



INFORMATION SHEET

VOLUNTEERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

FINLAND

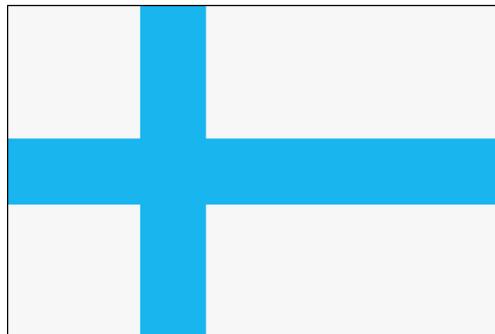


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1. Volunteering of young people in Finland

Give an overview on volunteering of young people (13 – 30) in your country on the national and regional level (in federal states) answering the following questions:

- Are there official national/regional recommendations (policies) concerning volunteering of young people?

On national level:

Volunteering is seen to be at the policy agenda. Overall, the significance of volunteering to many different sectors, sport and recreation in particular, is recognised by different stakeholders.

With regards to national strategies, in 2007 the Finnish government set up a new committee to enhance cooperation between the civil society and the public administration, the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (*kansalaisyhteiskuntapolitiikan neuvottelukunta, KANE*). Its legal foundation, including its aims and tasks, are seen as a key strategic document in Finland for the development of volunteering in the country.

The operations of the committee are currently led by the director of Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveysturvan keskusliitto STKL*) and co- led by Secretary General of Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi. Other members of the committee are: representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Environment, the National Board of Patents and Registrations of Finland (*Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus*), the Tax Administration, representatives from a number of non- profit organisations and representative organisations for the Finnish civil society, as well as researchers, academics, experts and social partners.

The committee will run until 2011 and one of its main tasks is to explore the ways in which the work of non-profit organisations can be made easier. It will also look at how to solve the barriers faced by non-profit organisations in their activities. Importantly these include a clarification of the administrative challenges that have arisen from EU regulation, especially in relation to taxation rules concerning service delivery by non-profit organisations (this is discussed in greater detail later in the report). The developments it will take forward will have relevance to voluntary organisations in the country. Experts have highlighted the importance and the uniqueness of the committee, in that so many different stakeholders from public and third sector spheres are working closely together to tackle problems that hinder the work of voluntary organisations and volunteers.

Five of the committee's working groups have particular relevance to voluntary organisations:

- The working group on taxation is exploring ways of solving problems relating to the taxation of non-profit organisations.
- The working group looking at issues around public procurement and service delivery by non-profit organisations, as well as the impact of public procurement rules on voluntary organisations, volunteers and disadvantaged groups.
- The working group on participation has main focus on NGOs influence and participation of young people.
- The working group on research, which will map out the situation of the Finnish civil society and report on the needs and challenges faced by the sector.
- The working group on the financial situation of non-profit organisations.

The Citizen Forum (*KansalaisAreena*) has also established a programme of which aim is to formulate a national strategy on volunteering. The goal is to develop a common understanding of volun-

teering, to define good practice in volunteering, to gain political support, secure future support and importantly, include grassroots level voluntary organisations into the strategic planning process of volunteering at national level.

The Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007-2011 (*Lapsi- ja nuorisopolitiikan Kehittämishjelma*) highlights the importance of integrating an element of volunteering into secondary level education in Finland. The programme stressed the significance of an understanding of the importance of volunteering from a young age.

As yet, there are no quantitative targets in relation to volunteering in Finland. However, the new committee to enhance cooperation between the civil society and the public administration (*kansalaisyhteiskuntapolitiikan neuvottelukunta*, KANE) has several qualitative targets in relation to volunteering. These include:

- Clarifying problems related to taxation of non-profit organisations.
- Clarifying issues around public procurement and service delivery by non-profit organisations, as well as the impact of public procurement rules on voluntary organisations, volunteers and disadvantaged groups.
- Clearer analysis of the Finnish civil society and the needs and challenges faced by the voluntary organisations.
- Clarifying the financial situation of non-profit organisations.

