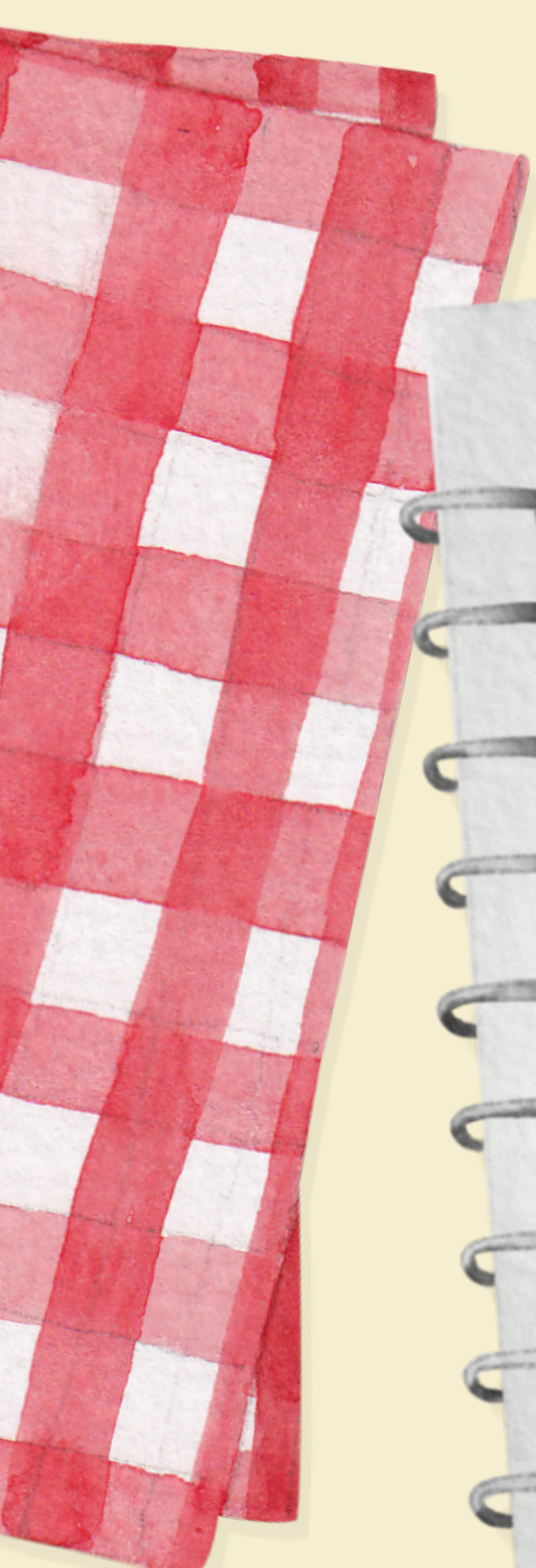




**Voluntary  
Action  
Cuisine**





Recipe books provide ideas, techniques and practical tips, often reflecting the author's style and approach. Most importantly, they encourage readers to start creating their own dishes. Our booklet was based on the same concept: collecting ideas and examples of volunteer activities and making them available and useful to everyone.

Every volunteer organisation wants to recruit and retain volunteers in the long term, engage them, train them, and collaborate with them for the benefit of society. However, many activities that have a long-term impact do not always provide immediate rewards or feedback, and it can be challenging to showcase volunteering to the general public. Volunteering often begins quietly, with small steps in the form of a single action.

A volunteer action is an activity that serves the public interest and is carried out over a short period of time – sometimes just a few hours – by people who devote their time to it free of charge. This can be done individually or in a group, and participants often see the results of their work immediately.

While most actions involve personal participation, there are also examples of online volunteering. Volunteers may meet the target group they are working with face-to-face, or they may help a community remotely. Readers of this publication can also experience the diversity of volunteer actions.

Volunteer action represents and symbolises volunteering, making it easier to reach out to those interested in trying these activities and encouraging them to become more committed. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to engaging with young people, who prefer activities with an immediate impact and are often reluctant or afraid to make a deeper commitment. A low-threshold volunteer action makes it easier to reach young people, but it can also encourage those with fewer opportunities to try volunteering.

The aim of this collection of volunteer activities is to provide inspiration based on the experiences of partners in five European countries. This list could, of course, be much longer, but we hope that what is described here **will inspire everyone to organise their own actions in their communities and spread volunteering as widely as possible!**





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# Academy Of Migrant Arts

## Ingredients

- One passionate workshop leader with a cultural craft to share
- Curious and creative participants
- A cosy space for hands-on art and conversation
- Materials tailored to the chosen craft (e.g., for fileteado porteño):
  - Wooden or metal plates (one per participant)
  - Watercolour or acrylic paints
  - Thin paintbrushes
  - Pencils and erasers
  - Printed traditional patterns for inspiration
  - Tracing paper (optional)
- A generous dose of openness, storytelling, and intercultural respect

## Preparation

- Arrange the location for the workshop
- Purchase the necessary materials for the selected craft activity
- Get in touch with the workshop leader and discuss the cultural background related to the activity

## The process

Warm welcome and cultural tasting (30 minutes)

- Greet participants with a drink or snack from the workshop leader's culture (e.g., yerba mate from Argentina)
- Share stories about the tradition, its social role, and any personal connections to it
- Introduce the place of origin and the background of the craft (e.g., Buenos Aires and fileteado porteño)

Demonstration and inspiration (15 minutes)

- The leader presents key techniques and visual language of the chosen craft
- Showcase sample motifs, the historical context, and the steps involved
- Discuss symbols, colours, and meanings embedded in the tradition

Hands-on creation (2 hours)

- Participants receive their materials (e.g., wooden or metal plates, paints, brushes)
- Using the provided materials, they sketch, paint, and decorate under guidance
- Emphasis is placed on personal expression within the cultural style
- The leader provides support, offers tips on techniques (e.g., shading, colour balance), and encourages experimentation

Show and tell closing circle (15 minutes)

- Each participant presents their finished piece and shares the inspiration behind it
- Wrap up with a reflection on what was learned about art, identity, and each other
- Celebrate the craft as a form of living cultural heritage



## Useful advice

- Use biodegradable or reusable materials where possible
- Translate key steps or terms to ensure inclusivity
- Encourage the leader to share both personal and cultural stories to enrich the experience
- Allow time for slower participants – there is no rush in art!
- Embrace imperfection as part of the creative process
- Be prepared for emotional moments – cultural sharing can be deeply personal



# A gift for Hungarian communities living abroad - A video of the National Holiday

## Ingredients

- Volunteers who enjoy and are skilled at reading aloud or reciting poetry
- A good-quality smartphone for recording
- A volunteer with experience in video editing and post-production
- Video editing software (even basic programs can work)
- Optional: a nice opening and closing shot to frame the video beautifully

## Preparation

- First, decide on the theme and occasion to which the poem (or prose) will relate
- If you're part of a national network or have professional partners, organising this project will be easier; if not, it is a great way to build new connections
- Assign each stanza (or passage) to different individuals or groups
- Allow time for practice, then record each part, setting a time window (e.g., one a week) for submissions
- The final video editing is often quick and easy for many of today's tech-savvy youth - find the motivated person

## The process

Coordination and planning (1-2 weeks before the deadline)

- Reach out of idea of volunteering across borders to youth groups or partner organisations across Hungarian cities
- Share the idea, technical instructions, and deadlines

Recording (within 1 week)

- Volunteers record their assigned verse in a creative or meaningful setting
- Encourage diversity in locations and times of day to create visual interest

Editing and post-production (1-2 days)

- Combine the video clips into a single video
- Add titles, transitions, and a unifying audio or visual theme, if desired

Sharing the video (on or before March 15)

- Upload the video to YouTube or another platform
- Send the finished video as a thoughtful gift to Hungarian communities abroad through a kind message or via partner organisations
- Encourage feedback and discussion among viewers

## Useful advice

- Plan the background of each recording. Perhaps record in front of a landmark, all indoors, at night, or at different times of the day to symbolically create a "day through poetry"
- Poorly planned or cluttered backgrounds can distract from the poem, so choose the visuals carefully
- Try to ensure that all recordings are made with similar equipment and framing (e.g., all in landscape mode on phones) as inconsistent formats can make the final edit difficult or less visually appealing
- The poem, occasion, speakers, and locations are only limited by imagination - be creative but always respectful of the literary work

"It felt great to contribute to something bigger, than my local group."

