



Council of Europe & European Commission Youth Research Partnership

RESEARCH SEMINAR PAPERS

How does the voluntary engagement of young people enhance their active citizenship and solidarity?

A research seminar that will provide a better understanding and knowledge of voluntary activities of young people across Europe

**European Youth Centre, Budapest
5 – 7 July 2004**

Keynote Speakers:

Kate Stanley (Institute for Public Policy Research)

More than a numbers game: a UK perspective on youth volunteering and active citizenship

Regine Schroer (AVSO)

Development of International Youth Voluntary Service in the EU

Comparison of programme and policy development in Germany, Italy, France, Czech Republic and Poland

Chair: Karin Lopatta-Loibl, Youth Unit, European Commission

More than a numbers game: a UK perspective on youth volunteering and active citizenship

Prepared for Council of Europe & European Commission Seminar on 'How does the voluntary engagement of young people enhance their active citizenship and solidarity?' Budapest, 5th – 7th July 2004

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"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve." Martin Luther King Jr

There is a growing interest across Europe in the possibilities of public policy intervention in youth volunteering. In the UK, the government wants to promote youth volunteering and to stimulate civil renewal. The Home Secretary (2003) has argued that: "civil renewal must form the centrepiece of the government's reform agenda in the coming years". Both he and the Chancellor regularly link a civil renewal agenda with engaging young people in voluntary activity. For example, in 2004 the Chancellor said: "the advantages [of volunteering] for young people are clear, [it helps people] to...become more active citizens". A Commission has also been set up by leading politicians to develop a national framework of volunteering for young people and "to examine...whether we can, through making it a national priority, engage a new generation of young people in serving their communities" (Brown 2004).

The aim of this paper is to examine this supposed relationship between youth volunteering and active citizenship and to suggest how effective and progressive public policy on youth volunteering might be developed with a focus on the UK. Firstly, I outline what I mean by active citizenship and civil renewal, and suggest civil renewal could be a strong motivating idea to guide the future development of youth volunteering. I then consider some examples of volunteering programmes and their links with civil renewal which reveals a paucity of evidence on their impact. Finally, I consider the implications of this analysis for research and for public policy.

1. Active citizenship and civil renewal

In this field, language frequently serves to obstruct rather than facilitate understanding. Civil renewal, civic service, active citizenship, even volunteering, are all expressions fraught with difficulty. Civil renewal, for example, is a complex term invoked to cover a range of events and experiences. If we could describe what it means, we may be able to achieve it. The UK Home Secretary (2003b) uses it interchangeably with active citizenship to describe government actions which enable people to act themselves, he says:

Civil renewal is about educating, empowering and supporting citizens to be active in their communities, socially and politically...Civil renewal and active citizenship is about creating the conditions for people to take control of their own lives, with the state acting as enabler, a supporter and a facilitator

It is, however, outside the scope of this paper to fully interrogate the concept of civil renewal. Instead I follow Nash (2002) and take the concept of civil renewal to be an articulation of achieving civic engagement, where civic engagement means participation by citizens in the public realm. Civic engagement, as it is generally understood, comprises at least three forms of engagement. These are: informal social engagement with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues; participation in voluntary and community organisations, including self-help groups, charities, sports teams, clubs and churches; and participation in governing and running of public bodies and government services. This paper looks at the role youth volunteering action might play in promoting all these types of lasting civic engagement.

It is desirable to bring about increased levels of civic engagement. Civic engagement benefits both those who get engaged and the community as a whole. Robert Putnam (2000) and others have shown that people who are socially and politically active are healthier, happier and more prosperous; they find it easier to find a job and have a larger pool of friends and acquaintances to call on when things go wrong. At the same time, active communities are also safer, more attractive communities, able to pull in public services, and fight for their needs and advance their interests in other ways.

It is also important to note that levels of civic engagement are reported to be lower amongst more disadvantaged groups. For example, poor people report being much more interested in social issues than their middle class counterparts but less empowered to change things. While only 35 per cent of middle class people believe that they can influence local affairs, the figure falls to 20 per cent for the least well off (Strategy Unit). This potentially means that the more disadvantaged in society have potentially most to gain from opportunities for genuine civic engagement.

I use ‘youth action’ and ‘voluntary activity’ as umbrella terms to describe all kinds of voluntary engagement characterised by being open to all, unpaid, undertaken of a person’s own free will, educational (in sense of providing non-formal learning) and of social value¹. Whilst there is recognition of the link between youth action policy and civic engagement within the UK government, often youth action is presented as an intrinsic good, something that should be promoted for its own sake. This is what leads to targets focused simply on increasing the numbers of volunteers or the number of hours they spend volunteering. Youth action can indeed deliver benefits to both the participant and the beneficiary of the action and this may be a reason for public policy intervention specifically to increase the level of youth action.

I would argue, however, that public policy should be both more focused and more ambitious in what it seeks to achieve by promoting youth action rather than simply seeking to increase the numbers of volunteers. This is because youth action has the potential to generate lifelong habits of civic engagement by virtue of its basic characteristics. Effective public policy needs a motivating idea. That is, it is important to be clear what objective we want public policy interventions to achieve. The objective of promoting lasting habits of civic engagement is a desirable objective for public policy and can justify interventions to promote youth action.

Of course, promoting civic engagement is just one of a number of possible motivating ideas for public policy intervention to boost youth action. Other valid objectives might be enhancing life chances or improving public services. Clearly, though, there is a need to prioritise and promoting civic engagement and achieving the goal of civil renewal is a strong contender for the priority objective. This is partly because it youth action has already been shown to have potential for success to deliver in this area. And it is partly because although increased levels of civic engagement are clearly desirable, there are very few public policy levers available to bring this about, so we have to maximise the use of those that do appear to be promising.

So, there is a common sense link between youth action and civil renewal, and public policy should make civil renewal an explicit objective of interventions to enhance youth action. The challenge now is to understand how youth action might best maximise its impact on civil renewal objectives by assessing the evidence to date.

2. Current policy and practice in the UK

I will now sketch out what we know about the links between youth action and civil renewal based on evidence from some of the most prominent and better evaluated forms of youth action in the UK. I will then highlight some similar issues with the evidence from Europe and the United States.

One of the strongest trends in UK youth action in recent years is the rise of youth advocacy and projects led by young people. This trend has emerged from a growing appreciation that young people have a right to be listened to and taken seriously and to shape their own activities. A longitudinal study (Roker and Eden 2003) of 22 youth action groups found evidence of the ability of such programmes to influence levels of civic engagement and sense of civic responsibility. It found that as a result of their participation young people felt they could try and bring about change in society and their participation had impacted on their sense of who they are and their understanding of political and social issues. Interestingly though many young people felt significant change could be achieved locally but they felt national change would be much harder to achieve. The researchers suggested that it might therefore be valuable to focus on the possibilities of local change. A second important finding was that most young people did not see the activities they were involved in as ‘political’ and viewed the world of party politics very negatively. Nonetheless, they did feel young people should exercise their vote.

Another strong trend is the rise in the numbers of people taking ‘gap years’. In 2002, 160,000 people in the UK took gap years. Most gap years involve spending time away from home and have an average cost of almost 4,000 euro. They can include formal and informal forms of voluntary action but do not necessarily include any and many gap years are primarily about leisure. There is much to be gained from overseas travel. However, it has been

¹ Following the definitions adopted by the Council of Europe and European Commission.

argued (Simpson PhD thesis forthcoming 2004) that gap years tend simply to reinforce traveller's expectations of a place and fail to take proper account of the interests of the host community.

The UK government has mainly focussed its own efforts on the creation of two programmes: Millennium Volunteers and Young Volunteer Challenge. Millennium Volunteers (MV) is an award scheme established in 2000 for young people aged 16 to 24. The programme was designed to promote a commitment to 200 hours of voluntary action within one year. An award of excellence is given to those completing a 200-hour placement which is delivered through non-profit organisations or a self-designed project. Recognition is also given for service of 100 hours. By 2004 130,000 young people had joined MV.

The evaluation (Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) 2002) of MV found it had been largely successful in delivering experiences that reflected what young people wanted and that delivered benefits to both volunteers and the communities in which they volunteered. The evaluation found that 84 per cent of volunteers agreed MV had increased their confidence and 65 per cent believed MV had increased their employability. Crucially for engendering civic engagement, 80 per cent reported that they were more aware of the needs of others and 68 per cent agreed that they had become more committed to volunteering, owing to their involvement in MV.

MV aims to be inclusive of everyone but particularly those with no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion and has had some success here. It attracted people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and was very successful in attracting young people who were unemployed and nearly half had no previous experience of volunteering. However, it was suggested that the one-year timescale is insufficiently flexible to allow people to fit their hours around other commitments. This lack of flexibility may have a disproportionate effect on groups from 'marginalized communities' and students. Another evaluation suggested that the drive to meet scheme targets means that harder-to-reach groups who are less likely to become volunteers, or who may need greater support to volunteer, are neglected (Volunteer Development England and Youth Action Network 2003).

The distortions that are created by the focus on numerical targets making the programme less attractive to some groups must be tackled if we want youth action to become the norm for the broadest possible range of young people.

MV provides a good basis for the future development of youth action programmes and suggests the potential of youth action programmes to generate lasting civic engagement although longitudinal research is needed to fully understand the extent of this.

One key issue that must be tackled at this stage in the life of MV is the distortions that are created by the focus on numerical targets making the programme less attractive to some groups. Similarly, the focus on targets does not easily take into account the time and financial resources that may be required to involve young people from harder-to-reach groups. If we want youth action to become the norm for young people, we need to acknowledge these barriers and take them seriously in order that participation is as wide as possible.

Young Volunteer Challenge (YVC) is another government-designed and funded pilot programme offering opportunities for 18- and 19-year olds from low-income backgrounds to undertake voluntary work on community projects in nine areas. The programme aims to test the effect of financial incentives on young people's participation in youth action. Young people who have received particular means-tested benefits an Education Maintenance Allowance or were eligible for Income Support whilst undertaking vocational training are eligible to participate. YVC is a full-time experience, which lasts up to nine months. Participants receive a weekly allowance of approximately 60 euro a week and a lump sum end of experience award of almost 1000 euro.

On-going monitoring evidence indicates that the weekly stipend is proving a greater incentive and facilitator of participation in this programme than the lump sum payment at the end. Evidence from AmeriCorps in the US concurs in suggesting that the lump sum end-of-service payment does not incentivise people to stay in the programme if they don't think it's worthwhile. The project has experienced difficulties in attracting young people to participate (partly due to the affect of the stipend on benefit entitlement) and to stay engaged with the programme. It is hoped that the full evaluation of YVC will provide insights on the best way to develop youth action targeted at disadvantaged groups. Many other programmes exist but have strikingly weak evidence of their impact of civil renewal goals.

The AmeriCorps programme in the US is also important to mention briefly here as it is often held up, not least by the UK Chancellor, as the gold standard for what we should be striving to achieve in the UK. AmeriCorps gives financial assistance to nearly 75 000 school leavers each year for service with 2100 non-profit and faith-based organisations and public agencies. The programme provides accommodation, a weekly stipend and an educational award in exchange for a year of full-time service in activities such as youth mentoring, running after school programmes and cleaning up parks. The goals of AmeriCorps include renewing “the ethic of civic responsibility”.

A study of AmeriCorps participants indicated that, after their period of service, volunteers were significantly more likely to become involved in local community groups or to attend public meetings. A change in volunteers’ expressed personal and social values was also identified. The programme has been found both to increase individual opportunity and to serve community needs (Simon and Wang 2000). Members who were part of programmes with clearly visible results were found to be most positively affected in terms of a sense of on-going civic responsibility (Aguire International 2001). Whilst these findings are encouraging, the methodologies used to conduct evaluations of AmeriCorps has been insufficiently robust to place too much store by them, for example, no efforts have been made to establish the counter-factual (such as a control group).

These examples have also shown that whilst the connections are sometimes made between youth action programmes and lasting civic engagement and there is some evidence to support this intuitive link, the empirical evidence to demonstrate this link is grossly under-developed. The significant limitations of this evidence warn us that we cannot simply assume that voluntary action programmes will deliver lasting civic engagement. This means that we need to develop a policy framework explicitly prioritises its achievement.

These examples show that a host of different policy objectives lie behind different programmes, although in some cases these objectives are not clearly articulated. It is essential to have a clear understanding of the different goals that programmes would pursue. Once the goals are established, the best structures for the achievement of those goals can be identified. Too often thinking in this area is not rigorous enough; as Lind (2003) has said, ‘service’ is often ‘a solution without a problem’. Only if we have a firm grasp of our goals and the models that might best meet these goals, can we have an informed discussion about the options available to us. Any one programme may aim to achieve one or more objective. These objectives could be grouped together according to whether they aim to achieve personal, community or instrumental objectives.

Personal objectives often focus on enhancing the life chances of the individual undertaking the action and promoting equality of opportunity. The objectives may include building character and a sense of identity, providing experience of work, broadening horizons, building networks, easing transitions to adulthood or enhancing skills and experience. It is crucial that personal benefits are delivered to ensure people sign up to programmes. These benefits will also make it more likely that people will develop an on-going habit of civic engagement and in the process help to achieve the government’s objective as well.

Community objectives come the closest to a direct focus on civil renewal. These might include encouraging the practice of volunteering as a form of civic engagement, promoting international understanding, building local or national identity, developing skills, knowledge and values for active citizenship or giving young people the opportunity to exercise choice and make decisions.

Instrumental objectives focus on the delivery of practical change. For example, through the provision of volunteers to enhance the capacity of the voluntary sector or in the public sector, improving the condition of those who are helped by volunteers or improving the quality and efficiency of public services through the use of volunteers. These objectives can deliver personal and community benefits at the same time although these will not be the primary drivers.

It should be clear that whilst there may be overlap between these sets of objectives, not all practices and programmes promote all these ends, or at least not to the same degree. So a programme like Young Volunteer Challenge does little to build shared identities. Some argue that compulsory national service does not do much to encourage volunteering. Domestic programmes do not do much to help international understanding.

I have suggested that youth action should be designed to deliver lasting civic engagement but found scant evidence that current practice - whilst showing considerable potential - is delivering on this objective. I will now turn to look at what public policy can do to help meet this challenge.

3. Implications for research and public policy

Six key policy questions which must be addressed if youth action policy is going to match up to the challenge of delivering lasting civic engagement and reflect the need to shift thinking away from simple numbers and towards different types of experiences and groups. These questions relate to image and language, what young people want, targets, building on existing programmes, who to engage, and delivery.

1. Image and language

It has been argued that the concept and term ‘volunteering’ have acted as obstacles to progressive policy development which seeks to bring about civil renewal (Nash 2002). This is partly because they are regarded by some as representing control of the volunteer over others through a one-way process (Brav et al 2002). This notion is supported by the fact that in the UK those who participate in volunteer programmes tend to be more highly educated and have a higher income than average, with those from the highest socio-economic groups almost twice as likely to take part in a formal voluntary activity as those from the lowest (IVR 1997).

It is also partly put down to evidence that the term ‘volunteering’ causes some groups to disassociate themselves from voluntary activities which they might otherwise engage in. For example, Little (cited in Kearney 2003) suggests: “the v-word...with its inevitable blue-rinse connotations of middle-aged, middle class women helping those less fortunate, alienat[es] young people and ethnic minorities”.

This notion was supported by Gaskin (1998) reporting a survey in which two-thirds of young people interviewed said ‘volunteering’ was not something people in their age group would do. Amongst other barriers to their participation peer pressure was cited and two-thirds of those interviewed said volunteering would be ‘uncool’. To address this image problem programmes need a brand that young people can identify with and aspire to, this makes their involvement in brand design and development essential.

If we want to make the widest possible range of opportunities available to the widest range of young people,; we need to employ a concept which is sufficiently loosely defined and is not off putting to young people.

2. What young people want

Whilst the evidence suggests that young people don’t like the term ‘volunteering’, it also shows that many young people do believe in the value of voluntary work for both society and themselves, and in one survey 94 per cent said they saw volunteering as a great way to gain experience (Gaskin 1998). Young people believe that youth action should be based on the principle of something for something.

Gaskin (1998) has identified a number of characteristics that young people are looking for from voluntary opportunities:

- Flexibility - in working time, choice and spontaneity
- Legitimacy - to combat peer pressure and negative associations
- Ease of access - more information on where, how and when
- Experience – stimulating opportunities and skills development
- Incentives - tangible outcomes, references, certificates of achievement
- Variety - types of opportunities available
- Organisation - efficient but informal

- Laughs - to incentivise continuing the activity

As well as meeting young people's requirements, we also need to take account of the fact that some forms of voluntary activity are likely to do very little toward making a lasting influence on people's civic engagement, while others might be more likely to make people think about the politics of their world or immediate community. But it is important to note that there is no obvious contradiction between what young people want and the civil renewal agenda. However, there are indications that what young people want may not match the kind of programmes which would deliver other goals such as increasing their employability, for example. This makes it all the more compelling that we consult young people in the development of all plans for youth action programmes.

However, at present we do not have a sufficient level of empirical evidence on which forms of voluntary action are most likely to lead to on-going civic involvement. We also need to know if this civic involvement, or the voluntary action itself, boosts the life chances of those doing it through the personal benefits gained. So, in the short term, we should focus on the quality of voluntary opportunities as an aid to promoting further and continuing civic engagement as well as encouraging more people to engage. In the long term, government needs to contribute to building the evidence base on the civic impact of certain forms of volunteering. Once we have established a decent evidence base, more ambitious programmes can be developed.

3. Building on existing programmes

Given the knowledge, skills and experience embedded in existing youth action programmes, it is crucial to ensure that all future developments build on existing programmes. This means improving our ability to measure the impact of programmes on their increasingly sophisticated objectives. It will be important for policy makers to emphasise that the aim is to target scarce resources where they can have the greatest impact in terms of civil renewal.

4. Who to engage

The objectives that a youth action programme is seeking to achieve are crucial to decisions about who the programme seeks to engage. Given that the most disadvantaged groups tend to be the least civically engaged (Fahmy 2003) and that participation can deliver personal benefits as well as greater civic engagement (IVR 2002), there is clear merit in targeting opportunities towards disadvantaged young people. Furthermore, experience tells us that programmes that do not specifically target disadvantaged groups tend to be unsuccessful in attracting them.

If we are going to successfully engage young people from disadvantaged groups, it is crucial to think about the cost of participation to young people. People often talk about payments for youth action as rewards. However, many young people will only be able to participate in a programme if they receive some form of financial payment (the Young Volunteer Challenge pilot recognised this although it has run into barriers with the interaction of payments and the benefit system). Payments can be as much about facilitating access to a programme, as they are about rewarding participation. As the evidence from Millennium Volunteers shows, it is also important to take into account the additional resources that can be required by delivery organisations to attract and retain participants from more socially excluded and marginalized groups.

There is a need to target those young people who are least likely to engage in civil society but targeted programmes run the risk of becoming stigmatised as for 'poor people' (Open Agenda 2003). Clearly, this is undesirable in a programme designed to promote civic engagement. This is why it might be wiser to develop universally accessible programmes which take particular measures to ensure that people from a diverse range of background can participate. There may be additional advantages to such programmes. For example, programmes that bring people from different socio-economic classes together may help to build social networks across, as well as within, social groups.

5. Targets: outputs or outcomes

The UK government set a target of increasing the number of people volunteering by one million by 2004. The target reflects the current policy focus on numbers of volunteers. I have been arguing that the question to start with is not do we have enough numbers of volunteers, rather it is why do we want people to engage in youth action? Once we have our big idea - and we have argued it might be achieving civil renewal - we can then move on to the how we do it and how to measure if we have done it.

There is a role for targets. It is well known that what gets done is what gets measured and numbers are important. However, poor quality youth action experiences could be counter-productive. There is some evidence to suggest that those young people who volunteer are often dissatisfied with their experience. In one IVR survey (1997), seven out of ten of all volunteers reported dissatisfaction with the way their voluntary work was organised, with younger volunteers most likely to be critical of their experiences.

This suggests targets need to be about more than sheer numbers of programme participants. Targets for the number of volunteers (i.e. outputs) might be supplemented by measures of change in quality of life or community impact, such as trust, young people's political involvement, youth crime or safety on streets (i.e. outcomes, see Ellis 2000). The Home Office target to increase community participation by 5 per cent by 2006 is a step toward this. To assess success by these measures would mean building-in the ability to address these issues in the design of programmes (Open Agenda 2002). It is not easy to develop measures assess community impact or quality of life, but it is necessary.

6. Delivery

A national policy framework is needed to provide the strategic direction for the development of youth action. The necessary impetus could be delivered through existing bodies and partnership working. The first task is to identify the systemic barriers to youth action and propose remedies. For example, barriers exist in the tax and benefit system and barriers – sometimes put up by professionals - exist to developing opportunities for youth action within public services. There is also a continuing need for a clear legal framework around the status of voluntary action and different forms of payment. This removal of barriers will demand effective cross-departmental co-operation in government.

The second task is to identify funding sources for youth action programmes and manage that financial support. The role of private sector in funding youth action also deserves full exploration and it may be possible to work in partnership with businesses that could either provide financing or donate goods in kind. There may be lessons to be learnt here from the American scheme, Business Strengthening America, which aims to use the business community as “a booster rocket” to efforts by government and voluntary and community organisations to inspire Americans to serve in their communities.

The third task is to identify infrastructure development and support needs in the Voluntary and Community Sector. The key will be to improve the coverage, quality and sustainability of its infrastructure to enable the transferability of practice, including that which effectively links youth action and civil renewal objectives. It is also necessary to set out the common elements of youth action programmes. For example, setting standards in relation to monitoring and outcome-based evaluation and training. There is also a need for a systematic review of all evidence available on the relationship between voluntary action and on-going civic engagement.

The fourth task is to identify gaps in current provision and suggest programmes that might fill them. This would include the development and funding of pilot programmes designed to deliver civic engagement through youth action. However, the decisions about how youth action should be delivered on the ground should be down to local partnerships to ensure community ownership and young people's input into programmes.

4. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that there is a need for a more focussed and ambitious approach to public policy intervention in youth action programmes. Such an approach must begin with clarity about the purpose of youth action. We have argued that the motivating idea behind public policy intervention in youth action could be the achievement of civil renewal. In particular, we recommend the focus be placed on bringing about long lasting habits of civic engagement, including amongst the most disadvantaged young people.

There is, however, a lack of robust evidence to show exactly how youth action should be developed in the future and this evidence base clearly needs to be built. What we do know is that there is significant potential for youth action to bring about lasting habits of civic engagement and the time has come to get a better understanding of how we might exploit this potential.

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Development of International Youth Voluntary Service in the EU

Comparison of programme and policy development in Germany, Italy, France, Czech Republic and Poland

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The research was supported by

Global Service Institute, Washington University in St. Louis, United States,

Federal Ministry of Families, Women, Youth and Seniors, Germany,

Robert Bosch Foundation, Germany,

Action Committee Service for Peace, Germany.

& Arci Servizio Civile, Comité de Coordination pour le Service Civil, Ost-West Institut für Sozialmanagement e.V.

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1.INTRODUCTION

National and international voluntary service programmes provides a wealth of evidence confirming the contribution of voluntary service to society and the young people themselves. But until now, international voluntary service in the EU has been restricted to a small number of young people. The European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme of the European Commission is by far the largest source of financial support. In 2003, 3,500 young people performed a voluntary service in a European country other than their own for periods of between 3-12 months. Under the current YOUTH programme (2000-2006) there is little prospect of any significant increase in the participants' numbers. The number of privately funded programmes² does not at all satisfy the demands of young people.

This research study has been carried out at a time when several European countries are in transition from compulsory military service to a professional army. In this context, they are in the process of establishing legal frameworks which set the conditions in which volunteers and organisations can receive state support. All frameworks foresee opportunities for youth voluntary service abroad and some offer the possibility of receiving foreign volunteers.

Interest in the development of civic service is growing – youth voluntary service being one of several forms – not only in Europe, but also worldwide.³ Civic service is considered a means of active citizenship and non-formal education.

This article presents only first the results of the research study as it is not yet completed. The final study is expected to be published in the autumn of 2004.

2. RESEARCH AIMS

The study aims to understand the legal, financial and administrative frameworks for youth voluntary and civil service that is being developed in France, Germany, and Italy. The reports on Poland and the Czech Republic illustrate the situation in two new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe in the enlarged European Union. The study compares the national developments and programmes in order to identify the major incompatibilities regarding international youth voluntary service.

The development of programmes and policies at European level is also explored in addition to the comparative approach of the different youth and civil service programmes at national level. The special status created for the EVS programme in most countries and its impact on national youth policy development is an example of the interaction between both levels.

The parallel analysis of the national and European frameworks, as well as research into how the different levels interact, aims to identify the incompatibilities and how they can be overcome. Despite bilateral declarations to develop international volunteer exchange programmes⁴, the legal frameworks for civil voluntary service in the countries are very different and present many practical and administrative obstacles to their implementation. This study aims to identify the challenges and possibilities to significantly increase the number of international voluntary service opportunities for young people in Europe.

3. METHODOLOGY

Methodological approach

The research began in May 2003 and will be completed in July 2004.

² Foundations, international voluntary service organisations

³ UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/57/106 adopted 26 November 2002, Follow up to the International Year of Volunteers; Global Service Institute(2003): The Forms and Nature of Civic Service: A global assessment; Innovations in Civic Participation(2004): Worldwide Youth Service Policy Scan

⁴ like 'Déclaration sur le volontariat civil' during the summit on 10th November 2001 between France and Germany

The methodological approach was developed and continually reviewed in three meetings by a research team composed of practitioners from the voluntary service sector and academics from the social and political sciences. The study was coordinated by the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations (AVSO), an umbrella for organisations involved in managing full-time, long-term voluntary service programmes.

The three countries: Italy, France and Germany were originally four together with Spain⁵. They were selected because all of them had either recently ended the compulsory military service for young men, or were discussing its end. Each country had established new, or amended existing frameworks for national voluntary service for young men and women. It was also suggested that the development of civil voluntary service programmes in three large EU Member States would be relevant to the possible development of international programmes at European level. The research in each of the three countries was carried out by the national research partner (and member of the research team) and supported through national funding.

In view of the EU enlargement, the team agreed to explore developments in two countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Poland and the Czech Republic were selected as both countries had adopted legal frameworks to promote volunteerism in 2003. The research was carried out by the study co-ordinator.

The research comprises four components:

- 1) ***National reports for five countries*** with an analysis of the political background and the current system of youth voluntary and civil service programmes according to a common structure.
- 2) ***Validation through case studies in Italy, France and Germany*** with experiences of international voluntary service from the perspective of different national stakeholders from a government body and from NGOs using a common questionnaire.
- 3) ***Analysis of EU policy, legislation and programming*** with a focus on European political or legislative instruments and the impact on the development of national political and legal frameworks for volunteers.
- 4) ***Comparative analysis and recommendations*** explaining differences in the countries. Recommendations aim to give practical suggestions on how cooperation between the stakeholders at national and at European level can be facilitated.

Limitations

The study is broad. The limited time and resources did not allow for an in-depth investigation of all the issues that could affect the development of youth service in the five countries. The study on Poland and the Czech Republic relies only on English and German documents, and on interviews with several stakeholders due to the language limitations of the author.

Other limitations are the lack of comparative quantitative data as well as the dynamic situation in each one of the countries. The five countries involved are all in a policy transition period regarding youth voluntary service. The impact of recent legal changes in the countries is examined until early 2004⁶.

The research project is considered to be a starting point for the development of comparative research in a new field. Hopefully, it will stimulate similar research on the subject in other countries.

Terminology

⁵ Unfortunately, the analysis of the Spanish situation needed to be withdrawn due to a lack of support at national level. The initiative of the Spanish government for the creation of a future Voluntary Civil Service Law in Spain encountered strong opposition from the civil sector (Trade Unions, Youth Councils and NGOs) and was withdrawn. This makes it unlikely that voluntary service will be officially recognised and supported by the Spanish government in the near future.

⁶ The national reports cover the Italian development until March 2004 and the development in the four other countries and at European level until April 2004.

At its first meeting, the research team agreed to change the term of “transnational” into “international”. According to the typology developed by the Global Service Institute “transnational” programmes are defined as “cooperative programme between two or more countries, where the servers are expected to spend service in a host country as well as their country of origin” (GSI, 2003, p.9) while “international” service programmes send people from their home country to another country.

The group agreed to focus on full-time “voluntary and civil service” programmes according to the following criteria:

- that they involve young people aged 16-28 years, who are
- carrying out a full-time voluntary/civic or civil service for at least 6 months.

The age range of the young people recognised in the national policies in the five countries differs slightly in regard to the minimum and the maximum ages: 18-28 (Italy), 16-27 (Germany) and 16-26 (France), 18-26 (Czech Republic) and 15-25 (Poland).

4. NATIONAL REPORTS

Overview

The following section provides a summary of the different national reports on youth voluntary and civil service. They briefly introduce the legal basis for youth voluntary service and other programmes that operate outside the framework of the specific legal framework.

France

The tradition of full-time voluntary service in France focused on sending people abroad through organisations officially recognised by the Ministry of Co-operation and Development⁷. Full-time voluntary service on French territory was, due to the high rate of unemployment, always viewed with ambivalence and the fear of introducing low paid jobs.

A 'new' National Service was adopted in France in 1997 together with the transition to a professional army. National service has been replaced by voluntary military and civil service.

The recent adoption of the law on Voluntary Civil Service 'Volontariat Civil'⁸ further complicates the legal framework. It allows young French, or citizens from another EU country (18-28 years old), to perform a full-time service in areas of civil defence and security, social cohesion and solidarity, international co-operation, development and humanitarian aid, for a period of 6 to 24 months. The service is regulated by a public-law contract. 'Civil volunteers' are under the responsibility of French ministries. They receive pocket money (exempt from taxes and social security contributions) and basic healthcare insurance. Their period of service is taken into account for their pension and may contribute to certain diplomas of further education or professional titles. The law also foresees a possibility for a service abroad although this programme is highly selective⁹.

On 28th July 2003, the French Government published the long awaited *Circular DIES Nor 2003-001* in order to implement the “volontariat” for social cohesion and solidarity, which was closest to the idea of a national youth voluntary service. Although originally foreseen, this legal framework does not offer the possibility of performing

⁷ These volunteers benefit from social insurance by the "Caisse des Français à l'étranger", comprising retirement benefits, civil liability insurance, a lump sum for reinsertion in France plus monthly allowances.

⁸ LOI no 2000-242 du 14 mars 2000 relative aux volontariats civils institués par l'article L. 111-2 du code du service national et à diverses mesures relatives à la réforme du service national

⁹ These 'volontariats civils' in the field of economic, social and cultural co-operation in French Embassies, Consulates, Alliance Française or commercial enterprises, are strongly promoted as 'professional international experience'.

voluntary service abroad¹⁰. To date, the government has made no financial commitment to the programme, so its uptake by organisations and volunteers has been slow to develop.

Italy

Until 2001, full-time voluntary service only existed in the field of international cooperation and development work and foresaw services of up to 24 months outside of Italy (Law No49/1987).

The 'Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri' (DPCM) of 10 August 2001 created a voluntary civil service and the volunteer status in Italy, preparing the way for the end of the military service in 2004¹¹. The transition is legislated in Article 5 of the Law for National Civil Service. Only women and men who are exempt from military service for medical reasons can apply for voluntary service. The programme will be open to all women and men between 18-28 years after the end of the draft. Volunteers can be placed in civic service projects in Italy or abroad, either in Europe or in developing countries. EVS remains outside the law. After the service, it counts for the calculation of the pension as equivalent to one year's work in a state or governmental office. In 2003, 22,390 young volunteers used the possibility to perform national civic service in Italy and 539 abroad.

Germany

Germany is one of the few countries in the EU that has developed the concept of full-time voluntary service within youth policy.

Both laws on voluntary service¹² were amended in 2002¹³. The law offers greater flexibility in the length of the service (varying between 6-18 months, in general 12 months)¹⁴ and extends the programme to include conscientious objectors who can perform a 12-month voluntary service in Germany or abroad instead of their civil service (10 months). The FSJ can be performed worldwide, but organisations abroad have to fulfil the same criteria as those at national level. Around 15,100 volunteers were involved in 2003 in the FSJ/FÖJ programme as well as 3200 conscientious objectors. Nearly 200 volunteers were sent abroad as well as 600 conscientious objectors.

