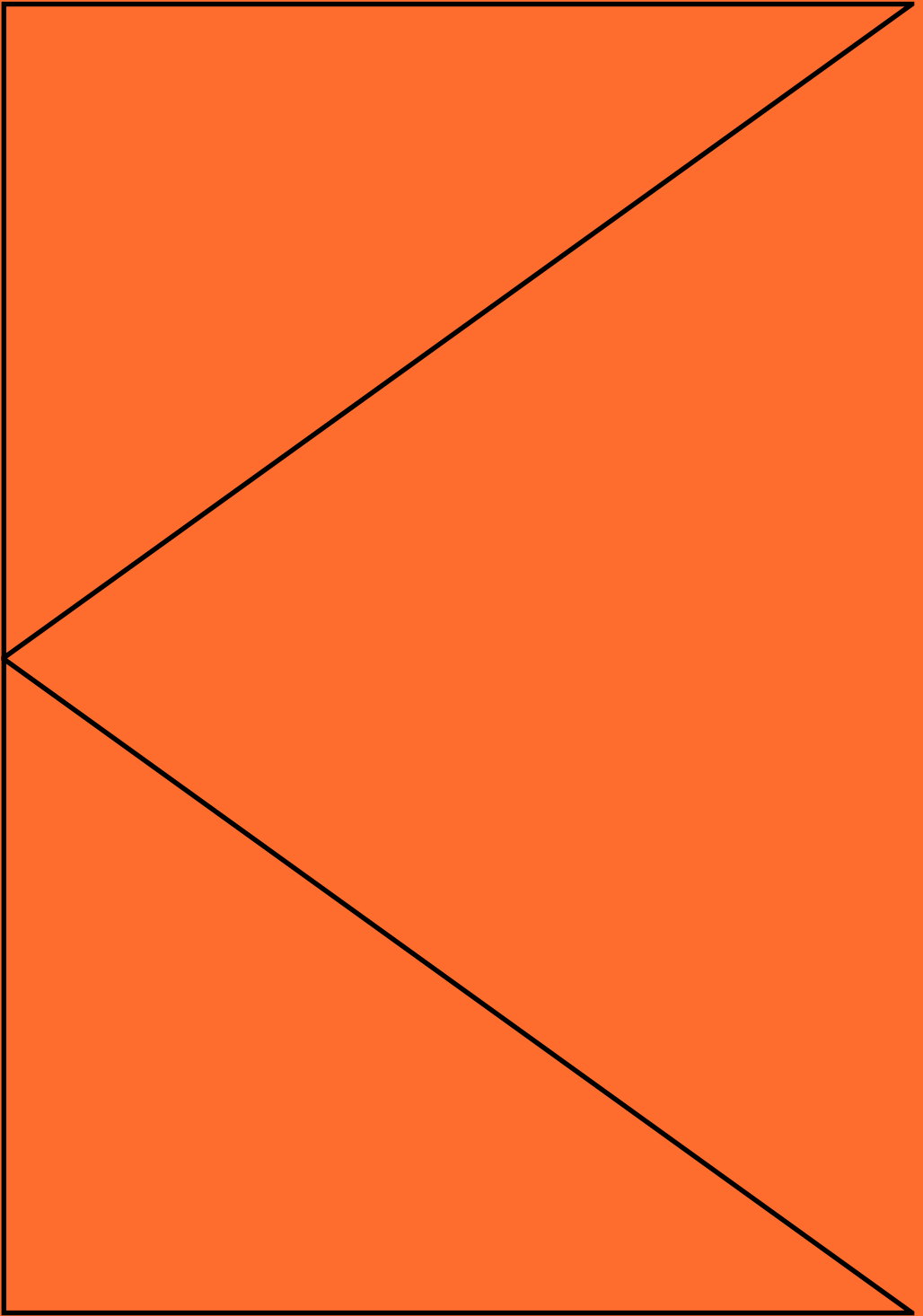


Kaunas –
European Capital
of Culture 2022

VOLUNTEERING
programme
methodology

Volunteers are key persons at mass events. The creative team and managers can perform their tasks at their best, yet they are usually rarely met by participants of events eye-to-eye. It is the volunteers whom we meet at events, and the entire mood of an event depends on the success of that meeting. A volunteer is an assistant and a guide, a real person next to us, and this person may be just one of us. Being a volunteer is like being a true patriot: going out to do one's work, at one's free will, to make it easier for others. It is a noble work worth of people's most sincere gratitude.

Rytis Zemkauskas
TV journalist, film producer, writer



*Culturists –
the volunteers
of the project
“Kaunas 2022”,
that lift the
culture of the
city up to the
higher level*

CONTENT

6 **CONTEXT**

10 **VOLUNTEERING IN LITHUANIA**

14 **ABOUT THE “KAUNAS – EUROPEAN
CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2022” PROJECT**

22 **VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME
IN NUMBERS**

26 **PLANNING AND STRATEGY**

30 **What do we know?**

36 **What do we aim for?**

40 **How do we achieve this?**

44 **When and what will be done?**

48 **Who will do what?**

52 **How much will it cost?**

56 **IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME**

60 **Attracting volunteers**

80 **Training for volunteers**

94 **Engaging volunteers**

124 **Motivating volunteers**

148 **LEGACY OF THE PROGRAMME**

156 **PROGRAMME TEAM**

Preface

One of the key objectives of the “Kaunas 2022” project was to engage as many citizens as possible in the process and help them become the owners of the project. Some people have contributed with their creativity, some — with their support, others — with their work. There was also another important community of one and a half thousand people who contributed with their time and their desire to help, without any remuneration. They were the “Kaunas 2022” volunteers — the Culturists, all united by the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme. For the team of the programme developers and coordinators, the 4 years of planning and delivery were full of excitement, challenges, lessons, and achievements. In order not to leave all this special experience behind, we have developed a methodology aimed at sharing with you our good practices, methods, and insights. Indeed, this book is meant to be helpful for a wider audience than just the future European Capitals of Culture. When creating the text of this book, we tried to think about the variety of organisations working with volunteers, as well as the challenges that they face. In different sections of this book, you will find out what were the measures that helped us in developing the programme plan, how did we manage to attract and coordinate around 1,500 volunteers and keep communicating with them, as well as what kind of competencies they needed, and what has motivated them to stay in the programme. We believe that you will find this book useful and applicable to your own organisation and projects.

Context

Context

All European Capitals of Culture and all organisations that are involved in mobilising volunteers are operating in a different environment, under different conditions, and have to respond to different needs. These special circumstances will determine the way the Volunteering programme will function, and the objectives it will have. In this chapter, we wish to introduce you to the context of volunteering and to disclose the factors that were important in shaping our programme.



Volunteering In Lithuania

Each European Capital of Culture is unique and its uniqueness depends on several factors: geographical location, historical events, the culture that has evolved over time, and the current tendencies still under formation. Speaking about the development of volunteering initiatives, the mentioned factors play a major role, as they do dictate the patterns of distribution of the volunteering phenomenon in the country, as well as the attitudes of people to volunteering. A frank conversation with our colleagues from a former European Capital of Culture in one of the Scandinavian countries several years ago, serves as a good illustration. At that time, we were looking for ways to attract the necessary number of volunteers for the programme. When talking to our colleagues, we expressed our worry that it was not easy for us to attract older people of working and retirement age for volunteering. Our colleagues were looking at us very surprised and assured us that all we needed to do was to simply make a visit to various social clubs, where people come together after work or for their free time, if they are retired, and invite them. Unfortunately, such clubs where people could come together for socially beneficial activities are not very common in Lithuania, and the existing associations uniting the seniors in Kaunas that we had approached did not express any greater interest in contributing to volunteering. In the conversation with our colleagues, we realised how different the reality faced by two European Capitals of Culture can be and how different are the processes that have to be applied for planning, implementation, and assessment of the Volunteering programmes.

Let us also have a look at the studies on the volunteering situation in Lithuania. According to the population survey carried out in 2019, 13 % of the population took part in volunteering activities in the last 12 months, while 31 % of the population said they did not participate and did not intend to do that. The survey responses also showed that in terms of gender and age, women and younger people were more positive about volunteering, while people of the older age categories were more sceptical. Besides, 50 % of the non-volunteers reported the lack of time as the key reason for non-involvement. When asked about the possible field of volunteering, only 15 % of the non-volunteering respondents marked organisation of cultural events as an option:

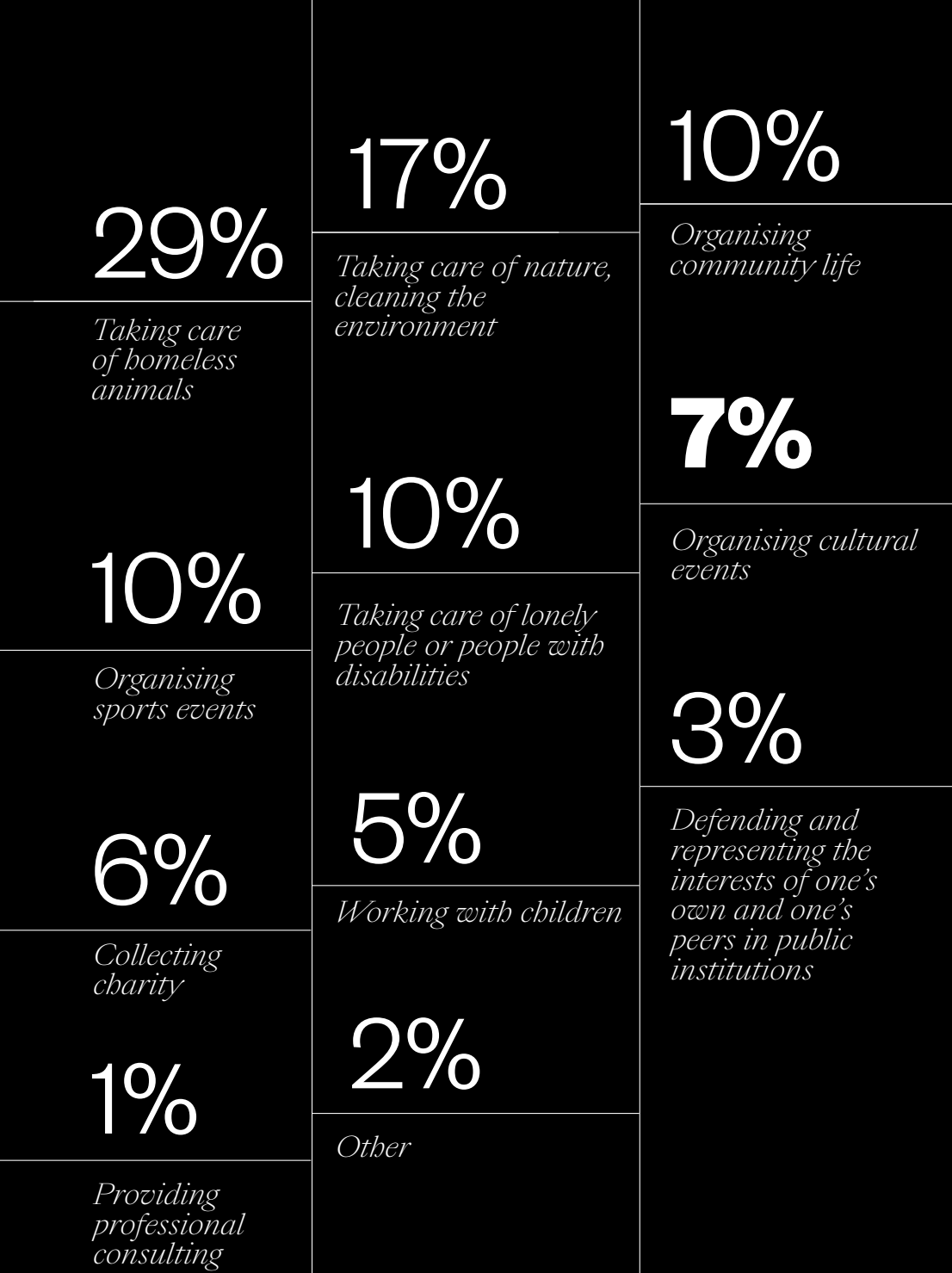


Figure 1. Responses given by the non-volunteering respondents to the question "If you were a volunteer, which fields of activity would you choose?".

Thus, the data above shows well that in Lithuania, volunteering is certainly not a widespread phenomenon, especially among men and older people. When comparing the fields of volunteering indicated by the respondents, one may see that a significantly smaller number of people would choose to contribute to the organisation of cultural events than to take care of nature or animals. Naturally, the task of the Volunteering programme of the European Capital of Culture in Kaunas was supposed to not only develop effective strategies for attracting volunteers, but also find ways how volunteering in culture could be presented as an attractive field of volunteering.

Indeed, it is important to mention that in the “Kaunas 2022” project, volunteering was influenced not only by the general public attitude towards volunteering, but, apparently, also by strong factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war in Ukraine.

The first COVID-19 case in Lithuania was confirmed on 28 February 2020, leading to the introduction of almost 8 months of intermittent quarantine. It ended only on 1 July 2021. For our programme, this period of time was supposed to be the most intense time of preparation. Moreover, Lithuania has imposed restriction or suspension measures on events. Our live introductory and team building meetings had to be moved to virtual space, and the entire society was encouraged to stay at home or contribute to volunteering in the positions related to COVID-19.

