

# In For Care Recipes

*How to recruit, train and keep  
volunteers and informal carers*



**The proof of the pudding  
is in the eating...**



# How the cookie crumbles...?

This brochure can be seen as a cookbook, full of useful and tested methodologies by the In for Care partners to support recruiting, training and keeping volunteers and informal carers.

Supporting and facilitating informal carers and volunteers has become a primary task for public services. As a consequence of an ageing population, the rising costs for care services and recent budget cuts, decision makers have directed attention to informal care and voluntary assistance. However, the efforts of local governments and care- or welfare organizations will remain fragmented if we do not question the needs of informal carers to keep a healthy life-balance and what drives volunteers to keep doing what they do? There is no single answer. Informal care situations entail a multitude of relationships and connections. Informal caregivers have a personal relationship with the one needing care while volunteers do not at first. This initial difference highlights a variety of challenges organizations and governments face when taking their new position as facilitators. Informal carers risk burn-out while juggling it all: taking care of their loved one as well as meeting responsibilities in the workplace, at home and in their social life. Volunteers are sometimes hard to find and match with the right request for help, or they may be hesitant about committing time and effort. These are just a few examples of the challenges faced by the public sector in the transition from state regulated care towards an engaged civil society.

So, is this just the way the cookie crumbles? The In For Care partners thought not, and instead they started cooking, resulting in inspiring methodologies to tackle these challenges. Despite policy variations in each country, key recipes were found that can support the North Sea Region (and perhaps even beyond) in shaping the new facilitative role that is expected of the public sector.

As a result, we proudly present this In For Care cookbook. We hope these recipes will inspire you and provide a head start in facing your own challenges in recruiting, training and keeping volunteers and informal carers. Are they recipes for success? We trust that the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

November 2019, Province of Drenthe  
Workpackage leader Support Public Sector

## How to read

For each methodology we created a recipe where you find the result, core ingredients, steps to take and the examples of In For Care partners.



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# Building Bridges

*A recipe for  
recruiting volunteers  
and strengthening  
social interaction*



## Result

### What does the cake look and taste like?

This recipe can be used for recruiting volunteers. The working principle is building bridges between different groups in society with compatible needs. Through facilitating interaction and connections between people from different 'groups' bridges are built, improving general well being. Giving and receiving care empowers both actors involved. Both sides are enabled, learn and become stronger individuals.

## Ingredients

### Which core components are vital for succes?

- **Firsthand knowledge of needs and strengths**

To introduce combatible people requires knowing them, their needs and strenths. Explore ways with both sides on how both groups can get acquainted with one another and help them to discover their common grounds or mutual interests.

- **Matchmaker(s) to kickstart reciprocity**

Matching groups with compatible societal needs requires an opening at both sides in order to coordinate. Find one or more parties to to make the connection and establish reciprocity.



## Recipe instructions

### Which approach is required?

- **Find the front runners and early adopters first**  
Build the connection through using the creative ideas of those in each group who are most enthusiastic about building the bridge.
- **Continue to work on mutual understanding and acceptance**  
The bridge is the key in this approach: people are connected through diversity seen as a strength. Time is needed to get to know one another, build a common language and an understanding of how they can be of value to one another.





## **Proof of this pudding**

### **Some inspiring In For Care examples**

- **Including people with an immigrant background as volunteers (Norway)**  
All associations (NGOs) working on inclusion were invited to join. Which was arranged together with the Adult Education and Refugee service. The purpose: to recruit people with an immigrant background as volunteers (University of Agder & Municipality of Grimstad)
- **Involving early school leavers and people with mental struggles when tackling loneliness (Norway)**  
The lonely elderly are assisted by volunteers who themselves struggle with mental health issues. These volunteers organise eat and meet suppers with the elderly, breaking isolation on both sides. The volunteers express feeling more meaningful by helping other. (Region Kristiansand)
- **Exchange events in Norway and Denmark**  
Formal and informal carers got better acquainted at an exchange exhibition and made agreements on how to share resources, services, time and expertise. The volunteer centre follows up on these agreements. (University of Agder & Municipality of Grimstad)
- **Students are often unaware of the range of voluntary work: bringing students and non-profit organizations together changes that. (University College South Denmark)**

# Informal care empowerment

*A recipe for strengthening  
the informal carer*



## Result

### What does the cake look and taste like?

This recipe strengthens informal carers through a facilitative approach. Informal carers are empowered with training or other need-based support that is developed in a co-creation between formal and informal carers. This should lead to retaining the services of informal carers because they are coached to stay healthy, connected and equipped.

