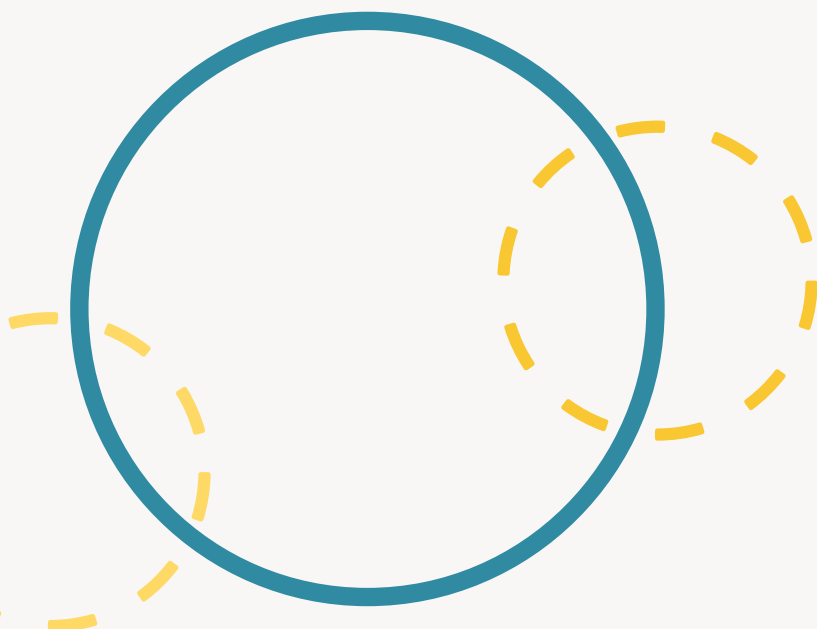


GUIDE

SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING METHODOLOGY: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS AGENTS OF CHANGE



Promotor:



Investidor social:



Parceiros:



Cofinanciado por:



Pista Mágica has tried, in this Guide, to use a "written and visual language that gives equal status and visibility to women and men," whose adoption is reinforced in the Council of Ministers Resolution no. 103/2013, referring to the V National Plan for Equality - Gender, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination 2014-2017. We are, however, aware of the debate around non-binary gender, believing that a fully inclusive language will have to involve gender non-referencing or the adoption of a gender-neutral grammatical gender.

We also recognize, with the humility of someone who is (still) making progress in terms of inclusion, the limitation of this document in terms of accessibility, committing ourselves to look for ways to make this Guide more accessible in the future and to guarantee, in future projects and services, the creation of accessible products and materials.

CREDITS

Title: Supported Volunteering Methodology Guide: Persons with Disabilities as Agents of Change

Authors: Ana Gonçalves, Cláudia Dias and Isadora Freitas

Writing support: Paula Pereira and Sunlina Xu

Proofreading: Ana Luísa Azevedo, Mafalda Magalhães and Sónia Fernandes

Graphic Design and Layout: Isadora Freitas

Translation: Alexandra Caetano and Bernardo Carvalho

Editing: Pista Mágica – Associação

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASSOL: Associação de Solidariedade Social de Lafões (Lafões Social Solidarity Association)

CASES: Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social (António Sérgio's Cooperative for the Social Economy)

CHP: Community Happiness Plan

CIS: Centro de Inclusão Social do Magarão (Social Inclusion Centre of Magarão)

CNIS: Confederação Nacional das Instituições de Solidariedade (National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions)

CPV: Confederação Portuguesa de Voluntariado (Portuguese Confederation of Volunteering)

CVI: Centro de Vida Independente (Independent Living Centre)

EESC: European Economic and Social Committee

EMVIO: Estrutura Municipal de Voluntariado Inclusivo e Orientado de Vila Nova de Gaia (Municipal Structure for Inclusive and Oriented Volunteering of Vila Nova de Gaia)

ENIPD: Estratégia Nacional para a Inclusão das Pessoas com Deficiência (National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities)

EU: European Union

FFMS: Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos (Francisco Manuel dos Santos's Foundation)

GVA: Generic Volunteering Activities

IEFP, I.P.: Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training)

IHP: Individual Happiness Plan

IIES: Iniciativa de Inovação e Empreendedorismo Social (Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative)

INE: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (National Institute of Statistics)

INR, I.P.: Instituto Nacional de Reabilitação (National Institute for Rehabilitation)

IPDJ, I.P.: Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude (Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth)

LAPI: Lar Adventista para Pessoas Idosas (Adventist Home for the Elderly)

LBV: Local Volunteer Bank

MVS: Estrutura Municipal de Voluntariado (Municipal Volunteer Structure)

ONG: Non-Governmental Organisation

PATA: Plataforma de Acolhimento e Tratamento Animal (Animal Shelter and Care Platform)

PATH: Planning Alternatives Tomorrows With Hope

PCP: Person Centred Planning

PERMA: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments

POISE: Portugal Inovação Social – Parcerias para o Impacto (Social Inclusion and Employment Operational Programme)

PWD: Persons with Disabilities

SVA: Specific Volunteering Activities

UN: United Nations

UNCRPD: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNV: United Nations Volunteers

VIO: Volunteer Involving Organisations

VOAHR: Voluntariado Organizado para uma Ação Humanitária de Referência (Organised Volunteering for a Humanitarian Action of Reference)

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PREFACE

Volunteering is a magic trail that appears in the path of people who decide to exercise active citizenship in this way.

Most of the testimonials in Volunteering state that volunteers get much more than what they give, and that the greatest reward is the smile of the people they serve. That is the magic of Volunteering! Give yourself and perceive that the return is superior. This is motivational pay (as Steve McCurley says). It is not economical. And this magic must be accessible to everyone. But I didn't always think this way.

Much of my time is spent giving presentations and lectures on Volunteerism. Over two decades I have been expressing maxims, which have been overlapping and at some point contradicting each other:

1. Initially it argued that Volunteering was for those who had their primary needs met – influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a theory of psychology by Abraham Maslow.
2. At the time I founded Pista Mágica (as a Volunteer School), I expressed the lack of preparation of the volunteer people as a violation of Human Rights – of both the beneficiaries and the volunteers that, in the limit, put the lives of both in danger.
3. Later, I informed about the common aspects of scientific studies carried out in various parts of the world that show that those who do volunteer work live longer, have a better quality of life and are happier.

The repetition of these ideas became a mantra and one day I realized that the first point made no sense at all. Not least because I understood it from experience: on an international cooperation mission by implementing a volunteer program that was a success with volunteers in a very vulnerable situation.

From that realisation, I began to envision a Volunteerism that included everyone. It all starts with Vision. Until the operational opportunities appeared and gradually we created the methodology that is presented here.

This was only possible because: 1) beyond the strategic vision, 2) the right funding lines came along, and 3) we now have more human (and qualified) resources in Pista Mágica – who not only believed but co-constructed and tested the methodological steps. To you, a big thank you!

Sónia Fernandes

Co-founder and President of Pista Mágica

(1) VOLUNTEERING, DISABILITY AND INCLUSION

There are three keywords that inspired the creation and implementation of VolunTalentos's initiative: **Volunteering, Disability and Inclusion**. Complex words with multiple meanings and different expressions in the law. Words that, as concepts, we sought to uncover, decipher and study in order to consolidate a project that seeks, in turn, to answer the question: **"how to include persons with disabilities (PWD) in and through volunteering?"**

The concept of volunteering has different meanings from country to country and, although its importance has already been reinforced by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) (2013), there are currently no regulations at the European level aimed at adopting a standardised methodology for statistical data collection on volunteer work. Its expression in legislative documents is, inevitably, also a divisive issue in the European Union (EU). While in some member states there are national laws on volunteering (such as Spain and Italy), in others (some even with a significant volunteering culture, such as Ireland and Denmark) there is no specific legislation on the subject (Making it Matter, p.5). In fact, of the 27 EU member states, only 16 have relevant legislation regarding volunteering.¹ This is the case of Portugal. In [Law on Volunteering \(no. 71/98, of November 3\)](#), Chapter 1 – General Provisions, Article 2, one can read the definition adopted by the Portuguese State:

1 – Volunteering is the set of actions of social and community interest carried out in a selfless way by people, in the context of projects, programmes and other forms of intervention at the service of individuals, families and the community developed on a non-profit basis by public or private entities.

2 – Actions that, although disinterested, have an isolated and sporadic character or are determined by family, friendship and good neighbourly reasons are not covered by this law.

In the article that precedes the definition, Article 1, referring to the object, the notion of universality of access to volunteering is present: "The present law aims to promote and guarantee the participation of all citizens in volunteering actions and to define the

¹ According to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), "National laws on volunteering provide a framework for volunteer arrangements. They are often used to distinguish volunteering from other activities, particularly employment. Volunteering laws tend to remove legal obstacles to volunteerism by defining "volunteers" and "volunteering", clarifying the rights and duties of volunteers and providing a single document that deals with volunteer engagement. Laws and legislation may also establish formal bodies or institutional arrangements to support volunteering" (UNV, n.d.)

bases of its legal framework". However, there is no mention in this law of people with disabilities or any other group of people in vulnerable situations.²

If, on the one hand, the scope of this law can be seen as an added value, in the sense that it proposes the exercise of volunteering as a right of "all citizens", on the other hand, it creates space so that the integration of volunteers with disabilities depends entirely on the will (or lack of will) of the organisations that promote volunteering.

This does not happen, for example, in the Law on Physical Activity and Sports ([Law no. 5/2007](#)), where there is an article dedicated to PWD (Article 29): "Physical activity and the practice of sports by persons with disabilities is promoted and fostered by the State, Autonomous Regions and local authorities with the appropriate technical aids, adapted to their specificities, envisioning their full social integration and participation, in equality of opportunities with other citizens."

Moreover, in [Law no. 38/2004](#), of August 18, which defines the general bases of the legal system of prevention, habilitation, rehabilitation and participation for persons with disabilities, which should, par excellence, serve to promote their emancipation, we see their perpetuation in the role of receivers of voluntary support. Instead of safeguarding the right to their integration in volunteering activities, Article 23 (*Volunteering*) merely states that "the State is responsible for encouraging volunteer work and promoting solidary participation in actions to support persons with disabilities within a framework of freedom and responsibility, with a view to the effective involvement of society in the development of volunteer actions within the scope of the policy for prevention, habilitation, rehabilitation and participation of the person with disabilities".³

If, for a long time, disability was seen as a total incapacity that placed people in unfavourable social positions (Bartalotti, 2010), today we should be moving towards the paradigm shift that Bartalotti (2010) writes about: one that values, above all, the independence and autonomy of PWD, while deconstructing capacitating conceptions that reduce them to a passive role.

² When we talk about people in vulnerable situations, it is important to understand "that people are not vulnerable per se, but may be vulnerable to some diseases and not to others, under certain conditions and at different times of their lives" (Pereira et al., 2022, p.2). It is understood that, in the case of people with disabilities, "disability is not in the person, but in society, in the environment in which they live" (Marchesan & Carpenedo, 2021, p.47).

