

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

## ***“VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES”***

### ***SWEDEN***



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## 1. Types of voluntary activities exist in your country for young people

		Voluntary Activity	Voluntary Service	Civic service
Exists		Yes	Yes	No
Total number of young people between 16 and 29 that are engaged in voluntary activities.	631 000* (41%)			
Women	324 000* (43%)			
Men	307 000* (39%)			
* The figures are from 2005. Source: <a href="http://www.sweden.gov.se">http://www.sweden.gov.se</a>				

## 2. Which kind of voluntary service exist in your country and how many young people engage in them per year, in totals and by gender

	Exists?	Number	Gender
a. Community activity	Yes	N/I	-
b. Participation/self-governance	Yes	N/I	-
c. Emergency response	No	N/A	-
d. Community peacekeeping	No	N/A	-
e. Social assistance	Yes	N/I	-
f. Personal assistance	Yes	N/I	-
g. Children and youth	Yes	N/I	-
h. Environment	Yes	N/I	-
i. Human rights, advocacy and politics	Yes	N/I	-
j. Economic justice	No	N/I	-
k. Development aid	Yes	N/I	-
l. Humanitarian aid	Yes	N/I	-

m. Religious volunteering	Yes	N/I	-
n. Education	Yes	N/I	-
o. Arts/culture	Yes	N/I	-
p. Sports	Yes	N/I	-
q. Recreation	Yes	N/I	-

### 3. Financial and legal status of voluntary activities

There is no particular legislation regarding volunteers. Neither are they assimilated to other categories. In certain cases volunteers are treated as being equivalent to either students or to employees. Taxation of volunteers is an area that is not specifically defined in Swedish fiscal legislation. The Swedish National Tax Board (*Skatteverket*) has however decided that benefits for foreign European Voluntary Service volunteers and their pocket money are to be regarded as scholarships and thus exempt from tax. Swedish volunteer organisations would normally be covered by the tax laws establishing tax exemptions and other privileges for non-profit organisations. There are both exemptions of income, payroll and wealth taxes and also regarding inheritance and gift taxes. (Source: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>)

### 4. Main actors of voluntary activities of young people on national, regional and local level in your country

#### Governmental actors

The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (*Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet*) is responsible for the coordination of the Government's youth policy, issues affecting youth organisations and international cooperation in the youth field.

Contact details: Fredsgatan 8, 103 33 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 405 10 00.

E-mail: [registrator@integration.ministry.se](mailto:registrator@integration.ministry.se). Website: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>

The Swedish National Board of Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) is the government agency responsible for the follow up of the objectives set for the national youth policy by the Swedish Parliament. The Board produces and communicates knowledge about young people's living conditions and supports municipalities in the development and implementation of local youth policy. It also distributes funds to and supports methods development in young people's leisure and associative activities and in international youth cooperation.

Contact details: Box 17 801, 118 94 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 566 219 00.

E-mail: [info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se](mailto:info@ungdomsstyrelsen.se). Website: <http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>

The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) is the governmental authority that follows voluntary work in the field of social care and distributes grants to organisations with social aims.

Contact details: Rålambsvägen 3, 106 30 Stockholm. Tel. +46 75 247 30 00

E-mail: [socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se). Website: <http://www.socialstyrelsen.se>.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – Sida (*Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete*) is the governmental agency responsible for international development assistance projects. It contributes project grants to NGO activities in developing countries and to information activities in Sweden.

Contact details: Valhallavägen 199, 105 25 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 698 50 00

E-mail: [sida@sida.se](mailto:sida@sida.se). Website: <http://www.sida.se>

### **Nongovernmental actors**

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*), is a coordinating body for almost 100 Swedish youth organisations. It aims at constituting a forum for matters of common interest in youth organisations and providing a network for national as well as international organisations dealing with youth cooperation.

Contact details: Gammelgårdsvägen 38-42, 112 64 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 672 6670

E-mail: [info@lsu.se](mailto:info@lsu.se). Website: <http://www.lsu.se>

The Swedish Sports Confederation (*Riksidrottsförbundet*) is the umbrella organisation of the Swedish sports movement. About half of all young voluntary workers are involved in voluntary sport activities.

Contact details: Idrottens Hus, Fiskartorpsvägen 15 A, 114 73 Stockholm.

