ensure sustainable impact.
- *Volunteer Engagement:* Provides diverse volunteer opportunities that cater to various skill sets and interests.

Habitat for Humanity

Overview

Habitat for Humanity is a global non-profit organization dedicated to building affordable housing for low-income families through volunteer labor and donations.

Initiative

Volunteers help construct homes, participate in fundraising events, and advocate for affordable housing policies.

Success Factors

- *Hands-On Volunteering:* Engages volunteers in the actual building process, fostering a strong sense of community and accomplishment.
- *Homeownership Model:* Involves future homeowners in the construction process, creating a sense of ownership and pride.
- *Global Network:* Operates in numerous countries, adapting its model to local needs and contexts.

The Red Cross Volunteer Network

Overview

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is one of the world's largest humanitarian networks, with volunteers working on disaster relief, health services, and social programs.

Initiative

Volunteers are involved in disaster response, first aid training, blood donation drives, and community preparedness programs.

Success Factors:

- *Emergency Response:* Provides rapid and effective response to natural and man-made disasters.

- *Training and Development:* Offers extensive training programs for volunteers, ensuring they are well-prepared for various scenarios.
- *Global Reach:* Operates in almost every country, with local chapters adapting programs to regional needs.

TimeBank USA

Overview:

TimeBank USA is a network of time banks where people exchange services based on time rather than money. Volunteers earn time credits by providing services and can spend those credits to receive services from others.

Initiative

Participants offer and request services in their local communities, such as tutoring, home repair, or gardening.

Success Factors:

- *Mutual Benefit:* Facilitates reciprocal exchanges that build social networks and trust within communities.
- *Inclusivity:* Encourages participation from a wide range of individuals, including those who might face economic or social barriers.
- *Flexibility:* Allows people to contribute and benefit in ways that match their skills and needs.

The Big Issue Foundation

Overview

The Big Issue Foundation is a UK-based organization that supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by helping them achieve financial independence through the sale of the Big Issue magazine.

Initiative

Volunteers support vendors through mentorship, financial advice, and assistance with personal development.

Success Factors:

- *Empowerment Model:* Focuses on providing individuals with the tools and opportunities to help themselves.
- *Economic Inclusion:* Creates pathways for economic self-sufficiency and personal growth.
- *Community Support:* Engages volunteers and the public in supporting vendors, raising awareness about homelessness.

One Million Trees Initiative

Overview

This initiative involves volunteers in tree planting projects aimed at combating climate change and restoring natural habitats.

Initiative

Volunteers participate in tree planting events, educational workshops, and advocacy campaigns to promote reforestation and environmental conservation.

Success Factors:

- *Environmental Impact:* Directly contributes to ecological restoration and carbon sequestration.
- *Community Involvement:* Engages local communities in environmental stewardship and education.
- *Collaboration:* Partners with schools, businesses, and government agencies to expand reach and impact.

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION



Reflection and Evaluation: How Is Your Community Doing?

Building a community is a dynamic and ongoing process—it grows, shifts, and evolves over time. To ensure its long-term success, it's important to regularly reflect on how the community is functioning, what is working well, and what might need adjustment. Reflection and evaluation help community managers and members stay aligned with their goals, understand levels of engagement, and make improvements to strengthen connections and participation.

Below are some tips, tools, and questions to help you evaluate the health and vitality of your community:

Reflection Tips

- Schedule regular check-ins (monthly, quarterly, or after major events) to review the community's progress and challenges.
- Create space for open dialogue among members—reflection is not just for leaders but for the whole community.
- Celebrate milestones and small wins as part of the reflection process, it boosts morale and reinforces a sense of achievement.

Guiding Questions

Use these to spark conversation and self-assessment within your team or community group:

- Are members regularly participating in activities, discussions, or meetings?
- Do people feel heard and valued in the community?
- What kind of energy do we feel during community interactions, enthusiastic, indifferent, or disengaged?
- Have we welcomed new members recently? Are they integrating well?

- What feedback have we received lately—positive or critical?
- Are our events and communications still aligned with our mission and members' interests?
Are leadership roles clear, and are members stepping up when needed?

