



Good practical examples from Poland and the Netherlands - digital inclusion for elderly volunteers and migrants

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Acknowledgment

This good practice examples book was carried out within the ERASMUS+ Cooperation partnerships in adult education, © 2023 - 2024 "Vulnerable people digital inclusion through digital volunteering"
Project nr.2022-2-PL01-KA210-ADU-000092441



Co-funded by
the European Union

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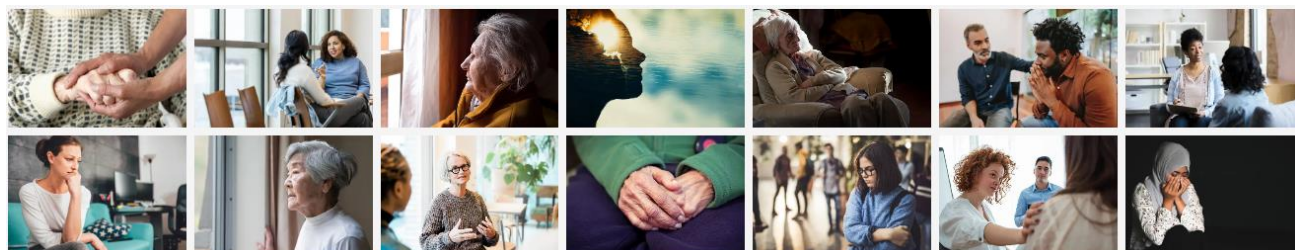
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Introduction

People generally grow older and deal with loneliness differently. Retirees are frequently counseled to maintain social connections, pursue new hobbies, and have a good outlook. Indeed, research indicates that those who participate in worthwhile, useful activities with others typically live longer, experience better mental health, and discover a sense of purpose in life. To guarantee that global sustainable development initiatives are owned, carried out, and benefit all people, volunteerism is crucial. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the indispensable contributions made by volunteers worldwide.

Vulnerable groups often are "invisible" in society (disabled people, elderly people, single parents, migrant women). Creating and promoting learning opportunities among all citizens and generations. Participating in volunteering and adult learning courses is a form of civic participation, which can lead to larger social inclusion and networking. Such benefits are not limited to individuals: better health and increased participation in society mean reduced healthcare costs and a greater contribution to society as a whole. Creating good practices helps to understand the current situation regarding digital volunteering, volunteering opportunities in general and the involvement of older people in volunteering, available training opportunities to promote digital competencies, and initiatives to motivate to use technology, the internet, and appropriate media (smartphone, computer) for seniors, as well as to identify older people's interest in participating in digital volunteering and their desire to improve their skills or learn to use communication technologies, etc. daily activities.

Through the concerted efforts of volunteers, governments, civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations, the Plan of Action seeks to strengthen people's ownership of the 2030 Agenda, integrate and mainstream volunteering into national strategies and policies, and better measure the impact of volunteers.



Picture: <https://unsplash.com/s/photos/vulnerable-people>

Volunteering tradition in Poland

Volunteering in Poland is legally standardized through the Act on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism passed on 24 April 2003. The document contains definitions of such concepts as 'volunteer', 'non-governmental organization' and 'public benefit activity'. The legislator also described in detail the rights and obligations of volunteers, as well as the benefits they are entitled to.

Volunteering in Poland has been booming in recent years. According to data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS), already every third adult Pole devotes his or her time to unpaid assistance to another human being. Volunteering was more often done individually (26.5%) than within an organisation or institution (5.0%). Poles gave direct help to their acquaintances, friends and neighbours (22.0%) than to strangers (5.8%).

Volunteers most often performed simple jobs (e.g. clearing snow, sweeping, throwing rubbish or as a chaperone) followed by jobs corresponding to their qualifications, e.g. providing information, promoting knowledge, legal advice, organising and conducting sporting and cultural events, providing support to people unable to cope with life problems and providing care (for children, the elderly, the sick).

The highest number of people involved in volunteering was recorded in the period including the first weeks of the war in Ukraine. For refugees in need, 60% of the public were involved. Organisations, social and cultural institutions worked for war refugees related to, among other things, legal advice, information provision, therapeutic talks, psychological support, as well as collections of clothes and food. (Own elaboration based on data GUS/Poland).



