



#V4VOLUNTEERS

Needs Assessment Report

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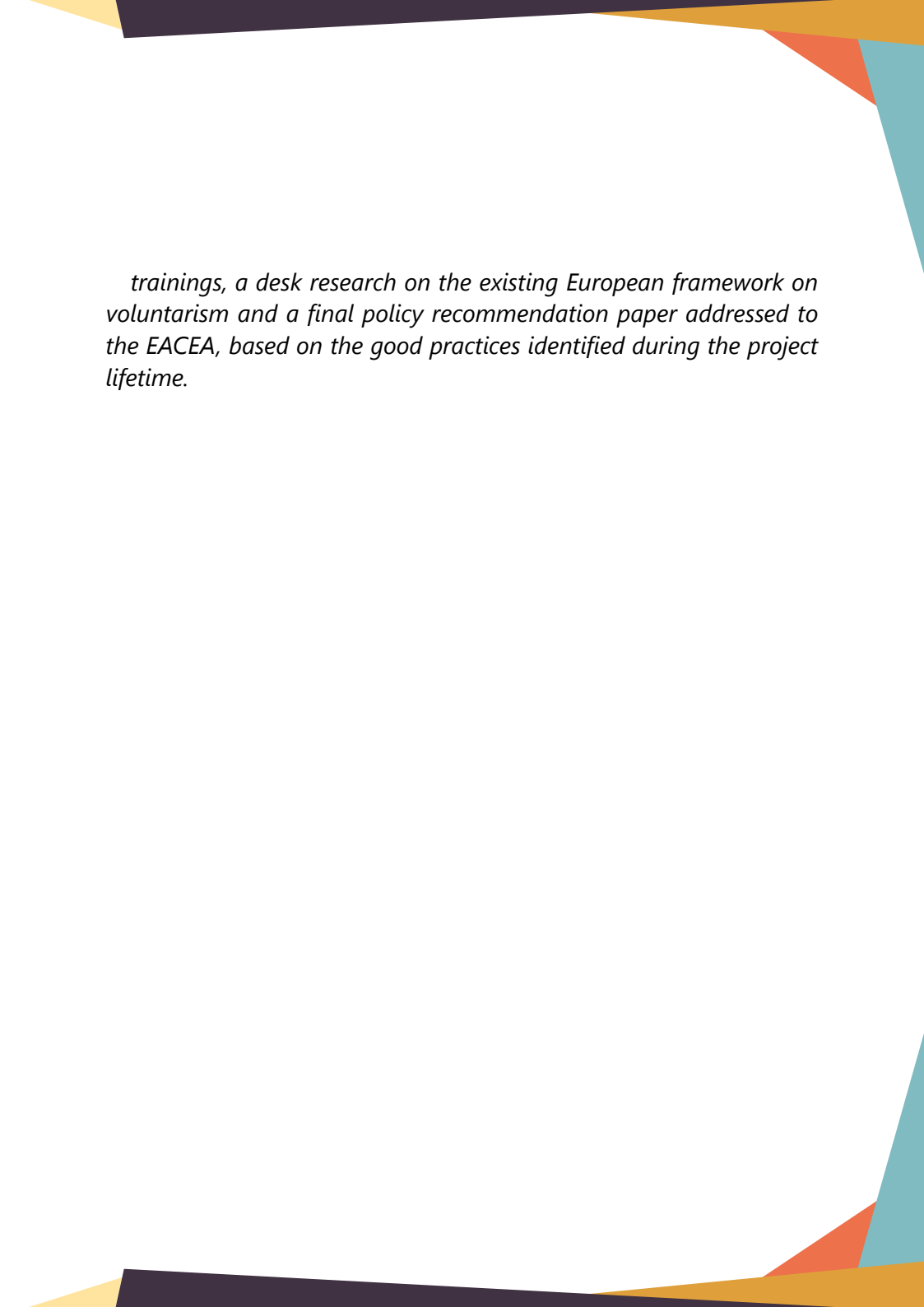
FOREWORD

The V4Volunteers is a project funded by KA3 – Social inclusion through education, training and youth of Erasmus+ programme that aims to empower youth workers and support staff who are experienced in the field of volunteering.

*They will develop competences related to promotion, implementation and mainstreaming of volunteering projects as a tool for social inclusion. **Specifically, this project aims at:***

- promoting youth voluntarism as a tool for social inclusion of youngsters with fewer opportunities;*
- actively encouraging volunteerism, as a way of civic engagement and youth capacity building;*
- developing and sharing innovative methods to reinforce volunteering structures;*
- developing policy recommendations about the topic of volunteering;*
- establishing sustainable cooperation between the actors involved in European Voluntary Service and European Solidarity Corps;*
- equipping EVS support staff of partner organizations with efficient skills, knowledge and competences, in order to set higher standards in voluntary projects across the participating countries.*

V4volunteers will last three years (2019-2021) and will promote focus groups about the topic of volunteering, exchange of good and bad practices among partners' organizations, international meetings,



trainings, a desk research on the existing European framework on voluntarism and a final policy recommendation paper addressed to the EACEA, based on the good practices identified during the project lifetime.



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Introduction

This booklet covers the first phase of the project, with a total duration of **two years**.

In this first phase, the main objective was to **collect as much information as possible from our target groups** (young people, volunteers and youth workers) in order to understand their needs and how volunteering is seen and perceived in partner countries.

To have a successful mapping of needs, we combine **different methodologies**. In order to have a clear idea of how volunteering is regulated, each partner has created a **desk research**, analysing the legal and institutional framework on the issue in question.

Subsequently, **20 focus groups were realized** (4 for each country). Simultaneously X video interviews were conducted in each country.

The interviewees, mostly **former volunteers** in the same organizations, told their story, highlighting the positive effects of volunteering and how this experience has enriched their lives.

The focus group and interviews gave us the information needed to create a **questionnaire** that has been spread for 6 months, reaching 186 people.

This booklet has been designed with the active participation of all organizations and in particular with the help of:

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1

Desk research

European framework

Volunteering is a core expression of civic participation. **Over the last 20 years, some 100 000 young people have taken part in international volunteering**, thus contributing to various sectors as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities.

“There are many young, socially minded people in Europe willing to make a meaningful contribution to society and help show solidarity. We can create opportunities for them to do so [...] Solidarity is the glue that keeps our Union together [...] Young people across the European Union will be able to volunteer their help where it is needed most, to respond to crisis situations [...] These young people will be able to develop their skills and get not only work but also invaluable human experience”, President Juncker announced in his State of the Union address on 14 September 2016 the idea of a European Solidarity Corps.

Volunteering is an essential part of every contemporary society. Through volunteering, citizens contribute to the social and economic development of their communities. In addition, they expand the influence of civil society organizations and at the same time develop their own skills. These contributions have been recognized through various initiatives aimed to promote volunteering internationally and throughout Europe.

“Volunteering is based on the culture of the gift and **free giving**. It can help everyone discover a new culture of solidarity, sustainable development, non-violence, respect for others and responsible citizenship”.

Volunteering also aids the volunteers themselves. Those who are young or unemployed can develop skills and gain confidence and self-esteem, which helps prepare them for employment. Furthermore, volunteering enables the elderly to remain engaged, contribute to the common good, and **feel their skills are still valuable**.

The European Council defines volunteering as *"all types of voluntary activity, whether formal, non-formal or informal which are undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain"*.

Volunteer work plays an important role in countries, contributing to production and to economic output, particularly in the **non-profit sector**, and also to community development and civic participation.

Persons in volunteer work are defined as all those who during a short reference period, performed any unpaid, non-compulsory activity to produce goods or provide services for others. While a main aspect of volunteer work is that it is performed without an expectation of payment, in some cases (EVS\ESC projects) volunteers can receive some payments to cover living expenses while engaged in the voluntary activity. **The total number of young volunteers** (15-30 years of age) in a given year in the EU **is estimated to be around 1.5 million**. This number has remained fairly stable over recent years.

The Flash Eurobarometer 'European Youth' 2015 concluded that around one young (aged 15-30) European in four has engaged in voluntary activities. Attempting an estimate on the population aged 15-30 in Europe it can be concluded that around **22 million young European have been engaged in volunteering**; per year it is es-

estimated that approximately 1.5 million young people are engaged in these kind of activities. An analysis of the national surveys and reports on volunteering identified by key stakeholders in the Member States indicates that, **there are around 92 to 94 million adults involved in volunteering in the EU**. In terms of competences and skills acquired and employment outcomes, volunteering can facilitate the transition from the world of education to the world of work.

Even if volunteering does not lead to a qualification, the skills acquired can be captured in a certificate. For projects funded by **Eras-mus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes, the participants get the Youthpass**. It is a certificate, a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work and volunteer activities. The certificate is based on a personal learning process, giving the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired.

Legal framework

There is no uniform way of regulating volunteering, primarily because of the diverse nature of volunteering together with the complexity and diversity of the voluntary sector across Member States.

By way of categorising the regulatory framework for volunteering, **three key distinctions can be made between Member States:**

- Member States where a legal framework specifically relating to volunteering is in place (Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain);

- Member States that do not have a legal framework but where volunteering is regulated by or implicit within other existing general laws (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK);
- Member States who are in the process of developing a legal framework for volunteering (Bulgaria and Slovenia).

This fragmentation on the approaches at European level has led to an unawareness of opportunities, community demands and supply, and limits in terms of documentation and validation of progress.

The **absence of a unified framework** with clearly outlined measures prevents bringing together the different actors in this field for volunteering activities, consequently creating a welfare loss for society. To release the full potential of cross-border volunteering, the existing barriers need to be removed by setting uniform standards across the EU.

Chronology of European legislation/key policies on volunteering

1983: European Parliament Resolution on Voluntary Work

1992: The Maastricht Treaty: Established the concept of European citizenship

1997: Treaty of Amsterdam: Recognised the contribution of volunteering and encouraged the European dimension of voluntary organisations

2001: White Paper on Youth: Volunteering recognised as a key element of youth policy

2006: EESC Opinion on Voluntary activity: its role in European society and its impact

2006: European Parliament and Council of Europe launch the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), aiming to inspire active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance and involve young people in shaping the future of the European Union.