Simple Evaluation Tools

1. Participation Tracker

- Track attendance, contributions, or message activity over time.
- Use tools like spreadsheets or integrated analytics on platforms like Slack, Facebook Groups, or Zoom.

2. Community Pulse Survey

- Short surveys (3–5 questions) sent quarterly to check engagement, satisfaction, and ideas for improvement.
- Tools: Google Forms, Typeform, or Polls in community platforms.

3. Example questions:

- How connected do you feel to this community (1–5)?
- What's one thing you enjoy most about being part of this group?
- What could make this community more meaningful for you?

4. Energy Check-In

- At the start or end of meetings, ask members to rate their current energy or engagement (e.g., on a scale from 1–10).
- Use emojis or colored cards (🟢 = energized, 🟡 = neutral, 🔴 = low energy) for a quick, visual temperature check.

5. Feedback Channels

- Set up anonymous suggestion boxes (physical or digital) for continuous, honest feedback.
- Make it part of your culture to ask, “What could we do better?” after every event or activity.

6. Engagement Map

- Create a simple visual that shows who is actively involved, moderately involved, and at risk of dropping out.
- Use this to identify patterns, outreach needs, and opportunities for inclusion.

CONCLUSIONS



Conclusions

In a world facing increasing disconnection, uncertainty, and social fragmentation, building resilient, inclusive, and engaged communities is more important than ever. This manual has explored key concepts, strategies, and practical tools to guide international organizations, volunteers, and community stakeholders in initiating, strengthening, and sustaining community efforts. From defining the core principles of community building to offering hands-on tips, platform recommendations, and real-world examples, the content is designed to inspire both reflection and action.

Strong communities don't just happen, they are intentionally cultivated through shared values, meaningful engagement, and consistent support. Whether offline or online, through local or global efforts, the role of international volunteers, community leaders, and civil society organizations remains vital in shaping a more connected and empowered world. By applying the knowledge, strategies, and resources presented here, communities can thrive, adapt, and continue serving as a force for positive change in society.

ANEX 1

Best Practices for Community Building. Case studies from the organizations.

INEX

INEXClub

Name and type of the event:	INEXClub
Number of attendees and profiles	12
What resources, space, and materials do you need to organise the event?	Presence list, Game Passion Bingo, Pens, Food
Aim, Main topics and methods used Please describe how did you organise the event	The aim was to strengthen the community bonds by creating an informal, relaxed environment for participants to connect, chat, and build relationships. We used facilitating games: to help interactions, and open chat and mingling: Providing time for participants to freely engage in conversations, share stories, and meet new people. The outdoor Setup (park) environment helped to create a casual and comfortable space for natural, unstructured socializing.
How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	The event helped with strengthened relationships within INEX Community, increased the engagement and set a new habit to join INEXClub event.

How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?	The community got an opportunity to build relationships, mingle and share their personal experiences.
How did you promote the event? In case there was also online put links to events published on social media or the web:	Social media: IG and FB FB EVENT IG POST FB POST
Other comments	

MDD - International day of Volunteering

Name and type of the event:	Mezinárodní Den Dobrovolnictví 2024
Number of attendees and profiles	Between 50 to 70 participants (Volunteers, campleaders, local partners, donors, members, board members, INEX team)
What resources, space, and materials do you need to organise the event?	Book a venue (with technical materials like a projector, microphone, speakers) Catering 2 computers Music playlists Disseminations/Posters (upcoming events, programme, evaluation form) Workshops (DIY and IMPROVE Workshop)

	Photobooth + Instax camera and photo papers Materials for the programme (Flipcharts with AZ KVIZ, Mentimeter quiz, Accessories for the introduction of the team).
Aim, Main topics and methods used Please describe how did you organise the event	The aim of this yearly event is not only to gather larger sum of our community but to sum up the volunteering season and its achievements and to award and appreciate the effort of INEX volunteers as well as introduce the new team members to partners or donors.
How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	Aim of the MDD event is to celebrate INEX's volunteers, donors and local partners, to show appreciation and to strengthen INEX community, to network and brainstorm for following season.
How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?	They receive INEX's appreciation and recognition for their contributions. The opening date for the next season. An opportunity to connect and engage with others. A chance to meet the INEX Team and Board members.
How did you promote the event? In case there was also online put links to events published on social media or the web:	We use our website and all our social media: IG and FB FB EVENT Website shared through newsletter Reel FB POST IG POST FB POST IG POST FB POST IG POST FB POST IG POST