## Ingredients

### Which core components are vital for succes?

- **Awareness**

Realize that informal carers are a diverse group of all ages and educational backgrounds, all involved in different care situations e.g. a teenager supporting disabled sibling with daily tasks or an older woman taking care of her partner with dementia 24/7. Awareness of this diversity leads to a tailor-made approach to empowerment.

- **Communication and time**

To get in touch with informal carers, time needs to be invested in reaching them. The use of social media, campaigns, meetings and the use of storytelling to create recognition among the target group is crucial.

## Recipe instructions

### Which approach is required?

- **Find them**

Informal carers are not very visible. I and they often don't recognize themselves as such. By the time they seek help, they are often already close to burn out. The ingredients above help to find them on time.

- **Think with them, not for them**

To empower means supporting the other to become stronger, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. Therefore, empowerment is done from a facilitative viewpoint of formal carers (if involved) and always based on co-creation with informal carers.

## Proof of this pudding

### Some inspiring In For Care examples

- **Informal care cafes and hubs in Belgium and Sweden**  
Meetingpoints for informal carers, set up in co-creation with them. They decide together on activities and provide peer-to-peer support. In Aalst informal carers established an 'informal care academy' in collaboration with health care professional. The academy is used to train (strengthen) informal carers. (Aalst & Värmland)
- **Expert team for groups that need more support/attention in the Netherlands**  
Some informal carers are especially difficult to reach with support, like young informal carers. Teaming up and developing a multidisciplinary practice in collaboration has proven to be successful to raise awareness and to combine strengths to reach the target group and co-create solutions for their challenges (CMO STAMM)



- **Storytelling and awareness campaigns in Sweden**

Let informal carers tell their story: (1) face-to-face to professionals. This gives the professional a good needs assessment and provides a chance for the informal carer to reflect on their own position; (2) in the media, bringing informal care and voluntary assistance to the attention of national politicians and the general public. This lowers the threshold to talk about it and identify. With taglines like "There is a difference between having time off and having time off", Värmland focused on the double duties informal carers have with work and caring for their loved ones. (Region Värmland)



# Professional awareness & competence

*A recipe for awareness  
and competence  
amongst professionals*



## Result

### What does the cake look and taste like?

This recipe leads to greater awareness and competences among formal carers about informal care(rs). In this way, the gap between formal and informal care becomes smaller. Closing the gap contributes to the quality of support for informal carers and eventually to a reduction of formal professionalized healthcare (costs).

## Ingredients

### Which core components are vital for succes?

- **Small pilots**

Work with small pilots to create a better understanding of informal carers. Professionals are usually busy and don't have the space for large projects. Small initiatives that can be implemented in their daily work are most suitable to get them on board.

- **Show the benefits**

In small pilots the 'why' needs to be a returning topic, invest in the understanding of employees. Closing the gap between formal and informal care has significant benefits on both sides. Invest in making that clear and constructing the pilot in co-creation with professionals so that benefits for professionals become obvious. First perhaps in theory, then undertaking the pilot in practice.

## Recipe instructions

### Which approach is required?

- **Repeat what works**

Getting used to a new way of working and making it part of a routine takes time and requires repetition. Once the pilot is adopted by professionals, repeat through training, plan-do-check-act or otherwise.

- **Mix groups and collaborate**

Find ways to create mutual understanding, a common language and practices between formal and informal carers through collaboration in pilots. This closes the gap and thereby contributes to the support of clients, informal carers and professionals at the same time.

## Proof of this pudding

### Some inspiring In For Care examples

- **Understanding family carers (and the benefits of collaborating with them) in Sweden**

Conducting competence improving- activities about the issues that family carers face: spreading information flyers, adds on internal website and seminars on the subject 'How can we as the formal care provider support and understand the family carer?' 'What are the family carers obligations and rights?' 'What can be gained in terms of security for the family carer and less phone calls for the professionals if family carers are more included in the careplan.' (Region Värmland)

- **Create common languages and practices between formal and volunteers in Denmark**

The implementation of a health promotion course to promote health for informal carers and strengthen cooperation between the target groups: volunteers, volunteer-students and professionals. Developed in collaboration. Part of the course: an e-learning program, communication tools and exercises in health communication. The course provides volunteers and professionals with competencies to have an end-user involving conversation with informal care and the end-users regarding their health. (University College Syddanmark)