The large-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine started on 24 February 2022, at the very beginning of the “Kaunas 2022” title year. At the time of writing this methodology, the war is still continuing. Even if we do not have any research-based indicators, we do believe that this situation could have affected the numbers of volunteers, tourists, and project guests from abroad. Another important factor was the increased demand for volunteering aimed at helping Ukraine.

Thus, such factors as the habit of society members to engage in socially useful activities, their attitudes towards volunteering, as well as the epidemiological and geopolitical situation in Europe do create specific conditions for the development and implementation of any volunteering programme. All these factors should be well assessed and considered when trying to take over the experience from other countries, cities or organisations and adapting it to another environment.





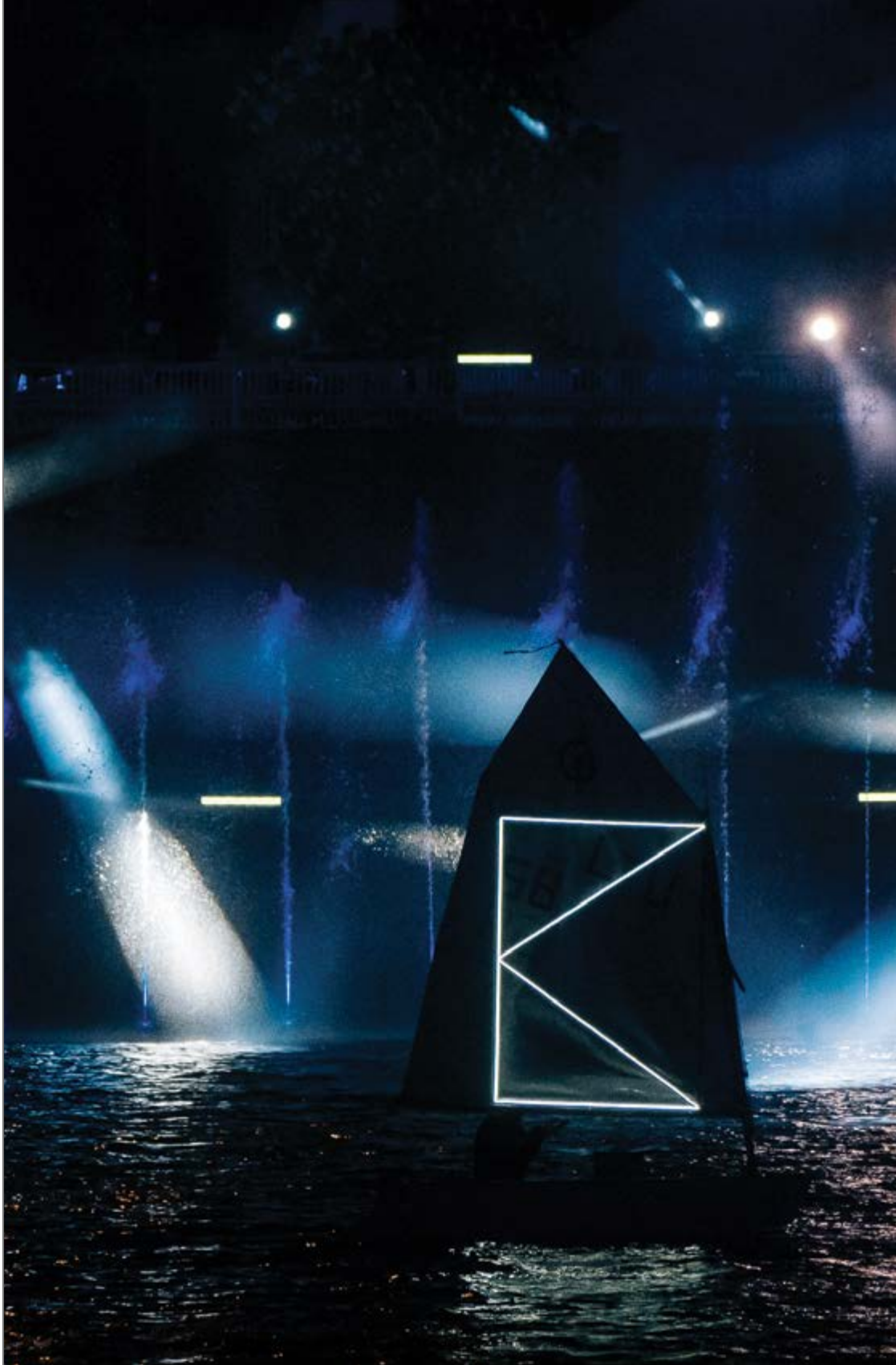
About

The “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022” PROJECT

From the very beginning of the “Kaunas 2022” project, the involvement of townspeople has been a very important component in ensuring success and long-term value of the project. We wanted the project not only to empower the residents of the city to become permanent consumers of culture, but also to provide them with the knowledge and tools needed for creating and promoting culture on their own. For this reason, the project focuses on different communities and close links with them. Were it people from the communities of courtyards, districts, architecture admirers, or Litvak culture, the project has served them all as a forum for spreading their word, for meeting each other, and for sharing their message on the urgent issues.

The programme of “Kaunas 2022” consisted of 8 different directions aiming to address different needs of the citizens.









Modernism for the Future

The programme was promoting the awareness of the modernist interwar architecture of Kaunas by communities, and their connection with this heritage, also developing new creative projects and strengthening the relevance of this heritage at the European level.

The Memory Office

The programme was collecting people's stories, making them known, and was seeking to revive the multi-ethnic memory of Kaunas city and Kaunas district, strengthening the connection and communication among the different communities living there.

Designing Happiness

The programme was developing a modern way of understanding what is a convenient city and what does urbanity mean, based on the recommendations received from designers and environmental specialists. It involved learning to adapt the city to everyone and to become a modern citizen.

Kaunas Challenge

The programme was dedicated to the younger generation of different age. It was aimed at addressing the problem of

emigration by young people from the city and at helping the youngsters to build the city in which they would like to live.

Contemporary Neighbourhoods

The programme was creating ties between the residents of Kaunas district, artists, and specialists who helped to reveal and strengthen the unique identity of each neighbourhood.

Cultural Partnerships

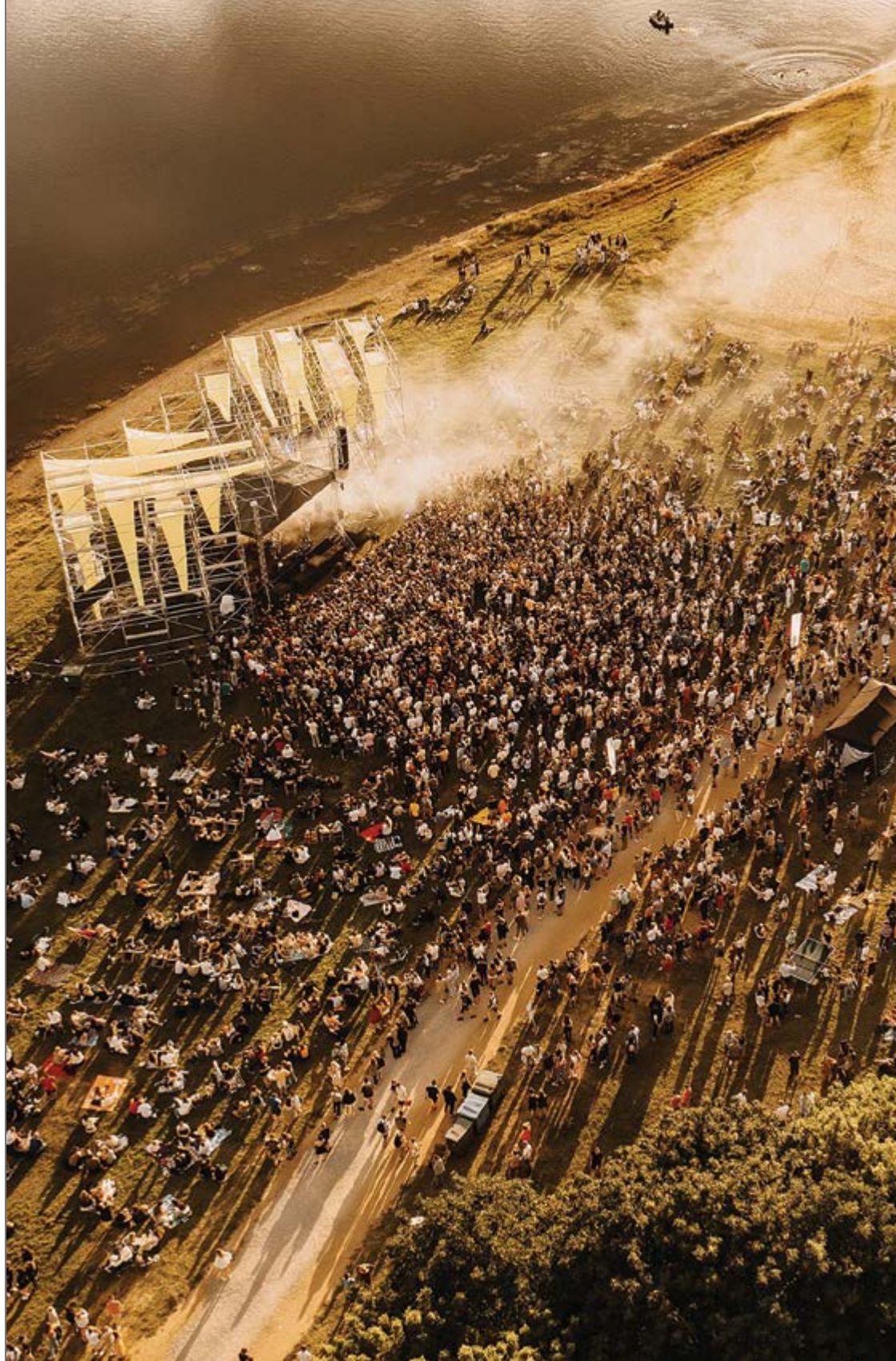
A network of cultural organisations, creators, and "Kaunas 2022" was created, resulting in more than 100 unique artistic projects dedicated to the special programme of the year 2022.

We, the People

The programme was developing the sense of community among the residents of Kaunas city and Kaunas district, acting through cultural activities. It was encouraging the residents to engage in joint activities, leading to creation of flexible, creative communities.

The Mythical Beast

The programme, serving as the entertainment part of the project. In close cooperation with the city residents, a unique myth of the city was being developed — as a means of promoting public spirit, co-working, and creativity.



The beforementioned goal of “Kaunas 2022” to bring together as many citizens as possible and invite them to become co-authors of the project has brought an excellent opportunity for development of the Volunteering programme with a view of inviting people to join the ongoing activities, and also encouraging them to become active participants in the cultural sector.

The development of the Volunteering programme was also influenced by the fact that help from volunteers was needed not only during the title year, but also in the preparation phase. Since 2017, when the title of the European Capital of Culture was awarded to Kaunas, the team was active in bringing together communities, offering the citizens various cultural initiatives, events, festivals, and preparing a solid basis for the year 2022.

It is estimated that more than 1,500 events and initiatives were implemented until 2022, and over 1,300 events of different size in 2022 — from ceramic workshops requiring 1-2 volunteers, to the opening event of the European Capital of Culture with around 800 Kaunas residents and city guests taking part as volunteers.

To be able to implement all the events as planned, a comprehensive Volunteering programme promoting the long-term engagement of the population was needed.



*Volunteering
programme*
in numbers

Total number of
volunteers: over

1500

Total number of trained
volunteer team-leaders:

107

Total number of trained
hospitality volunteers:

67

Total number of events
where volunteers were
involved: over

550

Number of hours of
volunteer contribution
during the title year:

over

70 000

Number of volunteers
involved simultaneously
at the opening event:

800

**The most common
volunteering
positions:**

Preparation and
technical
assistance.

Hospitality.

Directing and
informing
spectators.

Supporting artists
and performers.

Participating in
performances.

Ensuring
accessibility.

Coordinating and
informing volunteers.

Virtual volunteering.

47%

18 - 29

30%

Under 18

17%

30 - 45

5%

46 - 65

1%

66+

Figure 2. Percentage of members of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme by age, between 2020-2022.

Planning *and* *Strategy*

Planning and **Strategy**

Creating a Volunteering programme for the largest cultural project in Europe is a complex task. But the more complex the task, the more useful it is to have a plan, carefully prepared in advance. The planning process helps to break a multiplex task down into smaller parts and move consistently towards the goal. The main goal of the planning process was to have a clear plan for each team member, so that everyone knows his/her daily tasks. The present section focuses on the constituent parts of the planning process for the development of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme, the measures that helped to develop the plan, the basis on which strategic guidelines were set, and the specific guidelines adopted.



Planning of the “Kaunas 2022”

*Volunteering
programme
included the
following
parts:*

*1. Research –
what do we know?*

*2. Volunteer’s journey –
how will we achieve that?*

*3. Time plan –
when and what will be
done?*

*4. Team –
who will do what?*

*5. Budget –
how much will it cost?*



What do
we know?