Tel. +46 8 699 60 00. E-mail: [riksidrottsforbundet@rf.se](mailto:riksidrottsforbundet@rf.se). Website: <http://www.rf.se>

The National Forum for Voluntary Social Work (*Forum för frivilligt socialt arbete*) is an umbrella organisation for voluntary social work in Sweden. It has 32 member organisations.

Contact details: Hantverkargatan 3F, 112 21 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 651 07 21.

Website: <http://www.socialforum.se>.

The Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange – CIU (*Centrum för Internationellt Ungdomsutbyte*) is a non-governmental organisation with 30 member organisations active in the field of international youth exchange, voluntary work etc. CIU organises youth exchanges, support young people wanting to get involved in voluntary activities and develop methods within the area.

Contact details: Ludvigsbergsgatan 22, 118 23 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 440 87 80.

E-Mail: [info@ciu.se](mailto:info@ciu.se). Website: <http://www.ciu.org>

Forum Syd, the Swedish NGO centre for Development Cooperation, is an umbrella organisation for more than 200 Swedish non-governmental organisations working with international development assistance and the forming of opinion on global issues. Contact details: Katarinavägen 20, Box 15407, 104 65 Stockholm.

Tel. +46 8 506 370 00. E-mail: [forum.syd@forumsyd.org](mailto:forum.syd@forumsyd.org).

Website: <http://www.forumsyd.org>.

## **5. What is the social protection of young volunteers in your country and are voluntary activities compatible with social benefits?**

Due to the unclear formal status of volunteer programmes, young people participating in these experience formal problems regarding their role in the security systems such as social insurance, unemployment insurance, and the pension system. Other components of social insurance such as parental insurance etc. are also affected.

(Source: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>)

## **6. What Programmes and plans are there in your country on volunteering?**

Voluntary work has a long tradition in Sweden, especially within leisure and sports associations. Slightly more than 50 per cent of the population takes part in some form of voluntary work. Among young people aged between 16 and 29, 39 per cent of the men and 43 per cent of the women are involved in voluntary activities. On average the individual Swede who is active in these areas contributes about 14 hours per month or 3.5 hours per week in voluntary work (Source: <http://www.sweden.gov.se>).

The Swedish government encourages and supports voluntary work mainly through providing financial support to non-profit organisations and associations. This support amounts to about 780 million Euros on an annual basis, including support to popular adult education and to sports. A special part of the grant, which in 2007 amounted to around 22 million Euros, is directed to voluntary youth organisations. These involve around half a million children and young people, and account for a large part of voluntary work amongst the young. The youth organisations are even able to apply for financial support from county councils and municipalities.

In Sweden volunteer work in the form of full-time involvement over a limited period has traditionally been provided within the framework of the comprehensive activities of development aid organizations. The term "volunteer" in Sweden has thus come to be connected with this type of activity. As a result of the European YOUTH programme and the European Voluntary Service, volunteer activities have increased in scope and more young people are today interested in this area.

Today there are approximately 250 organizations which send or receive volunteers within the framework of around 25 different voluntary service programmes. In a report on volunteer activities among young people in Sweden, the total number of such places has been estimated at approximately 1 000 for Swedish young people working in Sweden or abroad, and between 250 and 300 for foreign volunteers coming to Sweden (Source: as above).

## **7. Does a strategy (plan) or specific measures for the development of voluntary activities of young people exist in your country?**

No. The development of voluntary activities of young people does mainly take place within the youth NGOs and NGOs working with young people. Hence the governments main focus is at encouraging and supporting the development of voluntary work mainly through providing financial support, enabling the NGOs to carry out their own development plans.

The Government has however even supported projects aiming at developing certain areas of importance for young people's voluntary engagement. One example is the development of methods for the recognition of non-formal learning, e.g. within the youth NGOs.

During the last year the government has taken several initiatives to develop and deepen the relation between the governmental and the non governmental sector. A Swedish Government Official Report (SOU 2007:66) has been produced on the future policies in the area of popular movements with special attention to the situation of young people and youth organisations. The Government has initiated a dialogue with the NGOs operating in the social policy field and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities. The dialogue aims at establishing a joint understanding of how the relation between the governmental and the non-governmental sector can be developed in this field.

## **8. Obstacles to volunteering of young people existing in the country and measures to remove them**

Studies (see <http://www.sweden.gov.se> for more detailed information) find that obstacles limiting opportunities for young people to work as volunteers may be socio-economic, formal, social or administrative in their nature. For example; it is primarily young people with good socio-economic positions who take part in volunteer programmes. Furthermore, young people who become involved in volunteer activities as their main occupation do not fit into any of the groups that are entitled to social security benefits. This is a formal problem that concerns most security systems, such as social insurance, unemployment insurance, and the pension system. In some cases these issues also affect those who are involved in voluntary work in addition to their regular work or studies.