European Year of Volunteering (www.tuntitili.fi) is coordinated by the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE) and by the Finnish Youth Co-operation - Allianssi. Furthermore, voluntary organisations and other bodies with related activities are actively involved in the realisation of the theme year. Organisations are also encouraged to link their own activities and events to the European Year of Volunteering.

The Year of Volunteering, in Finland, is primarily a communicational project. The objective is to raise the awareness of voluntary activities during the year through communications and campaigns. The communication is focused on three main target groups: general public, work communities, and educational institutions.

During the theme year, a challenge campaign will be carried out with the purpose of increasing the awareness of the different forms of volunteer activities and to attract new people to join the activities. A public challenge will be announced, encouraging people to commit to a number of hours for volunteering in 2011.

Volunteer brokerage services and sector specific umbrella organisations (such as the Finnish Sports Federation, Allianssi, etc.) help to promote volunteering. There are also a number of employment programmes in place, which benefit the voluntary sector:

- Employment schemes of the PES financially support the employment of long-term unemployed individuals (including former volunteers) into voluntary organisations. Although the positions are temporary, many have ended up finding permanent employment as a result of these interventions.
- Apprenticeship schemes are also available to voluntary sector organisations.

A new internet portal, www.vapaaehtoiseksi.fi, opened in 2010. It is a new portal aimed at functioning as a national brokerage platform between organisations looking for volunteers and individuals interested in volunteering. The portal has been established by KansalaisAreena ry and the Finnish Centre for Health Promotion, and is supported by RAY.

The Citizen Forum KansalaisAreena run a preparatory programme between 2007 and 2010 to introduce a cross-sectoral, national strategy for volunteering. At the moment most of the development work takes place at sectoral level. Hence, the aim is to develop joined-up, national level cooperation in the field of volunteering that aims to benefit the sector as a whole, and not only volunteering in certain sectors.

The preparatory programme will continue with a national strategy programme for volunteering between 2010 and 2013. It continues to be led by the Citizen Forum with key partners. The overall aim is to involve grass-root level voluntary organisers in the planning and development of volunteering in the country, and thereby improve the foundation and the infrastructure for volunteering. The programme also aims:

- Improve networking among local and national stakeholders in the field of volunteering.
- Improve brokerage services (such as the internet portal mentioned earlier).
- Raise awareness about the possibilities offered by volunteering.
- Improve the image of volunteering.
- Seek to develop new practices for co-operation between municipalities, companies and voluntary organisations in the field of volunteering.
- Define and clarify boundaries between voluntary and professional, paid work.
- Collect and disseminate information on good practices in the field of volunteering.
- Collect information and data on volunteering in order to better demonstrate the impact and value of volunteering.

A range of national, regional and local events, developments activities and projects will be implemented to achieve the aims. Funding is sought from a number of different sources and the work is overseeing and monitored by a management committee consisting of different NGOs and networks.

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/eyv2011/doc/National%20report%20FI.pdf>

On regional level: Yes, see above.

- Is volunteering usually paid?

No. Volunteering agency KansalaisAreena has defined volunteering as *“all activity carried out for the public good, which is based on civic movement and voluntary action and is not paid for”*. The key words uniting most definitions are: unpaid activity, for the benefit of others and action taken from free will.

- Is there any National voluntary service?

Yes. The Citizen Forum (*KansalaisAreena*) is service, development and information centre for voluntary actors in Finland.

- What is the legal / financial (fiscal) / social security status of volunteers?

The taxation of voluntary work is subject to a number of different interpretations. The Finnish Centre for Pensions has stated that voluntary activity should not be compared with a contract of employment and related pensions legislation, thus, does not apply. Voluntary activity should correspond to education. The opportunity provided for a young volunteer to learn non-formally is not equal to a contract of employment. The pocket money received by the volunteer cannot be regarded as valid remuneration for the work she or he does. Furthermore, work performed by a volunteer cannot replace the basic functions of the receiving organization.

In practice, the legal status of volunteers is ambiguous. Volunteers are sometimes regarded as (corresponded to) employees, and voluntary service has usually been treated according to the taxation practices of the Employment Contracts Act. According to the definition in the Employment

Contracts Act, an employment contract is characterized by working for remuneration. Neighbourly help, for example, has not been regarded as subject to employment contract legislation, even if the parties had clearly agreed on the benefits and responsibilities involved.

