

ERCA Web event:
Volunteering in Rural Communities: *How do we make it grow?*

Registration-link: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/erca-web-event-volunteering-in-rural-communities-how-do-we-make-it-grow-tickets-1267168317549?aff=oddtdtcreator

Rural communities and civil society organisations depend heavily on volunteers to deliver essential services. Across Europe, services such as healthcare, childcare, youth programs, services for older adults, transportation, sporting activities, and festivals, to name a few, rely on the support of volunteers to ensure that people living in rural areas have access to these services. Without the goodwill of volunteers, many of these services would not exist or would be severely limited in their reach and quality.

Volunteering also brings many benefits to volunteers themselves; it can build confidence and brings a sense of fulfilment and purpose, as well as sharing skills and knowledge to benefit others. However, it also comes with its own set of challenges—both for the volunteers themselves and for the organisations that depend on them. Volunteer burnout, succession planning, and a declining number of volunteers are ongoing concerns. The ageing population,

particularly in rural areas, combined with young people migrating to larger urban centres, creates a void that is increasingly difficult to fill.

This webinar will explore the following topics:

1. What are the benefits and challenges of volunteering for both volunteers and organisations? Are these benefits and challenges similar across Europe?
2. What is the future of volunteering? How can younger people be encouraged to get more involved? How can organisations improve volunteer retention and succession planning to ensure that knowledge is not lost when volunteers move on?

Speakers:

- Volunteering Strategy for Ireland – Aoife O'Brien – Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht.
- Community Volunteers Programme – Vicki O'Connell – Volunteer Ireland.
- Volunteering in Ireland and Comparison across Europe - Lejla Šehić Relić – Centre for European Volunteering

Break-out Rooms: 4 Breakout Rooms

- Room 1: Benefits of Volunteering for Organisations and Volunteers.
- Room 2: Attracting and Retaining Volunteers
- Room 3: Increasing Demands on Volunteers – (Governance, Funding Application, Legislation) – Volunteer Burnout
- Room 4: Succession Planning for Volunteering – How can organisations, communities plan for volunteers.

To join the webinar register on Eventbrite. You will receive link to webinar on before the event.

Schedule

11.00-11.05	Welcome and Introduction
11.05 – 11.10	Introduction to the day and speakers
11.10 -11.30	Presentation: Volunteering Strategy for Ireland – Aoife O'Brien Dept. of Rural & Community Development.
11.30 – 11.50	Presentation: Community Volunteers Programme – Vicki O'Connell-Volunteer Ireland
11.50 – 12.00	Comment and Input from European Expert – Lejla Šehić Relić – Centre for European Volunteering
12.00 – 12.30	Break-out Rooms – Attendees choose which break-out room
12.30 – 12.50	Feedback from Break-out Rooms
12.50 – 13.00	Wrap up and Closing remarks