Picture: <https://ideogram.ai/g/NyZfwF8ARJKfeFz-pNEETQ/2>

Numerous activities are carried out by volunteers to support vulnerable individuals in the community. It can be virtual workshops/webinars, virtual tutoring or mentoring, volunteers can help manage the NGO's social media accounts, creating and scheduling posts, responding to comments, engaging with followers, organizing creative online workshops for beneficiaries, helping them learn and share their artistic skills. Volunteers working with vulnerable people also share personal/cultural/family stories of or success stories to showcase the impact of the project.

Volunteering tradition in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is well known for volunteering long traditions. The Netherlands' social fabric is significantly and inextricably linked to volunteering. The Dutch have a long history of civic involvement, and volunteering is a fundamental part of the national character. In the Netherlands, volunteering is a sign of one's dedication to social inclusion, community well-being, and teamwork in tackling a range of societal issues. Given the deep-rooted habit of giving back, volunteering is an essential component of Dutch society.

In the Netherlands, there are many different types of volunteer work, such as work with social services, environmental projects, healthcare, education, and cultural institutions. In the Netherlands, retirees participate in voluntary activities regularly. Their tremendous impact on communities is a result of their time, skills, and experience being donated to numerous causes. As part of their corporate social responsibility programs, many Dutch businesses actively promote and encourage their staff members to volunteer. All around the nation, there are organized volunteer programs that make it easier for individuals and organizations to coordinate. Nowadays we see that number is decreasing. Based on CBR¹ in 2022, 41% of the Dutch population aged 15 or older have done volunteer work at least once. In 2021 this was 39% and in 2020 44%. Number of volunteers in 2012 was 51% of volunteers.

The Dutch government encourages and promotes volunteering through numerous projects and policies. This entails providing funds for charitable endeavors and establishing legislation that supports volunteer work. One strategy to promote social cohesiveness and community involvement is through volunteering. Numerous towns plan activities and initiatives that depend on volunteers' enthusiastic involvement. The Dutch are also involved in worldwide voluntary work, supporting development and global initiatives. A large number of Dutch nationals volunteer overseas, lending their knowledge and abilities to support underprivileged areas. In the Netherlands, volunteers are frequently acknowledged and valued for their services.

¹ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2022/42/steeds-minder-mensen-doen-vrijwilligerswerk>



Picture: <https://www.vrijwilligersaanzet.nl/2023/05/19/cbs-in-2022-deden-vier-op-de-tien-mensen-in-nederland-vrijwilligerswerk/>

Digital volunteering has become more popular in the Netherlands as a result of technological advancements. Volunteers use their expertise for a variety of online initiatives while working from a distance. Senior citizens actively engage in volunteer work, making contributions to social services, mentorship programs, and projects that use their experiences and abilities.

Good practical volunteering examples in Poland

1st good example

How volunteers help readers to switch to the digital system. Small action with big results!

Starting January 2023 couple of volunteers at the local library embarked on a help to empower elderly and less tech-savvy individuals by providing personalized assistance with the adoption of the new electronic card system. These volunteers ensuring that every library user received their electronic card with a pin, facilitating seamless access to borrowing books.



Upon visiting the library were warmly greeted by volunteers who exchanged their old paper cards for the new electronic ones, helping users navigate the digital landscape, and ensuring they felt comfortable and confident with the new technology. Additionally, volunteers facilitated access to the library's online catalog, guiding users through the vast collection of available books with ease.

Picture: <https://ideogram.ai/g/bqiZ1I92RCyrLJsHzPRH5g/2>

The impact of these volunteers extended beyond the mere transition to electronic cards. Through their efforts, they instilled a sense of empowerment and belonging among the elderly and less tech-savvy individuals in the community. By embracing the change, these individuals not only continued their love for reading but also experienced positive transformations in their daily lives.

This practice of volunteering not only bridged the digital divide but also fostered a sense of community and support within the library's ecosystem, leaving a lasting impression on all those involved.

The benefits for people are wonderful. They are not afraid new system, they will be still active readers, their life changes in positive way.