³ In this sense, the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025, published by the Council of Ministers' Resolution no. 119/2021, of August 31, which assumes the inclusion of PWD as a strategic objective for their appreciation, foresees the revision, in Strategic Axis 1, of the aforementioned law.

Take into consideration the adoption, in 2006, of the Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities ([UNCRPD](#)), which reflects the "widespread consensus of the international community (governments, NGOs, and citizens) on the need to effectively ensure respect for the integrity, dignity, and individual freedom of persons with disabilities and to strengthen the prohibition of discrimination against these citizens through laws, policies, and programs that specifically address their characteristics and promote their participation in society" (Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação (INR), I.P., 2023). Or, in Portugal, let us bear in mind the approval, on August 31, 2021, by the Council of Ministers, of the [National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities \(ENIPD\) 2021-2025](#), which "aims to consolidate the progress achieved so far and look ahead to the future, always with a view to strengthening the commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities". A commitment that was "assumed by the XXII Constitutional Government as one of the priorities of its governmental action and as a corollary of a society that wants to be more just, more solidary, that respects diversity and sees it as a factor of wealth and progress".

But how tangible is this new paradigm already in the lives of PWD? Will reality continue to have square wheels in some contexts?⁴

Persons with disabilities continue to experience social injustice when they are denied access to health services, employment, education, or political participation and are subjected to violations of their dignity through violence, abuse, prejudice, or disrespect based on their disability.

Fulfilling the paradigm of inclusion, [Law no. 46/2006](#) was published on August 28, 2006, prohibiting and punishing discrimination on the grounds of disability and aggravated health risk. The purpose of this law is to prevent and prohibit direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of disability, in all its forms, and to sanction the practice of acts that result in the violation of any fundamental rights or the denial or conditioning of the exercise of any economic, social, cultural or other rights by any person on the basis of disability.

This law is binding, i.e., it obliges all individuals and legal entities, public or private, not to discriminate on the basis of disability and, if this occurs, the situation must be reported by filling out the [complaint form of discrimination on the basis of disability or aggravated health risk](#), available on the INR, I.P. website.

⁴ Expression "square wheels" inspired by the words of Afonso Cruz in *Jalan, Jalan* (2017): "Reality has square wheels. It was the dream, the fiction, the ideal that made them round. We must not be accomplices of reality".

In this sense, in Portugal, a country with 1,085,472 people with disabilities (Instituto Nacional de Estatística [INE], 2022),* there were, in 2021, according to data from the National Institute for Rehabilitation (2021), **1195 complaints of discrimination based on disability**, which represents an increase of 16.8% compared to 2020. This discrimination was mostly due to issues related to access to health (39.6%), while the remaining categories (accessibility, access to employment and business equality, goods and services, access to education, among others) have incidence rates below 6%, with the exception of the generic category "Other", which comprises about one third of the complaints received (35.2%). The fact that the category "Health" stands out widely can be explained by the pandemic context experienced in the period in question, since in 2019, before the pandemic originated by the SARS-COV-2 virus, out of 1274 complaints of discrimination based on disability, only 6% were related to access to health, while 44% were due to accessibility issues, 30% to access to employment and business equality, 7% to the use of goods and services and 5% to access to education.

*According to data from the 2021 Census (INE), **10.9% of the resident population in Portugal, aged 5 or more, has at least one disability, which equals 1,085,472 people**. In comparison with the data obtained in 2011, we can identify a substantial difference, since they point to a disability prevalence rate in the resident population in Portugal of 17.8%, corresponding to 1,792,719 people (aged 5 years or more). [see contextualization of item i., within objective H., on page 53].

Data from INE (2022) show that 6.1% of the population is unable to walk or climb steps, 3.5% is affected by the inability to see, 3.4% by the inability to cognition/memory, and 2.8% in hearing; 3.0% has difficulty bathing or dressing without support, and 1.5% in understanding others or making themselves understood.

The disability condition affects mostly women and the prevalence increases progressively with age, especially from 70-74 years onwards. The population aged 15 and over with disabilities who commute to work or study represents only 3.2% of the total population who do so and 13.3% of the total population aged 15 and over with disabilities.

These processes of discrimination that PWD constantly face interfere with their access to a wide variety of opportunities, namely their access to useful activities in their communities. Knowing that social inclusion comes from the acquisition of social roles (Sieber, 1974) and that volunteering can be a path to a greater diversity of roles, which, in turn, leads to high levels of physical and emotional well-being (Moen, Dempster-McClain e Williams, 1992), efforts are being made to create initiatives that recognise the importance of widespread and truly inclusive volunteering.

See, for example, the [European Parliament Resolution, of 12 June 2012](#), on "recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU", in which the role of volunteering in reducing the risk of social exclusion of various social groups, in particular PWD, is underlined. Or the conclusions published by the Council of the European Union in 2011 regarding the impact of voluntary activities on social policy ([14552/11](#)), where in point 18., the importance of voluntary activities is underlined "to enhance the skills and improve the qualifications of vulnerable groups who may also be involved in volunteering activities and may thus benefit from improved social inclusion".

In Portugal, the three keywords of this initiative (Volunteering, Disability and Inclusion) are associated in the [National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities \(ENIPD\) 2021-2025 \(INR, 2021\)](#).

In the Strategic Axis 6 of ENIPD, which is related to social measures, services and support, there is, within General Objective 2 ("Innovation in context activities"), the specific objective: **2.2 "Boosting inclusive volunteering"**.

Here, it is proposed (2.2.1) to define and disseminate a guide for defining and organising inclusive volunteering activities and (2.2.2) to boost inclusive volunteering activities at the community level, measures that VolunTalento's team considers key to the generalisation of the concept and consequent practice.

It should be noted, however, that there is no definition of "inclusive volunteering" in the mentioned National Strategy or in any other governmental document.

This is a recurring question, and therefore one that needs urgent resolution: **what does inclusive volunteering mean?**

Assuming the [Law on Volunteering \(no. 71/98, of November 3\)](#) as a "framing hat", and as there are many other documents and programs whose formulations are similar (also at the international level), it is important to think about problematising inclusion in

volunteering, translating it into specific regulations that clarify the concept and promote the integration of different groups in vulnerable situations in volunteering actions – not only PWD –, not as beneficiaries, but as agents of change, based on their specific needs, and establishing guidelines for the implementation of more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes.

In a research carried out by the European project Making it Matter, in which 413 organisations from five countries (Germany, Croatia, Denmark, Slovenia and Ireland) have participated, the challenges faced by organisations in integrating young people in vulnerable situations were listed, standing out:

- ⤿ the lack of organisational capacity and the scarcity of resources (60% of responding organisations).
- ⤿ the lack of knowledge and preparation regarding the management and follow-up of these young people (one third of the organisations) (p.34).

In Croatia, the responding entities that do not consider integrating young people in this situation specify the issue of disability, mentioning that they do not have the organisational capacity or a suitable working environment to accommodate them (p.34).

As the study identified the need to create "tailor-made activities" for the accommodation of young people in vulnerable situations and as this is a fundamental condition for the success of any more inclusive volunteering project or programme, it is important to reflect on these obstacles.

How can the State guarantee that organisations have the resources to make their spaces and activities accessible? How can it ensure that they have access to training that provides them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the integration of these people? How can organisations empower themselves to reflect on and promote the creation of bridges between public partners and civil society to promote the inclusion of PWD?

Ignoring these obstacles and possible solutions means that people in vulnerable situations, particularly PWD, lose the opportunity to contribute to the common good and to the improvement of their communities. In fact, taking on these socially useful roles would not only empower them – by feeling part of the solution – but would also allow them to increase their self-esteem, deepen skills, create new social ties, help combat existing prejudices and stereotypes and discover their vocation (which may

contribute to choosing a career path and consequent integration into the labour market).

(2) THE PROJECT: VOLUNTALENTO

VolunTalento arises from the conviction that the investment in methodologies that prove the impact of volunteering carried out by people in vulnerable situations (in particular PWD) in their communities and in themselves is fundamental to accelerate the process of formalising and generalising the practice of a more inclusive volunteering.

Funded by Portugal Inovação Social – Parcerias para o Impacto (POISE), this Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative (IIES) aims to **improve access to volunteering for persons over 18 years old with mild to moderate (physical or intellectual) disability**, by developing and testing the supported volunteering methodology and amplifying the debate around the role of volunteering in the social inclusion of these persons.

With the awareness that all persons should have a place in volunteering, the project had to assume, however, as recipients, individuals who represent only a fringe of the population with disabilities: **"Persons over the age of 18 with mild to moderate (physical or intellectual) disability or neurodevelopmental disorder"**.

The municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia, social investor and territory of action of the project, is the most populous in the North Region, with 303,824 inhabitants, and the largest in the sub-region of Porto, with a total area of 168.5 Km² and a population density of 1,803.5 inhabitants/Km² (Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos [FFMS], s.d.). According to the same source, in 2001 (the only data available on this indicator), there were 17,431 PWD living in Vila Nova de Gaia, of which 1,521 had mild to moderate disabilities (degree of disability between 30% and 59%), which represents 8.73% of the total number of disabled people in the municipality on this date (FFMS, 2022).

With the support of Centre for Social Inclusion (CIS) of Magarão and the Municipal Structure of Inclusive and Oriented Volunteering (EMVIO) of Vila Nova de Gaia, VolunTalento proposes to work on volunteering as a solution for the inclusion of PWD in their communities based on two axes of intervention:

Axis I – Integration of Volunteers

Axis II – Empowerment of Volunteers

In 2022, within the scope of **Axis 1 – Integration of Volunteers**, were held: an online event to present the project to Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO); a training action on more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes (with a total of 12 hours); and consulting sessions, with the purpose of creating a pool of entities that promote volunteering and are available to receive VolunTalento volunteers.

In April that same year, in parallel with the dissemination of the training action aimed at VIO, a campaign was also launched to recruit volunteers. In this context, it is important to mention that the project team, together with the social investor and partners, chose to divide the intervention with volunteers into three generations, each with four months of activities (training sessions and integration in volunteering activities).

The first generation of volunteers started the training process in May 2022 and 14 people with mild to moderate disability (physical or intellectual) were involved (nine clients from CIS, three from Sim Somos Capazes project and two persons who were not involved in any response). Nine of those persons were integrated in generic volunteering activities (GVA), foreseen in the innovative methodology created by Pista Mágica, which took place in June and July 2022. In this generation, eight individual happiness projects were also designed, which allowed to gauge in greater depth the interests and aspirations of the volunteers in question. In total, from May to September 2022, 25 hours of training and 66 hours of volunteering (adding up the volunteering hours of all the volunteers) were completed with this generation.

The second generation of volunteers started the training process in September 2022, involving seven participants at this stage. In the volunteering activities, six volunteers with disabilities participated and four individual happiness projects were completed. Between September 2022 and early January 2023, this generation completed 24.5 hours of training and 101.5 hours of volunteering.