Two international programmes exist in Germany for full-time volunteers abroad outside the framework of these two laws: EVS and 'Learning Services Abroad'. The latter is organised by churches, social welfare and voluntary service organisations and offers placements of 6-24 months to people over 18 years to develop international exchange and understanding, solidarity, peace and reconciliation. Organisations are not required to contribute to unemployment or pension costs as in the case of the FSJ programme. The parents of the volunteers do not receive any family or child allowance.

The Commission on "*Impulses for the civic society – perspectives for volunteer and civilian services in Germany*" launched by the Minister for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in May 2003 put the future development of both services high on the agenda and involved all the major stakeholders in the area of voluntary and compulsory civil service. The report asked for state support in the case of the end of the compulsory military service. The abolishment of 92,000 compulsory civil service placements could be partially compensated by new volunteer programmes involving men and women of all age groups with flexible service periods, new activity fields and the involvement of new organisations. Pilot programmes will test the new concepts.

¹⁰ The law mentioned EVS and the voluntary civil service as possible combination for young EU citizens doing a service in France. No legal provision has been set up by decree or circular so far to integrate EVS in this context.

¹¹ The Italian government decided to accelerate the process (see law No 77 of 6th April 2002). The draft of compulsory military service will end in December 2004.

¹² Voluntary social year ("Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr" - FSJ) adopted in 1964 and the voluntary ecological year ("Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr" - FÖJ) adopted in 1993.

¹³ Law to amend the law promoting the voluntary social year and other laws (Gesetz zur Änderung des Gesetzes zur Förderung eines Freiwilligen sozialen Jahres und anderer Gesetze) came into force on 1st June 2002

¹⁴ Completion of the education is required instead of minimum age, enlargement of the range of activities to the cultural and sports fields, enlarging of the programme worldwide.

Czech Republic

The image of volunteerism in Czech society is still tainted by former experiences of the so-called ‘volunteering’ under the Communist regime. The Czech Act on Volunteer Services (zákon o dobrovolnické službě) effective from 1st January 2003 is unique among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe¹⁵. Influenced by the design of EVS, the act introduces new terms (volunteer, voluntary services, sending organisations, receiving organisations), which have no historical roots in the Czech legal system. The law is not conceived as a comprehensive framework law for volunteerism. Other forms of voluntary activity may take place outside the law.

The law requires written contracts between the volunteers and the sending organisations. Specific requirements are compulsory for long-term service or short-term service abroad¹⁶. Volunteers must have insurance coverage for health, accident and civil liability. Contracts may stipulate provisions for the pension insurance of the volunteer paid by the sending organisations at the minimal basis, if the service exceeds 20 hours per week.

Thirty-six projects coming from 23 organisations were accredited by 4th May 2004¹⁷. Only one project focuses on international voluntary service in the field of development aid.

Volunteer Programmes at national level are mostly part-time in the social field tackling social exclusion, but also run in the area of environment and cultural heritage. The “Volunteering of Unemployed People” programme is the only programme at national level involving young unemployed people for 4 days/week in an NGO. The focus of the programme is less on the development of civic society than to find a job in the labour market.

The end of military and civilian service announced for December 2004 may strongly influence the development of full-time voluntary service in the country, as organisations need to look for alternative solutions to replace 48,000 conscientious objectors.

Poland

In the context of the struggle for recognition of NGOs by the state and by society, the adoption of the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism in April 2003 is very important for the future development of the third sector. The law provides the procedural framework for co-operation between local governments and NGOs, and ensures the protection of volunteers working with accredited organisations regarding health and social security. Volunteers are entitled to receive reimbursement of expenditure for costs like travel and training, as well as a daily allowance exempt from taxes.

The law does not distinguish between part-time and full-time volunteering. The application of this law is very wide and foresees volunteer activities in all the areas of public benefit.

The law contains provisions for international voluntary services programmes sending Poles abroad and/or receiving foreign volunteers from other countries. Volunteers are entitled to benefits and reimbursements of their costs ‘generally acknowledged for the situation’ (for example, board and lodging).

Besides the ‘First Job’ programme, no official programme specifically promotes full-time voluntary service in Poland. Most organisations work with part-time volunteers who are active in a wide range of fields: youth unemployment, social inclusion, civic society development and lifelong learning.

The possible abolition of compulsory military service expected for the years 2006-2008 will not have a strong impact on the development of full-time voluntary service in Poland due to the small numbers of conscientious objectors.

¹⁵ Act No 198 of 24 April 2002 on volunteer services amending certain regulations (volunteer services act)

¹⁶ with regard to nature, location and duration of service, preparatory training, specification of food and accommodation conditions for the volunteer, reimbursement of costs linked to preparation, international and local transport costs, payment of pocket money etc

¹⁷ see Czech Ministry of Interior: www/mcv.cz/Akreditované_dobrovolnické_organizace.htm of 4th May 2004

Voluntary service at European level

Alongside these national developments, several activities are currently on-going at European level that are related to youth participation in society and the role of voluntary service.

In the follow up to the *White Paper on Youth Policy*¹⁸, the Youth Unit of the European Commission send out a questionnaire on “voluntary activity” as one of its priority areas for the Open Method of Co-ordination¹⁹. The answers of the governments of each member state²⁰ were compiled in a synthesis report²¹ and the European Commission proposed common objectives for national and EU-co-operation in this field in a communication²² to the Council in April 2004.

The report asks all member states to apply the *EU-Recommendation on Mobility* of July 2001²³ with regard to volunteers in order to remove obstacles to the freedom of movement in educational and vocational training programmes with an European dimension.

The conclusions²⁴ of the first intergovernmental conference on Civic Service and Youth on 28-29th November 2003 in Rome highlighted the need for the systematic and regular exchange of information and good practice for strengthened co-operation between civic services and youth policy, as well as enhanced co-operation among the member states, the acceding countries and the EC in the field of civic service for young people.

In March 2004, the Commission published two communications outlining its general ideas for the future programmes. EVS will be part of the future Youth Programme. Major changes foresee the extension of the target group (13-30 years) as well as the simplification and strong decentralisation of the programme. EVS will target 10,000 volunteers per year - compared to 3,500 currently – a total of 70,000 for the duration of the programme.

The European Commission is currently discussing how the EVS programme could be linked to a voluntary humanitarian aid corps as declared in the draft constitution. The consultation of all member states in the above mentioned survey on voluntary activity with regard to this perspective resulted in the general interest of most countries, while several stressed the importance to maintain the educational value of the EVS programme.

5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The comparative analysis is based on the findings of the national reports of the five countries, the analysis of policy and programmes related to youth voluntary service at European level as well as the experience expressed by stakeholders in the interviews in Italy, France and Germany.

The comparative analysis has two parts.

The first section focuses on the different motivations behind the development of international youth voluntary service in each of the countries concerned, highlighting the political context for the creation of programmes and the understanding behind voluntary service.

The second section focuses on comparing the practical implementation of the programmes in each of the countries.

5.1. Understanding voluntary service

¹⁸ Commission of the European Communities (2001), COM(2001) 681final, A new impetus for European youth, European Commission White Paper, November 2001

¹⁹ The Open Method of Co-ordination was introduced by the Lisbon European Council 2000 in order to develop a European Union action plan for combating poverty and social exclusion. It offers a means of benchmarking national initiatives, in order to develop a coherent EU approach while respecting the principal of subsidiarity.

²⁰ The candidate countries could also participate on a voluntarily basis.

²¹ Commission of the European Communities (2004), SEC (2004)628, Commission Staff Working Paper, Brussels

²² Commission of the European Communities (2004), COM (2004)337final, Communication from the Commission to the Council, Brussels

²³ Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers Official Journal L 215, 09.08.2001

²⁴ see: www....

Voluntary service, the abolition of obligatory military service and conscientious objection

The development of the legal basis for youth voluntary service programmes in France, Italy and Germany is inextricably linked to the suspension of compulsory military service. The fact that national legal frameworks for youth voluntary service are so closely tied to the phasing out of civilian service performed by COs, has enormous impact on the nature of the voluntary service programmes. In both Germany and Italy, the public sector and well-established social welfare organisations are still responsible for hosting the bulk of volunteers. In France, associations are more active in the solidarity and social cohesion programme. However, the actual number of young people involved is much lower.

Although both the Czech Republic and Poland are considering to phase out compulsory military service, their recent laws on voluntary service are not an attempt to replace the activities of conscientious objectors. The laws are more closely linked to the development of civic society (see below).

Voluntary service and the provision of social welfare services

As mentioned above, the countries with large numbers of conscientious objectors (Italy, Germany and to a lesser extent the Czech Republic) face a significant loss of manpower in the social welfare sector when military service is no longer obligatory. The promotion of youth voluntary service in these countries is therefore partly motivated by the need to retain young people in the social welfare sector.

Nonetheless, even where the involvement of conscientious objectors in the social welfare system has been less important, voluntary service is increasingly seen as a means of improving the delivery of services in the face of growing economic pressure and demographic changes. There is a trend in all countries towards giving greater flexibility and autonomy to NGOs in the delivery of social welfare services, and supporting the increased involvement of volunteers. This vision of voluntary service is a strong motivating factor behind the new laws in Poland and the Czech Republic where the legal framework offers a means of facilitating greater cooperation between the government and NGOs.

Voluntary service and youth unemployment

The unemployment rate among young people is more than double the national average in all countries except Germany. In Poland, over 41% of young people under 25 are without work. Governments in all five countries consider the integration of young people into the labour market as a major political priority. Volunteering has been loosely interpreted as a means of providing professional experience and training in the social or non-profit sector. Germany launched the ‘voluntary social training year’ – targeted at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Poland initiated the ‘first job’ programme in which voluntary engagement is one of several options. The Czech government supports a specific programme for young unemployed people work four days/week as volunteers in an NGO or a public institution.

The main motivation behind each of these programmes is the professional integration of young people. Training options may be referred to as ‘volunteering’ because they are within the non-profit sector. The traditional model of voluntary service may be lost with this interpretation.

Voluntary service and social inclusion

The national frameworks for youth voluntary service are open to all young people. In two countries participation is limited - only to EU-citizens in France to young Italians in Italy. None of the programmes require that the young person make a financial contribution, so as to avoid excluding young people on economic grounds. However, in all countries the majority of participants in the national as well as in the international programmes are well-educated young people. In the case of Germany and Italy, the demand for the placements exceeds supply so organisations can select candidates with the effect of excluding less academic candidates.

EVS is the only programme so far with an explicit inclusion policy with regard to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the percentage of these young people in the programme remains low for a

number of reasons²⁵. The German law was amended in 2002 to attract new target groups like young people with a migrant background or with low education. The minimum age was lowered and new activities were introduced (like the voluntary social year in sports associations).

Voluntary service and young people

International voluntary service is an attractive option for many young people because it combines individual development (language, international and professional experience) with the feeling of 'making a contribution'.

Demand for EVS placements has increased steadily since the launch of the YOUTH programme in 2000. Many National Agencies now have to reject applications. Demand is also high for international placements in the frame of the German voluntary social and ecological year and many candidates are rejected. Even the programmes outside the legal framework, which imply a participation fee and the loss of certain financial benefits (eg. Family allowance) are heavily oversubscribed.

Both French programmes, especially the 'volunteers in enterprises' have a high number of well-qualified candidates²⁶ (15,000 since 1st of January and 130 on average every day). While the programme is increasing (2001: 984 volunteers, 2002: 1790 including 194 extensions), available places cannot meet the demand. Organisations in Poland and the Czech Republic are still in the phase of accreditation and the focus of implementation is within the country. Only one Czech organisation, the focal point of UNV volunteers, has so far been accredited with an international programme focusing on development aid. While demands increase among Italian organisations and volunteer candidates to develop the civil service abroad, the numbers are so far limited due to administrative procedures.

Voluntary service and international solidarity

All five countries have developed programmes with a focus on cooperation with third countries but they have different approaches. Italy as well France have set up international voluntary service programmes with the exclusive focus on sending young people abroad. The programmes in the three other countries - Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland - have set up international voluntary service exchanges worldwide: sending young people abroad and hosting volunteers from other countries.

The older age range in all five countries than in the EVS programme allows young people with professional skills and greater maturity to also participate.

The French international volunteering in enterprises focuses on the international development of French interests. The programme shows the limited vision of the French government on the economic benefits of the social capital. The other programmes may be used by NGOs to develop mutual exchanges with a broader focus on the development of human and social capital through the support of social networks at local community, national and international level.

Voluntary service and European citizenship

It is striking that - with the exception of France - none of the five countries has integrated EVS into their national volunteer frameworks, all of which, however, promote international voluntary service. Only France identifies EVS as compatible in the law on civil service. At least, the hosting part of the EVS programme in France could be integrated in the programme for social cohesion and solidarity as the activities and projects are similar. The

²⁵ Complex administrative procedures at national level, delay of approvals, lack of knowledge of sending and hosting organisations how to deal with these youngsters and insufficient financial support of organisations for preparation, subversion and follow up, see: Schröder, R.(2003), Voluntary Service: Opening doors to the future, AVSO, Brussels, and AVSO, EIP, Envol and Creative Cooperations (2003), Recommendations to work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, AVSO, Brussels

²⁶ 56 % have spent five years or more in higher education, 28% have 3 or 4 years, 10% have 2 years and 6% have no 18+ education (see: Becquet (2004): Page 18)

implementation is at stake as no legal provision has been yet set up in France to allow associations to combine the two programmes for the hosting of volunteers coming from another EU Member states.

Only young Italians aged 18-26²⁷ can participate in the Italian voluntary service programme. The access to the French voluntary service programmes is limited to EU citizens. The restrictive access to both programmes does not allow the participation of third country citizens legally living in the two countries. The three other countries (Czech Republic, Poland and Germany) do not limit participation in their programmes with regard to nationality.

5.2. Implementation of voluntary service schemes

Government responsibility

Different ministries are in charge of voluntary service and responsible for the implementation of the laws: the Ministry of Social Affairs in Poland; the Youth Ministry in Germany; the Ministry of Interior in the Czech Republic; the Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers in Italy. In France, the responsibility for the four different forms of civil voluntary service is distributed according to the competences in the relevant sectors. In the area of social cohesion and solidarity (Ministry of Social Affairs), 12 ministries are concerned with its further implementation. While the variety of areas have a lot of potential for the further development of volunteering, it will be more difficult to ensure the coordination and the development of common visions for society or for example, international youth voluntary service.

All countries have specific legal frameworks for the different forms of voluntary service/activity rather than a general law integrating all forms of voluntary service. Initiatives in Germany and France to set up a more general legal framework have failed so far.

A major challenge will be the development of a common approach, which simplifies administrative procedures but still allows for a diversity of international programmes. Current experience at multilateral or bilateral level is less promising.

The administration of the national programmes reflects the limited vision of all five countries in youth voluntary service. EVS and national programmes are managed by separate administrations and rarely tend to communicate or cooperate.

The Youth Unit of the EC will change the current management²⁸ of the EVS programme²⁹ in order to simplify procedures. Administration costs are too high for 3500 volunteers per year and procedures don't guarantee secure time planning for the organisation of the exchange programme.

The French-German agreement on mutual recognition of youth voluntary service has so far failed to facilitate exchanges between organisations in both countries. As the French law is now enforced, it will be interesting to track if the number of French-German exchanges increases.

Programme management: relationship between state and civic society

France is the only country running the volunteer programmes under public law. Every volunteer agreement has to be signed between the state and the associations.³⁰ This involves the state more actively in the organisation and supervision of the French programmes than in the four other countries. Volunteer agreements are based on private

²⁷ From 2005: 18-28 years

²⁸ All EVS projects have to be accredited after submission of a host expression of interest. Application for EVS has to be submitted to the two National agencies in the sending and hosting country. A common decision on the application is not certain as National Agencies have set up in each country national priorities for activities, partner countries and are confronted with a limited budget. Organisations are regularly confronted with delays on decision of at least one side and several experienced an approval for one side and a rejection from the other side. The project needs to be approved from both sides to take place.

²⁹ The EC decided to introduce "more collective forms" of EVS - i.e. funding/approval for several volunteers together. From September 2004 on, the approval of one national agency may be sufficient to realise the project.

³⁰ If young people from abroad combine the French service with EVS, the European commission signs the contract with the associations.

contracts signed between the volunteer and depending on the programme of either the sending or the hosting organisation.

In all countries the state accredits organisations either for sending and/or hosting according to specific requirements for the domestic or international voluntary service.

Eligible sending organisations tend to be international NGOs. In addition, French law identifies different beneficiaries for the different programme.

The type of hosting organisations vary from country to country, while all countries recognise the variety of organisations in the non-profit sector (NGOs, municipalities, local authorities, associations etc.). While the majority of countries (and EVS) restrict placements for volunteers in the profit sector, the French understanding sees it as a cooperation partner for the development of international youth voluntary service.

Activity areas of voluntary service

Some countries have specific requirements for international projects. In Italy, projects have to either support foreign countries or Italian communities abroad. The international frames of the two German programmes focus on reconciliation, international solidarity and understanding. The Czech Act refers to the assistance in the implementation of development programmes and Poland mentions activities for the sake of European integration and development of relations and cooperation among nations³¹. The French programme for international volunteering in enterprises identifies other tasks for young people: the research for and the prospecting of new international markets, the technical or commercial reinforcement of local teams, the search for partners, agents or distributors and the creation or set up of local structures.

Accreditation of organisations

The process of accreditation of sending and/or hosting organisations is different in each country. While the Czech Republic and Italy (for the transition phase until 2005) have central institutions to deal with the applications, the others countries focus on decentralised implementation. The role of the Italian regions and the self-governing provinces will strongly increase in the process after January 2005 with the implementation of the new service. The regions and provinces will have decisive power on the legal and financial aspects of the future programme and the extension of working hours from the current 25 hours/week to possible 30/36 hours/week.

Pedagogical support

All programmes require preparation and pedagogic training for the volunteers. However, the pedagogical standards vary considerably. Italy, Germany and EVS offer financial support for the pedagogical dimension through lump sums per volunteer. The requirements for seminars for German volunteers abroad ³² represent an obstacle for developing the programme in other countries.

The legal status of volunteers

The emphasis in all the legal frameworks is understandably, on the legal status of the volunteers in the country. However, this leaves a hiatus for those volunteers performing voluntary service abroad.

None of the legal frameworks give legal status to EVS volunteers, which is incompatible with the national systems. The EVS programme covers private insurance to all participants.

While optimal social protection is desirable for volunteers during their service, this becomes particularly complex and difficult if the provisions for international volunteers (volunteers send abroad/hosted from abroad) with regard to social security differ from country to country.

³¹ Poland defines in the law 24 areas of public tasks, where volunteers can work. No distinction exists between domestic and international volunteering.

³² 25 seminar days during 12 months, preparation and evaluation seminars compulsory in Germany during the 12 months, language training in Germany

Differences appear regarding the protection requirements for *volunteers insurance*. While all countries specify requirements for health insurance, accident and civil liability are not required for volunteers in Poland.

While *pocket money* for EVS (140- 220 EUR) is at a similar level in Germany (153 EUR on average³³), the fixed allowances in France (570.86 EUR) and Italy (433,80 EUR and 600 EUR abroad) are significantly higher. While the state pays the allowances in Italy, the situation is completely different for French organisations that are requested to cover the amounts. The law in the Czech Republic does not entitle the volunteer to any remuneration, but to the reimbursement of costs for accommodation, food and travel, if they arise in connection to the voluntary activity. Poland defines the reimbursement of expenditures in the same way, but also grant per diem without specifying the amounts.

While France, Poland and the Czech Republic declare that the payments are exonerated from *taxation*, Germany and Italy ask that volunteers declare their allowances. In both countries, the amounts remain under the threshold.

Other allowances like *child or family* benefits are maintained in some countries while in others they are suspended or lost if young people go abroad³⁴. The differences apply in similar ways if the young people participate in the EVS programme. The loss of allowances is often a major disincentive to participate for young people with low financial means. Others who ignored the situation encountered the problem on return after the service. In most countries the allowances are no longer paid because the activity is not considered similar to formal training or education.

The situation regarding contributions to *pensions and unemployment* is also quite problematic and highlights the different status of volunteers in the different countries. While in Germany the volunteers are treated in the same way as workers and vocational trainees, organisations have to cover contributions to the German social security system. Italy and France recognise voluntary service as accountable for the pension schemes and the state covers the costs, although volunteers are not considered as workers or trainees and therefore, no unemployment contributions are requested from the organisations. The Czech state partly refunds the pension payments for volunteers working more than 20 hours/week. While the Act does not require hosting organisations to pay an unemployment contribution, unemployed people involved in accredited volunteer programmes can maintain their unemployment benefits. These volunteers maintain their social status as unemployed because the state considers the activity similar to job seeking.

Validation of experiences

The national as well as the European certificate in the frame of EVS are not sufficiently recognised in the EU. The problem is partly due to the lack of visibility of international volunteers. Employers and institutions don't know the programmes and experiences in the non-formal sector of education and in most countries these do not have the same value as a formal diploma.

Financial Support

While all countries recognise the value of voluntary service for society, the state supports the national programmes financially in different ways. In all countries except Poland the support has increased, but is insufficient. In France the support differs from programme to programme, while reimbursing the cost of social insurance and counting the time of service for an individuals pension entitlement. Social insurance costs are in

³³ Legislation considers a sum of pocket money appropriate if it does not exceed 6 per cent of the contribution assessment limit valid for the Workers' and Employees' Pension Insurance (§ 159 of the Sixth Book of the Social Code). The contribution limits were fixed in 2002 at a monthly rate of 4,500 (in the Western part of Germany) and 3,750 (in the eastern part of Germany). The amount paid to the volunteers by the host organization/project should not exceed this amount and is generally lower (see W. Schur (2004): Page 23)

³⁴ While the situation is particularly difficult for young volunteers abroad, the problem is more general: the suspension or loss of benefits occurs also for volunteers in domestic programmes that remain outside the law. In some countries organisations are obliged to remain outside the law because they are not able to pay social security conditions like in Germany or cannot apply like Czech associations membership-based activities of their volunteer members.

most countries covered by the state, except in Poland and in Germany. The latter finance social security costs for conscientious objectors but not for “real volunteers” under the social or ecological year.

Only Germany and the Czech Republic and to a lesser extent Italy support the costs for pedagogical preparation and training, while the other countries give low importance to the pedagogical quality of the programmes.

Italy is the only country to finance the monthly allowance for the volunteer as well as the international travel costs, as the EVS programme does. These amounts represent significant support for small organisations, which are already struggling for the support of their proper activities. The Czech Republic is the only country to recognise volunteering as an equal activity to job seeking maintaining unemployment benefits for that period of time.

State support at this stage is important to stimulate programme development as well as to guarantee quality standards. The general recognition of the value of the programmes needs to be more known and acknowledged in order to allow projects to look for alternative funding resources to state funds since the budget for volunteering will always be limited.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified several challenges and possibilities to significantly increasing the number of international voluntary service opportunities for young people in Europe. Recommendations aim to give practical suggestions on how co-operation between stakeholders at national and at European level can be facilitated:

1) Youth voluntary service as an innovative instrument of civic society policy at national and European level

Youth voluntary service is in all countries connected to the development of the third sector, which has to tackle new needs linked to the enlargement of the European Union. It will be important to develop open frameworks allowing the third sector to offer diverse forms of voluntary service for different youth and meeting different social needs. Therefore, all countries may set up a national civic policy covering all ages.

A European civil society with active people and infrastructure needs to be established. International volunteers could contribute to this process by being aware of cultural differences, by speaking foreign languages and sharing common concerns. They will have experienced NGOs of another country, different national structures and methods dealing with the problems of society. They represent an important potential human resource for the exchange of practices and mutual understanding. East –West, East-East and North- South exchanges may contribute through the mutual exchange of volunteers to bridge social capital, to network development and the set up of new partnerships at local, regional, national and European level.

2) Exchange between national and European representatives to develop a common approach

The analysis shows the absolute necessity to extend the exchange of practice and understanding between the EU member states and the European institutions. A common approach may be set up by the clarification of terms and values for the youth voluntary service. A first step could be the publication of the answers to the EU questionnaire on voluntary activity on the websites of the national youth ministries with an English translation in the Czech Republic³⁵.

Another issue at stake is the approach towards the profit sector as a beneficiary of voluntary service. Programmes of this type may be renamed to avoid misunderstandings or a discussion may take place as to in what way the profit sector support other volunteer programmes in exchange of this possibility.

³⁵ The answers to the questionnaire are published on the website of Hastier, the Czech national volunteer centre see www.volunteer.cz

The creation of an independent European observatory, composed of experts from the national and international voluntary activities/service would allow to track the developments in the different countries, identify incompatibilities and to report on the implementation and the impact of programmes.

The development of common standards and procedures is achievable by the common training of civil servants from the national ministries.

3) Remove obstacles to incompatibility by the implementation of existing European instruments in the national context.

The analysis highlights patterns of incompatibility between national laws that hinder transnational volunteering-social security requirements, unavailability of exemption from penalties for the unemployed for job seeking.

The EU-Recommendation for transnational mobility of July 2001 with regards to volunteers has to be taken into account by the Member States. The recommendation was ignored for the amendment of the German law. The recommendation fails to harmonise standards with regards to the right of residence, employment law, social security and taxation, effective elimination of double taxation.

Another suggestion is to sign the European Convention on the promotion of a Trans-National Voluntary Service for young people³⁶ preparing a proper legal status for volunteers in Europe. Set up in 2001, the treaty still lacks the signature of an EU member state to begin its ratification and to come into force for the countries that have signed it. None of the five countries except France has signed the European convention.

4) Equal access to international programmes for all young residents in the European Union

New legal initiatives should set up provisions for residents in their own country to go abroad as well as to have foreign volunteers allowing development in both directions.

Programmes for international youth voluntary service with restricted access should be amended to allow all young people legally resident in the EU to become a volunteer. Programmes combatting social exclusion or developing social solidarity lack coherence if young people from a migrant background, who are more likely to face discrimination or social exclusion, cannot participate in the programme. The German programme should look for ways to avoid disadvantages for young women and men exempt from military service, as state support and recognition is to a larger extent available only for conscientious objectors.

5) Simplification of administration procedures

Alternative administration procedures as established in the EVS programme need to be conceptualised. One example may be the proposal of AVSO for a youth mobility voucher. The concept foresees an entitlement system enabling every young person from 18-25 years with a permanent residence in the EU to go abroad for at least 3 months as a volunteer, student or trainee. Criteria for an effective system will be the significant quantitative participation of young people in transnational mobility schemes, low administrative procedures for young people and organisations.

6) Roles & responsibilities of NGOs

Civil society organisations are delivering the programmes. For programmes with an European dimension, the states should invest in the networking of organisations in order to ensure quality management and control of international partnerships. Experience shows that networks can develop high quality standards for the programmes as well as quality control that are less costly and more efficient than those carried out by the national administrations. National agencies or the state administration should concentrate on quality checks with the accredited coordination organisations and offer trainings for capacity development.

³⁶ European treaty series- No 175 of 11.5.2000

7) Government support

The participation of organisations in the youth voluntary service depends on the personal and administrative capacities as well as on financial means. NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe still need to discover the concept and become aware of its potential for the development of activities. State support will remain essential as no private funding system is yet established. This could change if experiences are better known and formally certified.

Governments should think of the national and European recognition/certification of the programmes. Voluntary service should be counted as a period of intercultural education and be recognised as equal to vocational training, as the training is organised by state-accredited organisations.

7. FURTHER RESEARCH

Research in the sector of voluntary service is just emerging. International terminology of the key notions of volunteering should be established to clarify terms and concepts. Cross-national comparisons especially need to be further developed in order to get a complete picture of developments in the European Union as countries like the UK and the Netherlands are also setting up initiatives.. The development and comparison of voluntary service in the new EU member states is of particular interest for the common development in the enlarged EU. Legal initiatives are also undertaken in Lithuania and Romania. In the Balkans, comparative research started in order to allow the development of legal proposals.

There is a need to set up European criteria for the gaining of quantitative data from the countries allowing comparison. An important issue would be the comparative analysis of the financial costs of voluntary service programmes.

Research on international voluntary service should question the effects on European civic society development, European citizenship and the contribution of voluntary service to bridge social and human capital. A matter of further research will be to define criteria to measure these developments.

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Circular DIES N° 2003-001 du 28 Juillet 2003 relative au volontariat de cohésion sociale et de solidarité, France

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9. ANNEXES

Implementation of EVS in the five countries 2002

	France 2000-2002	Italy	Germany	Czech republic	Poland
Sending	1373	209	580	46	185
Hosting	924	393	330	28	101
Rejected applications	No information	62 sending 157 hosting/	367 for sending/hosting in 2001	16 sending 12 hosting	No information

Voluntary service and youth unemployment

Data source/ Eurostat news release 35/2003- 20 March 2003	France	Germany	Italy³⁷	Czech Republic	Poland	EU-15
Number in thousands/percentage of young people 15-24 years 2002	7726 (13.0%)	9395 (11,4%)	6602 (11.4%)	1496 (14.6%)	6540 (16.9%)	46821 (12.4%)
Total unemployment rate 1/ 2003	9.0%	8.6%	8.9%	6.8%	20.2%	7.9%
Unemployment rate young people under 25 years 1/2003	20.6	9.5%	26.8%	16.1%	41.4%	15.3%

³⁷ October 2002

Panel 1 – Exploring the links between volunteering and citizenship

Gerd Mutz (Munich Institut for Social Science)

Voluntary activities and Civil Learning – Findings of a Preparatory Survey for a European Case Study

Almudena Morena Mínguez (University of Valladolid)

Youth and voluntary services sector in the context of the Spanish Welfare State

Davina Goodchild (Birmingham Volunteer Action)

Volunteering development in Birmingham

Chair: Roisin McCabe (Youth Forum)



Youth and voluntary services sector in the context of the Spanish Welfare State

Exploration of the link between volunteering and citizenship in particular considering the links between the concepts civil society, voluntary activities and voluntary service and the relationships between these concepts in a European context.

YOUTH AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPANISH WELFARE STATE

INTRODUCTION

In recent years growing emphasis has been placed on nonprofit activities in an attempt to promote “active civil citizenship” in democratic societies. In general, this implies a more active role on the part of the various groups that make up society through involvement in a range of activities in the tertiary sector as well as membership of organisations. According to sociologists such as Putnam and Coleman, citizen involvement in these kinds of activities boosts “social capital”, giving rise to more democratically united societies. Debates on citizenship and “empowerment” focus mainly on citizens’ contributions to various aspects of civil life through involvement in volunteer associations and organisations.

My goal in this paper is to present the relevance of the nonprofit sector in twenty-two European countries and in Spain in comparative terms from data gathered in the comparative analysis of the nonprofit sector carried out by The Johns Hopkins University in 1998. The final aim of this paper is to analyse how young Spaniards are contributing to the creation of a “civil citizenship” through volunteer work in a country characterised by familiarism, dependency on the family, and by a poor fabric in terms of associations coupled with a limited welfare state.