"Seeing all our parts come together gave me goosebumps!"

"I've never been part of a video project before - now I want to do more."

"We even showed the video at our school celebration!"





# Baking buns with the elderly

## Ingredients

- volunteers and elderly people (preferably an equal number of both)

### Ingredients of buns:

- flour
- sourdough or yeast
- warm water
- salt
- sieve

### Tools:

- bowls
- spoon
- wooden boards
- baking paper
- baking trays
- oven



## The process

- Create pairs from of volunteers and elderly people
- The volunteers and the elderly need to work together throughout the process
- Give clear instructions about the recipe
- Place the ingredients on the table
- Mix the ingredients
- Shape the buns
- Bake the buns

## Useful advice

- Wear clothes that can get dirty
- Wash your hands carefully before mixing the dough
- Chat, sing or play together until the buns are baked

Implemented by  
VAC international  
volunteer team  
in Szeged

**It is a great voluntary action that involves different generations. It also works well in an international environment, for example with foreign volunteers.**

## Preparation

- Contact the elderly club and the venue of the action
- Prepare the place where the event takes place
- Find a good recipe for the buns
- Buy the ingredients
- Ensure you have enough bowls





# Cleaning Up Sektor Rinia: A Youth-Led Initiative

## Ingredients

- Youth volunteers
- Gloves, garbage bags, and cleaning tools
- Recycling bins
- Educational materials on sustainability
- Support from the Civil Society Development Center (CSDC) Durrës and “Zëri 16+“
- Venue: Sektor Rinia, Durrës

## Preparation

- Planning a meeting with the organisers
- Outreach and recruitment of volunteers
- Procurement of cleaning materials
- Development of educational materials on sustainability
- Logistical coordination for waste disposal

## The process

### Introduction and awareness session

- Briefing on the environmental impact of waste
- Overview of the clean up plan and volunteer roles

### Clean up action

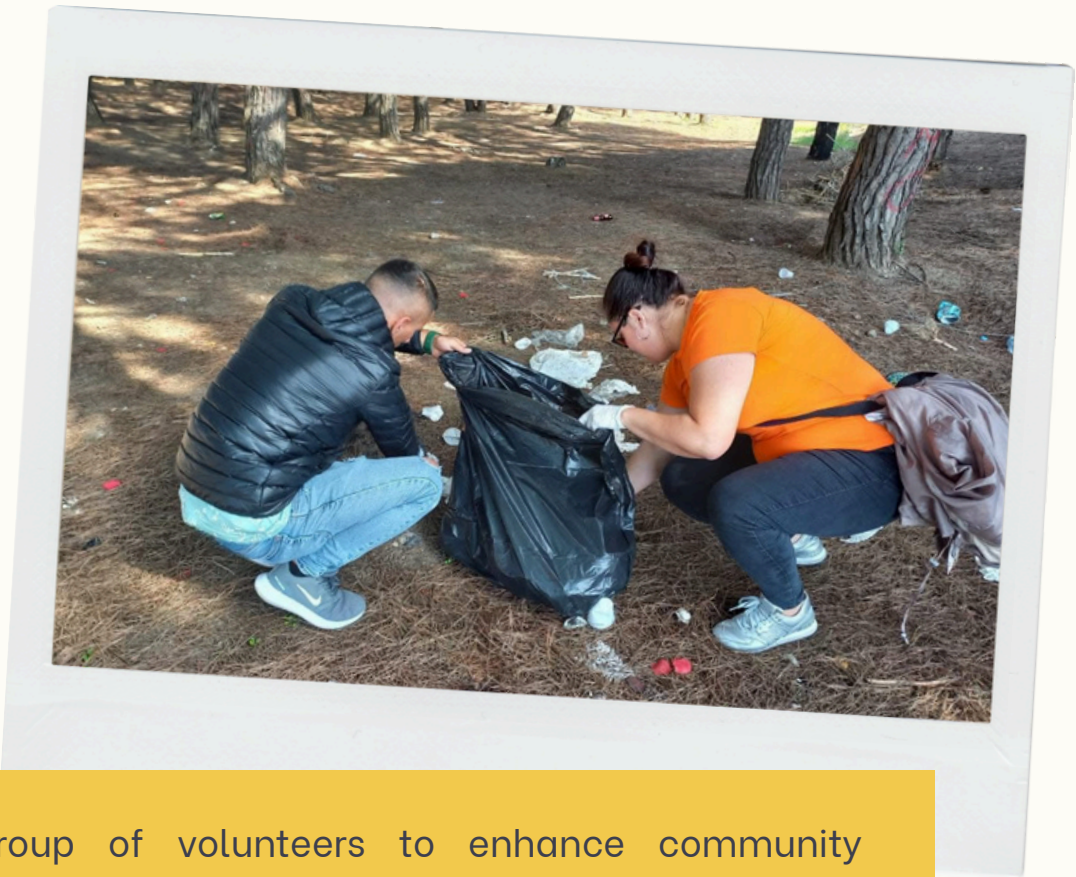
- Volunteers divided into teams to cover different zones of Sektor Rinia
- Collection of litter and sorting of recyclables
- Proper disposal of waste in designated areas

### Educational workshops and discussions

- Interactive discussions on sustainability practices
- Training on waste reduction and responsible consumption

### Community engagement and reflection

- Sharing experiences and key learnings
- Encouraging volunteers to advocate for sustainable habits
- Group photo and recognition of volunteers



## Useful advice

- Ensure a diverse group of volunteers to enhance community representation
- Partner with local waste management authorities to arrange proper disposal
- Equip volunteers with adequate protective gear to ensure their safety
- Use social media to raise awareness and encourage broader participation
- Integrate educational sessions to promote long-term behavioral change

**“Participating in this initiative made me realise how much of an impact small efforts can have on our environment.”**

**“Cleaning up Sektor Rinia was not just about picking up litter, it was about building a culture of responsibility.”**

**“This experience has inspired me to be more conscious of my own waste habits and encourage others to do the same.”**



# Cookie Dream: Sweet Charity Fair At Polish School

## Ingredients

- School volunteer club members who will prepare some desserts at home
- Volunteers who will sell the food at the fair
- One teacher
- A tool for online communication between volunteers
- Several tools to inform potential clients about the fair: a poster at the school, messages to students and parents
- A camera or phone to document the activities
- Energy and positive vibe while selling

## Preparation

### Planning ahead

- Think about the specific cause you would like to raise money for (Who or what do you need the money for?). Where and when can you organise the fair? How long will it last? How much food do you need? Who will you ask to prepare and sell the food?
- Plan the whole event and the meeting before it
- Organise a meeting for volunteers where you will inform them of the purpose and plan of the action

### During the meeting with volunteers

- Inform the volunteers about the aim of the fair
- Make a list of the foods to be sold and the students who volunteered to make them
- Encourage students to work with their parents or siblings if they need help or company
- Ask three volunteers to prepare a poster to advertise the event

### Before the day of the fair

- Send information to everyone at school (students, teachers, parents) to inform them of the date, location and purpose of the fair. You can also mention the average prices of the food to be sold

## Useful advice

- If not everything was sold, you can eat it together
- You can also treat the volunteers to some candies to show your gratitude for their hard work and commitment

## The process

### On the day of the fair

- Ensure there is a clean and appealing place to sell the food (tables with tablecloth and napkins) and that the students selling the food are wearing gloves
- Put the prepared food on the tables with price tags

### While selling

- Ensure that everything goes as it was planned
- Take photos / videos

### After selling

- Ask volunteers to clean the place
- Count the money you have collected

### At the end

- Summarise the achievements, tell your volunteers how proud you are of them, how much money you have raised and how it will help to achieve your goal. Decide together with the volunteers which charity action will be supported by the money





