

CHAPTER 6

LIFE SKILLS IN VOLUNTEERISM

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“All the world is my school and all humanity is my teacher.” George Whitman

Volunteerism involves the effort and assistance made without expecting a financial return. If that's so, then what kind of contribution or yield can a work done without expecting financial return have that allows an individual to decide to become a volunteer? Or what kind of transformation does one experience when volunteering so that the experience of volunteering provides one with a gain? Thinking of the reward from the work done as being financial will both deprive the volunteer of the depth of the support the work provides as well as distract them from thinking about how volunteering contributes to one's personal development. Volunteers develop for themselves a set of competences as a result of their contributions to various activities with the aim of creating social benefit and transformation in connection with an institution or movement. In order for individuals to transform their volunteering process into knowledge and learning, they need to define the experiences they've obtained step by step around the experiential learning cycle and complete the cycle. This chapter identifies how volunteering contributes to individuals' life skills based on the eight key competences determined by the European Union. It emphasizes the extent to which volunteers' processes of volunteerism are reflected in their personal development and life skills from the perspective of lifelong learning and what development areas are possible. The chapter mainly deals with the history of volunteerism being defined as learning and addresses European youth works, the eight key competences, experiential learning, and volunteerism as a learning process within this framework. The European Union Education and Youth Programmes' definition of key competences in the process of transforming volunteering experiences into learning is an important issue these departments focus on, in particular through their contribution to civil society activities in the youth field.

Introduction: Volunteerism and Its Roles in Non-Governmental Organizations

Volunteerism can be defined as a learning process that allows an individual to develop personal and professional knowledge and skills while using their time and effort for a social purpose in line with their own volition. Leigh et al. (2011, p. 2) stated, “Volunteerism is one of the most basic of expressions of human behaviour and arises out of long-established ancient traditions of sharing and reciprocal exchanges. At its core are relationships and their potential to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities.” Social cohesiveness and security are revived in places where volunteerism occurs. Volunteerism is not just the backbone of non-governmental organizations and social and political movements but also constitutes the main framework of many non-governmental, public, and private sector programs around the world, especially in health, education, shelter and environment.

The issue that distinguishes volunteer works from informal aid and charity is that volunteerism is done on behalf of a state agency, non-profit organization, advocacy group, fundraising campaign, club, or social association (Öztürk, 2019, p. 14). The principal difference between informal collaborations and volunteerism is that individuals use the financial, physical, and social resources of the organization of which they are a part as opposed to their own resources (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 420). The need for structuring volunteer management processes has emerged as a result of volunteer works that directly contribute to the mission and vision of NGOs, and these processes are carried out in most organizations at the initiative of professional employees or volunteers (Öztürk, 2019, p. 16).

Regardless of whether they are at the local, national, or international level, individuals with volunteering experience in non-governmental organizations can take an active role in various projects within different institutions, participate in trainings regarding their volunteering roles, and contribute to the work of NGOs for social transformation. Volunteers have the opportunity to develop their different competencies as a result of all these activities in the office or in the field. “NGOs benefit from the support of volunteers in various fields such as office work, training activities, promotion and communication activities, field support, project management, and advocacy work” (TÜSEV, 2012, p. 2). Institutions and employees should define the area where volunteering activities will be carried out, and volunteers should decide for themselves what kind of contribution they want to make.

Volunteerism can take place at local, national, or international levels individually or as part of a specific team by means of participating in a project or work based on consensus

without expecting a financial return. When addressing the international level, various local associations, foundations, and public institutions in Türkiye are seen to have begun benefitting from many grants and funds offered within the framework of the European Union Education and Youth Programmes since the early 2000s. In particular, the financial support and international mobility opportunities offered to young people have paved the way for many NGOs to focus on youth work and volunteer work and to specialize in this field. The European Union Education and Youth Programmes are primarily based on the use of “learner-participant-centered” education methods, which youths living in Türkiye had not previously encountered in their formal education experience, with titles such as intercultural learning or European Citizenship. As this new approach started to be used in youth exchanges and training course projects carried out within the framework of this program, expert trainers began to be trained in the civil field; trainings, events, and workshops are also organized for volunteers within this framework. Youths were introduced to non-formal learning thanks to participant-centered trainings, and they entered the process of redefining their volunteer experiences with what they’d gained from informal learning.