What do we know?

Our first steps to kick-start a coherent planning process were to identify the preliminary need for volunteers for the programme and for our partners, as well as to collect the insights from the representatives of the European Capitals of Culture (hereinafter referred to as ECoCs) that have already implemented their Volunteering programmes.

Each ECoC has the privilege of using the ECoC network and contacting the peers that would openly share their experience. Having identified our key areas of issues, we contacted the volunteering coordinators from “Aarhus 2017” (Denmark), “Hull 2017” (United Kingdom), “Wrocław 2016” (Poland), “Rijeka 2020” (Croatia), “Novi Sad 2021” (Serbia). We addressed them on the following issues:

The need for volunteers.

How many volunteers are needed to maintain a long-term Volunteering programme? How many volunteers are needed for such a massive event as an opening? What are the main roles of volunteers? What specific skills are needed?

Human resources.

What is the optimal size of the programme team?

Involvement of volunteers in activities.

Volunteer registration process, introduction, communication.

Motivational system.

The need for motivating volunteers, the most effective measures.

Development of competences.

Informing volunteers about the project, defining ways of developing skills for specific responsibilities.

Volunteer coordination system.

Assessment of the online platforms and software used.

Particularities of volunteer coordination in mass and small-scale events.

Distribution of responsibilities, availability of human resources, setting the coordination process.

Involvement of different volunteer groups in the project.

Foreigners, professionals, seniors.

Image of the Volunteering programme.

Visual identity, volunteer outfit, external communication.

Legal basis.

Function and content of the volunteering agreement.





Interviews with the managers of the ECoC Volunteering programmes helped us save time, gain *know-how*, better understand our future challenges, and set our goals. This survey also helped us understand where it was worth investing our time and attention. Here are some of the key insights:

- It is important to invest in creating an attractive and unique identity of the Volunteering programme.
- A tailor-made digital volunteer coordination platform is essential when working intensively with large numbers of volunteers.
- It is important to introduce the people working with volunteers (project managers, partners) to the particulars of such type of work, as well as possibilities and limits set for the use of volunteers.
- Volunteers are most motivated by extensive personal communication.
- Volunteer training brings benefit both for the organisation and for the volunteers.
- Hiring a professional Volunteering programme team would require greatest financial resources, but this would pay-off the most.

Insights:

When developing or improving a Volunteering programme, it is worth approaching representatives of similar organisations for learning about their experiences.

In the absence of such a possibility, a great amount of information can be collected online, obtained by interviewing volunteers from other organisations, or even by getting involved in volunteering in a similar organisation. Useful information can also be obtained from the feedback given by colleagues or volunteers.

What do
we aim
for?

What do we aim for?

There are countless ways to implement a Volunteering programme. Therefore, the next step after collection of useful information should be identification of objectives. This helps to set the priority directions of your activities and to mobilise your team's efforts.

The essential and obvious function of a Volunteering programme is to provide volunteering assistance for the project events. However, the ECoC title is important at the level of the entire city. This requires setting the goals not just at the project level, but also at the city level.

Our goals were as follows:

City level

Encourage active participation of Kaunas citizens and give them an opportunity to become creators and ambassadors of their city through volunteering in cultural activities. Develop the skills of Kaunas cultural sector in the field of volunteering.

Project level

Involve volunteers in the activities organised by "Kaunas 2022" and its partners, strengthen their competences and motivation, and help them feel an important part of the project.

It is important for the stated objective to be achievable. The set objective can help not just to identify the priority directions of activity, but also to foresee concrete measures to be taken for achieving it:

City level

1. Informing about the possibility of volunteering and encouraging the residents of Kaunas city and Kaunas district to join volunteering in the cultural sector.
2. Developing the competences of the cultural organisations of Kaunas in the field of volunteer work.

Project level

3. Creating an accessible system and tools for volunteers from various social groups to engage in volunteering in the “Kaunas 2022” project.
4. Creating an accessible system and tools for the curators of the “Kaunas 2022” programmes and partners of the project to get help from volunteers.
5. Creating a motivational system.
6. Creating a system of competence development.
7. Creating a consistent and recognisable volunteer identity.

Insights:

Setting an achievable objective helps not only to work in a more focused way, but also to identify concrete measures that could be taken to achieve it.

How do we
achieve this?

How do we achieve this?

Identifying measures for the achievement of the identified objective is useful, but to ensure a smooth process of volunteer engagement and to identify potential challenges in advance, we decided to look at the process from the user's perspective. We have created a volunteer's experience journey and have analysed in detail each step — from a non-familiar citizen of Kaunas to a motivated and involved volunteer. The main steps we have identified are as follows:

Volunteer's experience journey



This method has enabled us to look at the process from the perspective of a volunteer and predict his/her potential actions, as well as to identify the tasks that have to be carried out.

Attracting:

- Marketing/Communication campaigns, website.
- Information at events and in the offices of “Kaunas 2022” and project partners.
- Attractive identity of the Volunteering programme.
- Development of partnerships (universities, enterprises, etc.).
- Easily accessible and simple registration form.
- Invitation to the introductory meeting.
- Invitation to join the group on “Facebook”.

Engaging in activities:

- Platform for collecting the needs of colleagues.
- Open call to partners.
- Easily accessible and attractive volunteering request for an event or project.

Training:

- Need, format, and content of training for volunteers.
- Need, format, and content of training for colleagues and partners.

Motivating:

- Thank-you events and community gatherings.
- Visibility of the participating volunteers and of their contribution.
- Outfit.
- Food.

The goal of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme was to involve as many people as possible, regardless of their age or nationality. Thus, we have created a different type of volunteer’s experience journeys for the persons of older age and for foreigners, to ensure accessibility of the programme for them.

Insights:

Creating a volunteer’s experience journey has helped us to identify the actions needed to be implemented, and to spot each potential challenge.

When and
what

*will be
done?*

When *and what* WILL BE DONE?

In the development of any project, especially if the activity has clear deadlines, it is useful to set out the actions in a time plan. This allows for systematic co-ordination of team work, prioritisation and timely execution of the necessary actions, and more accurate budget planning.

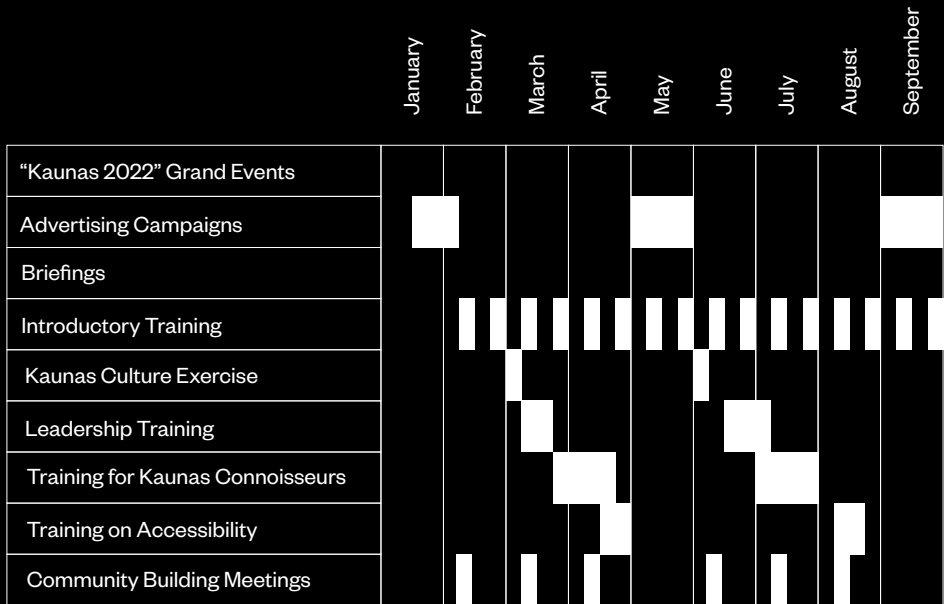
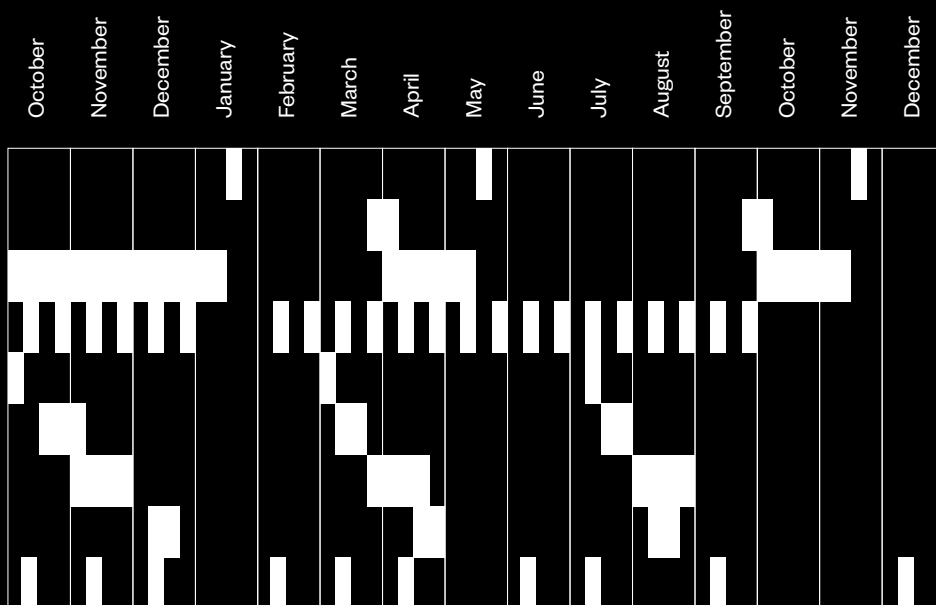


Figure 5. Time plan of the "Kaunas 2022" Volunteering programme, 2021-2022.

When planning the implementation of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme, all the actions set in the time plan were focused on overcoming the two major challenges previously identified — the opening event and the intensity of the title year. The tasks were grouped according to the type of the volunteer’s experience journey. Besides, the time plan also helped us foresee the content of the programme. That is, how many communication campaigns, training sessions, and community building meetings needed to be implemented so that we have the necessary number of informed and motivated volunteers for the opening event.



Insights:

The time plan helps to foresee the required financial and human resources, and to move towards the goal systematically.

Who will
do what?

Who *will do* WHAT?

The time plan has revealed the scope of the work to be done and, at the same time, the need for greater team resources. To justify this need, it was necessary to define the responsibilities of each team member.

Insights:

Clear definition of responsibilities can be of use in the processes of recruitment, coordination, and result assessment.

Availability of more specialists in the team could bring expanded possibilities for developing additional activities, such as broader scope of international exchange, more active efforts for attracting the less involved groups, increased accessibility, etc.

Volunteer programme curator :

- Planning, coordination, and improvement of the content and processes of the Volunteering programme.
- Management of team resources according to the programme's time plan.
- Management of the programme's budget and drafting of annual procurement plans.
- Selection of main suppliers, carrying out public purchase procedures, concluding contracts (for transport, catering, outfit).
- Coordination of the needs of the team and partners, mobilisation and management of volunteers at major events of the year.
- Identification of the needs for the year 2022, their planning and adaptation in the programme.
- Initiation and maintenance of marketing and communication campaigns.
- Teamwork at major events.

Volunteer programme coordinator (for communication):

- Communication with new volunteers and the ones already involved.
- Keeping communication in social networks.
- Implementation, testing, and coordination of the volunteer management platform.
- Specification of the needs of organisers and formulation of requests for volunteers.
- Coordination of distribution of the volunteer outfit, coordination of volunteer catering at events.
- Drawing up reports.
- Teamwork at major events.

Volunteer programme coordinator (for education and motivation):

- Improving content of all training courses, also management, facilitation, preparation of information materials.
- Organisation and facilitation of motivational and team building events.
- Drawing up reports.
- Distribution of motivation tools for volunteers.
- Teamwork at major events.

Each day, our team members were engaged in the tasks related to the responsibilities assigned to them. Yet, at the biggest events of "Kaunas 2022", they were focusing on teamwork, so we were redistributing our responsibilities in each individual case.

How much
will it
cost?

How *much will it* COST?

When the action plan was created and the need for volunteers was identified, the budget could finally be planned. As procurement of goods and services at “Kaunas 2022” was implemented through public purchase procedures, advance and accurate budget planning was not just recommended, but mandatory. The components of the budget of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme is presented in the table below.

The biggest part of our budget was spent on food. Even if we only speak about a bottle of water and a sandwich, it is seen by volunteers as an expression of care from the side of the organiser. If there is no budget for food at all, addressing sponsors could be an option, or at least a message could be sent to the volunteers informing that they are expected to bring food for themselves.

An important part of the budget was used for the volunteer outfit. We had to provide distinctive uniform to a very large number of people, who were rotating all the time. In the absence of budget for this, cheaper signs could be used, such as stickers or badges.