2007: White paper on sport: Called for the promotion of volunteering and active citizenship through sport

2008: European Parliament report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion

2009: Treaty of Lisbon: new legal basis for volunteering: article 149 concerning sports, participation of young people in democratic life in Europe

2010: PACE (Parliamentary Assembly- Council of Europe) Recommendation 1948 on promoting volunteering in Europe

2011: Council of Europe Committee of Ministers response to recommendation 1948 recognises the value of voluntary activities and support European Year of Volunteering 2011

2013: European Parliament and Council of Europe launch the Erasmus + Programme (2014-2020), the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, continues to offer similar opportunities in the areas of youth and non-formal learning.

2016: European Commission launch the European Solidarity Corps which offers young people between the ages of 18 and 30 the opportunity to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities across the EU.

EU Initiatives

The European Voluntary Service / The European Solidarity Corps.

Over the last 20 years, an estimated 100.000 young people have taken part in international volunteering through the European Voluntary Service (EVS). It started in 1996 as a pilot action. Later, EVS became part of the Youth programme (2000-2006), and continued to be an activity under the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013).

An **EVS project** is a partnership between two or more promoting organisations. Volunteers receive support to cover travel and living costs, as well as pocket money and insurance. Upon completion of the project, they obtain a certificate confirming their participation. In December 2016 the European Voluntary Service became European Solidarity Corps.

The ESC is the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. The Corps allows young people to volunteer (or work) in projects for the benefit of communities and people around Europe. The European Solidarity Corps aim is then to **provide a framework that motivates young people and organisations to engage in solidarity activities of high quality**, promoting qualified skills and enlarging solidarity through Europe, while responding to societal needs.

The EU Aid Volunteers

Another opportunity for cross-border volunteering is offered by the EU Aid Volunteers programme that **provides practical support to humanitarian projects and disaster-affected communities** for periods of between one and 18 months. It also hosts an online platform for virtual volunteering. The initiative is open to EU citizens and long-term third-country residents in an EU country, aged 18 or over.

The first volunteers will be deployed in autumn 2016. The programme covers travel costs, insurance and accommodation. In addition, volunteers receive a monthly subsistence allowance.

Sitography

- https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1311_en.pdf
- [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU\(2017\)602056_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU(2017)602056_EN.pdf)
- http://isca-web.org/files/EuroVolNet_WEB/EYV2011Alliance_PAVE.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Social_participation_and_integration_statistics#Formal_and_informal_voluntary_activities
- https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1018_en.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/youth/solidarity-corps_en
- https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/flash/fl_408_en.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en

1.1 Poland

Fundacja Autokreacja

Volunteerism understood as activity for which an individual could ask to be paid but doesn't expect any profit. Can be offered individually or within activity of an organization or institution.



Statistic

- 35% of Polish citizens aged 15 and above have taken part in such activity (in 2015, last available data);
- 27,6% offered help to **their friends and family, only 7.6% offered it to strangers** or on behalf of local community;
- 26,3% of people with disabilities volunteered;
- 42% of people with higher and only 30% of people with basic education;

- 66% of all volunteer activity was done by people living in urbanized area and only 34% from rural areas;
- Percentage of people that didvolunteering work in different age groups:

15-24 45%	35-44 41%	55-64 31%
25-34 37%	45-54 36%	65+ 25%

- **Mostly (85%) offered as individual activity rather than part of organization or institution;**
- 15-24 years 11% men, 8% women;
- 25-34 y.o. 6% men, 9% women;
- **In terms of youth, boys more often take part in volunteering activity than girls.**

Poland national framework

The Act of 24 April 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work (Dz.U. No 96, item 873, as amended) is a good example of comprehensive solutions in the legislation on volunteering activities.

The aim of the Act is to ensure **balance between protection** of basic entitlements of volunteers and **flexibility** of the legal relationship. Pursuant to the statutory definition – a volunteer is a natural person who provides services voluntarily and without remuneration, under the provisions specified in the Act (Article 2 point 3), where also a member of association may be a volunteer (Article 42 paragraph 3).

What is important, **the regulations concerning volunteer work** (with several exceptions) **are independent of the Labour Law regulations.** This is reflected, among others, in the provision stating that to agreements concluded between the beneficiary and the volunteer, within the scope not regulated by the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work, the provisions of the Civil Code shall apply (Article 44 paragraph 5). This constitutes an important guideline for interpretation, which makes such relationships (within the scope not regulated by the Act) subject to the civil law principle of freedom of contract and not to the complex regulations of the Labour Law which serve other purposes.

Moreover, **provision of services by volunteers is not an obstacle for acquiring the unemployed status** (Article 2 paragraph 2 point 1 of the Act on promotion of employment and labour market institutions). In order to enhance security of rights of both parties, the scope, manner and time of provision of services by volunteers should be specified in an agreement concluded with the beneficiary, which has to provide the possibilities of its termination.

Should a volunteer provide services for a period exceeding **30 days**, the said agreement shall be made in writing, if for a shorter period, the beneficiary, at the volunteer's request, shall confirm the agreement's contents in writing.

The non-negotiable entitlements of a volunteer include:

- **right to information on health and safety risks** connected with the provided services and on the rules of protection against hazards as well as about rights volunteers are entitled to and ob-

ligations they are responsible for;

- **safe and hygienic conditions of services provision**, including appropriate personal safety measures determined by the type of services provided and the related hazard under separate legal provisions applicable to employees;
- **casualty insurance** (if services provision lasts for a period of less than 30 days, such insurance is guaranteed by the beneficiary and if volunteer work is provided for a longer period of time, a volunteer is entitled to such insurance pursuant to the Act of 30 October 2002 on provision on account of accidents or occupational diseases resulting from specific circumstances);
- if a volunteer is delegated to provide services in the territory of another state, where an armed conflict, a natural disaster or a natural calamity occurs – **the volunteer is entitled to casualty and expatriate medical insurance**, should their costs not be covered otherwise, in particular under the coordination provisions set out in the Act of 27 August 2004 on health care services financed from public funds.

Moreover, unless the volunteer releases the beneficiary in full or in part from such obligation, **the volunteer is entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses and to allowances**, under separate legal provisions applicable to employees. The beneficiary may also cover: other indispensable costs incurred by a volunteer, connected with provision of services for the beneficiary as well as costs of trainings and third party insurance in relation to the provided services as well as casualty insurance and expatriate medical insurance (optional in other

situations than delegation to the territory of another state, where an armed conflict, a natural disaster or a natural calamity occurs).

The deregulation of the relationship between the volunteer and the beneficiary is in particular confirmed by the tax provisions. Pursuant to **Article 50** of the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work, the value of a service provided by the volunteer does not constitute a donation to the beneficiary as defined in the Civil Code and tax regulations. From the standpoint of the rules governing the taxation of personal income tax law to the revenue, does not include volunteer service, provided under the terms of the regulations on public benefit and voluntary work (Article 12 paragraph 4 point 16 of the Act of February 15 th 1992 on legal persons income tax, Dz. U. 2000, No 54, item 654, as amended. Whereas in accordance with the Act of July 26 th 1991 on natural persons income tax (Dz. U. 2010, No 51, item 307) tax-free is:

- value of benefits received by volunteers under the Act of law of April 24th 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work (Article 21 paragraph 1 point 113);
- value of benefits received from the volunteers, provided under the Act of law of April 24th 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work (Article 21 paragraph 1 point 117).

The state support is not limited to exempting the relationships between volunteers and beneficiaries from legal and tax burdens. The Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work in Article 5 paragraph 6 foresees establishment of organisation units appointed by the public administration bodies, with the view to support non-governmental organisations and the entities listed in Article 3

paragraph 3, in relation to public tasks which comprise also promotion and organisation of volunteer work (Article 4 paragraph 1 point 27). **The Act of 22 January 2010** amending the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work and some other acts (Dz.U. No 28, item 146) introduced Article 5 paragraph 6 which has been adopted in order to contribute to creation and enhancement of the civil society infrastructure, including the infrastructure of volunteer activities.



Sitography:

- <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/gospodarka-spoleczna-wolontariat/gospodarka-spoleczna-trzeci-sektor/dzialalnosc-organizacji-non-profit-w-2015-r-zarzadzanie-i-wspolpraca,12,3.html>
- <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/gospodarka-spoleczna-wolontariat/wolontariat-i-praca-niezarobkowa-na-rzecz-innych/wolontariat-w-2016-r-1,3.html>
- <http://www.ekonomiaspoleczna.gov.pl>

1.2 U.K.

Merseyside Expanding Horizons

U.K. national framework

1997 Police Act, in the UK defined volunteer as: *"a person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party other than or in addition to a close relative"*.

However, there is also a **slightly different definition** of volunteering **between England, Scotland and Wales** which they are also responsible for their own policies. According to the "Study on Volunteering in the European Union – Final Report" (2010), in the U.K. **over 40% of adults** is involved in carrying out voluntary activities.

In the last years the interest of the government in volunteering has developed and also volunteers became **deeply involved in many aspects of welfare state**. There is no one single national strategy for volunteering in the UK and each administration is responsible for developing its approach to volunteering.

In the UK volunteering is **free** and **open to everyone**; there is no age limit of participation in volunteering, however, insurance policies of some organisations do not include if the volunteer is under 16 or older than a certain age (usually 80 years). Moreover, in the UK people are not allowed to volunteer/work for a profit-oriented organisation if their age is under 14. A volunteering opportunity for young people

aged 15-17 is the **National Citizen Service (NCS)**. This program runs in the spring, summer and autumn and young volunteers have the opportunity to spend a short time away from home and take part in a team project to help their community. (<https://www.ncsyes.co.uk/>).



Volunteers usually receive a **volunteer agreement** where is explained the level of supervision, support and training they will get, insurance and safety issues and the expenses the organisation will cover.

The volunteer agreement is not compulsory, but sets out what volunteers can expect from the organisation they are volunteering for and it is not a contract between the volunteer and the organisation. Statistics show that **people from 65-74 years old** are more likely to volunteer compared to young people. It has emerged that 29% of 65-74 year old's volunteer once a month, with 42% volunteering once a year. (<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/>).

Statistics also show that the least likely group to volunteer **are 25-34 year old's**. Findings demonstrate also that people who do not work are more likely to volunteer regularly **because of their free time**. Women are found to be more likely to have taken part in regular volunteering than men, with 41% having volunteered monthly at some stage, compared to 36% of men.



In the UK volunteers hold decision making roles, for instance they are part of the board in organisation and they can support it with their personal knowledge and experience. Indeed, giving more responsibility and decision making roles to volunteers is a way to empower them and to increase their self esteem.