# Exploring together - trips for refugees with Míša

## Ingredients

- Volunteer with a desire to help – Míša, a student of pedagogy
- A group of Ukrainian seniors who now live in a new city (can be any target group)
- Inspiring places to visit
- Accessible transport connections (public transport, train, bus). Alternatively, you can explore the surrounding areas within walking distance – if you have limited funds, you can choose destinations that are accessible on foot. The tours can be adapted to the physical condition of the participants
- Guide, map or phone; suitable clothing; snacks; and a good mood



## Preparation

- Two weeks before the event: choosing a destination, organising transport, creating a programme
- One week before the event: agreeing with participants, printing maps and information
- Event day: meeting, trip, photo and video documentation

**“In Teplice, I first heard the history of this beautiful city. Now I feel more part of the Czech Republic.”**

## The process

- Plan your route. Volunteer Míša always carefully finds out what might interest the elderly. For example, in our location of the spa town of Teplice, there is an exotic butterfly house and a refreshing water park
- Meeting and opening. Welcome at the meeting point, brief presentation of the programme, sharing of expectations
- Experiences, informal learning. In the neighbouring city of Teplice, volunteer Míša tells the seniors about the city's history, and they discover nature together in the butterfly house and enjoy summer fun in the aqua park. During the trip, Czech language is practiced naturally as people ask about words and share impressions
- Conclusion. By the end of each trip, everyone not only leaves with new knowledge, but also a sense of belonging

## Useful advice

- Accessibility is key. Choose places with wheelchair access and adjust the pace to suit the group
- Informal atmosphere. Learning languages is best done in a natural environment and with a good companion
- Capture the moments. Take photos and videos to share with others

**“Thanks to the trips with Míša, we have overcome our shyness and improved our Czech.”**





# Food collection

## Ingredients

- Social service clients, volunteers, coordinators
- Uniforms or aprons, boxes for donated food, information leaflets, tables and chairs, shopping trolleys, roll-up banner about the collection, transport vehicle

## Preparation

- Cooperation with the National Food Collection
- Agreement with a specific grocery store
- Approaching clients and volunteers
- Providing space, food collection materials, food removal, marking for volunteers
- Preparing information leaflets
- Distributing aprons or T-shirts to volunteers and clients
- Time allocation: 4-5 hours

## The process

- Getting up a roll-up banner with information about the collection
- Clients and volunteers welcome donors at the stand and inform them how they can help. They go around the store and hand out information leaflets, thank the donors for their help, take over the food and then sort and put it in boxes
- After the food collection is over, we take the selected food away in shopping trolleys and load it into a car to transport it to our warehouse



## Useful advice

- Make sure everyone understands their role
- Create a friendly and open atmosphere so that all participants feel welcome and motivated
- Support your clients in getting involved in the community and improve their public relations skills



**"I am proud that I managed to overcome my social phobia, I felt like I was part of something big. It was very enjoyable."**

**"It's nice to be useful. And it's great that there are so many people who don't hesitate to help those who need it right now."**





# Greenery management of the city of Warsaw

## Ingredients

- One migratory bird species requiring assistance (e.g., the common merganser)
- Urban green spaces and bodies of water (e.g., parks, canals)
- Identified migration routes intersecting with urban infrastructure
- A team of dedicated volunteers
- One volunteer-kit including training materials and safety guidelines
- Public awareness signage and communication channels
- Partnerships with local authorities and law enforcement
- A structured monitoring schedule



## Preparation

### Identify the conservation need:

- Monitor urban wildlife to identify species requiring assistance during migration or breeding seasons
- Map out critical habitats and potential hazards along migration paths
- Discuss the topic with local experts or authorities

### Engage stakeholders:

- Collaborate with local government bodies, environmental organisations and community groups
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder

### Recruit and train volunteers:

- Launch a volunteer recruitment campaign targeting local residents
- Provide comprehensive training sessions covering species behavior, safety protocols, and communication strategies

## The process

### Provide tasks to volunteers:

- Supporting frogs during migration time
- Creating perennial beds
- Planting bulb flowers and trees
- Monitoring the route taken by the ducks
- Locating the habitat of bats

### Implement monitoring and assistance protocols:

- Develop a monitoring schedule, ensuring coverage during peak migration times
- Equip volunteers with necessary tools (e.g., reflective vests, communication devices)

### Enhance public awareness:

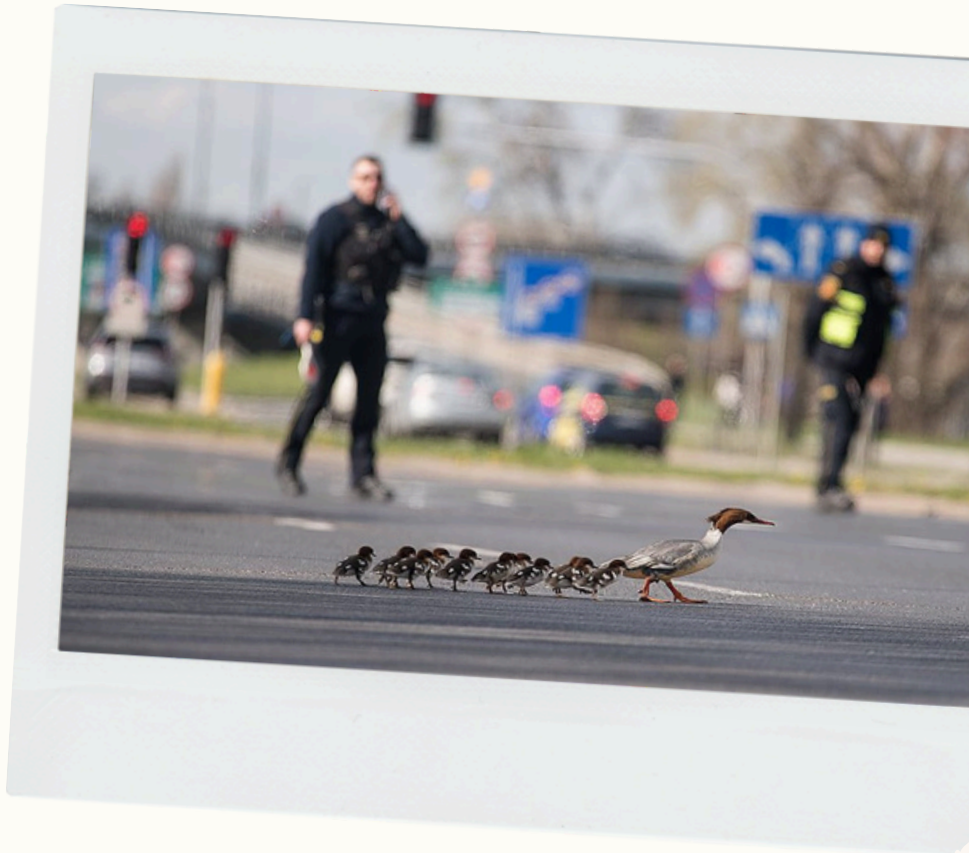
- Install informative signs along migration routes advising the public on how to act when encountering wildlife
- Utilise social media and local media outlets to disseminate information and updates

### Coordinate with authorities:

- Maintain open lines of communication with local law enforcement and municipal services, if necessary
- Develop contingency plans for high-risk situations requiring immediate intervention

### Evaluate and adapt:

- Collect data on the initiative's outcomes, including the number of animals assisted and volunteer participation rates
- Solicit feedback from volunteers and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement
- Adjust strategies and protocols based on findings to enhance future efforts



## Useful advice

- Integrate educational components into the initiative, such as school programmes and community workshops
- Celebrate successes with community events to recognise volunteer contributions and raise awareness
- Document the initiative's progress through photography and storytelling to inspire broader participation



# Literary Reading Sessions for the Elderly of Szeged

## Ingredients

- Elderly participants living in nursing homes, attending retirement clubs or living alone
- Young readers who enjoy reading aloud, preferably those passionate about literature, drama club members, or drama students
- Coziness: a warm and welcoming space, either an intimate corner for small groups or a large hall that allows the reader's voice to fill the room
- Stories and literary pieces: nostalgic tales, humorous or even slightly cheeky, stories that evoke memories of youth
- Optional props (blankets, warm lights, tea and snacks) to create a cosy atmosphere