	FB POST IG POST FB POST IG POST FB POST after event IG POST after event
Other comments	

PVN in Albania

Human Library

Name and type of the event:	Human Library
Number of attendees and profiles	20 - 30 Participants
What resources, space, and materials do you need to organise the event?	During this activity resources, space and materials we used has been as below: → A person with a story to share to the participants. In our case there was a 30 old blind woman who shared her challenges and how she overcame those in order for today to work in social services of the municipality, being able to have her own radiophonic show, and being very involved in social causes mainly for people with disabilities. → A facilitator/moderator of the event → 2 Volunteers to welcome the participants and help them to be seated in the venue. → A venue, open space for about 30 persons. → A projector to show photos and videos of the person who was the human book./ optional → a few refreshments as water, coffee, cookies and juice
Aim, Main topics and methods used Please describe how did you organise the event	The Human Library event aimed to promote empathy, understanding, and inclusivity by sharing real-life stories of resilience and overcoming challenges. It sought to combat stereotypes and stigmas while empowering participants to engage in meaningful dialogue. Methods used were the

	storytelling in which the blind individual shared her personal journey, highlighting experiences, challenges, and triumphs. After this also an Interactive Dialogue among Participants happened where they engaged in a Q&A session with the speaker/ human book, promoting open conversations and mutual learning. Firstly we identified the topic we wanted to treat with this activity and after that we looked for a person with lived experience to share all the reflections. After that we arranged to send the invitation in the community and share it with a targeted audience.
How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	The Human Library event had a significant positive impact on the organization, enhancing its mission for inclusivity and community dialogue. It strengthened the organization's role as stakeholder in fostering understanding and breaking down barriers, particularly around disability awareness. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to showcase the organization's commitment to promoting empathy, inclusivity, and human rights in the community. The event also facilitated stronger connections with participants, potential collaborators, and community members.
How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?	The target group consisted of young people and community members. It provided a unique opportunity for participants to engage directly with a blind individual's inspiring story, fostering empathy and breaking down stereotypes about disabilities. Participants learned about the realities of living with disabilities and the societal barriers that individuals face. They gained insights into how stigmas and stereotypes can affect people and how to challenge such prejudices.

Barbeque with young people

Name and type of the event:	Barbeque with young people
Number of attendees and profiles	10-20 Participants – Young People, high school Students
What resources, space, and materials do you need to organise the event?	For this kind of activity the resources as below are needed: • Outdoor space – Should be appropriate for making barbeque, sometimes it needs a permission from local authorities or you should check if barbeque events are allowed to be organised. • Barbeque equipment (Grill, charcoal or gas, Charcoal, lighter fluid, or propane gas. Grill utensils like tongs, spatula, grill brush, Aluminum foil or grill mats) • Shade (under the Trees or tents or Umbrellas) • Main Food Items - Meat options (burgers, sausages, chicken, steaks). Vegetarian/vegan options (veggie patties, tofu, grilled veggies). • Side food- Bread, Salads, Chips, and condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo, BBQ sauce). • Drinks - Water, soft drinks, and juice • Serving Supplies - Plates, cups, napkins, and utensils (disposable or reusable), Cutting boards and knives for preparation. • Cleanup Supplies - Trash bags and recycling bins, paper towels or wipes. Different kind of games that can be played during this kind of activity For example: <i>Chess box, Volley ball, Pabmington game, different kinds of Cards Game ect.</i>