Although there are strong messages in the UK concerning the cultural and social benefits of volunteering, particularly in terms of social inclusion, current research shows that **those deemed at risk of social inclusion are less likely to volunteer**. Despite this, the UK remains a country where volunteering is **strongly recognised** for personal improvement and to help others.

Sitography:

- <https://www.thirdsectorprotect.co.uk/blog/volunteering-statistics/>
- https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_uk_en.pdf
- <https://www.gov.uk/>
- <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/>

1.3 Italy

Per Esempio Onlus

Italy national framework

The role of volunteering, as a tool to **achieve social policies goals**, is widely recognised in Italy. The voluntary activities are seen as expression of **participation, solidarity and pluralism**. Volunteering is perceived as answer to the needs of the community, especially because its roots reach back to the societal organisation of medieval communes and its development is strongly linked with the social presence and care dimension of the **Catholic Church**.



According to the latest report of the ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics), **volunteering is a supplementary activity to the lo-**

cal welfare system, able to mobilise additional resources, directing them towards the demands not being answered, having demonstrative function, but showing practically that some things can get done.

Volunteering was defined by the Italian National Framework **Law on Volunteering L. 266/91**. Volunteering “is an activity performed at a person’s own free will, through an organisation of which the volunteer is a member, with no aim for direct or indirect profit, exclusively for solidarity reasons”.

The law did not directly focus on the individual as a volunteer, but defining volunteer activities and governing the work of volunteer organizations and their relationship with the national and local governments. The law extended certain protection and rights to volunteers by imposing **duties on the volunteer organizations**, including a duty to **insure members against illness and third-party liability**, and it distinguishes volunteering from employment relationships.

The same Law defined voluntary organisations, affirming the principles that distinguish these from other types of for profit organisations and associations, that may also involve volunteers. The characteristics of the voluntary organisation were: not-for-profit, non-governmental, democratic; activities are for the benefit of others (not members of the organisation) or the common good.

The Law also set up: a “National Observatory on Volunteering” to support, **promote and develop volunteering through research, databases and specific training and projects**; a specific mechanism for regulating services of public interest run by voluntary organisations in partnership with public authorities, the insurance of volun-

teers and the system of **volunteer support centres (CSV)**.

CSVs were born to be at the service of the voluntary organization and were managed by them, following the **principles of volunteering autonomy** (each region draws up specific regional law to regulate volunteering). The CSV have the task of organizing, managing and providing training and information support service (help desk) to promote the role of the volunteers (5.5 million according the ISTAT report of 2017).

The CSVs operating now are 63 and on the basis of the reform of the Third Sector they are destined to become 49 by 2019. The CSV provide **almost 220,000 services to more than 48,000 beneficiaries**, including voluntary and third sector organizations but also informal groups or other associations.

With the **reform of the Third sector (L.117/17)** the volunteer acquires a legal status: he\she is the person who, by his own free choice, carries out activities in favour of the common good and of the community, through a third sector body, making available his time and his own ability to promote responses to the needs of people and the community, in a personal way. spontaneous and free, **exclusively for purposes of solidarity**.

In addition, with the definition of "third sector body", it refers to all those bodies that pursue **non-profit civic, solidarity and social utility goals** by carrying out one or more activities of general interest in the form of voluntary action. Furthermore, the voluntary activity cannot be remunerated in any way and is incompatible with any form of employment relationship.

The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social policies is in charge for the implementation of the laws on voluntary activities. He promotes the **development of voluntary activities through:** research studies and publication of reports; agreements with public and private organisations; funding and administrative management of projects implemented by voluntary organisations and financed under the National Fund for Social Policies.

Sitography:

- <https://www.thirdsectorprotect.co.uk/blog/volunteering-statistics/>
- https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_uk_en.pdf
- <https://www.gov.uk/>
- <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/>

1.4 Spain

Sende

Spain national framework

Volunteering in Spain has gradually become popular, especially among the young generation of the country. Community service is very closely associated with youth and some of the main regulations in this field are directly connected to the youth policies. **Constitución Española de 1978** (The Spanish Constitution) **mentions that “public authorities will promote conditions for the free and effective participation of youth in the political, social, economic and cultural development” in its article 48.**

For its national youth strategy vision of 2020, the country has included **six actions**, which include participation, voluntary work, inclusion and equality. The goals include:

- **Improving channels and tools** in order to raise the participation and voluntary work of associated and not associated youth;
- **Fighting the social exclusion** of youth coming from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as
- **Promoting equality.**

The strategy also highlights the **importance of partnerships in a governmental level**, starting from collaborating between Ministries and local authorities to firmly realize the goals that have been set for the vision. Another important goal of the 2020 Strategy is that the

youth can become aware of the opportunities that is offered to them, **generating opportunities through effective policies and programmes on a national level**. For the moment, the country does not have a fixed set of regulations, regarding youth volunteerism. Nonetheless, starting from 2015, there has been a law that specifically mentions what institutions can become targets for volunteers, such as companies, universities and/or Public Administrations.

Through the law, the country recognizes the **different scopes of volunteering**, and it is technically the tool through which it regulates the collaboration between the volunteer and the volunteering entity. The law also specifies some of its rules and regulations, such as:

- The regulation to have the **volunteer's right to be protected under the law**;
- The **minimum age** of the volunteer;
- **The scope through which the volunteer could work in** (ex. social, environmental, cultural, international cooperation, leisure time, and more);
- **A set of agreements** between the companies, private institutions and any potential entities.

Since 1986, the country has created a **Platform for promoting volunteerism** (*Plataforma para la promoción del voluntariado*) on a national level, and then later developed the Spanish Volunteer Association (Asociación española de voluntariado), to name a few institutions in the area.

Social Services is the main area of volunteer work, followed by Educational Volunteering. **The most popular age to be involved in volunteering is 14-24** (13.11% for NGO participation).



Sitography:

- Constitución Española
https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-1978-31229
- Youth Policies in Spain
2017<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/sites/youthwiki/files/gdlspain.pdf>
- Ley 45/2015, de 14 de octubre, de Voluntariado
<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2015/10/15/pdfs/BOE-A-2015-11072.pdf>
- Attitudes Towards Volunteering
<http://www.kansalaisareena.fi/Voluntary%20Action%20in%20Spain.pdf>
- The Volunteer Action in 2016
https://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/ongVoluntariado/docs/La_accion_voluntaria_en_2016_Solidaridad_y_Juventud.pdf

1.5 Greece

United Societies of Balkans

Greece national framework

There is no a certain legislation for volunteers or for voluntary organisations in Greece. Regarding **the volunteers**, since there is no specific legal framework to refer to, they **do not benefit from any particular legal protection**. In the absence of any specific law, the general regulations governing employment, residency, social and health benefits and mobility apply.

Any legal conflicts that arise in relation to volunteers or their organisations are generally **monitored in a case-by-case basis**.



In case of voluntary organisations, there is no reference to their voluntary profile organisations, neither in civil law, nor in tax law. Hence,

there are **no provisions regulating the relations of civil society organisations** with their members. As a result, **some problems exist between paid staff and members** carrying out voluntary activities to an organisation. For example, paid and volunteer staff can be found sharing management and administrative tasks. This can happen in the case of Civil Non-Profit Enterprises and can upset the functioning of such legal entities. The aspects of civil society organisations as non-state, non-profit and voluntary organisations are not foreseen in the current legislative framework in Greece, as a coherent whole.

A number of organisations promote volunteering in Greece. The Hellenic Federation of Voluntary Non-Governmental Organisations brings together 75 NGOs from a number of sectors. The federation was established in 1996 and has set as priorities the promotion of the idea of volunteering, the protection of human life and dignity, the protection of the environment and the inclusion of the less privileged members of society. The Federation represents a response to the need for coordinated action by NGOs in Greece. The idea that led to making the Federation a reality was that working in greater numbers for a common goal can promote the societal demands more efficiently and ensure a better operating level for voluntary organisations. **The active members of the NGOs that compose this NGO federation are estimated to 12,000 persons. The Declaration of 2001** as a Year of Volunteers has made a significant contribution to activating the state, developing institutional and other measures to promote voluntary employment in Greece as well as recording voluntary initiatives developed locally and regional level.

Today, the Greek government has launched this effort through the

Inter-Ministerial National Volunteering Committee and the Inter-Ministerial Project Management Team set up in January 2001 and has already launched the **National Voluntary Policy Statement since May 2001**. During 2000-2004 the same NGOs, universities and centres research involving civil society institutions submits the European Commission to **109 integrated programs regional social development** in the interior and abroad, of which 52 were approved and implemented through European financing.

According the public bodies in Greece, there are many Ministries involved in overseeing voluntary organisations in different sectors and maintaining different databases of such organisations. There are currently **six different Ministries involved in different sectors and relating to different organisations and voluntary activities**.

Sitography:

- https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_gr_en.pdf
- <https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/SCAD/article/viewFile/8879/9091>





2

Focus Groups

Sample Information

The aim of the FG was to understand the needs of the participants better. **The methodology used is based on the studies of Fate-meh Rabiee**, Professor at University of Central England (School of Health and Policy Study) **and Richard A.Krueger**, professor at University of Minnesota.

The focus group has been conducted by a team consisting of a moderator and assistant moderator.

The moderator has facilitated the discussion; the assistant has taken notes and runed the tape recorder\ notes. From the first moment, it was important to underline that **there was no right or wrong answers**, only different points of view.

All partner has gathered and analysed the answer, following a common guideline. They have used a **narrative format** that has included an executive summary, method used, conclusion and recommendations, re-elaborating the answers.

The data have been collected in **6 categories: demographic data; volunteering; volunteers; organizations with volunteers; organizations without volunteers and young people no volunteering**. For each category, there were questions that have helped us to have a more detailed research. **Each partner organized 4 focus group with volunteers**; youth organisations with volunteers; young people without volunteering experience and youth organisations without volunteers.

20 focus groups have been realized reaching almost **90 people** in

5 countries. We had a successful mapping in each country. The FG have been conducted **from April to June 2019**.

The results of the focus groups conducted in each country are summarised below.

Bibliography:

- "Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews" by Richard A. Krueger, Professor and Evaluation Leader, University of Minnesota (October 2002)
- "Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group" by Eliot & Associates, 2005
- "Focus Group and Interview and data analysis" by Fatemeh Rabiee, School of Health and Policy Studies, University of Central England, Birmingham (2004)

2.1 Poland

Fundacja Autokreacja

Introduction

Volunteerism is understood as an activity for which an individual could ask to be paid but doesn't expect any profit. It can be offered individually or within the activity of an organization or institution.