2nd good example

Solidarity Senior Support Corps

The Solidarity Senior Support Corps was a central initiative introduced by government whose main objective was to support people in vulnerable groups in difficult times of pandemonium. In order to reduce their need to go out into the community, a mechanism has been set up to link people who want to help with seniors through institutions that provide such assistance under normal circumstances.



Picture: <https://ideogram.ai/g/uB-ew-vfTuWACiqP6CXq7A/1>

Who are the Digital Volunteers?

The coronavirus pandemic has made digital competence as necessary as ever. This was especially true for the elderly and others for whom the browser window quickly became the only window to the world. Digital Volunteers are people who have helped others find their way in the digital world. Volunteers were provided with training to enable them to effectively help others to deal with official matters remotely, or to perform other activities where new technologies can be useful.

<https://www.gov.pl/web/cyfrowywolontariusz>

3rd good example

At the Centre for Senior Initiatives, a group of volunteers helps interested people solve their current digital problems during individual consultations. Step by step, we counteract the digital exclusion of the oldest group of Poznań residents.



Volunteers are invited who are comfortable with the digital world, are not unfamiliar with laptops, social media or phone apps and, above all, enjoy helping others. Anyone of any age can become a volunteer. High school students, university students, working people and retired people can work with us. Volunteers are provided with support and preparatory training.

<https://centrumis.pl/wolontariat/zostan-wolontariuszem/wolontariat-w-centrum-inicjatyw-senioralnych/>

Picture: https://ideogram.ai/g/hahOQ6RFQ3W0r_MWf7HMG/2

4th good example

The E-volunteering programme was created to break the negative stereotype of the Internet and promote initiatives that use the potential of new technologies for social good.

The objectives of the Programme include:

To spread knowledge about the use of modern technologies as a tool of social involvement among NGOs and volunteers.

Changing the image of the Internet, drawing attention to the fact that the Internet can be used in a positive way to engage with others.

Action against digital exclusion, promotion of virtual volunteering among the elderly, the disabled, women working from home, etc.

<https://dobrasiec.org/projekty/e-wolontariat-pl/>



Picture: https://ideogram.ai/g/fL7_xZm2S-WdadDhyiRwUQ/0

5th good example

Very good example! Anyone can become a volunteer here, regardless of age, experience or time available.

<https://ochotnicy.waw.pl/aktualnosci/953-znajdz-wolontariat-dla-siebie-wybor-pierwszego-wolontariatu-w-pytaniach-i-odpowiedziach>

Many organisations and institutions particularly value cooperation with senior volunteers because of their experience, skills and commitment. For retired people, volunteering is a chance to spend their free time in a useful and interesting way, share their knowledge, develop their passions and establish new, warm human relationships.

<https://cam.waw.pl/centrum-aktywnosci-miedzypokoleniowej/wolontariat/>

<https://www.niepelnosprawni.pl/ledge/x/232459>

Volunteers can work at: "Nowolipie" Centre for Intergenerational Activity, Warsaw Insurgents' House, museums, community centres, social care centres, nursing homes, schools, hospitals, animal shelters, botanical garden, zoo and many other interesting places.

Good practical volunteering examples in the Netherlands

1 good example

VoorleesExpress aims to promote children's language development by enriching the home literacy environment and enabling parents to support their child's language growth in their own way. Research shows that children who are read to at an early age have an advantage over children without similar reading experiences. It turns out that it has a positive effect on their language development.

For a period of twenty weeks, a volunteer reader pays weekly visits to a family. During these visits, the volunteer reader initially demonstrates shared reading and other literacy-related activities to parents by engaging them in those activities with their child. The parents are encouraged to gradually take over the role of the volunteer.

VoorleesExpress Over Ons ▾ Voor wie ▾ Aanbod ▾ Taaltips Contact Steun ons **Word vrijwilliger**

IEDEREEN KAN TAAL

Laat jij kinderen en ouders zien hoe leuk taal kan zijn?

Wij verspreiden taalplezier. Als netwerk van vrijwilligers zetten we al meer dan 17 jaar onze kennis en ervaring in om gezinnen vertrouwen te geven in hun taal, en de drempel naar taal en taalontwikkeling te verlagen.

Doe je mee? **VoorleesExpress in het kort**

Vogel, kikker, bos en laars. Alles door elkaar!