## Preparation

- Choose suitable literary material – avoid stories that are too heavy or emotionally challenging
- Coordinate with elderly care homes or community centres to use their space and engage their participants
- Select young volunteers with good reading skills and a warm presence
- Brief the readers on how to read: slowly, clearly, and expressively
- Arrange the space so that it feels comfortable and personal

## The process

### Welcome and Introduction (15 minutes)

- Greet the participants and briefly explain the activity
- Introduce the readers and invite elderly participants to share their expectations

### Reading session (20–30 minutes)

- Young participants read selected literary pieces aloud
- Choose 1–3 short stories or excerpts based on the interests and energy levels of the audience

### Interactive discussion (15 minutes)

- Invite elderly participants to share their memories or thoughts inspired by the reading
- Facilitate a warm conversation to enhance connection and storytelling

### Feedback and next steps (10–15 minutes)

- Ask participants what kind of stories they would like to hear next time
- Thank everyone and discuss the possibility of regular sessions



## Useful advice

- Keep the sessions short, as elderly people may tire easily
- Read slowly and clearly to support those with hearing difficulties
- Choose uplifting, humorous, or nostalgic content to create a positive emotional impact
- Include intergenerational interaction to reduce feelings of loneliness
- Encourage young people to be empathetic, patient, and present

**"I felt young again - these stories reminded me of my childhood!"**

**"As a young reader, I felt like I was truly connecting with someone from another world."**

**"I never thought reading aloud could be this fun and meaningful."**

**"Hearing young voices brings so much life into our days."**



# Magic gardening in a heritage house

## Ingredients

- A heritage house that needs help organising its garden for the programmes with children and the elderly
- Enthusiastic volunteers
- Garden gloves
- Gardening tools (pruners, garden shears, lawn mower)
- Plants
- Nice weather

## Preparation

- Contact the institution (heritage house) where you would like to help with gardening
- Ask what the institution needs
- Choose the group of volunteers
- Get prepared with the instructions and let the volunteers know what they need to do in the garden
- Prepare the necessary tools you need (garden shears, gloves etc.)

## The process

- Give instructions at the venue: cut the branches from trees, plant fruits and vegetables, cut the grass
- Wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty and collect the tools you need: pruner, shears, gloves, lawn mower
- Start the gardening with the group
- Prepare the soil for the planting
- Plant the vegetables and fruit one by one
- Cut the branches off trees where necessary
- Cut the grass in the garden
- Help the volunteers during the action if needed
- Pack away the tools
- Clean yourself, change your clothes
- Watch the children and the elderly people as they enjoy the clean and organised garden you have just created. Show recognition for the work of volunteers

Implemented by  
VAC international  
volunteer team  
in Szeged



## Useful advice

- Risks: be careful with the large branches, they could injure the volunteers
- Sustainability tip: don't use single-use plastic gloves that, use long-term gardening gloves

**"It was a relaxing and enjoyable activity; I didn't expect that."**

**"It was good for team building too, because we had so much fun."**

**"It felt good to help the workers of the heritage house, since they don't have enough capacity to manage everything around the house. I knew that we were making the garden beautiful for the children and the elderly people who come here to learn about their ancestors, which it made the purpose of this volunteering even more valuable to me."**



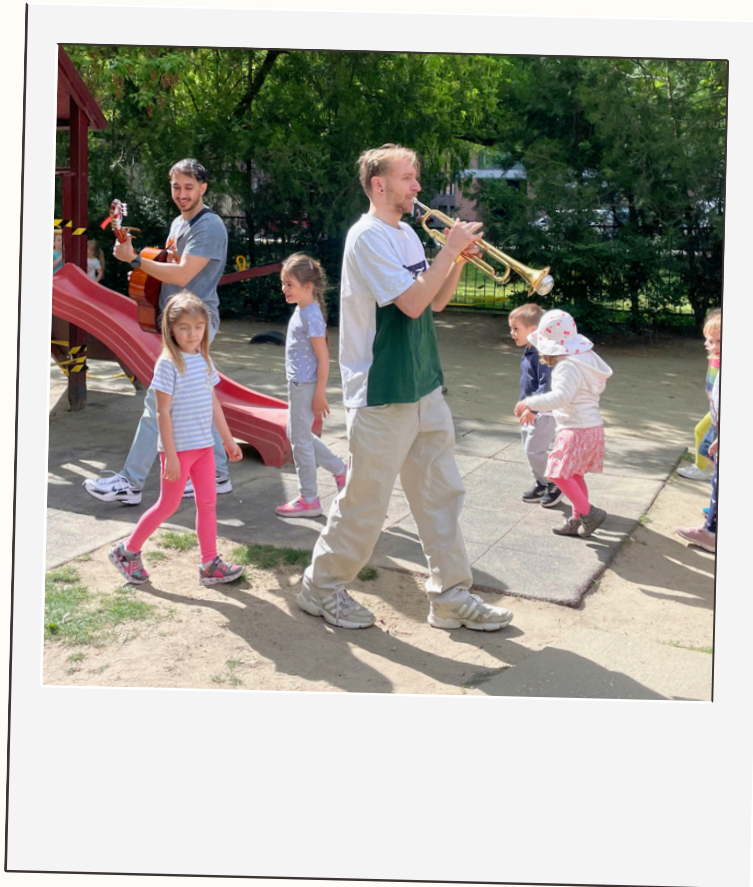
# Music-Filled Institutions! - Bringing Joy Through Song and Sound

## Ingredients

- Volunteers who can sing or play an instrument – musical skills are essential
- Performers don't need to be professionals – even music students can deliver heartfelt performances
- Reach out to music schools, local choirs, or bands – they may welcome the opportunity
- Optional performers: local theatre artists, zither or accordion players, choir members, or school groups
- A host or emcee to introduce the performers and guide the event
- Venue equipment if needed, such as a keyboard, microphone or simple speaker (depending on the setting)
- People living with disabilities (e.g., the disabled people's house in Szeged)

## Preparation

- Talk to professionals or staff at institution of the people living with disabilities to understand the audience, including their musical preferences, attention span, and level of interaction
- Based on this feedback, curate a musical repertoire – consider seasonal or thematic elements (e.g., spring or Mother's Day)
- Assemble the group of performers and schedule rehearsals if needed
- Coordinate the logistics with the institution, including space, timing, the number of attendees, refreshments
- Keep the programme short and engaging – 20 to 30 minutes usually works well
- Ensure the safety and comfort of the attendees during the event and serve refreshments afterward, if planned
- Prepare to document the event through photos or videos (with proper permissions)



Planning and coordination (two weeks before the event)

- Reach out to musicians, school contacts, or performing volunteers
- Create a list of performances and assign roles
- Visit the venue in advance if possible

Rehearsal and promotion (one week before)

- Run a short rehearsal if needed
- Announce the event within the institution – staff and residents will appreciate the anticipation

## The process

Event day (1–2 hours including setup and teardown)

- Welcome and introduction by the host of the centre for people living with disabilities
- Musical performance of 4–6 songs or pieces, with opportunities for clapping or other interaction
- Closing words and thanks to the performers
- Serve refreshments and allow time for informal interaction or feedback

**“It was amazing how the whole room started clapping along.”**

**“I was nervous at first, because I've never visited the disabled people's house of Szeged, but their smiles were a gift for me.”**

**“I'll never forget how someone living with disabilities started singing and someone else started dancing with us.”**



## Useful advice

- A warm, informal performance can be more moving than a formal concert
- Consider organising a series of musical sessions throughout the year
- Familiar songs spark joy and connection – music really does transcend generations
- Keep things light – uplifting songs, a cheerful atmosphere and a flexible schedule go a long way
- Always consider the emotional sensitivity and health needs of the audience