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European Youth Works and Non-Formal Education

European Union Learning and Youth Programs consist of projects that enable youths to volunteer in their own or another country. The European Union Education and Youth Programs, known as the Erasmus+ Program since 2013, enable young people to engage in educational mobility between European Union member states in order to increase their competences within the framework of intercultural learning by living together and respecting differences. The European Parliament has allocated a special budget that makes this program possible.

While the European Union Education and Youth Programs were being designed, studies supporting the participation of young people in social life began to be carried out thanks to the regulations in the field of youth policies across Europe; the aim was to have youths participate in public administration from the perspective of active citizenship (Certel, 2008, p. 216).

Although the European Union Training and Youth Programs change sub-programs or priority areas at certain periods, they basically offer learning and development support in two categories: (1) tools that directly support young people, and (2) tools that support youth workers/trainers.

Tools that directly support young people consist of programs that enable young people to volunteer in their own or other countries. The tools that support youth workers/trainers consist of international mobility projects such as training courses, seminars, and programs that support innovation and cooperation in the field of youth works (Erdoğan, 2019, p. 8).

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The Eight Key Competences

We're always learning to become more competent. We learn in order to be better able to overcome difficulties, adapt to the processes of change, and become more qualified individuals by solving our problems. Being competent in a subject involves three dimensions:

(1) *Knowledge*: This is the facts or conceptions about reality obtained through research, observation, or learning. At the same time, knowledge can be defined as the intellectual products resulting from the work of human intelligence.

(2) *Skill*: This is one's ability to accomplish a task or conclude an operation as required based on one's aptitude and learning.

(3) *Attitude*: This is the evaluations an individual has toward other people and objects that guide their behaviors.

In order to be competent in a subject, one needs to develop oneself in these three dimensions.

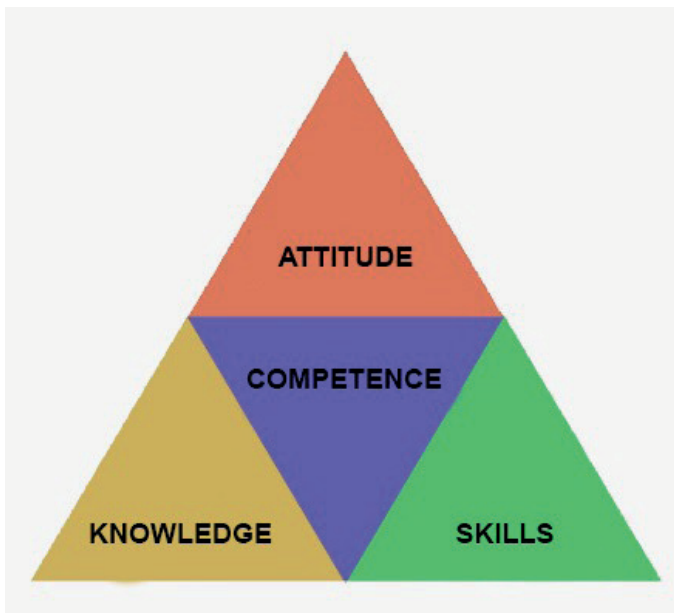


Image 1. The three dimensions of competence.

The Youthpass certificate is an important document presented by the Education and Youth Programme that contributes to recognizing informal learning throughout Europe. This certificate began being implemented as of June 2007 by the Support, Advanced Learning,

and Training Opportunities (SALTO)- Youth Participation Resource Center. The Youthpass certificate allows program participants to assess themselves over eight key competences. The document identifies what the volunteer has done and learned in the project in which they were involved and is expected to individually reflect the informal learning process and results.