We had a long-term Volunteering programme, therefore, it was essential to keep organising advertising activities, as only a small part of volunteers are

usually loyal or have an opportunity to contribute throughout the whole project. Significant financial resources were also required for a campaign aimed at attracting volunteers for the opening event — without this campaign, we would not have succeeded to attract the required number of people. There are also other, free ways to inform the society on the possibility of joining your initiative. They will be discussed in the section “Attracting” below.

In our programme, training was particularly important both as a tool for informing volunteers and as a means of creating relations among volunteers and motivating them. If there is no budget for trainers, training could be carried out by the ECoC team, or trainers could be asked to help free of charge, or on the basis of mentorship.

To sum up, consistent planning was the tool that we have used for developing a long-term Volunteering programme for “Kaunas 2022”. The process is time-consuming, but in the long-term perspective, the results of your dedicated efforts and time resources become obvious at the stage of implementation — you have a clear direction, you can see not only what you need to do, but also the best way of acting, and you can also draft the required financial and human resources.

BUDGET 2021-2022

26%

Catering

23%

Outfit

18%

Advertising

13%

Training

8%

Rent of premises

6%

Technical service

3%

Transport

2%

Press, publications

1%

Software

Implementing *the Programme*

Implementing *the Programme*

The strategy of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme was based on a volunteer’s experience journey. Thus, the structure of the section on the implementation of the programme reflects the four steps in a volunteer’s experience journey – attracting volunteers, training, engaging in activities, and motivating.

In each subsection, we will try to tell you how we managed to implement our plan, what has worked, what had to be changed, and what were the lessons we have learned.



Attracting

Attracting

People start volunteering for various reasons: they are motivated by the goal of the project and the opportunity to meet like-minded people, they wish to accomplish their personal goals, etc. However, to be able to identify the cause that will encourage them to fill in the questionnaire, they must first learn about the programme and become convinced of its good image. The image of the programme can be affected

by many factors — some of them can be initiated or created, while others exist on their own and do not depend on the efforts of the Volunteering programme staff. In the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme, we have identified several factors that we were systematically shaping in order to create a good image of the programme and attract volunteers.

*Factors that
can be affected:*

Programme identity

Website

Advertising messages

*Factors that
cannot be affected:*

Organisation’s staff

Available volunteers

Organisation’s image

Image of the Volunteering programme

Volunteer’s registration

Figure 7. The aspects shaping the image of the Volunteering programme, that we have decided to develop.



Volunteers for the Grand Opening of "Kaunas - European Capital of Culture", 2022

Programme *identity*

Before starting any communication actions, we first decided to invest in creating the identity of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme. We decided to consider such tools as the programme’s title, logo, colour, font, visual style of print and digital tools, and volunteer clothing design. All these points were described in the Brand Book of the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme.





Title

We named the volunteers of “Kaunas 2022” as “Culturists”. It is important to note here that the Lithuanian term for the word “culturist” defines exclusively a bodybuilder. Bodybuilding has nothing to do with art, but the word was used for the title to keep the word play. The creative attitude and humour employed when developing the name for the volunteers helped us to reflect the mood and spirit of the Volunteering programme, and to communicate its creative, artistic, and joyful atmosphere. In general, the word “bodybuilder” is associated with physical power, energy, strength. Even when these associations are transferred to the context of a cultural project, they serve to create a positive image of the “Kaunas 2022” volunteers as strong and energetic people. “Kaunas 2022” is not the only institution to give a name to its volunteers (e. g., Rethinkers at “Aarhus 2017”, Wavemakers at “Galway 2020”, etc.). These names help to communicate the purpose of having volunteers in the project and the common goal of the project, and also creates a sense of belonging to a group of like-minded people.

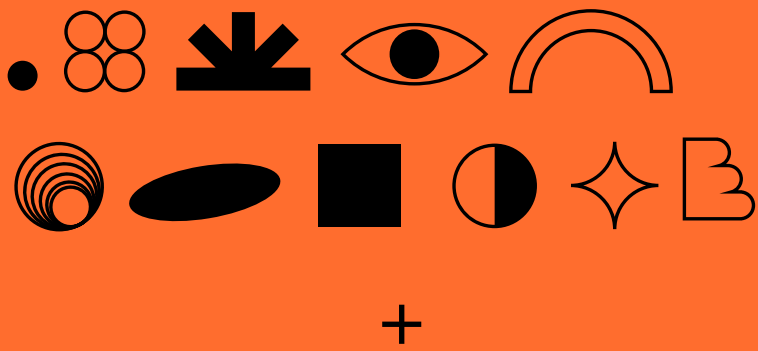
Visual style

The visual style of the Volunteering programme consisted of its logo, colour palette, and font. Most of the organisations engaged in working with volunteers use the style of their organisation for the communication. However, in the project which involves numerous programmes, it was essential to create a style that would be distinct yet would clearly relate to the project.

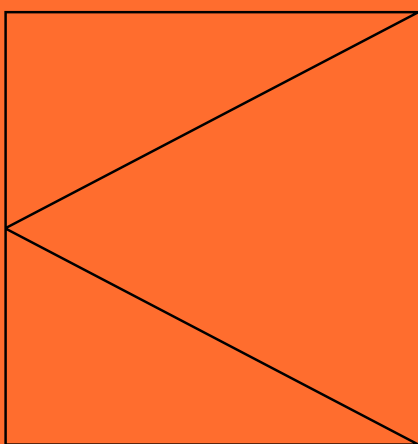
The colour palette consisted of three basic colours — black, grey, and white, and the main one — neon orange. Looking from a symbolic perspective, the bright orange reflected the vigour and dynamism of the Culturists, and from a practical perspective — it made the volunteers so well distinct from the crowd of people at events and was attracting attention.

The logo consisted of the “Kaunas 2022” logo showing geometric figures in different shapes. They not only symbolised the diversity of volunteers, but also served as graphic elements in the development of the programme’s communication tools.

Creating a visual style proved especially helpful in the development of other communication tools and design of the volunteer merchandise. The approved visual style was helpful for maintaining consistent communication, and also for saving time in decision-making when considering the appearance of the future deliverables, the programme’s presentation, its website, volunteer outfits, etc.



+



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Figure 8. Logo symbols and constituent elements of the “Culturists” programme.

Volunteer clothing

A full set of the volunteer outfit consisted of a T-shirt, a wind- and rain-proof jacket, a warm sweatshirt, a waist bag, and stitchable badges showing completion of training. A T-shirt and a jacket were given to each volunteer, while the rest of the outfit elements — only to the volunteers who were more actively engaged in the activities. The volunteer clothing has fulfilled several functions in the project. First of all, it was a tool for ensuring distinctive appearance, so we wanted the basic clothing to be bright and exclusive. As it turned out later, the neon orange colour chosen for the jacket was a very good solution. Even at night, in a multi-thousand crowd, organisers and spectators could easily distinguish our “Culturists”.

Indeed, we also sought to make clothing one of the motivating factors, so we have invested a lot of time to discover the clothing of high-quality, appealing design, and high comfort, and to adapt a graphic design of high aesthetic level. For more information on how the outfit has served to motivate volunteers, see the section “Motivating volunteers”.

In general, we believe that investing in the volunteer clothing has paid off. Next to that, it performed a distinctive and a motivational function, and also served as additional advertising of the programme.

Insights:

In the context of other similar Volunteering programmes, consistent identity helps to make the programme recognisable and exclusive.

A high-quality identity can be of help in creating a good first impression of the programme and in making a positive impact on the person's decision to fill out a volunteer's questionnaire.

For volunteers, a consistent and clear identity can contribute to promoting the sense of belonging to a united community, and their pride for being part of the programme.

Having a strong identity saves time when it comes to making decisions in the next stages — when creating campaigns, slides, posters, links, clothes, texts, etc.

Website

A subpage dedicated to the Volunteering programme was accessible on the “Kaunas 2022” website or via a specially created link www.kulturistai2022.eu. The subpage was performing both representative and informative functions and contained a registration form. It provided general information on what positions volunteers could take in the project, what they could learn in training, and what kind of community they could join. A video was used for presentation of the community of volunteers: active volunteers were telling about why they saw volunteering meaningful and why it was worth joining the “Culturists”. We were improving the questionnaire regularly to keep only the most necessary questions. In this way, we tried to remove any barriers that could make it difficult for a volunteer to take the first step, followed by the next one — the introductory meeting.

Insights:

Availability of clear, concise, and visually attractive information on a subpage describing the benefits of volunteering can encourage people to fill out the questionnaire.

The shorter and simpler the questionnaire for the registration, the more likely a potential volunteer will take immediate action and register.



Advertising campaigns

Since it was a long-term project, volunteer support was needed not only in 2022, but also in the years of preparation. At the same time, we needed to ensure a continuous growth in the number of volunteers in order to have a sufficient number of reliable, trained volunteers for the opening event — the largest event of the project year 2022.

To ensure the growing numbers, we implemented 4 advertising campaigns from the beginning of 2020 until 2022. In the team of “Kaunas 2022”, there was already an internal marketing team with creative staff, designers, and project managers. Thus, the most important assignment for this team was to convey the task very precisely and to share the message on how many volunteers it was important to collect. New volunteers that joined with each campaign were invited to a new series of training. At the end of each campaign, a new one was started, and we were continuing working in cycles.

In this way, campaigns were planned at similar time intervals with a clear beginning of each new cycle of introducing volunteers to the programme. This has helped to keep the training well-structured and to ensure that the highest possible number of volunteers could join this training at the beginning of their volunteering journey.



Main messages of advertising campaigns

The main messages of our advertising campaigns were chosen on the basis of the internal motivation of the volunteers. When preparing for the first campaign, we took into consideration the answers that were dominating in the questionnaires of new volunteers when answering the question “Why did you decide to volunteer in the “Kaunas 2022” project?”. The “love for the city” was dominating in the answers, so the message was linked to the promise that volunteers would be able to realise their aspirations and contribute to the city’s well-being, if they chose volunteering at “Kaunas 2022”.

CULTURISTS — “KAUNAS 2022” VOLUNTEERS
REGISTER
Fulfilling yourself, fulfilling the city



*Išpildai save -
išpildai miestą*

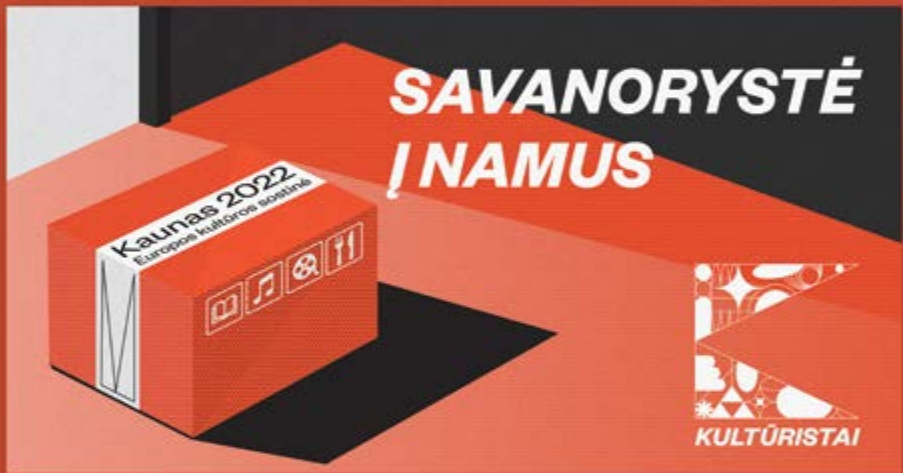


KULTŪRISTAI -
KAUNAS 2022
SAVANORIAI

REGISTRUOKIS
kulturistai2022.eu

The message of the second campaign had to be changed and adapted to the reality brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the existing situation, we offered opportunities to volunteer and participate in training online. Therefore, our advertising tools were also inviting to contribute remotely.

VOLUNTEERING TO THE HOMES
Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022
CULTURISTS



The message of the third campaign was based on the responses given in the feedback questionnaires filled by our experienced volunteers. As one of the main motivating factors for volunteering, our “Culturists” have identified the opportunity of self-realisation. The key message of the campaign was on how volunteering at “Kaunas 2022” could help to fulfil one’s ambitions.

SHORT OF SPACE FOR FULFILLING
YOUR AMBITIONS?

Join the volunteers at the “Kaunas – European Capital
of Culture 2022”



However, the last campaign was very different from the previous ones in its message. The reason was the doubled demand for volunteers for the opening event, caused by the extra requirements brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Four months before the opening event, it turned out that we needed 800 volunteers for the event, instead of the planned 400. What we learned from our previous campaigns was that messages focused on internal motivation attracted only about 200 volunteers per campaign. Moreover, our society still lived in the post-COVID moods and preferred staying at home, avoiding big events. We knew that there was no time to take the risk with another moderate message and that we had to attract people's attention and convince them that the contribution of each of them was so much important. Thus, we decided to use the elements of shock advertising. We chose a negative message stating that Kaunas people would lose the opportunity to have a grand event in the city, if the required number of volunteers were not collected. This prompted people to react and explore this topic more. The bold message that we chose proved successful and, eventually, we managed to mobilise the required number of volunteers.

In conclusion, the strategy for attracting volunteers must not be limited to the use of advertising measures. There are also other effective ways (such as creating distinctive identity) that help to develop a positive image of the programme, stand out from other Volunteering programmes, and attract the attention of your target audience.