Aim, Main topics and methods used Please describe how did you organise the event	The goal of the barbecue event was to bring young people together in a casual and interactive environment to foster connections, encourage collaboration, and generate ideas for future initiatives. It was also an event to “reward” the good work these young people has been doing in framework of a project where they made several community initiatives. The main topics discussed during the activity were about strengthening community bonds among young people, brainstorming and discussing potential projects or initiatives for the future and promoting teamwork and collaboration in a relaxed setting. The event was carefully planned to ensure an engaging and welcoming experience for all participants. The process included: • Venue Selection: An accessible outdoor space was chosen with sufficient facilities for a barbecue. • Preparation: A group of 3 people was assigned to handle logistics, including food preparation, seating, and game materials. • Invitation: Informal invitations were sent to the group of young people that already was formed. • Activities: A combination of cooking together, games, and group discussions was scheduled to ensure a balanced mix of fun and productivity. • Facilitation: Organizers facilitated discussions to help participants brainstorm and share their ideas for future initiatives.
How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	The event positively impacted the organization by: • Strengthening Relationships: It deepened connections with young participants, fostering trust and engagement. • Generating Ideas: The brainstorming sessions provided valuable input and inspiration for future projects or initiatives.

	• Raising Visibility: The event was published on our social media and showcased the organization's commitment to youth engagement and community building. Also showing this event on our communication channels it caught the attention of other young people wanting to be part of these kind of activities.
How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?	Young people had the opportunity to meet, interact, and build friendships in a supportive environment. The event encouraged teamwork, communication, and leadership skills through collaborative activities. Participants felt heard and valued as they contributed their ideas for upcoming initiatives.

CCIVS

Name and type of the event:	• Live Talks (Instagram Live) • ICONic Youth: From Local to Global Through IVS (e-workshop)
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Number of attendees and profiles

Live Talks (27 August 2024)

- Number of viewers: 1804 (viewers on Reels)
- Number of speakers: 2 (CCIVS Youth Committee)
- Moderator: 1 (CCIVS Youth Action Officer)
- Duration: 29:38

ICONic Youth: From Local to Global Through IVS (27 September 2024)

- Number of attendees: 25 people registered (around 20 stayed the longest)
- Number of speakers: 5 (2 CCIVS Youth Committee, 2 ICYE Youth Engagement Committee, 1 CCIVS Finance and Administrative Officer)
- Organising Committee: 4 (3 CCIVS Youth Committee, 1 CCIVS Youth Action Officer)
- Duration: 1.5 hours

What resources, space, and materials did you use for the event?

We used the Instagram Live feature to organise the Live Talks and Zoom for the ICONic Youth e-workshop. We didn't use any special tools or materials. All segments were done online.

For the main presentation, we shared access to Google Slides and used Mentimeter for the ice-breaking session. Breakout rooms were arranged for smaller group-sharing to stimulate two-way conversations.

Aim, Main topics and methods used
Please describe how did you
organise the event

Workshop objective(s)

This workshop encourages young people to recognise their potential as changemakers in their communities and beyond. It also showcases examples of youth who have made significant impacts through IVS.

Main topics

- What is IVS?
- Who is CCIVS?
- About ICON
- Human Library
- ❖ African Youths in IVS: Challenges and Opportunities by Ian Tawanda (CCIVS YC - Zimbabwe)
- ❖ New Perspectives: How IVS Shaped Me and My Worldview by Marcela Fallas (ICYE YEC - Costa Rica)
- ❖ The Power of Youth Leaders in Shaping the Future of Organisations by Mette Lund (ICYE YEC - Denmark)
- ❖ Volunteers at The Frontline: Addressing Risks in Palestine's Conflict Areas by Zaid Daana (CCIVS YC - Palestine)

Our organising committee consists of four young people based in Asia, Australia and Latin America. We organised an Instagram Live (Live Talks) as our way to promote the main event (e-workshop). During the IG Live, the moderator together with the other two speakers was sharing a bit of their IVS journey to the audience and wrapped up with the promotion of the e-workshop. Questions were also encouraged under the Q&A session/function during the session to let people understand more about the movement.

For the session (27 September 2024), we have one of our organising committee members to be the host, where the others act as the supporting members for the entire session and the breakout rooms. We first gathered all the participants together to share more about what IVS, CCIVS and ICON are to align the understanding.

For the breakout rooms, we used the method of “*Human Library*” where the IVS volunteers share their IVS journey experiences with the audience. We divided the participants into two breakout rooms with two speakers in each, where each speaker shared their own stories and their involvement in the action. A Q&A session was also arranged to resolve participants’ questions and aimed to trigger their interests.