1.- THE THIRD SECTOR FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The growing attention which in recent years has been focused on these organisations is in part due to a widespread crisis of the State, apparent throughout practically the whole world for more than two decades. This crisis has been reflected in a profound questioning of traditional social welfare policies in many developed countries in the Northern hemisphere, in a certain disenchantment with State handling of national development programmes in major parts of developing countries located in the Southern hemisphere, in the failure of the Central and Western European state socialist experiment, and in an ongoing concern for environmental destruction that threatens the health and safety of people everywhere. In addition to stimulating support for market oriented economic policies, this questioning of the State has focused its attention and new expectations on organisations in civil society that also operate in the heart of communities throughout the world. The growth in the number and size of these organisations also helps to draw attention to them. A revolution in this kind of association seems to have been taking place at a world scale, a massive upsurge in both private as well as organised volunteer initiatives in practically all corners of the earth³⁸. In many cases this has been brought about by the growing doubts raised as to the capacity of many countries to deal on an individual basis with problems linked to social welfare, development and the environment, problems which nations must face up to today. This growth in the number of civil organisations has likewise been boosted by the revolution in communications that has taken place over the last few decades and by the rapid spread of middle-class groups with an academic background who feel frustrated by the lack of financial and political expression which they find in many places. Finally, one factor that has recently emerged further highlights the importance being attached to nonprofit organisations or to civil society, namely the growing questioning of the neoliberal consensus, sometimes labelled the Washington Consensus, which has been at the forefront of world economic policy for the last two decades. This consensus has basically maintained

³⁸Lester Salamon, «The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector», *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 74, nm. 3 (July/August 1994).

that the problems which both developed as well as developing societies must face up to at the current time can be dealt with more effectively by simply giving free rein to private markets. Yet, as a result of the global financial crisis and the constant social unrest in many regions, this consensus has come under ever increasing attack, even from its staunchest supporters. As the Chief Economist at the World Bank Joseph Stiglitz recently stated: «The policies promoted by the Washington Consensus... are not exactly complete and have often been wrong ... the economic results are not only determined by political economy and human resources, but by the quality of a country's institutions»³⁹. Echoing these opinions, political leaders from many areas around the world have begun to seek alternatives which combine the virtues of the market with the advantages of wider social protection. This search is clear in the emphasis placed by Tony Blair on the Third Way in the United Kingdom, in Gerhard Schröder's New Centre in Germany and in the French prime minister Lionel Jospin's summary declaration: «Yes to the market economy, no to the market society». Due to their unique position outside the market and the State, to the fact they are generally smaller, their links with citizens, their flexibility, their ability to exploit private initiative in support of public goals and their recently rediscovered contributions to the creation of social capital, the organisations that make up civil society have emerged as strategically important elements in the search for an intermediate way, between simple faith in the market and faith in the State. However, the nonprofit sector's ability to involve itself in this search as an experienced collaborator has been severely restricted by an acute lack of basic information on this sector and how it works. Although major strides have been made over the last five years, including the culmination of the first stage of the current project and the start of empirical research by Eurostat in response to the European Union Commission, the nonprofit sector is still a lost continent in the social arena of modern society, invisible to most politicians, the business sector and to the press, and even to many within the sector itself. The comparative study project conducted by The Johns Hopkins University has heralded a major step forward in research into the third sector.

This project was set up to cover this void in basic knowledge and to place the nonprofit sector on the world economy map. To be more precise, this project aims to broaden our understanding of the nonprofit sector in various ways. Firstly, it has documented for the first time in solid empirical terms the scope, structure, funding and role of the nonprofit sector in a significant number of countries around the world. Secondly, it has attempted to explain why the size of the sector varies from one place to another, identifying those factors that would seem to foster or delay development. Thirdly, it has assessed the impact of these organisations and the contribution they make and has finally helped to publish the information which has emerged.

To achieve these goals, a plural and comparative approach was adopted. This is a comparative method that covers a wide range of countries. The initial stage of the project, which culminated in 1994, focuses on eight countries (The United States, The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Hungary and Japan)⁴⁰. The current stage involves updating the information on many of the original countries as well as widening the analysis to embrace a total of twenty-eight countries, of which twenty-two have finished gathering basic data and are included in this report: nine new Western European

³⁹ Joseph Stiglitz, 1998 Wider Lecture, Helsinki (January 1998).

⁴⁰ For a summary of the results of the first stage of the project, see Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, *The Emerging Sector: An Overview [El Sector Emergente: Una Visión General]*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, 1994; republished as *The Emerging Nonprofit Sector*, vol.1, part of the Johns Hopkins collection Nonprofit Sector Series, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996. More detailed results may be found in this collection. For a complete list of the products in the comparative study of the nonprofit sector by The Johns Hopkins University, information can be obtained by writing to, faxing or e-mailing the Center for Civil Society Studies at the address indicated on the credits page of this work.

countries, four other developing countries, four in Central Europe and Western Europe together with five Latin-American countries.

This study has helped to make progress in the comparative analysis of the third sector as well as its contribution to different world economies, which in general have neglected this sector.

2.- THE THIRD SECTOR IN FIGURES

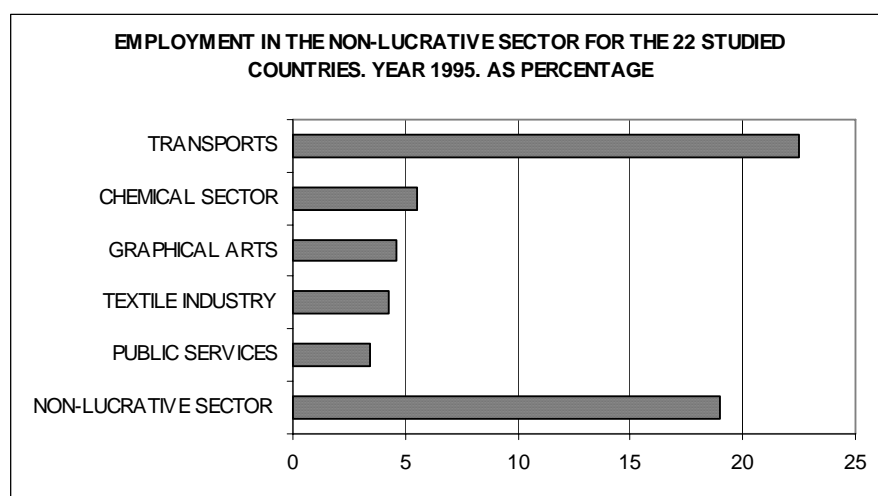
The most relevant findings, the result of research work into the scope, structure, funding and role of the nonprofit sector at an international scale, may be grouped into five main sections.

Firstly, apart from its social and political importance, the nonprofit sector is a prominent economic force in most of the regions analysed, accounting for a significant share of employment and national expenditure. In precise terms, this is a 1.1 billion dollar area. Even when we exclude religious organisations, the nonprofit sector of the twenty-two countries studied moves 1.1 billion dollars and provides full time employment to the equivalent of some 19 million workers. As a result, expenditure in the nonprofit sector of these countries reaches an average of 4.6% of the gross domestic product, employment in this sector reaching nearly 5% of all non-agricultural employment, 10% of all employment in the service sector, and 27% of the total for the public sector.

Employment in the nonprofit sector in these countries easily outstrips all of the employment in the major private enterprises in each country, at a ratio of six to one (19 million employees in the nonprofit sector compared to 3.3 million for all those employed in the major private enterprises in each of the twenty-two countries).

In the twenty-two countries analysed the number of people registered in the nonprofit sector exceeds those in the public service sector, textile manufacturing, the paper industry, graphic arts or the chemical sector in those countries, employing almost as large a labour force as the transport and communications sectors.

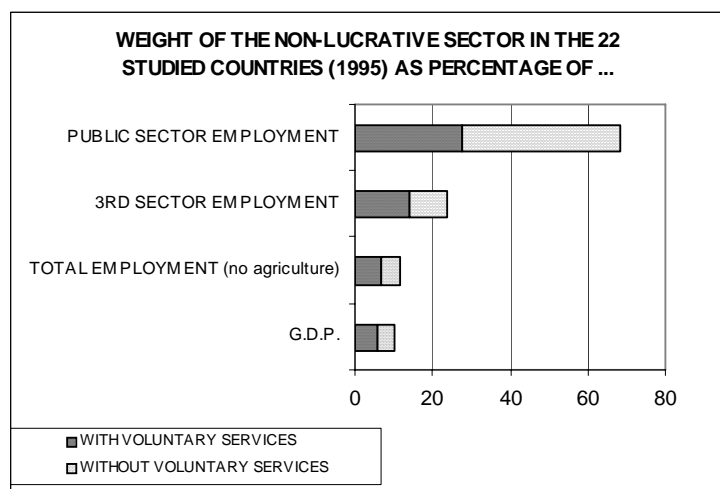
FIGURE 1



Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

Yet, even this does not reflect the full scope of the nonprofit sector, since a significant number of volunteer workers are also involved. In fact an average of 28% of the population of these countries devote part of their time to nonprofit organisations. This is the equivalent of another 10.6 million full time jobs, taking the total number of full time jobs in nonprofit sector organisations to 29.6 million. Including volunteers, the sector accounts for an average of 7% of total non-agricultural employment in these countries, 14% of employment in the service sector and a remarkable 41% of employment in the public sector (see figure 2).

FIGURE 2

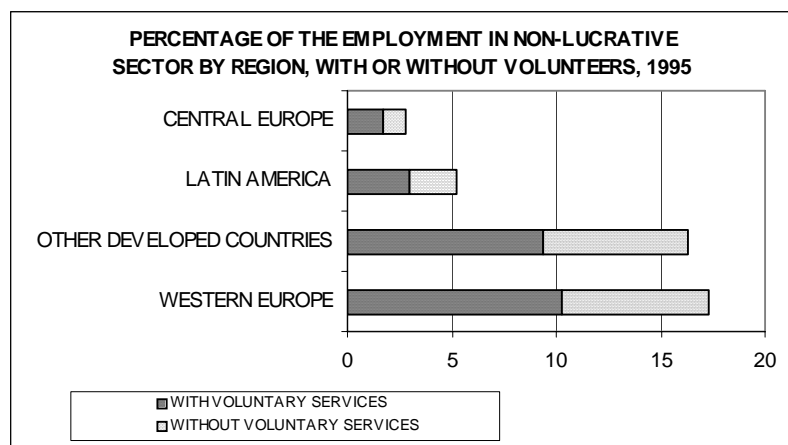


Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

The situation does not alter when we add volunteers, and to some extent the gap grows, at least between developed countries and Latin America, as well as between Western Europe and other developed countries. Including volunteers, nonprofit sector organisations account for 10.3% of total employment in Western Europe, 9.4% in other developed countries, 3.0% in Latin America and 1.7% in Central Europe (see figure 3). Bearing this in mind, and including volunteers, Western Europe appears as the region with the most highly developed nonprofit sector and largest amount of volunteer

involvement. It is also surprising to note the relatively low level of formal volunteers reflected in our data for Latin American countries.

FIGURE 3

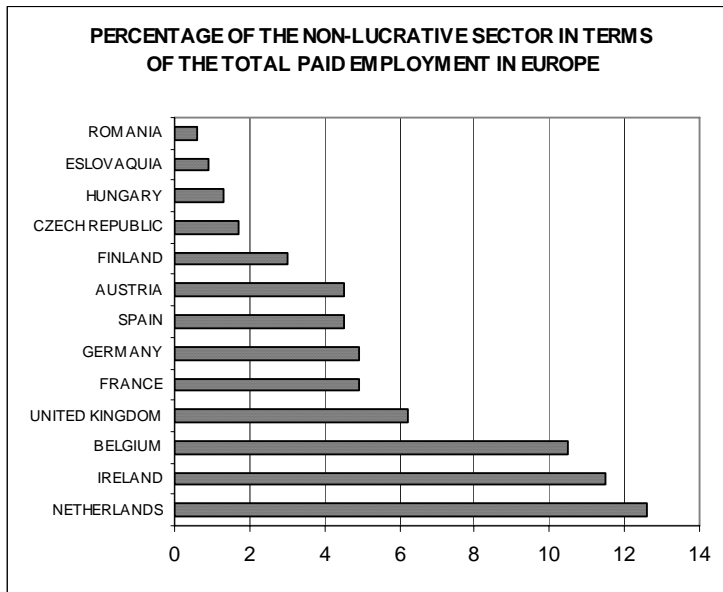


Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

One possible explanation for the discrepancies observed in the development of the third sector by countries is the presence or lack of public systems for social protection. One theory is that the larger the system of public social protection, the smaller the nonprofit sector is expected to be. However, our data on the twenty-two countries analysed do not back up this theory. Of the eleven countries we studied which had relatively high levels of public systems of social protection (above the average for the twenty-two countries), five have relatively small nonprofit sectors (with a level of employment below the average for the twenty-two countries) and six comparatively wide nonprofit sectors. Furthermore, of the eleven countries with relatively low levels of public systems of social protection, eight have fairly small nonprofit sectors. By contrast, only three countries have large nonprofit sectors. Therefore, as is indicated in figure 4, in over half the cases the results contradict the theory. Clearly, something more complex than the relation proposed in this theory is determining the variation in scale of the nonprofit sector between one place and another⁴¹.

⁴¹ For a more detailed study of the factors that make up the nonprofit sector in different frameworks and the resulting models, see Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, «Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally» [Origen social de la Sociedad Civil: Explicación del sector no lucrativo a partir de varios países], *Voluntas*, vol. 9, num. 3 (September 1998), pages. 213-248.

FIGURE 4



Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

FIGURE 5

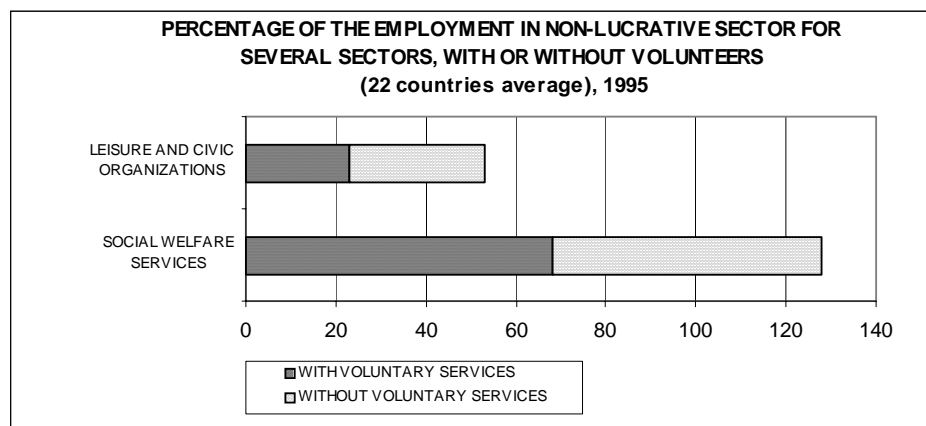
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC EXPENSE IN SOCIAL WELFARE AND SIZE OF THE NON-LUCRATIVE SECTOR

		% OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE THE NON-LUCRATIVE SECTOR	
		LOW	HIGH
PUBLIC EXPENSE IN SOCIAL WELFARE	HIGH	5	6
	LOW	8	3

Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

The report has shown that two thirds of employment in the nonprofit sector is concentrated in the three traditional areas of social welfare services: education, with 30% of the total; health, with 20% and social services, with 8% (see figure .6). The area of recreational and cultural activities is not far behind with 14% of the total for employment in this sector. This pattern changes radically when volunteers are factored in. Around three fifths (55%) of the time devoted by volunteers focuses on two main areas: recreational activities, including sports activities, and social services. Moreover, environmental organisations, those involved in the defence of civil rights and development attract a considerable percentage of volunteers' time. Therefore, including volunteers, involvement in overall employment in the nonprofit sector of the three areas (health, education and social services) falls from 68% to below 60%, whereas the share of activities linked to culture and leisure, the environment, development and the defence of civil rights increases from 23% to 30% (see figure 6).

FIGURE 6



Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

3.- THE SCALE OF THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN SPAIN

The construction of the institutional net of the Welfare State in Spain during the democratic transition presented some lacks in the provisions of family services and assistance services, which have been compensated with the growth of the non-lucrative sector also denominated voluntary services sector. The logic of this sector is opposed to the intervention of the public sector (political logic) and also to the participation of the lucrative private sector (market laws), by means of the activities of private agents that altruistically offer services of general interest in an alternative or complementary way to the provision of services carried out by the Spanish public administration (Ferrera, 1996; Castles, 1998; Naldini, 2003).

The fact that the Spanish nonprofit sector is smaller than its Western European counterparts is due to both various factors that date back many years, as well as to more recent events. Spain has a long and complicated history, in which the Catholic Church has played a predominant role. There is on the one hand the late development of industrialisation and the current system of state administration, all of which has left many conflicts unresolved between State and Church, and on the other there is the emergence of civil society. What should also be taken into account is the strong corporate policy during the Franco regime from the end of the nineteen thirties until the mid nineteen seventies and the suppression of civil liberties. These are factors which restricted the social and political space available for the potential emergence of many kinds of nonprofit organisations, while at the same time maintaining the social services and educational institutions of the Catholic Church. Also key was the transition from an authoritarian model to democracy which led to a sudden surge in the number of associations, thanks to the freedom existing in the political arena for the development of nonprofit activities, a space which was filled by newly fashioned social movements and by citizen involvement. Another factor has been the rapid economic development that Spain has undergone since 1975, which has created a new demand for social services, services which are rendered at least in part by an expanding nonprofit sector, a sector that has thus gained ground over the last twenty-five years in Spain.

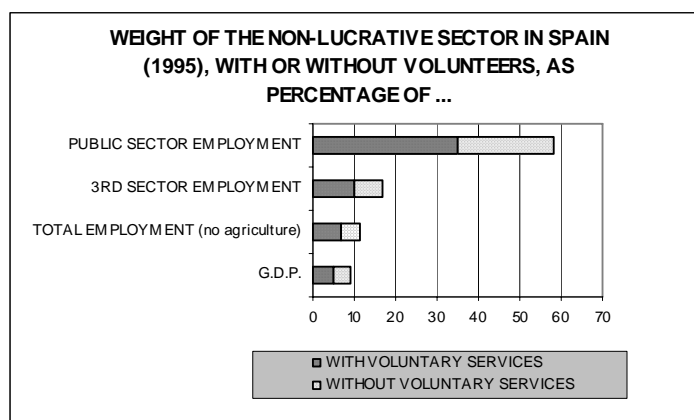
As with many of its Western European counterparts, the Spanish nonprofit sector focuses a major part of its human and financial resources on the areas of social welfare, above all in the social services area. However, contrary to most other countries in Western Europe, Spanish nonprofit organisations receive greater financial support from private sources and charges and for services than they do from the State. Another point that sets the Spanish nonprofit sector even further apart is the relatively high level of private donations in mixed income. These conclusions are the result of pioneering work carried out by

a research group at the Fundación BBVA in conjunction with the comparative study project of the nonprofit sector at The Johns Hopkins University⁴².

According to this study, this is a 22 600 million dollar sector. Even excluding the religious aspect, in 1995 the Spanish nonprofit sector had operating costs amounting to 22 600 million dollars or the equivalent of 4% of Gross Domestic Product in Spain, a highly significant figure. Moreover, this sector is an active driving force for employment, providing jobs for a labour force which is the equivalent of 475 179 full time paid workers. This figure amounts to 4.5% of the total number of workers in Spain, if we leave aside those working in agriculture, 6.8% of service sector workers, and almost a quarter (22.9%) of those employed as public administration staff, whether at a national, regional or municipal level.

This sector attracts a significant amount of volunteer work. In fact, around 9.8% of the adult population in Spain say they devote part of their time to cooperating with nonprofit organisations, which translates to another 253 599 full time jobs, taking the total number of full time jobs in Spanish nonprofit organisations to 728 778, or 6.8% of the total amount of non-agricultural work in Spain (see figure 7).

FIGURE 7

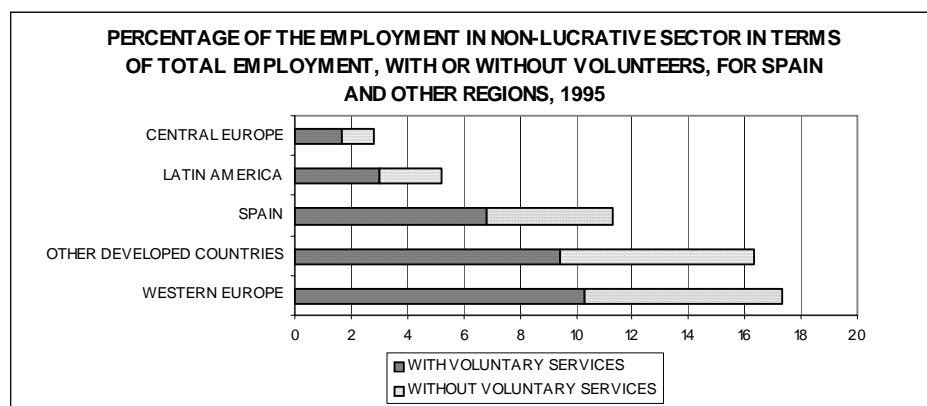


Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

Although nonprofit work in Spain is fairly similar to the average of the twenty-two countries in the study, in comparison to the Western European average, the percentage in Spain is quite small. As can be seen in figure 8, equivalent full time employment in the nonprofit sector in Spain, with 4.5% of total employment, is proportionately 35% lower than the European average (7.0%). This low rate of employment is due to the fact that although there are a large number of nonprofit organisations in Spain (253 000), most of them are fairly small and create only a limited amount of jobs. The margins increase when volunteers are included. Moreover, the percentage of employment in the nonprofit sector increases slightly if volunteers are included. Thus, by including the time contributed by the latter, nonprofit organisations make up 6.8% of total employment in Spain, a significantly lower percentage than the Western European average (10.3%) (see figure 8).

⁴² A project which the Fundación BBVA joined some time ago and in the framework of which it published the work on the nonprofit sector in Spain. The study carried out in Spain was coordinated by Dr. José Ignacio Ruiz Olabuénaga, who has acted in the capacity of local cooperator in the project.

FIGURE 8



Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

As with other Western European countries but unlike the average of the countries included in the study, social services clearly dominate the nonprofit scene in Spain. Almost 32% of employment in the nonprofit sector is concentrated in the area of social services. Of all the different types of nonprofit activities in Spain, social services have the highest percentage of nonprofit employment. As can be seen in figure 9, 31.8% of the total amount of nonprofit employment in Spain is concentrated in this area. This percentage is above the European average (27.0%) and is well above the average of the twenty-two countries included in the study (18.3%). This situation clearly reflects the dominance of three large networks of nonprofit organisations: the National Institute for the Blind (ONCE), the Red Cross and Cáritas, who play a leading role in the rendering and funding of services throughout Spain. By way of just one example, the ONCE alone employs some 40 000 paid workers, representing 8.4% of the total amount of nonprofit employment.

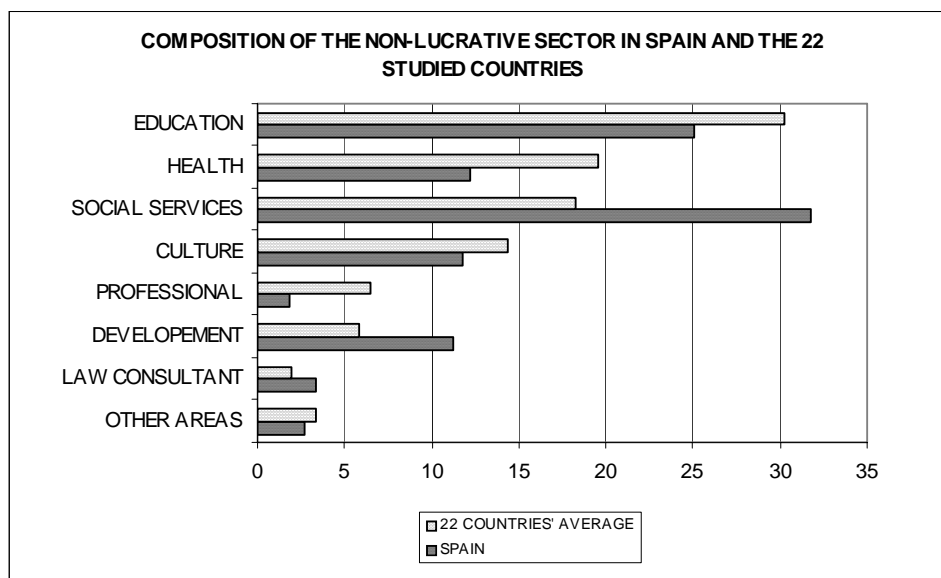


FIGURE 9

Source: Worked out from the data of the compared study of the Johns Hopkins University.

Although quotas and payments for services are the main source of income for the nonprofit sector in Spain, private donations account for a larger source of funding than in any other EU country included in this study. The principal source of revenue for Spanish nonprofit organisations comes through quotas and payments for services. By itself, this amounts to 49.0% of the total income in the nonprofit sector in Spain. Funding from private charitableness is much lower, although it still represents a significant percentage of total income, private donations accounting for 8.8% of total funding in the nonprofit sector in Spain.

When taking volunteers into account, the pattern of income in the nonprofit sector in Spain changes dramatically. After including the contribution of volunteers, private charitableness increases considerably from 18.8% to 36.3%, thus exceeding contributions from the public sector, which falls from 32.1% to 25.2%. Although the percentage of income from quotas also drops from 49.0% to 38.5%, once volunteers are included, the former are still the major source of income in Spain.

4.- YOUTH AND THE NONPROFIT SECTOR AND CIVIL CITIZENSHIP

Associations and volunteers are turning Spain into a privileged area in terms of civil and political commitment on the part of young Spaniards. The difficulties encountered in the labour market, the lack of housing and dependence on the family that characterises Spanish youth has led to the promotion within this group of nonprofit activities such as volunteers that are only viable in a framework in which the family has become the principal mainstay for the economy and for welfare.

The term “civil citizenship” coined by T. H Marshall (1964) encompasses the legal, political, and social rights that stem from citizenship. However, this term does not embrace rights arising out of actions which are not strictly instrumental and political such as the contribution of citizens with their work and resources to the nonprofit sector in which volunteers play such a prominent role. The nonprofit sector (associations, volunteers, and so on) provides a perfect vantage point from which to analyse which civil resources are mobilised, which civil virtues are valued as well as how mature in civil terms the society in question is.

Young Spaniards born into and brought up under a democracy have shown civil commitment, solidarity and a highly plural civil reciprocity. This might be explained by the strong sense of the family that characterises Southern European countries to such an extent, in which the younger generation have gained a deep social sense of the family and of reciprocity. According to a study carried out by the Institute for Youth Studies published in 2003, 1.9% of youngsters between the ages of fifteen and thirty stated that they were involved in charity and volunteer associations. This indicates that Spanish youngsters are involved in volunteer work to a notable degree, despite the limited development of the network of associations characterising this country. According to the data offered by Wallace (2003: 117) vis-à-vis the World Survey on Values, Spanish youngsters' involvement in civil associations in Spain in 1998 was above the European average and not far below the Nordic and Central European countries. This is somewhat paradoxical, since the fabric of associations in Spain is weaker than in Nordic countries, Germany and Switzerland, countries with a long tradition of civil activity. In these countries, associations are deeply integrated in the welfare state, and non-government organisations that make up volunteer groups are a key factor in social life.

Nowadays, the active involvement of youth both in their local communities as well as in other areas of public life covers a wide spectrum of activities and fields ranging from more or less formal

participation in political life to organised involvement in charity activities and various forms of volunteer work.

In recent years there has been an interesting debate concerning the nature of the various ways in which the young become involved in these kinds of activities, especially with regard to the role of the volunteer vis-à-vis the controversy surrounding the possible politicisation or depoliticisation of these groups. The source of this controversy according to Benedicto and Morán (2003: 58) lies in the relevance which neoliberalism attaches to citizens' volunteer work in the different areas in which it is involved and identifying this kind of activity with the idea of the active citizen. Conservative neoliberalism has attempted to lessen the scope of civil involvement to volunteer work. This kind of work includes a large part of the tasks that the Keynesian state had assumed with the idea of guaranteeing general levels of welfare for the population as a whole. This reasoning falls within the rhetoric of the "return to civil society", in which civil society is considered to be more efficient at managing public social policy. This rhetoric fosters a kind of active citizen who does not seek political interests, but rather voluntarily takes on a series of obligations with the community, obligations that consist of offering help and developing civil policies in a context to which they can easily relate (Oliver and Heater, 1994).

This has become an issue in the political arena with the so-called "third way". For those who defend this political and ideological ideal, community involvement through volunteer work is a precondition for the development of civil society and the values of democratic citizenship. In this case, volunteers are considered to be the expression of the responsibility that citizens feel towards the community to which they belong, perceived as a collective way of intervening in society (Giddens, 1999; Cieslik and Pollock, 2002; Alonso, 1999). From this standpoint, volunteer work on the part of the young would form part of a wider scene that would include other kinds of activities and organisations such as social movements, social and institutional organisations, a scene in which youth intervenes in very different ways in society, thus strengthening the social fabric of the community (Lister, 2003).

In short, my proposal for civil protagonism for involvement in volunteer work on the part of the young in different areas of society is based in part on the recognition of their condition as fully fledged citizens, beyond the mere network of the family, work or institutional dependency in which they are immersed, and in part on the direct link that the exercising of citizenship has with the formation of independent individuals. This makes it possible to contribute to a strengthening of institutional mechanisms designed to promote the involvement and presence of youth in social and political life as an active exercise of citizenship without the risk of undermining individual rights and leading to the social exclusion of certain youth groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The data presented in this report reinforce the idea that the nonprofit sector in Spain is an economic social sector of tremendous importance in which youth plays a key role. From the moment the process of democracy began to take root in the mid nineteen seventies, Spain has made major strides which have paved the way to development for a modern nonprofit sector. However, there is still a long way to go. One of the key factors to be stressed is that unlike most Western European countries, Spain cannot boast a stable policy of relations between the State and the nonprofit sector. In fact, misgivings and certain mutual mistrust can often be found between representatives of the authorities and the nonprofit sector. This lack of mutual understanding of both the strong and weak points of each of the players involved might stifle the development of relations between the two sectors. Setting up a high level broad based commission to analyse the mission and future of the nonprofit sector in Spain might provide the most adequate springboard for establishing the necessary dialogue, above all with a view to greater integration at a European scale. To this end, the next urgent task is to obtain a deeper awareness of the social contribution that the nonprofit sector currently makes and might in the future make to the different European societies, a task which is already underway and which constitutes an important part of what the current study aims to achieve.

In the case of youth, it should be underlined that this is a social group with enormous potential to promote the exercise of civil citizenship as is shown by the active and committed involvement of youth in associations and volunteer groups. The apparatus of this institutional mechanism for promoting the civil involvement of youth as citizens can only be achieved from the recognition of individual rights and the neutralisation of all kinds of family as well as institutional and other kinds of dependency. The weakness of the fabric of civil associations and the limited development of the Spanish welfare state in terms of public services to the community contrasts with the active and growing participation of youth in the nonprofit sector. We trust that this kind of study and meeting will help to reflect on and recognise the importance that this type of volunteer work has for stimulating civil participation on the part of the young and thus furthering the leading role played by civil society as a key element in the democratisation of western societies.

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Volunteering Development in Birmingham

"What's it Worth?"

How valuable is volunteering?

By : Alun Severn and Terry Potter ©

Version 2.0 | 18/03/04

Davina Goodchild (Birmingham Volunteer Action)

Foreword

Throughout the course of this project we have sought to gain a more informed view about voluntary activity in Birmingham and how best interventions might be designed that can support and promote volunteering. Our earlier desk research and public attitudes survey compared the state of volunteering in Birmingham with that nationally.⁴³ This indicated that:

- The level of volunteering in Birmingham – whether considered as “formal” volunteering or “informal” voluntary activity – may be as low as only one-half to one-quarter of that nationally. This may indicate that Birmingham is a volunteering “cold spot”, but there is also some evidence to suggest that by failing to distinguish adequately between respondents’ past and present volunteering, national surveying methods may historically have tended to overstate volunteering levels.
- When the numbers of people indicating that they had volunteered in the past were compared with those who said they were still engaged in voluntary activity, there was a consistent falling off across all activities – in some cases by up to two-thirds.
- While greater numbers of people were engaged in informal volunteering and for increasing periods of time, the evidence suggested that formal volunteering – i.e. that conducted under the auspices of an established voluntary or community organisation – was more sustainable, with volunteers maintaining their involvement consistently in the longer-term.
- Birmingham has an ageing volunteer force, with voluntary activity highest in the 45—60/64 age group. In the 16—29 and 30—44 age groups there was the biggest falling away in numbers between those volunteering in the past and those volunteering currently.

While important for the detailed picture of voluntary activity in Birmingham that this provides and for its implications for the volunteering support infrastructure, it also serves to illustrate some of the fundamental difficulties – and contradictions – in how volunteering is identified and subsequently valued.

Although models of assessing and valuing voluntary activity have over the past few years become more sophisticated, they remain essentially statistical, seeking to measure either the numbers volunteering, the duration of this activity, or its notional economic value. There is no doubt that the mass of statistical data generated by periodic surveys of volunteering – such as those conducted every six or seven years by the Institute for Volunteering Researching (IVR) – has been instrumental in convincing Government of the importance of volunteering, it is also the case that the public policy agenda regarding volunteering has shifted. Government now places much less emphasis on calculating the financial ‘worth’ of volunteering and instead locates volunteering in the very broadest sense as one of a range of community-based actions that can contribute to stronger communities and a more active and engaged citizenship. This is perhaps nowhere more clearly stated than in the Home Secretary’s two recent pamphlets explaining and promoting the ‘civil renewal’ agenda.⁴⁴

⁴³ See *Because We Want To...: Volunteering Development in Birmingham*, ISBN 1 898902 27 5, BVSC [2003].