Young people who come to Sweden on volunteer programs encounter some specific problems. These mainly concern practical questions, such as having access to a personal identification number or a bank account. Volunteers coming from outside Europe may in some cases encounter difficulties when trying to obtain a residence permit to stay in Sweden.

Administrative obstacles may spring from extensive bureaucracy within the sending or receiving organizations or within any contributor involved. Social difficulties are, for example, problems getting into the togetherness at the place of work, homesickness etc.

In January 2007 the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality presented the national report concerning the implementation of the common objectives for voluntary activities of young people. The report pointed out several areas which need to be followed up in a close future to facilitate young people's volunteering.

The Swedish Government Official Report (SOU 2007:66) on the future policies in the area of popular movements (see even 8.1) points out further areas that need to be addressed. Obstacles to voluntary work, in general but even concerning young volunteers, will be included in the government's dialogue with the NGOs operating in the social policy field and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities.

## **9. How are voluntary activities of young people promoted in your country, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities?**

The NGOs are the main actors when it comes to promoting voluntary activities in Sweden. Being dependent on the contribution of thousands of volunteers they are constantly trying to reach new



potential volunteers that would like to be involved in their work. The methods of promoting voluntary activities vary from organisation to organisation. A number of NGOs and municipalities organise activities during the UN International volunteer day 5 December, focusing on the positive contribution to society by volunteers in Sweden.

The following organisations promotes voluntary activities. Non of them focus particularly on young people with fewer opportunities.

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer), is a coordinating body for almost 100 Swedish youth organisations. It aims at constituting a forum for matters of common interest in youth organisations and providing a network for national as well as international organisations dealing with youth cooperation.

Contact details: Gammelgårdsvägen 38-42, 112 64 Stockholm. Tel. +46 8 672 6670

E-mail: [info@lsu.se](mailto:info@lsu.se). Website: <http://www.lsu.se>

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Contact details: Idrottens Hus, Fiskartorpsvägen 15 A, 114 73 Stockholm.

Tel. +46 8 699 60 00. E-mail: [riksidrottsforbundet@rf.se](mailto:riksidrottsforbundet@rf.se). Website: <http://www.rf.se>

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E-Mail: [info@ciu.se](mailto:info@ciu.se). Website: <http://www.ciu.org>

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104 65 Stockholm.

Tel. +46 8 506 370 00. E-mail: [forum.syd@forumsyd.org](mailto:forum.syd@forumsyd.org).

Website: <http://www.forumsyd.org>.

## **10. Explain how voluntary activities of young people are recognised in your country.**

In Sweden work is proceeding on finding methods for recognising non-formal and informal learning in a number of areas. The Government has established a special authority, the Swedish National Commission on Validation (*Valideringsdelegationen*) to carry out development and dissemination of measures with a view to raising quality, strengthening legitimacy and increasing equivalence concerning validation of competence and knowledge acquired outside the formal education system. As a part of this work, the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*) has developed models and methods for recognition of competences acquired by non-formal and informal learning. The Swedish Centre for International Youth Exchange - CIU (*Centrum för internationellt ungdomsutbyte*) has with state funding developed a new method for the recognition of international competences; ELD (experience, learning, description). Youthpass, the European Commission's instrument for validation of non-formal learning within the European Youth in Action programme, is used by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs as an integrated part of the programme in Sweden.

## **11. Which co-operations, networks and exchange programmes do exist in your country for supporting voluntary activities of young people?**

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*), is a coordinating body for almost 100 Swedish youth organisations. It aims at constituting a forum for matters of common interest in youth organisations and providing a network for national as well as international organisations dealing with youth cooperation.

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## **12. Do collective volunteering projects exist in your country?**

Cultural or sporting events with a large number of volunteers involved are normally organised by NGOs, occasionally with financial support from the national, regional or local government. There would however normally be no formal registration by national authorities with the result that there is no national overview over projects of this kind. Humanitarian/natural disaster situations would, if and when they occur, normally not be organised as traditional collective volunteering projects.

## **13. Which recent survey or research has been carried out on the topic of voluntary activities?**

During 2008 no major national survey/research has been carried out on the topic of voluntary activities.