Every fourth person in Poland devotes their free time to unpaid work for family, neighbours, and friends. The help of strangers or spending time on volunteering for a town, the natural environment or the community is much less frequently declared, but it still exists and **the idea of volunteering is getting more and more popular.**

Volunteers

Majority of participants has **friends in volunteering**, however, the discrepancy was quite big – some of the participants have over a dozen friends, who also volunteer, some of them has indicated, that they **met a lot new and good friends during volunteer work**, who they now spend time also after volunteering with. But on the other hand, some of the participants claimed sadly, that **they are the only ones in their circles of friends, who volunteer.**

However, each of them claimed, that the reason was a **desire to help others and doing something good for society**. Volunteers specified also such reasons as **experience, extra points for a diploma** in school and good use of free time. They mentioned also a curio-

sity in getting to know better **how organisations work from within**. For them volunteerism is associated with **'selfless help and good heart', 'a lot of positive energy', 'busy but happy Saturday' and 'open people with a large amount of creativity'**.

Each participant was different – in terms of both time spending on volunteering and the moment they started. The older ones said to be volunteers **nearly 20 years, in over 5 different organisations** and on average two days per week, usually from September to June. They were also young girls with just a few-day or few-week experience in volunteering. However, the majority of participants do volunteer work from three-two years and spend on it one or two days per week.

Young people no volunteering

People in this group were very sceptic about volunteering and mentioned that it's unpaid work rather than gaining experience. Surprisingly they were ready to start working in international corporation as a trainee with non-financial benefits. No one had any problems with naming the benefits of being a trainee in company. From **'experience and development', 'meeting new contacts', 'learning how to present yourself' and 'dealing with difficult situations' to 'becoming a more open person' and 'getting to know my strengths and weaknesses'**.

The moderator pointed out that the same skills can be gained in non-for profit organisation, anyway the participants seemed not to be interested in giving their time for non-name organisation, but it would be possible for national branches of Amnesty International, WWF or

other well-recognised organisations.

That showed also that **branding is one of the weak point of NGOs in Poland and they should focus on so called “employer branding”** and promotion of voluntary service as a first step in their future career also well-seen by international companies.

Organizations with volunteers

This focus group consist of people that host **both local volunteers and long term EVS**. When we ask them why they believe volunteering is good for the organisation, they are quick to point out that it: expands an organization’s capacity to impact the issues most relevant to its long-term success, increase networking and partnership opportunities. **Some activities wouldn’t be possible without voluntary help.**

The tasks of volunteers depend on their current position. Most of them described offered positions in their organisation such as ordinary volunteers, team leaders, project coordinators and volunteer coordinators. Each of them has a **different role** and tries to delegate tasks to lower-ranking groups in the structure.

As a challenge the participants pointed out the need for effective NGO-volunteer relationships and development of the field of volunteer management to make sure that volunteers are satisfied, and have fun. This can be achieved by making the volunteer’s responsibilities clear from the very beginning of the volunteer period. Most volunteer duties depend on the day and current needs of the organization. Participants named such activities as **being at the reception, coordi-**

nating activities with children, taking photos and videos, office assistance or promoting events.

Organizations without volunteers

The volunteer position usually targets **students who are expected to juggle academic and professional commitments**, where the academic are more important. The biggest problem for people running the organisation is the fact that they are not always commitment to work and needed to be guided. The lack of compensation and benefits may be demotivating if it doesn't lead to a paid position. It's also **demotivating to be working** for free while someone else in the organization doing a similar job is getting paid. It may be disadvantageous for an organization who trains the volunteer only to see he/she leaves shortly thereafter for another position.

2.2 U.K.

Merseyside Expanding Horizons

Introduction

This report summarises the findings of **4 focus groups** with local organisations and young people. **21 participants** in total shared their experiences, barriers and opinions about volunteering. It has been interesting to compare the thoughts and practices of organisations and young people who have experience in volunteering, with those who do not have experience with it. The first part of the report will focus on organisations, while the second part will concentrate on the opinions of young people.

Volunteering has always had an important impact in the UK culture; in 2017/18, 20.1 million (38%) people in the UK volunteered formally at least once a year and 11.8 million (22%) of people did so at least once a month. However, although volunteering has a significant meaning in the UK, **some organisation still encounters some issues** and barriers in recruiting volunteers and in managing them.

Organizations with volunteers

5 local organisations with experience in managing volunteers have been selected. **They work in different fields such as: youth, disability, mental health and people with fewer opportunities.**

All of them have experience in managing volunteers whose age is **between 19-24**, while few of them host volunteers from every age.

All participants agreed that volunteering is **an experience and an opportunity to use free time** in order to help someone else, to build new skills and experience and to link with the community.

Each organisation has different challenges and needs when related to volunteers. Participants agreed that the role of a **volunteer coordinator** is essential in order to train volunteers, to deal with their doubts and to help them understanding their skills improving their **lack of self-esteem**. Indeed, organisations without volunteer coordinators might face complications in completing the daily tasks for the organisation and to train volunteers.

The lack of time in training volunteers might affect both the organisation and the volunteers, who might not show their potential and their engagement can decrease. It has also been mentioned the importance of having a **personal project** for the volunteers in order to improve their interest, their active participation and to make them feel part of the organisation. Example of personal projects are: volunteer platform and newsletter developed by them.

All participants agreed that before accepting a volunteer it is necessary to do a **DBS check** since in their organisations volunteers work in strict contact with service users. Moreover, everyone agreed that **supervision of volunteers** is fundamental. All of them supervise volunteers 1 per month, but if needed the supervision can be changed according to the needs of the volunteer. They all have a "volunteer policy" that has to be shared with volunteers. That is a sort of contract/agreement.

Organizations without volunteers

We have selected 4 local organisations with few or no experience in managing volunteers in order to understand their barriers and their necessities.

Participants work with local communities through dance and sport projects, and with young people with fewer opportunities. One of the participants works with prisons and they mentioned that volunteers would be required to have a **specific background** and to be able to cope emotionally with tough issues such as detention and mental health.

The **size of organisations** is another important matter to consider when hosting volunteers. In small organisations with 2 or 3 employees it is more difficult to complete the daily tasks for the organisation and to train volunteers. This has a double consequence because also organisations do not enjoy the process of having volunteers; indeed, when we asked them what volunteering reminds them, they said “pain in the neck” and “headache”. Some participants consider **“non-formal volunteering”** (without any bond or stated agreement) a better solution for some volunteers because they will not feel the pressure of being forced to work, but they might enjoy more the process of doing things because they want to.

Volunteers

We have held a focus group with young people having volunteering experience. **We involved 6 participants** from the local area that collaborate with the organisation “Youth Priority” and an EVS volun-

teer from MEH.

Participants have volunteered with children, adults and people with fewer opportunities. It has arisen that their main motivation of volunteering is the desire to feel part of the community, to meet new people and to gain new skills and experience to add in the CV. According to the participants volunteering is not about the money, but is about helping other people, sharing and doing something rewarding.

Some participants volunteer few hours per week, while others volunteer full time. They all agreed that the most difficult barrier was working in contact with other people, such as children and teenagers. The majority of them have been inspired by friends and family members who did volunteering.

Young people no volunteering

5 young people with no volunteering experience participated to our focus group. They have been selected from the local community ("Youth Priority" organisation) and from MEH interns. They agreed that volunteering consists in activities aiming to help others but it is also rewarding for the person to gain some experience.

However, they mentioned some barriers that influenced their absence from volunteering activities. The first barrier is related to the **lack of information about volunteering opportunities** and participants declared that they do not know what they would like to do since they do not know what is offered. Few participants said that they have never volunteered because of lack of motivation, but that

if they had more information about the volunteering opportunities they would like to do it. Another barrier is related to the **lack of confidence** because they think they do not have good skills. Lack of time and money also affects and limits their participation in volunteering activities; some of them said they do not have time to volunteer due to school and work commitments, or because finding a paid job is necessary for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the focus groups have been an interesting opportunity for organisations and young people to exchange good practices, barriers and opinions about volunteering. At the end of each focus group MEH have shared tools and resources, such as the **“Time bank”** platform, which aims to tackle social isolation faced by adults in Liverpool area through volunteering.

The project creates opportunities for people with mental health problems to exchange their skills and time with volunteering. LCVS is another platform suggested, that provides support, advice and training networking and representation for individuals and organisations across Liverpool. Other interested websites for volunteering have shared, such as:

- local support provider for volunteering : <https://www.lcvs.org.uk/>
- “Time banking” platform: <https://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/time-banking-scheme-gets-quality-mark/>

- Free bus tickets to Merseytravel Community Project: Community@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk
- STAR tool to evaluate volunteers: Situation, Task, Action, Result: <https://www.trakstar.com/blog-post/use-star-feedback-performance-review-system/>
- EU Solidarity Corps, EU opportunities to host and send longterm volunteers: https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

It has also emerged that the presence of a volunteer coordinator reveals to be extremely important for the organisation, for the volunteers and for the service users. Indeed, as it has been mentioned more times, volunteers can help a lot organisations and can make a difference.

2.3 Italy

Per Esempio Onlus

Introduction

This report summarized the findings from **4 focus groups**, realized **between April and June 2019**. The target groups were: volunteers, youth organizations with volunteers, organizations that do not have volunteers, and young people with no volunteering experiences.

The aim of the FG was to **understand the needs of the participants better**. We had a successful mapping of needs, which will set our direction for the project.

Demographic data (for volunteers and young people with no volunteering experiences)

Young people's age participating in the 2 FG varied **from 18 to 33 years old. Six participants were women and four men**. This number is common because women tend to participate more in the civic society.

The majority of people have finished studies and they were looking for a job or they were starting now working. Those who were volunteers were from Italy and just one was a EVS volunteer. Those without experience were all coming from Italy.

Except two girls still attending high school, the others were all graduates (Law, Engineering, architecture).

Volunteering (for all 4 FG)

For all the participants, **volunteering means helping the people that more need to be helped**. Volunteering means participation, satisfaction, emotion and duty.

Volunteering implies not only do good things for others, also change yourself and understand what is truly important in life. All the participants agreed on the difference between local and abroad volunteering, considering this last most impacting for personal and professional growth (because you are in another country, without family and friends, out of own safe zone).