⁴⁴ See *Civil Renewal: A New Agenda*, *The CSV Edith Kahn Memorial Lecture, 11 June 2003* and *Active Citizens, Strong Communities: Progressing Civil Renewal*, Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP, Home Office Communication Directorate [2003]. Both at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/civil/index.html>.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to look more critically at the whole issue of ascribing value to volunteering. What do we mean by ‘value’? Value to whom and according to whose value-system? And why, exactly, do we need to ascribe value to volunteering in the first place – what does this help us to decide or do? It is also a timely point at which to revisit some first principles – this may aid us in considering the often complex array of interlocking issues that are involved in volunteering. Why do we think volunteering is worthwhile? Why does it have such a central, defining role in this thing called the “voluntary sector”?

The paper was commissioned by Birmingham Volunteer Action as a contribution to the Volunteering Development in Birmingham project funded by the Active Community Directorate. It was written by Alun Severn of Third Sector Services, Gail Walters and Terry Potter of BVSC Research, Information & Sector Intelligence (RiSi).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What has become increasingly evident during the course of this research project is that assessing the value of volunteering is the tip of the iceberg. What at first appears a reasonably straightforward aspiration in fact rests on top of a complex mass of questions – of the value, worth and contribution of volunteering, the wider social benefits it creates, its relationship to the state, and the role played by the personal attitudes and value-systems of those who volunteer or, indeed, choose not to volunteer. In setting the broader context of this paper it is necessary to at least touch on these briefly.

Let us pose the question again in the same way that the title of this paper does: “What is volunteering *worth*?” Perhaps more accurately, where does its worth derive from? Why do we consider volunteering to be *good*?

We would argue that there are at least four quite distinct areas for examination in volunteering:

- First, there is our essentially “political” commitment to the concept of voluntary action. A core value of the voluntary and community sector, it can be stated and adhered to as a guiding principle, but is not very amenable to measurement.
- Second, there is the impact achieved by and the effectiveness of the volunteering infrastructure – the support and promotion mechanisms, interventions, campaigns and activities to foster the growth and good health of volunteering.
- Third, there is the wider social or community benefit attributable to voluntary activity. (Indeed, we might also add to this the personal gains attributable to volunteering – for both the donor and the beneficiary – but we will consider this briefly in the section on the “Volunteering Contract”.)
- Fourth, there is the as yet largely unexplored, we believe, dimension of a cost-benefit comparison of voluntary and statutory provision.

While the latter three are more amenable to measurement this, as we argue later in the paper, would be at significant cost, inevitably raising the issue of resource allocation and priorities. In passing, however, this serves to illustrate the complexity of the issues involved in ascribing value to volunteering.

Volunteering – a core value

Let us look a little more closely at the central role that volunteering plays in our conception of what the voluntary sector is about. **As an expression of neighbourliness and mutual aid**, volunteering *is* central to the values of the voluntary sector. Freely given and elective, volunteering is a personal choice that comes down on the side of **social solidarity**. It emphasises collective aid and reciprocity and because volunteering, by definition, is non-commercial, it favours mutuality over individual consumerism. It is inconceivable, then, that volunteering would not be central to the ethos of the voluntary and community sector.

Volunteering's elective nature must also be emphasised: organisations may be *committed* to volunteering, but it is individual volunteers who choose to involve themselves in the personal transaction of volunteering, freely donating their time, energy and effort. In this sense, the freely chosen *voluntary* nature of volunteering is a crucial value underpinning the act and strongly informs our views about how closely or otherwise volunteering can or should be tied to the aims of the state. We would argue that while it is legitimate to utilise the benefits of volunteering to help achieve some greater, overarching good – more cohesive communities, for example, or more widespread active citizenship – anything that detracts from or compromises the *voluntary* nature of the act will tend to be viewed unsympathetically by those most likely to engage in volunteering.

What this suggests to us is that while the voluntary sector and Government do indeed share some common interests in extending and maximising the benefits of volunteering, these interests are not strictly co-terminous. The voluntary sector also has a duty to safeguard the *voluntary* nature of volunteering and ensure that in any closer harnessing to the state's social policy objectives it does not become expected or *required*. We must also be vigilant in avoiding any blurring which might occur between voluntary services *freely given for community good* and the potentially punitive notion of *community service*. These concerns are brought into sharper relief by the Chancellor's recent call for the establishment of Commission to report on the way forward for a National Youth Volunteering Strategy. This he clearly sees as a key instrument for building notions of civic responsibility in the longer-term.⁴⁵

Writing in its *Manifesto for Change 2003*, BVSC highlighted the dangers that exist for the voluntary sector in its ever closer relationship with the state: "The more the sector wins the arguments, the more it finds itself incorporated into the fabric of social provision it evolved to challenge." This is as true of volunteering per se as it is of the wider sector, but with an added danger. Many voluntary organisations are equipped to handle any such debate robustly; they have many years experience of 'fighting their corner' and will never simply walk away from the complex relationships modern society demands of them. But this is not true of volunteers, of the millions of individuals who, propelled by a complex set of motivations and attitudes, volunteer every day of the year. For them it would at least seem plausible that there is a tipping point, a step too far in state intervention which could simply switch off the volunteering impulse.

It is against these wide voluntary sector responsibilities that we consider the role and worth of volunteering in the rest of this paper.

⁴⁵ See Gordon Brown's speech to the NCVO national conference 2004 at: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/asp/search/ncvo/main.aspx?siteID=1&subSID=206&sID=18&documentID=1942> and the response by the Fabian Society at: http://www.fabian-society.org.uk/press_office/news_latest_all.asp?pressid=296

2.0 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘VALUE’?

Over the past few years, efforts to assess the value or impact of volunteering have tended to focus on those things that can be counted: the numbers of people volunteering, the duration of their volunteering and the notional financial worth of this voluntary activity. Few would doubt that this effort has been instrumental in raising the profile of volunteering and in establishing the central role that volunteering can play in adding value to statutory and voluntary services and more widely to communities themselves.

As a consequence of the periodic national surveys carried out by the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) and more recently by the Home Office,⁴⁶ we now have a better picture of national trends in volunteering than ever before. But such surveys are extraordinarily costly. IVR, for example, is usually only able to conduct a national volunteering survey every six or seven years – the last was 1997 – and is currently trying to raise the funding necessary to conduct the first twenty-first century survey.

Similarly, more sophisticated economic models for assessing the contribution of volunteering within individual organisations – such as IVR’s ‘VIVA’: the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit – while clearly useful to larger volunteer-using organisations that want to know the economic contribution that volunteering makes to their own operation, are unlikely to be within the budget or capacity of those at the smaller and poorer end of the voluntary sector spectrum.

And yet, it is not surprising that quantitative surveying and audit methods such as these have predominated. Measuring anything beyond numbers, duration and economic value – the *social* contribution of volunteering, for instance, or the personal gains experienced by volunteers and beneficiaries, or the community-building contribution of voluntary work – is methodologically complex and may in addition be open to wide interpretation. Underlying social and community benefits are resistant to measurement. They do not lend themselves to standardisation or repetition and may depend to a large degree on personal testimony.

Perhaps for these reasons, social indicators which would enable a more thoroughgoing evaluation not just of volunteering but also of a wide array of social policy objectives have become a kind of holy grail. While at a national level they may be of crucial importance, at a local level amongst cash-strapped voluntary organisations whose primary aim is direct service delivery, they will rarely be perceived as the most pressing priority for investment.

Value or *values* – a personal matter?

It must also be emphasised that *value* means different things to different people: personal motivation cannot be dismissed from the equation because to a great extent it determines how people view their voluntary effort.

Our findings from amongst focus groups carried out with Birmingham volunteers, for example, show that few if any think of the *monetary value* their volunteering might represent, but they do consider the *values* on which their volunteering is based. And while some volunteers may talk about “giving something back to the community”, or of “wanting to make a difference” it is perhaps not surprising that

⁴⁶ See *Active Communities: Initial Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*, Prime, Zimmeck & Zurawan. Home Office [2002]. At: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/voluntary1.html>.

few if any speak of their volunteering in terms that have now become familiar in public policy – community empowerment, for example, active citizenship, or civil renewal.

This is not to say that these concepts have no broader validity, of course, merely to acknowledge that they are not generally speaking for popular consumption. But there are important implications in this for how volunteering is promoted – for how we ensure that the right messages reach the right people. At ‘street level’ it is vital that the volunteering message reflects and speaks to the values of volunteers and potential volunteers themselves.

As the Birmingham survey illustrated, most volunteers do so out of personal or family experience. They respond to an often fairly simple desire to put something back into the community. Some volunteer in support of a specific service, illness, condition or disability that they have some personal or family experience of. Others volunteer because of experience gained in a period in their own past – raising children as a lone parent, for instance, or homelessness, or sight or hearing impairment. Personal experience is a powerful motivator and most volunteers we spoke with seemed to consider volunteering an essentially personal choice, even when conducted under the auspices of an organisation or volunteer agency of some description.

Volunteers, then, respond most positively to the one-to-one relationship of voluntary help – the real, tangible freely given service. And they respond most powerfully to its *voluntary* nature: proscription is inimical to volunteering’s good health.

Segmentation

It is possible that a quite different picture might be gained if one were to examine a specific *sector* of volunteering, such as that attached to regeneration programmes such as New Deal for Communities. Here, it might be argued that a much clearer relationship exists between *personal volunteering* and *community benefit* and it may be the case that volunteers in these kinds of situations do in fact make a stronger connection between their voluntary effort and the wider community good.

Indeed, as we discuss later in this paper, in operational terms there may be a case for drawing a much clearer distinction between volunteering that is primarily personally motivated – such as one-to-one care, support or befriending, for example – and that which arises primarily as a response to *conditions in a particular community*. It may be that the latter does have a clearer “community empowerment” dimension to it, but again this is to argue for a greater precision, a greater segmentation, in thinking about voluntary effort. While very different kinds of volunteering have shared characteristics, not all voluntary effort arises from the same motivation and the respective values and perceived consequences of different kinds of volunteering will appeal to very different types of people. WE explore the implications of the further segmentation of volunteering in sections 3.0 and 4.0.

What do we want to measure and why?

Although we can observe that communities which have a well developed voluntary and community sector, where volunteering and community activity are frequent and levels of good neighbourliness high, are somehow more robustly cohesive than neighbourhoods where these things are under-developed or in decline, the precise contribution that volunteering makes to the overall health of communities remains an extraordinarily complex question. More sophisticated counting or measuring of voluntary activity obviously gives us a clearer picture of what and how much is going, whether this helps us better understand the contribution that volunteering is making to the overall social or community mix, especially at a local level, is another matter. More importantly, perhaps, quantitative surveys of

volunteering rarely help us to understand how best voluntary activity can be encouraged, or supported when the need arises, or most effectively be helped to flourish in those communities where it is absent. These are pressing issues, especially for agencies involved in the voluntary sector infrastructure.

But the messages we wish to project about volunteering may also determine what we seek to measure or assess. At a local level, for example, organisations may wish to assess the value, effectiveness and impact of particular volunteering projects or interventions, perhaps within a specific community or neighbourhood in mind. There may also be an argument for as yet untried cost-benefit analyses of volunteering that seek to assess the respective voluntary and statutory costs and benefits of service provision. This would be demanding and methodologically challenging research; it would also be costly. But it would also bring to the volunteering debate a dimension that at present is missing.

Alongside this, however, it must also be emphasised that volunteering is not just about money. There are personal gains for the donor, quality of life gains for the beneficiary, community and neighbourhood gains and – as Government now increasingly emphasises – broader social gains in the form of social cohesion and active citizenship.

The ‘volunteering contract’

‘Value’ is spread across what we have called the “volunteering contract”. Not only will all parties to this contract be unlikely to share the same notion of *value*, it is also quite possible that they will have different *value-systems*.

There are three main parties to the volunteering contract: the *donor*, the *beneficiary* and the *commissioner* of the volunteering (at least in cases where the activity is formally organised by an agency). We have already seen that for the donor, there is a strong likelihood that the motivation will be primarily personal – as much to do with what they get out of and put into volunteering and how this makes them feel as it is any broader notion of community benefit.

For the beneficiary, value will be much more likely to revolve around what the help or assistance they get means to them – how it affects them, how it improves their quality of life, the degree to which they can depend on its availability, and what would happen if this voluntary service ceased. The value – or values – of the transaction are strongly informed, therefore, by personal circumstances.

Organisations that commission volunteering will again take a different perspective on value and it is here that the social significance of volunteering in its wider context might be considered and longer-term strategic objectives come into play. Again, a very different interpretation of value.

There are other partners to the volunteering contract, however, and these have been of increasing importance over the past few years. A fourth category might be funders of volunteering initiatives, where again different expectations will prevail. In some cases, funders may be synonymous with a fifth category – the local or national state. It is here that voluntary activity will most clearly be harnessed to broader social policy aims – as can be clearly seen in the Home Secretary’s writings on civil renewal.

The notion, then, that the value of volunteering changes according to one’s place in the volunteering contract is an important one, with implications that go far beyond how we value volunteering and touch on all aspects of the volunteering debate – the language we use to describe volunteering, how (and where) volunteering is promoted, what people think their voluntary action is for and is meant to achieve, and the role they feel the state can legitimately claim to play in the volunteering arena.

In this context it is important that we again remind ourselves of a few key facts:

- The last IVR national survey of volunteering (1997) showed a decline in the numbers volunteering of around a million – despite the proliferation of new routes into volunteering and nationally backed volunteering campaigns.
- The single most effective means of promoting volunteering is word-of-mouth: people respond most readily to direct appeals to volunteer and this is especially the case when the appeal is made by someone they know or someone already involved in voluntary activity.
- And research has shown that public awareness of volunteering agencies of all kinds is abysmally low.

We still need to find effective ways of reconciling broad social policy aims with popular messages about volunteering; we still need ‘street level’ messages that ‘sell’ the volunteering experience, reflecting and speaking to the values that volunteers and potential volunteers consider most important. These are vital considerations for an organisation such as Birmingham Volunteer Action and for the wider network of volunteer placement, referral and brokerage agencies.

3.0 THE SOCIAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Although since 1999/2000 there have been a plethora of Government initiatives to support or encourage volunteering, particularly amongst specific age groups, such as young people (Millennium Volunteers) and the over-50s (Experience Corps), it is evident that Government thinking on volunteering, certainly as regards programmes directly engaging with or supporting individual volunteers, has changed markedly. Some 90 volunteering schemes supported by the Home Office are currently under review and at time of writing a number of these look set to lose all or some of their funding, including Experience Corps, which the Government will cease funding in March 2004, and Time Bank, the skills/service exchange scheme targetting the most disadvantaged communities.⁴⁷

This does not indicate that volunteering per se has fallen from popularity, however. Rather, it is the emphasis that is changing – and nowhere is this more evident than in the Home Secretary’s two recent pamphlets to promote his vision for ‘civil renewal’.⁴⁸ Voluntary community action lies at the heart of this vision.

But it is an extraordinarily broad and sweeping vision. Its central thesis is that renewal of civil society and the public realm demands a new contract of active citizenship – a contract between a “progressive, activist state” and empowered communities that are “increasingly capable” of “defining the problems they face and then tackling them together”.

While individual volunteering is certainly not absent from these policy statements, a clear shift in emphasis is nonetheless apparent – away from programmes to support and encourage *individual*

⁴⁷ See *Regeneration & Renewal* [8 August 2003].

⁴⁸ *Civil Renewal: A New Agenda, The CSV Edith Kahn Memorial Lecture, 11 June 2003* and *Active Citizens, Strong Communities: Progressing Civil Renewal*, Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP, Home Office Communication Directorate [2003].
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/civil/index.html>.

volunteers and much more towards **communities of volunteers**, “active citizens” engaged in a mutual effort to build community solidarity and work for the common good.

This is perhaps most clearly expressed in the later of the Home Secretary’s pamphlets, *Active Citizens, Strong Communities: Progressing Civil Renewal*. Where there is specific mention of voluntary activity – as opposed to civil renewal’s key notion of the engaged citizen acting for the common good – it is noticeable that rather than generic volunteering this tends to be voluntary activity in quite specific *civic* contexts: within the youth justice system, schools, hospitals, fire stations and prisons, for example.⁴⁹

Alongside this emerging civil renewal agenda, the Government is still pledged to increase voluntary and community sector activity amongst socially excluded groups by 5 per cent by 2006. But more recently the Chancellor has added his voice to the volunteering debate with a controversial and much longer-term aim of establishing a youth community service scheme, the assumption being that voluntary activity in youth will grow into active citizenship in later life – a continuum of engagement measured in decades rather than simply the here and now.

There is little doubt, then, that a new perspective on volunteering is emerging within Government. The scattergun approach to funding numerous volunteer support programmes – which broadly coincided with the UN International Year of Volunteering in 2001 – would seem to be over. **In its place is an emphasis on active citizenship and the role of engaged communities, what we might call a kind of “civic volunteering”, in which there is a much clearer relationship between voluntary effort and the building of civil renewal and community solidarity.**

Overarching values?

One of the most interesting things about the Home Secretary’s civil renewal agenda is that it is recasting a set of social ideas – solidarity, mutuality and co-operation, for example – in what has become New Labour’s characteristic language of civic rights and responsibilities. The agenda, then, is not significant necessarily for its *newness*; **what is significant is the determined detachment of these particular social values from the old municipal socialism which would previously have been their most likely political underpinning.**

There is also a further significant dimension to this attempt to formulate a new and more widely understood language of social solidarity, however. One of the problems that has bedevilled such attempts previously has been the tendency to fall back on ‘imported’ and often highly contested concepts such as ‘social capital’. Although *Active Citizens, Strong Communities* does use this term, it is used on only three occasions and then somewhat in passing. Blunkett says that new forms of social capital should be recognised and supported by Government, that Government has a role to play in assisting communities to “build social capital” and, in the longest reference, that the social capital lost during the forced march of industrial restructuring under Thatcherism in the 1980s must be restored and reinvigorated. There is no attempt to locate social capital in a more theoretical or academic context, as some other commentators have done⁵⁰ and it is used almost as a synonym for ‘community spirit’ or simply ‘sense of community’. What emerges with a much higher profile – a central notion in civil renewal – is community cohesion.

⁴⁹ *Active Citizens, Strong Communities: Progressing Civil Renewal*, p.12.

⁵⁰ Most notably the American academic Robert D Putnam. See *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Touchstone Books/Simon & Schuster, NY. ISBN 0-7432-0304-6 [2001].

Community cohesion has risen up the political agenda in the wake of Ted Cante's report on the race riots that took place in some northern former textile towns during the summer of 2001⁵¹ and is seen as central in Blunkett's vision for civil renewal. The pursuit of civil renewal, he says, must "be backed by a resolute commitment to break down barriers to the realisation of our shared citizenship": communities that are cohesive, that are not divided by "mutual suspicion or misunderstanding of diverse cultures", are seen as a prerequisite platform for progressing civil renewal.

And community cohesion is being resourced. The Home Office has committed £6m to funding Community Cohesion Pathfinders in 37 local authorities, aimed at driving community cohesion measures into the mainstream of service delivery; the Department for Education & Skills is making funding available to support community cohesion in schools, enabling them to take action which will build bridges, especially in areas where there are "clear fractures within the community"; and the Connecting Communities grants programme – which includes proposals for race equality support programmes – is supporting 75 projects from 2003 to 2006.⁵² It is only, says Blunkett, "by setting a clear legal framework for citizenship, and developing practical initiatives to promote its realisation that we will strengthen communities through strengthening their cross-cultural relationships."

Does this begin to suggest a different approach towards thinking about volunteering and community activity and how their value should be judged? We think it does and discuss this more fully in the next section.

4.0 VALUING VOLUNTEERING – THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COHESION

This shift in emphasis now taking place in Government policy suggests that gauging the duration, frequency and notional financial value of volunteering may no longer be the most important objective. Rather than quantitative measurement, we now need something that can assist us in understanding the broad contributions that volunteering can make in pursuit of civil renewal's core objectives of:

- Community cohesion
- Active citizenship
- Cross-cultural working

And yet this also highlights the difficulties. While efforts to develop community cohesion indicators, for example, are ongoing – the Home Office, the Community Cohesion Unit and the Local Government Association⁵³ have all published guidance of various kinds – large-scale community cohesion surveys are beyond our capacity and resources to implement in Birmingham, specifically for the volunteering sector. (This is to set aside for a moment the widely acknowledged difficulties that exist in designing successful methodologies for measuring community cohesion.)

⁵¹ *Community Cohesion: Report of the Independent Review Team*, Chaired by Ted Cante [Home Office 2001]. See <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/>. Also see Guardian for key findings of Cante and links at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/racism/Story/0,2763,617138,00.html>.

⁵² *Connecting Communities: Proposals for Race Equality Support Programmes*, Home Office Communications Directorate [March 2003]. See Community & Race link at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

⁵³ The LGA's *Guidance on Community Cohesion* states, for example: "Working with the Audit Commission, the CCU has captured the essential qualitative element of community cohesion in a survey question that has been included in the Quality of Life indicators. The headline indicator of community cohesion is number 25 and the indicator is 'percentage of people surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can live together harmoniously'." LGA [2002]. ISBN 1-8409-313-5.

In any case, we would question whether attempting to replicate such surveys on a smaller scale in Birmingham is necessarily a useful investment of resources. If policy-driven indicators do have a role to play in helping to assess the contribution of volunteering at a local level, then it may be more useful to use them as the basis for developing a *volunteering framework* that can be used to guide **the kind of interventions that are made to support, promote and encourage volunteering**.

What this would suggest, rather than a set of measurable indicators to enable the *counting* of units of volunteer activity, is a *framework* linked back to key policy objectives (and these could be national or local objectives – the approach is inherently flexible), which will help in identifying voluntary activity which *has particular characteristics*. By looking for volunteering that has particular characteristics we can begin to manipulate the interventions made in support of key policy objectives. For example, it would be possible to design a volunteering framework linked specifically to civil renewal, as in the table below:

A Volunteering Framework to Contribute to Civil Renewal	
Headline policy objectives	Identify activities with the following characteristics
Cross-cultural working:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Activity that encourages people from different backgrounds and/or different communities to meet and help each other⁵⁴ ❑ Activity that encourages cross-cultural volunteering – i.e. groups assisting people from a different community to themselves
Community cohesion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Activity that helps people to identify more strongly with their local area ❑ Activity that helps people from different backgrounds and communities to live together more harmoniously ❑ Activity that draws in and/or involves excluded groups
Active citizenship:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Activity that adds to the overall sum of community engagement ❑ Activity that promotes more effective or more direct engagement with broader community issues

⁵⁴ The LGA Guidance recommends “Using the networks of statutory and voluntary agencies to develop cross-cultural contacts at all levels and reviewing the funding of VCOs in order to provide incentives to promoting community cohesion and cross-cultural contact and understanding.”

While far removed from a quantitative or measuring approach to valuing volunteering, this is a means of ensuring that local interventions in volunteering support and development are informed and guided by key policy objectives (wherever they might derive from). This is very much in keeping with the kind of ‘segmentation’ approach we advocated in earlier papers, but takes the process a stage further. This is a logical point at which to consider in more detail the implications of such an approach for BVA.

5.0 ROLE OF BVA

We have long argued that BVA should take a more segmented view of volunteering and that this, when linked back to key policy objectives, will assist significantly in modelling interventions that make a more critical contribution to supporting and developing voluntary activity in Birmingham. Nothing that we have so far advanced in this paper contradicts that view; however, there are one or two areas in which further thought is required in order to fine-tune BVA’s operational priorities.

Developing a strategic framework for volunteering interventions

We have seen the shift that has taken place in public policy regarding volunteering away from individual volunteering programmes in favour of *communities of volunteers* – the emergence of the active citizenship and civil renewal agendas. We have also highlighted the Home Secretary’s emphasis in *Active Citizens, Strong Communities* on what we have called *civic volunteering*. This clearly has implications for how BVA operates.

One possible operational change that BVA could consider is whether its volunteering priorities should be themed. (Let us emphasise again that this is for BVA’s internal operational guidance and is not necessarily amongst the messages it would project to the outside world and especially to prospective volunteers.) We have so far in this paper drawn a distinction between *personal volunteering*, *community volunteering* and Blunkett’s vision of *civic volunteering* (police, health, fire, schools, youth justice system and so forth). It might assist BVA to focus on specific strategic objectives if its own priorities were similarly ‘themed’, so that effectively it had three ‘departments’:

- Personal volunteering – for all activities that involve personal service delivery to a beneficiary or group of beneficiaries (most care, befriending, visiting, elderly support and the like would come under this heading).
- Community volunteering – activities with a direct relationship to the wider community good, such as tenant/resident groups, regeneration, community groups, local campaigns, development trust-style activities, environmental activities and so forth.
- Civic volunteering – specifically aimed at voluntary activity in statutory or civic services (health, education, police, justice system, fire services etc).

While there would probably be some overlap and also some grey areas – is volunteering to read to children in a local school in one’s own community “community volunteering” or “civic volunteering”, for example – these would be no worse and certainly no more of an obstacle than the overlaps and grey areas that have persisted over the years with just about any definitions or categorisations of volunteering one might choose to examine.

The advantage of such an approach however is that it could be very neatly linked with the “Framework” approach outlined above, thus enabling strategic or policy-related objectives to be set within each volunteering category.

Measuring volunteering – is it over?

One other matter that we should comment on at least briefly is the future need for further local volunteering surveys in Birmingham. Our view is that the kind of ‘generic’ volunteering survey conducted as part of this research has, in the longer term, only limited utility and is perhaps not the best use of resources, certainly on a repeated basis.

While the data gathered provided a greater level of intelligence specifically about Birmingham volunteering than has ever before been available, the potential of such surveys to inform and shape **strategic interventions** in volunteering is actually very limited – partly because the response rates across cohorts (age, gender, ethnicity; formal or informal volunteering) or across volunteering activities are very much smaller than in a national survey and therefore drawing conclusions based on these can be problematical.

But having said this, there is also an issue about the level of data on city-wide volunteering trends that other parties expect BVA to be able to furnish. Many automatically make BVA their first port of call in seeking facts and figures about volunteering in the city and BVA therefore needs to consider how it meets this expectation and the relative priority it should have within their operational budget.

There is a further consideration, of course, and this is that in future BVA may choose to be partners to research without necessarily conducting it themselves. Indeed, there might be an argument to say that such a division of labour would be both logical and effective, leaving BVA free to focus on what it has developed as core activity - being an action-based placement, referral and brokerage volunteer agency, challenging the boundaries of ‘formal’ volunteering and providing organisations who host volunteers with key infrastructural support.

However they might be handled, we have identified four priorities for research and activity:

- The development of effective strategic interventions in volunteering support and development
- Assessment of the effectiveness and/or impact of such interventions
- Assessment of the contribution made by volunteering against specific policy or strategy objectives (as outlined in the *volunteering framework* concept on p.15, for example)
- And investigation to see whether research adopting a cost-benefit analysis approach (comparing volunteer provision with statutory service provision) can be viably developed and carried out.

In our view, the usefulness of this approach is that it focuses on covering the key operational concerns that BVA and BVSC share:

- The design and delivery of effective volunteering interventions – i.e. improving and strengthening the support infrastructure.

- Evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of such interventions.
- Development of a policy-linked volunteering framework as a guide to prioritising action.
- And the more innovative notion of cost-benefit analysis of volunteer provision.

The ‘customer relationship’

Finally, something should be said about BVA’s continuing role as a promoter and advocate of volunteering directly to the public and its signposting, referral and brokerage role to the wider voluntary and community sector. While a more strategic *volunteering framework* that can inform the nature and intention of BVA’s volunteering interventions is crucial, the direct delivery elements of BVA’s work – its support, signposting, referral and brokerage roles — are also vital to the continuing health of volunteering in Birmingham. These should be seen as complementary, each reinforcing and informing the other.

However, while it is clearly important that BVA’s interventions are guided by a strategic framework, at ‘street level’ it is crucial that volunteering is presented – as we suggested earlier – in a way that resonates with, and plays to the values of, volunteers and prospective volunteers. BVA is uniquely well situated to combine these roles and adopting a more ‘departmentalised’ approach – distinguishing, as suggested, between personal, community and civic volunteering – could play an important part in ensuring that the right kind of messages reach the right kinds of volunteers.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

In the final analysis, then, certainly as far as BVA and BVSC are concerned, available resources will to a large extent determine the future of both volunteering interventions and research. But there is a broader point to be made here. We have said that those supporting and promoting volunteering from *within* the sector share a common interest with Government in seeking to spread the benefits that derive from volunteering, but that these interests are not strictly co-terminous. The voluntary sector also has a duty to safeguard the *voluntary* nature of volunteering and to ensure that it does not become proscriptively attached to the state’s social policy agenda. This is not only necessary, it is a legitimate role of the sector.

A fruitful relationship has been developed in Birmingham between BVSC and the Active Communities Directorate and this has enabled us to think more systematically, more critically and more creatively about volunteering in the round than has ever previously been the case. It has facilitated the instructive process of utilising research to inform and modify the actions and priorities of Birmingham’s main volunteer agency and has enabled us to examine a number of different options for BVA’s future work.

But how Government fosters, resources and keeps open the channels of this debate present something of a challenge. There must be room for dissenting views and for the healthy scepticism that comes so naturally to the voluntary sector.

There must also be space to develop new ideas rather than fall back on the comfort of preconceived ones. Indeed, without a wider debate conducted in this spirit, it is unlikely that Government can rise to the biggest challenge of all: how to harness volunteering to its longer-term social policy goals without compromising the very principles and values on which it is founded and which to a great degree motivate individual volunteers.

Alun Severn
Third Sector Services
BVSC RiSi
Birmingham Volunteer Action
April 2004

Panel 2 – Better Understanding and Knowledge of Voluntary Activities

Diane Machin (Youth Link Scotland)

Case study on “who is volunteering in Scotland”

Maria-Magdalena Cretu (CCIVS)

An inventory of Youth Voluntary Service possibilities and their impact

Karin Lopatta-Loibl (European Commission)

Analysis of the Questionnaires from the Open Method of Coordination

Chair: Bryony Hoskins (Youth Research Officer, Directorate for Youth and Sports, Council of Europe)

This paper is for **Panel 2**: Better understanding and knowledge of voluntary activities – providing an empirical, cross cultural and comparative picture of volunteering across Europe.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND: THOSE WHO VOLUNTEER AND THOSE WHO DON'T

Background

A UK wide National Survey of Volunteering in 1997 indicated that 43% of 16-24 year olds were involved in volunteering, a decrease from 55% in an earlier survey conducted in 1991. The report caused concern with its conclusion that there had been a 'sharp reduction in levels of participation by young people aged 16-24' and that young people 'were considerably less likely to be involved on a regular basis' than they had been in previous years (Davis-Smith, 1998). Subsequent research in Scotland sought to explore whether volunteering is sufficiently user-friendly for young people (Volunteer Development Scotland, 1999a). The study found that while the experience of young volunteers in Scotland is primarily a positive one and levels of satisfaction are high, a number of areas of concern existed. These included:

- A failure of adult society to present volunteering to young people as a realistic and attractive option;
- Under-representation of young people who are not white, female and in education;
- Outwith the voluntary youth sector, some organisations struggling to have any meaningful involvement of young volunteers;
- Unequal treatment of young volunteers compared to older volunteers in some organisations, and tacit barriers to their full participation.

Volunteering agencies also faced problems with high turnover rates of young volunteers and were having to compete with increased demands on young peoples' time and resources (Volunteer Development Scotland, 1999b).

Similar research in England and Wales explored the conditions and incentives that attract young people to voluntary work and the most effective ways of publicising and marketing volunteering opportunities to young people (Gaskin, 1998). This study concluded that the essential requirements of volunteering for 16-24 year olds are flexibility, legitimacy, ease of access, experience, incentives, variety, organisation and laughs (or 'Flexivol').

Being Young in Scotland

In 2003 YouthLink Scotland commissioned a research company, MORI Scotland, to carry out a major survey of a representative sample of 3,000 11-25 year olds across Scotland. The survey explored young people's characteristics, the things they like to do and their attitudes and opinions on a range of issues. The opportunity was taken to ask a number of questions about young people's involvement in volunteering and the data provide some insights into what can facilitate and what appears to hinder their involvement.