# Old-School Brain Games with the Elderly

## Ingredients

- Elderly participants who regularly attend club meetings and enjoy chatting, singing, or card games, and who are open to trying something fresh and mentally stimulating
- Classic games from the past such as: “Hangman,” “Battleship,” “Word Categories” (e.g., Country, City, Boy, Girl), and “Dots and Boxes” (also known as “Chicken Guts”)
- Young people who enjoy leading group activities, either because they want to learn these old games or because they already have a personal connection to the participants (e.g., their grandmother or neighbour attends the club)
- Materials: Paper, pencils, possibly a large board or flipchart
- A cheerful room where people can chat and laugh comfortably, and if someone brews a warm cup of tea, it’s the perfect setting for a “brain workout” session, like how it was in the Szegedien club of Szent Rozália Ház

## Preparation

- There are two possible approaches:
  - Young people can learn the games on the spot from the elderly, while still leading the session
  - As another option, young people also can prepare in advance and surprise the elderly with a guided, playful experience
- Gather simple, low-prep materials
- Ensure the space is set up for interaction and comfort, with tables for writing, enough chairs and good lighting



## The process

Welcome and warm-up (15 minutes)

- Introduce the participants and give a brief explanation of the activity
- Invite elderly participants to share memories of the games from their youth

Game Time – classic paper games revival (45–60 minutes)

- Play several rounds of classic games, switching partners or game types as needed
- Try individual games, like Hangman on a large board, and two-player games for deeper interaction

Memory sharing & laughter break (15 minutes)

- Encourage storytelling about how people used to play these games, and any fun or nostalgic moments
- Laughter is guaranteed when funny words or surprising answers come up!

Wrap-up and game collection (15 minutes)

- Wrap up with a short reflection
- Ask participants to write down the rules of any lesser-known games for a shared “Game Collection”
- Thank everyone and invite them to the next session

## Useful advice

- It’s best to have several young people involved – both leading and participating in the games
- Some games work well on a large visible board, allowing everyone to shout out answers, which makes gameplay more dynamic and accessible
- Playing in pairs allows for deeper conversations and connections across generations
- Keep the mood light and fun – about the aim is to enjoy the moment and stimulate the mind

**“I hadn’t played these games since school – they brought back so many good memories!”**

**“I love that the young ones wanted to learn our old games. We had so much fun together.”**

**“I was surprised how quickly we all started laughing – it felt like I was a kid again.”**

**“The best part was making new friends while playing – both young and old!”**



# Rain Garden

## Ingredients

- 5 volunteers
- yard with a good conditions of enough rain
- plumbs
- plants
- gravel
- sand

## Preparation

We check the condition of the building of Dobrovoľnícke centrum Košického kraja, n.o. and its surroundings up to a distance of three meters.

## The process

- Inspection of the building and measurement of the roof size, inspection of the areas in front of and near the building where a rain garden could be created
- Soil permeability test at the site selected as suitable for a rain garden
- A soil test is carried out within 48 hours
- Analysis of the sun exposure and land slope , analysis of data from the statistical office
- Based on this, selection of suitable plants
- Analysis of the average amount of rainfall in the given area
- Determining the size of the rain garden and the technical procedure for disconnecting the rainwater pipes to the rain garden
- Proposing the budget and administrative activities, such as ordering plumbing and excavation work, ordering plants, gravel, sand
- Provision of volunteers
- Implementation activities



## Useful advice

Take into consideration the benefits and the advantages of the rain garden:

- Saving money, as you will not have to pay for
- Rainwater drainage (about 100 € per year)
- Increasing the groundwater supply on your property
- Reducing the temperature on the property by around 3 °C
- Increasing the air humidity on the property
- Reducing dust and allergens in the air

**“Thanks to rainwater retention in the natural environment, our city’s environment is improving.”**

**“They increase the attractiveness and aesthetics of yards or areas in front of schools and apartment buildings, which of course increases the attractiveness of the entire city.”**

**“Students at schools have a better microclimate, thanks to water evaporation, which makes learning better and the air more pleasant.”**



# Reading and creating in the library with volunteer Olí

## Ingredients

- A volunteer full of creativity
- Children eager for adventure
- A library or other suitable meeting place
- A book and art supplies (paper, glue, crayons, scissors, etc.)

## Preparation

- Arrange a suitable time and place with the library (volunteer Olí comes every Wednesday afternoon)
- Choose a book to read that inspires and appeals to the children's imagination
- Prepare art supplies according to the book's theme (paper, glue, crayons, scissors, etc.)
- Inform parents and children about the activity through the library or social networks

## The process

- Every Wednesday afternoon, volunteer Olí comes to the library with a bag full of stories
- Volunteer Olí reads a book to the children – sometimes exciting, sometimes funny, but always a story that stimulates the imagination (approx. 20 minutes)
- After the reading, it's time for the creative part – the children participate in an art activity inspired by the story (approx. 30 minutes)

*Every meeting is different, every piece of work is original, and the joy of time spent together is always unique.*



## Useful advice

- Don't be afraid to get involved, even if you're neither a professional artist nor a teacher. The desire to share and inspire is important
- Find a space for your activity in a library or other community centre – you can create something extraordinary, too!
- Use different art techniques that match the age and skills of the children
- If the children are not familiar with the book, introduce them to the main characters and plot to help them enjoy reading the more
- Maintain a safe environment – make sure the children use scissors and glue correctly

**“Volunteer Olí has the gift of creating a safe space where children not only listen to stories, but also learn to express their feelings through creative activities.”**

**“Our library has come to life thanks to volunteer Olí, children love coming back here, and parents appreciate that their children are spending their free time meaningfully.”**

**“Volunteer Olí is incredibly patient and kind. Her Wednesday readings are always a magical experience for children.”**



# Reading tales

## Ingredients

- Seniors who are willing to read tales and stories to children
- Kindergartens that host the activity
- Kindergarten children who love listening to tales

## Preparation

- The organiser and the kindergarten need to agree on the frequency and timing of the voluntary action
- Selection of seniors who read tales (decision on whether it is a one-time or regular activities for the senior)
- Time the activity appropriately – avoiding flu season and other pandemic times

## The process

- The senior enters the kindergarten at the agreed time and reads out a tale or two
- The children listen to the tale



Check out  
the video here!



## Useful advice

- Good timing is crucial, in accordance with the kindergarten's schedule
- It can give more to the elderly if you choose from traditional fairy tales (for example we chose from old Slovakian fairy tales)

**This is an intergenerational activity, which connects seniors with children. Kids become more tolerant towards older people and seniors become more understanding towards children. In larger cities, where grandparents often do not live close to their grandchildren, this activity can help to offset the absence of grandparents in children's life.**



# Students and seniors create together

## Ingredients

- Seniors living in senior care homes
- Secondary school students
- Materials for the creative activities, in this case: linen and beeswax

## Preparation

- Timing of the meeting
- Preparation of materials if needed, e.g. cutting the linen to an appropriate size
- Try out creating the product beforehand