In turn, the third and last generation of VolunTalento, starting in January 2023, had 11 participants from two institutions: Cercigaia (six volunteers) and Associação Somos Nós (Somos Nós Association) (five). For the first time, participants in wheelchairs were integrated, which implied the adaptation of some of the dynamics used in the training process and the volunteering activities themselves. In this generation, one community happiness project and six individual projects were designed. With this generation, 55.5 hours were completed in the training process and 129 hours of volunteering activities.

Thus, in total, in Axis 1 of the project, 32 beneficiaries were involved, 26 of whom were integrated in volunteering activities, completing a total of 105 hours of training and 296.5 hours of volunteering (sum of the volunteering hours of all the participants). 21 of these people completed all phases of the methodology, which resulted in the increase of their social inclusion. The following entities hosted activities under the initiative: Quintinha Pedagógica de Canelas, Associação Senhores Bichinhos, Plataforma de Acolhimento e Tratamento Animal (PATA), Parque Biológico de Gaia, Sim Somos Capazes, Cantinho das Aromáticas, Associação das Escolas do Torne e do Prado, LAPI Norte and Centro Social Mário Mendes da Costa.

It should also be noted that four volunteers were integrated into specific volunteer activities on an autonomous basis, and agreements were signed with three entities that promote volunteer work. In these cases, volunteer positions descriptions adapted to each volunteer were defined with the host organisations and individual monitoring of the volunteers was carried out.

Axis 2 – Empowerment of Volunteers, in turn, started in the third quarter of the initiative, with the sending of invitations to entities working in the areas of volunteering and disability to join the Working Group for *Advocacy*, which resulted in the effective participation of 13 entities and an activist for the rights of PWD: Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista, Associação Salvador, Associação de Solidariedade Social de Lafões (ASSOL), Câmara Municipal de Gaia, Catarina Oliveira, Centro de Vida Independente (CVI), Confederação Nacional das Instituições de Solidariedade (CNIS), Confederação Portuguesa de Voluntariado (CPV), Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social (CASES), Fundação Eugénio de Almeida, Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP, I.P.), Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação (INR, I.P.), Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude (IPDJ, I.P.) and Universidade do Porto.

In total, between October 2022 and May 2023, four online sessions were held with the Working Group, with the aim of problematising the concepts of volunteering, disability, and inclusion, which resulted in the creation of a document with recommendations for public policies and the design of an awareness-raising campaign aimed at the general population.

(3) THE CONCEPTUAL PATH

(3.1) The spectrum of autonomy in volunteering

It was in 2021 that Pista Mágica began, with the VOAHR Municípios project,⁵ a collection of good practices on inclusive volunteering that would enable the creation of a new methodology to make any volunteering projects or programmes more inclusive. The [Guide for a More Inclusive Volunteering](#) (Fernandes et al., 2021) was thus born and, with the implementation of operationalisation projects, the need to shape a new approach in the field became urgent: **one that assumes the practice of volunteering as a tool for social inclusion**. This is based on the premise that some people in vulnerable situations may need adapted volunteer management processes, which respect their individuality, their skills and their challenges and allow for them to explore their full potential in volunteering.

In this sense, it is important to understand what is meant by social inclusion.

According to the United Nations (UN), this can be defined as:

«the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights»

(UN, 2016, p.20)

Several authors share this perspective, conceiving social exclusion as a multidimensional process (Barnes, 2005; Barnes et al., 2002; Gordon et al., 2000), which goes beyond the mere material and economic aspect and addresses issues such as personal relationships, health and participation in the community.

Other authors, such as Hall (2009) e Power (2013), understand that the creation of formal and informal ties is crucial to the issue of social inclusion of PWD. McConkey

⁵ VOAHR Municípios (Oct. 2018 – Dec. 2021) is a project promoted by Pista Mágica – Associação and financed by Portugal Inovação Social through the European Social Fund within the scope of the Operational Program Social Inclusion and Employment (POISE) and with the institutional support of the Metropolitan Area of Porto (AMP). Having been born from the need to boost volunteering at a local level, involving voluntary agents (volunteers, social economy organisations, the public sector, companies and educational entities), VOAHR Municípios emerges as a social innovation initiative with the aim of increasing the impact of volunteering at the municipal level through training and consultancy actions that make volunteer work increasingly efficient and effective, having had 14 AMP Municipalities, social investors in the project, as its territory of action, namely: Espinho, Gondomar, Maia, Matosinhos, Oliveira de Azeméis, Porto, Póvoa de Varzim, Valongo, Santa Maria da Feira, Santo Tirso, São João da Madeira, Trofa, Vila do Conde and Vila Nova de Gaia.

and Collins (2010, p.692) contribute to this line of thinking, associating greater levels of community participation and creation and expansion of social networks with greater social inclusion as well. In a sense, these concepts are interconnected. Bates and Davis (2004), for example, understand that the development of social relationships and interactions is only truly enhanced through broad engagement with the community. Here, PWD should have opportunities to interact with persons with different profiles. Some academics prioritise the advantages of these social contacts when they involve the exchange of experiences and support between persons with and without disabilities. Others believe that segregated environments have other advantages, due to the feeling of belonging and safety that they transmit (Hall, 2010; Milner & Kelly, 2009).

Furthermore, Cobigo et al. (2012) further elaborates on this issue and understands that the consolidation of a robust social network of interaction and support, for the enhancement of social inclusion, is only possible if the person, at an individual level, feels that (i) belongs to his/her social circle through the process of reception and retribution, (ii) his/her role in the social network is valued and (iii) acquires a relevant social role in the community.

It is assumed, therefore, that volunteering programmes created with the aim of promoting greater social inclusion of people volunteering should provide:

1. New opportunities.
2. Greater access to resources.
3. The amplification of the volunteers' voices;⁶
4. Increased awareness and respect for the rights of volunteers in vulnerable situations.

In practice, what does this approach to volunteering as a tool for social inclusion imply?

It materialises in volunteer programmes or projects in which people in vulnerable situations are the agents of change, by putting their talents at the service of the community. This approach presents volunteering as a tool to facilitate the fulfilment of social, esteem and self-actualisation needs of those who practise it; the discovery and potentiation of talents; the amplification of

⁶Amplifying the voices means creating spaces and moments in which persons in vulnerable situations can express their opinions, perspectives, needs, concerns. It differs from "giving voice", an expression that, in the perspective of the authors of this guide, reduces people to voiceless subjects.

their voice; the access to new opportunities and resources; the full respect for their rights; and, consequently, their full social inclusion.

In this sense and using the exclusion-segregation-integration-inclusion scheme, Pista Mágica created, in 2022, what it called the "**spectrum of autonomy in volunteering**".

Not assuming the form of a ladder, it includes, along with different levels of autonomy, the concepts of **sheltered volunteering**, **supported volunteering** and **more inclusive volunteering**, among which the person (in a vulnerable situation) may move, according to their needs, capacities and level of autonomy, in order to reach their full potential in volunteering.



Fig. 1 – The spectrum of autonomy in volunteering (Pista Mágica, 2022)

For a better understanding of this spectrum, it is important to reflect on the distinction between autonomy and independence. Here, the definitions proposed by Burnagui et al. (2016), were adopted in the article *Autonomy and independence: perceptions of adolescents with vision impairment and their caregivers*:

Autonomy is then understood as the "competence of each subject to act according to their own choice and decision" and independence as the "ability to perform activities and social roles without assistance from others" (Burnagui et al., 2016, p.22).

The spectrum proposed above assumes that all persons within it have some level of autonomy, i.e., they all choose to participate in volunteering activities. Persons with a

higher level of autonomy are able to autonomously take the decision to join a volunteering opportunity, in this case in a more inclusive context, while people with a lower level of autonomy may not take the initiative to volunteer, but choose to do so when they are offered the opportunity to do so, either in sheltered or supported settings.

The greater the autonomy within the practice of volunteering, the greater the number of opportunities at the level of direct acquisition of skills, knowledge, contacts and other resources, which may result, for the person, in a more favourable situation at the level of his/her reaffirmation within society and subsequent social inclusion.

In this sense, whatever the level of autonomy in volunteering, the person's **social inclusion will always be greater than that of someone who is in the exclusion zone of volunteering** (given that, among other things, it will contribute to a greater sense of life purpose and feeling of usefulness (Su & Ferraro, 1997)).

Segregation is therefore seen as a potentially necessary step towards greater social inclusion for people in vulnerable situations who have lower levels of autonomy. As pointed out by Hall (2010) e Milner & Kelly (2009), segregated environments can facilitate a greater sense of belonging and sense of security.

Whatever the context in question, preference should be given to the independence of volunteers, i.e., they should be integrated in volunteer positions they are able and willing to carry out independently. However, when a person aspires to carry out an activity which they cannot do without the support of others and decides, autonomously, that they want to do it with the necessary assistance, the volunteer manager must try to satisfy this desire as much as possible.

In light of the concepts of sheltered employment⁷ and supported employment⁸, we assume the following concepts within the spectrum:

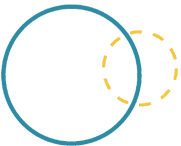
⁷ Sheltered employment: "is the work carried out by people with disabilities in workshops specifically established for this purpose", therefore, one in which a specific context is created for that person and their needs. (NACTE, 1997, in Marques, 2018, p.1).

⁸ Supported employment: that in which the person integrates the free labour market, taking on positions adapted to their abilities. According to Marques (2018, p.2), this model "has given people with disabilities the opportunity to occupy workplaces in a real context, working alongside people without disabilities, receiving wages, as they had access to ongoing support that helped them to succeed in their work and thus keep their job".

Sheltered Volunteering:

It implies carrying out volunteer work in a sheltered context, i.e., established specifically for that purpose, as a safe space that allows the person in a vulnerable situation to reach their full potential, according to their capacities and needs. In other words, here, the volunteering context is created specifically for the volunteer, with the activity having a socially useful purpose.

In VolunTalentto:



It is important to highlight that this concept emerged in the reflection process following the intervention with the first generation of VolunTalentto volunteers, in which the challenges felt by the team in integrating participants with a lower level of autonomy in community volunteering activities were pointed out.

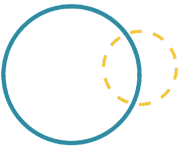
Today, we can identify situations in which, in that same generation, it could have been beneficial to provide a first experience in a sheltered context, and only then, when or if possible, in a supported context.

With this awareness, and the need having arisen, given the concrete desire of a volunteer to share his testimony, as a PWD, to children, an activity in a protected context was carried out, already in the third generation of volunteers. This materialised in the writing of a children's story based on the experiences of the volunteer in question, with the support of another volunteer and a project team member, which will serve as a vehicle to facilitate volunteering activities in a school context created specifically for this purpose.

Supported Volunteering:

It foresees the training and integration of small groups of people in similar situations of vulnerability in opportunities, activities, projects or programmes already existing in the community, with the monitoring of a professional, whose function is to support the volunteers and mediate the contact with the volunteer involving organisation. Volunteering activities take into account the characteristics of the group and of each person, so that each one can reach, in volunteering, their maximum potential.