11-16 Year Olds in Scotland

Young people aged 11-16 years (n=2,124) were asked what they are most likely to do in their spare time. While listening to music and visiting friends houses were the most popular activities, 11% of respondents said they were most likely to 'give up some time to help others (that is, volunteering)'. Young people aged 11 and 12 years were significantly more likely than those aged 13-16 years to say they were likely to volunteer in their spare time and girls (13%) were significantly more likely than boys (9%) to say they volunteered.

The data suggest that young peoples' perceptions of their academic ability may influence their participation in volunteering – those who expected to leave school with Standard Grade qualifications were significantly more likely than those who expected to leave with Highers to say they were likely to volunteer in their spare time. Similarly, those who thought it was 'very' or 'fairly likely' that they would go to Further or Higher Education College were significantly more likely than those who thought it was 'very' or 'fairly likely' that they would go to University to say they volunteered. This suggests two things:

- among the 11-16 year old age group, volunteering might be regarded as being a predominantly vocational activity that is particularly suitable for people with average academic aspirations; or,
- those with higher academic aspirations may feel that they have less time to devote to volunteering because they have to devote more time to their studies.

Support for the former suggestion comes from the finding that young people who believe that they do not 'have good job prospects in the future' are significantly more likely than those who feel that they have good job prospects, to say that they volunteer.

Over one quarter of 11-16 year olds (28%) stated that they would like to do more volunteering in their spare time, with girls (35%) being significantly more likely than boys (20%) to want to do more. Support for the suggestion that those young people who are more academically orientated have less time for voluntary activity comes from the finding that those who expected to leave school with Highers and those who thought it was 'very' or 'fairly likely' that they would go to University were significantly more likely than those who thought they would leave school with Standard Grades and those who thought they would go to College to say they would like to give up more time to help others. Table 1 below shows the proportions of young people saying they would like to give up more of their spare time to help others.

Table 1: Young People who Volunteer and who Would Like to Volunteer in Their Spare Time

	Expect to leave school with Standard Grades	Expect to leave school with Highers	Very/fairly likely to go to FE/HE College	Very/fairly likely to go to University
Most likely to give up some spare time to help others	216 12%*	166 11%	188 13%*	158 11%
Would like to give up more time to help others	532 29%	461 30%*	432 29%	448 31%*

* Difference significant at $p < 0.05$ level

Over one quarter of 11-16 year olds (29%) thought it was 'very' or 'fairly likely' that they would 'take a gap year/do voluntary work' when they left school. However, just 6% hoped to work overseas as a volunteer. The data show that aspirations change with age, as 15 and 16 year olds were significantly more likely than 11-14 year olds to say that they hoped to work overseas as a volunteer. Girls in Scotland were significantly more likely (7%) than boys (4%) to say they hoped to volunteer overseas but this appears to arise from girls being more outward focused rather than from them being more inclined to volunteer – that is, girls were also significantly more likely than boys to say they hoped to study and work in another European country.

Volunteering appears not to feature highly in young peoples' information needs – just 13% of 11-16 year olds said they would find it useful to have information or advice on volunteering. Young people aged 11-12 years were most likely to say they would like information on this issue and girls were twice as likely as boys to want information.

One in five 11-16 year olds (21%) believe that volunteering to do things is one of the most important things that make someone a good citizen. This proportion is greater than that believing voting in elections makes someone a good citizen. Again, age is influential, with 11-12 year olds being significantly more likely than 13-16 year olds to say that volunteering makes someone a good citizen.

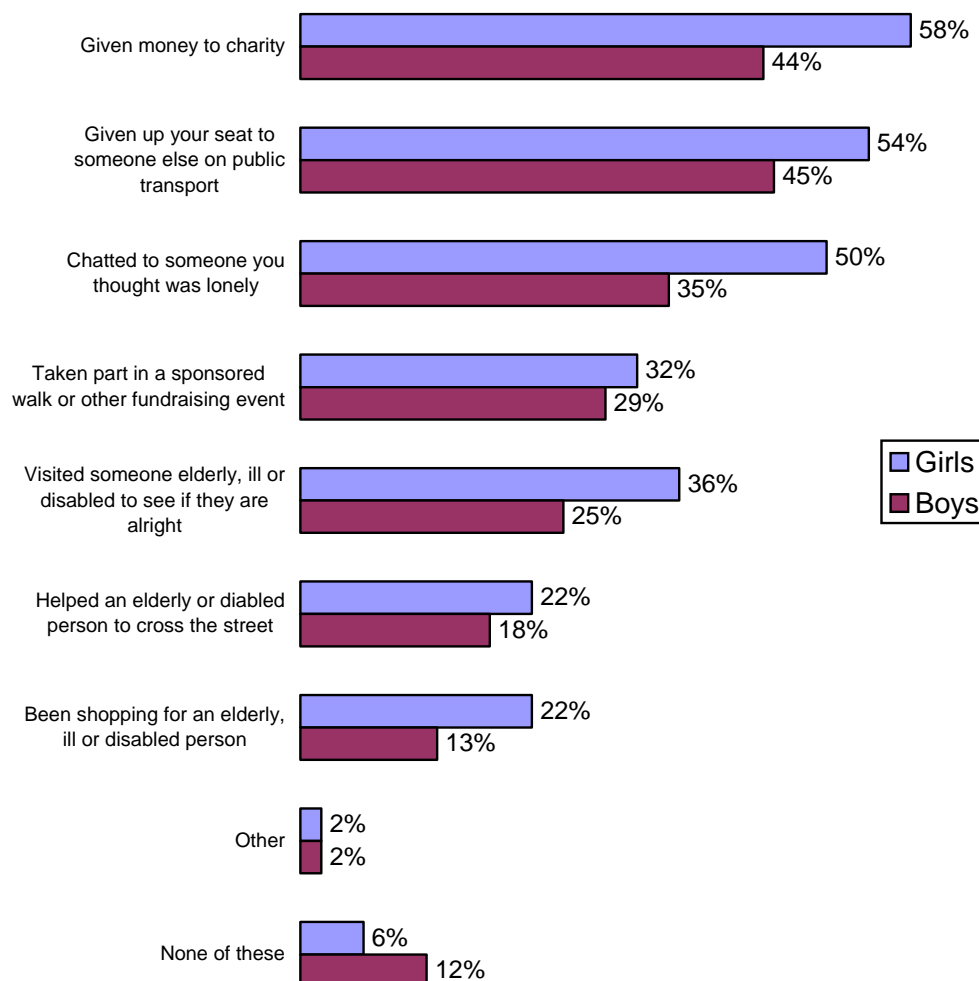
In addition to exploring what young people aged 11 to 16 years like to do in their spare time, the survey asked specifically whether they would consider doing some voluntary work. Almost half (47%) said they would consider doing voluntary work during school time (that is, within the school's curriculum and organised by the school). One quarter of young people (26%) said they would consider doing voluntary work in their own spare time in their community. Taken together, two in three 11-16 year olds (61%) said they would consider doing voluntary work.

Again, girls were significantly more likely than boys to say they would consider doing voluntary work in both scenarios. The data suggest that household composition might have an impact on young peoples' perceptions of the amount of free time they have available for volunteering. Those from households in which both parents work were significantly more likely (48%) than those from households where one (42%) or no parents (40%) worked to say they would consider doing voluntary work during school time.

A young person's family can have a substantial impact upon their attitude towards volunteering. Research by MORI in England and Wales shows that while school is a highly influential factor in encouraging young people to volunteer, family influence is also crucial. Three quarters of adults who had participated in voluntary work in the previous year said they encourage their children to undertake voluntary work and half said they themselves had been encouraged to undertake voluntary work by their own parents (MORI, 2000).

The Being Young in Scotland survey shows that a willingness to help others outside of the family is firmly established by the time young people reach their teenage years. Chart 1 shows that around half of 11-16 year olds (51%) had given money to charity in the previous six months and around half (49%) had given up their seat to someone else on public transport. The chart shows that helping others is more common amongst girls than boys and this difference is significant on all activities with the exception of 'taking part in a sponsored walk or other fund-raising event'. The chart also shows that encouraging proportions of young people had taken direct action to help specific people, for example by visiting someone to make sure they were alright or by shopping for someone who could not manage for themselves.

Chart 1: Things 11-16 Year Olds had Done to Help Others Outside Their Family in the Previous six Months



Overall, just 5% of 11-16 year olds claimed not to have taken part in any of these activities, a finding that does not correspond with earlier questions on whether young people were likely to give up some of their spare time to volunteer. This difference may be accounted for in part by the question of whether young people see donating money to charity and giving up their seat on public transport as volunteering.

17-25 Year Olds in Scotland

The Being Young in Scotland survey also sought the views of a representative sample of 972 17-25 year olds across Scotland. Watching television and listening to music are again the most favoured spare time activities but one in ten of this age group said that in a typical week they are most likely to give up some of their spare time to help others (that is, volunteer). Again, females and those at the younger end of the age spectrum (17-20 year olds) were more likely than males and 23-25 year olds to give up their time to volunteer. However, the differences were not significant.

For this age group household composition appears to have an important influence on volunteering – those who are married or living with a partner and those who are home owners are much less likely to

give up some of their time to volunteer than those who live with their parents or in rented accommodation and those who are single or of other marital status. It is important to recognise, however, that employment status may also have an influence here – those who are home-owners are more likely to be in full-time employment and, therefore, may have less time to give to volunteering. Indeed, the data show that those 17-25 year olds who are employed are less likely than those who are unemployed, in government work or training or in further/higher education to say they are most likely to give up their spare time to help others.

The relationship between volunteering and 11-16 year olds' expectations of their school leaving qualifications was explored earlier in this paper and the data indicated that those with higher academic aspirations were less likely to volunteer. This tendency appears to be carried through to actual academic attainment among 17-25 year olds. The data show that those who have a degree and/or professional qualification are less likely to say they give up some of their spare time to volunteer than those who have vocational qualifications, Highers or School Leaving Certificates. However, the important influence of time should be borne in mind again – those with a degree may be more likely to be in full-time employment and feel they have less time to give to volunteering.

One in ten 17-25 year olds (11%) said that they do not currently volunteer in their spare time but would like to. Again, females (13%) were more likely to express this view than males (9%). Neither marital status nor household tenure appear to have any influence on desire to undertake voluntary work among those 17-25 year olds who do not currently do any.

Those living in urban areas are significantly more likely (16%) than those living in rural areas (9%) to say they would like to volunteer but do not currently do so. However, there is no difference between urban and rural areas in the proportions who say they are likely to give up some of their spare time to help others or those who have volunteered in the past six months. In this respect the profile of 17-25 year olds is different to that of adults who volunteer in Scotland. Data from the Scottish Household Survey, a continuous cross-sectional survey, commissioned by the Scottish Executive, show that rates of volunteering by adults are highest in rural areas and lowest in large urban areas (Scottish Executive, 2002; Dudleston et al., 2002).

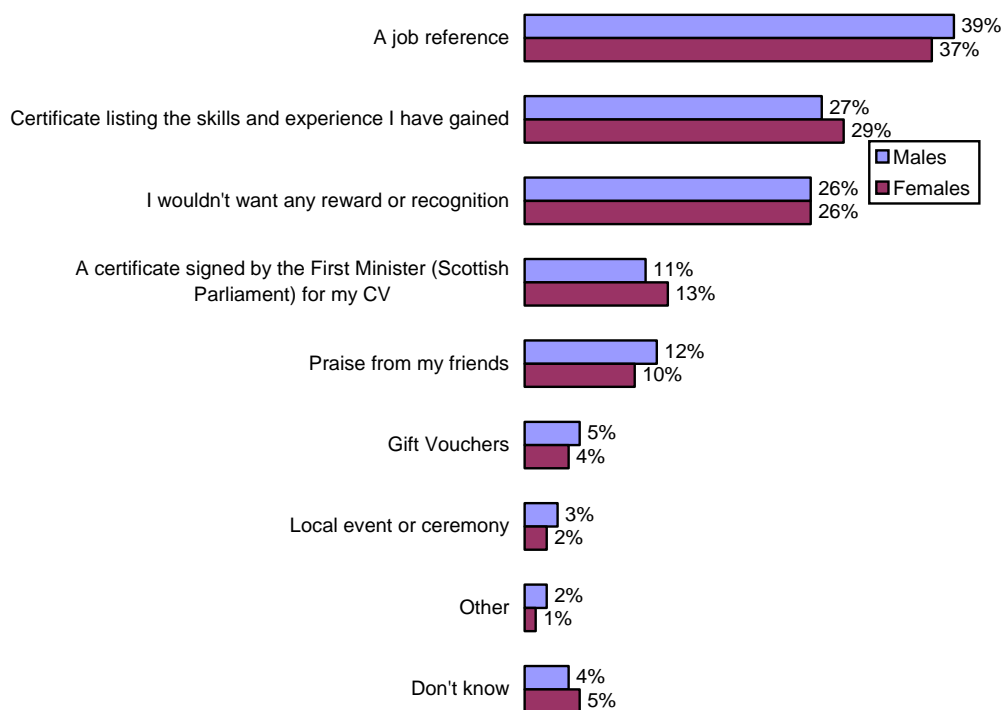
The survey asked 17-25 year olds whether they had 'done anything unpaid (that is, volunteered) to help others in the past six months'. One in four young people (24%) said that they had. There was little difference in the proportions of males and females saying they had volunteered but those at the younger end of the age spectrum (17-18 year olds) were significantly more likely than those at the older end (21-25 year olds) to say they had volunteered. For this age group, however, the relationship to academic aspirations is less clear – 17-25 year olds who were still in education (that is, at school or in further or higher education) were significantly more likely than those who were not in education to say that they had volunteered in the past six months. There was little difference between those with different levels of qualification, although those with a degree and/or professional qualification were slightly less likely to say they had volunteered than those with lower qualifications.

For those in employment, time may have been an issue, but the incidence of volunteering was also lower among those who were unemployed and who were not available for work. These findings reflect those for the adult population. The Scottish Household Survey shows that in 2000 18% of unemployed adults volunteered, compared to 28% of adults in employment, 36% of students and 35% of school pupils (Scottish Executive, 2002).

Interestingly, one quarter (26%) of those who felt their job prospects were good had volunteered in the past six months compared to just 15% of those who felt their job prospects were not good, a difference that is significant. It is not clear from the survey whether participation in voluntary activities enhances

young peoples' positive feelings about their job prospects. However, 17-25 year olds were asked how they would like their volunteering to be recognised and two in five (38%) said they would like a job reference. This was slightly more important to males (39%) than it was to females (37%) and significantly more important to 17-20 year olds than it was to 25 year olds. This suggests that the link between volunteering and employment is of greater importance to young people who are at the start of their careers or work history than it is to those who are established in employment. Those who agreed that their job prospects were good were significantly more likely than those who disagreed to say that they would not want any reward or recognition for volunteering. Chart 2 shows the ways in which young people said they would like their volunteering to be recognised.

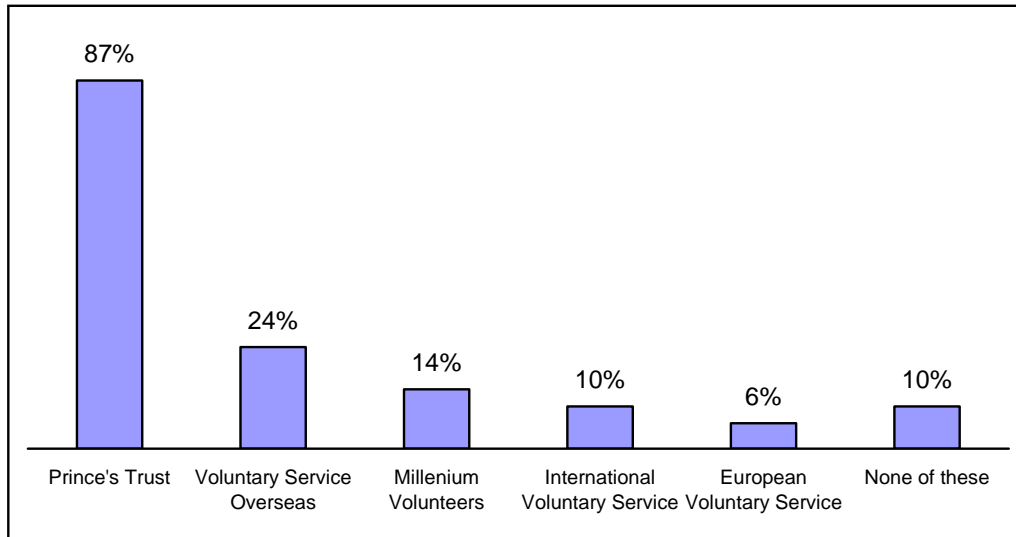
Chart 2: Ways in Which 17-25 Year Olds Would Like Their Volunteering to be Recognised



Noticeably, there was little support among 17-25 year olds for financial recognition of volunteering in the form of gift vouchers. This finding concurs with that of an earlier study by the Institute for Volunteering Research (Gaskin, 1998) which found that while young people were keen that volunteering should offer the incentive of a reference, certificate or qualification, there was very little support for the idea of financial reward.

The survey explored young peoples' awareness of a range of volunteering opportunities available to them. Chart 3 shows that nine out of 10 17-25 year olds had heard of the Prince's Trust, a UK charity that helps 14-30 year olds realise their potential and transform their lives, focusing in particular on those who have struggled at school, been in care, been in trouble with the law, or are long-term unemployed. One quarter of young people (24%) had heard of Voluntary Service Overseas, but just 6% had heard of European Voluntary Service.

Chart 3: Volunteering Opportunities Heard of by 17-25 Year Olds



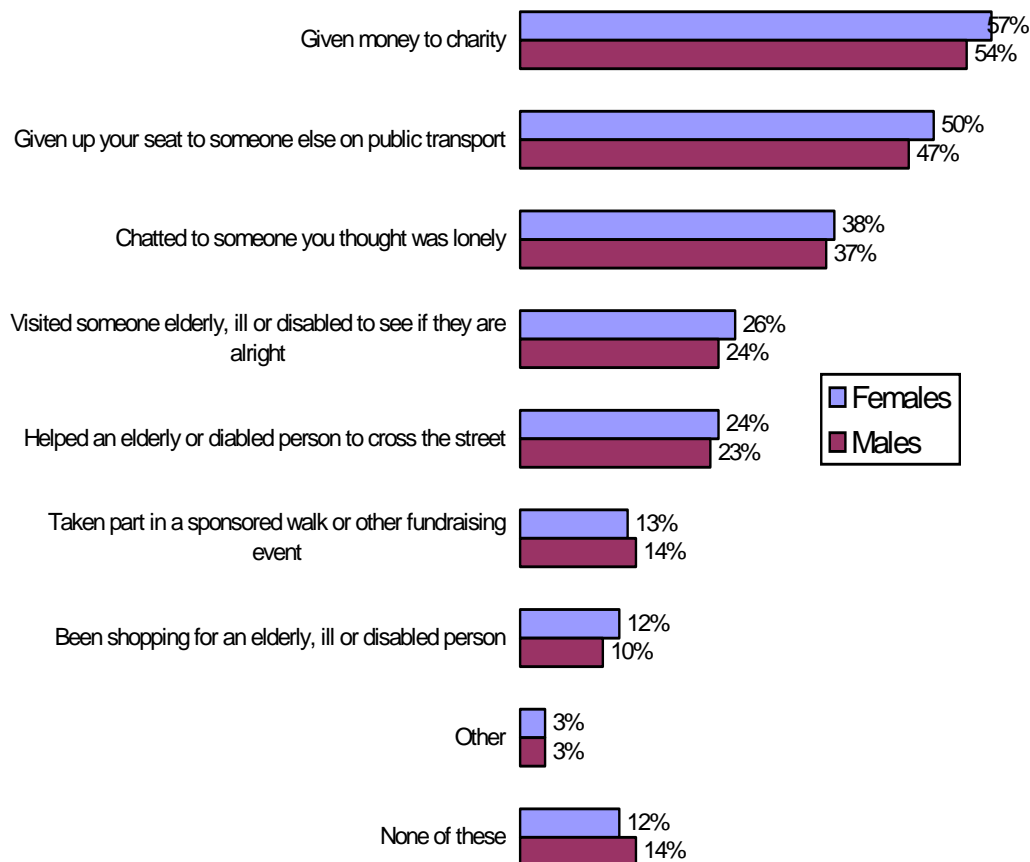
As with the younger age group, volunteering does not feature highly in 17-25 year olds' information needs – just 12% of this age group said they would find it useful to have advice or information on volunteering.

One in ten 17-25 year olds said that they hope to work overseas as a volunteer, a higher proportion than among 11-16 year olds. Young people in further or higher education were significantly more likely than others to have this aspiration, as were young people who were single.

One in five 17-25 year olds (19%) thought that 'volunteering to do things' is one of the most important things that make someone a good citizen, a slightly lower proportion than among 11-16 year olds. This suggests that the perceived importance of volunteering as a measure of good citizenship decreases with age. However, this perception is not confined to volunteering – fewer 17-25 year olds than 11-16 year olds regard 'respecting others'; 'having a say in what goes on'; 'voting at elections' and 'looking after the environment' as being important aspects of good citizenship.

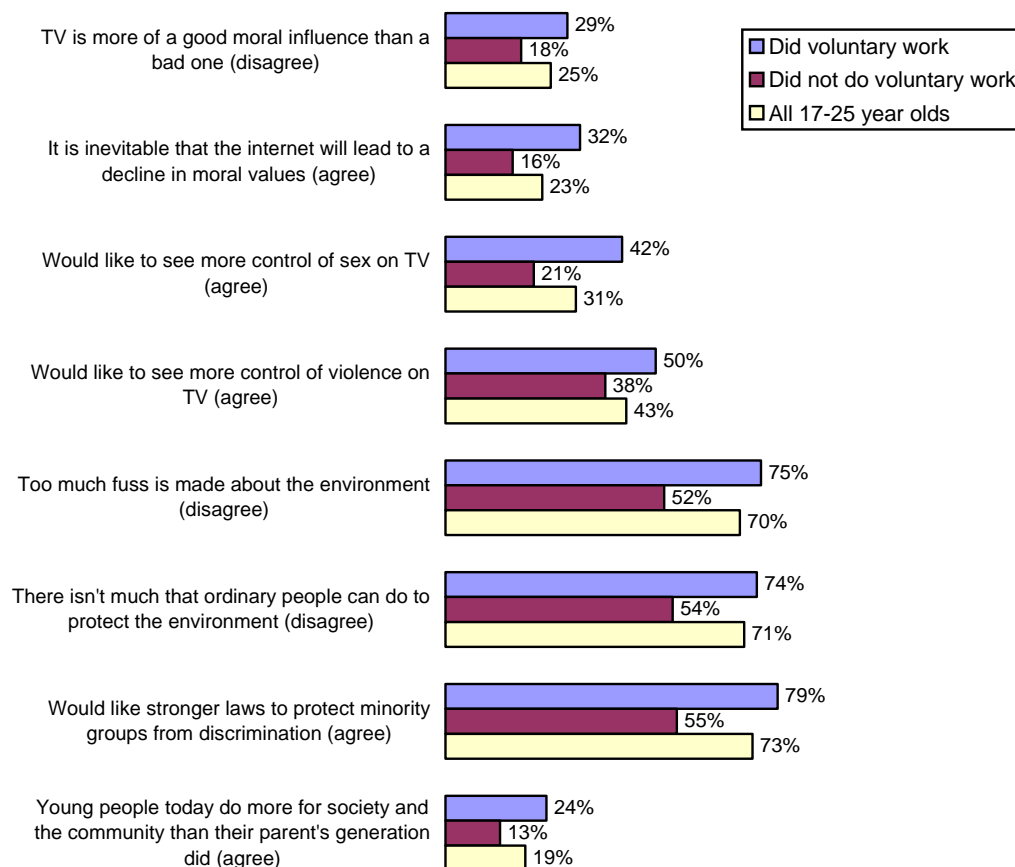
The survey shows that over half of all 17-25 year olds (55%) had given money to charity in the past six months. The proportions of 17-25 year olds who said they had undertaken direct action to help people outside their family are lower than the proportions of 11-16 year olds. However, the greatest decline is in respect of fund-raising activities – just 13% of 17-25 year olds said they had taken part in a sponsored walk or other fund-raising event in the previous six months, compared to 31% of 11-16 year olds. Clearly this particular type of voluntary activity is more attractive to young people at the younger end of the 11-25 year old age spectrum. Information from other surveys, however, indicates that interest in this particular type of voluntary activity may pick up again. The Scottish Household Survey shows that almost half of adults who volunteer in Scotland (45%) are involved in fundraising (Dudleston et al., 2002). Overall, 13% of 17-25 year olds said that they had not taken part in any activities to help others in the last six months, more than twice the proportion of 11-16 year olds. Chart 4 below shows that males were more likely than females to have not done any of the things mentioned, a trend that continued from, but is less pronounced than among 11-16 year olds.

Chart 4: Things 17-25 Year Olds had Done to Help Others Outside Their Family in the Previous six Months



The survey sought to explore the attitudes of 17-25 year olds on a number of social issues. Analysis of the data shows that those who had done voluntary work in the last six months appear to be more conservative in their views and have a stronger environmental conscience than those who had not done voluntary work and than all 17-25 year olds. Chart 5 shows that 29% of those young people who had volunteered either tended to disagree or strongly disagreed that ‘on the whole television is more of a good influence than a bad one’. This compares to 19% of people who had not volunteered and 25% of all 17-25 year olds. Those who had volunteered were more inclined to agree that the internet will have a detrimental effect on moral values and that sex and violence on television should be subject to greater control. They were also more inclined to disagree that the environment is the subject of too much concern and that there is little ordinary people can do to protect the environment.

Chart 5: Social and Environmental Attitudes of 17-25 Year old Volunteers and Non-volunteers



Conclusion

The Being Young in Scotland survey shows that 24% of 17-25 year olds have undertaken voluntary activity in the past six months. It is not clear from other data available on Scotland whether this is a healthy proportion or not – the Institute for Volunteering Research 1997 UK Survey of Volunteering found that 43% of 16-24 year olds across the UK and 50% of adults in Scotland were engaged in formal volunteering; however, data from the Scottish Household Survey showed that in 2001 25% of adults in Scotland had volunteered through a group, club or organisation in the previous year. Research commissioned by Volunteer Development Scotland in 2002 showed that 20% of the adult population in Scotland had volunteered in the past year, but a subsequent survey (that used different wording in the questions) put the proportion at 38%.

It is clear, however, that the proportion of 17-25 year olds who say they have actually volunteered, is substantially lower than the proportion of 11-16 year olds who say they would be willing to consider volunteering (61%). A new Volunteering Strategy for Scotland was launched by the Scottish Executive in May 2004 and one of its four key strands focuses on young people. The Strategy aims to ‘increase the range of young Scots aware of volunteering and the benefits it brings to volunteers, communities and organisations, as well as improving awareness amongst young people of how to access volunteering’. The results of the Being Young in Scotland survey suggest that many 11-16 year olds are already aware of volunteering. What appears to be of greater importance for the future of volunteering in Scotland is ensuring that we capitalise on the willingness of young people to volunteer by enabling them to readily access appropriate volunteering opportunities, and retain their interest and involvement in volunteering as they make the transition to adulthood. The Scottish Executive’s newly launched ‘Project Scotland’,

based on the AmeriCorps model, aims to encourage 16-25 year olds to undertake one year of full-time voluntary work on a modular basis by providing quality-assured placements of three to four months duration, for which volunteers will be paid basic living expenses. The Project will make ‘a concerted effort to attract those from traditionally under-represented groups’ into volunteering (Working Group Report Into a National Youth Volunteering Programme, 2004). Future sweeps of the Being Young in Scotland survey will provide an opportunity to explore whether Project Scotland has impacted on young peoples’ volunteering at a national level.

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1. CCIVS

The Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) is an international non-governmental organization, which works towards peace, development and human rights through the promotion, development and co-ordination of national and international voluntary service.

CCIVS was created in 1948 under the aegis of UNESCO for the coordination of voluntary service worldwide. Over the following 50 years, CCIVS has expanded its membership from a Western European base to include youth movements in Eastern Europe and volunteer organizations in Africa, Asia, Arab countries and the Americas. Today CCIVS works with 242 member organizations and their branches present in more than 90 countries.

THE OBJECTIVES OF CCIVS

The objectives of CCIVS are related to the promotion and development of the voluntary service movement on national, regional and International levels in the contemporary world:

- The propagation and development of the aims of voluntary service and its educational impact both on the volunteers and the community in which they work
- The promotion and development of relations and co-operation with other voluntary service and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- The support of the United Nations Principles : co-operation and contribution to the implementation of the programs and the initiatives of the United Nations and its bodies on questions of common interest, especially to develop co-operation on a broader scale with UNESCO, striving for the realization of common initiatives and the contribution to each others programs.

ACTIVITIES related to the co-ordination

- Co-ordination and promotion of activities of member organizations;
- Organization of international and regional conferences, seminars, courses and workcamps;

- Presentation of the issues concerning the international voluntary service movement towards international organizations and various other fora;
- International solidarity campaigns and special joint actions of voluntary service organization;
- Research and Publications;
- Information and documentation;
- Fundraising.

2. A picture of voluntary activities across Europe

First of all, it is important to define voluntary service:

Profile of volunteers:

CCIVS member organisations generally work with **non- specialised volunteers of all ages**, who are willing to invest their time, energy and fantasy in a project for the benefit of a local community **anywhere on the globe**.

Duration:

The projects can be **short term** (2-4 weeks), **medium term** (up to 3 months) or **long term** (up to 1 or even 2 years). The short term projects are usually group projects called **workcamps**, while the medium or long term projects usually consist in **individual placements** within a given community. We are doing this difference in CCIVS for a better analyse and cmprehension of the different types of voluntary service.

Some statistics...

There are a lot of statistics talking about the voluntary service. In the bibliography there are some publications which treat the impact of the voluntary service from the point of view of the numbers and the statistics. Indeed, the Annual report of SCI and Alliance for year 2002 locate within the framework the volunteers and distribute them according to age, sex, their choice for the workcamps. The majority of the participating volunteers on workcamps are students, women in majority and they take part in projects of environment, antiracism, young people and children. During the year the number of the workcamps and volunteers increased, but at the same time, there are volunteers who gave up and projects were cancell.

Statistics made on the European Voluntary Sevice (EVS) by the Structure of Operational Support, in 1999, present the volunteers having take part in the EVS project. The results showed some weak and strong points of the program and they were positive from the point of view of the evaluation of the volunteers experience. 95% of the volunteers said that their experience was good or very good. The questionnaires made it possible to collect the opinion of the volunteers on what was the impact of the EVS in their lives and how they evaluated their experience in negative terms against positive results. These evaluations and statistics alow to put in evidence that an evaluation must be regularly carried out in order to have a European vision of the profile of the young people and impact of the EVS on their course. The volunteers told full of things, in a free way, what shows that in a certain manner the EVS left a print in their life.

For example, the statistics of SCI show the following dates:

a)concerning the themes of the workcamps:

25% environement
 15% children, teens, elderly
 11% arts, culture, local history
 10%disabled
 9%antifascism, antiracism, minorities

65% students
22% employed
4% unemployed
2% other
7% unknown

66% female
34% male

- from 16652 volunteers:
 - 72% sent abroad and 28% in the country
 - 34% males, 66% females
 - 10% under 18, 70% between 18 and 25, 20% over 25 years old

On the Alliance workcamps 90% of the places were filled.

We can see that we have different types of workcamps according to the duration, the type of workcamp. There are organisations who choose also to organise insertion workcamps, in which they involve disadvantaged young people mixed with non-disadvantaged ones. On the other way, people are coming from different continents, so not only from different social backgrounds. Very often, these young people are in situations without exit, they do not know the elementary social behaviors, often they are unaware of their rights and their duties. The workcamp started to be used as instrument of insertion because it showed its effectiveness with regard to the young people in difficulty. In the pedagogy of voluntary work, the workcamp is the base of any preparation for these young people. This form of activity includes the leisures, the group relations, the relations inside the group and with the hosting community. Through the voluntary service, the excluded individuals achieve the possibilities to change from passive to active actors of the society.