In December 2006, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted a recommended text titled *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning*. The intention behind this policy initiative was to create educational strategies for paving the way to a competitive and knowledge-based economy and to build and improve social cohesion processes in European societies on a more solid basis. The eight key competencies determined within this framework were identified as the basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes that every European citizen should acquire and develop throughout their life (EU Parliament, 2006).

The eight key competencies enable individuals to adapt to social transformations and changes and consider one's entire life to be a learning process. These eight key competencies have been identified to be developable in formal and non-formal/informal learning areas. Some minor adjustments have been made to the 8 Key Competencies over time based on much discussion and debate. However, these regulations are still in their draft form. These adaptation attempts can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Eight Key Competences: 2006 and 2018¹

#	KEY COMPETENCES European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2006 version	KEY COMPTENCES Council of the European Union 2018 Revised version
1	Communication in the mother tongue	Literacy competence
2	Communication in foreign languages	Multilingual competence
3	Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology	Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering
4	Digital competence	Digital competence
5	Learning to learn	Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
6	Social and civil competences	Citizenship competence
7	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship competence
8	Cultural awareness and expression	Cultural awareness and expression competence

1. Communication in the Mother Tongue: This involves the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts, and views in the mother tongue orally and in writing (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the ability to appropriately and creatively interact linguistically by taking into account social and cultural contexts.

1 https://www.myk.gov.tr/images/articles/TYC/Yayinlar/Hayat_Boyu_Ogrenme_icin_Anahtar_Yetkinlikler_Tavsiye_Karari_2018.pdf

2. *Communication in Foreign Languages:* This includes mediation and intercultural understanding in addition to the skill dimensions provided by mother tongue communication. Competence level is based on one's capacity to listen, speak, read, and write.

3. *Mathematical Competence and Basic Competences in Science and Technology:* Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking by taking into account factors such as process, activity, and knowledge with the goal of solving the problems encountered in daily life. Core competences in science and technology refer to mastery of knowledge and methods for explaining the natural world and the ways in which they are not applied. The aim of these is to understand the transformations caused by human activities and the responsibilities individuals have as citizens.

4. *Digital Competence: Digital Competence:* This includes the basic skills of information society technologies (IST) and their safe and effective use.

5. *Learning to Learn:* Learning includes the ability to individually or as a group take part in, maintain, and organize learning processes in accordance with one's own needs and awareness of their methods and opportunities.

6. *Social and Civic Competences:* Social competence refers to any form of behavior that encourages individuals to participate actively and constructively in their social relationships and work life at personal, interpersonal, and intercultural levels. It is affiliated with personal and social well-being. Understanding the codes of conduct and customs in the environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence and knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (i.e., democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights) in particular equip people for active and democratic participation.

7. *Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship:* This involves the ability to turn ideas into action and includes skills for planning and managing projects as well as creativity, innovation, and risk-taking for achieving goals. Individuals are aware of the context of their work and are able to seize opportunities that arise. It provides a basis for the more specific knowledge and skills needed by those engaged in or contributing to social or business activities. Entrepreneurship should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

8. *Cultural Awareness and Expression:* This involves appreciation of the importance of creative ideas, experiences, and emotions present in the media (i.e., music, performing arts, literature, and visual arts).

The Skills Matrix for Developing the Eight Key Competences

Table 2 can be reviewed in order to fully understand the skill set required to practice the core competencies identified by the European Commission.