No specific social security system for volunteers exists.

2. Main actors and networks

- Who are the main actors (institutional and NGOs) in the field of volunteering of young people on the different levels?

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö*), www.stm.fi

Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*), www.minedu.fi

On a national level, Finnish Slot Machine Association RAY (www.ray.fi) and Finnish National Lottery Veikkaus are significant public funding sources.

Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi is a national service and interest organization in youth work and independent of any political and denominational affiliation. Almost all national youth or education organizations are its members, the total number of which is 118. <http://www.alli.fi/english/>

The Evangelic-Lutheran church is an important player in Finnish society, both as a civil activity forum and as an organizer of services. The church has the right to levy taxes just as does the state, which gives it a broad basis in funding youth activities. <http://evl.fi/EVLen.nsf>

Finnish Sports Federation (FSF) is a co-operation, interest and service organization for sports organizations, with promotion of civic sports activities as its main mission. Established in 1993, FSF has 127 member organizations and through them more than 1.1 million individual members, http://www.slu.fi/eng/finnish_sports_federation/

Service Centre for Development Cooperation (KEPA) is an umbrella organization for Finnish NGOs involved in development co-operation or other global issues <http://www.kepa.fi/international/english>

Youth Academy (*Nuorten Akatemia*) is a national organization that supports young people's own activity and learning in it. Activities of the organization are aimed at young people aged 13 to 19, also for young people that are not members of other associations. Youth Academy channels funds activities and provide its know-how for the benefit of young people and the future of society, and provides information on views and ideas of young people. <http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi> - <http://www.homma.fi>

Municipalities provide facilities for voluntary and other activities and also grant funds for local cultural, youth and sports associations.

All the organizations mentioned above work or affect the work on regional as well as on local level.

- Are any organizations in this field specifically targeting youth (as participants in voluntary activities and voluntary services)?

The Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi is a key player in the youth sector and works with voluntary youth organisations to promote and facilitate volunteering in the youth sector.

<http://www.alli.fi/english>

Youth Academy (*Nuorten Akatemia*) is another organisation supporting voluntary organisations and voluntary activities in the youth sector. <http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi>

Suomen Nuorisovaltuustojen Liitto - NUVA ry (Federation of Finnish Youth Councils) works as the co-operational organisation between the local youth councils, and one of its main goals is to support the work of the local youth councils by providing services. <http://www.nuva.fi>

Centre for International Mobility CIMO is a national public administration and the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme. It promotes young people's non-formal and informal learning through European Voluntary Service (EVS) by providing grants for transnational (European and international) voluntary service for young people aged 18-30 years old including training and support for volunteers and organisations involved.

- Do networks and/or co-operations exist for supporting volunteering of young people in your country?

Finnish organizations actively engage in international activities through their own networks or umbrella organizations as well as through the United Nations system. Finnish organizations also participate in a number of European youth activity structures such as the Youth Forum Jeunesse (YFJ), European Youth Card Association, European Youth Information and Counselling Agency.

Allianssi Youth Exchanges is a youth exchange agency providing young Finns opportunities to work abroad. Annually it recruits about 1000 young Finns in programmes abroad, and places about 100 international volunteers in work camps in Finland every year. Those volunteers are recruited from the member and partner organizations of the Alliance of the European Voluntary Service Organizations.

<http://www.alli.fi/english>

Finnish Branch of Service Civil International (KVT) is a peace organization that aims at promoting equality, social acceptance and respect for the environment. KVT's most important activity is organizing international work camps in Finland and sending volunteers to work in camps abroad. In addition, KVT coordinates long-term volunteering. KVT is run by volunteers working in various working groups and local groups.

<http://www.kvtfinland.org/>

International Cultural Youth Exchange, ICYE (*Maailmanvaihto*) is an international non-profit youth exchange organization promoting youth mobility, intercultural learning and international voluntary service (<http://maailmanvaihto.fi/english>)

European Voluntary Service project (EVS): The European Union supports non-formal education opportunities for young people through transnational voluntary service which directly and actively involves young people in activities designed to meet the needs of society in a wide range of fields. The EVS Action is open to all young people who are legally resident in a programme country or in an eligible third country and are, in principle, aged between 18 and 30.