## The process

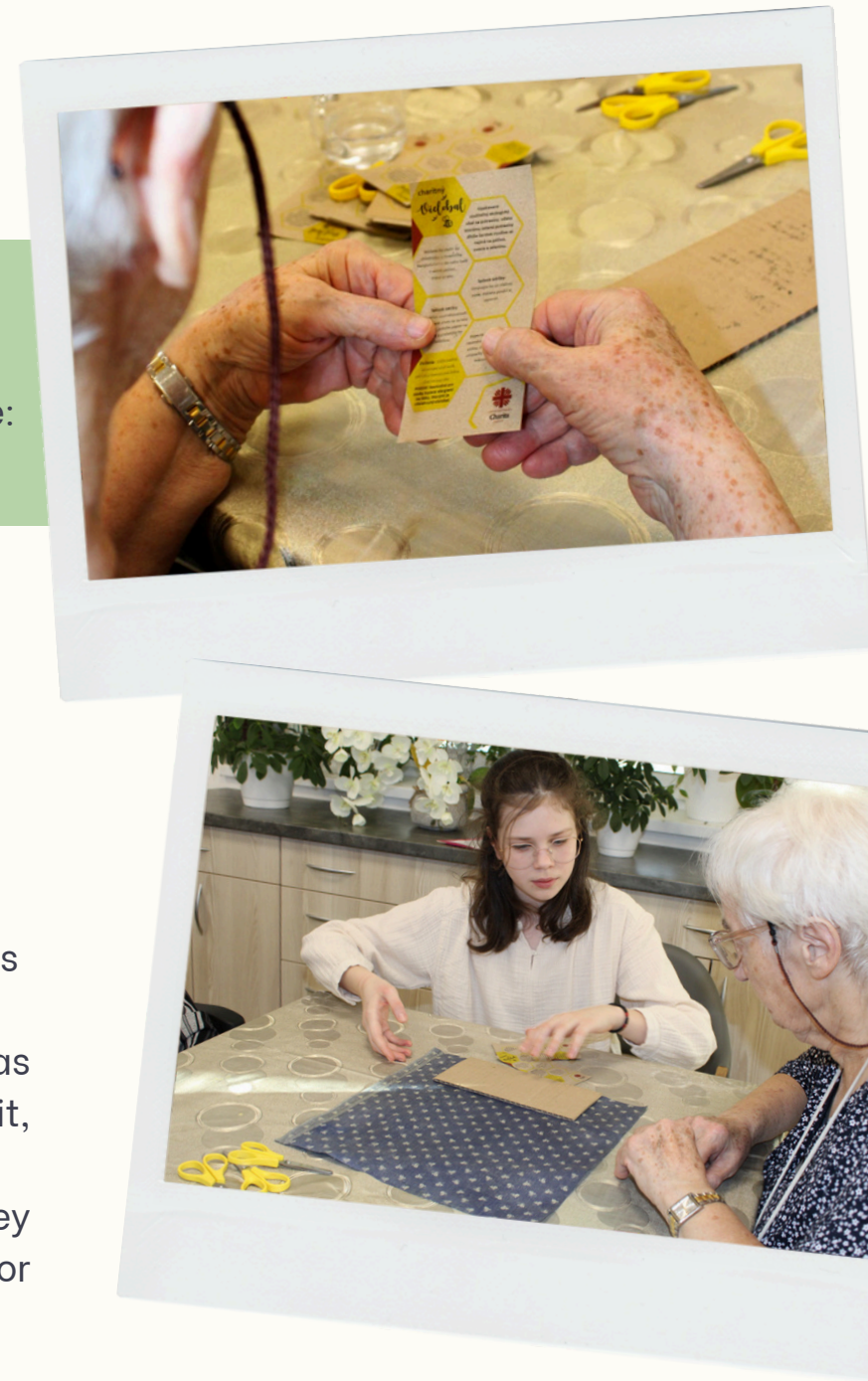
- Students visit seniors living in senior care homes
- They make handicrafts together
- They create easy-to-make products, such as beeswax linen bags for storing food, fruit, vegetables, etc.
- They decide what to do with the products they have made: give them as gifts to relatives or offer them for charity

In our example from Slovakia the beeswax bags are provided to the Caritas movement, who sell them and use the profits for charity.

**It is a great intergenerational voluntary activity, that makes young people become more empathetic and respectful towards the elderly, and makes seniors more understanding of young people.**

## Useful advice

If you decide on the common creation of the products, try out their production to avoid any surprises during the action





# Small urban flowerbed

## Ingredients

- Volunteer group
- Summer flowers on sale
- Small tools for soil preparation, watering can, a bag of nutritious soil

## Preparation

- In mid-June, take a tour of the garden and find out when the summer flowers go on sale
- Discover a neglected area in the city that is not currently being used for planting
- Make an agreement with the municipal government on the installation of a small city flowerbed

## The process

- Choose a date and plan for 2-3 hours of activity, ideally on a weekend morning when there are few people in the city and the atmosphere is calm
- Form a group of 5-7 volunteers
- Provide work gloves and tools for digging up weeds and aerating the soil
- On the day before the volunteer event, purchase summer flowers at a discount, a bag of nutritious soil, tools, work gloves, and a watering can

**“You did a great job with the video  
and the flowerbed is great.”**

Check out the  
video here! →



## Useful advice

- Bring a bag or large box for weeds and rubbish
- Buy summer flowers in the afternoon or evening, so that they can stay in the trunk of the car overnight for transportation to the site and planting the following morning
- Arrange access to water at a nearby store or with helpful neighbours

**“Thank you, beautiful work.”**

**“It caught my attention even behind  
the wheel. It's beautiful. I hope it lasts.”**





# Social Animation and Sports Activities for Children

## Ingredients

- Children from Eftali Koci and Met Hasa schools
- 20+ youth volunteers
- Sports equipment (balls, cones, jump ropes, etc.)
- Educational and creative materials
- Support from the Civil Society Development Centre (CSDC) in Durrës

## Preparation

- Collaboration with school leadership and teachers
- Planning meeting with CSDC Durrës and school representatives
- Recruitment and training of volunteers
- Procurement of sport and educational materials
- Scheduling and coordination with schools
- Venue preparation and logistical arrangements

## The process

- Opening and introduction
  - Welcome speech by organisers and school representatives
  - Introduction of volunteers and overview of planned activities
- Social animation and interactive games
  - Icebreaker games to build confidence and teamwork
  - Creative activities such as storytelling and role-playing
  - Group exercises to enhance communication skills
- Sports and team-building activities
  - Football, basketball, and relay races
  - Cooperative games to develop leadership and collaboration
  - Fun competitions to encourage active participation
- Educational and reflection session
  - Discussions on inclusion, respect, and teamwork
  - Sharing experiences and reflections on personal development
  - Encouraging children to participate in future voluntary activities



## Useful advice

- Ensure that activities can be adapted for all children, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds
- Partner with school staff to improve engagement and safety supervision
- Use sports as a tool for social inclusion and breaking down barriers
- Foster an environment where every child feels valued and included
- Encourage volunteers to build lasting connections with the children

**“This event gave me the confidence to interact with others and feel included.”**

**“Playing sports together showed me how teamwork makes us stronger.”**

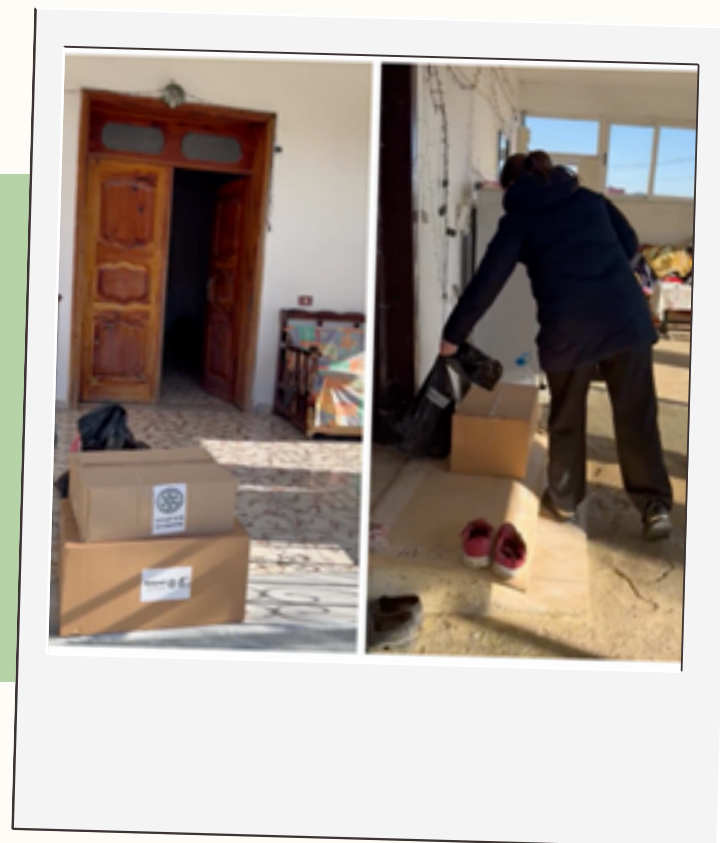
**“I enjoyed learning new skills while making friends in a fun environment.”**



# Spread Hope for the New Year!

## Ingredients

- Youth volunteers
- 60 beneficiary families
- Food packages
- Cleaning supplies
- Clothing and toys for children
- Local citizens, businesses, and organisations
- Vehicles for transportation
- Venue for organising donations



