



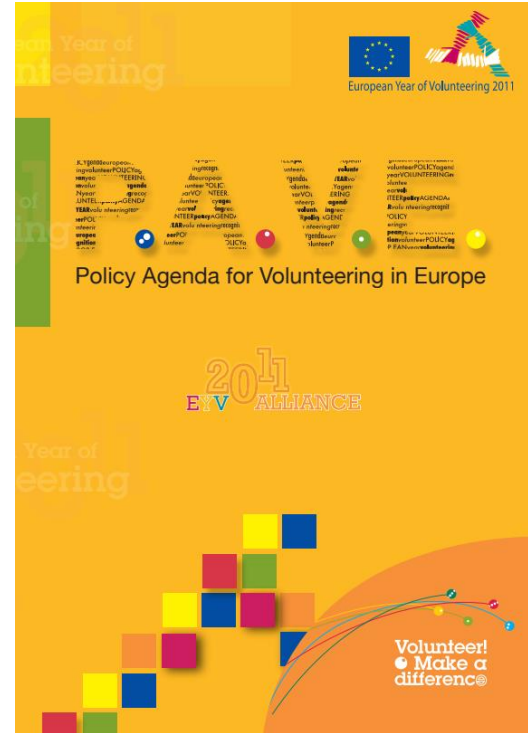
Volunteering, Validation and Employability

VOL+ Program Evaluation

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Background: validation and recognition of volunteering



The celebration of the **European Year of Volunteering** was a great impetus and advance in the vindication of learning acquired through the action of volunteering, which is reflected in the **Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE)**, the result of the cooperative work of a multitude of European social agents linked to volunteering.

Normative framework

National framework



Law 45/2015 on Volunteering
(Articles 10 and 24)

European framework



Council Recommendation of
20 December 2012 on the validation
of non-formal and informal learning

Other policies to help promote
the recognition of
competences in volunteering



Volunteering sector in Spain



- 4.5 million volunteers*
- 25.000 voluntary organization
- 10 areas of volunteering
 1. Social volunteering
 2. International development cooperation volunteering
 3. Environmental volunteering
 4. Cultural volunteering
 5. Sports volunteering
 6. Educational volunteering
 7. Socio-health volunteering
 8. Leisure and free time volunteering
 9. Community volunteering
 10. Civil protection volunteering

PVE is a third level non-profit organization whose mission is to make visible, encourage, promote and protect transformative voluntary action. To consolidate and strengthen the network of organizations that make it up as spaces for participation and representation of volunteering in society as a whole.

*PVE. 2023. La Acción Voluntaria en 2023:
https://biblioteca.plataformavoluntariado.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/00_general_acc.pdf

VOL+ Program



- It has been developed since 2014
- It promotes a validation system of competences obtained through volunteering
- It is a validation system designed by volunteering sector for volunteers
- **Objectives:**
 - Recognising the impact of volunteering on competence development
 - Making it visible that voluntary action promotes learning
 - Improve the employability profile of the volunteers.

What does VOL+ certify? Transversal Competences

‘These are competences that mobilise personal resources in different situations that require them and that are inherent to the subject and the context. This transversal competence responds to a request from the organisational environment and is considered essential to transform knowledge into behaviour’ (PVE, 2021)

Elements: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Definition of competences in terms of **learning outcomes**. It assesses and certifies what a person knows, understands and is able to do as a result of voluntary action.



VOL+ process

1. Training
2. Assignment of tutor
3. First meeting
4. Identify and document volunteer LO
5. Assessment
6. Contrast and critical incident meeting
7. Certification proposal
8. Review by PVE
9. External certification committee
10. VOL+ certificate issued by PVE

Parties involved in the VOL+ process



Volunteering organisations:
supporting the implementation of the programme among their volunteers