Picture: website² <https://voorleesexpress.nl/>

² <https://voorleesexpress.nl/>

2 good example

Maatjesproject - Buddy project

Everyone deserves a buddy.

Buddies come in all kinds. There are buddies who visit. Buddies who help or give advice. Buddies who make others laugh. Or buddies who go with you to difficult things. There are walking buddies, reading buddies, shopping buddies, debt relief buddies, homework buddies, sports buddies. And many more buddies. Would you like to be there for someone else? Or would you like a buddy? SWL mediates and looks for the right match. Buddies are supervised by a professional employee of SWL.

Bij SWL hebben we Maatjes op Maat



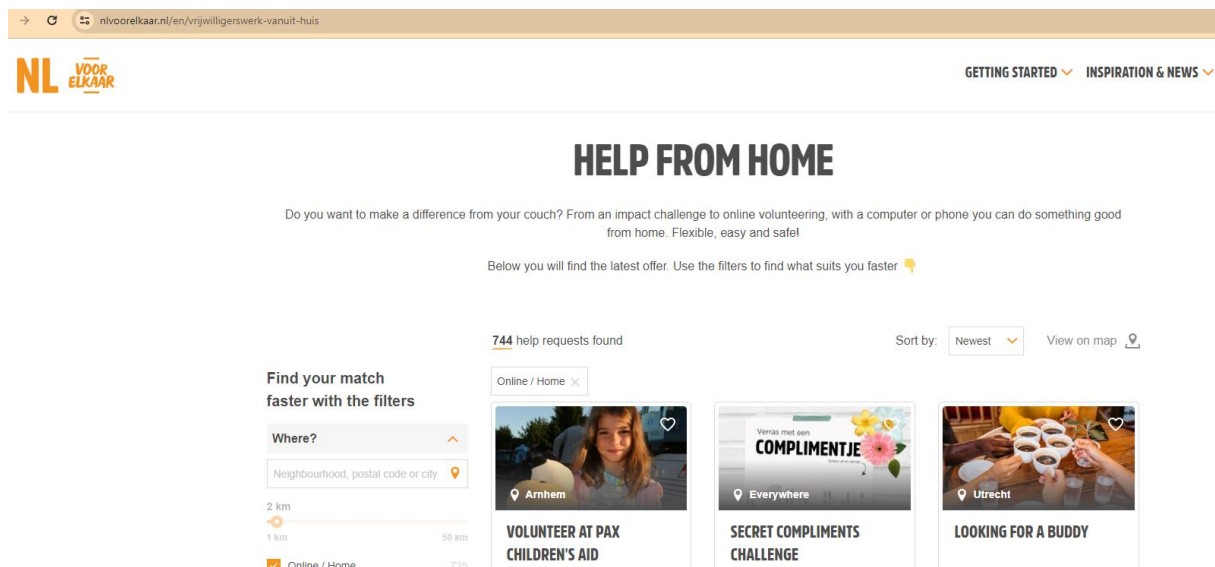
Picture: website ³<https://www.welzijnlochem.nl/vrijwilligers-centrale/>

³ <https://www.welzijnlochem.nl/vrijwilligers-centrale/>

3 good example

Do you want to make a difference from your couch? From an impact challenge to online volunteering, with a computer or phone you can do something good from home. Flexible, easy and safe! You can do the test which volunteering work suits you best