- **Informal care coordination in Drenthe and Sweden**

The use of an informal care coordinator in GPs to formalize awareness for their presence and prevent burn out of informal carers by helping them find the support they need (Hoogeveen, Drenthe & Region Värmland)

- **Tips to working with volunteers in Belgium**

Aalst developed an information guide with practical tips and tools for working with volunteers, aiming at different topics: 'reflect', 'recruit', 'accompany', 'reward', 'retain', 'terminate' all regarding working with volunteers. (Aalst)

- **Training SMEs in the Netherlands**

A training proactively offered to SMEs in order to keep informal carers sustainable employed and supported in combining work and care in their daily lives (province of Drenthe and co-beneficiaries VPB Emmen and the 'Noaberloket')



# Reach new volunteers, train and keep

*A recipe for recruiting new volunteers  
through building networks*



## Result

### What does the cake look and taste like?

This recipe improves support for informal carers through building new networks. These networks can be built based on an area-specific approach or a target group approach, based on establishing new connections where you see potential to stimulate social cohesion and (with time) recruit new volunteers. This can lead to relieve informal caregivers or professionals.



## Ingredients

### Which core components are vital for succes?

- **Low threshold activities that connect to primary needs**  
Inviting people who could potentially become a volunteer starts with offering low threshold activities (e.g. in an area) that connect to the needs of your target group. This could be offering activities that are fun and prevent loneliness or providing a little support for new comers who need help with their administration and are given a cup of coffee and a chance to chat with neighbours.

- **Prepare to invest short term: make it rewarding**

Building new networks requires investment. Getting people in takes time and perseverance. The key is to find way to make it immediately rewarding. E.g. relieving people from worries by helping them to fill out a form or providing a cup of coffee for people who need some company.

- **Think long term win-win: make volunteering meaningful**

Once people encounter the benefits, invest time in finding a persons qualities and encourage them to get involved. If people can use their talents and see the result they find meaning in voluntary assistance. Find the things that make it fun and meaningful for them.

## **Recipe instructions**

### **Which approach is required?**

- **Invite and ask people in**

Don't underestimate the initial investments. Pilots in In For Care show that the first stages require a continuous effort tot invite people and build connections. Once these are established, the connections can function as a flywheel to get attract a broader range of citizens and reciprocity can be found.

- **Involve and engage**

This is the next step of exploring way show people transfer from 'consumer' to 'co-builder'. Reciprocity requires relationships first. Facilitating and stimulating connections is how you get the ball rolling.

## Proof of this pudding

### In For Care examples to get inspired...

- **Stimulating social cohesion in Belgium**

't Geburt' is a pop-up location in the city to recruit volunteers by enhancing social cohesion in the area. Activities there consist of low threshold activities that enhance the social cohesion and help to recruit volunteers and find 'active' citizens. (Turnhout)

- **Set up collaborations in Sweden**

The local university and Red Cross organisation have established a collaboration so that the Red Cross can recruit volunteers among students with help from the university. (Region Värmland)



## Useful tech & tools

*A recipe for using technology and tools to make recruiting, training and keeping easier*



### Result

#### What does the cake look and taste like?

This recipe can be combined with all the other recipes to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and thereby overall results. Technology solutions and tools can be used to support the processes of recruiting, training and keeping volunteers and informal carers.

## Ingredients

### Which core components are vital for succes?

- The primary goal

Technology is a means to an end. Take time to define the problem or challenge and explore how technology can be used to fit the purpose, e.g. building bridges, learning competences or facilitate interaction.

- Co-creation with end-users

To design it supporting the purpose also means involving end-users in all stages of development and implementation. This is not only the best guarantee for the tool fitting the needs, but is also the best chance the tool gets adopted by the end-user because they become familiar wit hit throughout the process and feel just as much part of the creation than other parties involved.



## Recipe instructions

### Which approach is required?

- **Find change ambassadors**

Working with a new tool can entail challenges for the end-user: some might be sceptical of its added value, others might not feel comfortable with technology etc. Early adopters are able to demonstrate the usefulness to others and thereby lower the threshold for less enthusiastic peers.

- **Continue to work on user-friendliness**

Once created and implemented does not mean the process is done. Refining may increase user-friendliness (and thereby use in general) or changes may be necessary over time due to changes in context. So test, evaluate and improve to make sure the tool or instrument stays of optimal support to the purpose it was designed for.