Table 2. The Skills Matrix for the Eight Key Competences¹

Competence	Activity Performance	Skill Set
Communication in the Mother Tongue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Express thoughts in a variety of forms and contexts by using verbal, written, and other communication skills effectively. Realize meanings inherent in knowledge, values, attitudes, and intentions using effective decoding skills. Use effective communication skills (inform, instruct, motivate, and persuade) to achieve multiple goals in different settings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The ability to verbally understand and interpret concepts, feelings, facts, or views. S2. The ability to understand and interpret concepts, feelings, facts, or views in writing. S3. The ability to verbally express concepts, feeling, facts, or opinions. S4. The ability to express concepts, feeling, facts, or opinions in writing. S5. The ability to understand the world and establish relations with others. S6. The ability to interact appropriately and be creative in any situation.
Communication in Foreign Languages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Express thoughts effectively in a foreign language in a variety of formats and contexts. Realize meanings using effective decoding skills. Use effective communication skills to achieve multiple goals in different settings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The ability to verbally understand and interpret concepts, feelings, facts, or opinions. S2. The ability to understand and interpret concepts, feelings, facts, or views in writing. S3. The ability to verbally express concepts, feelings, facts, or opinions. S4. Ability to express concepts, feelings, facts, or opinions in writing. S5. The ability to understand the world and establish relations with others. S6. The ability to interact appropriately and be creative in any situation. S7. Knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. S8. Assessing cultural diversity. S9. The ability to use technical language according to the field of study.
Mathematical Competence and Basic Competences in Science and Technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate your ability to reason with numbers and other mathematical concepts. Demonstrate your ability to evaluate based on methods that form the source of scientific and numerical information. Evaluate scientific arguments based on evidence to demonstrate your capacity and appropriately apply the results of those arguments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The ability to think constructively to solve a random problem. S2. Understanding mathematical terms and concepts and knowing how to apply them. S3. Basic knowledge about the principles of nature, scientific concepts and methods, and technological processes. S4. Arithmetic (ability to perform basic calculations).

¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-af3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

Table 2. Continue

Competence	Activity Performance	Skill Set
Digital Competences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use technology effectively: Technology as a tool for information research, organization, evaluation, and communication. 2. Use digital technologies, communication and network tools, and social media to appropriately access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information to achieve success in a given environment. 3. Master the fundamental principles of ethical and legal issues surrounding access to and use of information technologies. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The effective use of information technologies in business practices. S2. Basic skills in IST. S3. Understanding the role IST plays in everyday life, the opportunities it offers, and the risks it carries. S4. The ability to use technological tools and machines.
Learning to Learn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate your commitment to lifelong learning. 2. Become a self-directed student: Challenge your core abilities to master your learning process and explore/expand your opportunities to gain expertise. 3. Take the initiative to bring your skills to a professional level. 4. Think critically about past experiences to achieve future progress. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The ability to follow and sustain different types of learning. S2. Identifying current opportunities. S3. The ability to acquire new knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary for career goals.
Social and Civic Competences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interact effectively with others: act respectfully and professionally, distinguish between when it is appropriate to listen and appropriate to speak. 2. Flexibility and adaptability: adapt to change (work effectively in an environment that varies according to social roles and job responsibilities) and be flexible (react effectively to feedback, be resilient to stress, deal positively with disadvantages) and listen, understand, negotiate and balance different views and beliefs to reach solutions, especially in multicultural settings. 3. Collaborate with others: be able to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams and help in making the necessary concessions to achieve a common goal. 4. Take joint responsibility for collaborative work and value the contributions made by each member of the team. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The ability to interact effectively with other people. S2. The ability to adapt to changing situations, be flexible, and work under pressure. S3. The ability to work and collaborate effectively with other team members.