<https://www.nlvoorelkaar.nl/vrijwilligerswerk-test/>

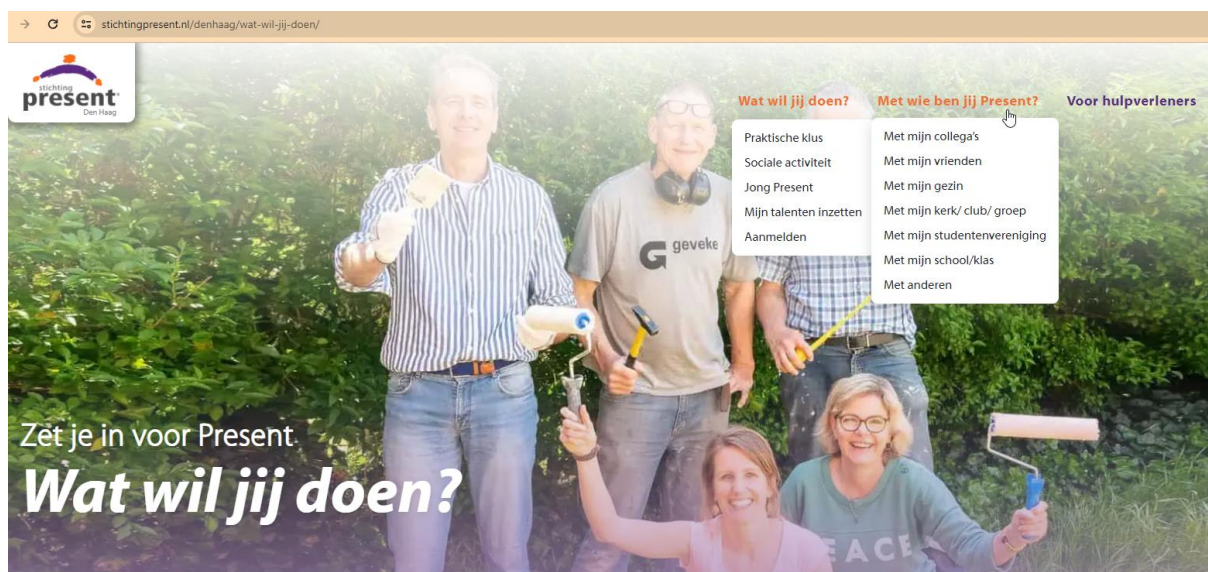


Picture: website⁴ <https://www.nlvoorelkaar.nl/en/vrijwilligerswerk-vanuit-huis>

⁴ <https://www.nlvoorelkaar.nl/en/vrijwilligerswerk-vanuit-huis>

4 good example

You can help once and tackle one project. Your group is then sure to experience a meaningful and well-spent day. But your group may also commit to others for a longer period of time. At present, we hope to start a movement where more and more people take it for granted to look after each other. We see that it works. Through a Present project, something really gets off the ground in one day and encounters of lasting value are created!



Picture: website⁵ <https://stichtingpresent.nl/denhaag/wat-wil-jij-doen/>

⁵ <https://stichtingpresent.nl/denhaag/wat-wil-jij-doen/>

5 good example

A new coalition agreement, changes in the law or the introduction of European regulations have consequences for volunteer work. On the Legislation and Regulations pages we exchange information, discuss positions and coordinate responses. Sometimes we write joint responses to policy changes or bills.

The screenshot shows the website 'Platform Vrijwillige Inzet'. The browser address bar displays 'vrijwilligerswerk.nl/themes/wettenenregels/default.aspx'. The website header includes navigation links: 'Registreren', 'Inloggen', 'Contact', 'A&V Vertaal', and a search bar with the text 'Zoeken'. The main navigation menu contains: 'Thema's', 'Agenda', 'Nieuws', 'Over NOV', 'Open forum', and 'Zoek vrijwilligerswerk'. A left sidebar menu lists categories: 'Sociale Veiligheid', 'Werven van vrijwilligers', 'Vrijwilligersbeleid en -management', 'Vrijwilligerscentrales', 'Wetenschap & Cijfers', 'Wetten & Regels' (highlighted), 'Blogs en nieuws (40)', 'Vraag en Deel', 'Inzicht in Wetten & Regels', 'Netwerk Wet- & Regelgeving', 'Meldpunt uitkering en vrijwilligerswerk', and 'Meldpunt regeldruk'. The main content area is titled 'Wetten & Regels' and contains a paragraph: 'Een nieuw regeerakkoord, wetswijzigingen of invoering van Europese regelingen hebben gevolgen voor het vrijwilligerswerk. Op de pagina's Wet- en regelgeving wisselen we informatie uit, worden standpunten besproken en reacties afgestemd. Soms schrijven we gezamenlijke reacties op beleidswijzigingen of wetsvoorstellen. We geven gevraagd en ongevraagd de overheid advies. Contactpersoon is is [Adam van Bergeijk, a.vanbergeijk@nov.nl](mailto:Adam.van.Bergeijk_a.vanbergeijk@nov.nl). Er is ook een besloten netwerk voor wet- en regelgeving waarvoor je je bij Adam kunt aanmelden.' Below this are two columns of news items. The 'Blogs & nieuws' column lists: 1. 'NVB-standaard voor non-profit sector is eerste goede stap oplossing bankproblemen vrijwilligers' (08 September 2023 door Mark Molenaar); 2. 'Verenigingen en stichtingen zijn vanaf juni 2023 weer welkom bij ING' (23 March 2023 door Mark Molenaar); 3. 'Vrijwillige solidariteit is een van de belangrijkste schakels in de transformatie van zorg!' (14 March 2023 door); 4. 'Vrijwilligersorganisaties gezocht voor ons onderzoek naar samenwerking met gemeenten' (24 February 2023 door); 5. 'Onderzoek naar regeldruk vrijwilligers van start'. The 'Vraag en Deel' column lists: 1. 'Parkeerkosten tijdens vrijwilligerswerk' (07 November 2023 door); 2. 'Vrijwilligerswerk onder werktijd (dus doorbetaald)' (25 October 2023 door); 3. 'Verzekering vrijwilligers boven de 70 jaar??' (18 October 2023 door); 4. 'Verplichte volkstuinvereniging' (16 October 2023 door); 5. 'ouders die ingezet worden als vrijwilliger bij een organisatie waar kind lid is' (19 July 2023 door). A green button labeled 'Nieuw Vraag en Deel' is visible at the bottom right.