In VolunTalento:

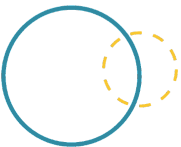


Since this was the preferred methodology in the project, all 26 volunteers were integrated in supported volunteering activities, having had the opportunity to participate in activities tailored to the group in which they were inserted, according to their needs, potential and challenges, always accompanied by a project's team member. Naturally, the needs of the hosting organisations have also been taken into consideration, with the operational team having assessed which adaptations were necessary for the volunteers to perform the activities. Examples are adaptations related to hearing hypersensitivity, contact with the public and physical limitations of some participants.

More Inclusive Volunteering:

It presupposes the inclusion of people in vulnerable situations in existing volunteer programmes, with volunteer positions being adjusted to their potentials, needs and challenges – as should be standard practice for any volunteer manager, even when including volunteers who are not in vulnerable situations. An example is any volunteer programme where policies and procedures are in place to enable all people to volunteer. Here, no provision is made for the need for personalised, face-to-face mentoring of the volunteer by a professional external to the host organisation during the volunteering practice.

In VolunTalento:



The individual happiness projects allowed for the project's team to identify which volunteers were motivated for a long-term inclusion in volunteering activities. As previously mentioned, four volunteers integrated activities in an autonomous way, i.e., in a more inclusive volunteering context.

Volunteer S., having shown, during her training, a great interest in the area of animal protection (more specifically, in working with felids), autonomously joined the Animal Shelter and Treatment Platform of Vila Nova de Gaia (PATA). P., due to his professional interest in returning to gardening, joined LAPI Norte

(Adventist Home for the Elderly), where he is responsible for supporting the maintenance of the organisation's green spaces; A. and H., volunteers also with a special interest in the animal area, joined the volunteer team of the Canelas Pedagogical Farm, where they provide support in feeding farm animals and cleaning the spaces.

Given the characteristics of the volunteers, adjustments were made to the volunteer position descriptions proposed by the host organisations. In the case of volunteer P., for example, with congenital heart disease, it was necessary to guarantee that he would not handle machinery such as lawnmowers and trimmers. In the case of A., integrated in the Canelas Pedagogical Farm, an adjustment was made to the timetable so that the work could be supported by the volunteer.

(4) FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO RECOMMENDATION

As already mentioned, this chapter explores the two axes of VolunTalento and their respective features. It should be noted that it was only through "experimentation" within Axis 1 and the consequent learning that we were able to move from reflection, with the involvement of different actors, to "recommendation", which takes the form of a document with recommendations for public policies within Axis 2.

(4.1) Supported Volunteering methodology – the particular case of PWD

In 2022, with the start of two projects aimed at promoting volunteering as a tool for social inclusion (Carry and VolunTalento), Pista Mágica tried to materialise the learning from VOAHR Municipios into a concrete and innovative methodology that could be applied and adjusted to different populations in vulnerable situations. In VolunTalento, it was within the scope of Axis 1 of the project – Integration of Volunteers– that this was tested with PWD.

Taking into account the PERMA model, created by the founding psychologist of the Positive Psychology movement, Martin Seligman, who proposes five pillars on which psychological well-being and happiness are based – Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments –, a methodology was created that aims to foster experiences that stimulate the psychological well-being and happiness of participants, facilitating, as mentioned above:

- ⤷ the fulfilment of participants' social, esteem and self-actualisation needs.
- ⤷ the discovery and potentiation of their talents;
- ⤷ the amplification of their voice;
- ⤷ access to new opportunities and resources;
- ⤷ the full respect for their rights;
- ⤷ and, consequently, their full social inclusion.

Given that both projects were based on (1) working with groups of persons in similar situations of vulnerability (in this case, young people living in shelters or social housing and persons with mild to moderate physical or intellectual disabilities) and (2) a personalised monitoring of the volunteer, taking into account their degree of autonomy, talents, needs, interests and challenges they face, the methodology developed is translated into a **supported volunteering methodology**, which is based on four phases:

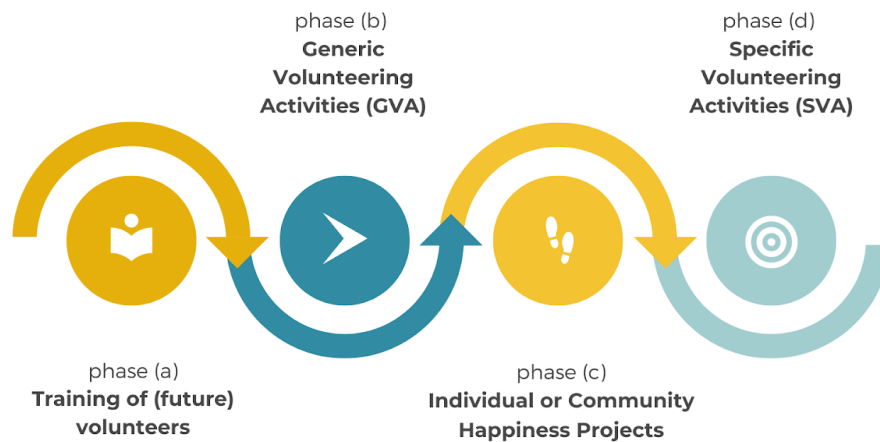


Fig. 2 – Supported Volunteering methodology's phases

The narrative structure of **Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey"**, although largely adapted, was adopted as the common thread of this methodology. It consists of 12 stages, which inspired the points to be addressed in the methodology's training sessions, as well as the creation of the four phases in which it materialised.

These are the 12 stages: (1) ordinary world; (2) call to adventure; (3) refusal of the call; (4) meeting with the mentor; (5) crossing the threshold between the ordinary world (where we find ourselves) and the extraordinary world (where heroic deeds happen) (6) tests, allies and enemies; (7) approach to inmost cave; (8) ordeal; (9) reward; (10) the way back; (11) resurrection; and (12) return with elixir.

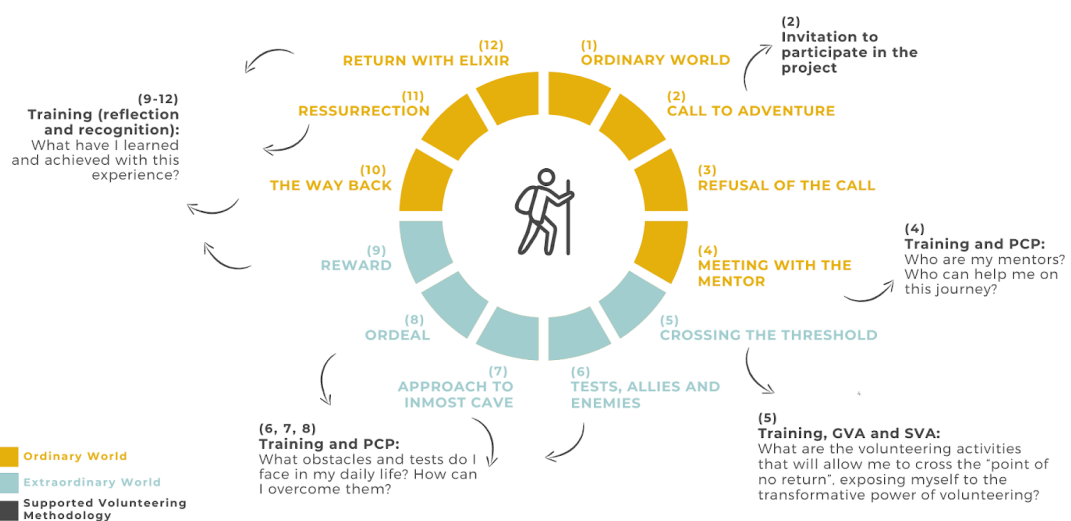


Fig. 3 – The Hero's Journey and the Supported Volunteering methodology (Pista Mágica, 2022)

In this sense, the methodology assumes that the volunteer is at the centre of this journey, assuming the role of hero or heroine in their own story.

Still in the "ordinary world", the person receives an invitation to the adventure – that is, to participate in the project – and, once accepted, various concepts of the journey are visited: who are the mentors who will be able to help them make their journey (Step 4), which volunteering activities will get them past the "point of no return", exposing them to the transformative power of volunteering (Step 5); what tests and ordeals they face in their daily life (Steps 6 and 8); what they have learned and achieved from the experience (Steps 9 to 12).

What do the four phases of the methodology consist of?

Phase (a) – Training of (future) volunteers

The importance of capacity building for capable and positively impactful volunteering is at the core of Pista Mágica and, as such, the supported volunteering methodology starts from a **training process** for the volunteers involved.

As persons in vulnerable situations are generally perceived as mere recipients of volunteer support and not as potential volunteers, and with a view to destigmatising these groups, the training process was designed with the goal of promoting their empowerment, proposing to work on the psychological and self-fulfilment needs of each individual, namely their social, esteem and self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1943).

It is based on three themes that the methodology assumes to be indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, although adaptable to the group in question: Self-knowledge, Empathy and Volunteering.

Each of the themes corresponds to a training session, lasting approximately two hours, which is preceded by a session 0 that aims to: (1) clarify the purpose of the project and the role of each of the participants and (2) explore the concept of a talented person (or changemaker) and their characteristics.

1. Self-knowledge:

It allows participants to reflect and answer questions such as: "Who am I?", "What characterises me?", "Who are my teams?", "Who are my mentors?", "What are my

limitations?", "What obstacles do I identify?" and "How can I use my mentors and teams to overcome obstacles?".

In addition to aiming to (1) explore talents and (2) define the circles of each participant (in parallel to the proposal of Falvey et al. (2011), in *All My Life's a Circle*), the self-knowledge session also aims to (3) deepen the sense of belonging to the project's team in question.

2. Empathy:

It provides for the appropriation of the concept ("Am I capable of trying on the shoes of the other person?"), as well as the reflection on it ("Am I aware that their shoes will never fit me perfectly?") and the carrying out of *in loco* exercises (empathy training).

The session on this theme has, therefore, the following goals:

- 1) explore one's fears and obstacles;
- 2) identify how mentors and teams can help overcome obstacles;
- 3) define and explore the concept of empathy; and
- 4) deepen the sense of belonging to the project's team.

3. Volunteering:

Once the "self" and the relationship between the self and others have been worked on, the concept of volunteering is explored – what it means, what skills and knowledge it implies and how it materialises – so that the participants are able to place themselves at the service of the community.

The session on volunteering has the following specific goals:

- 1) explore, as a group, the reflections made about the challenge of empathy week (in the logic of the interrelationship between the basic themes of the training phase);
- 2) understand the concept of volunteering;
- 3) explore the different characteristics of a volunteer person; and
- 4) know the rights and duties of volunteers in their practice.

The training sessions are carried out using Non-Formal Education, which is reflected in a structured process of social learning, characterised by voluntary participation and focused on the needs, potentialities and characteristics of the people participating.

In addition, pedagogical materials adapted to enhance participation are used, with preference being given to the use of group dynamics, the viewing of videos and the use of practical exercises that encourage reflection and sharing.

In order to facilitate revisiting the topics covered, the supported volunteering methodology also involves the **construction of a mural**, with the contribution of all participants, which acts as a visual repository of the sessions, and the **creation of an individual "passport"**: a printed and personalised document which concentrates the main learnings acquired and reflections made throughout the training and volunteering journey.