The final purpose of this engagement is the construction of peace through the exchanges between people from everywhere. The voluntary service is “an international movement which aims to a justice, peace and human solidarity society. It fights against the various forms of violence, exploitation and injustice; against the ideological, sexist, political, cultural and economic oppression networks” (*Preamble to the international constitution of Youth Action for Peace Organisation*).

3. The research

Introduction and motivation

The idea for the research project first came up at the General Conference of CCIVS in 2001, where the members expressed the need for further research on the impact of voluntary service projects in order to “strengthen the effects of our voluntary action” (report 28th General Conference of CCIVS). The idea was then further developed during a symposium on the International Year for Volunteering 2001, as it was organised in Mollina, Spain in January 2002. The symposium involved organisations like CCIVS, AVSO, YAP, SCI, ICYE, and the Alliance, as well as representatives of the European Commission, UNV and UNESCO.

The research itself

The research itself focuses on the effects of the voluntary service on the volunteer as well as on the host community. It was conducted by Magdalena Cretu from Romania, at the CCIVS office based in UNESCO in Paris. She was supported by the EVS programme of the European Commission. The research was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Simona Costanzo-Sow, director of CCIVS.

To start, it was important to have an overall picture on existing researches. On the long run, the researches should be directed towards the long-term effects of the voluntary service on the volunteers and on the sustainable development of the local communities where the project takes place.

During the research, it was discovered that the most important part of the researches on voluntary service (as opposed to national service) are made in Europe, on young people performing a voluntary service in Europe or on the other continents. They are engaged in different types of voluntary service, short-, medium- or long-term. It was noticed that voluntary service activities influence the personality of the volunteer, his/her intercultural awareness, his/her future professional life. Voluntary service also improves and changes local and global communities.

The research uses a total of 17 publications (see annexed list). It is structured into three main topics, focusing on personal development, intercultural development and local development. The research starts with an introductory table, summarising the publications used, and giving ideas about the type of publication, statistics, region concerned, type of volunteer activity, etc. It then continues with a description of the working methods and the definitions used, followed by a detailed description of the conclusions on the three main topics, and each individual publication. The research ends with a conclusion regrouping the main topics.

Main findings

- Voluntary service allows “the practice and the training of the democracy”. Volunteering makes it possible to assume responsibilities and to take decisions. At the same time, it allows to the volunteer to re-use all the knowledge that he/she accumulated on the project. Then, in a project, the existing differences according to the cultures, the environment, knowledge of people, become a way of life, a richness for everyone. The young people are in contact with a new medium, another know-how, another culture. The culture plays an important role in a project by offering an international opening, creating an international identity.
- Volunteers have an important role in society. Answering to a social request, they fill important functions for their organisation, using the means of the associative structure.
- Volunteering allows young people to integrate the social, political, economical life in a new context, where the relations are more equitable. Within the framework of associations, the young people can defend the values in which they believe: human rights, the tolerance, national heritage, etc.

- Voluntary service is not just pure altruism, the volunteer also receives and expects from his/her activity. He/she has 2 requirements: "to live decently" and "to have a role in the organisation". Within the framework of community life, the voluntary service answers these requests, because associations appear to set up projects of common interest for volunteers.
- If the professional life has its constraints, volunteering it is stimulating- it allows the volunteer a human contact with the others, a training of the social life, to raise new challenges, to open out.

Voluntary service constitutes for the young person a possibility of developing social values, of forging a stronger identity and of acquiring experience and skills not provided in the sector of formal education or the vocational training; the young people become conscious of their citizenship. Volunteering is opened to everyone, independently of the school, economic or social preparation and that makes the voluntary service an important instrument for social inclusion. Moreover, it supports the mobility of the young people, which contributes in a very important way to intercultural comprehension.

First of all we have to consider the impact at personal level. Is the voluntary service the search for an ideal or the response to this ideal? The volunteer is placed in an unknown situation where he should rebuild the elements which melt its rooting in its engagement and its convictions. This experience reinforces the sense of certain values like solidarity

The voluntary service must be used for social integration, citizen engagement, to find different ways to see the world and to find his own place like a volunteer. By participating to a long term volunteer project, the young person becomes conscious of his place in the world, he builds his place and his own answers, he becomes responsible for his activities. Within the framework of this engagement, the volunteer becomes open to other cultures, he becomes able to build his way in the life and the society, and at the same time he becomes already able to adapt more easily to all that is new or different for him

One of the studies, which was carried by a french organisation, Solidarites Jeunesses, member of Youth Action for Peace movement, concentrates more on the impact from the point of view of the personal development. We observe that more than half of volunteers after having finished their project imply themselves in associations, "especially cultural and leisures or youths and coeds or sporting". The study could note that the majority of the people lived voluntariate like a positive experience from the point of view of personal enrichment. The voluntary service made it possible to the young people to better know themselves, to gain a confidence in them, to better know the others. At the same time, this activity can be considered as a test to pass at the adulthood. After voluntary service, half of them found an employment as soon as they started to seek it and half found it in a field which had a bond with their voluntary service. What had impressed the employers it was initially the fact of having lived abroad, then the gained experience, independence and the fact of knowing a foreign language.

Among the publications, the one of the Esdime Center of Portugal talks about the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and its contributions at personal and cultural level and local development. Since 1997 this center accomodates volunteers. They try to promote a certain image of voluntariate as the most-value for the association and especially for the young person. They want to show that the EVS makes it possible to the young people to grow up, to acquire competences as well personal as professional, to know a new culture and to better develop theirs, to develop capacities of autonomy, organization, adaptability, to communicate with the others. As a personal experience, voluntariate is considered by the young people a way of giving a part of his time to the others, people or associations. For them, the voluntariat is at the same time knowing other sides of the society and it allowed to volunteers to become rich from cultural point of view by the discovery of another culture.

Talking about intercultural developement, here also we have many gains. The voluntary service represents intercommunality, partnership, interaction:

- the training of partnership
- the workcamp initiating interactions
- practice of the intercommunalty

In the portuguese center, the volunteers are in contact with the local arts and crafts, especially that the projects proceed in the countryside. Then, after having finished their project, some make publicity and emphasize the craft

industry and the culture with which they were in contact. The volunteers are familiar with people of the village, their traditions, their way of seeing the things and the life, considering that there is a great difference between the life in the city and the life in a village, other concepts and other prejudices, especially in a country like Portugal, where the traditions are still well kept. Also, the volunteers are in contact with the Portuguese cooking, which for volunteers coming from the north countries it is something new. From their side, people from the community learn things from other cultures, they come in contact with young people from other countries.

In the case of the French Scouts who went in Senegalese workcamps, the volunteers learned the concept of solidarity by working in group, in the service of the community. The workcamp is a pretext to bring closer the young people, to help them better knowing themselves and building an international solidarity. The volunteers contribute in all the cases to make live a "citizen spirit". The freedom of associations to adapt each day to their environment make them permeable to the social climate.

The local development plays an important role in the volunteer service philosophy. The assertion of the regional identities and "want to live and work in the countryside" animates the reflexion of the local populations. Other workcamp actions are presented like contesting forms vis-a-vis to the inequality of the development.

The organizations have the occasion to register their action in processes of local and regional development. The young volunteers workcamps proves to be an extremely flexible and adaptable tool. It always knew to adapt to the social and cultural evolutions.

There are important effects regarding the local development.

a) concerning the territory:

- internal and external valorization of the local image
- reductions are considered (continuity of social and professional vocational actions)

b) for the local community:

-following these educational, cultural and intercultural effects, but especially social, there is extremely to bet on participative citizenship development and thus to facilitate the emergence of local actors

c) for the partners:

- they consider new co-operations and grow rich by methodological contributions

In the same time, the workcamps are an important tool for the revalorization of the inheritance and of the identity image.

- to give again life to the local inheritance, to find its roots
- to confer a utility on the rehabilitated site
- to generate a dynamics of projects

The workcamp bring an aid to the local economy development:

- direct impacts on the trade and the local arts and crafts
- economic impacts of the sites rehabilitate
- indirect impact on the creation of activities

There are 4 key concepts of this form of engagement in the international co-operation under development: creativity, solidarity, responsibility and ecumenicalism.

In any case, there is a favoured field, the social economy. The workcamps are the possible answer to leave the economic crisis, to leave a process of decomposition which affects all the societies, the industrialized countries as well as the Third World.

Such a project is not at all easy to realize, especially that during my research, I realized that there are few documents which speak about the impact of the voluntary service. The case where I found documents, there were only certain passages which talked about this subject. From what I could find and noted until now., all the publications was published in Europe, especially in France. From this point of view one can say that the system of popular and nonformal education is stronger in France than elsewhere and also it has a great influence on the young people with regard to their choice compared to the voluntary service.

Another problem of the voluntary service is the recognition of the status of volunteer. There are many cases, people from Eastern Europe or from South Countries who have problems in coming in Europe, and in most of the cases there are visas problems. There is more need to make people conscious about the voluntary service, they have to know how to make the difference between this engagement and humanitarian actions. Also, voluntary service has many interpretations in the world.

If in Europe we can find everywhere the same sense of the voluntary service, to see voluntariate, in the United States for example, voluntary service = voluntary help = national service. The voluntary help it is an activity which does not engage many responsibilities on behalf of the person who carries out it and does not ask either an engagement. It is realized in most of the cases in the spare time. On the other hand, the volunteer breaks of his usual medium to make a voluntariate, in the majority of the cases abroad, he assumes responsibilities and an engagement. At the same time, his activities are remunerated with a little money for his existence. For CCIVS and his members, **“voluntary service is an exchange between an individual, or a group of individuals and a local community. The volunteer or group of volunteers offers time, energy and effort to a project of benefit to a community, and via this project the community offers to the volunteer or group of volunteers an opportunity for experimentation, learning and personal and collective development”**. (Cotravaux, France)

Another thing that I observed while doing this research is that there are not many publications talking about the political or religious impact of the voluntary service. There are just a few paragraphs who treat the political impact of the voluntary service. And I think there are many things to tell considering that the voluntary service is a form of popular education and that the final goal of this activity it is peace in the world.

I have to say also that the young people, the students should not regard the voluntary service as a validation of their studies, some kind of internship. The voluntary service can supplement these studies, but it remains an experiment of life, a step towards the maturity, a way of realizing their place as citizen in the society.

From my point of view, we need to set up national centers of volunteers, charged with making the studies, collecting the statistics and to constitute data banks in connection with voluntary work. It is necessary to encourage and support the role of the volunteers while rewarding, by acts of public recognition, their remarkable contribution.

ANNEX: list of publications used for comparative research

1. SCI, " *Annual Report* ", 2002 Belgique
2. ICYE Finlande, " *Evaluation of ETVO* ", Finlande
3. Cotravaux et INJEP, " *Les apports des chantiers de jeunes bénévoles* ", collection Mémoire, avril 1997, Paris
4. Agence française du Programme Européen Jeunesse, " *Programme Européen Jeunesse - Bilan 2000-2002* ", 2003
- court aperçu fait par Agence Jeunesse, " *Europe Express* ", n°15, décembre 2003, pg.
5. Structure du Support Opérationnel pour le SVE, " *Volunteers' perception on the impact of the EVS in their lives* "
6. Agence française du Programme Européen Jeunesse en collaboration avec l'Université de Marne la Vallée, " *Le SVE : avant, pendant, après* "
7. Vive Mexico et Lunaria, " *The International Voluntary Movement in Mexico* ", nov. 2003
8. Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations, " *Annual Report 2002* "
9. Thierry Roos, " *La contribution des chantiers de jeunes bénévoles internationaux en matière de développement local* ", 1997
10. Françoise Materne, " *Analyse des modifications, de trajectoires sociales et/ou professionnelles des volontaires bénévoles engagés dans la coopération ou développement* ", juin 1987
11. Stéphane Nove Josserand, " *Mission d'évaluation des camps -chantiers des scouts français et sénégalais 1990-1992* ", 1993

12. Anouk Vanommeslaeghe, *"L'impact d'un volontariat long terme sur la vie citoyenne"*, septembre 2001
 13. Esdime, *"Voluntor -témoignages et expériences de volontariat"*,
 14. Bénédicte Halba et Michel le Net, *"Bénévolat et volontariat dans la vie économique, sociale et politique"*, 1997
 15. Jean Bourrieau, *"Les chantiers internationaux de jeunes volontaires et l'insertion des jeunes en difficulté: 1984-1989 analyse d'une pratique au Centre de Beaumotte"*, 1989
 16. Frederic Billaud, Alain Piveteau, *"Pour un volontariat d'avenir. Regards croisés sur le volontariat de solidarité internationale"*, La documentation française, 2001
 17. Arthur Gillette, *"Taking People Out of Boxes and Categories: Voluntary Service and Social Cohesion"*, in "Service in the 21st Century" edited by Helene Perold, Susan Stroud and Michael Sherraden, 2003
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**Panel 3 – Facilitating voluntary activities – exploring the obstacles to young people’s participation in voluntary activities
(mobility/visa issues, gender stereotypes or young/single families, economic conditions, etc...)**

Brian Gran (Case Western Reserve University)

Public-Private Obstacles to Voluntary Service and Citizenship

Anna Musiala

Facilitate voluntary activities – exploring the obstacles to young people’s participation in voluntary activities

Vincent Guibert

Recruiting minority volunteers

Chair: Helen Colley - (Leeds University)

Public-Private Obstacles to Voluntary Service and Citizenship

Panel 3: Facilitate Voluntary Activities

July 5 to 7, 2004

Budapest, Hungary

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Public-Private Obstacles to Voluntary Service and Citizenship

Abstract

What are obstacles to participating in voluntary service activities for young individuals traveling to other European countries? This paper concentrates on private and public-private barriers to participation in voluntary services by young people. It identifies three barriers, obligations, information, and opportunities, which may deter young people from participating in voluntary service activities. After providing descriptive information about each of these private and public-private obstacles, the paper briefly concludes with recommendations on overcoming these obstacles to promote solidarity and ensuring active European citizenship.

Introduction

What are trans-European obstacles to voluntary activities for young people? To foster young people's active citizenship and solidarity, private and public-private structures and practices must be considered in establishing national and transnational policies of voluntary service. Young persons face considerable obstacles to participating in voluntary services. These obstacles are found in public and private sectors of social life; sometimes these barriers are formed by public-private collaborations. This paper presents categories of private and public-private barriers to voluntary service participation by young people. It then examines survey data and political and socio-economic data to place these categories in a European context. An overarching objective of this paper is to contribute to debates on barriers to voluntary service activities and how to remove or alleviate their consequences. This paper seeks to contribute to discussions of how voluntary service activities can foster active citizenship and solidarity of young people in Europe.

This paper first presents an overview of what is meant by public and private, then a discussion of what is public and private when considering voluntary service activities. It then presents three categories of private and public-private barriers to voluntary service participation. This paper concludes with a brief discussion of how these barriers may be overcome or mitigated for purposes of employing voluntary service activities to foster active citizenship and solidarity of young people in Europe.

What is Public and Private

Before examining private and public-private barriers to voluntary service, it is important to discuss what is meant by public and private. It is impossible to give all meanings of public and private or to come to a neat conclusion about sources of ideas of what is public and private. Instead, this section's objective is to offer an overview of how we often think of what is public and private, and to raise questions about what is meant by public and private.

We start with common notions of what is public and private. Nancy Fraser (1999: 128) reviews typical conceptions of public and private.

"Public," for example, can mean (1) state-related, (2) accessible to everyone, (3) of concern to everyone, and (4) pertaining to a common good or shared interest. Each of these corresponds to a contrasting sense of "private." In addition, there are two other senses of "private" hovering just below the surface here: (5) pertaining to private property in a market economy and (6) pertaining to intimate domestic or personal life, including sexual life.

Fraser's notions of public seem to revolve around either the state or a matter that involves everyone. Public denotes government as well as universal access or relevance. Her notions of private appear to be non-state, not to involve everyone, or to pertain to private property or intimate relations. Private refers to space and relationships

outside government, including areas and relationships not universally available. These spaces and relationships include the home and relationships taking place within the home or in the market place.

Fraser's (1999) conception, like others' notions of public and private, probably has a basis in Aristotle's ideas. In his *Politics*, Aristotle sets out the basis of a state, delineating categories: the citizen, the household, the village, and the state. In his model, the state subsumes the village, the household, and the citizen. Rather than a dichotomy between state and non-state actors and institutions, the state is built on the village, which is based on households capable of fulfilling daily needs. A state is a community based on an organization of villages. A community is formed from several villages. A village is formed when several households unite to fulfill more than basic needs, thereby allowing household members to manage concerns beyond their own households. A household consists of master and slave, husband and wife, and father and children. Outside Aristotle's household, as a citizen, a male household member participates in public affairs arising between other households and the village and state they form.

Aristotle offers some directions on how a household should be governed. Inside this household, the male citizen as husband, father, and master, governs his wife, children, and to a less degree his servant, respectively. The relationship between husband and wife is constitutional rule. The husband should govern his wife as a citizen leader governs another citizen, with the expectation that they will take turns and the other citizen will eventually govern. In the case of the relationship between husband and wife, however, the husband's rule never ceases. The wife will never govern the husband, but she should submit to the power of the husband, who should treat his wife with the respect of a fellow citizen who will rule him. The father should govern his children royally. A royal government for Aristotle means the father should rule his children as a loving parent. His children, in turn, should submit to him out of love and respect for his royal government. Although the male member owes responsibilities beyond mere ownership, the bottom line is that the servant is the master's property. For Aristotle, the state is based on and subsumes the village and the household, but within the household the male citizen governs. Outside the household, together citizens would form government and make decisions affecting others living in and under authority of government.

Gobetti (1997: 103) suggests that the public-private dichotomy "has its roots in the modern contractual theorists." She points to the distinction between public and private jurisdictions. The private jurisdiction belongs to the "citizen/subject" and the public jurisdiction belongs to the group that makes decisions for a "politically unified group" (1997: 103). The private jurisdiction extends to all activities in which an "adult engages without harming or endangering others," whether by commission or omission. When harm is done, the public authority can then legitimately intrude into an individual's private jurisdiction.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991), Jürgen Habermas conceives of a public sphere, the state, and the economy or market place. His focus is on the public sphere, which he describes as a place where people are socially integrated and rational, critical discourse can take place about state and economy. Integration into this public sphere occurs through communication, not domination (Calhoun 1999: 29; see Calhoun 1999 for an excellent overview of this book). In the public sphere, individuals are to participate together, through communication, in debating issues of authority of the state and market place. Habermas' private sphere is the household. Compared to Aristotle, the public sphere is the site where all individuals can exchange ideas and opinions to exercise control over state and market sectors. It is not clear in Habermas' conception whether communication in the public sphere is expected to be used to control the private sphere.

Behanbib (1999: 92) criticizes Habermas for failing to identify power differences in intimate relations found in the private sphere. The women's movement, according to Behanbib, is making private issues into public issues (1999: 92) by noting power differences "on which sexual division of labor has rested" (1999: 92). As a result, lines between public and private are under negotiation. She is troubled, however, by how these private issues are managed in public. "When, however, issues like child rearing...domestic violence...child abuse...go public in our societies, more often than not a 'patriarchal-capitalist-disciplinary bureaucracy' has resulted. These bureaucracies have frequently disempowered women and have set the agenda for public debate and participation" (Behanbib 1999: 94).

An important conceptual contribution to the public-private dichotomy is the social sector. Fraser (1989: 156) identifies the social, which she says is different from family and official economy, as well as Habermas' public sphere. "Rather, the social is a site of discourse about people's needs, specifically about those needs that have broken out of the domestic and/or official economic spheres that earlier contained them as 'private matters.'" It is a place of conflict and struggle "in which conflicts among rival interpretations of people's needs are played out" and discussed (Fraser 1989: 156-157). She (1989: 157) identifies three major ways needs are discussed in the social arena: (1) experts such as social workers and policy makers identifying people's needs; (2) oppositional movements identifying people's needs; and, (3) reprivatization constituencies that seek to move "newly problematized needs to their former domestic or official economic enclaves." Fraser's social is similar to

Habermas' public sphere in that it is a site of communication, but less of integration. While Habermas may hope that everyone enters the public sphere, it seems that experts and groups dominate Fraser's social sector.

These different conceptions suggest many important thinkers have devised different conceptions of what is public and private, and that these conceptions sometimes conflict. Fraser (1999: 131) advocates taking harder looks at "public" and "private." "These terms, after all, are not simply straightforward designations of societal spheres; they are cultural classifications and rhetorical labels. In political discourse they are powerful terms frequently deployed to delegitimize some interests, views, and topics and to valorize others." Turkel (1992: 222) contends that the public-private "division is increasingly determined by social forces," but that the public-private distinction is incoherent. This incoherence "occurs along with increases in societal power that make the individual and the private sphere a zone of surveillance, manipulation, and intensive technological control." Yet the public-private dichotomy is a double-edged sword. To deny the utility of the public-private boundary can result in the weakening of the boundary, permitting the state and others to intrude into private life. On the other hand, affirming the boundary can discourage new responses to problems the public-private boundary denies (Tutel 1992: 222-223; see Fraser 1999: 137).

What is meant by public and private includes both place and relationship. Aristotle described relationships between state, village, and household. Male household leaders negotiated these relationships, as well as relationships within the household. Roles of other household members, including wife, child, and slave, were conceptually limited to intra-household relationships. The male household leader participated in public and private sectors, while participation of women, children, and slaves were limited to the private sector. Habermas is concerned that state and economic marketplace will overwhelm the public sphere, which is a site of social integration that can encourage individuals to participate in controlling authority of the state and economic marketplace. In his later work, Habermas goes further to express concern that the state and economic marketplace will intervene in and to some degree control the private sphere. Habermas conceives that everyone will participate in the public sphere, but as his critics note, he fails to consider barriers and abilities to participation. These barriers may be erected in the state and economic marketplaces as well as within the household (see Gobetti (1997: 105).

What is Public and Private for Policies of Voluntary Service Activities

Voluntary activities may be undertaken as part of a relationship to a non-governmental organization, a charity, a social movement, or less formally with like-minded individuals interested in pursuing similar activities. These activities may belong in Habermas' public sphere because they can integrate people. Most people would probably designate these activities and their relationships as private. Lines separating government and voluntary service activities, however, are fuzzy. Considering Fraser's (1999) conception of public and private, voluntary service activities are not explicitly tied to government and the relationships are exclusive in that they are not open to everyone. In some countries, on the other hand, people perceive strong ties between government and voluntary service agencies (Chaney and Febre 2001) and these activities receive government support.

Voluntary activities belong in Fraser's (1989) social sphere as well. This paper and the seminar to which it will hopefully contribute are examples of discourse about people's needs. The seminar and other fora will be locations of discussions of what voluntary activities can do to promote active European citizenship. The immediate goal of this paper and seminar is not to integrate a potential volunteer, but to communicate and critically discuss voluntary activities as means to promote active European citizenship and solidarity among younger people.

Voluntary activities are not performed, of course, in a vacuum. Instead, understandings of voluntary activities are influenced by government and non-government actors and institutions. Perceptions of voluntary activities are affected by work in Fraser's social sphere, as this research seminar will do. Attitudes toward government and social sphere actors can affect an individual's decision to participate in volunteer activities.

Barriers to Voluntary Service Participation

This paper presents and discusses three types of private and public-private barriers young people may face when pursuing voluntary service activities across European boundaries: obligations, information, and opportunities. These three types are not hard and fast; they are meant to serve as guidelines to thinking about barriers young people may encounter in participating in voluntary services in other European countries. Lines separating the types are fuzzy. Formal and informal obligations may hinder, even prevent, a young person from participating in voluntary service activities. These obligations can limit information the young individual receives about opportunities to participate in volunteer service activities. Available information may be limited by opportunities an individual enjoys. Some individuals may enjoy opportunities to participate, while others do not or think they do not. This section presents conceptualizations of each type, then offers information about how the

barrier may influence young people's participation in voluntary service activities and the degree to which these barriers exist.

Obligations

Young people may face formal and informal obligations that influence their decisions on whether and how to perform voluntary service activities in other European countries. Coleman (1990) emphasizes the leverage a group can bring on an individual member to ensure compliant behavior. Group membership may be based in Habermas' public sphere or Aristotle's household. In the public sphere, these obligations may be to non-market institutions like religious organizations or market-related institutions such as trade unions.

While it is likely that individuals have varying depths of convictions, it is probable that many religious institutions mandate formal fulfillment of religious practices. Adherents to some faiths are expected to practice their faiths in explicit ways, often daily. They may require access to religious facilities and interaction with religious authorities. Adherents may have dietary needs they must fulfill to maintain their religious convictions. Some religious practices require adherents to undergo fasts or to avoid work in general. A young person may reasonably question whether he or she can fulfill faith obligations away from his or her home community.

Within Europe, approximately 271,000,000 people adhere to Roman Catholicism, 166,000,000 to Orthodox beliefs, 80,000,000 to Protestant beliefs, 32,000,000 to Muslim beliefs, and about 3,000,000 to Jewish beliefs. Although Europe is known for its great religious heterogeneity, this heterogeneity is not evenly distributed.

Table 1: Religious Adherents (Percent of population)⁵⁵

Country	Catholic	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	% of 18-25 year olds who say that "religion" is "very important"
Austria	78	0.1	16	0.8	5	13.7
Belgium	80	0.4	1.1	0.4	0.4	6.9
Bulgaria	0.5	0.1	10.6	25.6	1.3	
Cyprus	1	0	18.5	76.2	0.4	
Czech Republic	50.4	0	0	4.2	7.1	
Denmark	0.6	0.1	0.2	0	95	1.9
Estonia						
Finland	0.1	0	0	1.2	92.5	14.5
France	85	1.1	8	0.8	2	7.4
Germany	43.8	0.1	2.4	1	46.7	4.1
Greece	0.4	0	1.5	97.6	0.1	
Hungary	67	0.9	0	0.5	25	
Ireland	95.3	0.1	0	0.1	0.8	20.7
Italy	83.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	24.7
Latvia						
Lithuania						
Luxembourg	93	0.2	0	0.1	1.2	
Malta	97.3	0	0	0	0.4	
Netherlands	42.6	0.2	1	0.1	41.8	9.3
Poland	81	0	0	1.2	0.1	
Portugal	94.1	0	0	0.1	0.8	7.9
Romania	4.9	0.5	1.2	78.9	5.8	
Slovakia					8.4	

⁵⁵ The final version of this paper will present additional data on religious practices.

Slovenia					1	
Spain	96.9	0	0	0	0.1	9.9
Sweden	1.4	0.2	0.1	1.1	67.6	6.4
Turkey	0.1	0	99.2	0.3	0	
UK	13.1	0.8	1.4	0.6	15	6

An individual living in Austria who adheres to Muslim beliefs, for instance, may hesitate to participate in voluntary service activities in another European country because of concerns of religious practices. The number of mosques, for instance, varies across European countries.

Table 2: Number of adherents and mosques

Country	Muslim adherents	Number of mosques
Austria	120,000	87 (1999; Islamic voice)
France	4,200,000	1554 (2004; Islamonline.net)
Hungary	Few	None

A religious obligation can restrict an individual from building relationships outside his or her own country, hindering the process of becoming an active European citizen.

Although it may appear as a less formal obligation, responsibilities toward children, parents, and other family members, including siblings and grandparents, may be significant obstacles to a young person's participation in voluntary service activities in another country. These responsibilities run the gamut from physical and social care to financial support.

Table 3: Family ties and responsibilities⁵⁶

Country	Average age at which women become biological parents (UNECE 2000)	Proportion of 20-24 year olds who live with parents (IARD: Appendix 1)	Proportion of 18-25 year olds who say that “family” is “very important” (IARD: Appendix 1)
Austria	27	65	78.5
Belgium	26.4	68	70.8
Bulgaria	23.5		
Cyprus	26.1		
Czech Republic	25		
Denmark	27.4		80.2
Estonia	24.1		
Finland	27.6	29	65.6
France	28.7	52	73.8
Germany	28	55	47.2
Greece	27.3	72	
Hungary	25		
Ireland	27.4	64	90.2

⁵⁶ This papers' final version will provide information about the degree to which young people provide care to other family members and their contributions to household income.

Italy	28.5	87	82.1
Latvia	24.5		
Lithuania	24		
Luxembourg	28.5	69	
Malta	--		
Netherlands	29.1	47	64.6
Poland	24		
Portugal	26.8	82	59.5
Romania	24		
Slovakia	23.1		
Slovenia	26.5		
Spain	29	89	74.1
Sweden	28		82.7
Turkey	--		
UK	27	47	86.6

(IARD is L'Istituto Iard (www.istitutoiard.it). IARD cites Eurostat Labour Force Survey, 1998, 2000). These data suggest different aspects of family ties may enter into a young person's decision to participate in voluntary service activities. While we note variation in the age at which a woman typically becomes a mother, the average age is older than 23 years. In some countries many young people live with their parents, with more than half of countries' youth living with parents in ten of the thirteen examined countries. Indeed, in all but one of the thirteen examined countries, approximately 60% or more young people state their family is very important.

The "family" has an important role in policies established by some European national governments. We can characterize some governments as employing principles of social capitalism. According to Kees van Kersbergen (1995: 190), through social capitalism "[s]ocial rights are attached to family or status groups, and the state only provides the conditions under which the family and social groups can continue to function according to their natural and organic roles...The state assists those who fail to help themselves in the performance of their natural duty." Van Kersbergen states (1995: 190), "The very idea of social capitalism assumes women to be only marginally present on the labour market and the family to be the prime provider of care." Governments of different countries, including Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, develop social policies based on social capitalism principles. These policies affect relationships within Aristotle's household and outside in his community, village, and state. Social capitalism can establish responsibilities and expectations that will influence a young person's decision to participate in voluntary service activities. Social capitalism may particularly influence women's decisions to volunteer in other countries. These policies may affect people's abilities to become active European citizens and thwart solidarity.

Young may people may face a variety of formal requirements and informal expectations to support family members. As indicated, these obligations may discourage young people from pursuing participation in voluntary service activities at the European level. These private and public-private barriers may disproportionately affect young people in some nation states more than others.

Information

Beyond obligations, other memberships an individual has may affect his or her decision to participate in voluntary service activities in other European countries. As various experts have noted, including Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1990), and Putnam (2000) among others, most individuals belong to groups through which resources are shared and even guarded from others. These resources not only are financial, they can be information about opportunities. These kinds of group membership can criss-cross Aristotle's conception of the relationship between state, village, community, and household. Membership in one community can restrict relationships with other communities and villages. Strong community relationships may weaken ties to national and trans-national institutions. This paper will describe two ways distribution of information among community members can affect an individual's decision to participate in voluntary service activities based in another European country.

The first is group closure. Group organization and shared beliefs may work against reception of information from outside the group. A group may be organized in a way that, intentionally or not, may isolate group members from outside information. A system of shared beliefs of this group, for instance, could work against receiving and accepting outside information. Norms shared by group members may discourage separation of young people from their own group. Granovetter (1973) finds that weak ties, through which an individual has

infrequent and casual contact with another, produce more information. Strong ties are made when individuals frequently see each other over a long period. New information is less likely to enter into relationships based on strong ties than weak ties. For individuals who are members of strong groups, access to information may be restricted because of group closure. A relationship based on a weak tie suggests the other individual has ties to others. These relationships will produce new information that strong ties will not.

The second is unequal access. Rather than closure, a group may not have access to information. Some groups may not be in the position to receive information about voluntary service opportunities. Often times tied to opportunities based in human capital and socio-economic structures (see below), members of some groups may not have access to information presented in "mainstream" media. Some groups may either avoid or do not have access to major newspapers, radio and television programs, or Internet information delivery. Access to a television does not guarantee an individual will view a program about European citizenship, but in Europe televisions are widely available and may be an important means of communicating information about voluntary service activities (IARD 2001: 18). In Malta nearly 7 of 10 people own a television; in Romania only 2.32 of 10 people do. Internet usage widely varies, ranging from 3.7% in Turkey to 67.6% in Sweden. Experiences with voluntary service organizations in home countries (Bode 2003) may shape individuals' opinions of voluntary service activities. Moore and Whitt (2000) have demonstrated that gender breakdown among leaders of a nonprofit organization influence women's decisions to participate in nonprofit activities. Individuals may conclude conflicts between voluntary service agencies at home (Stroschein 2002) will be found in other European countries. These conflicts may discourage a young person from making a commitment to a voluntary service agency in another European country. Access to information in general and to specific kinds of information will influence a young person's decision to participate in voluntary service activities.

Table 4: Information Access

Country	Proportion of 15-24 year olds belonging to an association (IARD: Table 6)	Proportion of 18-25 year olds who have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in: Europe	Proportion of 15-24 year olds agree with the statement: "foreigners living in [own country] have same rights as [nationality]" (IARD: Appendix 1)	Proportion of young people who have visited other countries	# of individuals owning a television out of 1000 (nationamaster.com)	Proportion of Internet Users (users/population)
Austria	60		15.6		519.03	45
Belgium	47	70.9	19.3		458.73	36.5
Bulgaria				17	439.11	16.5
Cyprus				70		19.4
Czech Republic				82	332.3	26.2
Denmark	77	47.1	32.9		579.63	62.6
Estonia				63	429.51	30.5
Finland	67	63.3	33.9		616.47	51.8
France	49	74.6	24.4		578.26	28.2
Germany	58	49.1	13.9		623.79	39
Greece			17.8		238.14	13.1
Hungary				46	440	12
Ireland	61	72.4	17.4		463.79	33.4
Italy	54	78.5	20.5		522.42	32.1
Latvia				52	519.41	13.3

Lithuania				40	473.2	9.5
Luxembourg	66		17.4		627.53	22
Malta				41	699.26	14.7
Netherlands	77	60.9	36.1		501.53	60.3
Poland				48	337.88	7.8
Portugal	40	60.9	18.1		327.65	43.6
Romania				20	235.72	4.5
Slovakia				75	482.5	31
Slovenia				86	366.79	12.9
Spain	38	53.7	27.8		402.81	19.6
Sweden	82	64.3	58.3		518.12	67.6
Turkey				2		3.7
UK	50	50	25.2		507.53	57.2

Membership in some groups may work against interest in Europe and European citizenship. Group membership is not only limited to ethno-linguistic or religious background. Group membership may be based in legal categories, such as people with mental and physical disabilities.

Opportunities

Beyond group membership, some individuals may not enjoy opportunities to participate in voluntary activities. Three factors may work against an individual's decision to seize an opportunity of voluntary service. The first factor is whether the individual can economically afford to participate in the voluntary service activities. This question can involve a multitude of factors, including whether a young person has obligations to his or her family. Other affordability factors include whether the person has sufficient income to participate in voluntary service activities: does an individual need to accept a paid job in the short term? Does an individual consider the EVS compensation scheme sufficient?

Table 5: Opportunities⁵⁷

Country	Gross domestic product per capita (CIA 2003)	Youth (15-24) Unemployment Rate (UNECE 2000)	Difference between men and women in employment (IARD: Appendix 1)	Aggregate of non-mother tongue skills (Europa)	Proportion who have visited foreign countries
Austria	27700	4.9	5.8	82	
Belgium	29000	15.2	6.6	114	
Bulgaria	6600	38.4 (2001)		51	17
Cyprus	10000	10.5		71	70
Czech Republic	15300	17		67	82
Denmark	29000	6.7	0.6	154	
Estonia	10900	23.8		63	63
Finland	26200	21.6	3.7	105	
France	25700	20.7	4.9	65	
Germany	26600	7.7	5.2	74	
Greece	19000	29.5	12	54	
Hungary	13300	12.1		36	46
Ireland	30500	6.4	6.4	39	
Italy	25000	29.7	10.1	56	
Latvia	8300	22.9		78	52
Lithuania	8400	28.8		67	40

⁵⁷ In the final version of this paper, I will include information on average pay a youth receives compared to the EVS scheme and completion of secondary and tertiary education.

Luxembourg	44000	-6.4	4.1	244	
Malta	17000	15.4 (2001)		147	41
Netherlands	26900	6.6	2.8	159	
Poland	9500	35.2		46	48
Portugal	18000	8.6	7.7	47	
Romania	7400	18.6		61	20
Slovakia	12200	35.2		72	75
Slovenia	18100	16.6		117	86
Spain	20700	25.3	10.9	54	
Sweden	25400	11.9	3.3	126	
Turkey	7000	13.2		43	2
UK	25300	11.8	5.2	34	

A second factor is other opportunity costs, besides income, that can affect an individual's decision to participate in voluntary service activities. What factors will an individual consider in making a decision to participate in voluntary activities? How will the decision to accept an opportunity to participate in voluntary activities affect an individual's short- and long-term circumstances? Considering availability of work suggests that these opportunities vary across countries. In some countries, a substantial gap exists between men and women in employment. A young person may obtain information indicating that the European country where he or she will participate in voluntary activities does not welcome him or her (Batiwala 2002: 393, 395). Opportunity costs may be greater than predicted benefits arising from voluntary service participation. In addition to foregoing work income, an individual may be concerned that he or she will lose formal educational and career opportunities while participating in voluntary service activities.

A third factor is whether the young person believes he or she is prepared to participate: does his or her educational background and other experiences prepare him or her to live and work in another country? For instance, does he or she possess (or believe he or she possesses) language skills needed to participate in voluntary service activities outside their own country? Despite impressive language abilities, Eurobarometer and other agencies report secondary-language skills as significant concerns to young people.

Some individuals may mentally place these factors into an equation in which they try to determine whether "benefits" from participating in voluntary service activities outweigh their "costs." Benefits, of course, are not limited to enhancing paychecks or cosmopolitan pedigrees. They will include new experiences, opportunities for immersion in a second or third language, as well as participating in new group memberships. These new group memberships may bring new benefits of relationships and opportunities into a participant's life. Costs to a participant not only include foregoing a larger paycheck and time off-track from formal educational structures, they can include moving away from group memberships and not fulfilling obligations. As mentioned above, a young person may have faith-based concerns. Beyond religious beliefs and practices, individuals may anticipate and experience antagonism because their group membership differs from natives of receiving country in other ways, such as language, ethnic background, and nationality. While it is hoped and anticipated that voluntary service activities will help overcome these antagonisms, it is reasonable that a young person may hesitate to rise to the trans-European challenge.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suspect that many young people will not work through a fully-informed calculus of benefits and costs to participating in voluntary service activities. Not only is it unlikely that an individual would consider every relevant benefit and cost, it is highly improbable an individual could obtain the necessary information. An individual will probably look to experiences of his or her peers, including group members, and information they find at school, on television, or through the Internet. Traveling outside one's home country may strongly influence the decision to participate in another European country. Data suggest that many young people have traveled to other countries. These experiences will alert a young person to potential benefits from living elsewhere and that he or she has similar interests and concerns as young people living in other European countries.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly presented three private and public-private types of barriers to voluntary service activities young people may encounter: obligations, information, and opportunities. Because these barriers are, in many ways, located outside government's purview, they may be more difficult to overcome. Some obstacles, for instance obligations, will be difficult to surmount. Passage of time and demographic change will reduce imagined

boundaries separating European citizens, but as we know, these boundaries are often more durable than physical ones.

Information and opportunity obstacles may be easier to change, but will probably be expensive. Distributing information in a means useful to a particular group is one step. Another difficult but necessary step is devising distinctive opportunities for the needs of diverse young people, whether those differences are ethno-religious or socio-economic.

It is not ironic that participation in voluntary service activities is an important step to overcoming these obstacles. Through cooperation in voluntary service activities across European borders, social participation will likely increase, along with promoting educational experiences, learning about different cultural perspectives and values, and exchanging information about opportunities. First-hand experiences in other European countries will hopefully result in less prejudice and more integration. Voluntary service activities will enhance European citizenship and promote solidarity.

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Panel 3: Facilitate voluntary activities – exploring the obstacles to young people’s participation in voluntary activities (mobility / visa issues, gender stereotypes or young / single families, economic conditions).

I would like to indicate some obstacles which may discourage young Polish people from taking part in voluntary activities both in Poland and abroad. I want to concentrate especially on the legal aspects of voluntary work as my PhD studies concern the legal status of people working without being paid for it. My intention is not only to show the problems but also to propose the possible solutions to them. I can put forward the main thesis that without defining clear regulations concerning the general procedures and especially the consequences of voluntary work abroad it would be impossible to facilitate voluntary activities. My country is the best example for it.

Poland has undergone grave political and economical changes over the last 15 years. The government continues to liberalize its trade, foreign exchange and investment policies. There can be also observed administrative and social reforms undertaken widely, including healthcare, social security and educational system. Political freedom now permits us to establish parties and associations, vote in elections, open personal bank accounts and plug into Internet. Poland is becoming a consumer – oriented society with all the good and bad consequences of that change. A good result of that change is the appearance of non - governmental organizations that use volunteers. More than half of all NGO’s (55%) do not employ full – time paid personnel and 47% work with volunteers. There are estimated to be around 1.6 million volunteers in total, who invest on average 18 hours per month. The majority of volunteers are employed (61%), school pupils (42%) or students (40%). The Polish term WOLONTARIUSZ (volunteer) has been used historically to describe either a person who has unpaid apprenticeship or someone who offers to join the army. For long time we have been interested in broader meaning of the term and its social context, which is well – known in countries with long tradition of volunteerism, but was new for us in Poland. Before the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism in April 2003 there was no legal definition of voluntary activity. By volunteering we understood activities which were unpaid, conscious, free – will for the benefit of others. Everyone might become a volunteer, in every field of social life, wherever there was a need, but not every volunteer could perform every type of work. The term “volunteer” was firstly used for people who carried out humanitarian aid in third countries after 1989. Now we have in our system of law a definition of volunteer that sounds: A volunteer is a person who voluntarily and with no remuneration provides services based on regulations specified in law. However we must remember that in Polish meaning the term “voluntary activities” defines broadly all types of voluntary engagement without remuneration.

In my performance I would like to concentrate on these grave issues from Polish point of view:

- 1) the lack of a specific statute for volunteers, which leads to problems in terms of recognition, of social protection, of taxation; as a result there is a lack of rules and instruments recognizing voluntary activities in the framework of formal education, e.g. in high schools or at universities, by enterprises and employers or by society in general
- 2) the lack of minimum standards as well as of provisions on social protection
- 3) the problem of replacing full – time workers by volunteers,
- 4) work which is necessary in vocational training (apprenticeship) is performed in Poland without any remuneration, even without reimbursement of costs and these people learning defined skills are called volunteers
- 5) the lack of the clear structures concerning voluntary organizations and also the lack of information about voluntary activities

1. Clearly there is a need on the Polish legal system level to distinguish a volunteer from a worker or an employee by stressing the educational character of transnational voluntary service. The European Court of Justice defined the conception of employees and workers (decision D.M. Levin from 23th March 1982 - 53/81). The court stated that the employee is any person getting salary or wages in exchange for full or part time work. This definition is explicitly only used for the realm of economical life. A volunteer is not active in economical life but participates in project of mobility in the realm of youth or adult education. The amounts of money are not given to the volunteer for his /her work, but to provide for basic living. This allows him/her to contribute to the common good and learn for his/ her own social and personal maturity. In Poland the conception to consider volunteers as a kind of worker has to be understood in the light of the perceived necessity to protect him/her against illness, accident, unemployment, etc. A minimum of social security, covering illness, accident, civil liability, and repatriation for the volunteer during the service, is necessary.

2. In my book titled "The legal aspects of voluntary working Poland" I analyzed the legal situation of volunteers in Poland and I indicated that Polish non – governmental sector needs some clear regulations concerning its activity (especially volunteers' work). The book was written at the beginning of year 2003, just before the Law about Public Benefit and Volunteerism. Now we have the Law about Public Benefit and Volunteerism of 23th April 2003 which surely helped to regulate a set of basic and grave issues. This Law (as it can be noticed) has encouraged even more people to participate in the voluntary actions. Now the volunteers know their legal situation and all legal consequences of their work. In the past they were very often discouraged from taking part in voluntary work just because they did not know their legal status. However, we must remember that the Law about Public Benefit and Volunteerism of 23th April 2003 does not refer to the voluntary work in the frame of EVS.

Therefore, I can point out the same problematical issues concerning European Voluntary Service. I have met many volunteers who could possibly take part in EVS but the lack of legal regulations make them sceptical and discouraged. Also The National Agency in Warsaw sometimes encounter problems concerning legal position which result in uneasiness in their undertakings.

There are few general regulations concerning EVS in the Polish legal system. We are not ready to comprehend a lot of fundamental issues invoked by volunteers' undertakings, such as:

- 1) the issue of the social insurance; can the period of the voluntary work (which is unpaid) be treated like a period of the normal work for which we get paid? In both contexts: of the future pension and the unemployment allowance it is a crucial problem.
- 2) should the unemployed be deprived of their rights to the unemployment allowance if they want to participate in EVS?

The European law does not cope with such questions. The Polish law does not solve the problems either. What are we to do than ? When people willing to do the voluntary work abroad encounter such problems and nobody can help them, they simply resign.

Also a very problematic issue concerns the term of a volunteer which is not officially recognized. The lack of recognition means that volunteers have to accept financial disadvantages compared to other low – income groups: they do not get any reductions on tickets for public transport, cultural events, etc. because they are not part of an institutionalized framework as it is for students, unemployed people or pensioners.

A very common issue that appears dealing with voluntary activities concerns the duty of military service. There is not any regulation in the Polish legal system for people who have just finished school and want to participate in EVS but they should perform an obligation of military service and go to the army. Is it possible to postpone this duty for one year?

These examples give an idea of restrictions for organizations and volunteers. They do not encourage participation in the programme. More young people have applied to do a voluntary service than the number that could be placed. This means that official recognition will encourage an enormous potential of young transnational mobility. They are willing to practice European citizenship if legal obstacles were removed.

3. There is an understandable concern that the growth of the voluntary sector and temporary employment schemes will be used to substitute for properly paid permanent employment. As a result there has been a strong resistance in some areas of the highest unemployment to the involvement of voluntary organizations.

People in Poland do not understand that voluntary service is no remedy for unemployment. Because of the large number of the unemployed people in Poland and especially the large number of younger people unemployed there are many government schemes for dealing with youth unemployment. However it must be remembered that volunteering should never replace paid work but should be seen as a natural adjunct to the well – being of the community – legislation should protect the rights and responsibilities of both paid employees and volunteers. Voluntary service can provide an important and worthwhile solution to the problem of unemployment but it must not be used by governments as a means of manipulating employment statistics and creating a “second labour market” with second class jobs for second – class citizens. Neither should it be regarded as a cheap way for society to delegate public responsibilities to non – governmental organizations handling voluntary service. It is true that voluntary service schemes are generally less costly, leading some to feel they could be alternatives to more costly retraining schemes, but this reasoning is false. Voluntary service has its own value to young people and to society. Voluntary service has always been regarded not only as an activity of public benefit and service rendered to society but also as an alternative means of access to working life enabling young people to develop new skills that will help them gain a foothold in society and find a job. It forms an integral part of the concept and structures of adult education, implying active involvement in a long and wide – ranging process of learning all facets of life – it is not just a continuation of vocational training. It is a social learning process in the broadest sense, which cannot be achieved without educational support at the group or individual level. I am afraid that if Polish people do not realize what is the sense of voluntary activities, then very soon the voluntary service in Poland can resemble certain alternative forms of national service designed for conscientious objectors, the unemployed, social welfare beneficiaries, as far as the organization of the work and the form of payment goes. However, these types of service will be rarely voluntary and often imposed or demanded by the authorities. It is for this reason that voluntary service worthy of the name must stem from carefully considered personal decision.

4. In Poland a person who has finished a medical academy and wants to stay a specialist for example in heart diseases (a heart specialist) must perform a period of special training which lasts about 4 years. Because of the lack of places in hospitals for everybody, some of the future doctors perform this period of necessary special training for free and do not get any money for this kind of work. In Poland they are called volunteers.

The same thing concerns people who have finished a faculty of law and want to be for example a judge. In this situation they work in a court of justice performing this necessary special training, but they do not have any money for that. We also call them volunteers.

I would like to ask if this is typical only for Poland or maybe in other countries we can also find such practices?

5. A crucial problem for further development of voluntary service is the lack of cooperation between Polish associations in order to tackle common issues. We can indicate for example on “Centrum Wolontariatu” in Warsaw which is acting as coordination organization for network of the 16 regional centers and organizations working with EVS. The idea of a common platform for youth voluntary organizations for voluntary service is not discussed. Polish people do not know what is the structure of Polish voluntary organizations, what kind of problems they deal with and how they fulfill their tasks.

In my opinion there is a need to create a special status of a volunteer, because of unusual nature of voluntary service which tends not to fall within the framework of existing practices or legislations on youth mobility, education, the labour market, social protection, etc. The specific characteristics of voluntary service could, for instance, be recognised:

- by issuing volunteers with student visas and regarding them as non – wage earners, without any formal connections with the labour market therefore not requiring a work permit. This approach might be considered if the definition of the voluntary service placed on its educational value;
- by imposing the organizations to guarantee a status and a voluntary service contract providing for free board and lodging; appropriate health, accident insurance, pocket money, preparation, support and post – service evaluation.

Panel 4 – Recognising Voluntary Activities

Kirsi Airaksinen – (YOUTH ACADEMY) –

Recreational Activity Study Book system as a tool for Certification of youth non-formal and informal learning in Finland

Risto Karajkov (Balkan Children and Youth Foundation)

Volunteering and Benefits for Youth Employment

Agnieszka Moskwiak

Recognition of voluntary activities – focusing on what young people learn from voluntary activities and how this can be recognised

Chair: Linds Pexton (SCI)

Author:
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Recreational Activity Study Book system in Finland: An example from experience

School is an important learning environment for young people. However, young people learn outside school, as well. Especially participation in voluntary and leisure activities offer good places for learning. Young people learn many valuable life skills in voluntary and leisure activities, i.e., co-operation and team skills, communication skills, goal-orientation and problem solving skills. These mentioned skills are also useful when a young person attends further education or working life.

Learning in voluntary and leisure activities carries various names: it might be called "civic learning", "non-formal learning" or "informal learning". If a learning activity is defined to be "non-formal learning", the organising party should have a clear understanding of the learning that is supposed to take place in the activity. That implies at least some educational principles or an "educational program" behind the activity. One cannot argue a learning activity to be "non-formal" without a clear, well-defined understanding of the learning that takes place in activity. In addition, it is essential that both the learner and the educator are aware of the aims and methods of the supposed learning situation.⁵⁸ Without these definitions, the learning is "informal" or "occasional" by nature. In this context, both non-formal and informal ways of learning things and acquiring competencies are dealt with, parallelly. Most organisations that deal with young people do have a clear educational role and many even have their own educational programs (for example the scout movement).

Formal education and non-formal or informal learning (that takes place for example in voluntary and leisure activities) support and complement each other. In line with the principles and aims of lifelong learning, the learning environment of young people should be approached as an entity, the ingredients of which are formal educational system, working life and free-time environments (such as home, leisure activities, family, peer groups, etc.). Integration of formal and non-formal learning implies actions and a change of traditional attitudes. Learning of young people in voluntary and leisure activities is usually observed from the point of view of formal education. When doing so, the essential concepts are a) identification, b) recognition, and c) validation of learning.

From the viewpoint of voluntary and leisure activities, it is important that the learning taking place in activities is recognised and appreciated in society. Evaluation of non-formal or informal learning is also important, especially because through evaluation the learning environment produced by youth organisations can be further developed. Evaluation or measurement of informal learning is particularly difficult, though, since the learning outcomes are very difficult to place in a specific context, time or place. In addition, informal learning includes also non-course-based activities like information, advice or guidance, which do not usually have an agreed curriculum⁵⁹.

Accreditation of non-formal learning in voluntary and leisure activities can also carry risks: if, for example, a formal educational institution automatically credits a certain activity, the voluntary nature of the learning activity could be endangered. In addition, the formal educational system is relatively equal (at least in the Nordic countries) in regard to place of residence, but possibilities to actively participate in voluntary and leisure activities vary a great deal, depending on which area or region of the country one happens to live in. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the learning experiences in voluntary and leisure activities always personally, case-sensitively and in regard to specific fields of formal education.

⁵⁸ For example Sahlberg 1999, 10.

⁵⁹ McGivney 1999 & 2000, ref. Katus 2002, 124-125.

In Finland there has been a system called "Recreational Activity Study Book" since 1996. The system is developed by Youth Academy, which is a co-operation organisation for major Finnish youth & sports NGOs. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture supports the study book system. The study book is a non-formal and informal learning CV for young people. They can collect entries from all learning experiences in voluntary and leisure activities. There are about 70.000 study book owners in Finland (updated: 02.04.2004). The book serves young people as a tool for making all the experiences and learning – self-development, growth etc. - outside school visible. It is also an instrument for identifying and crediting non-formal learning when applying for a job or further education. Youth Academy has a written agreement with 250 formal educational institutions on how to value and credit the entries in the book. The study book is a feasible way to document and recognise the non-formal and informal learning of young people. The entries in the book can be collected either in Finnish, Swedish or English.

The Finnish study book system focuses strongly on the development of the individual learner – young people. Despite of the fact that some pathways towards formal education have been created as a part of the study book system, the idea is to cherish the very voluntary nature of the learning taking place in outside school, voluntary and free-time surroundings. Therefore, there are neither any criteria for the measurement of learning outcomes or performance, nor any public examinations held to assess the competencies supposedly acquired.

The Recreational Activity Study Book system is feasible for the documentation – and recognition – of both qualifications and competencies acquired by participating in youth voluntary activities. More focus is, however, placed on the competencies. That has to do with the individual learner-centeredness of the study book system. In the study book, more emphasis is put on the development of each young person's personality rather than the actual qualifications of the skills required in particular job requirements.⁶⁰ The underlying idea is that by participating in youth voluntary or recreational activities, young people do have a chance to acquire key competencies in regard to personal development, such as social, communicative etc. competencies.

The reasons for the openness and "non-measurability" of the Finnish study book system are several. First of all, as Bentley argues, subjective perceptions of learning outcomes or competencies acquired should not be of marginal validity, as they often are in systems depending on public examinations. According to Bentley, subjective perceptions are "central to the quality of learning, and the extent to which what has been learned will be retained and applied in other contexts".⁶¹

The second reason for the openness and flexibility of the study book system is the already mentioned appreciation of the voluntary nature of youth informal and non-formal learning. By formalising the system, the basic motivation for participation in youth activities, i.e. the joy of being, doing and learning together, would be endangered. Youth Academy attempts to encourage the representatives of the formal education system to recognise and value the learning and competencies young people acquire outside school, as well as to do more co-operation with organisations offering young people meaningful learning environments. But the issue is always approached from an individual learner's point of view, not the point of view of the formal educational system, for example.

The third reason for keeping the study book system informal and flexible is that by doing so, all young people can gain access to it and collect entries from various learning activities. The Recreational Activity Study Book is not only targeted to those young people which are active in one or another youth organisation. Competencies can be acquired and things can be learned in various situations and settings, even the non-organised ones⁶². Therefore, even though the study book system is developed by Youth

⁶⁰ See Euler 2001, 197-198.

⁶¹ Bentley 1998, 147.

⁶² See Euler 2001, 198-202.

Academy and its twelve member organisations (major Finnish youth and sports NGOs), it is open to all young people, and the content is designed in a way that all young people “fit” in to be able to make use of it.

The study book itself is divided into nine categories, according to the nature of the learning activity. The categories are:

1. Regular participation in leisure activities;
2. Holding positions of trust and responsibility within NGOs;
3. Activities as a leader, trainer or coach;
4. Participation in a project;
5. Courses;
6. International activities;
7. Workshop activities (apprenticeship);
8. Competitions; and
9. Other activities.

By looking at the categories, one can see that there are environments of both non-formal and informal learning present. The most formalised form of learning is the category “courses” which means organised and hierarchical educational programs offered by various youth and sport NGOs and other learning providers. The eight other categories fall more or less under the umbrella of informal learning, in which the learning-by-doing approach is often the method for acquiring competencies and skills.

According to a survey carried out by Youth Academy in spring 2003 (690 informants), the most popular category is “Courses” (17,4 %). The categories “Activities as a leader, trainer or coach”, “Holding positions of trust and responsibility” and “Regular participation in leisure activities” are also quite popular (12 – 13 % each).

The following figure illustrates an example page of the Recreational Activity Study Book. It is translated into English for the purpose of this paper only – the study book is available for young people only in Finnish and Swedish languages at the moment.

Type of activity:
Holding positions of trust and
responsibility within NGOs

Organisation in which the activity took place

Time/dates of the activity

__/__/____ - __/__/____

In average _____ hours per week/month

Position of the young person in the organisation

Successes and competencies acquired

Description of the activity

Place

Date

Young person's self-assessment of the learning

Signature of the person responsible of activity

Contact information of the undersigned person

Position of the undersigned person

The entries in the book are always written by an adult (= over 18 years of age) person who is either responsible or well aware of the particular activity. Young people themselves fill in the part "Self-assessment of the learning". The idea is to focus more on what and how things have been learned rather than what has only been done. The person undersigning the entry adds his/her contact information, in case someone wants to check whether the young person actually has participated in the activity or not.

The educational institutions involved in the system have a written agreement with Youth Academy on how and to which extent they value and credit the entries in the book. It is essential to bear in mind that accreditation and validation of the learning experiences documented in the study book is always individual and case-sensitive. The system does not aim for direct accreditation in formal education in any way. It is of great importance that the voluntary nature of participating and learning in voluntary youth activities, whether organised or not, will not be endangered.

The Recreational Activity Study Book is distributed to young people mainly through youth and sports NGOs. Young people usually receive or purchase the study book during being involved in the activities of a particular NGO, for example when attending courses etc. Recently, more and more private companies have purchased a limited number of study books and given them to young people locally, either through schools or youth and sport organisations.

Youth Academy does a lot of marketing efforts to promote the study book in all Finland. Target groups are divided roughly into three different groups: young people, formal educational institutions and employers. The message to young people is, in simplified terms: "This is a good tool for making all the

learning experiences visible (= non-formal and informal learning CV). It can also be useful when applying for further education or a job.” The message to employers is: “This is a good tool for assessing the job-seeker’s activity and goal-orientation. Young people learn valuable competencies outside formal education, in voluntary activities.” The message to formal educational institutions is: “This is a good tool for assessing the applicant’s experience relevant to the particular field of education. -Youth & sport NGOs offer a good learning environment that can be used as complementary or supportive to formal education.”

The Recreational Activity Study Book system has raised positive interest on European level – it is also mentioned as a good practice in the European White Book on Youth Policy by the European Commission. The Finnish study book system could be a starting point in creating a European model for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, bearing in mind the cultural and educational differences in different European countries.

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Volunteering and Benefits for Youth Employment

Introduction

Recent times seem to have enhanced the validity of the outworn phrase that most important things in life are not taught at school. The ever faster changing face of the economy is imposing demands of skills and knowledge to which the formal and sizeable educational systems are less and less in a position to respond. The classical criticism of education and training as not being adapted to the demands of the market is reinventing itself multidimensionally as the pace of new technologies imposes need for adaptation on almost daily basis. Education can no longer be seen as a one-time event/process before the start of working life but as a life-long process requiring ever greater flexibility (Mitchell, 1998). The new knowledge economy presents itself as an era of enormous opportunities, but at the same time of greater risks, less security, widening gaps, and increased possibility for the exclusion of the individual.

Youth appear to be especially vulnerable in this context, especially youth coming from societies still undergoing thorough and traumatic processes of transition. The statistics on youth unemployment in Southeast Europe (SEE) give a devastating picture of despair. Beyond this, within the boundaries of the European Union (EU) the numbers of unemployed youth have been a rising cause of concern. Globally, youth unemployment threatens to position itself as an urgent priority on the development agenda as estimated 1, 2 billion young people are expected to enter the labor market in the next decade (ILO, 2003). The question is what needs to be done in order to give these young people a chance for meaningful and productive lives? What measures need to be taken and who bears the responsibility? How to increase the individual effort over one's wellbeing and how to facilitate a more synergetic action of the social partners?

The issue of youth unemployment is these days always related to the issue of skills and the process of transition. The argument regarding skills revolves around the question how well equipped young people are to compete for jobs in the labor market? The process of transition, especially transition from education to work is seen as critical to the prospects of youth for productive adulthood. The focus on skills reveals the phenomenon of mismatch or shortage of relevant skills. This means that young people cannot find jobs while at the same time there are vacancies that cannot be filled. Some estimates done by the European Commission speculate with around 1, 6 million unfilled posts in the EU in 2002 (Orr, 2000). This is a phenomenon that persists globally.

Research points out that the unsuccessful period of transition from education to work, that would extend into longer first-time unemployment (over a 1 year period) can cause serious and what more hard-wearing decline of productivity of the individual that will persist long into adulthood. The decline of productivity is only one aspect of the problem. Unemployment can lead to marginalization, social isolation, loss of civic identity, and engagement in illegal activity. The lack of proper skills, the mismatch between what employers need and what education and training offer is one highlighted cause for the pronounced difficulties in the school to work transition.

On a macro level and in very simplified terms youth unemployment is a facet of general unemployment. Basically, it exists because of insufficient supply of work, because the economy cannot produce enough jobs (ILO, 2001). There are analyses and interventions that deal with this problem on a macro economic level, such as interest rates, policies for labor intensive growth, and so on. These aspects are beyond the scope of this paper and thus are only simply mentioned.

The issue of skills or better lack of them can be observed on several levels, macro, meso and micro level, if the country perspective taken. On macro level it addresses the general rules and conditions that define and shape the context. The most prominent role here is the one of the government as the actor

with the strongest say as to the establishing of the features of the educational and vocations system, the labor legislation and some ground market rules. On a meso level it can be analyzed through the action of the many different institutional actors that are concerned in one way or another, such as employers, vocational centers, training centers, intermediaries of different profile. On a micro level it emphasizes the responsibility and the action of the individual over self-development for maximizing his/her chances on the job market. All of these levels interweave through a process of continuous social dialogue, however each level can be observed separately. What is of particular interest to this paper is the possibility for individual action and some possible modes for undertaking it.

Why aren't skills sufficient? What used to be enough 10 years ago is now not sufficient. The new economy requires workers who are able to deal with an increased set of problems. The skills that were in the past necessary only for managerial staff are now required also for the technical personnel. Employers expect also technical staff to be able to solve problems, propose solutions, think creatively. Job descriptions are expanding. At the same time, one set of skills for one work process is no longer enough. Increased flexibility is required under the pressure of rapidly changing economy and workers are expected to be able to adapt and adapt quickly. It is no longer just the skills you possess but the capacity to upgrade them and adapt them continuously that is important. Life long employment is diminishing, people have to change jobs and that means acquiring new skills. This reflects on the individual in different ways; labor becomes more valuable but also workers become more vulnerable as they might not possess the skills that are needed to go through the changes (Mitchell, 1998).

There are many diverse factors that interplay towards this end. The vertical disintegration of companies in the new economy, which keep the core competences and subcontract the peripheral ones; the competition for productivity that abandons the mass and orients to leaner and more flexible modes of production; market liberalization and deregulation; the rapidly increased mobility of factors of production (Mitchell, 1998). And probably the most important ones, the new information and communication technologies (ICT) that increasingly globalize the world. The reasons further branch into country or region specificities. What goes for the EU does not necessarily apply to the rest of Europe. The SEE would for example suffer some of these problems in aggravated forms part due to the expanding gap, part due to the still unfinished processes of transition. The shortage of skills can exist in different contexts, it can be a shortage of senior professionals or entry level positions, it can be a shortage of technical or management skills, it can be about a lack of experience or lack of certification, it can be a shortage of job – specific skills or of transferable or portable skills that are central to many different jobs and occupations.

When talking of youth employability the issue of skills shortage combines with the issue of work experience that further contributes to the vulnerability of youth as entrants on the job market.⁶³ The chicken and egg puzzle of employers preferring to hire someone with some and certain work experience, as opposed to the situation of one not being able to get it unless first hired describes the difficulty of that critical first step into the job market. How to go about it?

Numerous models have been designed to tackle this particular aspect of the youth unemployment problem, the first time unemployment. . Training and re-training schemes, vocational and professional orientations, apprenticeship, internship, probations and traineeship programs, in-school or on-the-job trainings, school – business partnerships and so on. . These are all programs aimed at the supply side, on the supply of labor. Programs that aim at improving the characteristics of labor in order to make it more suitable to employers' need. What is often quoted as a very successful model is the German dual apprenticeship system within which young people at the same time attend classes and work as

⁶³ There are many available definitions of employability. In simple terms it is a possession of skills that increase the chances for employment.

apprentices with a company (Nagi, 2002). Germany is a rare exception from the point of view of youth unemployment as the youth unemployment rate is the same and in some sub categories almost lower than the adult unemployment rate, as opposed to the regular parity of the former being double or more than the latter (O, Higgins, 1997). This model ensures easy entry into jobs; however it is sometimes criticized for its rigidity.