## Preparation

- Planning a meeting with the Rotaract Club Durrës and partners
- Outreach to businesses and individuals for donations
- Sorting and packaging of collected items
- Coordination of volunteers and delivery logistics

## The process

### Call for donations & collection

- Engagement with local businesses, organisations, and individuals
- Promotion of the initiative via social media and community networks

### Sorting & preparation

- Volunteers gather at a designated venue to categorise food, clothing, and toys
- Packing items into distribution-ready parcels

### Distribution day

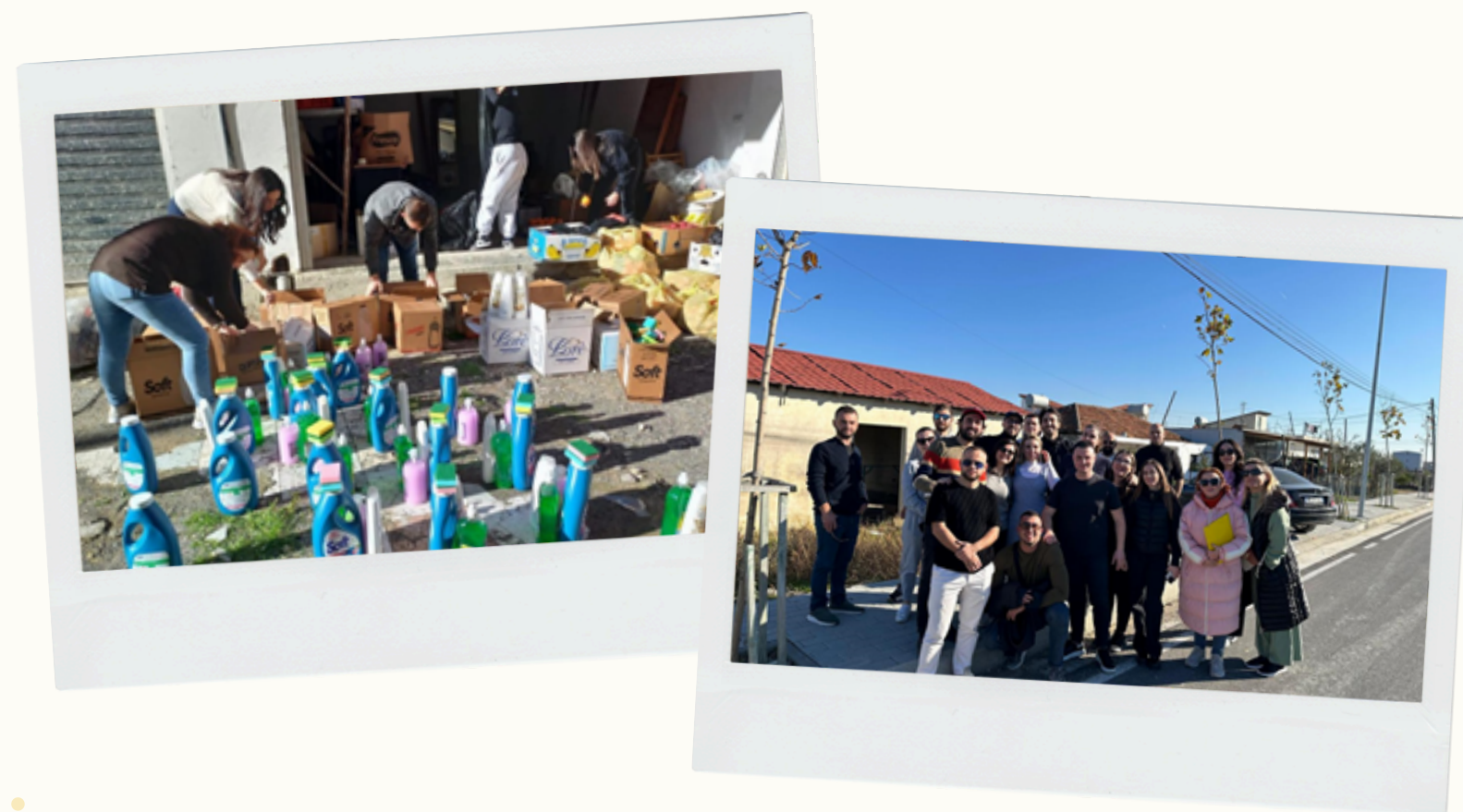
- Volunteers divided into groups to cover different neighbourhoods
- Visit to 60 families in need to deliver aid in Spitallë, Porto-Romano, Ish-Kënetë, Shkozë, Plazh, Shijak, and Sukth
- Personal interaction and engagement with families

### Follow-up & community engagement

- Recognition of volunteers and contributors
- Sharing event highlights and success stories online

## Useful advice

- Ensure diverse representation of volunteers to reach different community groups
- Partner with trusted local organisations to ensure a smooth logistics process
- Address potential transportation issues in advance
- Maintain transparency in donation collection and distribution
- Encourage year-round community engagement beyond the holiday season



**“Seeing the smiles on children’s faces made all our efforts worthwhile.”**

**“This initiative helped me understand the power of giving and community support.”**

**“The sense of solidarity and teamwork among the volunteers was truly inspiring.”**



# Summer Future Makers Event

## Ingredients

- Volunteers including foster care teenagers participating in existing programmes
- Other foster care teenagers
- 1 programme leader
- 1 workshop
- 1 Kahoot quiz
- City game (Actionbound App)
- Registration form to the event
- A tool for communication (e.g. Messenger)
- A camera or phone for documenting activities
- Accommodation
- Venue
- Tickets (train and bus, if needed)

## Preparation

- Set the date and venue
- Invite programme participants to the event (using the recruitment form)
- Invite them for volunteering to prepare activities for others
- Choose and inform participants of the time limit
- Propose some activities (e.g. City game, Kahoot quiz, workshops)

## The process

Preparation beforehand:

- Arrange the venue for the workshop
- Purchase all materials required for the chosen craft activity
- Contact the workshop leader to review the cultural context and activity plan together

On the day of the event:

- Prepare the venue: arrange the space, set up the equipment, and lay out the necessary materials
- Let the volunteers implement the activities and assist them if needed
- After the event, guide participants through discussions about the benefits and challenges

## Useful advice

- Ideally the programme would be connected with sightseeing for teenagers from small villages
- This could be combined with meetings with positive role models (also volunteers)
- The programme leader should be available to provide help and support with preparation (online) and throughout the event





# Together for Local Green Areas in Slovakia

## Ingredients

- Equipment and tools (bin bags, gloves, spades, rakes, brushes, watering cans, etc.)
- Small trees and flowers to plant
- 10+ volunteers
- A detailed plan of what you would like to achieve
- Refreshments
- Sponsors

## Preparation

- If needed, or if there is a possibility, secure finances through (small/regional) projects
- Ensure all necessary tools
- Advertise your event and inform local residents
- Select your volunteers and assign tasks
- Have somebody who is responsible for refreshments
- Have somebody who can cook goulash soup for the volunteers
- You may ask for sponsors to provide small gifts/vouchers, which can be raffled among the participants afterwards

## The process

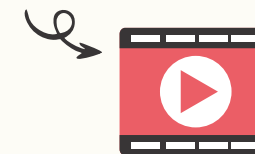
- Start your activity in the morning. Divide the volunteers in groups. Assign tasks in advance, hand out tools and equipment
- After briefing they can start the activities: painting benches, collecting rubbish, planting new trees, etc.
- Some volunteers are responsible for providing refreshments and/or a bowl of warm soup
- Monitor the volunteers and help with organisational issues
- After the work, hold a raffle to give out the sponsored gifts or vouchers

## Useful advice

- Have a plan B in case of bad weather
- Share before-and-after photos
- Thank all your volunteers on social media



Check out  
the video here!