Insights:

Distribution of the available promotional budget for regular advertising campaigns helps to ensure continuous attraction of new volunteers and to introduce them to the programme in a structured way.

In the case of “Kaunas 2022”, moderate advertising messages aimed at internal motivation helped to reach the target number of volunteers.

In the case of “Kaunas 2022”, the negative and shocking advertising message proved successful for attracting a large number of volunteers urgently.

THE BIGGEST EVENT IN KAUNAS WILL NOT HAPPEN
IF YOU DON'T JOIN THE VOLUNTEERS FOR THE OPENING EVENT OF THE
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE
JOIN

Find out more: "Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022"

DIDŽIAUSIAS RENGINYS KAUNE NEĮVYKS



***JEI NEPRISIJUNGSI PRIE EUROPOS KULTŪROS
SOSTINĖS ATIDARYMO SAVANORIŲ***

SUŽINOK DAUGIAU
kulturistai2022.eu

Kaunas 2022
Europos kultūros sostinė



Training *for volunteers*





When designing the Volunteering programme, we were contemplating the role of volunteers, and what kind of characteristics or knowledge will be needed to fulfil that role. Having identified the need, we took the following steps: preparation of training programmes, search for lecturers, and communication to volunteers on the opportunities of training.

Training *for whom* AND WHAT?

At training, volunteers acquired new knowledge, gained new competences, or strengthened the ones that they already possessed. They also met other volunteers and joined their community, they got in contact with the coordinators of the Volunteering programme, thus maintaining and/or encouraging their own motivation to engage in volunteering. Although initially, the need for trained volunteers came from the organisation itself, later, at the time of implementation of the project, we realised that training can strengthen the motivation of people to join the community of volunteers, continue volunteering, engage more actively, and take more responsibility.

In the current section, we will present the training that we offered the volunteers of “Kaunas 2022” during the project.

The training programme consisted of the following parts:

- **introductory Exercise;**
- **Kaunas Culture Exercise;**
- **masterclasses on the topics of Kaunas Experts, Culture Hosts, Leadership, and Accessibility.**

The training, also referred to as exercises, in order to keep the playful mood, was

intended for large groups of people and was accessible to everyone. We named it masterclass when specific training was focused on a smaller number of participants, with personal attention to each volunteer. Most of the training sessions that we offered were optional (with the exception of the Introductory Training) and volunteers could choose where to apply. Applicants could attend no training at all or could take part in one or several training sessions.

Training is useful for volunteers for acquiring new competences. Nevertheless, training is an effective motivational tool.



Introductory Exercise

Volunteers had to register on our volunteer management platform (hereinafter referred to as the “Timecounts”) only after the introductory meeting — a mandatory meeting for everyone who wanted to start volunteering in the “Kaunas 2022” project. Introductory Training offered the first contact with the coordinators and other newly joining volunteers. This meeting helped the newcomers to decide whether they will join the programme and start volunteering. The meeting was equally important for us, as it helped us align our own expectations with those of the volunteers and introduce the next steps.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all our meetings were taking place by physical participation, but the pandemic made us test the remote meeting format. After the quarantine restrictions were released, we kept the remote format because we noticed that it was easier and safer for some people to connect remotely. Besides, this format meant less resources required from us. Meetings were held a few times per month, and registration for the meetings was open on the “Culturist’s” subpage: (www.kulturistai2022.eu).

Content of the Introductory Meeting:

- Getting acquainted with each other and with the coordinators.
- Presentation of the title of the European Capital of Culture.
- Presentation of the “Kaunas 2022” project.
- Plan and scope of the planned events.
- Role and values of the “Culturists” Training.
- Ways of communication.
- Introduction to the “Timecounts”.
- Important tips for volunteering at events.
- Contacts of the coordinators.
- Next steps.

After the meeting, volunteers received an e-mail with detailed steps on how to connect to the “Timecounts” system and a printed copy of the “Culturist’s” Guide, with all essential information about volunteering in the “Kaunas 2022” project. Only after registering in the “Timecounts” system and after completing the questionnaire, volunteers could become the “Culturists”.

Insights:

It is worth considering using the formats of online meetings and physical participation alternately for the Introductory Meetings. This can help to fulfil the needs of those who find personal attention important, and of those who prefer joining online.

Kaunas Culture Exercise

After the Introductory Meeting, we invited volunteers to the Kaunas Culture Exercise, where they were introduced to the cultural field of Kaunas and Kaunas district, including the cultural institutions and objects, historical personalities, interesting yet little-known facts, etc., that they were supposed to know. At this training, volunteers acquired knowledge about the special nature of culture in Kaunas, and how to present it to the guests, thus becoming our well-informed ambassadors of Kaunas city. At the end of the meeting, each volunteer was given a printed copy of the “Culturist’s” Atlas, involving a brief summary of the information on different places in Kaunas.





Masterclasses

When presenting Masterclasses at our Introductory Meetings, we used to say that “Masterclasses are for those who want more”, as this type of training means higher responsibility from the side of the participant and higher involvement in the project. Motivation of the applicants was assessed according to the information provided when registering for the training.

Completion of one or another type of training did not involve any obligation from the side of volunteers to perform a certain role, volunteer a certain number of hours, etc. If the training consisted of several parts, we asked volunteers to attend all of them, as this was required for obtaining a certificate of completion of training and a special badge attachable to a “Culturist’s” T-shirt.

After completion of training, volunteers were invited to join closed groups of volunteers on “Facebook”, and we had several of them: for volunteer team leaders, for Kaunas experts and hosts, and for the accessibility volunteers. In the groups, we were posting information specifically dedicated to the target group of volunteers.

Recommendations:

If the possibilities allow, it is worth hiring professional trainers, as this helps to ensure high quality of the content and to increase trust by the volunteers.

When creating the content of the programme, it is useful to assess what kind of skills and knowledge the volunteers are supposed to possess, to be able to create the training course that would respond to your needs but will also be attractive to the volunteers. The training course should involve a practical part next to a theoretical one.

It is worth trying to ensure that those who wish to test their new role after completion of the training, would have an opportunity to do so. For instance, will all the volunteers who have completed the leadership training and are willing to lead volunteer teams be able to do so at least once in the project?

Masterclass for Kaunas Experts

The “Culturists” who were fond of communication and wanted to learn more about Kaunas were invited to join the Masterclass for Kaunas Experts. The training was aimed at preparing the curious volunteers, so that they could present the city and the “European Capital of Culture” project to different categories of guests: cultural delegations, professional performers, artists or speakers, citizens, and visitors.

At the training, the “Culturists” were able to:

- find out what constitutes a good tour and what are the qualities that a cool tour host should possess;
- attend a guided demonstrational tour;
- learn how to compose the narrative of the tour according to the interests of the audience;
- prepare a tour route according to the proposed type of audience, and to test it, working in groups.

The training consisted of three parts (meetings) and was delivered by experienced, professional guides.

Masterclass for Culture Hosts

This masterclass was like the next step after becoming an expert of Kaunas. Differently from the Masterclass for Kaunas Experts, this training course was addressed to the persons willing to develop individual tours around the city on a topic of their own interest. At the meeting, each volunteer presented their route or their idea to a group of professionals, and the latter shared their thoughts on how the proposals could be improved.

After this meeting, the profiles of Culture Hosts were placed on the website “Experience Kaunas”, where tourists and city guests could directly contact the volunteers with requests to have a free tour in the city offered by a local resident.

Leadership Masterclass

Active and enthusiastic volunteers who enjoyed communication and wanted to accompany and inspire other people, were invited to try the position of a volunteer team leader, but only after completion of the Leadership Masterclass.

At the Masterclass, volunteers were working on such questions as:

- What qualities are characteristic of a leader?
- Why is it important to plan one's time effectively and how is it done?
- How to delegate tasks?
- Why is it important to help team members maintain motivation and take care of their safety and comfort?

The training consisted of several parts, one of which was a hiking tour. The Masterclass was led by an experienced educator, consultant in education.

This training was exceptionally successful and popular among our volunteers. Indeed, a large number of people applied for this training each time it was announced. It has to be noted that volunteer team leaders have become important assistants of the "Kaunas 2022" team in the implementation of the project's grand and larger events: they helped to ensure that essential information reaches every volunteer and that everyone is familiar with each other, they also dedicated their time to take care of the needs of volunteers.

What we have also noticed was that volunteer team leaders got more involved in the implementation of the project and became real team members, who were trusted with the tasks requiring more responsibility.

Accessibility Masterclass

During the project, we tried to make our events and volunteering activities accessible to as many people as possible. In cooperation with the organisation "VšĮ Socialinis Taxi" (the organisation providing travel organisation services for people with disabilities), we have created an Accessibility Masterclass, where our volunteers learned to:

- Recognise different types of disability.
- Offer assistance.
- Provide the necessary help at events.

The training consisted of two parts, one of which involved practical tasks. We adapted the practical part of the Masterclass to a specific event, considering such aspects as the availability of special platforms for people with disabilities, how they will reach the venue, etc. The Masterclass was delivered by the Public Institution "Socialinis Taxi" staff.

To sum up, training serves as great investment in volunteers, bringing benefits to all the participants of the process. This training course enables volunteers to become more familiar with their own selves, discover the value of unity, feel the pulse and importance of the project, establish a stronger relationship with the organisation and its team.

Recommendations:

It is worth paying attention to the motivation of volunteers to participate in training. Indeed, try to assess whether it is acceptable to you that the participants might come for the training without an intention to apply the gained knowledge in your project.

It is worth offering the opportunity of attending the training to different types of people. For instance, the ones who keep active communication do not necessarily become good leaders of volunteer teams, while the modest and silent ones might appear to be great experts of the city, able to extend warm welcome to the guests.

Engaging *Volunteers*

In the present section, we will discuss in more detail what measures have helped us to consistently involve volunteers in the “Kaunas 2022” activities, how was the volunteer’s journey developing after joining the Volunteering programme, and what communication channels we have used.





Communi- cation

When developing a Volunteering programme, it is important to foresee which communication channels and platforms will be most convenient for the volunteers and will simultaneously respond to your own needs. Later, having selected the information channels, it is good to know which ways of information provision are most effective.

Channels of communication with volunteers

At the Introductory Exercise, volunteers received information on the channels to be used for communication with them. Given the large scope of the project, the amount of information to be communicated to volunteers was also huge. We have chosen two main channels of communication:

- **Closed group on “Facebook”.**
- **E-mails (newsletters).**

In this way, we have adapted communication both to the people who did not use social networks, and to those who were using social networks as a primary source of information.

The group on “Facebook” was dedicated to sharing informal messages: thank-you notes, volunteering experiences, and “last minute” offers. E-mails were used for sharing important and detailed information, regular volunteering offers, and news.

Since the flow of information was big, we tried to use exclusive visuals for newsletters and Facebook posts on different topics. In this way, it was easier for volunteers to quickly identify the content of the letter and conveniently select the information that they were interested to read. A few examples can be seen in the figures below.

Recommendation:

Before choosing the channels for communication with volunteers, it is important to consider the amount and type of information that you are going to announce. If you plan to share large amounts of information, it is worth choosing several channels, so that it can be divided in parts.



Volunteer *Management* PLATFORM

During the project years 2019–2020, when the number and intensity of events was rather low, we were using the “Google Forms” platform for placing volunteering offers. This is a simple platform, familiar to many people, often used for the purpose of registration. Unfortunately, for us, its use meant many different tables and repeated filling of data for volunteers each time. We knew that the year 2022 was going to be intense and that numerous volunteering offers would be reaching the volunteers. With this in mind, we were looking for a system that would help us solve these two challenges. We chose the “Timecounts” platform for our work, considering the convenient and modern design of the platform, and availability of the required functions.

Among the main advantages of the “Timecounts” over the “Google Forms” were the following:

- All volunteer data in one place.
- More convenient administration and announcement of volunteering offers.
- Automated validation of volunteers for different positions.
- Automated send-out of letters to different groups of volunteers.
- Possibility to follow the hours spent in volunteering activities.
- No need for volunteers to refill their contact information.

Did this platform work perfectly and meet all of our expectations? Not completely. The platform was launched recently, so we were faced with technical bugs and not all of the features were available. Indeed, when joining the platform, volunteers had to create an account, so this requirement could have become a barrier for less motivated people to continue their journey with us. Although the platform was relatively primitive, it still required greater computer literacy, compared to the previously used “Google Forms”, making the access more complicated for seniors. Also, even if we published our offers both in Lithuanian and in English, the working language of the platform was English. Despite the mentioned inconveniences, there were more advantages in the use of the platform than disadvantages, and the platform made the work of coordinators much easier.

Recommendation:

If the Volunteering programme that you are creating involves a large number of volunteers and volunteering offers (e. g. in an ECoC project), introduction of an automated management platform could be an important and necessary step.

Volunteering *offers*

A large part of the activities in the Volunteering programme team consisted of continuous communication with partners and colleagues, and preparation of volunteering offers. When preparing our offers, we have always paid significant attention to the 5 most important things:

1.