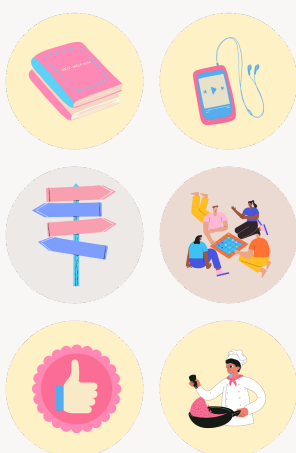
Fig. 4 – Example of a customised passport cover and page

In VolunTalentos:

Having identified the need to promote group cohesion, not only among the participants, but also between them and the facilitators, two informal sessions were added to the foundational sessions of the methodology (based on the three basic themes of the training phase mentioned above), to be held before the project presentation session, with the goals of (1) promoting group

knowledge and (2) providing moments for the group to feel comfortable (among themselves and in the space).

Given the characteristics of the group in question, printed materials were also created in order to make the training process more accessible.



Examples are the **cards with characteristics**, which assist volunteers in selecting skills and talents applicable to themselves (Self-knowledge) and others (Volunteering).

It is also important to note that, if there are participants with writing difficulties, it is the person responsible for facilitating the sessions who has the task of systematising each one's reflections in the passport. This happened in VolunTalento, in the case of people who could not read or write and people with reduced strength and/or dexterity of the upper limbs.

Phase (b) – Generic Volunteering Activities

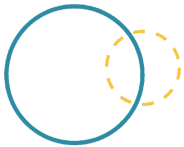
Once the training in the three basic themes is completed, participants are invited to participate in Generic Volunteering Activities (GVA), so that they can experience different volunteering fields of action and discern what best fulfils them. These are carried out in groups (of persons in similar situations of vulnerability), so that participants feel more comfortable and are able to support each other.

Based on the interests shown throughout the training and the needs diagnosed in the community, volunteer hosting entities with diversified areas of activity are identified and contacted. Therefore, a schedule of GVA is created, of a social, cultural, environmental, animal, sporting nature, among others, which is presented to the participants, so that they can select those they would like to join.



After finishing the activities, a session of Reflection and Recognition takes place, in order to (1) promote reflection on the experiences lived in the GVA and their evaluation, (2) identify which GVA had more impact on the volunteers and which ones were less suitable and (3) recognise the work done by each one.

In VolunTalento:



Throughout the three generations of volunteers, GVA were carried out in the environmental (beach cleanup and flower picking), animal (support in feeding and cleaning spaces) and social (gymnastics, music and plastic arts activities with senior citizens, preparation of food baskets and support in organising a social store) areas.

It should be noted that, given the physical limitations of some participants, it was necessary to create specific roles within the GVA other than those of direct support to the needs of the host organisations. An example is the role of the person responsible for the photographic recording of the activities.

In the Reflection and Recognition session, within the project, a **reward system** was created based on **badges (stickers) with symbols of the different fields of action.**



Phase (c) – Happiness Projects (Individual or Community):

After the field experimentation, volunteers are invited to build a **Happiness Project**, which can be individual or communitarian.

The Individual Happiness Project (IHP) is designed based on the **Person Centred Planning (PCP)**, an approach disseminated in Portugal by the Associação de Solidariedade Social de Lafões (Lafões Social Solidarity Association) (ASSOL), first developed in the field of support to PWD, which aims to "find ways of support that [allow] people to live integrated in their communities", providing professionals with "instruments consistent with the paradigm of social inclusion and respect for human rights" (Pereira, 2014, p.13).

The Person Centred Supports assume, therefore, as a starting point, the dreams, wishes and aspirations of each person, proposing to help the person to "achieve the future they want, regardless of their current capabilities" (Pereira, 2014), focusing on the person and never on their limitations.

In this sense, Pista Mágica dedicated itself to the study of the various instruments available within the PCP, in order to create adequate tools for the groups of persons integrated in supported volunteering contexts that would allow for the understanding, in the life of each volunteer in a vulnerable situation, what role volunteering can play and how it can leverage their dreams and facilitate the pursuit of goals.

It is very important, at this stage, that the facilitator is someone with whom the participants have already built a relationship of trust and openness, preferably someone who has accompanied the previous phases of the methodology.

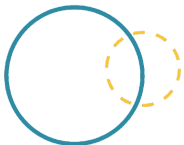
The Community Happiness Project (CHP), on the other hand, consists of the design of projects, which motivates volunteers, as a group, to identify the needs of their community and to propose and implement solutions centred on volunteering.

Inspired by the Project method applied by the National Scout Corps (2016), the design of a CHP assumes eight steps as fundamental: (1) Motivate; (2) Choose; (3) Plan; (4) Organise and Operationalise; (5) Involve; (6) Execute; (7) Evaluate; and (8) Celebrate. It therefore aims to answer questions such as:

- ⌚ What needs and problems exist in our community? Which ones do we identify with the most? What are the causes of the problem?
- ⌚ What creative solutions exist for the problem identified? What is the most appropriate, taking into account its possible impact and sustainability?
- ⌚ What resources will be needed to implement it?
- ⌚ Who can we involve?

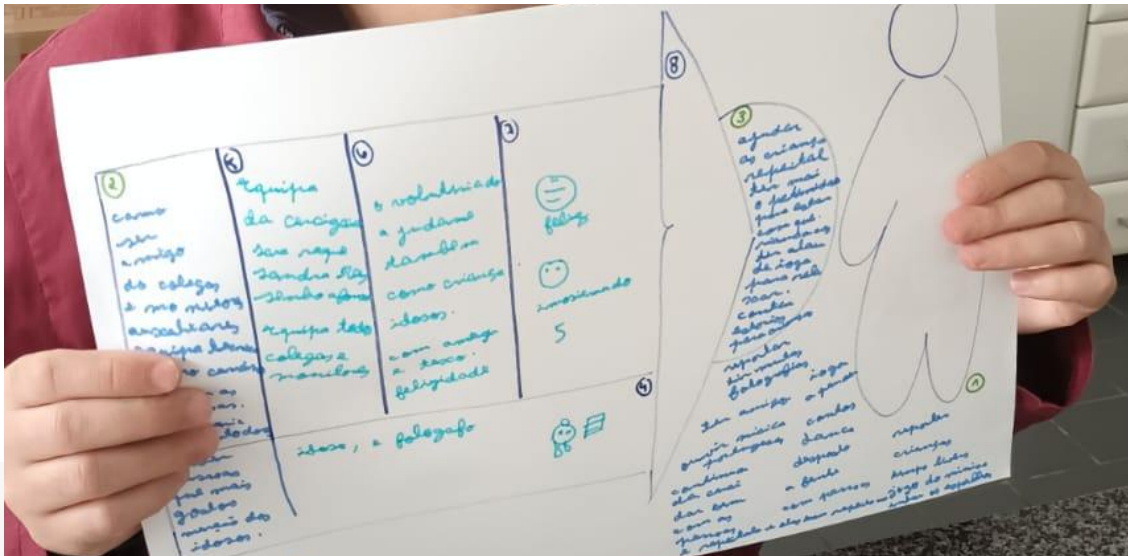
As in the Individual Happiness Project, the aim here is to identify each person's strengths so that the distribution of responsibilities can respect and celebrate them. This work is also carried out with the use of visual materials that allow for an easier realisation of the project thought by the participants (using badges, photographs, etc.) and can be achieved with greater or lesser interference from the project's team member, according to the needs and characteristics of the group.

In VolunTalento:



Of all the instruments studied, Pista Mágica opted to base the construction of the Individual Happiness Project of VolunTalento volunteers on **PATH (Planning Alternatives Tomorrows With Hope)**, created by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsha Forest, which is based on eight stages that aim to clarify goals, describe the present situation, identify strategies and key actors and create commitments to action.

In VolunTalento, after its adaptation, the instrument for the construction of the Individual Happiness Project assumed the stages: (1) The dream; (2) The present; (3) Goals; (4) Celebration of successes; (5) Enlistment; (6) Volunteering and Empowerment; (7) Emotions; and (9) Next steps. This is embodied in a drawn scheme that can be filled in using words or drawings.



When, in one of the groups of volunteers, greater difficulties were identified in thinking individually in a more abstract way, a group design of a Community Happiness Project was used, following the eight steps mentioned above.

The group in question chose to respond to a problem identified at the **Torne e do Prado School Association** (an organisation that had previously hosted generic volunteering activities): the limited goods to supply, on a monthly basis, families in vulnerable situations.

That said, as a group, the participants realised that it would be important to make a collection of goods: paper and cardboard to exchange for food; clothes for the social store, and toys to deliver on International Children's Day.

To this end, they also defined how the collection would be carried out, for how long, to whom they would publicise it and where they would keep the donations.

During the three preparation sessions for the CHP, they designed and carried out the dissemination campaign, designing a poster and approaching the remaining colleagues, technical staff and family members, in order to raise awareness and encourage them to participate in the project, explaining it and distributing pamphlets. As they received donations, they also organised them by category so that delivery to the host entity would be more efficient.



Phase (d) – Specific Volunteering Activities:

The **Specific Volunteering Activities (SVA)**, the last phase of the methodology, enable the implementation of the happiness projects, either through integration in volunteering opportunities (done in group or individually) which are in line with the personal goals of each volunteer or through the implementation of the designed community projects.

At this stage, it is important to note that two or more volunteers may want to integrate, in an autonomous way, the same activities, because they have common interests. This fact should be respected and taken advantage of in order to maximise their adaptation.

In VolunTalentos:

In VolunTalentos, after the phase of designing Happiness Projects, specific individual and group volunteering activities were scheduled, according to the interests and aspirations identified, so that all volunteers (with a greater or lesser degree of autonomy) could have new experiences in the field that would meet their motivations.

Volunteers with greater autonomy and interest in specific opportunities were paired with volunteer involving organisations in order to sign volunteering agreements. In these cases, the project's team accompanied the volunteers at the beginning of their integration, so that the transition from supported volunteering to a more inclusive volunteering setting could happen in each person's own time. Examples of this are the accompaniment of volunteer P.,

integrated in a gardening opportunity, which consisted of supporting the volunteer in getting to the institution's facilities, and volunteer S., integrated in an animal association, which was materialised in the presence of a person from the team in the first volunteering sessions.

As far as the materialisation of the designed Community Happiness Project is concerned, the group of volunteers who promoted the CHP delivered the goods collected to Associação das Escolas do Torne e do Prado.

In any of the scenarios, it is important to mention that this phase should always be concluded with a moment of reflection and recognition, allowing for an evaluation and celebration of the volunteer work done.

(4.1.1) Roles and responsibilities in implementing the methodology

Different entities were mobilised to implement this first axis of VolunTalento: (1) Pista Mágica, promoter of the initiative and responsible for its operationalisation; (2) Social Inclusion Centre (CIS) of Magarão, Sim Somos Capazes (project promoted by the Associação Desportiva e Cultural Santa Isabel), Cercigaia and Somos Nós, responsible for the identification and selection of participants; (3) EMVIO (Municipal Structure of Inclusive and Oriented Volunteering of Vila Nova de Gaia), responsible for the articulation with volunteer involving entities; and (4) those same entities, responsible for welcoming the project's volunteers.