Volunteers

Participants have approached volunteering for different reasons: to test himself\herself; to **acquire new skills and tools; to understand better what they want to do in the future** (who don't work yet); to meet new people. It was very widespread the idea that being a volunteer nowadays can enrich the CV. Participants feel that the organisations, in which they are volunteers, take in consideration their needs and they have a contact person to whom they can speak in any case. All confirmed that they have never faced difficult situations, especially on their own.

A volunteer from an humanitarian aid ass. explained that in the organization everyone works in the field for which he\she has studied so she has never found herself unprepared. **All participants affirmed that volunteering has enriched them humanly and professionally** and recommended it to everyone.

Organizations with volunteers

All the participants were youth workers from local organizations. Everyone had experience both as volunteer and as a “hosting organization”. They were from different fields, such as youth- refugees support- non formal education with youngster and children. Three participants work with European programme (EVS\ESC) and they are more focus on international volunteers.

One association, a youth center, each year managed 30\40 volunteers, both local and international, and it has developed a specific methodology to support them. **All the participants agreed on the importance of the formation for the volunteers**, even though it’s difficult because every volunteer come with different previous experiences and with different motivations. It is necessary training the volunteers, giving them rules to follow and especially clarify the roles of everyone in the organization. **The volunteer is not a stopgap, but a resource to invest in.** In each organization, the volunteers can propose their ideas, after observing how it works, but always respecting their roles.

Organizations without volunteers

The participants were all youth workers. They were from different field: sustainable tourism; youth and receptions and social inclusion of unaccompanied minor migrants. Even if the majority works with European Programme they don’t have volunteers.

All agreed on the importance of volunteering but for several reason they have decided to not host. Some organizations need

very specific skills and training volunteers would take a long time. In the case on minor migrants, the organization doesn't want volunteers because the minors need emotional continuity, so they can't bring someone that can leave at any time. Someone spoke about the importance to have interns (two have interns) because of the temporal guarantees of internship gives.

They all agree that not having volunteers don't make the association stronger, but is the best solutions for them.

Young people no volunteering

All participants didn't have any experienced volunteering because they didn't have enough time with their work or studies.

There were also other reasons like living a little bit far from the city or not having a push from some friend or a relative doing it or just laziness. **All agreed on the importance of volunteering, but they seemed to focus on their studies or work.** In some cases, (two participants in high school) the families held them back to participate in volunteering activities considering it as a waste of time. For the families were more important to focus on their studies, and acquire diplomas which will help them in their life.

Everyone knew someone that have made volunteering.

2.4 Spain

Sende

Introduction

This report focuses on multiple aspects of voluntarism. It summarizes the interviews and conversations within the multiple focus groups, including interviewing youngsters with no voluntarism experience, youngsters with voluntarism experience, and organizations who have had volunteers and the ones who have not had volunteers before.

As Sende in itself is an international organization, that has hosted people from more than 50 different countries, **it became an advantage to use the opportunity to speak with people from different backgrounds.** This report mainly summarizes the various experiences and viewpoints the participants had about the topic of voluntarism. **The 4 focus groups included overall of 20 participants.** Two of the focus groups were held in Sende at different times, one in Lobeira and another one in As Conchas.

Organizations with volunteers

The participants of this focus group were each representatives of one organization, youth workers, working in spheres of youth empowerment, non-formal education, and conflict transformation and peace education.

The youth workers strongly valued the importance of being a volunteer and hosting volunteers in their organizations. **Some of the**

participants had been volunteers themselves in the past and have seen the value it has given to them, and so now they give the opportunity for others to grow and learn through voluntarism.

The participants usually have volunteers through the programs European Voluntary Service (hereafter: EVS) and European Solidarity Corps (hereafter: ESC).

Some participants expressed a different opinion that sometimes when they host volunteers, the volunteer comes with a general excitement and readiness to help and slowly defines his or her own role in the organization. And **sometimes, the volunteer is very committed to the cause of the organization right from the beginning.** But after some time, both categories of the volunteers become very involved in the organization's activities, and what is more, they initiate their own activities and projects. This inspires others in their community to participate in such initiatives as well as learn ways to give back to their community. And that is the important and wonderful part of community service.

It is also important to mention that everyone agreed to have structure, when hosting a volunteer. If they are placed in the organization with no specific roles, it will be a very ineffective and fruitless experience both for the volunteer and the hosting organization. This will also discourage them to apply for any further opportunity, given their wasteful experience in the organization.

Which is why it is important to integrate the volunteer in the organization as much as possible, giving them concrete tasks and activities.

Organizations without volunteers

This focus group included youth workers, each representing one organization that does not have volunteers. Even though these were youth organizations, each of the participants had different reasons to be without volunteers at the moment. **The reason that united all of the participants was that all of them did not have enough capacity to manage the work of a volunteer,** because they all agreed that volunteers need to have someone to coordinate them.

And if they were to bring a volunteer to their organization, they would want them to have a good experience. Two of the participants expressed interest to host volunteers in the future because they have had the experience of participating in ESC or EVS programs themselves and have seen the positive impact it has had on them.

Another participant mentioned that since the organization is very small and does not have as big of a capacity, it would spend more resources on managing the volunteer than receiving the benefit of having a volunteer, helping them with their operations. All in all, none of them viewed having a volunteer as a negative experience, it is more about the efficiency and the capacity of the hosting organization at the given moment.

Volunteers

The focus group of young people who have had volunteer experiences before were very unanimous with their answers. **Everyone in the group highly valued each of their former volunteering experiences. One of the participants especially mentioned the**

experience as “lifechanging”, not just with the fact that volunteering provided an opportunity to be in multicultural environments and travel to see how others live and work, for her, it was also life changing in terms of values - the idea of obtaining the idea of giving back to the community and learn the **importance of helping other people**.

The volunteers typically also are keen on constantly searching and finding opportunities not only abroad but more importantly in their own communities. Two of the volunteers have had short term experiences before and were eager to try volunteering for a longer term as they have seen the rewarding effects of it. **They are also encouraging others in their community to try to find options most suitable for them and become involved.** One participant also mentioned that becoming a volunteer has made her become a more active citizen, getting more involved in the community life and caring about the local problems.

Young people no volunteering

The answers from this focus group were very different from the results on the group that has had volunteering experiences before. **The group did not see many opportunities that they could use, in order to have a volunteering experience.** They specifically mentioned that not many things are available for them.

However, they were eager to learn how they could improve their skills of researching and finding suitable opportunities with them.

In contrast to the group that has had volunteering experience before, this group was not filled with optimism and energy.

The most common theme among the participants was that they could not find things that were available for them, and could not understand how to start or where to start from. Some of them were also involved in other initiatives that were for-profit companies instead of non-profits with social impact. They also were not confident enough, thinking they did not have enough skills and knowledge to succeed.

2.5 Greece

United Society of Balkans

Introduction

In total **4 focus groups have been conducted by USB** as part of the project V4Volunteers. The 4 different target groups were young people who are or have been volunteers, organisations with and without organisations, young people who have never volunteered.

Demographic data (for volunteers and young people with no volunteering experiences)

Young people's age participating in the 2 focus groups varied **from 19 to 28 years old. More than the two thirds identified as women and less than one third men.** This quota is very common according to the Moderators in these ages due to the fact that women tend to participate more.

Due to the fact that they were in that age range, most of them were either starting now working or they were in the passage between their studies and the work. Some of them were at the moment interns.

Those who were volunteers were either from Greece or from different countries members of the EVS/ESC programme, while those without experience were all coming from Greece. As for those who participated in the other two focus groups, were all staff of the organisations.

Volunteering (for all 4 FG)

All of the participants mentioned that voluntarism is the concept of offering to the other, for a good cause or giving your workforce without expecting something in return. However, **in different organisations or countries, voluntarism is perceived slightly different.**

Volunteers

People volunteer for different reasons; some for offering, some to learn new things and build their capacity, others to leave their house and do an EVS/ESC project abroad, some to do a gap year, etc. The motivations vary also, both volunteers but also organisations that have volunteers expressed this.

There are several types of volunteers. An LGBTI organisation for example explained that many of their volunteers do it for socialisation and they are beneficiaries of their services. Many do it for enriching their CVs. It was very outspread in all focus groups the idea that being a volunteer nowadays and having it written in their CV, make them distinguish from other youngsters. **Most of them were very happy by this experience and they would definitely recommend it to their peers and friends.** They find it extremely beneficial for them, giving them tools, experiences, building their capacities and making them independent from their families. **The EVS/ESC programme is considered as a very good programme for young people** as it offers apart from the opportunity, many tools and benefits for the young people and the organisations.

Volunteerism for them helped them grow as persons, gain knowl-

edge and skills. Especially those participants which are part of a European programme, they feel very satisfied by their experience generally as they are provided accommodation, pocket money, mentoring support, food, language courses, insurance and they are in an international and safe environment.

They all believe that organisations involved in volunteering activities should be more focused, their programmes should be organised better and that there is more monitoring from the NAs.

Organizations with volunteers

Participants from this focus group were all very experienced from organisations having volunteering department. They were from different fields, such as humanitarian aid, refugees, LGBTI and youth. Most of them also work with EVS/ESC programme and they have developed a specific methodology and system to support the participants in this regard.

As a result, **all of them are aware of the programmes existing and they are very satisfied about how they are working so far**. They spoke a lot about voluntarism, the motivations behind being a volunteer and how they experience that and influence their work. They had different experiences and different motivations which of course depend a lot on the nature of their work and their target groups. **Generally they find beneficial to have volunteers in their organisation and working with European programmes.**

As explained earlier, all participants confirmed that in order to support volunteers in an organisation it is very important to “invest” on

them. To create certain standards. One of the most important things in the training to them. In some cases this works as a way to increase their motivation and in some other cases as a prerequisite for doing the job correctly and according to the standards of the organisation.

The different trainings include **introduction to the organisation, self-education on specific topics** which are important for the organisation (eg in the case of the LGBTI organisation), **team building activities, task related training, etc.**

Organizations without volunteers

Participants of this focus group came from organisations that have not developed a volunteering department and they do not host volunteers from European Programmes such as EVS or ESC. As a result they did not have much information about the existing possibilities. In addition, they valued the sense of voluntarism and how beneficial it is especially for young people.

However, in their case for several reasons which had to do with the structure of their organisations or the nature of their work, they did not want to involve volunteers in their activities. They spoke a lot about interns that they find better in terms of their daily work.

All the organisation understand the value of volunteerism. However, they believe that this scheme does not fit to their organisation's activities. In addition, they find it very important for the growth in their professional and personal life.