Table 2. Continue

Competence	Activity Performance	Skill Set
Cultural Awareness and Expression	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work effectively on a multinational team. 2. Respect and pay attention to cultural differences; work effectively with people from various social and cultural backgrounds. 3. Be tolerant; respond open-mindedly to differing views and values. 4. Use social and cultural differences to generate new ideas and increase both innovation and quality of work. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. Having awareness of the place that local, national, and European cultural heritages have in the world S2. Possessing basic knowledge of contemporary culture S3. Understanding cultural diversity
Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know different contexts and opportunities exist for turning ideas into action in personal, social, and professional activities. 2. Know and understand approaches to planning and managing projects. 3. Understand economics and the social and economic opportunities and challenges facing employers, organizations, and society. 4. Be aware of ethical principles and challenges of sustainable development; have self-awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1. The ability to transform ideas into action. S2. Creativity / innovation S3. Ability to design and direct questions S4. Independence S5. Motivation S6. Determination

Experiential Learning and Volunteer Experience

Experiential learning theory is based on the works of leading scientists of the 20th century such as Dewey, who took experience in learning as his basis; Lewin, who emphasized the importance of individuals' being active in the learning process; and Piaget, who described intelligence not only as an innate feature, but also as a result of people's interactions with the environment (Kolb, 1984). While these scientists were critical of traditional one-way education, they also examined the natural learning and the developmental processes of human beings from different perspectives. But they all had one thing in common: the importance of experience in the learning process. David A. Kolb developed experiential learning theory, drawing from the works of William James, Kurt Lewin, Carl Rogers, Carl Jung, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Paulo Freire, and Mary Parker Follett. The six propositions that make up the theory and the relationships these propositions have with volunteering processes will be discussed below before moving on to the most popular component of the theory: the experiential learning cycle.

1. Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes

Volunteer programs have a similar approach. Of course, the performance results from the work for which a volunteer is responsible are important, but the process is much more important. This is because the volunteer is at the same time the target audience of a program. Undoubtedly, the beneficiaries of the program constitute the target group of the institution, but the volunteer in this program is also within that target group, and the impact of the program on the volunteer is much more important than the volunteer's job performance.

2. All learning is re-learning. Learning is best facilitated by a process that draws out the students' beliefs and ideas about a topic so that they can be examined, tested and integrated with new, more refined ideas.

Volunteer programs provide a tremendous space for experiential learning. Before becoming a part of the program, volunteers have prejudgments and attitudes about themselves, the subject for which they'll volunteer, the target audience, and volunteerism itself. These prejudgments and attitudes transform by the volunteer testing their existing knowledge within the volunteer experience. Some prejudgments change while others become more grounded.

3. Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Conflict, differences, and disagreement are what drive the learning process.

Room needs to be made for conflicts in the volunteering process because conflict will occur before these prejudgments and attitudes mentioned in the previous proposition get transformed. This conflict can be within the person as well as between people. The important things are to be aware that conflict is a necessary process for learning and development and to support volunteers in managing these processes.

4. Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world. Learning is not just the result of cognition but involves the integrated functioning of the total person— thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving.

Volunteerism should be a process of shared creation. Volunteers should not be objects who merely follow the instructions given to them. They should have room to re-contribute the new things they learned from their volunteering experience to the volunteer program. For this reason, volunteer programs should always retain blank page, however small. Activities to be created jointly through volunteers' contributions should be found on this page. As long as volunteers have areas where they can be active in order to transform their environment, they find room in the program as a subject.

5. Learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment.

As learning is an experience realized by individuals, it requires room to be realized (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Volunteer programs as being areas of learning should not be forgotten. These areas have psychological, cultural, physical, and institutional dimensions. The physical dimension may involve small details such as whether they are sitting in a movie theater or in a circle at a meeting with volunteers. The psychological dimension involves volunteers' learning styles. Everyone involved in a program is a volunteer; however, every volunteer is different and has a different life experience and learning style. When approaching volunteers, individuals' uniqueness should not be dissolved into the image of the volunteer group.

6. Learning is the process of creating knowledge. In experiential learning theory, knowledge is viewed as the transaction between two forms of knowledge: social knowledge, which is co-constructed in a socio-historical context, and personal knowledge, the subjective experience of the learner.