In the reflection carried out with a view to the sustainability of the project and possible replication of the methodology, the conclusion was reached that **it is important to ensure that there is a partnership between at least two types of entities: the one working with PWD and the one promoting volunteering** (ideally a Local Volunteer Bank (LVB) or a Municipal Volunteering Structure (MVS)).

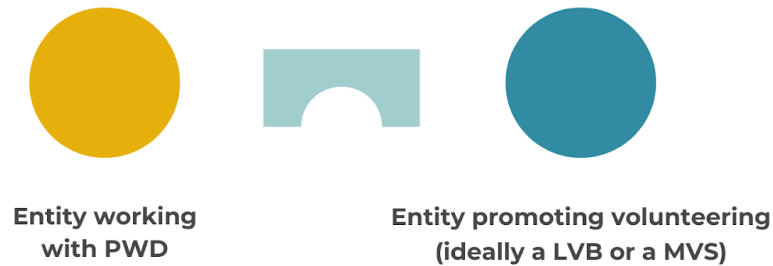


Fig. 5 – Facilitating agents in the Supported Volunteering methodology with PWD

In this sense, tasks were systematised, after the Planning and Organisation phases of the supported volunteering program⁹ (which must be included in the activity plan of each entity) to be taken into consideration.

The entity working with PWD:

1. Identification and selection of participants.
2. Provision of space for facilitation of the training sessions.
3. Facilitation of the volunteers' training sessions.
 - a. Involves budgeting the necessary materials for the sessions: passport, exercise sheets, A5 sheets, markers, pins, toners, etc.
4. Mapping of the participant's interests and availability in relation to the generic volunteering activities (GVA) scheduled.
5. Carrying out the individual or community happiness projects design sessions.
6. Accompaniment of the volunteers in the GVA, as well as in specific volunteering activities (SVA) carried out in a supported volunteering context.
7. Facilitation of Reflection and Recognition sessions.
8. Systematisation of information about each volunteer, to be sent to the partner entity responsible for the organisation of GVA, containing, at least, the following fields: Full Name, Date of Birth, Tax Identification Number, Location, Diagnosis, Characteristics, Interests and Contacts.

⁹ For more information on the Volunteer Management phases, with notes on how to make it more inclusive, consult the Guide for a more Inclusive Volunteering (Fernandes et al., 2021), available [here](#).

9. Guaranteeing the follow-up, if necessary, in a first phase, of volunteers integrated autonomously in SVA (thus, in a more inclusive volunteering context).

The entity promoting volunteering (ideally a LVB or an MVS):

1. Facilitation of capacity building and consultancy sessions to volunteer involving organisations (VIO) on more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes.
2. Enrolment of volunteers in the entity and activation of insurance.
3. Scheduling of the GVA.
 - a. It involves carrying out a briefing with the organisations regarding the profile of the volunteers they will host.
4. Accompaniment of volunteers during the GVA.
5. Identification of hosting organisations for SVA, according to the areas of interest of each volunteer raised during the happiness project's design phase.
6. Support the VIO in the elaboration of a volunteer position description adapted to each volunteer.
7. Elaboration and celebration of a volunteering commitment adapted to each volunteer.
8. Conducting a follow-up of volunteers integrated in SVA, either in a supported volunteering context or in a more inclusive volunteering context.
9. Conducting follow-up meetings with the VIO.
10. Evaluation of volunteer work.
11. Recognition of volunteers.

It is important to highlight that it is fundamental that, before the beginning of the implementation of the supported volunteering programme or project, an agreement is reached between entities as to who will be responsible for the transportation of the participants in phase (b) Generic Volunteering Activities (GVA), which must be adapted to their needs.

In VolunTalento, this has been one of the greatest challenges in integrating volunteers and we understand, as such, that it should be one of the first responsibilities to be defined between the entities, in order to avoid possible constraints.

(4.2) Advocacy – How to include PWD in volunteering?

Considering the need to work for a fairer, more democratic and inclusive society, with participation opportunities for all persons, with or without disabilities, it is important to reflect that, even though there is still a long way to go, some institutions and governments are already trying to reinforce, in their policies, the importance of volunteering as a tool for social inclusion.

That is the case of the European Union, which has been emphasising this issue in several documents published by different bodies,¹⁰ or of countries such as Croatia and Australia, which we believe are examples to follow regarding the generalisation of the concept and practices of more inclusive volunteering.

In Ireland, for example, a country with one of the highest rates of volunteering in the world (Government of Ireland, 2020, p.14), although there is no legal protection for volunteers (Volunteer Ireland, n.d.), the [National Strategy for Volunteering \(2021-2025\)](#) was launched in December 2020, a document which "demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity in volunteering, so that everyone who wants to can volunteer and feel that their contribution is supported and valued" (2020, p.15). An example is Strategic Objective 1, which aims to improve awareness and increase participation in volunteering activities, particularly among sections of society "that are currently under-represented" (2020, p.39).

Meanwhile, Croatia, with a Volunteering Law adopted in 2007, approved an addendum to it in 2013, introducing the principle of inclusive volunteering and setting out the provisions for volunteer involving organisations to pay special attention to equal access to volunteering opportunities, with special emphasis on members of socially excluded groups (Making it Matter, p. 20).

In Australia, the "[Inclusive Volunteering Pathways To Employment](#)" programme, promoted by VolunteeringACT, seeks to "reduce and remove barriers to volunteering

¹⁰ Examples are the European Parliament Resolution, of 12 June 2012, on "recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU" ([2011/2293 \(INI\)](#)), which underlines the role of volunteering in reducing the risk of social exclusion of different social groups, in particular, people with disabilities; the opinion published in 2006 by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) ([2006/C 325/13](#)) on the role and impact of voluntary activity in the European society, in which, in item 1.3 of the conclusions and recommendations, one can read: "In all the Member States a legal framework must be drawn up to guarantee the right to carry out voluntary activity independently of an individual's legal or social status. There should be equal opportunities for all individuals engaging in voluntary activity, including people with disabilities"; and the conclusions published by the Council of the European Union in 2011 regarding the impact of voluntary activities on social policy ([14552/11](#)), in which, in point 18., the importance of voluntary activities "to reinforce skills and improve the qualifications of vulnerable groups that can also be involved in voluntary actions and thus benefit from better social inclusion" is underlined.

and employment for people living with disability or mental health conditions". The programme not only supports participants to engage in volunteering activities as a pathway to employment, but also works with organisations to help them become more inclusive.

In Portugal, as mentioned in chapter (1) of this guide, there is no mention of any groups in vulnerable situations in the Law no. 71/98, which provides the legal framework for volunteering, or any definition of inclusive volunteering in the governmental document in which measures for its implementation are proposed: the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (ENIPD) 2021-2025.

It was based on this reflection that **Axis 2 of VolunTalentos's project – "Empowerment of Volunteers"** – was designed. How can we guarantee the inclusion of persons in vulnerable situations, namely PWD, in volunteering, if there are currently no public policies to strengthen it? In this sense, a Working Group for *Advocacy* was created, which, by problematising the issue of inclusion in volunteering, led to the construction of two products:

- (1) **A document with recommendations for public policies.**
- (2) **An awareness campaign on inclusion in volunteering.**

The Working Group, mediated by Pista Mágica, the association promoting the project, was attended by:

1. **Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista**
2. **Associação Salvador**
3. **Associação de Solidariedade Social de Lafões (ASSOL)**
4. **Câmara Municipal de Gaia**
5. **Catarina Oliveira (activist for the rights of PWD)**
6. **Centro de Vida Independente (CVI)**
7. **Confederação Nacional das Instituições de Solidariedade (CNIS)**
8. **Confederação Portuguesa de Voluntariado (CPV)**
9. **Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social**
10. **Fundação Eugénio de Almeida**
11. **Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP, I.P.)**
12. **Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação (INR, I.P.)**
13. **Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude (IPDJ, I.P.)**

14. Universidade do Porto

As priorities and main reflections listed by the group, the following points stand out:

(1) There is an urgent need to create **specific regulations on volunteering to strengthen the participation of PWD** (and other groups in vulnerable situations), in order to ensure that their inclusion is done in a structured way and taking into account their specific needs. In this sense, it is important to update national programmes and plans on volunteering, making them inclusive in that regard.

(2) **The training of entities and their staff members** is essential so that truly inclusive programmes and projects can be implemented. To this end, it is important to promote dialogue between different actors, such as entities working with PWD and entities that want to make their volunteering projects and programmes more inclusive and, as such, need to be trained. The training sessions may be led by persons with disabilities themselves, so that possible prejudices in the entities are deconstructed from the start.

An equally important note, however, is to make it clear that training does not replace the entity's process of mapping out the specific needs of each volunteer (for example, with regard to accessibility (physical environment, information and communication)).

(3) It is necessary to ensure the **existence of financial support for the implementation of more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes**, either to support the creation of physical conditions that favour accessibility and mobility or to target capacity building and, eventually, consultancy in this area.

(4) Volunteer involving organisations should create **entry conditions for volunteers with disabilities** and work towards their retention. In this sense, it is important that they seek to create an environment free of obstacles – physical, social, economic or of any other nature – that enables the volunteers to carry out their positions (duly adjusted to their needs and skills). To this end, it is fundamental to have an understanding of characteristics of the other – which is achieved by asking the person what they need to carry out their role – and to seek compatible answers, working on a relationship in which communication and flexibility are key elements.

(5) As volunteering can contribute to the development of key skills for entering the labour market, it is crucial to promote **synergies between entities working on more inclusive volunteering projects or programmes and employment.**

(6) **Communication** has a vast transformative power and, if used correctly, can contribute to demystifying and deconstructing stigmas around disability (for example, through the use of first-person testimonies of PWD who volunteer). In this sense, in order to reach more people – and consciences – the creation of strategic partnerships for the preparation of joint campaigns may be key. At the same time, communication can be directed towards the dissemination of concrete (more inclusive) volunteering opportunities.

(7) We must not forget the importance of the **representativeness of PWD** and the pressing need for its advocacy. In order for there to be a full transition from a structurally enabling and oppressive system for PWD to a truly inclusive system, it is imperative that PWD are involved in decision-making processes, reinforcing the motto: "Nothing about us, without us". In Portugal, this debate must include the involvement of organisations that guarantee this representativeness and that are identified in article 6 of Decree-Law no. 106/2013, of July 30.¹¹

Also, the fact that PWD can see themselves and be seen in different roles is highly empowering and transformative, whether in a decision-making body or in a volunteering position.

(4.2.1) Recommendations

Taking as a starting point the reflections listed above, the Working Group for Advocacy drew up a set of recommendations, later systematised by Pista Mágica, based on nine objectives.

With the motto "Nothing about us, without us" present, an intersectional group of PWD was also formed for a critical analysis of this document. This group was composed by:

- Ana Filipa Leça | Candidate of the project "Destino: Emprego" ("Destination: Employment") of Associação Salvador

¹¹ In addition, in article 10 of Decree-Law no. 48/2017, of May 22, the composition of the Commission for Inclusion Policies for Persons with Disabilities is expressed, being identified, in article 16 of the same decree-law, the specific powers of the said commission.