Young people no volunteering

All participants did not have any experience with voluntarism. **They all understood that voluntarism might be very beneficial for their personal and professional life. However for different reasons they didn't choose to do it.** Many mentioned that their studies and their limited time didn't let them do it. Yet all of them were motivated to do it one day if they had the time, the environment, the conditions, etc.

According to the opinion of the moderators, first from their experience as youth workers but then as observers of the discussions of the focus group, it is evident that some young people tend not to participate generally in the social and political life because of different reasons. Firstly, **the reason of time and studies is not relevant and it is easily understood that is only an excuse.**

The real reasons should be further researched and among them are the lack of motivation in general, the cultural aspect of the participation and the low interest. In addition many people tend not to participate. In any case as said, many young people tend to focus mostly on their studies without extra-curriculum activities. This is because in Greece, for many years families tend to push their children to focus on their formal studies, and acquire diplomas which will help them in their professional life. In addition, NGOs in Greece are considered by many people as corrupt and young people do not trust them to participate in volunteering actions.





3

Interviews

3.1 Poland

Fundacja Autokreacja

Aleksander, 25

Aleksander has been **volunteering for two months** supporting in organisation international meeting. He moved to Poland 5 years ago from Belarus. In volunteering he sees the opportunity to gain experience and meet new people. As a new comer he was looking for the place where he can participate in a local life in a new environment. He sum up his experience as a **perfect way to increase self-esteem and social skills.**

Daria, 25

Daria started her short volunteer activities at secondary school. At the beginning she was involved in **environmental protection** action in local organisation. **Now she is also involved in a work with seniors.** *“Working with seniors can be very challenging and definitely requires a lot of patience. However, I have learned many tips and tricks through my experiences. There are a lot of challenges that you may face that simply aren't present in other kind of activities”.*

3.2 U.K.

Merseyside Expanding Horizons

Shukri, 25

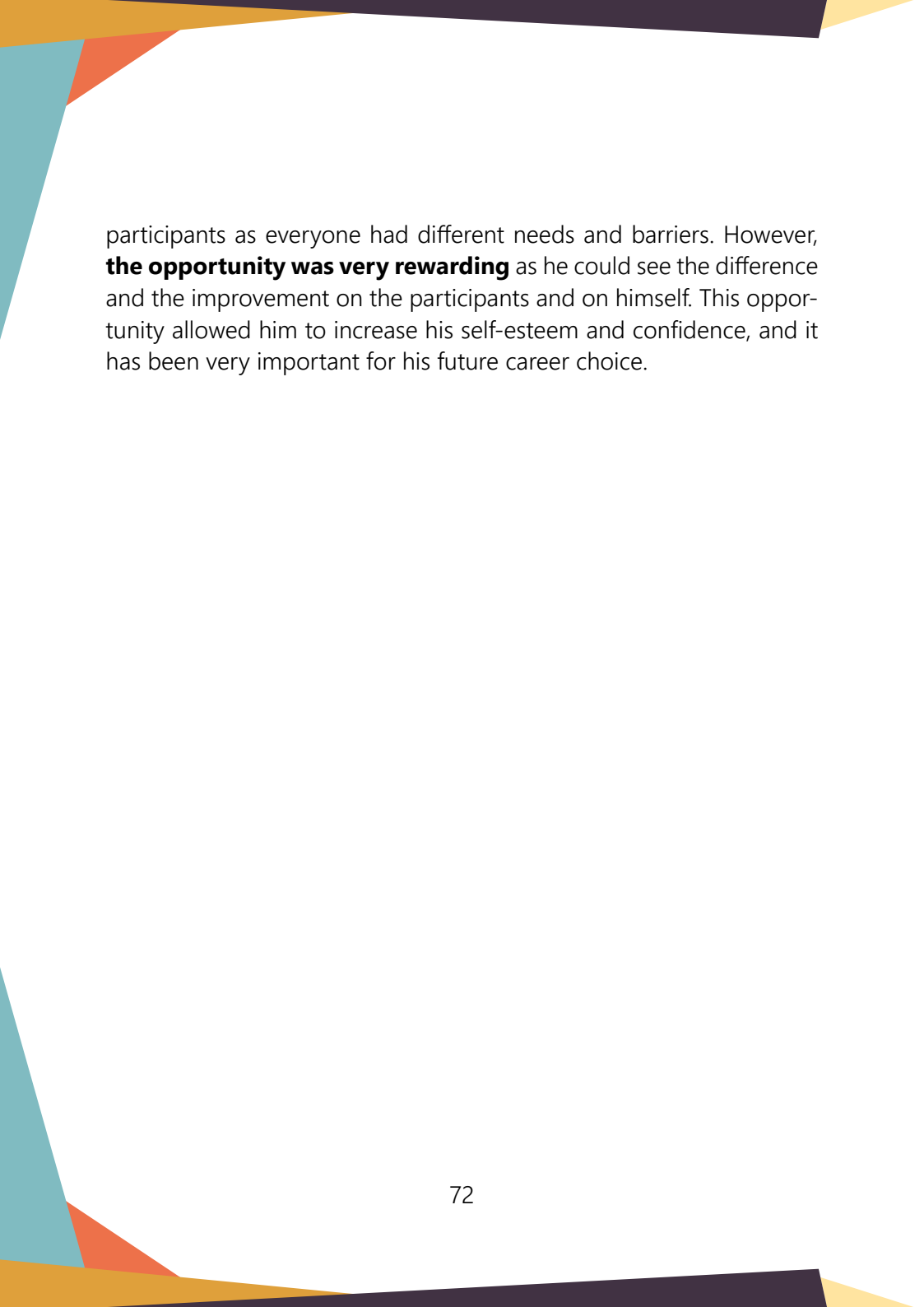
Shukri spent **two months** volunteering at “Social Youth Development KANE, an NGO based in Kalamata, Greece. Her role was to **support the organisation working with local projects and with migrants and marginalized youth.**

Shukri described the experience abroad as **challenging and rewarding**, an experience that has had an impact at personal and professional level as it has helped her to learn to live alone in a new country, to meet people from different backgrounds and to find a new purpose for her future. She would definitely recommend this experience to other young people and she is currently thinking to participate to another volunteering project abroad.

Liam, 28

Liam spent **six months** volunteering at “USB” in Thessaloniki. He has supported USB by **participating in several local and EU projects with migrants and marginalized youth.** He has enjoyed working and learning more about topics such as human rights, interculturality and gender related issues.

During the 6-month volunteering, Liam had the opportunity to deliver English classes for migrants and local youth. This task has been **challenging** as he had to learn how to teach and how to support



participants as everyone had different needs and barriers. However, **the opportunity was very rewarding** as he could see the difference and the improvement on the participants and on himself. This opportunity allowed him to increase his self-esteem and confidence, and it has been very important for his future career choice.

3.3 Italy

Per Esemplio Onlus

Eirini, 24

Eirini Daskalaki is a greek girl. For **nine months** she was a ESC volunteer in Palermo. **She supported the educators in free play and artistic creative activities in a kindergarten in Ballarò and also in a centre in Zen**, a neighbourhood with difficulties in which there is a safe place for the women, doing theatre and sewing workshop for their empowerment.

She was also **helping on the office of Per Esemplio**, but when the quarantine started after two months of being in Palermo all the volunteers created a **television news** in which in every week they were presenting good news or recipes from their home countries.

Volunteering has **changed her life a lot** because you can learn a lot of thing about other people's reality, their culture, becoming richer, living in this multicultural environment. For sure it helps both the personal and professional growth.

She would like to continue volunteering after this project to her home country to her community because she thinks that more or less we cannot contribute to the development of the communities in need. She would definitely recommend this experience to young people, because the is a **life changing experience**, in which they are becoming more tolerant and they live in this multicultural context which is a reality of this era.

Marine, 25

Marine Boudra is a french girl. She arrived in Palermo for an EVS project designed by Per Eempio Onlus and called Connection.

She worked mainly in three places: two associations **supporting women and in a nursery**. She decided to take part in this project for three main reasons: to learn – **learn a language**, a culture, a country, a **different way of working**; to help others and **share her skills**; to get the opportunity to work on different tasks (kindergarden and associations for women) and in different places (Districts of Ballarò, Zen and BorgoVecchio). The feeling she experienced was that, thanks to this project, she has **grown up professionally and personally**.

From a professional point of view, she learned **different approaches to work** carrying out different activities. For example, Eva (an EVS like me) and Marine organized activities on the five senses with the children attending “Il Giardino di Madre Teresa”. Moreover, in *Spazio Donne* in ZEN district they organized laboratories about Carnival in three classes of the middle school *L. Sciascia* (carnival mask, making a rocket made of recycled products...). On the other hand, from a personal point of view, she challenged myself living with other volunteers from different European countries (Estonia, Spain) with different experiences, age, expectations, goals. Enjoying differences helped her to **exchange skills** and became **more sensitive**.

She warmly suggests this kind of experience to everybody wanting to learn about herself/himself and the others. It's a rewarding job because we learn something every day. If she had to use three words to describe my experience in Palermo, she would say: discovery, learning, sharing.

3.4 Spain

Sende

Nune, 22

Nune Harutyunan from Armenia tells the story about her Erasmus voluntary experience in Spain. This journey completely **changed her way of thinking about the life and future**. Nune did a **3 months** volunteering experience in Sende. For her the most mind-blowing discovery were digital nomads she met. **Digital nomads** are people who are working online while traveling the world. She had chance to hear their stories, to learn about their jobs, and this peculiar life which made her thinking that she could start something on her own from Armenia and maybe start traveling even more.

"I thought that only way was to finish the school, then University and then you get your 9 to 5 job and the life ends there. Now I know that there is more".

After her volunteering experience in Sende, Nune returned to Armenia, and instead of looking for a regular job, Nune is **starting her social business** while at the same time applying for international master scholarships.

Miguel, 25

Miguel is a Portuguese volunteer who had his **first-ever volunteering experience in life**. Miguel came to volunteer in Sende, and this was his first time abroad as well.

In his opinion, there is not many volunteering experiences in his town which is called Viseu. He also thinks that young people are bit "lost" in his community, because of the **lack of opportunities**.

Miguel would like to start his own organization and **help young people like him to get more volunteering experiences** and get more chances to travel the world. At the moment when we are telling this story about Miguel, we received information that **Miguel started his organization in Figueira da Foz town**. His organization will be focused on social and solidary events, and to provide volunteering experiences for other young people from his region.