The principle of not objectifying volunteers, but rather placing them in the program as subjects, as underlined in the fourth proposition, is closely related to this sixth and final proposition of experiential learning theory. The volunteer program itself has already been shaped by certain societal knowledge. This social information is certainly important. However, the volunteer should not be a passive receiver to whom this social information is transmitted only one way; they should be an active subject who is able to synthesize this information using their own volunteer experiences and produce their own personal information.

Unless these six propositions of experiential learning theory and the philosophical position associated with these propositions are sufficiently internalized, experiential learning methods will remain only a technique. Institutions that possess the approach behind these six propositions, volunteer coordinators who advocate this philosophy, and programs that have all the dimensions of the learning area these propositions indicate house a cycle where we are able to transform the volunteer experience into a deep journey of learning. This cycle is defined as the *experiential learning cycle*.

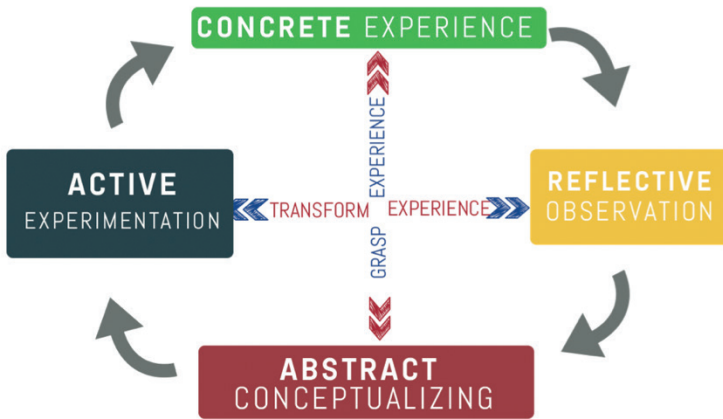


Image 2. The experiential learning cycle.

As the first step of the cycle, *concrete experience* is the experience of the “here and now.” This part expresses the moment the person is found within with their five senses and the internal reactions they develop through the obtained experiences. This is just like how a child, when first learning to ride a bike, falls on their first try. The process includes all the feelings of excitement, fear, curiosity, and anxiety felt during this experience and corresponds to a concrete experience.

This is followed by the second stage of the cycle: *reflective observation*. The lived experience is analyzed and combined in this stage with the observations made about the environment. A good example would be that the child who fell off the bicycle questions why they fell and tries to understand the situation by observing other children riding bicycles. Through all these analyses and reflections in their own inner world, the child accesses new abstract information.

Accessing this abstract knowledge corresponds to *abstract conceptualization*, which is the third stage of the cycle. For example, if a child who falls off a bicycle comes to a conclusion such as “Balancing is easier when going fast, but more difficult when going slow,” it means they’ve accessed abstract information. They can produce this conclusion on their own or someone can tell it to them.

The important thing here, however, is that the child associates this abstract information with the concrete experience they have had. The stage of reflective observation is also

essential for this association. Possessing new abstract information and concepts, the child now comes to the fourth stage of the cycle. They test this newly obtained information through *active experimentation*, the fourth stage of the cycle. This experimentation provides them with a new experience naturally, and the cycle continues non-stop.

Learning Process in Volunteerism

The key competences that provide a method for individuals to be able to describe what they gain while volunteering have already been mentioned. So, how can one describe the transformation of this process into a learning process for volunteers?

Volunteers have many enjoyable, challenging, successful, and maybe even unsuccessful experiences while volunteering. In order to turn these experiences into a learning process that provides opportunities for developing competences, volunteers must first define them as a learning process, and then complete the stages in the experiential learning cycle. Table 3 contains guiding questions volunteers can ask themselves in this process that were developed by the founder of the experiential learning theory, Prof. David Kolb (1984, 2017).