- Andreia Sofia Moura | VolunTalento's participant
- Mayne Benedetto | President of the Advisory Board of Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista
- Members of Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista
- Pedro Clara | Former Paralympic Athlete
- Raul Mieiro | Social Educator in the Rumo Sul project, volunteer in the Associação Portuguesa de Deficientes – Delegação Local de Paredes, mediator of the activity "A Inclusão e as Competências Digitais" ("Inclusion and Digital Skills"), in partnership with the project "Escola Mais Inclusiva" ("More Inclusive School") of Associação Paredes pela Inclusão Social, in the school year 2022/2023
- Rita Serra | Project Coordinator of Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista
- Roberto Ferreira | Salta Fronteiras Associação
- Rui Filipe Manhente | VolunTalento's participant
- Sara Rocha | President of Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista

The recommendations presented here are, thus, the result of this joint effort.

OBJECTIVE A.

Promote greater knowledge on the needs and existing resources regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in volunteering opportunities

Recommendations:

1. Create an interdisciplinary and inter-ministerial working group, with the participation of civil society and of an intersectional set of PWD that ensures:
 - a. A diagnostic study should be carried out at national level to find out:
 - i. the existing needs and resources of volunteer involving organisations with regard to the inclusion of PWD;
 - ii. the obstacles pointed out by PWD in accessing volunteering opportunities.
2. Include, in the Guide for the definition and organisation of inclusive volunteering activities, foreseen in section 2.2.1 of the ENIPD, the conclusions of the diagnostic study.

The identification of existing resources and needs of volunteer involving organisations, as well as the obstacles perceived by PWD, will allow the prioritisation of the improvements needed to implement more inclusive volunteering programmes that are truly integrative and personalised.

For the creation of the Republic of Ireland's National Strategy for Volunteering (2021-2025), for example, a consultation of different stakeholders was undertaken to map the key challenges identified in regards to volunteering. That consultation suggests that the primary challenge in this context is not a lack of people available and interested in integrating opportunities, but rather " limited resources of Volunteer Involving Organisations and their lack of capacity to engage and adapt to the changing needs of volunteers" (Government of Ireland, 2020, p.34). With regard to challenges faced by volunteers, the "need for more understanding and research on the positive impact of volunteering on specific groups such as the disability sector, older people, gender, youth and education and migrants" (p.35) is highlighted among others (a challenge that this set of recommendations addresses under Objective I).

OBJECTIVE B.

Recognise, give visibility and value more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes, contributing to their mainstreaming

Recommendations:

1. Promote a positive view of volunteers in vulnerable situations through visibility and empowerment:
 - a. Encourage and standardise the use of images depicting volunteers with disabilities and other groups of people in vulnerable situations.
 - b. To inform and empower PWD for the knowledge and exercise of their rights in volunteering.
2. Include the concept of more inclusive volunteering in guidelines provided to schools with regard to the “Volunteering” domain within Citizenship Education.
 - a. Promoting training actions on disability and volunteer work among educators, teachers and non-teaching staff, with the participation, as trainers, of PWD.
3. To reinforce the concept of social inclusion in curricular and academic plans, namely, in the guidelines provided to schools, regarding the dimension “Education for Human Rights”, in the Citizenship Education subject and in the curricular programmes for Higher Education, promoting a practical approach, which enables the operationalisation of the concept of social inclusion and counts on the involvement of people in vulnerable situations.
4. Promote a nationwide communication campaign aimed at increasing the social value and recognition of volunteer work carried out by people in vulnerable situations, using their testimony.
 - a. This could also serve to captivate potential volunteers and entities interested in making their volunteering programmes more inclusive, through a call to action.
5. Organise an Annual Forum on Volunteering and Inclusion, at the national level, to give visibility to good practices when it comes to more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes.

6. Create a "+ Inclusive Volunteering" seal, to be awarded to entities able to demonstrate good practices in this area.
 - a. Ensure, when defining the criteria for awarding the seal, the participation of people in vulnerable situations.
 - b. Create an online repository with the name of recognised volunteer involving organisations and their respective fields of action.

For it to become more widespread, it is essential that there is a greater knowledge about more inclusive volunteering: what it is and what it entails, not only in terms of responsibilities, but also in terms of potential. Volunteering, as a tool for social inclusion, can enhance the fulfilment of social, esteem and self-actualisation needs of those who practise it, while at the same time being a socially useful activity. In this sense, if structured, it can be an asset to all parties: volunteers, host organisations and the community.

OBJECTIVE C.

Ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to engage in volunteering opportunities

Recommendations:

1. Create an interdisciplinary and inter-ministerial working group, with the participation of civil society and of an intersectional set of PWD, responsible for:
 - a. Creating specific regulations to ensure access to volunteering for PWD, including sheltered volunteering, supported volunteering and more inclusive volunteering:
 - i. This should include the creation of mechanisms to monitor its implementation.
 - ii. Its creation must be followed by communication actions that make its existence and content widely known.
 - b. Ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of public policies on the inclusion of PWD in volunteer work.

- c. Ensuring the participation of PWD in decision-making processes that have a direct implication on their rights and its exercise.
 2. Ensuring the broad dissemination of the rights and opportunities for PWD in the field of volunteering also at the international level.
 - a. Reinforce the dissemination of programmes at the European level that enable PWD to carry out international volunteer actions.

This objective has to do with the need to clarify, in legislation and in national strategies, the concept of more inclusive volunteering. Also, here the debate around the participation and involvement of PWD in decision-making processes becomes urgent. A proposal for regulation enhancing the right of PWD to participate in volunteer actions as volunteers, for example, can never be drafted without the intervention of PWD.

OBJECTIVE D.

Improve services and infrastructure to ensure accessible volunteering opportunities

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen compliance with points 1.1 – Promote accessibility of the physical environment, 1.2 – Promote accessibility in the public and passenger transport system as a mobility factor and 1.3 – Promote accessibility of information and communication, present in General Objective 2 of ENIPD, that foresee the promotion of accessible and resilient physical, informational and communicational environments.
 - a. Promote the creation of partnerships between public and private actors to streamline compliance.
2. Define priorities when it comes to the accessibility improvements identified in regards to volunteer involving organisations, following the diagnostic study carried out under objective A.
3. Promote the creation of teams, at local level, to monitor the process of tendering for funds to improve the accessibility of volunteer involving

organisations (objective E.). Their creation should be followed by communication actions that can make the existence of these teams widely known.

Ensuring the accessibility of services and infrastructure is essential to make the implementation of more inclusive volunteering programmes possible, which is why it is important for volunteer involving organisations to understand which improvements must be prioritised and how they can access support that will allow for those to take place.

OBJECTIVE E.

Ensure the allocation of public funds to the promotion of more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes

Recommendations:

1. Create a public funding line for more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes.
 - a. Extend the existing financial support in the employment context to the volunteering context, allowing for the adaptation of volunteer work¹² positions by private or public volunteer involving entities, which are not part of the direct administration of the State and which, by hosting persons in vulnerable situations as volunteers, need to adapt the position to the volunteer's characteristics.
 - b. Extend the existing financial support in the employment context to the volunteering context, allowing for the elimination of architectural barriers by private or public volunteer involving entities that are not part of the direct administration of the State and which, by hosting persons in vulnerable situations as volunteers, need to adapt their facilities to the functional characteristics of the volunteer.

¹² "Volunteer work" is understood as the definition present in the Methodological Notes (pages 59-60 of this document, taken from the methodological notes of Volunteer Work Survey 2018, published by INE).

- c. Provide financial support for: 1) Training organisations in volunteer management and inclusion of persons in vulnerable situations and; 2) Supporting the implementation of more inclusive volunteer projects and programmes.
 - d. These options for financial support should be widely disseminated and there should be teams to support the entities in applying for them (objective D., point 3).
 2. Reduce the contribution rate for entities promoting volunteer work that welcome persons in vulnerable situations, such as those listed as preferential in access to professional internships, e.g., people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, refugees and former prisoners.
 3. Launch a pilot project with the aim of setting up multidisciplinary teams with wide territorial coverage to help volunteer involving organisations become more inclusive and support persons in vulnerable situations to engage in volunteering opportunities.
 - a. This could be inspired in VolunteeringAct's work with the [Inclusive Volunteering Pathways To Employment](#) programme, which proposes volunteering as a pathway to employment.

Related to point (3) (p.42), these recommendations arise from an inevitable debate around the needs of most organisations in terms of finance and capacity building with regard to enabling the implementation of more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes.

OBJECTIVE F.

Promote the deconstruction of the stigma associated with persons with disabilities

Recommendations:

1. Include, in the National Reading Plan, books that value the rights and human dignity of PWD.

2. Promote the training of the media and of educational and cultural agents in disability and social inclusion issues.
3. Implement measures to increase the representation of PWD in teaching and cultural positions, as well as in the media.
 - a. Involve PWD in defining these measures.

The normalisation of disability is essential for there to be a structural transformation that enables the full social inclusion of PWD. Their greater representativeness in different social environments and spheres will allow for the collective deconstruction of existing stereotypes and prejudices, which often result in their exclusion from certain opportunities. Even so, it is important to mention that the onus for destigmatisation should be on society and not on PWD. After all, for Aranha (2001, p.19), social inclusion is a "process of mutual adjustment, where it is up to the person with disabilities to express their wishes and needs and society to implement the necessary adjustments and provisions that enable access and coexistence in the common space, not segregated" (in Marchesan & Carpenedo, 2021, p.48).

OBJECTIVE G.

Develop a national strategy for the training of organisations promoting supported volunteering programmes and volunteer involving organisations

Recommendations:

1. Promote a training action on volunteering as a tool for social inclusion, at national level, that can be replicated locally and that precedes the fulfilment of point 2.2.2 – Boost inclusive volunteering activities at the community level, foreseen in the ENIPD.
 - a. This should include an approach to the spectrum of autonomy in volunteering, clarifying the different contexts of participation regarding volunteering.
 - b. The training should also allow for the diffusion of good practices already identified in pioneer projects in this field.

2. To create and include, in the Guide for the definition and organisation of inclusive volunteering activities (provided for in ENIPD's point 2.2.1), a list of entities capable of training others in this field.
3. Foster coherent and constant practices of continuous training on the concept and practices of more inclusive volunteering for entities promoting volunteering, through Local Volunteer Banks (LVB) or Municipal Volunteer Structures (MVS).
 - a. Focus on providing certified training for LVB's staff on more inclusive volunteering issues.
 - b. Create a pool of certified trainers in the design and implementation of more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes.
 - c. Promote periodic inter-municipal meetings that bring together Town Councillors and technical experts from Municipalities and LVB to define territorial strategies that can promote the design and implementation of more inclusive projects and programmes.