Number of volunteers

One of the most difficult tasks faced by our colleagues working in event organisation was to foresee the required number of volunteers. We noticed that in many cases, when identifying the need for volunteers, our colleagues were tending to double the numbers, and only then they moved to identification of the tasks needed to perform. Adherence to this principle can demotivate volunteers from returning to volunteering because they may find their help not needed. For this reason, we tried to help our colleagues to first identify specific tasks. Consequently, the number of volunteers needed for the events often decreased significantly, although there were also cases when this number increased. Indeed, it is important not to be afraid of questioning the need for volunteers expressed by the organisers and of reconsidering whether there would be enough activity for all the volunteers present at the venue.

Recommendation:

It is useful to calculate precisely how many volunteers will be needed at the event and what exactly they will

have to do. If too many volunteers are invited, they may have nothing to do and feel unnecessary.

2.

Adequate activities

In our programme, we have often faced the fact that, for the organisers of activities, it was not always clear how volunteers could or could not help at events. We advised them to try and imagine taking the role of a volunteer and to think about the tasks that they themselves would like to do. The main questions that we discussed with the organisers were:

- Is the activity suitable to a volunteer, or is it a service normally provided by hired professionals (logistics staff, technicians, etc.)?
- Speaking about the level of responsibility expected from volunteers, is it not too big (e.g. cash register with money, key moments of the event)?
- Will the volunteer, when performing the given task, see his/her contribution meaningful?

Recommendation:

When planning volunteering activities, it is advisable to try and imagine oneself in the volunteer's role. This helps to refine adequate activities that are consistent with the principles of volunteering.

3.

Time

By all means, time and place of the volunteering activity should be indicated in the volunteering offer, but our experience shows that not all times are convenient for volunteers, and it is not easy to collect the required number of assistants. Whenever we could, we tried to adjust the offered times to the possibilities of our volunteers. When tasks did not require an exact hour, we moved them to weekends, or to the evening on working days, in order to enable as many as possible persons to engage in volunteering.

Recommendation:

If possible, time of activities should be adapted to the possibilities of the volunteers.

4.

Objective

Our volunteers were given a variety of tasks — some of them seemed interesting, while others looked minor and insignificant. To fulfil even the smallest need,

we tried to name the greater goal that the volunteer would help to achieve by completing the task. For example, we invited volunteers to make transcription of video interviews, mentioning that their input would allow the English-speaking viewers to understand the video.

Recommendation:

When formulating offers, it is worth highlighting a greater, inspiring goal to which the volunteer would contribute by completing the task.

5.

Visual

The last important element in the process of drafting the offers was a convincing and catchy visual. Whenever we had a possibility, we tried to maintain the style of the Volunteering programme and to adjust its visual for each specific task. We have noticed that volunteers respond better when visuals of the offers reflect the mood, content, or final product that we will be creating together. For example, when we invited volunteers to contribute to the creation of an artistic installation, we tried to show them what the installation should look like.

Recommendation:

It is advisable to have an attractive visual related to the activity, as it is an important part of the volunteering offer.

Volunteers *at events*



In this section, we will discuss what kind of information we were providing to our volunteers before their arrival to the venue and will showcase how we were working with volunteers at events of different scale.



There are no self-evident things

It brings joy when volunteers register to the proposed positions, but the work of coordinators does not end here. The biggest lesson we have learned at this stage is that people perceive the same information differently and there are no self-evident things. Before an event, it was important to remind the volunteers that we were waiting for them, and to specify the venue, time, and contact person of the meeting. For us, it was important to get their confirmation that they were going to come for volunteering. We tried to think about what kind of things a volunteer might need at the time of volunteering. Maybe they should bring warmer clothes, some water or snacks for themselves?

Insights:

It is important for volunteers to have explicit and comprehensive information. In this way, they feel confident and ready to dedicate their time.

If a volunteer has filled out the registration questionnaire and expressed his/her desire to take up a certain position as a volunteer, this does not necessarily mean that the person will come to volunteer. Before the event, it is worth getting additional confirmation from the volunteer that he/she is really going to participate.

Organisation of volunteer activities at events

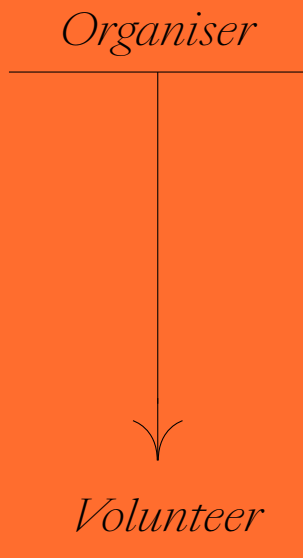
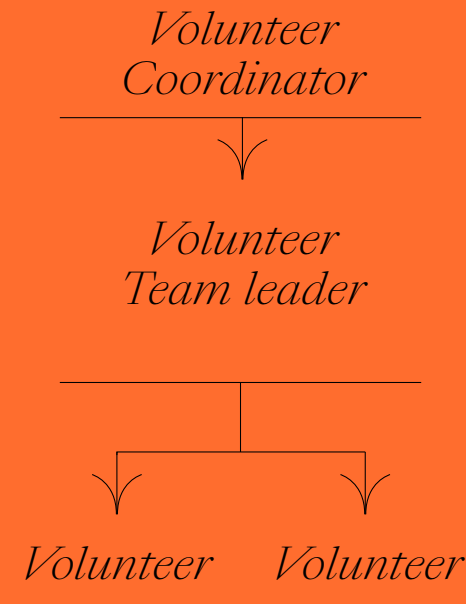
Over time, in our work with volunteers, we introduced classification of the events of our project and those of our partners into three main categories:

Mini-events – include different creative workshops, concerts, or meetings, requiring the presence and help of less than 10 volunteers.

Midi-events – include larger festivals, concerts, or events where assistance from several dozen volunteers is needed.

Maxi events – are the biggest events and festivals, involving several hundred volunteers.

Depending on the size and complexity of the event, we chose different methods of communication with and grouping of the volunteers. Let us discuss communication first.

*MINI
EVENT**MIDI
EVENT**MAXI
EVENT*

As illustrated in the figure above, we chose different communication methods, depending on the size of the event. At mini-events, where the number of volunteers was small and the event was not complex, volunteers were usually directly contacted by the organisers of the event, without the help of volunteer coordinators or volunteer team leaders (see the “Leadership Masterclass” section for more information on these positions).

At midi- and maxi-events, we ourselves — the Volunteering programme team — were responsible for volunteers, with the help of volunteer team leaders. We assigned them to different areas of activity at the event and explained in detail all the awaiting tasks. The function of volunteer team leaders was to convey this information to their team of volunteers and to supervise its activities throughout the event.

This approach has been very useful in building a stronger relationship with volunteers. The task for the team leader was to assure that every volunteer would feel visible and important, would know where and when to be present, what items to have at hand, and what tasks to perform.

The main task for us, as Volunteering programme team, was to ensure that all sides receive the necessary information and that the number of volunteers is sufficient.

1
1
2



ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

Briefings

No matter what the size of the event is, briefings have always been an important part of work. In many cases, briefing was short and simple, while sometimes we needed to have a separate meeting or even several ones. In the current section, we will give you an overview of the briefing formats that we usually used.

Normally, **mini-events** did not require any prior preparation from the side of volunteers, so briefing was usually given by the organiser, before the event. The most important part of this briefing format was to introduce the space of the event, the programme, discuss the key issues and potential risks.

Speaking about **midi-events**, they required greater preparation and greater involvement of volunteer team leaders, so we tended to give briefing a few days before the event. Prior to the briefing, we used to make a clear list of activities for each group of volunteers so that each team leader knew exactly what to do before, during, and after the event. During the briefing, whenever we had a possibility, we visited the spaces of the event and discussed every task and related questions. The benefit of this method was evident during the event, as team leaders already knew the tasks and could clearly pass them to the volunteers.

At the beginning of the project, in advance of bigger events, we were also organising briefings for all volunteers. At such briefings, we were introducing our volunteers to the main organisers of the event, its idea, and activities. These meetings helped the volunteers

feel part of the event and encouraged registration. However, due to the pandemic, we had to abandon this format.

At **maxi-events**, briefings were meant to fulfil several important functions in the volunteer's experience journey. The first one was provision of information that volunteers had to acquire in order to ensure the smooth experience of volunteering. The second one, no less important, was motivating volunteers and building a team. Such briefings provided an opportunity to introduce volunteers to each other and motivate them to stay, wait for the event, and, in a sense, become its hosts. We organised briefings at least a month before the start of the volunteering activity. Briefings were not limited to one meeting — we opted for the format of regular thematic meetings.

Since volunteer team leaders play an important role at maxi-events, individual briefings were also arranged for them, so that they could get acquainted with the team members in charge of different parts of the event, in which assistance of volunteers was needed (for more information about briefings for maxi-events see section “The “Kaunas 2022” trilogy of grand events. Opening of the title year”).

Insights:

Volunteer team leaders are a great help in communicating with volunteers during the event.

Briefings can serve as a useful tool both for conveying important information and for motivating volunteers as well as shaping the team.

What is most important *in communicating* WITH VOLUNTEERS?

In many cases, our work also included educating our colleagues and partners on how to work with volunteers. Based on our experience, communicating with volunteers at events involves the following main aspects:

Equal communication.

Equal communication was important to us aiming to show that our volunteers were a full-fledged part of the team, so we avoided addressing them as girls, boys, kids, etc. Indeed, the use of such vocatives often creates a greater distance between the volunteers and the organisational team.

Possibility to ask.

We tried to emphasise this possibility to the volunteers at every stage of communication. It is impossible to communicate everything through briefings, thus, it is essential to provide a safe space for asking questions. In this way, we can also avoid misunderstandings. We always left time for questions at the meetings and encouraged volunteers to ask as much as needed until the task looked completely clear.

Clear tasks.

Volunteers will feel safe and self-confident if they have clear information about their role in the event and what exact functions the given role involves.

Care.

We should not forget volunteers during the events, i. e. after they take their positions. We have always tried to ensure that volunteers have breaks at work, and also encouraged our colleagues to stay in contact with them and see how they were doing.



Recommendation:

If your colleagues or partners who have little or no experience in working with volunteers will communicate with them directly, it is



worth dedicating time for consulting or training, thus preventing any possible misunderstandings.



The “Kaunas 2022” *trilogy of grand events.* OPENING OF THE TITLE YEAR

*The opening event is
always one of the key
events of the ECoC project.*

We were no exception, and the Volunteering programme was working hard to prepare for the opening event from the very beginning of its creation. The “Kaunas 2022” project included three grand events — the trilogy that was gradually leading Kaunas from a provisional capital to a contemporary city.

All the three events were part of our maxi-event category, but we will examine the opening of the title year separately, as this event required a lot of concentration and planning. It is no secret that in early 2022, gatherings of people were still restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the entire organisational team had to be extremely flexible and adapt to the ever-changing requirements set for controlling the pandemic. These control requirements were the reason why the number of required volunteers increased unexpectedly and significantly.

As already mentioned in the previous section on advertising campaigns, a little less than 4 months prior to the opening show, we learned that the required number of volunteers for the event is no longer 400, but more than 800 instead.



In the present section, we will discuss what steps we have taken to attract volunteers and how we organised our volunteering activities before and during the event, but first of all, we will briefly present the volunteering positions that we have identified:

The show volunteers	were playing at the show and creating decorations, they got actively involved a few weeks before the grand event.
The audience volunteers	helped to ensure that all the spectators had an event ticket, a COVID-19 passport, and knew the way to their sector.
The communication volunteers	were in charge of providing information at the information centres set for the event.
The hospitality volunteers	took care of the smooth welcome of guests and accompanied them to the major venues of the opening weekend.
The accessibility volunteers	were ensuring safe access of people with disabilities to the venues adapted for them.
The volunteers at the Volunteer Centre	helped to ensure smooth operation of the Volunteer Centre and were managing the volunteer testing point (all the volunteers had to undergo a rapid COVID-19 test, before entering the Volunteer Centre). If help was needed elsewhere, we were also directing these volunteers to other positions.
The VIP event volunteers	were taking care of important guests of the “Kaunas 2022” project and Kaunas City Municipality.
The team of technical volunteers	were key in the preparation for the event and in case of unforeseen disturbances during the event.
The city activations volunteers	contributed to various activities developed by the “Kaunas 2022” project and by the partner institutions, taking place in the city locations after the grand show.



Attracting *volunteers*



Recommendation:

When searching for volunteers for a big event, it is worth setting the initial target of having about 20 % more volunteers than you think you would need for the event. Otherwise, with the event approaching, and considering the likelihood that, for various reasons, a certain number of volunteers will not be able to participate, you would face significant difficulties when involving the persons having joined the process just recently.

Having learned that the required number of volunteers got doubled, we realised that we needed not just a bold advertising campaign (see more in the section “Advertising campaigns”), but also to employ other proactive ways of inviting our citizens to join:

- **We invited student organisations and schools to join.**
- **We sent out messages to different companies inviting their employees to volunteer together.**
- **We invited various communities and dance groups to join.**
- **We took part in the opening weeks organised by universities.**
- **We installed a specially equipped stand in the shopping centre “Akropolis”, where we were actively inviting the townspeople to join.**

Almost all of these methods have worked well. We had a lot of volunteers from student organisations and welcomed communities of teachers from several schools. During the introductory weeks, we convinced many students to join for volunteering. Unfortunately, we did not manage to attract any community of seniors. Companies did not show any big interest in volunteering as well. Employee volunteering is still quite a new phenomenon in the Lithuanian labour market.