# Volunteers at the Matonni Running Festival in Ústí nad Labem

## Ingredients

### Personal:

- Volunteers (students, athletes, seniors, community groups, individuals interested in sports and event organisation)
- Volunteer coordinators (people responsible for communication and team management)
- Partner organisers (RunCzech)

### Material (provided by the organisers of the sporting event):

- Identification elements (T-shirts, tags, reflective vests)
- Necessary equipment (tables, station equipment, route markings, refreshments for runners and volunteers)
- Mobile phones (private volunteers, coordinators and work organisers)



## Preparation

- Three months before the event: recruitment and registration of volunteers (social networks, website, email newsletter, leaflet distribution)
- One month before the event: training volunteers, assignment of specific roles (refreshment stations, flag bearers, track, luggage storage, etc.)
- One week before the event: logistics, division into teams, distribution of equipment, final briefing, meeting of leaders with organisers
- Day of the event: arrival of volunteers, briefing, preparation of the site, resolution of ongoing situations



## The process

- Registration
- Assignment of roles (during recruitment until the day before the event)
- Preparation of the site (construction of sites, installation of signs, distribution of refreshments)
- Coordination of runners and support on the course (provision and serving of refreshments, encouragement)
- Ensuring safety and the smooth running of the event
- End of the event and clean up (dismantling of sites, cleaning of the area, evaluation and thanking of volunteers)

**"Simply register, choose the role that suits you best, and join a team of amazing people who help create an unforgettable atmosphere at the race. In return, you'll gain meaningful experiences, new friendships, and the chance to see the world of sports from a whole new perspective."**

**"That is one of the many motives - the feeling of being part of something so big and cohesive."**

**"The volunteers were fantastic, they really made the run enjoyable. Thank you for your enthusiasm."**

**"Without them, nothing would work - every volunteer is an irreplaceable part of the race. Thanks to their support, the course is safe, the refreshment stations are ready, the runners are motivated and smooth organisation is ensured."**

**"It was an incredible experience, seeing the athletes' joy and knowing that I had contributed to their success."**

## Useful advice

- Volunteers: choice of location upon registration
- Sustainability: recycling and waste sorting
- Risks: adverse weather conditions, health complications of participants, organisational shortcomings
- Interesting facts: this race is international and offers a varied route along the Sřekovské nábřeží alongside the Elbe River to the section passing through the Spolchemie industrial zone



# Warsaw Uprising Museum

## Ingredients

- A clear mission focusing on preserving and promoting historical memory
- A diverse pool of volunteers aged 14 and above
- Structured volunteer roles: long-term and event-based
- One comprehensive training programme and support systems
- One calendar of events and educational programmes
- Effective communication channels (website, social media, newsletters)
- Recognition and certification mechanisms
- Partnerships with educational institutions and community groups

## Preparation

Develop structured volunteer roles:

- Offer two primary pathways:
  - Long-term volunteering: Regular commitments over extended periods
  - Event-based volunteering: Participation in specific events or short-term projects

Implement a comprehensive recruitment process:

- Create an accessible application process for individuals aged 14 and above (twice per year)
- Utilise online platforms and community outreach to attract a diverse volunteer base

Provide training and support:

- Develop training modules covering organisational history, volunteer responsibilities, and communication skills
- Make a probation period
- Assign mentors or coordinators to support new volunteers

## The process

Engage volunteers in meaningful short-term activities:

- Involve volunteers in various tasks, such as:
  - Assisting with museum exhibitions and tours
  - Checking entrance tickets
  - Support guests with disabilities
  - Meetings with veterans
  - Preparing and sending gift cards to veterans
  - Helping to prepare concerts and commemorative events
  - Participating in archival research and documentation projects

Foster a sense of community and recognition:

- Organise regular meetings, workshops, and social events to build strong bonds within the community
- Provide certificates and public acknowledgement to recognise volunteer contributions

Establish effective communication channels:

- Maintain an updated website and an active social media presence to share news and opportunities
- Distribute newsletters to keep volunteers informed and engaged

Evaluate and adapt the program:

- Collect feedback from volunteers to assess programme effectiveness
- Make necessary adjustments to improve volunteer experiences and programme outcomes

## Useful advice

- Collaborate with schools and universities to integrate volunteer activities into the educational curricula
- Encourage intergenerational participation to enrich the volunteer community
- Share volunteer stories and experiences to inspire broader community involvement
- A system for managing volunteers in a Polish museum was first developed within this institution
- It allows to manage the engagement process of each volunteer. People who wish to volunteer at the Museum can do so within a strictly defined time frame. An account is created for them, enabling them to apply for individual events





# Closing words

Voluntary Action Cuisine was developed as part of the Erasmus+ Youth Workers Mobility programme. The aim of the project was to collect good practices in the field of volunteering, with a specific focus on voluntary actions. As part of the project, an international experience-building workshop was held, where youth workers from the participating countries shared their experiences and jointly implemented four volunteer actions in Szeged, organised by Talentum Foundation, the project coordinator.



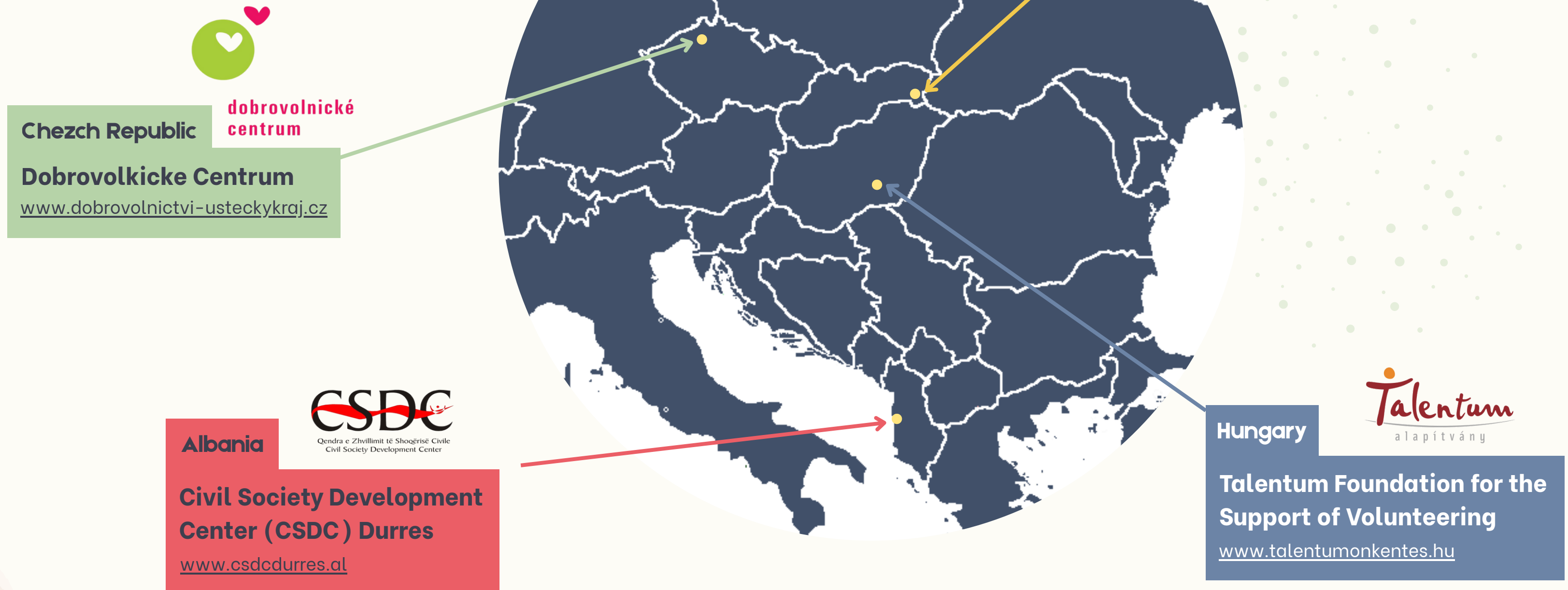
The actions described in the booklet can be adapted by anyone according to their needs and capabilities. If you have been inspired by the booklet, we would appreciate your feedback at [iroda@talentumonkentes.hu](mailto:iroda@talentumonkentes.hu).

**We hope that all readers will find something of interest in the booklet, and we wish everyone good luck in volunteering work!**



# Authors

The volunteer actions present the experiences of volunteer centres in five countries: Albania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The authors of this volume are open to providing further advice on their activities, either upon request or in the form of cooperation.





# Impressum



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**Volunteering  
is always  
on the menu**

