

# Volunteering & Informal Learning

What is the benefit of it all?



Lifelong  
Learning

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# What is informal learning?

## **Formal learning:**

learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learners' perspective

## **Non-formal learning:**

learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

## **Informal learning:**

learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or incidental/ random).

EU 's definition is related with the context of Life-Long Learning policy (2001)

# Informal Learning in volunteering settings?

Informal learning happens everywhere but although it is very important for the personal development the impact is usually not measured.

The RIVER methodology tends to make improvement visual that is gained through informal learning that happens during volunteering activities.

# What is the benefit?

For both the volunteering organisation and the volunteer there are a couple of positive effects when using the **RIVER** methodology

# Benefit for the Volunteer

- Learning development is recognised and learning benefits of volunteering are made visible
- Learning development can be evidenced and acknowledged through certification
- For senior volunteers the certification is a motivation aspect because it shows the value which is given to their volunteering engagement.
- For young volunteers the certification of competence development is a benefit, since they can use it for specific purposes, like applying for a job or studying opportunity.
- Motivation and commitment can be increased

# Benefit for the volunteering organisation

- Reflection is given as an added element of the volunteering activity
- Project planning can be improved
- Knowledge about competence development can be transferred to other contexts
- Recognition of informal learning results of volunteering increases motivation and commitment of volunteers
- RIVER can be a useful methodology for recognition towards institutions and decision-making bodies, but can also be useful to attract more volunteers.