Miguel would like to become a **music creator and producer**, while getting experience in USA. Sende recommends that Miguel creates the list in excel with 100 music studios, especially ones that are part of NGOs (because there is higher probability to get accepted) and to write the email (or to call) all hundreds of them to ask to get internship or volunteering experience in these studios in exchange for food, accommodation and plane ticket. Another solution would be to find programs like Work and travel in the same industry, to apply and to travel there as a volunteer.

Miguel needed a better way to organize his tasks and in case he opens his NGO, he would need an organizational system

Sende shared with Miguel Sende's organizational system which is made in Notion.so software. Also, team of Sende created one Notion document to manage the collaboration with 3 volunteers (one of them is Miguel). Like this, Miguel was learning about new process and the software while participating in it:

We believe that mentoring work with new volunteers is so valuable.
A proper match between a mentor and a volunteer is crucial.

Most of the basic career skills and experiences can be boosted and accelerated while cooperating with a mentor and we would recommend that each volunteer, gets frequent feedback while being encouraged to get curious.

3.5 Greece

United Society of Balkans

Bojan, 28

Bojan Kocovski is youth worker and youth leader and he is leading the CET Platform Skopje in North Macedonia. **He started volunteering when he was in the elementary school** and he was impressed of the new experience that he was gaining; he got **new knowledge**, met **new people** and had fun while providing his voluntary service. A volunteering experience in a NGO in Skopje led him to participate in his first Youth Exchange. This experience gave him the opportunity to meet people from **different cultures** and with **different background**, to gain more knowledge on different topics, to **practise his English** and most importantly to fall in love with the youth work, the engagement with the civil society, volunteering and the non-formal education.

His participation in the YE was his first experience with a NGO and gave him the opportunity to implement some local activities. He liked the process and the methods that are used in **non-formal education** and because of that, he continued being part in this kind of activities until he became youth trainer and project manager. For Bojan, being a volunteer for so many years feels like he has been involved into the youth sector all the time. Volunteering had a **huge impact in his personal and professional life** because it provided him with self-confidence, experiences, methods and tools, knowledge on different topics, especially connected with the voluntarism, civil work

and non-formal education. **He was able to find the job he loves** and later on to set up his own NGO in order to provide the same possibilities to young people who want to take initiatives.

Yannis, 26

Yannis Kourtis has been a **volunteer since** he was **10 years old**. His activity began with some local NGOs which were implementing activities in order to clean the coastline and the beaches from garbage. At the age of 18, he started to participate in various Youth Exchanges and Training Courses all around Europe, which **changed his life completely**. His participation in those projects brought him in contact with United Societies of Balkans, where he became an active volunteer. He was involved in the projects that USB hosted as a facilitator with the responsibilities of the logistics and all the practical arrangements, such as **time management**, the following of the schedule. He was also providing **assistance to the trainers** in operating the sessions. His volunteering career led him to find a job and develop skills that he lacked, like time management, arrangements of the logistic matters, organising events etc. Besides working, he continued being a volunteer and he won't leave this experience. His suggestion to young people is to start their volunteering activity as soon as possible, due to the fact that it is an opportunity for the youngsters to gain a lot of skills, **new tools and methods** and the most important very useful and valuable experience.

Michela, 32

Michela Gennari started his volunteering activity at the age of 25,

when she decided to move from Italy to Greece with a European Voluntary Service (EVS) project. The summer before her mobility, she was **volunteering in a shelter home** and she was doing activities with little children creating a safe space for them, like a family. When she was a volunteer in USB, she was mostly working with **social media, video editing and radio**. She started being involved in other local organisations and events, such as the International Film Festival of Thessaloniki and the Documentary Festival.

In this way, **voluntarism changed her life** and became **a way of living**. She moved from Italy to Greece, where she learned the language and she met her husband and now she lives with her own family in Greece.

Michela definitely recommends voluntarism because is an experience that can change every life (as it did with hers), it is an opportunity for young people to find themselves and what motivates them and it is a first contact with an environment that seems like the real labour market.



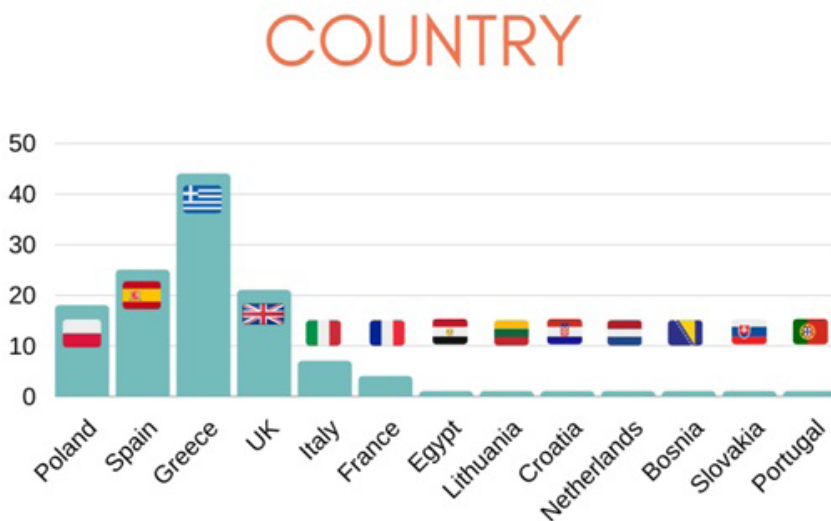


4

Questionnaire analysis

Questionnaire

Based on the result of the focus groups and interviews, this questionnaire has been created, addressing to the above target groups. The aim of this analysis was to **find out what our focal group thought about volunteering** and how this concept is perceived and spread in Europe. 186 questionnaires were collected over a period of 6 months. They have been collected especially from: Greece, Italy, Spain, Poland and UK (partner of the project).



Generally speaking, the findings of the questionnaire are uniform. The people that took part in (74.2% of them) were young people (18-30 years old) and a significant amount of them were employed.

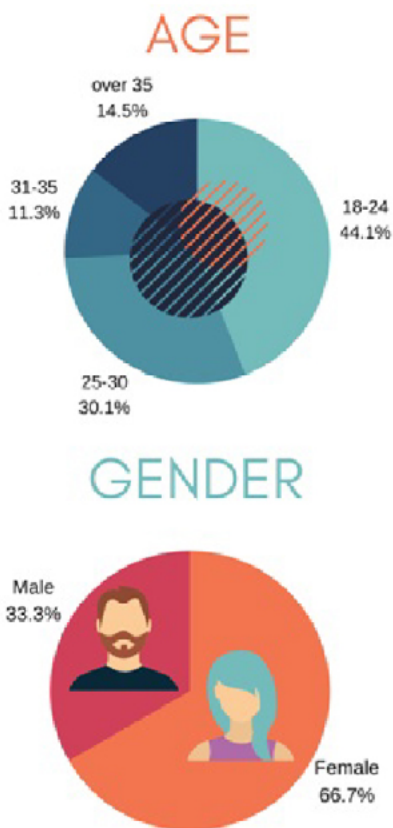
It is against these data we can say that our sample is narrow, be-

cause the majority has the same profile. We will see more in depth each aspect.

Demographic data (age, gender, role\job, country, level of education)

The ones that filled in the questionnaires belong mainly to the age group of 18-24 (44.1%), who know about the European opportunities related to the volunteerisms and furthermore, this age group is the target with which each partner works daily. Since usually people in this age have participated in volunteering activities (local or European projects either in university/school or European Solidarity Corps), and this has a beneficial impact in their future work perspective, most of them believe in **“the power of volunteering”**, both at educational, personal and professional level.

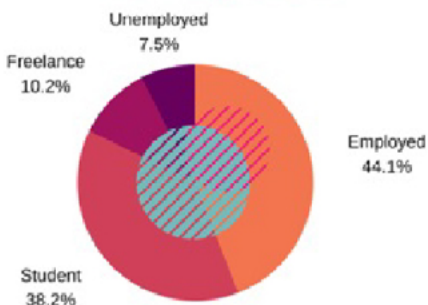
The majority of the respondents (66.7%) are women. This number is common because women tend to participate more in the civic so-



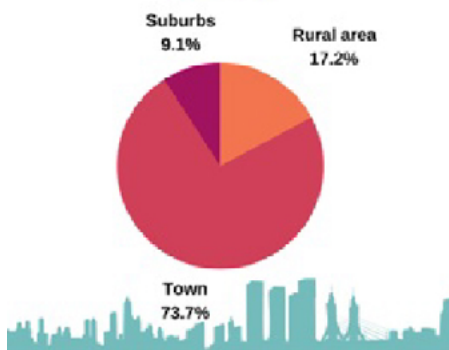
ciety. Usually, during a Training or Youth Exchange we face **several difficulties to find male participants** and even for the ESC (European Solidarity Corps) opportunities we receive always more applications from female candidates. We also have concluded that **most of the people who took part in the survey it is employed** (44.1%), following by students (38.2%), freelance (10.2%) and unemployed (7.5%). We can assume that the **half of the unemployed, are "NEET"**. It is an acronym that stands for "Not in Education, Employment, or Training". It refers to a person who is unemployed, not in school or vocational training usually aged between 18-24.

In terms of where they live, the average shows that the 73,7% of the surveyed collected here are from the cities, the rural area (17,2%) and suburbs (9,1%) in this order.

ROLE/JOB



CITY



General definition about volunteering

The respondents gave their personal answers about the idea that they have about the topic. The common idea of the surveyed about volunteer, it can be resume in to help others in the altruistic way (either other people, animals or environmental ones), or to work for free. The general from Greek and Italy was to work without getting paid, in Spain it sees it more as a good action, in Poland and in the UK it is halfway through the previous answers, even if almost everyone agreed that it is something that you can do to contribute in helping others while you feel fulfilled.

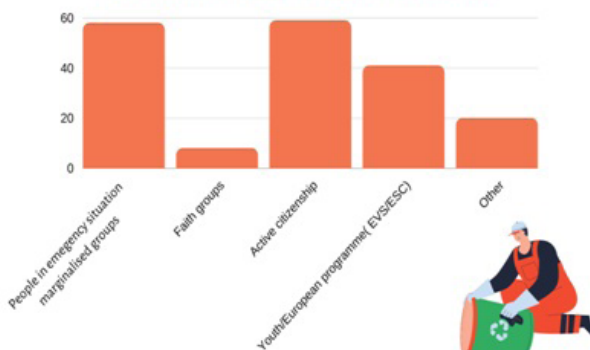
People consider volunteering as a way to working without getting payed, helping people in need and gaining skills (skills that can make own Curriculum vitae more attractive). "Volunteering is helping people and community to be better and it's a win-win situation because the volunteer also gains experience and knowledge", "An altruistic choice that can be a huge lesson and be beneficial for your CV", "helping vulnerable groups" are some of the most common answers.