Table 2. Guiding questions that volunteers can ask themselves during the learning process

Initiating	Experiencing	Imagining
Which step should I take now? How can I start? Where are the opportunities? Can I give this a chance?	Am I experiencing this problem right now? What is my intuition telling me? How do others feel about it? Where is my attention right now?	What are the possibilities? What is my vision? How do I feel about this situation? What do others think? Should I imagine what will happen?
Acting	Balancing	Reflecting
How can I implement this plan? How much time do I have? What resources do I need? What are the next steps? Who can help me get through this?	Is there a blind spot? Have I considered all the possibilities and weighed all the options? Do I need to change my approach?	Can I look at this from another angle? What assumptions do I have? What information is most meaningful? What else should I consider?
Deciding	Thinking	Analyzing
What's my goal? What does the cost/benefit analysis show? How can I solve this problem? What's my decision? What's helpful, what's not? What is actually important?	Am I being objective? What do the numbers tell me? Am I thinking correctly? Have I put my feelings aside? Is this a sensible approach?	Can I create a scenario of what will happen? What strategies do I need? What's my plan? Am I conceptually thinking logically?

Volunteers are on a natural journey around this cycle throughout the process. The important question is how aware the person is of this journey. Experiential learning is a metacognitive process. In other words, the more conscious the person is about the learning process as they move around the loop, the richer and deeper the learning will be. Therefore, making sure both volunteers and volunteer coordinators have common ideas and language about the experiential learning cycle is important. Due to this common language, the following two modes of experiential learning cycle can be used in evaluation meetings, debriefings or individual coaching/mentoring sessions:

Understanding Experience (From Concrete Experience to Abstract Conceptualization)

Reflection is used in the vertical mode of the experiential learning cycle so that the volunteer experience can turn into new abstract information. Reflection is a conversation space where the volunteer can freely share how their experience made them feel. What they share becomes abstract after a while, and the volunteer is encouraged to reflect on what they have learned from this experience. At this point, abstract information is associated with the volunteer's own experience. For example, permanent learning occurs when a volunteer working with children combines the abstract information they'll acquire about the relevant age group's behavioral characteristics with the concrete difficulties they've experienced after a problem.

Transforming Experience (From Reflective Observation to Active Practice)

The mode of transformation that occurs on the horizontal axis of the cycle is a process in which a person connects their inner and outer worlds and transfers what they've learned from their experiences to their real life. To do this, a volunteer should be encouraged to think about where in their real life they'll apply the new knowledge they've learned from their experiences and what they'll do differently; they should be encouraged to set new learning goals for themselves and take steps toward these goals.

Steps for a volunteer experience that covers the entire experiential learning cycle:

1. *Preparations*: Volunteers should be prepared to have a common mind and language and that this process is a learning process. This preparation can be supported with information packages to be shared beforehand, but a meeting on the subject of "learning" must be organized.
2. *Expectations*: Room should be opened up for volunteers to share their past experiences. How these experiences can contribute to the program should be shared. Talking about what kinds of learning expectations the volunteer has from the program would be very helpful.

3. *Reflection*: Periodic learning conversations should be held throughout the program. These conversations can be held in groups or individually. The four steps of the cycle should be followed in order during the conversation.

Prepare reflective questions. Identifying the learning processes around the loop will help the volunteer. People sometimes have a difficulty with putting into words what their experience means to them. Metaphors can be used to overcome this challenge. For example, “If there’d been a meal last week, what would it have been?” can be asked, and then the reasons for this can be focused on. These types of questions are called “conversation starters.”

4. *Identification*: Attempts should be made to identify volunteers’ learning styles. This study should be done with the volunteer. There are nine learning styles centered around the experiential learning cycle.²³
5. *Feedback*: Feedback should be sought regarding the support given to the volunteer’s learning process. Those who support the volunteer in the learning process should be flexible about the roles they play. This process should be noted as being a volunteer-centered learning process.
6. *Information Transfer*: Volunteers should be trained about the support they give and the work they do, and abstract information should be shared with them. A learning conversation should be held about this abstract information, and they should be asked to associate this abstract information with their own experiences.
7. *Competences*: Information about the eight key competences should be shared. Which of these competencies and what kind of learning gains can be achieved may be focused on during the volunteer program.
8. *Gains*: Self-reflection should be done on what the volunteers have learned under the headings of the eight key competences. Doing this in writing will make it easier for them to think more systematically.
9. *Co-experimentation*: The volunteer coordinator must not be forgotten as also being a “learner” in this process. Those in the coordinator position should be known to be subject to the experiential learning cycle just like volunteers. Areas essentially need to be created (e.g., supervision) where they can share their own experiences by self-reflecting.

2 Visit <https://experientiallearning.net/> for detailed information on this topic

Summary and Evaluation

The volunteering process begins with becoming aware of the area where the volunteers want to contribute and ends with the action, maintenance, and evaluation phases or begins anew as another cycle. Volunteers achieve different gains throughout their volunteering process. Volunteering returns as a learning experience that inspires individuals in their daily lives, brings maturity, and opens the way for them to unleash their potential. Sometimes they are aware of it, and sometimes they have a moment later on when they realize it.

This chapter of the book addresses the subject of experiential learning theory and the key competences in non-governmental organizations in which volunteers can identify this moment of learning. Key competences have been assessed under eight categories. The Eight Key Competence Skills Matrix both defined these competences and indicated the learning steps that can be taken to develop these competencies. *Experiential learning theory* has been defined. According to the propositions of experiential learning theory, individuals' volunteer process is more important than the activity outcomes. This is why volunteer programs are an enormous space for experiential learning. Learning requires resolving the conflicts the individual has experienced while adapting to the world with which they have a dialectical relationship. Room needs to be opened up for disputes and conflicts in the volunteering process in order to help volunteers manage these processes. However, volunteering should be a co-creative process. Volunteers should not be viewed as objects that fulfill the instructions given to them, but as subjects that contribute to the program's social transformation of which they are a part as long as they have the space to act. Every volunteer is different from the next and has different life experiences and learning styles. This case should not be forgotten in the approach to volunteers. Knowledge is viewed as an interaction between two types of knowledge in experiential learning theory: the social knowledge constructed together in a socio-historical context and the personal knowledge that is the learner's own subjective experience. Volunteer programs themselves are already shaped by certain social knowledge. Volunteers should not be passive receivers to whom this social information is only transmitted unidirectionally; they should be active subjects who are able to synthesize this information using their own experiences and produce their own personal information.

Unless the six propositions of experiential learning theory and the philosophical position associated with these propositions are sufficiently internalized, experiential learning methods will only be used as a technique. The stages of volunteer experience should be followed to cover the entire experiential learning cycle. These steps apply not only to the volunteers, but also to the professionals and volunteers responsible for volunteer coordination.

Basic Recommended Reading

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- Tony Geudens, Peter Hofmann, Luis Amorim, Luba Pavlovova, Simona Costanzo (2013) “International Voluntary Service”, Council of Europe and the European Commission (available online).
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- Ayşe Kadioğlu (2008).“Vatandaşlığın Dönüşümü”, Metis Yayınları.

Advanced-Level Recommended Reading

- Mustafa Erdoğan (2017). “Ezilenlerin Deneyimsel Pedagojisi”, Deneyimsel Eğitim Merkezi Yayınları, 2017 (available online).
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- Nina Eliasoph (2013). *The Politics of Volunteering.* Polity Press, Malden, MA.
- Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı –TÜSEV. (2012). *STK’larda gönüllülük ve gönüllülük politikaları: Vaka analizi.* İstanbul: TÜSEV.

Activity Recommendations

- Geri Bildirim Alfabetesi [Feedback alphabet] (available online)
- İletişim Oyunu [Communication game] (available online)
- Afiş Galerisi [Poster gallery] (available online)
- David Kolb & Alice Kolb YouTube Channel (available online)

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- “Key competences for lifelong learning”, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (Accessed: 11/3/2021).
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- Musick, M.A., & Wilson, J. (2008), *Volunteers: A Social Profile*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
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