It is not a solution, for ENIPD's specific objective "2.2. Boost inclusive volunteering", to think of one-time and, ultimately, segregated activities, to meet the target (=10 activities), but rather activities that allow for a sustainable and sustained inclusion over time. In other words, it is important to train entities for the promotion of "inclusive volunteering activities at community level" that give substance to an effective paradigm shift, in which the role of PWD as volunteers is recognised.

OBJECTIVE H.

Promote greater knowledge on the representativeness of persons in vulnerable situations within volunteering

Recommendations:

1. To carry out a diagnostic study on the practice of volunteering by people in vulnerable situations.

- a. This study could be applied at municipal level, with the support from key actors in promoting social inclusion.
 - i. It is important to ensure the creation of partnerships for the collection of real data, in particular, regarding PWD, given the fragility of the data currently known.
 - b. This study should contain a repository of links to the pages of entities that concentrate statistical data on the different populations in vulnerable situations (e.g. migrants, former prisoners, etc.).
2. Include, in the Surveys on Volunteer Work (INE), statistical data on more inclusive volunteering practices in Portugal.

Bridging the gap with point (7) (p.43), it is essential not to forget the importance of the representativeness of people in vulnerable situations (such as PWD) and the urgent need to promote it. Knowledge leads to empowerment and, in fact, it is not only important to reflect the representativeness of these persons in the form of statistical data in order to strengthen, with decision making bodies and entities promoting volunteering, their participation in volunteering, but also so that people in vulnerable situations can view themselves and be seen in the role of volunteers (and not as mere recipients of volunteer support).

Here, it is important to highlight item i, referring to the collection of statistical data on PWD, as, in Portugal, the collection of information is done in an inconsistent way, harming the actual awareness on the number of PWD in the national territory. An example is the substantial difference between the number of individuals with disabilities registered in 2011 – 1,792,719 (INE, 2011) – and in 2021 – 1,085,472 (INE, 2021), which may be explained by a change in the data collection methodology, since the question on disability in 2021 was optional and more response options were introduced.

OBJECTIVE I.

Promote greater knowledge on the impact of volunteering on persons in vulnerable situations and vice versa

Recommendations:

1. Include, in the diagnostic study mentioned in objective H., point 1, a survey on the impact of volunteering on people in vulnerable situations (at a personal and professional level).
 - a. Create a network of more inclusive volunteering entities in order to share information and build impact measurement mechanisms.
2. Carry out a study on the impact of the population in situations of vulnerability on voluntary work, using a quantitative and qualitative methodology as a way of triangulating data, along the lines of the [study](#) conducted in 2003 by the High Commission for Migrations on the impact of immigrants on state accounts.
3. To create communication campaigns capable of giving visibility to the results of the above-mentioned studies, so that knowledge about the impact of volunteering on people in vulnerable situations, as well as their impact on volunteering, becomes more widespread.

Generating knowledge about the impact of the practice of volunteering on people in vulnerable situations is fundamental for the generalisation of volunteering as a tool that promotes the acquisition of skills, knowledge, contacts and other resources that may result in their reaffirmation within society and subsequent social inclusion.

On the other hand, a study to understand the value added by people in vulnerable situations within the scope of volunteering would help understanding, in turn, that the allocation of resources to public policies focused on more inclusive volunteering, as a concept and a practice, is an investment on different fronts: (1) empowering populations in vulnerable situations; (2) increasing community resilience and social cohesion; and (3) destigmatizing people in vulnerable situations, actively combating, through representativeness, ableism, ageism and other forms of prejudice.

This set of recommendations, which seem to be useful and which may allow significant advances in terms of inclusion in volunteer work, will be presented and proposed to

decision-makers, involving organisations representing PWD and persons in vulnerable situations. It is intended, therefore, that, through joint reflection, the proposed measures can be worked on so that the necessary steps can be taken for their constitution as public policy.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

In 2021, when Pista Mágica launched the Guide for a More Inclusive Volunteering, it did so knowing that the methodology proposed in it would have to be tested and, consequently, adapted to the needs felt by those who work directly with persons in vulnerable situations.

The conceptual reflection arising from the experience acquired since then, in the direct work with young people who live in foster or social homes and persons with mild to moderate physical or intellectual disabilities, allowed us to consolidate a certainty: that volunteering cannot be a vehicle or an answer that assumes a single path for all, but rather that attends to diversity, respecting and celebrating it.

The spectrum of autonomy in volunteering seeks to establish contexts in which every person can enjoy their right to volunteer in a way that fits their needs, skills, challenges and aspirations. Not assuming the form of a ladder, it includes, along with different levels of autonomy, the concepts of sheltered volunteering, supported volunteering and more inclusive volunteering, among which the person (in a vulnerable situation) may move in order to reach their full potential in volunteering, acquiring different socially useful roles. Here, we argue that, whatever the volunteering context, the person's social inclusion will always be greater than that of someone who is in the exclusion zone of volunteering.

In VolunTalento, the direct work with volunteers with disabilities in a supported volunteering context allowed us to witness positive changes not only in terms of the acquisition of relational and socio-professional skills by the participants, with an increase in their self-esteem, self-perception and interaction with the community, but also in terms of the receptiveness by the volunteer involving organisations and their beneficiaries.

However, despite the impact data that makes us want to replicate it, this pilot project tells us that more is needed. Political decisions need to be taken in order to boost the generalisation of truly inclusive volunteering programmes throughout the national territory.

According to the Working Group set up under VolunTalento, it is necessary:

- A. Promote greater knowledge on the needs and existing resources regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in volunteering opportunities

- B. Recognise, give visibility and value more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes, contributing to their mainstreaming
- C. Ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to engage in volunteering opportunities
- D. Improve services and infrastructure to ensure accessible volunteering opportunities
- E. Ensure the allocation of public funds to the promotion of more inclusive volunteering projects and programmes
- F. Promote the deconstruction of the stigma associated with persons with disabilities
- G. Develop a national strategy for the training of organisations promoting supported volunteering programmes and volunteer involving organisations
- H. Promote greater knowledge on the representativeness of persons in vulnerable situations within volunteering
- I. Promote greater knowledge on the impact of volunteering on persons in vulnerable situations and vice versa

This Guide, as well as these recommendations, seek to be an ode to the elimination of ableism,¹³ sexism, ageism and all existent forms of discrimination. They are, however, insufficient in the demanding quest for equality. The solutions we propose here are certainly not solutions that enable the inclusion of all persons. They are solutions that assume as addressees individuals who represent only a fringe of the population with disabilities. We know that. But we believe that it is important to start, to problematise, to experiment and to reflect, even if this implies that there is still a lot to do, to say, to safeguard and to defend.

In 18 months of VolunTalento, there were several moments when we had to take steps back. The methodology was adapted and transformed because, in the field, with the people, we realised that, since we, members of the project team, are not persons with disabilities, the exercise of empathy would never be enough to design solutions. As we advocate in Pista Mágica, good will is not enough. It is necessary to know, study and,

¹³ Ableism is the “expression that designates prejudice towards persons with disabilities”, assuming “that the person with a disability has all his or her capacities limited or reduced” and is, therefore, a “less ‘capable person’” (Marchesan & Carpenedo, 2021, p.45).

above all, consult and listen carefully to those we seek to support. In 18 months of the project, we have collected lessons and reflections that today seem obvious to us. Today, we understand that filling in quiet times with music or giving a hug can bring comfort to some and discomfort to others. We understand that, even those of us who propose to work for inclusion, keep some inattention to what is or is not accessible, what is or is not inclusive, in our daily lives. And, above all, we understand that this work will never stop. There will always be more needs and specificities that we will need, as a society, to attend to.

This methodology is not, therefore, a definitive proposal, but rather a possible solution that invariably requires critical reflection and adaptation by those who decide to embrace it.

This is also why this Guide does not take a more practical and direct sharing form of tools and materials. We believe that this should happen in a different format, one of interaction and training, where issues that arise can be debated and problematised. In which a greater sensitivity on the part of those facilitating this type of initiatives can be promoted and in which the potential challenges can be studied together.

The path is tortuous and long, but we must not forget what makes us move: *all people are capable of doing volunteer work*. It is up to society, as a whole, to build and adopt measures that enable this inclusion.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Concept of "volunteer work" taken from the Survey on Volunteer Work 2018 (INE, 2019), pages 12 to 13:

"According to the "Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labor underutilization" of the "2013 International Conference of Labour Statisticians" (2013 ICLS Resolution I), volunteer work should be considered to be performed by "persons (...)of working age who, during a short reference period, performed any unpaid, non-compulsory activity to produce goods or provide services for others, where:

- (a) "any activity" refers to work for at least one hour;
- (b) "unpaid" is interpreted as the absence of remuneration in cash or in kind for work done or hours worked; nevertheless, volunteer workers may receive some small form of support or stipend in cash, when below one third of local market wages (e.g. for out-of-pocket expenses or to cover living expenses incurred for the activity), or in kind (e.g. meals, transportation, symbolic gifts);
- (c) "non-compulsory" is interpreted as work carried out without civil, legal or administrative requirement, that are different from the fulfilment of social responsibilities of a communal, cultural or religious nature;
- (d) production "for others" refers to work performed:
 - (i) through, or for organizations comprising market and non-market units (i.e. organizationbased volunteering) including through or for self-help, mutual aid or community-based groups of which the volunteer is a member;
 - (ii) for households other than the household of the volunteer worker or of related family members (i.e. direct volunteering).

Two distinct types of volunteer work are admitted:

- Formal or Organisational Voluntary Work, which is understood as all unpaid and non-compulsory work that has been done through an organisation (e.g. volunteering as a teacher or tutor in an organisation; participating in actions of a Food Bank, cultural, sports and recreational collectives);
- Informal or Direct Volunteer Work, which is considered to be all volunteer work done directly by an individual for other individuals not residing in the dwelling,

not belonging to the household and with whom he/she has no family relationship (e.g. free tutoring for a neighbour's child, friend, etc.; taking care of elderly neighbours or a friend's, neighbour's, colleague's pet, etc., while they are away on vacation).

Given the characteristics described, all volunteering activities originating from court decisions, mandatory as part of a prison sentence, unpaid internships that are part of an academic curriculum, and other forms of "forced" volunteering are excluded. Mutual aid work, i.e. work done in a business, farm or professional office by a family member or friend in return for other work done, is also not to be understood as volunteering.

Similarly, all business-initiated volunteering activities are excluded when carried out during working hours or, in general, all activities that take place at the same time as a "paid job". However, if these activities come from employees' initiatives, occurring, in general, outside of working hours and where there is no financial consideration for the participants, they should be considered voluntary work. Finally, any type of monetary or non-monetary aid, in the form of loans, gifts, or donations to institutions or individuals should not be considered voluntary work, although the same does not apply to participation in fund-raising activities that could translate into donations.

It is also important to mention that, although less detailed and more focused on formal volunteering activities (within organisations), the definition of volunteering in Law no. 71/98, of November 3, which provides the legal framework for volunteering, is very close to the above, considering volunteer work as "the set of actions of social and community interest carried out in a selfless way by people, in the context of projects, programmes and other forms of intervention at the service of individuals, families and the community developed on a non-profit basis by public or private entities".

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GUIDE SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING METHODOLOGY: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

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