Field about volunteering

The groups of surveyed think that the most common field about volunteering are the **Active Citizenship** (31,7%) almost tying with the risk groups (31,2%) such as marginalized ones and following them the Youth/ European Programme such as ESC (22%).

From a geographical point of view, the answers are very homogeneous. Just in few cases, in Poland especially, people mentioned the faith group/ religion as a field of volunteering.

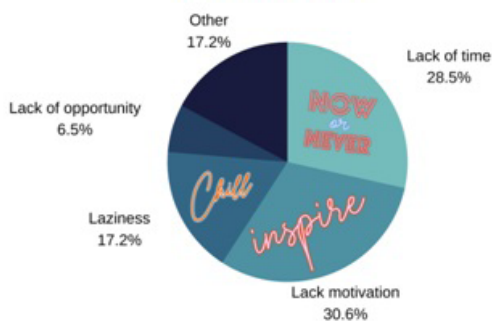
WHAT FIELD COMES INTO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?



What stop people to do volunteering

The respondents gave their personal answer about what stop people to do volunteer activities. Almost the 31% think that lack of motivation is the reason for stopping people do to a volunteering experience,

WHAT DO YOU THINK STOP PEOPLE FROM DOING VOLUNTEERING?



almost the 29% says time and the 17% and 6.5% thinks that it depends from laziness and lack of opportunities. There is the 17.2% of respondents that add others motivations, including no compensation/fear/selfishness/ lack of information.

What motivate people to get involved

The 40% of the surveyed think that to help others people out can motivate they to get involve in voluntarism. The 26% (almost the half of this percentage belongs to the target 18-24) answer that developing knowledge and skills can be a good motivation.

The 12,4% and 7,5% instead think that **challenging themselves** and gaining confidence and maturity can help people to decide do join a volunteering activities. There are 13% respondents that add others motivations, including all of the above/get money and recognition in professional career. Doing volunteer has seen, as we said before, as a way to enrich the CV.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVE IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES?



How popular is volunteering in countries

The respondents gave their personal answers that were organized into a scale from completely disagree to completely agree (1 to 7). The most common value is 4 (55%), followed by 5 (50%).

In this case, we have the lowest score from Greece and Poland, instead the highest from UK, Greece and Poland too.

FROM 1-7 HOW POPULAR DO YOU THINK IS VOLUNTEERING
IN YOUR COUNTRY?



Some findings:

"I think volunteering is quite popular among young people and it is growing more and more especially among teenagers as well (age 14-17). People see this as an opportunity to grow but also travel and meet new people and make new friends who have similar ideas and values about community service" Spain, 18-24 years.

"Because there is not a specific definition and knowledge for volunteering in my country. We don't know the importance of volunteering

here yet. Maybe the economic crisis doesn't let people do things without earning money and doesn't let them much free time. they prefer in their free time working or having activities for their selves." Greece, 18-24 years.

"It is very structured if you want to find organisations, but is still missing a culture of volunteering. Among young people is more popular to volunteer abroad instead that in their local community." Italy, 31-35 years.

How popular is volunteering related to European Programme

The respondents gave their personal answers that were organized into a scale from completely disagree to completely agree (1 to 7). The most common value is 4 (31%), followed by 3 and 5 (both 21 %). In this case, we have the lowest score from Greece, instead the highest from Poland and Greece too.

FROM 1-7 HOW POPULAR DO YOU THINK IS VOLUNTEERING IN YOUR COUNTRY RELATED TO EUROPEAN PROGRAMME?

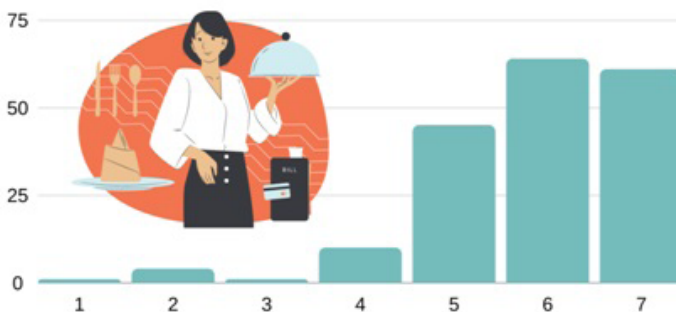


Volunteering can enhance work opportunities

The respondents gave their personal answers that were organized into a scale from completely disagree to completely agree (1 to 7). The 34,4% choose 6, followed by the 32,8% with 7. We have the highest score from UK, Spain and Poland (the target group is equally 18-24/30-35 years), instead the lowest from Croatia and Spain too.

Almost the 65% of respondents, from 18 to 35 years, believe that, doing a volunteering activities, can get **new experience and skills**, learn to know how to work in a team, know how to treat people, how to react in different situations, go out of your comfort zone, becoming more confident and creative.

FROM 1-7 DO YOU THINK THAT PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES WILL ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK IN THE FUTURE?



Some findings:

"Maybe with volunteering people can show that they are interested in helping other people and also gain experience by trying themselves

out in different organizations" (Spain,31-35).

"I believe that volunteerism is a very powerful tool. Not only will give me a lot of knowledge but I will be able to use it to my future working environment. So, I believe that a person who has done a lot of volunteerism is more likely to get a great job opportunity" (Greece, 18-24).

"Confidence gained and lots of real life office experience that you simply cannot get from a text book. It prepares you for the world of work and is a building block to the next step which is paid employment." (U.K., 25-30).

Volunteering can enhance educational skills

The respondents gave their personal answers that were organized into a scale from completely disagree to completely agree (1 to 7). Almost the 70% and up of respondents believe that **volunteering can improve educational skills**. In this case the lowest score is from Greece, instead the highest score is equally distributed among all the countries.

FROM 1-7 DO YOU THINK THAT PARTICIPATING IN
VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES WILL ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL
SKILLS?



Volunteering experience

Almost all of the participants did a volunteer (both local or international experience) and just a few did not, in general due to educational reasons or lack of time.

"First, you leave your own person, you look beyond, you leave your comfort zone. I always go with the idea that I am going to help you and it is always they who help me. You value all the good you have, and you feel more grateful. You develop more empathy. You meet new people. You learn from the great capacity of people who work all their lives on that. For me it was a very great faith experience, but I understand that for people who are not it will be similar", UK 18-24 years.

"Volunteerism builds strong bonds with people who have similar beliefs and who also consider community service to be an important part of their lives. Benefiting other people with my actions I learn from them as well. It shapes my way of seeing the world and it shapes my personal characteristics - to be kinder towards other people and more empathetic", Spain 18-24 years.

The majority agrees in to take part but they think that they should receive either pocket money either knowledge in return such as to explore another culture, experience, go to other country or learn another language.

What Europe can do

The final question of this survey was what can the EU do to improve volunteering among youngsters and in the answers we can

conclude in that **it would be interesting to do more promotion, offer better benefits and, overall, bigger variety of destinations and projects.**

The EU should continue supporting the European Solidarity Corps, and also promote volunteerism among not just young people aged 18-30 but also provide funds for others as well, namely people aged 30+ since they might benefit from this experience a lot more than

the EU should give **more opportunities for people** to get involved in volunteering settings and motivate people through education. They might commit to this service a lot stronger.

The respondents think that it is necessary to act more in the Educational field to **promote the culture of volunteering**, maybe also as mandatory. Schools are involved in a very low level and just if there are active teachers/directors or good association that propose them activities. They should insert volunteering (at a local and international level) in the educational path of the young people.

It seems necessary **establish more voluntary programs** around the world and show to young people how volunteering changed the lives of those who invested time in volunteering at early stages of their professional lives.

Conclusions

Concluding the findings of the questionnaire, 74.2% of the answers are from young people aged 18 to 30. The majority (66.7%) are women which is normal as women are more connected to volunteerism.

Also most of the participants are living in towns (74%). Trying to give a definition of volunteer job we can face **two different perspectives**. From the one side there are people that face it as an altruistic way to help others and on the other side others that focus mainly in payment and face it as working for free.

Active citizenship and supporting of people in emergency situations are the main fields where people are interested to offer their volunteer job. Lack of motivation and time are the main boundaries for people to be volunteers.

Main reasons that people are involved to volunteerism are their need to **help others** and also the fact that they can develop themselves and enrich their CV through it. Gaining skills such as communication, patience, organization and critical thinking can be useful for their upcoming careers so volunteering can be a win-win situation most times. The majority of answered had already or want to experience a volunteering experience such as European Solidarity Corps but they think that **Europe should promote more these kind of activities** and also **increase the amount of financial support**. From the one side there are people that face it as an altruistic way to help others and on the other side others that focus mainly in payment and face it as working for free.

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Conclusions

Volunteering is an essential part of every contemporary society. Through volunteering, citizens contribute to the social and economic development of their communities. In addition, they expand the influence of civil society organizations and at the same time develop their own skills.

Over the last 20 years, some 100 000 young people have taken part in international volunteering, thus contributing to various sectors as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities.

Trying to give a common definition of volunteerism can face two different perspectives. On one side there are people who see it as an altruistic way to help others and on the other side people that focus mainly on payment and see it as working for free.

In general, the volunteering experience has brought a lot of new skills and opportunities to the participants and they totally recommend it. Volunteering opens many doors to job opportunities, gives a great experience, provides new skills and tools and it helps you make long-lasting friendships in local, national, and international level. One of the most useful elements is that it gives the opportunity to get in touch with something that someone is passionate with, to be able to define their interests and most probably to give the motivation and the guidance that someone needs in order to find out what to do with their future.

Volunteers found that their experiences have a deep impact on

their personal development, helping them make the transition into the world of work or simply, by making a person more self-confident.

Volunteering can also deepen awareness and understanding of global issues and the importance of the acquisition of cultural knowledge and the value of the learning experience.

Surely a single legislation at the European level could be of help for the many young people looking for opportunities (both local and European) and also for the countries, which would finally have a common framework to refer to. In light of this, there seems to be a need for European policies to enhance and publicize the world of volunteering in order to make it accessible to all.







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