Briefings

We knew from our experience that keeping a group of more than 800 volunteers in place until the start of the event was going to be a tough task. Thus, we decided to help them connect with each other and start feeling an important part of the event. In this task, we were assisted by 4 instructors. As mentioned before, briefings at maxi-events can perform a two-fold function: they help to convey important information and to build a team.

For the briefings on the opening event, we have selected the following topics:

1.

Presentation of the event and introduction of the main organisational team. This type of briefing was the widest in scope and mandatory for everyone. At this meeting, volunteers signed contracts, were distributed their outfits, were the first ones to hear the details of the event, got acquainted with their team leaders, and learned more about their chosen position.

2.

Presentation of the project and the questions frequently asked by tourists. At this training, volunteers learned to present Kaunas, to extend help by providing the necessary information to the visitors, and to introduce the key events of the cultural programme offered in 2022.

3.

Practical first aid training. This training was a great success and brought positive feedback. Since the opening was a mass event, we tried to ensure that as many volunteers as possible would be able to provide first aid.

4.

Aspects of the opening event most relevant to volunteers. It was in the last meeting held a week before the opening weekend, where we shared the technical information and the latest updates.

We do believe that all these briefings made a significant contribution to keeping the registered volunteers in their positions until the event and their becoming the true hosts of the opening weekend.

How did we *communicate?*

Since the number of volunteers was big, we asked volunteer team leaders for assistance. These persons were of special importance in connecting with and communicating information to the volunteers working at different positions, and not just at the event, i. e. face-to-face, but also in advance of the event, reaching them by letters and messages.

Throughout the organisation and implementation of the event, our work was based on shared responsibility.

The organisers were responsible for ensuring that all parts of the event were implemented smoothly and for communicating the required information to volunteer team leaders.

Volunteer team leaders were helping in communicating information to their volunteers, were taking care of their needs, and coordinating their activities during the event.

We, as coordinators of the Volunteering programme, were responsible for organising briefings, supervising registration of volunteers, allocating them to specific positions. Our responsibilities also included ensuring smooth communication between the organisers and the volunteer team leaders, supervising the functioning of the volunteer centres, and solving all the challenges that our volunteers were facing during the event.

On the day of the event, volunteers were invited to gather in the volunteer centres, where we had the last motivational briefing and sent our volunteers off to their positions. Each volunteer team leader was equipped with a portable radio (handheld transceiver) for quick contact with us and with the organisers responsible for certain parts of the event. This method of communication helped to ensure a quick problem-solving process.

Recommendations:

At grand events, if the possibilities allow, it is worth delegating responsibilities in a way which could ensure that the Volunteering programme team could monitor the process of implementation of the activities and find immediate solutions in case of unexpected challenges.

If you have a possibility, it is worth equipping volunteers with portable radios. Thanks to this equipment, communication with a large number of people at the event can take place quickly and efficiently.



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Motivating *volunteers*

At the Introductory Exercise, we asked our volunteers about who was accompanying them to this meeting, also how they decided to join the “Kaunas 2022” Volunteering programme. Most often they replied that they wanted to be part of this unique project, that they loved their city and wanted to con-

tribute to the activities happening in the city, to find new friends, acquaintances, and spend time in a meaningful way. We were fortunate that the people who decided to volunteer were highly motivated, willing to co-create culture in Kaunas, and to be part of the unique process.

Although most persons had strong individual motivation for volunteering, we, as the Volunteering programme team, also had our own system for supporting their motivation. For us, it was important to show that volunteers were an important part of the project and that we cared about them.

Our motivational system consisted of the following:

Team building meetings.

Food.

Volunteer outfit.

Non-material and material gifts.

Thank-you events and celebrations.

Counting volunteering hours.

Social hours.

International cooperation.

Sharing experiences.

Team *building* MEETINGS

As we have already described in the section on training, meetings with volunteers are an important part of the process, if we wish to build a community of volunteers and have motivated assistants in the project. One of the ways to achieve this is through training. However, usually training is mostly focused on content and less on mutual contact.

Another way to strengthen the volunteer community is through team building meetings. At such meetings, volunteers have fun, meet each other, learn more about themselves, overcome one or another challenge, and experience a sense of community.





The format and duration of these meetings can vary depending on the needs and resources available. Below, we will explain how we were organising team building meetings. We will answer four questions: What is the target audience? Who is leading the meeting? What is the meeting format? How much does it cost?

What is the target audience?

In our case, team building meetings differed depending on what they were meant for: all volunteers or individual groups of volunteers, based on the completed training (volunteer team leaders, Kaunas experts, culture hosts). We held meetings for individual groups because it was important for us that, for example, volunteer team leaders establish a connection and feel like a team at events, supporting each other in case of need.

Who is leading the meeting?

Team building meetings can be led by professionals of a specific field, as well as by the programme coordinators, if they have the necessary skills and time for this task. In our case, as the coordinators of our Volunteering programme were possessing the required experience and wanted to lead team building meetings, they sometimes performed

this task as well. To our mind, there are several advantages when team building meetings can be led by the programme coordinators, for instance, saving available resources (financial, etc.) and contacting volunteers. For our programme coordinators, these two types of benefits served as a motive and a value.

Recommendation:

It is important to assess the coordinator's role at the meeting: if this person is leading a meeting, then he/she should rather not be a participant in the activity, and if he/she wants to participate in the activity, then someone else should be leading the meeting. In this way, we can avoid any potential conflict of roles and confusion.

What is the meeting format?

Depending on the group of volunteers involved, we chose different formats of our team building meetings. Some examples:

- We invited volunteer team leaders to a meeting dedicated to the acquaintance with oneself and the others. Part of the meeting time was devoted to a team game where volunteers had to find solutions and implement them together, while the remaining part of the time was spent for sharing experiences, with the help of the Points of You associative cards.
- We set off on a guided tour with Kaunas experts.
- We invited all volunteers to a meeting with a well-known actor from Kaunas Drama Theatre — he offered the participants to play several games and improvisations, making it easier for them to get to know each other and have fun.

How much does it cost?

It may seem that team building activities are a process that requires additional resources (financial or human), but what is key for a good team building meeting, is motivated participants and creative, experienced leaders.

Without sufficient financial resources, you can also involve volunteers quite widely, for example, by asking them to bring their own table games, home-made food, and share their talents and competences with the others, etc.

Recommendation:

When planning the format of your meetings with volunteers, it is worth considering the number of participants. In a small group, the activities that have a direct focus on everyone could take place. For a larger group, another format should be chosen. For example, one of the most successful formats for a group of over 100 people was a battle of wits.

Likewise, you should not limit yourself when you think about paid services, such as renting a bus or a venue, or inviting a lecturer. You can always look for partners and people of goodwill who could support you with these services.

To conclude, our experience shows that in order to maintain and grow the motivation of volunteers for staying in your organisation, it is important to dedicate time for informal gatherings of volunteers, when they have no responsibilities, but come to have fun and get acquainted. It does not have to be an expensive pleasure — there are numerous creative ways to build a connection without significant financial costs.

Food

Seeing this specific sub-theme mentioned in the section on motivation of volunteers may raise the question of how a basic thing like food can relate to motivation. Inspired by our recent experience, we decided to elaborate on this theme in the present section. We will explain, why.

Food can perform not only a physiological, but also a social function. It did not take much time for us to get convinced that, indeed, eating is a process that unites people, and also opens doors for communication and common experiences. Many times, we have heard from our volunteers or have read their feedback in questionnaires that having delicious food served during activities is a pleasant experience for them.

It is also important to keep in mind that people who come to volunteer usually come right after their work or studies, at the time of lunch or dinner, besides, volunteering takes long hours. In our programme, access to drinking water was ensured for all volunteers, all the time, and the persons who spend more than 4 hours for volunteering, were also provided with food. The food that we offered was mainly sandwiches, pizzas, and various bakery products, because many people fancy this kind of food, and it is also easy to transport and comfortable to eat.

As we have all four seasons in Lithuania, we also provided hot drinks (coffee and tea) for our volunteers at colder times. This service is especially important at a cold season of the year when volunteering takes place outside.

Recommendation

Undeniably, treating volunteers with food and drinks creates big value, and in the absence of financial resources, one might look for sponsors among the companies operating in the field of catering. Our volunteers were happy to be treated with coffee by our sponsors — the “Caffeine” coffee network and the “Druskininkų Rasa” mineral water company.





Volunteer outfit

As already described in the section on how to attract volunteers, volunteer clothing has both played a functional and visual role and served as a motivational tool for some people.

Next to the basic outfit set (T-shirt and jacket), we also had additional outfit elements (sweater and waist bag) that we gave as a thank-you gift and an incentive for a certain number of volunteering hours achieved.

We have noticed that it was important for some volunteers to be able to wear the “Culturist’s” clothing. The “Culturist’s” outfit created a sense of pride, also made it easier to fulfil the volunteer’s role and become part of the community. At the end of the volunteering experience at “Kaunas 2022”, many volunteers wanted to keep their outfit elements as a lovely souvenir. For the purposes of sustainability, we encouraged our volunteers to return their outfit elements to us at the end of the event, if they did not wish to keep them, so that we could reuse them.

Recommendation:

Whenever the possibilities allow, it is worth investing in the distinctive clothing or extra signs for volunteers (vest, cap, etc.) — such items will ensure good visibility of volunteers in a crowd of people, will help to build the identity of your volunteer community, and will be kept as a pleasant souvenir for the future.

Non-material and material gifts

To our mind, in working with volunteers, there is no single answer or solution to the question of gift-giving. We used gifts as additional, yet not essential external tools. They were helpful when we wanted to show personal attention and gratitude to our volunteers. During the project, we did not have a particular focus on gift-giving, although we often surprised our volunteers with gifts for certain works or their greater contribution. It was important for us to avoid seeing gifts as the main motive for volunteering in the project.

In addition to material gifts, such as outfit elements or coffee vouchers provided by our partners, we also invited our volunteers to attend events free of charge, which enabled them to be the first ones to see an exhibition or a performance that would otherwise be difficult to access, or meet artists, creators, etc. We noticed that such offers were greatly appreciated and welcomed by the majority of volunteers.

Still, an exceptional gift and a real surprise for our volunteers was a piece of street art dedicated to the “Culturists”, which emerged in Kaunas at the end of 2022, on the wall of the building at Savanorių pr. 41.

Indeed, we tended to express our gratitude to volunteers by warm words and by caring for their needs during the volunteering period, as well as at the thank-you events.

Recommendations:

Even if gifts are not seen as the main motive for volunteering, it is worth considering gift-giving as an expression of your appreciation for the offered assistance, as receiving gifts is pleasant and can increase motivation.

It is worth considering an option of giving the gifts that bring experiences and emotions, instead of material gifts.

Thank-you events and celebrations

When organising thank-you events dedicated to volunteers, we were discussing two options: inviting volunteers to be our guests and enjoy the event or inviting them to contribute to the creation of the content of the event. We often were choosing the first option, because we wanted to organise a celebration, where volunteers would have no other roles or extra concerns.

For us, such events served as a way to express our gratitude, to show that volunteers were visible and that we were very happy to have them. We organised thank-you events once or several times a year (linking them to our maxi-events, where assistance most needed).

Celebrating the “Culturists” Christmas in our project has become a tradition since 2019, and it was continued even at the time of the global pandemic. For many of us, the festive time before Christmas is the time for reflecting on the past year and for expressing our gratitude. On this occasion, we invited volunteers to come together, celebrate, and have fun, and this was the right time for us to thank them for their contribution to the project and to inform them about the awaiting experiences of the coming year.

The format of our thank-you events and celebrations was entertaining, with lots of laughter, pleasant memories, and delicious food.

Recommendations:

It is worth organising thank-you events at least once a year, with an exceptional focus on volunteers.

Likewise, it is worth building traditions like celebration of Christmas, World Volunteer Day, or any other holiday that volunteers would be expecting, knowing that it will happen again.

Counting volunteering hours

On the “Timecounts” platform, one may see how much time a person has spent for volunteering. We noticed that it was important for some volunteers to keep track of their hours. Moreover, it was interesting and useful for us to know the general scope of volunteering. We were also using a system under which, every month, we invited volunteers to collect a gift.

For volunteers, an invitation to collect a gift was a surprise, because we did not officially introduce this system to them. As already mentioned before, it was important for us that our volunteers would not start seeing gifts as an objective and that such practice would not affect their internal motivation to volunteer. Volunteers would themselves decide if they wanted to receive a gift, as this was not equally important for everyone.

Social hours

Indeed, we had thought out and planned well the ways of supporting motivation of our volunteers in advance, as described above, but we were taken by surprise to learn that the time spent for volunteering could be considered as the hours spent for social or civil activity (which is an obligatory part of the educational programme for pupils in the schools of Lithuania), which brought significant added value to volunteering. Indeed, we regularly received requests from school-age volunteers to issue a statement about their hours spent for volunteering.

