

TANDEM INFO SHEET

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1. WHAT IS TANDEM?

Tandem is an initiative that was set up in 2016 to help and support refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Belgium. The aim is to provide a possibility for them to contribute to the community, and support the restoration of their dignity and autonomy through volunteer placements.

Tandem also aims to bring the direct experience of individual refugees and asylum-seekers and the challenges facing them into the hosting organisation. These organisations are often concerned about the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers but may not have identified opportunities to support them directly individuals here in Belgium. Tandem has recently become part of the work programme of the European Volunteer Centre with the support of [European Solidarity Corps](#) trainees.

The European Volunteer Centre is the European network of over 60 organisations dedicated to the promotion of, and support to, volunteers and volunteering in Europe at European, national and regional level. Working on the development of the Tandem project together with refugees and asylum-seekers in

Belgium, and hosting several volunteers ourselves, we've recognised the mismatch between their desire to be active and engaged, their experience and capacity, and the absence of opportunities to enable them to build a social network, access work, and most urgently, to give structure and purpose to their day-to-day existence. By supporting the Tandem project, we are hoping to match willing NGOs with prospective volunteers and play a small part in increasing the possibilities to restore the dignity and autonomy of the refugees and asylum- seekers here in Belgium, and support their integration and well-being.

2. HOW DOES THIS INITIATIVE HELP YOU AS A REFUGEE/ASYLUM-SEEKER?

Many refugees find it so difficult to create a network of relationships and friendships within the local communities. Having this kind of network is essential for them to get support, advice and to access employment opportunities.

By volunteering with NGOs, refugees and asylum seekers will be able to meet and engage with new people- many of whom are themselves migrants to Belgium- and benefit from their experiences, and establish and widen their social network.

3. IS THIS LEGAL?

Yes! Refugees, individuals in receipt of subsidiary protection, and asylum-seekers are legally allowed to volunteer.

4. WILL YOU NEED TO DO LOTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE PAPERS?

For those who are living in a reception center and receiving material subsistence, they just need to inform Fedasil (the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers) in advance of their volunteering placement .

Volunteers are allowed to receive a small allowance for their costs (transportation....etc.). The volunteer and the hosting organization will sign an agreement outlining clearly the tasks/rights, volunteering hours, and the allowance provided for reimbursement of costs.

The Tandem team have worked together with Het Punt, the Flemish Agency for Volunteering in Brussels to ensure all legal and admin issues are fully clarified. We can help take care of all necessary paperwork to Fedasil, CPAS...

5. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU? WHAT TASKS CAN YOU DO?

You're expected to add your experience to the organizations at various levels, including:

- Media Support: interviews - support websites - prepare for speeches and seminars.

- To provide linguistic support in relation to your mother tongue.
- To provide logistical support for conferences and workshops.
- To add ideas and new working methods stemming from your culture, your point of view and your previous experience.

6. WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO EXPECT FROM THE HOSTING ORGANISATION?

- To receive you as a volunteer for an agreed period of full or part time engagement.
- To nominate a contact point for you, who will provide you with supervision and support throughout your volunteering period.
- To provide you with insurance coverage during the volunteering period.
- To cover your expenses in relation to volunteering with either a fixed rate of 25 Euros per day or direct costs on presentation of invoices and tickets etc, as agreed.
- To provide you with a certificate noting your achievements, number of hours/days that you volunteered (if applicable), any training received and any skills or competencies gained.
- To give you a new experience, some quality time, learn and enjoy together.

7. HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

You can express your interest in our volunteering program by filling our online registration form [here](#).

Once you fill in this form, we will add your information to our database, and compare your skills and interests with the available volunteering opportunities.

We'll contact you once we find the most suitable placement for you.

If you still have some questions or would like to discuss the possibilities with us first, don't hesitate to drop us a line at bianca.guberti@cev.be and at cev@cev.be indicating "Tandem volunteer" in the object of the email. You can also follow our Facebook page www.facebook.com/Tandemvolunteering/

We look forward to hearing from you!

The Tandem Team