- What is the legal / financial (fiscal) status of organizations promoting volunteering?

There is no national budget allocation to volunteering as such but the public sector supports voluntary organisations, for example, by enabling activities of national federations and umbrella organisations. The turnover of voluntary sector organisations is approximately 5 billion euro. Around 32 %, (1,6 billion euro) comes from public sources. The largest amount of funding goes to social and health organisations. The state funding provided for many voluntary organisations and federations come from the proceeds of the gaming industry.

Gambling and betting activities in Finland are regulated by the Lotteries Act (23.11.2001/1047). Under the Lotteries Act, all gaming arrangements in Finland require a gaming licence. A gaming licence is issued separately for running money lotteries, pools and betting, for keeping slot machines, operating casino games and running casino activities, and for operating totalisator betting. Only one licence is granted at a time for each of these purposes. The official justification for this limitation is to protect those who engage in gaming activities, prevent abuse and criminal activities and reduce social problems created by gaming, such as gaming addiction. Gaming licences may be issued for a maximum of five years at a time and the licences are granted and revoked by the Finnish government. The current gaming licences, which are in force until 2011, have been granted to the following three gaming operators: Veikkaus Oy (state-owned), Finnish Slot Machine Association RAY (state-owned) and Fintoto Oy (privately owned). Due to the current legislation no other gaming operators are allowed to offer gaming services in Finland.

Only a small percentage of voluntary sector funding comes from budgetary funds; funds are largely proceeds from the gaming industry, and this is the reason why the Finnish actors feel strongly about the need for the Member States to be able to decide on their own gaming policies. It is ex-

pected that the Finnish voluntary movement would suffer significantly if the gaming industry in Finland was opened to competition. It is expected that the level of funding for the voluntary sector would reduce and thereby weaken the volunteering infrastructure in the country as a whole.

Finally, a significant form of public support for sport is the tax-free nature of volunteer work. As stated earlier, non-profit organisations do not need to pay taxes on the income gained through fundraising, donations, membership fees, etc. provided that no one receives direct personal benefit from it but all funds are used for 'common good' - to support activities for the entire club or team.

The sources of funding of Finnish voluntary organisations are:

- Membership fees
- Fundraising
- Donations
- Benefits in-kind (e.g. use of facilities for free of charge, voluntary workforce)
- Income from service provision
- Sale of products
- Income for advertisements (e.g. in a magazine of a voluntary organisation)
- Agreements with private companies
- Funding through national gaming organisations (e.g. Veikkaus, Fintoto and RAY)
- Grants from local and national authorities
- EU funds
- Project funding
- Capital income (e.g. rent income, etc.).

Usually, the most important funding sources include: own funding (e.g. membership fees, fundraising), donations and service delivery and public funding. However, sectoral differences are apparent in funding sources of voluntary organisations. For example, membership fees are crucial for voluntary social and health organisations while sport organisations benefit more from private sponsorship than most other voluntary organisations. Religious organisations tend to benefit from private donations. Voluntary youth organisations are funded by state subsidies (28 %), EU funds, foundations and other ministries (19 %), and private sources such as membership fees, donations and fundraising (53 %).

Overall, Finnish voluntary organisations are more dependent on self-financing than their counterparts in many other European countries; the proportion of state funding is relatively low. Own fundraising emphasises the central role of the members and enhances the autonomy of the sector.

No tensions were identified between the state aid rules and allocation of grants and subsidies to voluntary organisations. This is down, for example, to a long tradition of voluntary sector activity.

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/eyv2011/doc/National%20report%20FI.pdf>

3. Promotion of volunteering of young people

- Which methods among the one listed below are the most used to promote volunteering of young people in your country?

By national policies:

- Advertisement campaigns
- Education
- Youth information centres
- Funding of NGOs
- Other:
- None

By NGOs:

- Advertisement campaigns
- Education
- Youth information centres
- Other: Internet
- None

Young people receive information from the media and educational establishment. Positive word of mouth communication is also an important channel.