Thus, we realised that not all aspects can be thought out and planned, and some things, like this motivational tool for young people, can come out only in the course of the project.

International *cooperation*



Exchange of volunteers

We saw international volunteer exchange as a good tool for motivating volunteers and sharing experiences, but our practice shows that its effectiveness depends on the scope, context, and purpose of the Volunteering programme being developed. Our Volunteering programme and motivational measures were designed for a huge number of volunteers to be involved over a given period of time, with relatively low human resources (3 positions).

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the programme, we considered the possibility of joining the European Solidarity Corps. As we started the process, it turned out that high-quality implementation of this programme requires additional resources. We had to abandon this idea, as we did not have such resources at that time.

A much more successful attempt was made in 2022, when we sent 3 volunteers to Veszprém, in the framework of our cooperation with “Veszprém–Balaton 2023” (Hungary). We were delighted to have this cooperation and supported our volunteers in this process, but we could only use this opportunity thanks to the fact that coordination of the exchange was taking place at the time which was less intense for us.

Thus, we learned from our experience that organising international exchange requires significant involvement, while only a small number of volunteers would be enjoying the results. Therefore, when compared to the other measures referred to above, international exchange seemed less advantageous in our case. For this reason, we have not chosen international exchange as a key motivational tool, worth investing our time.

Recommendation:

International exchange programmes, as a tool for supporting motivation, seem to be most suitable for organisations developing small-scale long-term Volunteering programmes and having sufficient time and/or human resources.

Business trip

It seems to us that our decision to take a group of volunteers for a trip to Matera (“Matera Basilicata 2019” (Italy), the former ECoC) brought us numerous advantages. At the end of our project year, we started planning the legacy scenarios of the Volunteering programme. We knew that in Matera, after the title year “Matera Basilicata 2019”, local volunteers established an association which has been successfully carrying out volunteering activities in the field of culture so far, so we decided to go and see how we could apply their experience in Kaunas. After this trip, volunteers were also inspired to continue volunteering and create their own association of volunteers in Kaunas.



Recommendation:

International experiences can be a very beneficial source of inspiration both for the team members and for the volunteers willing to apply the existing good practice examples in their own city.

To sum up, international experiences are a strong motivator for volunteers, they also help to create a basis for new initiatives. It is true that international exchange can require a lot of money and time. That is why, in each specific case, it is worth assessing whether this tool is most efficient under the existing conditions.



Sharing experiences

Feedback

We do believe that key aspects of working with volunteers involve not only good planning of the training programme, meetings, and volunteering positions, but also giving volunteers an opportunity to speak.

Having completed a training cycle or after implementation of a midi- or maxi-event, we were asking volunteers to give us feedback by filling out a questionnaire. This approach was mainly chosen due to the large number of volunteers. Having assessed the answers, we could see whether we were moving in a good direction, and how we could improve the future experiences of our volunteers.

Here is the feedback from one of the volunteers after the Leadership Masterclass:

“Compliments to the lecturer for having created a rather free and cosy atmosphere in the training, which enabled us to feel free of fear or anxiety when expressing our opinion, discussing, making jokes. And the march, as part of the training, was also a very nice way to get to know the team better (like a team-building).”

We sent separate invitations to volunteer team leaders, asking them to reflect on their role. Depending on the number of participants, we used to invite them to physical meetings. Volunteer team leaders provided a lot of useful technical information about the emerging challenges, and even offered suggestions on how to address them. Where possible, we applied the offered solutions. In this way, volunteer team leaders, being volunteers themselves, could feel that they were an important part of the team.

A feedback form can bring an opportunity for volunteers to express their views, while for us this served as a tool to learn what we could change or improve, and what we had not foreseen or thought over. For volunteers, filling feedback forms is often the time of expressing their joy and gratitude and sharing their impressions.

There is a variety of feedback formats available: if only a few volunteers are providing assistance at the event, you could stay for a couple of minutes after the event and ask them how did it go. Speaking about us, we often used electronic questionnaires. Another important aspect is that it is often easier for people to express their thoughts in writing, especially if the questionnaire is anonymous. Like this, we could expect more open comments.

Here is a quote from the feedback form filled by one of the volunteers after the opening event of the ECoC title year:

“It’s fun when you are walking along the Laisvės alėja (note: Laisvės alėja, i. e. the Freedom Alley is the main pedestrian street in Kaunas centre) and people recognise that you are a volunteer and start bravely asking various questions. It’s nice that the townspeople and city guests are not afraid to ask questions, they would always thank you for the answers and wish you a nice evening. I was surprised by the sincerity and good mood of the visitors. There were several guests who wished us very kindly that we take care of ourselves and try not to freeze outside, also thanking us for the provided help not only to them specifically, but to other people as well.”

Recommendations:

It is advisable to take time for exploring the views and feelings expressed by volunteers.

It is good to be prepared for possible criticism and even changes.

When preparing a questionnaire, it is helpful to include questions of different forms: open questions, scaling questions, etc.





Volunteering experiences.

Another way how volunteers could express their thoughts and share their experiences with other volunteers is through creating posts in the groups shared by “Culturists” on “Facebook”. In our case, this way was not very common (we think that many people found it uncomfortable to share their views publicly), but we kept reminding our volunteers about this option. They were more open in groups with a smaller number of members, where they knew each other, e. g. in the group of Kaunas experts.

Recommendation:

It is advisable to try and find ways how to encourage volunteers to share their experiences with each other.

Pictures of volunteers from events.

In our project, all events, training courses, and meetings were captured by photographers. We were selecting relevant pictures and sharing them with volunteers in the “Culturists” group on “Facebook”. Such practice is a good way to enjoy the moments together, and for volunteers — to have high quality pictures, be noticed and visible.

Recommendations:

It is advisable to have contracts concluded with photographers and to remind them regularly about taking pictures of volunteers.

It is always good to have a point in the volunteering agreement stating that volunteers will be photographed and their pictures will be used for representing the project, etc.

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Legacy
of the
programme



Volunteering *association*

In the middle of the title year, we started planning different legacy scenarios for our programme. Again, we took advantage of the ECoC network and kindly asked our colleagues for advice. For us, the example of the previously mentioned “Matera Basilicata 2019” with an independent volunteering association that continues volunteering in culture, seemed most attractive. We started talking to Matera’s former volunteer coordinators and association members (volunteers), aiming to find out what we could do, as coordinators, to adapt this scenario in Kaunas. We realised that sustainability of an idea can only be guaranteed if motivation comes from the community of volunteers, and everything we could do was to inform our “Culturists” about the existing possibilities and support them in the process.

Indeed, we decided to introduce our volunteer team leaders to the idea of continuing volunteering independently, and we did it at a special march organised for them. A few months later, as already mentioned before, we also organised a trip to Matera for three volunteer team leaders, as we wanted to enable them gain experience and learn the principles of the association’s functioning. Most likely, these steps have stimulated their motivation and provided the necessary know-how on how to take the initiative for creating an association of volunteers in Kaunas. In February 2023, at the time of writing this methodology, the volunteers of Kaunas have already had submitted the required documents to a notary for the purpose of establishing an association.

Recommendation:

When implementing the programme, it is worth releasing control from time to time, retreating from the mediator’s position, and maintaining independent cooperation among the volunteers instead. Such steps do strengthen the relationship and responsibility of volunteers and can turn into valuable volunteering initiatives.

Legacy event

At the end of the ECoC title year, considering the possible legacy scenarios, we set some goals for ourselves and aimed to respond to them by organising a special event of three parts:

Part 1:

We invited Lithuanian organisations working with volunteers to a conference where we shared our useful insights and practical advice.

Part 2:

The conference was followed by presentations of our partner cultural organisations to volunteers, and a contact fair. At this event, volunteers learned about the existing local and international opportunities of continuing volunteering in culture.

Part 3:

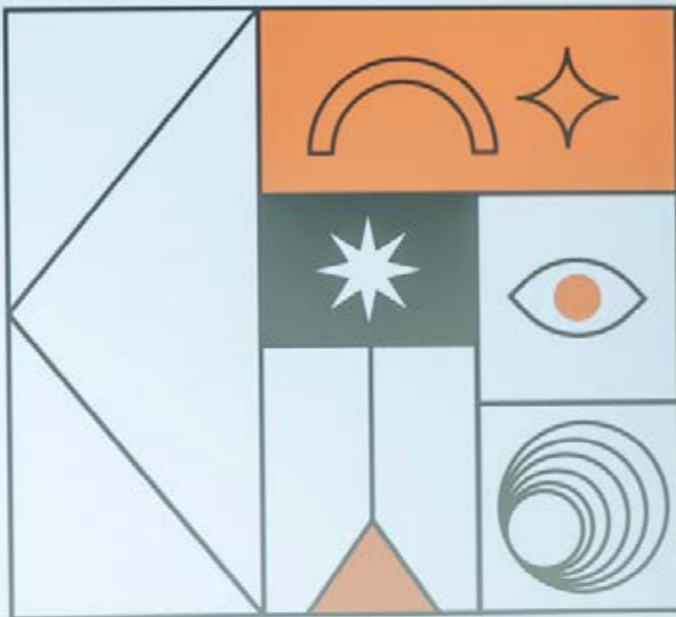
On the next day, a live seminar was held for the future coordinators of Volunteering programmes in the ECoC network, which was aimed at reviewing our programme and sharing our advice relevant to the specific aspects of the project.

The event was successful because it was beneficial for all participants. At the conference and contact fair, the participating organisations could discover the volunteers interested in continuing volunteering, and also had an opportunity to establish mutual partnerships.



ALGOS INEŠTI: KUSIJA

aryti, kad
norystė veikty?



Recommendations:

It is worth organising and taking part at events where participants can establish contacts with similar organisations, share experiences or even volunteers.

It is worth taking part at events where you can meet potential volunteers and offer the audience an opportunity to engage in volunteering.



Programme

team

“I was very lucky to have an opportunity to work in the “Kaunas 2022” project and to be entrusted with the responsibility of creating a specific programme, namely a volunteering programme. The volunteers involved in the programme are unique personalities, all linked by a great inner motivation to contribute to the creation of the culture of their city. They are wonderful people, and working with them was a motivating process for me.”

MARIJA
PULOKAITĖ

Curator of the Volunteering
Programme



“The involvement of Kaunas citizens in the “Kaunas 2022” project brought great success for the volunteering programme. In the company of the smiling and motivated volunteers who dedicated their time for a common purpose, we wanted go on and make a better effort in our work. The “Culturists” have become my source of inspiration!”

**AGNĖ
MEDĖKŠAITĖ**

Coordinator of the Volunteering
Programme



“It is only now that I come to understand what has happened and what we have achieved: we have created and implemented a programme that has helped us attract a huge number of volunteers to the activities that lasted for years – an unprecedented event in Kaunas. And the most amazing thing is that the “Culturists” wish to continue volunteering in the cultural sector. What is it if not a proof of the success of the programme?”

VITALIJA
LYSKA-ACCOSSATO

Coordinator of the Volunteering
Programme



Forografijų *sąrašas*

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9, 15, 18, 20, 29, 33, 34, 59, 63, 82, 85,
89, 97, 108, 111, 117, 123, 129, 134, 138,
140, 150, 159, 160, 161

Andrius Aleksandravičius

104, 115

Linas Žemgulis

13, 118, 133

Gražvydas Jovaiša

16, 65, 71, 112, 145

Lukas Kazakevičius

39

Sebastijonas Petkus

146

Julius Balašaitis

153, 155

Kaunas –
European Capital
of Culture 2022

**VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME
METHODOLOGY**

Bibliographic information is available
on the Lithuanian Integral Library
Information System (LIBIS) portal
ibiblioteka.lt

ISBN 978-609-8317-13-8

Publisher

Kaunas 2022

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Daiva Jeremičienė

Papers

Munken Lynx 300

Munken Lynx 150

Typefaces in use

Founders Grotesk

SangBleu Kingdom

Printed by

KOPA

Print run

250 copies

Kaunas 2023

The five years of co-working in the international project “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022” brought unique experiences of continuous teaching and learning. For competence development, the “Tempo Academy of Culture” programme was established in the framework of the project and was aimed at both specialised training and practical workshops covering such topics as creative freedom, active community, open cultural networking, and sustainable solutions for the city. The tools mastered by the local residents enabled them to fulfil their dreams and create that type of Kaunas and Kaunas district that hundreds of people were dreaming about, bringing the feeling of pride about their local place. We have in mind different communities, active youth, seniors, representatives of cultural institutions and various nations, professionals and enthusiasts of architecture, design, heritage. The lessons learned – both personal and collective – reflect the values that we feel obliged to share with the others: our personal values and the ones shared by the entire Europe. The trilogy of our methodological publications reflects the experiences and achievements gained during the years of our activity. The three publications are dedicated to everyone seeking positive change and caring about their city, their community, and their neighbour.

Other Series Publications:

Community Programme Methodology,
ed. Greta Klimavičiūtė - Minkštimienė,
Aistė Ptašinskaitė - Paukštė, Milda Rutkauskaitė,
Kaunas, 2023, p. 254.

Youth Programme Methodology,
ed. Vaiva Marija Bružaitė, Sandra Karnilavičiūtė,
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