



## R2 A9 Definition of possible competency validation models for volunteer competencies

R2 – A9

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## Introduction

This report provides an overview of the current state of volunteer competency validation models both within and outside of the participating Fair-Trade organisations. Its function is to provide insight and a clear set of options for further developing skill validation of volunteers generally and within Fair Trade. After reading this report, readers are knowledgeable about both what's already out there, and the concrete possibilities for their own organizations and volunteers.

## The VoW R2 learnings and their goals.

The main product produced in this project result. Is an expansive program of learnings touching upon various key volunteering topics, from basic to more advanced. These learnings are available online to be used directly by students as self-guided e-learnings and as presentations to be used by organizations in guided study for their volunteers. The developed learnings are:

### Unit 1.1 – Recruiting volunteers

- 1.1.1 Definition.
- 1.1.2 Recruitment tools.
- 1.1.3 Good Practices.
- 1.1.4 Inclusivity in the recruitment process.

### Unit 1.2 – Welcoming volunteers

- 1.2.1 The key characteristics of a proper welcoming.
- 1.2.2 The people involved in the welcoming process.
- 1.2.3 The steps of the welcoming process.
- 1.2.4 Tools to welcome volunteers.
- 1.2.5 How to conduct a first meeting.

### Unit 1.3 – Recognition of volunteers

- 1.3.1 Basic principles of recognition.
- 1.3.2 When to do recognition.
- 1.3.3 The advantages of doing recognition.
- 1.3.4 Tools/ideas to recognize volunteers.

## **Unit 2.1 – Managing Volunteers**

- 2.1.1 Introduction.
- 2.1.2 What is management of volunteers.
- 2.1.3 Keywords.
- 2.1.4 Managing “regular volunteers”.
- 2.1.5 Managing “flexible volunteers”.
- 2.1.6 Conflict Management.
- 2.1.7 Team building.
- 2.1.8 Conclusions.

## **Unit 2.2 – Fair Trade Shop**

- 2.2.1 Introduction.
- 2.2.2 What is a Fair-Trade Shop.
- 2.2.3 Keywords.
- 2.2.4 Learning by doing.
- 2.2.5 Good Practices.

## **Unit 2.3 – Communication**

- 2.3.1 Introduction.
- 2.3.2 Internal Communication.
- 2.3.3 External Communication.
- 2.3.4 Inclusive Communication.

## **Unit 3.1 – Fair Trade Principles**

- 3.1.1 Introduction.
- 3.1.2 The 10 Fair Trade Principles.
- 3.1.3 Activities and tools about Fair Trade.

## **Unit 3.2 – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- 3.2.1 The definition of sustainable development.
- 3.2.2 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- 3.2.3 Activities related to the SDGs.
- 3.2.4 The climate fresh.
- 3.2.5 Other European Project on sustainability.

## Skills and competencies

Competencies refer to a combination of knowledge skill, abilities, attitudes, and behaviours and thus refers to a mix of qualities. It's a more complicated holistic concept associated with performance. A skill, however, is a specific ability or expertise connected to being able to perform certain tasks.

## What type of skills can be developed?

The type of skills that are developed through volunteer work is wholly dependent on the content and other contextual elements of this work. Since volunteer work only refers to a pay rate, and not to content, it could potentially involve the development of any skill. However, high-skill volunteer work, often involves a high barrier to entry where the skill is already presumed to be present. Even then, the volunteer work can increase the skill-level.

Skills can be categorised in various ways:

### 1. Hard Skills and soft skills:

- **Hard skills** involve teachable abilities related to a particular job or field, such as programming, accounting, or writing social media posts.
- **Soft skills** are related to people or are interpersonal in nature. These involve personal attributes and social abilities. Examples include communication, teamwork, and leadership.

### 2. Technical and non-technical skills:

- **Technical skills** are very close to hard skills. They are specialized abilities often related to jobs or fields.
- **Non-technical skills** are often transferable and not tied to a specific job, examples are problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity.

### 3. Categories within overarching categories

The Hard-Soft Technical-non-technical skill dichotomies are only two main ways of setting skills apart, within these categories a nearly endless array of sub-categories exist. In relation to Fair-Trade volunteering, you could further specify, for example:

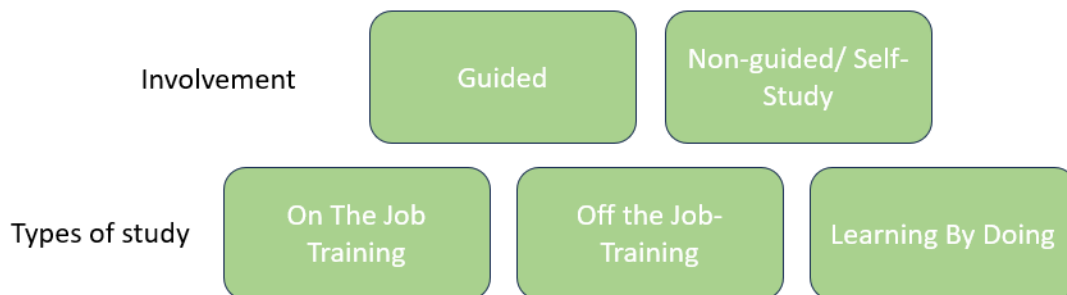
- Commercial skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Marketing skills
- Communication skills
- Visual merchandising skills
- Purchasing skills
- Administration skills

*Take a look at the VOW R1 Code Of Competencies report for competency profiles for various positions within Charity Retail.*

## Methods of competency development for volunteers

Skill development through voluntary action is most often implicit, taking place through the work itself, or learning by doing. However, there are a multitude of options available.

- **Guided**  
Someone, this could be another volunteer, a volunteer coordinator or expert, teaches the volunteer a skill directly.
- **Non-guided / self-study**  
This involves the volunteer essentially teaching themselves, with or without resources.
- **On the job training**  
Training in the workplace, while doing volunteer work (in the Fair-Trade shop) for example.
- **Off the job training**  
Involves volunteers being trained, guided or unguided while not doing volunteer work. This could be doing an online course, or offline workshop.
- **Learning by doing**  
Refers to skill development through the volunteer work itself, through the act of performing tasks and responsibilities, without specifically being trained.



## Actors involved in competency validation

Competencies are validated by the following actors:

- **Formal education institutions:** such as higher education institutions, trade schools etc.
- **Informal education institutions:** such as private training institutions. I.e. volunteer centers
- **Directly by the organization in question.**
- Other informal validation organisations exist in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Further examples will be mentioned below.

## Assessing volunteer competencies

The proper method of assessing competencies depends on the which competency is tested. Assessing communication skills may be done verbally for example, and programming skills by providing a case for programmers to solve. There are a multitude of methods, of which the following are most relevant:

1. Written exams: Can be made up of different types of questions
  - Multiple choice questions: Questions have multiple choices of which one or multiple are correct.
  - Short-answer questions: Show understanding by writing a few sentences about a topic. Test conciseness
  - Essay Questions: Evaluate critical thinking, analysis, and written communication skills.
2. Assignments: Can take up various forms
  - Essays: A long-form written assignment with a clear beginning, middle and end.
  - Reports: Usually involves research of some kind and answers a central question.
  - Product creation: Create a real-world product. This could be a flyer if someone is a visual designer, or a promotional text if someone is a copywriter.
3. Practical tests / assessments
  - Perform task: Assess practical skill in real world context
  - Simulation: Demonstrate skill in controlled environment
4. Oral Examinations
  - Oral exams: Evaluate verbal communication skills, subject knowledge, and the ability to articulate ideas.
  - Technical interviews: Common in technical fields, these assess problem-solving and coding skills.
5. Portfolios:
  - a. A collection of work that showcases a person's accomplishments over time.
6. Performance Evaluations:
  - Supervisors or peers assess an individual's performance on the job, often using predefined criteria. This can include observation of one's work process.

## Using VOW R2 and relevant competency assessment methods

VOW R2 has produced a series of e-learning. These online modules are presented in the form of slide decks. To validate the learnings from these units a validation framework must be created. However, any assessment created for these units also provides learning by itself.

These assessments can take up any of the forms presented in the paragraph above, chosen based on the content of these e-learning. Considering the product should be internationally useful. To maximize impact, a combination of both a ready-to-use self-study forms should be devised, along with a more organizationally involved version of guided study.

Organizations that choose to use the VOW R2 material, can integrate the material into their existing training measures. The material can be used as mandatory or optional self-study material but could also be used in a group lecture type setting. In both cases. Assessments could be devised. Due to the form of this material, written knowledge tests or written assignments would be suitable. Assignments could also lead to products that benefit the organization. Examples of assignments could be:

- Developing a volunteer management policy.
- Developing a recruitment strategy.
- Developing new volunteer activities.
- Developing a volunteering event.

## Organizational reasons for validating competencies

Reasons for validating volunteer competencies are manifold. However, organizations must decide on whether the investment made is worthwhile.

Validating volunteer competencies can be used as a precursor to become a volunteer both with and without offering the volunteer training. It can be used as a means of vetting incoming volunteers, and seeing whether they'll need extra assistance or are up to the task in general.

On the other hand, validation can be used to, in part, validate the learnings offered to the volunteer.

From the organization's perspective, reasons for validating the competencies of volunteers could be:

1. Better volunteer placement  
Validating competencies could lead to a better match between the potential volunteer and the volunteering activity. While simultaneously, it's not the whole story, competencies don't have to say much about interest and willingness to learn.
2. Quality assurance  
Making sure that volunteers can do the job, can limit the amount of lost efficiency due to a discrepancy in required and actual competency levels.
3. Making volunteering more attractive  
Offering validation could be an incentive for existing volunteers to stay longer and new volunteers to join.
4. Increased effectiveness  
Validation, especially when combined with training, can lead to an increase in organizational effectiveness. Even more so when the competencies that are being trained/ validated are not yet present within a volunteer team.
5. Improved risk management
6. Legitimacy

Partners from the Fair-Trade umbrella organizations are of the opinion that functionally, the benefits of validation for efficiency and effectiveness of volunteer tasks would not outweigh the implementation of validation infrastructure. However, certain groups of volunteers may value competency validation. The umbrella organizations may benefit in terms of making volunteering more attractive.

Validation does not have to be compulsory or generally applied to all volunteers. Organizations can implement validation for specific tasks, roles, or competencies, and can do so on their own initiative or that of the volunteer. Only validating on request of the volunteer, could ensure only volunteers who personally benefit from validation use this option, without introducing strain on the organization.



## Volunteer considerations for competency validation

Considerations for the validation of competencies could vary based on demographics and socio-economic factors. Generally, the reasons for – and benefits of – validation for volunteers can be categorized as:

### 1. Personal

#### a. Confidence

Volunteers may feel more confident about themselves and the tasks at hand when they have verified their competencies.

#### b. Value

Validation of competencies may lead to enhanced feelings of self-worth.

### 2. Organizational

#### a. Affiliation

Having competencies related to a specific organization, may give volunteers a closer feeling of affiliation with the organization and/ or their mission.

#### b. Recognition

Having their competencies validated, may have volunteers feel more recognized by the organization.

#### c. Performance

Validation connected to training can lead to the volunteer being able to generate more value for their team through an increased competency level. Being better at conducting their tasks, may lead to an increased feeling of satisfaction.

### 3. Professional

#### a. CV strengthening

Validating competencies can boost the CV of a volunteer by providing clear proof to potential employers, without the use of references.

## Relevant volunteer groups

If validation of competencies is not compulsory and done through the initiative of volunteer's, organizations need assess which groups of volunteers may benefit most from validation for two reasons:

1. To more effectively present and promote the validation offering to volunteers.
2. To better tailor the validation offering to the volunteers.

### The current volunteers

The typical volunteer for Fair-Trade shops in all partner countries (Italy, Spain, Belgium), and in many charity shops generally, is relatively senior. Most often, volunteers are middle age or senior women, commonly possessing a higher level of education (see figure #).

Competency validation for this group, may be less valuable, due to their relatively high educational background. Their age means they're less likely to need the validation for cv-building, with exception to those wanting to transition into another field.

OXFAM Magasins du monde	altromercato	OXFAM Intermón
Volunteer demographics	Volunteer demographics	Volunteer demographics
Age: 50/70	Age: 54	Age: >50
Starting age: 63	Starting age: ?	Starting age: >50
% under 35: ?	Gender: 87% female	% under 35: 12%
Gender: 85% female	Level of education: ?	Gender: Mostly female
Level of education: University	Political or religious affiliation: ?	Level of education: University
Political or religious affiliation: Left leaning	Avg. hours committed p/w: 5	Political/ religious affiliation: ?
Avg. hours committed p/w: 1	% under 35: ?	Avg. hours committed p/w: 4
Avg. duration: 7,5 years	Avg. duration: ?	Avg. duration of volunteering: 1/4 leaves first year, others about 4

However, when the validation of skills is connected to an actual training track, leading to a higher level of volunteer management effectiveness than is now present in the volunteer's environment, validating competencies may become very attractive for current volunteers too.

## Newcomers

European countries have become host to an increasing flow of newcomers from various parts of the world in recent years. In many cases, they cannot immediately go to work due to their legal status, but they are allowed to volunteer. NGOs have a unique position for allowing newcomers to integrate and develop their competencies / increase their odds of finding paid work when they're allowed to.

## Young people / students

Young people are only just starting out or still must start their professional lives. Some within this demographic have never had a job or worked in a professional environment. The validation of competencies can give young people the proof they need to break into other work and can add to their self-esteem- and worth. Additionally, when focusing on sustainability-oriented competencies, it can set them apart from their peers by showing dedication to the theme.

## Lifelong learners

Some volunteers may be interested in building their profile, adding new competencies from a lifelong learning perspective.

The European Commission has designated [9 competencies](#) as being essential for lifelong learning. The possible validation offering of Fair-Trade volunteering and charity retail fits many of these competencies, due to the combination of direct experience with running / maintaining a business with a clear social / sustainability angle, where communication with others, including other volunteers and customers is essential:

- Literacy competency
- Multilingual competency
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering
- Digital competence
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

## Relevant competency validation offering

Based on the unique combination of elements Fair-Trade volunteering comprises of, a wide range of competency validation offerings could be made. Volunteering tasks range from shop management to more non-profit related tasks such as volunteer management and activism. From the interactivity with other volunteers and customers, transversal skills such as storytelling and teamwork can be developed and potentially validated. The following is a selection of possible validation ‘packages’ shops could choose to develop and offer volunteers.

### Shop management

A package related to the various facets of managing a (charity) retail shop. Covering the basics from manning the floor and working a register, to stocking and interacting with customers. These competencies are organically developed by conducting regular volunteer tasks in all shops, however, to reach the full range of competencies, volunteers may need to be trained beyond the regular volunteer tasks, and potentially gain more responsibility at a management level to organically gain the competence. In preparation of this volunteers could be trained, also utilizing the learning units of VOW R2. Validation could more than in other cases be done through observation.

### Volunteer management

Managing volunteers is a distinct competence gained through experience and training. Volunteer managers are faced with unique challenges related to motivation, control and performance that do not arise with paid staff. Validating these competencies may prove valuable for those wanting to continue in that field or adjacent fields (in local governments for example). Also, through utilizing the learning units of VOW R2, those wanting to validate volunteer management skills can learn about new ways of managing volunteers, along the lines of event and project volunteering / short – vs. long-term volunteering / online and offline volunteering.

### Fair Trade principles – and sustainability systems

Volunteers are already trained regarding the Fair-Trade principles. One of the learning modules created during VOW explicitly covers this. Volunteers are ambassadors of the Fair-Trade movement and understanding both the principles of Fair Trade and the underlying sustainability (i.e., sustainable development) system basics, potentially makes them much more effective ambassadors. Volunteers seeking other volunteering or paid work could benefit from the validation of this unique angle to Fair-Trade volunteering, setting them apart from others.

## Teaching Sustainability

Transferring knowledge about Fair-Trade and its relevant sustainability themes is a key activity of the Fair-Trade shops, umbrella organizations and shops. There are various ways volunteers are part of this effort. They teach students in schools, during event, they educate customers and their fellow volunteers, for example through the VOW-developed Fair-Trade fresk.

## Language validation

Charity shops are an excellent place for those unfamiliar with the local language to gain language experience. Most interactions stay simple, language wise, making them ideal for practicing. Gaining a better understanding of the local language can a strong tangible benefit for volunteers. The shop experience could be enriched with a language course – possibly offered by local partners - and a language certificate.

## Activistic skills validation

The Fair-Trade movement is inextricably linked to the retail element. Across Europe, these shops are also used as activistic hubs. Activism comes with its own set of competencies that are unique and rare. Through experience and umbrella organization support, volunteers can develop these competencies. Focus could lie on mobilizing others for a cause, coordination, organizing events, facilitating change – reaching the right people that can effect change - and even cause related communication through – among other things - protest signs.

## Event organization

Every year, the Fair-Trade movement, consisting of the umbrella organizations and shops, organize many events throughout Europe. Event organization is not only already an important part of Fair-Trade, but also a point of great potential. Event volunteering is on the rise, volunteers on a 'track' for validating event organization competencies can be tasked with organizing events that involve volunteering with a double-sided goal – the event's main draw /cause on one hand and drawing in new volunteers on the other. Introducing a dedicated volunteer, who is on track to validate these competencies, who simultaneously organizes events could greatly increase the number of events hosted and people reached by the organizations / shops that implement it.

## Appendix

### Existing resources for the validation of competencies of volunteers

#### Current state of volunteer competency validation at Fair-Trade partners

The following information was collected through a questionnaire of 7 questions answered by the Fair-Trade partners of the VOW project from April to June 2022.

#### Validation of volunteer competencies within partners' country and Fair-Trade movement

The Belgian partner Oxfam-Magasins du Monde has no **skills validation framework** in use. There is a document called "[Plan dynamique des bénévoles](#)" that explains the different roles and the expectations Oxfam has for each role. All the volunteers have access to this document and they are obligated to read it. In Italy, the validation of volunteer skills is **not a responsibility of Altromercato**. There is some validation for curricular internships from school or university students but it's not systemic and it's linked to specific agreements with schools and universities. Same situation in Spain where the validation of volunteer **skills is not officially developed**. There is one validation program in Spain that stems from the [Spanish Volunteer Platform](#), may prove useful for the Fair-Trade movement. There are two regional volunteer platforms that have developed it a little bit with no big success: Aragón and Catalonia.

#### What is lacking?

The partners agree in saying that **what exists now is more about the expectations/roles related to a responsibility in the volunteering team**. For example, Oxfam-Magasins du Monde prefers to talk about valorisation instead of skill validation and the argue "there is no feeling of lack in our current policy about skill validation". In Italy until now the skills acquired in volunteering is considered important only in some cases and many **volunteers engaged in Fair Trade do not feel the need for recognition** of the skills acquired.

**The Spanish partner underline the lack of knowledge about the topic.** It will take time to develop it in the country and it would be more popular if it is more requested from employers. The number of certificates issued shows that **the initiative undertaken so far are not very successful in Spain.**

The general idea is that this kind of certification is more useful for young volunteers or for job seekers and less so for the current pool of volunteers, mostly made up of seniors and those not actively seeking work.

### **The changes and improvements needed**

At this stage **Oxfam-Magasins du Monde** prefers to work on the valorisation/recognition of volunteers. What is very important to them is that each volunteer clearly knows the tasks that are expected from him/her, this is the preliminary and most important condition. If it is not the case, it could disturb the good organization of our shops. Moreover, according to them, this service do not respond to the needs of volunteers.

**AltroMercato** in Italy focuses on the need to involve more young people as volunteers in fair trade. In that case validation would become essential to recognize the service they perform and the skills they learn. In this way, volunteering becomes important for professional growth. In Spain **Oxfam Intermón** focuses on communication and awareness as first step to spread this opportunity. Otherwise, if no change is made this kind of programs are going to be irrelevant.

## DESK RESEARCH

**Guidelines or frameworks for validating skills gained in volunteering used/available in partners' countries.**

### Belgium

In Belgium there is **no national framework/guidelines for validating skills in volunteering in Belgium**. A way to have competencies acquired through volunteering validated would be through the process of "[Validation des Compétences](#)". This is a process to make competencies acquired through other experiences than formal education validated by the state, mainly to be able to get a job. This process is not directed to validating competencies acquired through volunteering only.

*Other tools developed by private partners and non-profit sector are:*

- **CECI**

The non-profit organization ULB - Engagée has created a "Citizen engagement" certificate (CECI). This certificate aims at valorising the engagement of students during their studies. It is composed of theoretical modules online, monthly meetings with other students following the program, and an internship of 150 hours in a non-profit organization. Successful students receive 10 extra-curricular ECTS (the equivalent of 2 courses). This certificate is quite new as it was launched in 2021.

*Target group: ULB Students*

*Link: <https://engagee.ulb.be/ceci/?msclkid=a069523bd06211eca96c08ce7817a4ba>*

- **Requapass**

It is an Interreg project (2018-2021) between France and Belgium aiming at better recognizing the competencies acquired through a volunteering experience.

*Target group: Volunteers in general*

*Link: <https://requapass.eu/page-1-0-0.html>*



- **Scout Leader Skills**

The scout movement is very active in Belgium. They have created a tool directed to scout leaders to help them determine the different competencies they have acquired through their volunteering and how to use them for personal and professional projects. These competencies are related to soft skills only.

*Target group: Scouts leaders*

*Link: <https://scoutleaderskills.lesscouts.be/fr/home>*

## Italy

In Italy the process of building the National System of Competence Certification started in 2012 and the Decree 13/2013 designed the national and comprehensive system as it covers all the range of qualifications from education, HE, VET and even the ones with legal value.

The institutional authority in charge of the implementation of the system is the National Technical Committee led by the Ministry of Labour and by the Ministry of Education and composed of all the Qualification Authorities. In January 2018, the National Decree concerning the National Qualifications Framework came into force. This Decree published on 8 January 2018 provides the establishment of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) according to the Recommendation on the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and defines a clear common set of descriptors for the eight levels of qualifications by identifying what kind of knowledge, skills and Decree structures the procedures for referencing every qualification to the Framework through the National EQF Coordination Point established in ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Policies) and with the independent evaluation of Inapp. So far in Italy there isn't a common framework for soft skills gained in volunteering.

*Other tools developed by private partners and non-profit sector are:*

- **Lever Up**

It's a Model that has been created in order to help people value their soft competencies achieved while doing volunteering and other activities of benefit to the

community and society. It has been designed on the basis of the Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) thanks to the experience of the partners participating in the “LEVER project – Modelling informal learning and transversal competencies. gained through voluntary experience to increase employment and mobility of citizens”.

*Target group: all types of volunteers*

*Link: <http://www.leverproject.eu/>*

- **DYVO - Digital technologies for validating young volunteers competences**

The project contributes to facilitating and innovating the recognition and validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the field of youth volunteering. The main aim lies in enhancing young people’s employability and social participation as well as the quality of the work done by youth/voluntary organisations.

*Target: youth volunteers*

*Link: <https://dyvo.eu/en/about/>*

## Spain

The recognition of the abilities acquired through non-formal and informal learning is done at the regional level. This process began at an institutional level with the Royal Decree 1224/2009, 17th of July 2009, of recognition of the professional skills acquired through work experience ([Real Decreto 1224/2009, de 17 de julio](#)). In the first article of this decree, the requirements and procedures for the recognition and evaluation of the professional competences acquired through non-formal education or work experience are established. The effects of the evaluation and recognition are also included in this decree. This law establishes the requirements to benefit from the recognition of the competences acquired in non-formal education and labour. These requirements are related to age, work experience, education level and nationality. This decree also mentions the creation of an Evaluation and Monitoring Plan to review the quality, efficiency and impact of these degrees. The plan is intended to be developed by the General State Administration, the autonomous regions and the General Council for the Vocational Training ([Consejo General de la Formación Profesional](#)). Data from

the autonomous regions will be used by the General State Administration to develop the plan. Finally, an annual report is planned with possible improvements sent to the General Council for the Vocational Training. There are not specific mechanisms to recognise the skills of volunteer workers at a national level.

*Other tools developed by private partners and non-profit sector are:*

- **VolPlus**

It's the Spanish Volunteer platform certification program. The validation of volunteer skill has 3 objectives: (1) recognising the impact of volunteering on skills development, (2) to make it visible that voluntary practice promotes learning and the development of professional competencies, (3) improving the employability of volunteers. In order to join the program, the volunteer organisation must join the program VOL+. The program VOL + has some people (volunteers and professional staff) who are the responsible for confirming the skills of the volunteers.

Target: Volunteers

Link: <https://plataformavoluntariado.org/vol-plus/>

- **Reconoce**

It is a specific certification project for young volunteer organisation (Scouts, Don Bosco) and/ or specific for leisure time. 1,512 volunteers are members of the network. 307 competence requests managed.

Target: all types of volunteers

Link: <https://reconoce.org/>

- **Talante solidario**

It is an online platform for training and certification of soft skills, aimed at volunteers from social organisations to improve the impact of their solidarity action. It is structured around 10 core competencies with three types of content. To enrol in the online platform, it is a prerequisite to be a volunteer in a social organisation, as it is the training in the field that enables the acquisition and development of competences.

The social organizations can join the program through an agreement with Talante Solidario. This initiative was developed by the Murcia University. Until 2019, more than 100 people have joined this program.

*Target: all types of volunteers*

*Link: <https://talantesolidario.org/>*

## Conclusion

The results of this activity indicate the Validation of skills gained through volunteering in the fair-trade volunteering movement is still in its infancy. The three organizations interviewed recognize the importance and the value of volunteering, but they don't see the validation process as a priority.

There is a certain reticence by parts of voluntary organizations to present their activities as a personal and professional growth, they think that could reduce the value of gratuitousness and bring volunteering to a trade logic dimension. Another obstacle that makes the certification of competences a difficult process in this context is the excessive bureaucratization of this procedure, often managed in a centralized way by national or regional authorities, and that scares the social workers and volunteers, this is true especially in Italy.

Finally, the partners have expressed they feel skill validation is a topic reserved for younger and more job seeking volunteers, instead of the current volunteer pool, which is mostly made up of seniors and non-jobseekers.

Starting from the results collected and the discussion held in Rotterdam during the LTTA (C1) we can define the following conclusion:

- *At this stage validation is not a priority for the Fair-Trade organizations. Before it's important to define the profile and the roles. Validation should be taken into account for future developments;*
- *there is a lack of understanding of what validation is both within the organizations and within volunteers;*
- *on the other hand, fair-trade organization claimed that they should attract more young people. Offering validation could be a tool for this aim;*
- *The concept used by fair-trade organization is "valorization" that is broader idea of giving value and rewarding the volunteering activity, validation could be an aspect of it. But none of the fair-trade organization has already integrated validation in their valorization approach.*