Picture: website⁶ <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl>

⁶ <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl>

Sociale Veiligheid
Werven van vrijwilligers
Vrijwilligersbeleid en -management
Vrijwilligerscentrales
Wetenschap & Cijfers
Wetten & Regels
Blogs en nieuws (40)
Vraag en Deel
Inzicht in Wetten & Regels
Netwerk Wet- & Regelgeving
Meldpunt uitkering en vrijwilligerswerk
Meldpunt regeldruk

Inzicht in Wetten & Regels

Hieronder vind je een aantal onderwerpen waar we door de jaren heen informatie over verzameld hebben. Mis je iets? Stel je vraag dan op [het Open Forum](#).

 Sorteren op: **Titel**

Aansprakelijkheid

Een vrijwilliger die schade veroorzaakt is verplicht die schade te vergoeden. Dit geldt ook voor organisaties. Ook organisaties kunnen aansprakelijk gesteld worden voor schade die ze veroorzaken. [Lees meer >](#)

Alcoholwet - schenken en verkopen van alcohol

Organisaties en personen die alcoholhoudende dranken schenken/verkopen hebben een aantal wettelijke verplichtingen, zoals een vergunning en een inschrijving in een Register. En voor vrijwilligers: het volgen van een instructie verantwoord alcohol schenken. [Lees meer >](#)

Auteursrechten

Auteursrechten worden beschermd. Wat betekent dit voor jouw organisatie? Waar moeten vrijwilligers en hun organisaties op letten bij het draaien van muziek,

AVG (privacyregels)

De AVG, Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming, is van invloed op alles wat je (niet) hebt georganiseerd rond gegevens van leden,

Picture: website⁷ <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl/themas/wettenenregels/wenr-inzicht/default.aspx>

⁷ <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl/themas/wettenenregels/wenr-inzicht/default.aspx>

Summary

Identifying the opportunities for digital volunteering and its preferred possible forms and types as well as existing practices in partner countries gives an overview of volunteering experience.

Through volunteering people feel useful and important, and that's why the motivation to do activities online, and digitally could be better accepted. However, both countries are affected by the pandemic and notice that vulnerable people are excluded from digital activities and learning and participating online. In the Netherlands elderly people volunteering is well developed however, digital inclusion volunteering is not well developed neither in the Netherlands, neither in Poland. Older people in the Netherlands are involved in different volunteering activities, however, digital volunteering is a new approach to most vulnerable groups (disabled people, migrants) who are mostly isolated because of immobility.



<https://digitalvolunteering.eu/>

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Project nr.2022-2-PL01-KA210-ADU-000092441

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Partners



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<https://www.stowarzyszenie-wir.eu/>