## **Proof of this pudding**

### **In For Care examples to get inspired...**

- **Managing and matching system for volunteers, FRIDA by Norway**  
This is a tool for managing and matching volunteers. It is regarded by all collaborating partners as a useful tool to improve the daily work and administration of the volunteer centre. Other In For Care partners are now investigating the possibility to use FRIDA as well. (University of Agder & Region Kristiansand)
- **Gamification in the Netherlands**  
The Expert Team for Young Informal Carers reaches out to young people in schools by using an interactive game. This game is used by all members of the Expert Team when they visit schools to find young informal carers and create understanding among peers for the challenges their caretaking class mates face. (CMO STAMM)
- **E-courses and digital (information) platforms in Belgium and Denmark**  
Several forms of e-learning and e-interaction have been of great added value in new methodologies to recruit, train and keep volunteers and informal carers: the digital informal care café in Aalst, the e-learning program for health promotion and the virtual training platform by UCSYD so the physical health of informal carers can be maintained or improved (Aalst & University College Syddanmark)
- **Use of social media to recruit and keep**  
In for Care partners have reported various good results, such as in Aalst (Belgium) and the volunteer Center in Grimstad (Norway) that us Facebook actively to recruit volunteers and to inform about activities.

# Enthuse next generations

*A recipe for involving next generations in volunteering*



## Result

**What does the cake look and taste like?**

This recipe is about applying a longterm strategy: tap into the underexplored territory of next generations, such as students and youngsters and take an intergenerational perspective when it comes to finding solutions for the growing shortage of voluntary assistance.

## Ingredients

### Which core components are vital for succes?

- **Mindset in the public sector**

Due to an ageing population and focus on a civil society, the need for voluntary assistance continues to increase. We need intergenerational collaboration to find creative solutions for these challenges.

- **Social media and influencers**

Social media can be a powerful tool to reach them, but also to spread the message by them. Younger generations are generally skillful and active with social media. Due to the reach of their networks many young people can be considered as social influencers on social media. Once you attract them, you might also get their support through social media.

- **Go to them and raise awareness**

Actively invite them, raise awareness in ways that appeal to them and on the need and importance of their skills and talents (e.g. social influencers).



## Recipe instructions

### Which approach is required?

- **Give them time to taste and try**

Start by introducing volunteering to them and spark their curiosity with light activities without immediate strings attached. Also contextual factors can lower the threshold, such as (in collaboration with the school) clearing with teachers they can go a bit earlier to a volunteering activity as part of teaching them social responsibility and introducing them to the experience of volunteering.

- **Harness their interests**

Think about or ask them what's in it for them. Make those benefits visible and tangible. Volunteering needs to be attractive to them. This could be related to something they like, but also more practically by handing out a certificate so they can show their effort and time investment for a social cause to an employer.

- **Empower them**

Recognize and acknowledge their talents and skills. Let them know they have something valuable to contribute. Intergenerational learning goes both ways and can be fun and rewarding on both sides. Recognition through something concrete can be a good motivator.

## **Proof of this pudding**

### **In For Care examples to get inspired...**

- **Intergenerational knowledge transfers in Sweden**

Students volunteering by using their own digital skills in inspirational seminars for digitally excluded elderly. The results show that the students thought it was great to be the teacher and be able to help someone. 29 of 31 volunteers would do it again. The recruiting process was effective by using Facebook and information via teachers (posters and emails). 30 students registered through Facebook in just 1-2 days, the message distributed one month in advance and a reminder one week in advance. (Värmland County Administrative Board)

- **Students applying their knowledge in Denmark**

Recruiting students to help with developing a health promotion course that will support communication about health with informal carers. Active involvement in developing the course was helpful to create ambassadors among the students for further recruitment (University College Syddanmark)

- **Students applying their knowledge in the UK**

For students to spend valuable time travelling and being out of class, they need to get a considerable benefit. With the use of technology in volunteering context, students felt that the time they were devoting to the volunteering work was benefitting their technical skills as well as their interpersonal skills. (University of Abertay)

- **Events for recruiting in Norway and Denmark**

Exchange exhibitions and fairs were used to recruit students and get them more acquainted with volunteerism and the possibilities. This approach appeared less effective to recruit volunteers than the concrete request with seminars and the course like in Sweden and Denmark, although we may not know how activities like exhibitions and fairs influence the mindset towards volunteerism over time. (University of Agder & University College Syddanmark).



*provincie* Drenthe



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gemeente  
Aa en Hunze