	Challenge We created the registration form which was also a simple pre-event survey to collect information of the participants' knowledge on IVS. After the event, many participants didn't fill out the post-event survey, therefore, we found it challenging to analyse the data.
How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	This event basically opened possible opportunities for us to connect with others, especially young people. In terms of social media reach, we also gradually increase our followers and viewers. The event also acted as a stepping stone for us to create a series of similar events in the future, aiming to engage more young people to join the movement. Through this event, we could understand more about the participants' opinions, levels of interest and motivation, so we could adjust our upcoming events accordingly.

How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?

Target Group

- Youth, aged between 17-30
- Students, activists, volunteers, workers, job seekers

Benefits for participants

- Engage with experienced IVS volunteers who share their stories and answer the questions directly.
- Explore understanding of IVS and discover participants' own interests in this unique field.
- Gain valuable information and resources to kickstart the participants' IVS adventure.

Outcomes

- Participants understand more about the IVS movement concept
- Participants understand about IVS activities
- Participants are encouraged to be actively engaged in IVS activities

How did you promote the event?
In case there was also online put
links to events published on social
media or the web:

We promoted through social media (Instagram, Facebook, X, LinkedIn), weekly newsletter and CCIVS WhatsApp Community.

Live Talks promotion on IG [here](#).

Watch Live Talks (IG reels) [here](#).

GAIA

Name and type of the event:	Infosessions about volunteering and learning opportunities (in-person events)
Number of attendees and profiles	approximately 5 to 15 participants per event, participants are youngsters interested in volunteering, experiencing a project abroad, students, etc.
What resources, space, and materials do you need to organise the event?	Venue, computer and projector for the presentation, leaflets and brochures. Infosessions would be co-organized with local organizations, and their venues would be used.
Aim, Main topics and methods used Please describe how did you organise the event	Aim of the infosessions would be to present the opportunities that are available within ESC and Erasmus+ programmes to youngsters in Kosovo. Methods used: presentation and discussion, sharing first hand experience (ex-volunteers would be invited sometimes too), time for Q&A.
How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	Connecting to individuals, youngsters, those that are our target group. Main outcomes would be including persons in Erasmus+ and ESC projects, and supporting them through the experience. Also, promotion on Erasmus+ and ESC would be one of the outcomes.
How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?	Learning about opportunities, and some took part in ESC or Erasmus+ activities. Getting connected to GAIA. The main outcome would be the visibility and promotion of programme, as well as gathering more young people around the organization.

How did you promote the event? In case there was also online put links to events published on social media or the web:	The promotion was done through social media of GAIA, as well as the local organization/institution at whose venue the event took place.
Other comments	We experienced difficulties with the events, e.g. many request emails would not be answers, sometimes events would be postponed by the hosting organization, occasionally even through participants would register they would not show up at the event...

Name and type of the event:	Gathering of members for organizations anniversary
Number of attendees and profiles	Appx. 50 participants, ex-volunteers and participants of GAIA activities, representatives of partner organizations from Kosovo and abroad
What resources, space, and materials do you need to organise the event?	Venue, accommodation, food for all participants, materials for workshops, printing photos for exhibition, equipment for short movie projections, etc.
Aim, Main topics and methods used Please describe how did you organise the event	Celebrate the work of the organization, network, connect and reconnect among members and friends of GAIA, discuss important topics (climate injustice, solidarity, current protests within Balkans, etc.). The gathering involved exhibition, discussions, practical workshops, music evening, short movie screening, connecting to the local community, open space for participants to contribute, etc.

How did this event affect the organization, what were the main outcomes?	Motivation to develop more ideas and reminders of importance of the changes we create as a community, connecting people and stories which can further grow together, connection with relevant stakeholders (from activists to organizations and institutions)
How was the target group and/or community affected? What did they benefit, and what were the main outcomes?	Networking, motivation to stay connected and create changes
How did you promote the event? In case there was also online put links to events published on social media or the web:	Within GAIA's members, through direct contact via email and newsletter
Other comments	