Organizations and congregations maintain websites, which are frequently updated. Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi and individual organizations distribute information on current forms of voluntary activities. Youth information service centres are also an important forum.

Valtikka is a online-democracy project, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, that provides information, e.g. of organizations of whose voluntary work a young person can take part in (www.valtikka.fi).

During the Year of Volunteering there will be different kind of actions and campaigns which will tell also about young volunteers in various fields of life.

Youth Academy (*Nuorten Akatemia*) is a co-operation organization aiming at building bridges between spare time activities, education and working life.

International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (December 5th every year) is highlighted by Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and Health, Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi and Finnish Sports Federation.

The International Award for Young People (www.avartti.fi) which is a method of youth work allowing young people to develop their skills through various voluntary and recreational activities. Young people participating in this scheme acquire certificates from their achievements projects of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Centre for International Mobility CIMO has a web information service for young people going abroad (www.maailmalle.net).

Different Youth Organisations promote volunteering by campaigns, websites and most of all by using their own volunteers as advocates.

- Which among the followings are methods of recognition of volunteering of young people in your country?

- √ European Youth Pass
- √ Certificates
- Credits in the formal education system
- Awards
- Incentives
- √ They are valued in the CV
- Other:
- They are not recognised

According to the Information Strategy for Education and Research 2007-2011 (www.minedu.fi) young people and adults should benefit of the knowledge they have acquired earlier during work, civic activity or studies.

The Recreational Activity Study Book of the Youth Academy, where young people can gain entries for activities they have been involved in. It gives the reader a broad view of the young person's skills and learning experiences. It serves as a CV, as participation in all forms of recreational activities can be recorded in it. The Study Book is aimed at all young people above 13 years of age who are involved in recreational and voluntary activities. For two years the Study Book can be found in internet (<http://www.skene-x.fi>).

http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi/Nuorten_Akatemia/Harrastaminen/Opitun_tunnistaminen_ja_tunnustaminen

The International Award for Young People (www.intaward.org), which is a method of youth work allowing young people to develop their social skills through various voluntary and recreational activities. Young people participating in this scheme acquire certificates from their achievements defined in different levels. Promoting the Award as a youth work method is one of the development projects of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

- What obstacles to young people's engagement in volunteering do exist and how are these faced by national policies?

In practice, the legal status of volunteers is ambiguous. The taxation of voluntary work is subject to a number of different interpretations. Most young people who are not currently engaged in organizational activities would like to participate, but have not found a suitable form of activity. On the other hand, according to survey the most common reason (44%) not to participate in voluntary activities is the lack of time. On the other hand "no one has ever asked me to" is a significant reason as well. Especially young people in threat of marginalization need encouragement and opportunities to volunteer (e. g. minorities and the unemployed).

4. Mobility of young volunteers

- **Is there any national monitoring of how mobility of young volunteers takes place?**
- **What are these monitoring mechanisms? If yes, please explain.**

No. The monitoring only concerns Youth in Action programme.

<http://www.cimo.fi/english>

http://www.cimo.fi/programmes/eu_programmes

5. Sources of information

The Centre for International Mobility CIMO:

<http://www.cimo.fi/youth-in-action>

<http://www.maailmalle.net>

The Citizen Forum (*KansalaisAreena*) <http://www.kansalaisareena.fi/index.php?sivu=english>

The Evangelic-Lutheran Church: <http://evl.fi/EVLen.nsf>

Finnish Branch of Service Civil International: <http://www.kvtfinland.org/>

Finnish Online-Democracy Project: <http://www.valtikka.fi>

Finnish Slot Machine Association RAY: <http://www.ray.fi>

Finnish Sports Federation: http://www.slu.fi/eng/finnish_sports_federation/

Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi: <http://www.alli.fi/english/>

Ministry of Education and Culture: <http://www.minedu.fi>

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: <http://www.stm.fi>

Service Centre for Development Cooperation (*KEPA*): <http://www.kepa.fi/international/english>

Study on Volunteering in the European Union – Country Report Finland:

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/eyv2011/doc/National%20report%20FI.pdf>

Volunteering Portal: www.vapaaehtoiseksi.fi

Youth Academy (*Nuorten Akatemia*): <http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi>