

EVENT REPORT:

VOLUNTEERING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH:

TOOLS, LESSONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#IfEveryoneDid #IVD2023



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The event “Volunteering for Sustainable Growth: Tools, Lessons, and Recommendations” was held on December 5th from 14:00 to 16:00 at the UN House Conference Room. It celebrated International Volunteer Day, focusing on sustainable development and the theme “If Everyone Did.” The event, a collaboration between the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), aimed to highlight volunteerism’s impact, motivate participation, and acknowledge diverse volunteer voices. It included panel discussions and sessions with various speakers, emphasizing personal development and community empowerment through volunteering. This presentation will cover key takeaways from the event, along with a set of recommendations to improve volunteering practices. This event happened under the Youth 4 Inclusion, Equality and Trust that is implemented in the Western Balkans and funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF).

Key takeaways:



1. Professional and Personal Development: Volunteering aids in building diverse skills beneficial for both personal and professional growth.



2. Reciprocal Impact: It offers a dual experience of giving and receiving, enhancing self-worth and confidence.



3. Government Role: Volunteering should be part of government agendas for community benefit, not individual promotion.



4. Inclusion in Education: Essential to promote within educational systems to instill its value and encourage practice.



5. Media Representation: Positive stories in media are crucial to inspire volunteering and counter negative perceptions.



6. Legal Framework Support: Adjusting legal frameworks across Bosnia and Herzegovina is vital to recognize and encourage volunteers.



7. Private Sector Engagement: The private sector plays a crucial role, with professionals like lawyers or welders offering their expertise voluntarily, enriching community resources and vocational training.



8. Personal Resonance in Volunteering: Emphasizes choosing volunteer activities that align with one's passions, skills, and aspirations, highlighting the importance of personal connection to the cause.



9. Flexibility and Enjoyment: Advocates for a spontaneous approach to volunteering, encouraging individuals to engage in activities that bring joy and fulfillment, free from rigid schedules.



10. Focus and Balance: Reflects on the speaker's personal journey, underscoring the importance of focusing efforts on areas of genuine interest while maintaining a balance between passion and practicality.



11. Volunteering as Lifelong Commitment: Describes volunteering as an ongoing commitment, integral to personal and professional development, and a medium for making meaningful contributions to society.



Recommendations to enhance volunteering in Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. Diverse Volunteer Recruitment through Community-Based Recruitment Campaigns: Carry out diverse recruitment campaigns in different communities across Bosnia and Herzegovina, utilizing local media, community centers, and educational institutions to attract a wide range of volunteers.

-Utilizing diverse channels like local radio, social media, community bulletin boards, and disability organizations to reach a broad audience.

-Partnering with community leaders to promote volunteer opportunities. Their endorsement can enhance trust and encourage participation from all community segments.

-Conducting interactive sessions in community centers, schools, and universities, offering sign language interpreters and materials that cater to various learning and accessibility needs.

2. Skill-Based Volunteering through partnerships with professional organizations: Collaborate with professional bodies and universities to encourage skill-based volunteering. This could involve creating internship and volunteer programs that align with professional development goals

-Collaborating with educational institutions and professional bodies to design internships and volunteer roles that align with various skill sets, including accommodations for people with disabilities, Roma communities, rural populations, single parents, and other marginalized communities.

-Establishing mentorship programs where experienced professionals guide volunteers, with a focus on inclusive practices.

-Providing training for mentors to understand the needs of volunteers with disabilities, Roma communities, rural populations, single parents, and other marginalized communities ensuring they can offer appropriate support and adjustments.

3. Sustainability through Local Leadership: Developing volunteer programs that are led and sustained by local leaders and community members, ensuring continuity and local relevance.

-Providing specialized training for local leaders, including those with disabilities, Roma, rural populations, single parents, and other marginalized communities in project management, leadership, and inclusivity.

-Focusing on building a leadership pipeline within the community that represents its diverse makeup, including gender, ethnicity, and ability.

-Asking for support from the UN Youth Advisory Body to seek guidance and ensure that volunteer programs remain relevant, effective, and inclusive.





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