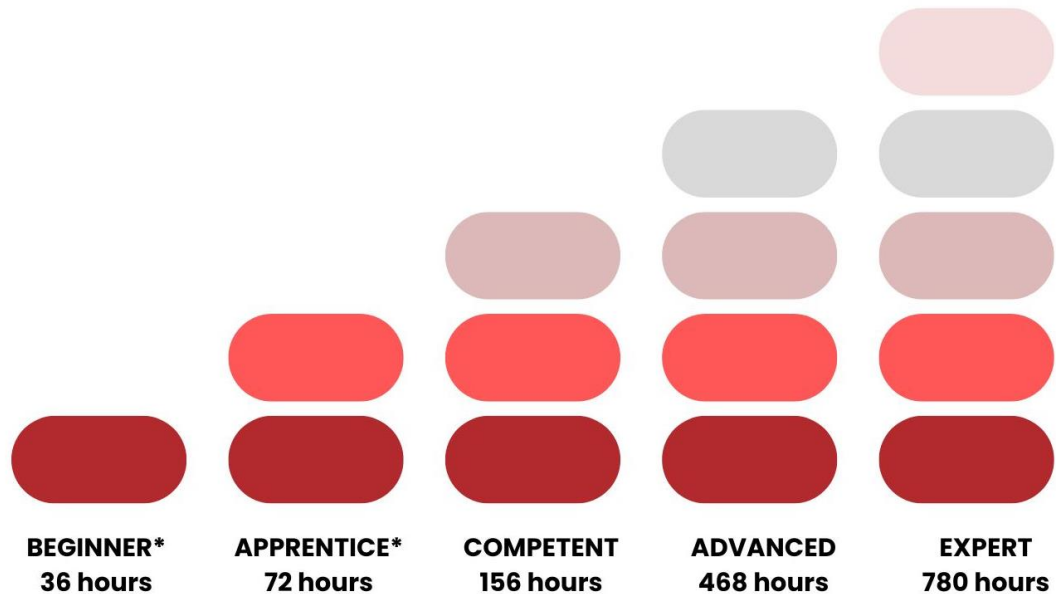


Tutors (Evaluators):
from companies, organizations or independent professionals, experts in HR, competence management or evaluation.



Volunteers:
assisting and guiding them along their certification process.

VOL+ evaluation system



- The volunteer starts the assessment at the entry level according to the number of volunteer hours (minimum level of participation).
- Each level has descriptors that are associated with what the person knows, understands and is able to do depending on the competence to be certified (Learning outcomes).
- Instruments: forms, questionnaires and interviews.
- Assessment matrix: by competences and by levels.
- To certify the level, all performance indicators must be met.
- Each competence will have the traceability of the person's learning determined (compliance criteria).

*Non-certifiable levels

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

Using the EBP methodology, the impact of the VOL+ validation and certification process on the volunteers' profile is measured.

Volunteers complete questionnaires related to their motivations, expectations and satisfaction with the VOL+ program. If they declare that they wish to be contacted 6 months after receiving the VOL+ certificate, they are contacted to complete another survey on the impact of the program. The average intervention is 2 months per process, the N is the number of participants who in one year have completed the Vol+ process and the 3 questionnaires. The evaluation design is pre-experimental pre-post, with a single intervention group.

INSTRUMENTS:

- Pre: Motivation and expectations questionnaire
- Post: Satisfaction questionnaire
- Post 6 months: Employability monitoring inventory Vol+

EBP: results 2021

The sample consists of N = 37 volunteers who participated in the program for two months in 2020 from 19 organizations. 83% of participants were female with an average age for the total sample of 36,36 years (SD = 10.77) and a range of 18 and 57 years.

The sampling technique used was convenience sampling (Martínez, 1995).

The program adopts a pre-experimental design with one intervention group.

The result of the binomial test suggests that more than 30% of the participants consider that their employability has improved, (Observed $p = 0.48$, $p < 0.019$).

The regression result suggests a significant relationship between the dependent variable (employment status six months after completing the programme) and the predictor variables (gender, age, employment status at the end of the programme, incorporation of volunteering in the CV, mention of volunteering in job interviews).

Finally, different sources of threat to internal and external validity are identified to improve the impact of future replications.

*Cedena, B., Pieper, M., Arco-Tirado, J. L. (2021). Volunteering, Competence Certification and Employability: VOL+ Program Evaluation. *Methaodos. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 9(2), 232–243. <https://doi.org/10.17502/mrcs.v9i2.489>



EBP: results 2023

The sample consists of N=39 volunteers who participated between 2021-2023, for two months, from 26 organizations.

In terms of gender 64% are women and 36% are men with a mean age of 40 years (SD = 13.34) and a range of 24 to 75 years.

Selection by convenience (Kalton, 2020) was the sampling method utilized. The research design was pre-experimental with a single intervention group.

The result of the binomial test suggests that more than 50% of the participants consider that their employability has improved, (Observed $p = 0.61$, $p < 0.5$). The regression result suggests a significant relationship between the dependent variable (employment status six months after completing the programme) and the predictor variables like 'communication with the tutor'. ($\beta = -3.455$; $p < 0.05$) in Model 6, $F(27, 11) = 44.55$, $p < 0.0005$, $R^2 = 84.3$.

Both results suggest that VOL+ can significantly contribute to improving the employability profile of participants, if implemented with fidelity. Different limitations are identified to improve the impact in future editions.

***to be published**

Conclusions

- Binomial test: Increase from 30% to 50%
- Both analyses suggest that VOL+ can contribute significantly to improving the employability profile of participants, if applied with fidelity
- Limitations of the analysis identified: small sample in two years ($N \leq 39$), pre-post study with no control group, ad hoc nature of the instruments, lack of nationally and internationally comparable evaluation studies, other.
- Carrying out this type of evaluation is a great effort for an organization such as PVE, but we believe it is important to know its impact and contribute to knowledge in this field.
- Finally, it is important to promote coordination mechanisms so that learning through volunteering is also valued and recognized by educational institutions and/or companies. The appreciation of learning acquired in different contexts is not only the responsibility of one sector, but of all sectors and areas involved, because the main objective is that people have the tools to develop and live a full life.

Questions?

Thank you very much!

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