International Conference on Migrations and Refuge in Europe

Learning and Serving from the University

Presentation
Rapid Response Volunteer Group of the USC

Service-Learning
Migrants/Refugees

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Cofinanciado por la Unión Europea

USC Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

Esculca

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway

Università di Verona

Accem

Glocal Factory

Rapid Response Volunteering
University of Santiago de Compostela

A proposal adapted to the socioeconomic, cultural, and associative context of Santiago of Santiago de Compostela, designed to involve all members of the university university community: students, technical, management and administrative staff staff (PTGAS), and teaching and research staff (PDI).

Context and Justification

Santiago de Compostela, as a university city, has a dynamic social dynamic social and cultural environment, but it also faces faces challenges such as rural depopulation, migrant integration, integration, and the need to strengthen social cohesion.

Through the ESCULCA Research Group, the USC has the opportunity to lead a volunteering project that promotes promotes inclusion and social responsibility, leveraging the the potential of its university community.

Inspired by existing programs in other contexts, this project aims to replicate replicate successful strategies for inclusion and support of vulnerable groups, groups, adapting them to the local context of Santiago de Compostela.

Objectives of the Volunteering Program

Promote social inclusion

Support vulnerable groups (migrants, elderly people, individuals with disabilities) in the Santiago de Compostela area.

Contribute to local development

Collaborate on projects that boost the socioeconomic and cultural environment of the city and its surroundings.

Strengthen community cohesion

Promote intercultural coexistence and civic participation within the university environment and the city.

Instill values of solidarity

Provide learning and personal growth opportunities for volunteers within the university community.

Proposed Activities by Profile

STUDENTS

- Educational support for children at risk of social exclusion
- Organization of intercultural workshops
- Translation and linguistic mediation for migrants

PTGAS

- Logistics and organization of solidarity events
- Public service in information offices
- Management of material resources

PDI

- Specialized training and capacity building
- Applied research on social inclusion
- Legal, psychological, or healthcare counseling

Each profile contributes its specific knowledge and skills, creating an integrated support ecosystem for vulnerable groups in Santiago de Compostela.

Structure and Functions

Rapid Response Volunteering Unit

Linked to a centralized office at USC (SEPIU), to coordinate activities, activities, manage volunteers, and establish partnerships with local organizations.

Specific training

Courses on interculturality, psychological first aid, language and culture, and mediation tools, in collaboration with NGOs and public administrations.

Digital platform

Development of an app or web portal to manage registrations, assign tasks, and communicate emergencies or urgent needs.

Connection with the community

Collaboration with local organizations

Joint work with the Santiago City Council and migrant associations to maximize the impact of the initiatives.

Projects in rural areas

Extension of volunteering to more rural and aging areas, promoting active aging and interculturality.

Connection with the *Camino de Santiago*

Leverage the flow of pilgrims to promote intercultural and welcoming activities, following cohesion models developed in other projects.

Training for Volunteers

Educational Skills:

- Language classes (English, Spanish, Galician)
- Music workshops with intercultural repertoires
- Inclusive sports activities
- IT and digital skills workshops
- Artistic expression and virtual reality workshops

Social Skills:

- Empowerment workshops for women
- Group cohesion and coexistence activities
- Relaxation and emotional well-being sessions

Management and Organization:

- Project management training
- Training in logistics and public service
- Coordination of community events

Comprehensive training enables volunteers to develop cross-cutting skills while contributing to the well-being of the community.

Expected Impact and Conclusions

Social Impact

- Improved integration of vulnerable groups and reduced discrimination in the city.

Educational Impact

- Promotion of solidarity values and the development of cross-cutting skills among volunteers.

Community Impact

- Strengthening of the social fabric and promotion of Galician identity as a model of inclusion.

Conclusions

This rapid response volunteering project would not only strengthen USC's social commitment but also contribute to the sustainable development of Santiago de Compostela and its surroundings, positioning the university as a benchmark for inclusion and social responsibility.

The experience of similar projects shows that strategies such as the creation of stable spaces, the training of volunteers, and the active participation of beneficiaries are key to the success of initiatives of this kind.