There are models that work on the demand side, on job creation. Such are the models that offer different kinds of incentives and subsidies to employers in order to employ youth or certain categories of youth who are especially vulnerable. The so called wage subsidies comprise tax or benefits exemptions or deductions. These models are popular in SEE as most of the countries employ them (European Training Foundation, 2000). Many of the models that work on the supply side, and try to facilitate the school to work transition, focus on remedying for the lack of work experience and skills that are either developed or practiced through working experience. This brings us to the particular phenomenon that is in many ways relevant to such models and can represent one strong vehicle - volunteering.

Focus

Notwithstanding the theoretical dispute over volunteering driven solely by genuine altruism vs. volunteering that might incorporate other motives, including personal satisfaction, or personal development, or vs. volunteering that is influenced by peer pressure or undertaken because of social obligation, there are quite some similarities between the traditional “ciraklak”⁶⁴ and what we might call volunteering for work (Street, 1994). Cirak was (and still is) an apprentice who labors (usually) without compensation in a craftsman’s workshop in exchange for acquiring and recognition (usually informal) of certain skills. This laboring is of course voluntary though it might be easily result of family instruction or influence. The stark difference with today's volunteering for work is the legitimacy of the beneficiary, as today the beneficiary would have a more meriting need. As such, this apprenticeship model is a centuries old mechanism for entering the world of work and it is a forerunner of both vocational education and modern apprenticeship programs. The cirak who works in the craftsman’s workshop, over time, if he/she is a good learner and worker, might move up and be promoted and start getting a salary, or after having gained enough skills and independence, might go into work for him or herself. So the model, apart from being a tool for getting skills, can also offer an opportunity for a direct placement in a job or individual entrepreneurial engagement, that is self-employment.

This will be our lens to view volunteering for work; as an equipper and booster of employability, as a possible direct link to getting a job, and as bouncing board into entrepreneurship. Abreast, it adds value to the beneficiary/host organization, the direct target beneficiaries, the community and society at large.

The skills that volunteering can add are as diverse as the very experience of volunteering can be. The possibilities are endless. One very basic dichotomy of skills already mentioned above, is skills that are specific to a particular job and transferable skills that are important for every job, or many different types of job, as they are of more generic character. Often they are also referred to as core skills, soft skills, portable skills etc. The definitions and conceptions would often overlap, blur differences and be used as interchangeable. This is not of prior importance for this paper. Skills that are often listed by different kinds of employers as important include communication, leadership and team works skills, critical thinking and problem solving, organizational and self management skills. Often the young job applicant will have a satisfactory portfolio of the technical, job-specific skills but will lack the core skills and will be taken over by somebody with more experience. Most of these skills are not plausibly transferable in a classroom. Some of them depend on an inherent personal endowment and the need to be exercised in a real life environment in order to be promoted. Other are only learned by doing and some are so crucially dependent on experience and diversity. Employees are expected to be good with

⁶⁴ Cirak means apprentice in Macedonian and several other Balkan languages. The word most probably comes from Turkish.

prose and to be good with numbers, to be able to handle documents and to find their way around with charts and tables. They need to use computers well and be prompt in thinking of a solution. They need to be able to work in a team and they need to be able to use community resources smartly and resourcefully (The Conference Board of Canada, 2004). They need to be resourceful themselves. A person who has had volunteering experience in different environments is better equipped for example to use community resources such as concepts of time, orientation, handling organizational cultures, and to adapt to different rules and procedures. Adaptation is not easy, it is hard. People buy into the habits of the daily life and find it difficult to change. And it is as hard for organizations as it is for individuals. The concept of "handling documents", once certainly more rigid and conventional on account of its sturdiness and durability is now both an end in itself and a prerequisite for any kind of advancement in responsibility. The ICT had not just exploded it, it is more like there is an eruption once a week. In exaggerated terms, a manager who would take a month of unpaid leave, upon return to the office could find her/himself in a position not to be able to open a new format. And more than a stock of knowledge, it takes the understanding that constant learning is needed. Volunteering experience can add adaptability and flexibility, important qualities in the modern economy.

An employer doesn't assess the job applicant insularly but as a prospective contributor to the team. In this regard, also the volunteer is a contributor to the team and he/she is in a position to gain but also to contribute to the team. There are parallel processes of drawing and adding of knowledge as reciprocal, mutual relationships are created (UNDP, 2003). These exchanges are by no means balanced. Sometimes the contribution of a volunteer expert to a young organization can be invaluable. Other times a young volunteer will be able to offer only an alternative, youthful point of view in exchange for priceless experience, insights and skills. The issue of balance of the exchange is of particular interest to the planning of the volunteering and is of relevance to the personal motivation of both the volunteer and the host organization.

Other important aspect of the benefits of volunteering regards the effect on attitudes, behaviors and values, and the psychosocial aspects of individual health. The search for a job can be a callous experience. It takes self esteem and resilience to be successful. Volunteering creates the sense of self worth and instills self esteem. It gives the very important feeling of being needed as through volunteering somebody is offered help, which is by itself a very rewarding experience for the helper (Street, 1994). Youth who are jobless for a considerable time start to develop the feeling that they are not needed and this is the way to self isolation. It can easily be argued that the effect on attitudes and behaviors is at least as important as the impact on skills. These processes of self development are mutually reinforcing. The acquiring of skills gives confidence which in turn bolsters even harder learning. It is not only skills that make a good professional. Indeed they may be even secondary to the right attitudes and behaviors. Attitudes and behaviors encompass a wide range of qualities from simple punctuality and readiness to stay extra hours to keeping an open mind and expressing readiness to both learn and teach. Volunteering is not a magical panacea that can just bequeath all the right virtues to whatever individual who decides to donate a portion of time. It is however a healthy process of ethical learning and has the mandate to assess qualities, that can feed back both into the volunteer track record and the inner personal benchmarking system saying what weaknesses have to be worked on.

In addition, volunteering can represent an important trial period and provide the opportunity to experiment and put preferences to practice (Street, 1994). In this way it is a step beyond the professional and vocational orientation offered in schools and employment centers. Indeed people, especially young people, are not sure about the right path, and as the new times offer a plethora of opportunities the right path is even more uncertain. A person is entitled to a try. Needless to say that professional choices can relate to identity in a very primordial way and by that can be essential to fulfillment. On the other hand they often take a lot of courage especially if the road is not devoid of risk. Volunteering can be a vital facilitator in this regard. A person can have a free shot of what she/he

preferences first and then go being a doctor or a lawyer. And this is not pertinent only to career beginning. Retraining can successfully be strategized through volunteer engagement even concurrently with a full time job, for example through seasonal or flexible part times. It therefore is a tool for developing or revealing additional talents and skills.

Employability is enhanced by strengthening the core skills (Mitchell, 1998). Employers will often be reluctant to invest too much in core skills as they are transferable. Also, they would be more inclined to invest in skills that guarantee profit in the short term as opposed to ones that mean investment in the long term productivity of the worker. The readiness to invest in training will also depend on the capacity and the size of the employer. Governments at the same time, have a limited capacity to contribute and this capacity decreases even more during economic recession. This is some of the reasoning for the pragmatic paradigm of assuming individual responsibility for employability enhancement, and volunteerism is but one tool available.

However, individual development can not be an isolated process. It has to be integrated with institutional support in order to be successful (Kitigawa, 2001). The problem is the lack of the support from the part of the relevant social partners, from reasons already mentioned. The business doesn't care and sometimes can not, the government doesn't know and its capacity can vary. Again volunteering can be observed as a possible platform, as an interface between the individual vis-à-vis the business and the government, grounded on stronger personal responsibility. The government can put a sound framework in place and offer the incentive to the business. The individual will have a greater role to play in making the choices. This is by no means a neo liberal absolution, but merely a pragmatic reasoning. And it is a reasoning that is widely accepted. More and more people volunteer today as part of their search for employment (Street, 1994).

The second idea this paper tries to explore looks at volunteering as a lobby to getting directly into an office. That is, placing young people directly from volunteering into jobs. It is more of a common talk than a relevant statistics that the vast majority of jobs, according to some almost 80%, are not advertised (Street, 1994). Regardless of the exact number, the fact exists that many posts are filled without public ads. This could mean that employers are able to effectively get the skilled people they need without wide searches, though this is a bit of an overstatement. One of the often pointed weaknesses of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) is their inefficient approach to recruitment. Some theorists had looked into hiring practices as a means of exploring societal ties, with a conclusion that many jobs are acquired through weak ties, that is to say, contacts that are not particularly close (Granovetter, 1973). The bottom argument is that volunteering in addition to augmenting the human capital also builds the social capital endowment of the individual. It serves as a useful tool for creating and maintaining useful contacts in the world of work.

In many cases happens that the volunteer starts to work with the same company he/she volunteered for. In some instances the volunteer just becomes an integral part of the team. She/he becomes an important supplement that contributes to the team dynamics. The employer realizes that the gain in effectiveness outstrips the increased staff expenses. This transition can be prompt or gradual. The volunteer can move from part time, to full time with no benefits, until a full fledged status is recognized.

The types of school to work transitions, among many other factors, are molded by cultures. Kitigawa (2001) compares the systems of some of the strongest economies in the world. Germany enjoys a strong cooperation between industry, government, trade unions and education. Thus the best practice dual model that puts young people effectively into jobs. In Japan the corporations embrace and protect the individual who spends his/her entire life working for the same company in a mutual exchange of protection and absolute loyalty (Fukuyama, 1995). These strong cultural determinants that shape

the very character of the economy will have strong impact on the practices and values of volunteering too. This is however beyond our scope.

In other cases the volunteer simply becomes indispensable. For example, a volunteer who over time develops a complicated database is not so easily replaceable. Volunteers will often be given vast technical detail. Often organizations resort to volunteer effort when faced with increased amount of technical detail whose handling with paid labor could exceed their financial strength. Sometimes the volunteer develops a line of activity that the organization finds useful and decides to retain. When hiring, organizations often rather contact a former volunteer than looking for somebody completely new. This saves them costs, effort, time, and unpleasantness of a surprise, in a case the relationship doesn't work.

Volunteering can create jobs or even types of jobs. Sometimes it happens that a type of service is developed originally by volunteer effort and subsequently government or other service providers take over the provision as the awareness grows that the service is vital to the society. The original volunteer effort mobilized in response to the AIDS pandemic urged both governments and others social actors to start with consistent provision of related services, that created thousands of jobs (UN Volunteers, 1999).

When thinking about volunteering as a means for direct placement into jobs, one idea that would be interesting to explore, and that this paper will just outline, is the relationship with the SMEs. They are the backbone of most economies. In the EU they represent over 98% of all companies, over 50% of GDP and account for 2/3 of the total employed work force (Observatory of European SMEs, 2002). At the same time, some of the particular challenges for SMEs pertain to training and staffing, that are central to the issue of skills and skills disconnects. Most SMEs indicate the lack of skills as the main obstacle in work. SMEs do not have the funds and the time for training of their staff, most of the learning is done on the job. According to Kitigawa (2001) SMEs choose to address the skills gap by working harder rather than working smarter. Often they do not possess the capacity to do well-planned recruitment. Basically they are the most vibrant part of a country's economy but also express clear vulnerabilities that need certain kinds of support. The very fact that they are by far the largest type of employer emphasizes their importance to youth unemployment. It would be really interesting to explore those possible interplays that can happen between SMEs and youth who transit from school into work, both on the conjunction of skills shortage lanes and also as processes of incubation of entrepreneurship. What they have in common is that both lack skills. Now, to a large extent these lacks would not be complementary in terms that a mutually productive exchange can take place. Youth will lack the level entry skills whereas the employers would lack the skills needed to adapt certain production or service delivery process for example. The generality of this statement is of course debatable. However, there can be many points of congruence, many chances for happy marriages. Especially if preceded by periods of living together. The fresh up-to-date ICT youthful culture can be really valuable to an SME that runs good production but has somewhat outdated communication procedures for example. The young person learns the traits of the trade and at the same time updates the employer's communication system. Innovation in business will more seldom be radical and more often gradual and incremental. It will often consist of simple new ways of doing things, simple little improvements, that at the end of the day add up to a rise in productivity. . And this is but the simplest possible example, of interest both to youth and small employers.

It is a valid argument that for youth who are interested in entrepreneurship, short volunteering periods with different SMEs can be a very useful experience. It is in an SME that the spirit of entrepreneurship can be really felt and explored. The big companies rely on the executive decisions of professional managers. These decisions are far both from genuine enterprising and innovation, and also have a

different relation to risk. In an SME the young person interested in business can have a first hand practical education about all the aspects that are relevant to business.

Nonetheless, another important argument goes along the line of the point made earlier, and this is the importance of orientation. A young person may have some interest in business but this interest may not be unhesitant. Moreover, the motivation may derive from an inclination to a very particular type of business. A short time with an SME of a certain profile may be the right insight needed, without a risk of failure.

Interest in entrepreneurship in the EU is declining especially among young people. The EC recommended measures for reinforcing the entrepreneurial spirit also by promotion activities in the classroom.⁶⁵ Some experts argue that entrepreneurship can not be taught but that it is innate and it can only be instigated. If that is true then the best place to do it is in the right type of environment. It takes the right context to awaken and promote the right attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Lastly, as only of sideway relevance to this paper, volunteering is one of the facilitators of linkages among businesses. In an anecdotal testimony of a volunteer from Macedonia, a student of food processing technology who went for a volunteership in Denmark, the host managers were very interested in the milk and dairy industry in Macedonia to which he tried to comply by providing extensive data. This ensued in the company from Denmark purchasing the controlling package of a Macedonian milk producer. In this way, even if only indirectly, the volunteering effectuated foreign direct investment. The volunteer got a steady job upon return home.

Conclusion

Attempting to concentrate mostly on the practical benefits volunteering can give young people, in a particularly important aspect of life, this paper didn't elaborate on the enormous complexity of the processes of transition to work. The variances in their course can be many and influenced by a myriad of factors. A couple of decades ago these transitions were in general terms faster and took place at an earlier age. Over time, and with the gradual decline of jobs in the manufacturing sector, as one of the often quoted factors, they became both postponed and longer (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). The last few decades also noted, apart from the longer staying in school, the trend of exploding numbers of female enrolment and clear records of better performance of girls as compared to boys. In Europe and not only, girls consistently outperform boys in school. However, their transition in the job market is more difficult. Many jobs are still gender segregated or gender typical although a lot of progress has been made. Girls find it in general more difficult to progress in their careers.

The structure of the economy results in some countries with higher rates of youth unemployment in the high skill cohort, vs. in other with a higher unemployment rates in the low skills cohort. Youth unemployment follows general unemployment but in some countries can happen that youth unemployment can rise in a situation when the overall unemployment is decreasing. The situation becomes more complicated when taken into account the social and cultural stratification of society and the in-country urban to rural divide. Youth from rural areas are far more vulnerable than youth from the capital and their transition looks absolutely different. Marginalized youth face enormous challenges that do not need special reference. Sometimes the imperative of the transition will be to just make it fast, in order to break the welfare cycle, though this might lead to being locked in low paid job without possibilities for exit (Kitigawa, 2001). Youth in more developed countries will be in a position to delay

⁶⁵ The European Charter for SMEs was endorsed by the European Council in Santa Maria de Feira in June 2002. Among other, the Charter pledges for promotion of entrepreneurship in schools.

the transition till the right opportunity comes along, as opposed to youth from a developing one, who will have to scrap a living.

The differences in social status, education, residence, cultural identity, also strongly influence the stance towards volunteerism. Marginalized youth will be less likely to volunteer than youth from the cultural mainstream of society. Youth who are the edge of livelihood will more unlikely find even the time to volunteer, let alone the commitment. The differences at individual level translate into macro level phenomena. Volunteering will differ in a developed from developing country in terms of priorities, structure, organization (Roy & Ziemek, 2000).

However, whatever the context, volunteering appears to be adaptable and able to deliver benefit. One final conclusion is that its importance grows as an important avenue for combating youth unemployment. The possibilities it offers are numerous. It can be molded, customized, tailored to individual needs. It can be full time, part time, weekend of working days, home or abroad, it can differ in intensity and duration. It can be more or less structured and formalized. It can be equally about a frame of mind or culture, and technical improvement. It can serve as a tool to explore preferences, add experience, and strengthen self esteem. It can be an effective interface for combining community effort for mutual benefit. It can open borders, even in the literal sense of the word. It is a strong tool for enhancing individual control over one's life. And more and more young people use it.

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Recognition of voluntary activities – focusing on what young people learn from voluntary activities and how this can be recognised.

I. What young people learn from voluntary activities

In the beginning of the eighties sociologist observed that developing economy hadn't improved the situation on the labour market. There is growing unemployment, in particular among young people, who after finishing school remain outside the labour markets instead of getting job. In addition they have not sufficient education and skills to get job. In opinion of F. Ferraroti, Italian sociologist "youth is a social invention of industrial society and at the same time its most obvious failure (...). In traditional societies, youth as separate and specific social group simply did not exist. One would pass directly from infancy to adulthood and responsibility and full-time work. Schooling was but a passing phase (...) training was done directly on the job"⁶⁶. Nowadays this traditional transition doesn't exist any more. The university degree is not sufficient to get job, and in consequence start an adult life, because the universities are a mass organisations opened for everyone. Often the level of education is not high enough to lag behind fast changing technology and requirements of the modern labour markets. Young people feel in this situation lost and have no knowledge where to improve their skills and get experience mentioned by the employers in order to get a job. So that there is a need to undertake activities aimed for young people to increase, first of all, their access to information and in consequence to rise their employability.

Among this initiatives are the community programmes like Socrates/Erasmus enhancing the university students exchange, Leonardo Da Vinci aimed at young workers and last but not least European Voluntary Service for young people aged 18-25, particularly coming from less privileged backgrounds.

Most of the programmes are aimed mainly at people who have certain level of education, high school (e.g. Socrates), university matriculated or university degree (e.g. Erasmus, Leonardo Da Vinci). These conditions are to be fulfilled to participate in order to participate in one of the mentioned programmes. In consequence there are a great number of young people who don't fulfil these conditions and would remain without chance to get new experiences and improve their skills and knowledge.

In order to involve also this group of young people European Commission implemented on basis of decision 1031/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2000 establishing the Community action programme for Youth⁶⁷. The programme was adopted for the period 2000-2006 and was the continuation of the programme established in 1988 Youth for Europe. Programme was divided into 5 actions (Youth for Europe, European Voluntary Service, youth Initiatives, Joint Actions, Support Measures). Decision 1031/2000/EC made the programme structure more clear and comprehensible for the users. It based on initiatives that were introduced year-by-year, e.g. Youth for Europe in 1988⁶⁸, European Voluntary Service in 1998⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ *Youth and work. The incidence of the economic situation on the access of young people to education, culture and work*, Regional youth meetings, Report, recommendations and documents of a European regional meetings, Venice, 7-11 November 1977, p. 39

⁶⁷ Official Journal L 117, 18.05.2000

⁶⁸ Council Decision of 16 June 1988 adopting an action programme for the promotion of youth exchanges in the Community - "Youth for Europe" programme Official Journal L 158 , 25/06/1988

⁶⁹ Decision 1686/98/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 July 1998 establishing the Community action Programme European Voluntary Service for Young People, Official Journal L 214, 31.07.1998

European Voluntary Service existed before the official decision was issued. In 1996 the pilot action were made and 200 young people participated in voluntary activities. Since then volunteering activities has been gaining greater importance as a source of educational and professional experience for young people and a mean of involvement of youngsters from less opportunities backgrounds. What was crucial is the fact that EVS lies in non-formal education area. This is so important because a great number of EVS participants are early school leavers or are outside formal education system⁷⁰.

The main objective of the European Voluntary Service is to reinforce social and occupational integration of young people and help local communities by introducing good practices involving young volunteers who would work for 6-12 months. During period of the voluntary service volunteers will get new social and professional experiences, improve their knowledge will develop personal skills. As a consequence the transition from the school to labour market will be done through participation in community programmes enhancing employability.

Problems which appeared in the beginning of nineties in European countries- increasing unemployment of young people, less engagement in social and cultural activities resulted in taking up discussion that voluntary activities is not only a way of using a spare time but also a way in which young people get a lot of new experiences and that's why is it should be recognised as a part of professional experience gained in in-formal way. The idea of volunteering changed the definition from "help the others to helping others, help yourself". Young people are more and more aware of this fact, so that each year the number of participants in EVS and young people involved in Poland in voluntary activities grows. Data presented below shows the numbers of the EVS participants in Poland (1 table) and the engagement of young people in volunteer activities in Poland (table 2).

Table 1

ACTION 2 EVS	Total 2000	Total 2001	Total 2002
Application submitted	51	211	378
Financed projects	49	159	285
Number of Volunteers ⁷¹	49	159	285

Source: Polish National Agency of the Youth Programme internal rapport, 2002

Table 2

Commitment in voluntary activities

Age	Volunteers		
	2001	2002	2003
Under 25	8,1 %	11,9%	22,5%
26-35	7,8%	9,6%	19,4%
36-46	10,4%	13,6%	18,6%
46-55	14,5%	13,6%	20,5%
Over 55	10,1%	7,1%	8,3%

Source: Polish Volunteerism and philanthropy research 2003, KLON/JAWOR 2003

⁷⁰ According to Youth Programme Inclusion strategy programme one of the key objectives is "empowerment of young people with fewer opportunities by using the different instruments of the YOUTH programme and by developing and implementing new creative approaches in this field"., http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/priorities/inclusion_2004_en.html

⁷¹ Numbers present all submitted application, both sending and hosting projects.

Data presented in tables shows that in Poland there is a growing engagement of young people in voluntary activities.

The research, I conducted, has focused on young people, who were engaged in long-term European Voluntary Service of the Youth Programme in period 2000-2002. This research is organised into two parts. In first I focused on motivation of young people to participate in EVS and what people learn during periods of their voluntary service. The second part will be an attempt to answer if the experience gained during voluntary service can be recognised and what should be done in order to increase the recognition of the experiences.

The aim of the research was to asses educational and occupational benefits for young people involved in EVS. In particular, the specific objectives of the research project were to understand:

- What is the motivation of young people to participate in European Voluntary Service,
- If young participants are aware of benefits they can obtain during the service,
- If participants engage themselves into the service to get particular skills and knowledge or if it is only the will of “foreign adventure”,
- If, according to EVS volunteers, participation in EVS improves job opportunities

Methodology

The methodology includes questionnaires send via post and email to all polish EVS volunteers who participated in the service in 2000-2002. This choice of the dates was to send questionnaire only to those volunteers who completed service in the moment of researches. Volunteers were chosen from the database of volunteers from the Polish National Agency of the Youth Programme.

Table 3

Volunteers	2000	2001	2002	Total	Returns due to bad email/postal adresses
With email	9	30	111	150	10
Without email	8	40	43	91	12
Total	17	70	154	241	229

I made distinction between volunteers with email and without e-mail because not all the volunteers wrote email addresses in their application forms for EVS. After sending questionnaire to volunteers I had some failure returns either from e-mail and post recipients. The reason was “recipient unknown” both for e-mail or post addresses. Respondents had 2 weeks to answer the questionnaire and send it back. From 229 send questionnaires I received 68 filled questionnaires, which is 30 % of all sent questionnaires. The return rate is relatively high⁷², however some information were to complete in process of communication with the respondents (e. g. some missing dates, unclear answers).

Questionnaire consisted of 100 questions – opened and closed concerning educational and occupational experiences of the volunteers, previous volunteering experiences, motivation to take up EVS and expectation towards benefits from the service. There were questions regarding after-project life, as the questionnaire was prepared for the purpose of master thesis on impact of EVS on educational and occupational choices of ex- EVS – volunteers.

⁷² Mail questionnaire is applied very seldom and it is treated as “poor substitute” for face-to-face interview. They are said to bring low percentage of returns(in random samples approximately 10-20%); SZTABIŃSKI, F. Ankieta Pocztaowa i wywiad kwestionariuszowy, Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, Warszawa, 1997, p. 242

Sex, age and level of education of respondents

Table 4

Sex of respondents	%
Male	14,7
Female	85,3
Total	100

Majority of participants in European Voluntary Service are females in all countries of the Programme. The equality policy is introduced however to increase number of male participants. Some National Agencies of Youth Programme introduced point system when assessing application. Male participants receive more points, e.g. polish NA introduced this system to encourage men to the programme.

Table 5

Level of education	%
High school students	2,9
Recently graduated high school students	14,7
University students	64,7
University graduated	17,7

From analysis of the data it appears that polish youngsters decide to take up EVS when they are matriculated University students. Comparing with European data it appears that youngsters from old EU take up their service usually after they finished high school. Polish youngster decide to go on EVS rather when they are matriculated students. The reason of this difference lies in fact, that in the majority of the countries students simply have to sign up for the universities (e.g. France, Italy). In Poland majority higher education institution require entrance examines. One year break makes difficult to pass exams.

Table 6

Total	%	Age of the respondents
Birth		
1975	2,9	29
1976	8,8	28
1977	11,7	27
1978	14,7	26
1979	32,3	25
1980	14,7	24
1981	2,9	23
1982	8,8	22
1983	2,9	21
Total %	100	

Table nr 6 represent the age of the respondents. This data shows that questionnaire was respond by older participants of the Programme. In Poland the Youth Programme was introduce in 2000 and before EVS didn't exist.

Volunteer were asked also about the duration of their service. 50 % of the respondents took part in 12 moths service, 26,4 % took up 6 moths service, 14,8 % chose 10 month period and 8,8% left abroad for 8 months.

The one of the main question when we take in consideration European Voluntary Service is if participants have ever participated in voluntary activities before. What is so significant about polish volunteers is the fact that most of them have never had pervious experiences with the volunteering.

Table 7

	Have you ever worked as a volunteer?	%
1	Yes	44,1
2	No	45,9

45,9% have never participated in any voluntary activity.

However this group were not asked what do they consider as a voluntary activity. I can suppose that respondents understood this "voluntary activity" as a work within structures of non profit organisation and didn't consider other forms of volunteer activity like "neighbourly helping-out".

Among those who responded "yes", 86,6% worked with children, 26,6% worked with old people, 20% managed NGOs, 13,3% worked for NGOs which manage volunteers in different actions, 13,3% helped in NGO office. Majority is involved in work with children. The most chosen subject of the EVS is work with children as well.

When we take into consideration the motivation to go for EVS we have to ask also why volunteer chose certain subject of the project. I can assume that majority of the volunteers chose the project according to subject not the country. The subject refers to interests and the expectation of the

volunteers towards project content. The next table presents what is important for volunteers when they choose projects of the EVS. It can give also answers what they expect to learn during EVS.

Table 8

	What was important for you when choosing project subject?	%
1	It had to correspond to my interests	47
2	It had to be placed in certain country	47
3	It had to give me a chance to get new skills and knowledge	47
4	It had to give me a chance to learn language	47
5	It had to give an chance to use my knowledge and skills from school university	23,5
6	There were free places	20,5
7	It had to correspondent with my education	17,6
8	I wanted to know new area	14,7
9	The subject had to concerned certain area	11,7
10	Project should be with other foreign volunteers	11,7
11	Other - I don't know - 2 - I knew the hosting organisation before - 3 - Someone told me it was interesting - 1	8,8
12	It had to corresponded with my previous work experience	5,8
13	It had to correspondent with my previous volunteer experience	5,8

From the data presented it appears that for the majority of young people taking up the service the most important things are: relation to their interests (47%), country(47%) which usually is connected with the will of learning the language (47%) and the possibility of acquiring new skills and knowledge.

In research I also asked volunteer to write 5 reasons of their decision to participate in EVS (Table 9). They had to write them in order from the most important reason (1) to the least important (5) one.

First of all volunteers want get to know new culture and people. 14% of all indications were made on the possibility of getting to know new culture. The second reason is the possibility to learn new language and then acquiring new skills and knowledge. In further part of the researches I asked volunteer what kind of skills and knowledge they acquired

during EVS.

I was also interested if volunteer choose EVS because they think it will improve their chances to get better job in the future. 4,8% of volunteers stated that EVS gives occupational experience and in consequence helps to get better job in the future (4,8%). From the analysis of the data below I can state that most volunteers choose participation in EVS, because they want to improve their understanding of other culture – its history, politics, education, mentality, customs. They are so called “international key qualifications”⁷³. It seems that young people are aware that participation in EVS increase the job opportunities, however they decide to take the service because they want to experience living in different culture, with youngsters from all over the Europe.

Table 9

Why did you decide to participate in EVS?	Ranking (number of choices)	% of all indicates
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⁷³ KRISTENSEN, S., *Learning by leaving-Towards a pedagogy for transnational mobility in the context of vocational education and training (VET)*, European Centre for the Development of Vocational training, Youth Website Mobility Section_SKR

	1	2	3	4	5	
1 I wanted to know other people, new culture	6	16	8	14	2	14
2 I wanted to learn language	8	6	12	10	6	12,8
3 I wanted to get new skills and knowledge	2	8	4	12	8	10,3
4 I wanted to help other people	4	10	8	2	6	9,1
5 It was an adventure	6	0	10	4	8	8,5
6 I wanted to make a break in my school to think what I want to do in the future	6	6	2	0	8	6,7
7 Because I wanted to be independent	2	2	6	6	0	4,8
8 EVS gives chance to get occupational experience	6	2	2	0	6	4,8
9 EVS experience helps to get better job in the future helps to	8	0	4	2	2	4,8
10 I wanted more experience in this area	2	4	2	2	2	3,6
11 I wanted to know better myself	2	0	4	4	2	3,6
12 I was unemployed	4	0	0	0	4	2,4
13 EVS project was adequate to my education area	2	0	0	2	4	2,4
14 One of my friend was EVS volunteer	2	2	0	0	2	1,8
15 Employers prefer person with volunteer experiences	0	0	2	0	4	1,8
16 I wanted to check if the subject interest me	0	0	4	0	2	1,8
17 I wanted to go abroad before I continue my education	6	0	0	0	0	1,8
18 Other - I knew before hosting organisation - I couldn't have found interesting job in Poland	4	0	2	0	0	1,8
19 EVS gives chance to developed knowledge and skills gained in school, at the university	0	0	0	4	0	1,8
20 I have just finished school, university and I didn't know what to do in my life	0	0	0	2	2	1,2

In further research I asked volunteers if their projects required any specific skills or knowledge. 67,6% of the respondents said that their project didn't required any skills and pervious experience. 22,4% stated that they were asked pervious experience. They enumerate various skills and what is important also features of character, which were demanded from the hosting projects. 36, 4% of hosting projects required fluent knowledge of language, 36,4% some features of character like openness, tolerance, courage.

Table 10

I asked also if they learn new skills and knowledge during their projects(table 11). Majority of the answers were “Yes” – 76,5%, and 23,5% answered “no”.

The table below presents skills gained during the EVS projects.

Table 11

Almost half of the respondents indicate language as the most important skill they learned during

	What kind skills required your hosting project?	%
1	Fluent knowledge of language	36,4
2	Features of character: tolerance, openness, courage	36,4
3	Previous experience in work with children/youth	36,4
4	Computer processing	27,3
5	Sense of art.	9,1
6	Knowledge of subject area	9,1
7	Organisational skills	9,1
8	Driving licence	9,1

	Did you get some new skills during your EVS project?	%
1	Language	46,1
2	Interpersonal skills	30
3	Organisational skills	23
4	Better understanding of certain subjects: youth, handicapped problems, ecological issues	23
5	Ability to live in different culture	19,2
6	Technical skills	15,3
7	Better knowledge about youth programmes	15,3
8	Some values: openness, tolerance, respect	11,5
9	Artistic skills	7,7
10	Ability to work with "disadvantage" youth	7,7
11	Cooking skills	7,7
12	Sport skills	3,8

the project. It relates with their expectation before the project, so this aim is fulfilled. 30% learned “interpersonal skills”. Asked to precise it volunteers mention the ability to resolve conflicts, ability to work in multicultural environment. Volunteer indicate as an important skill also better understanding of certain subjects like youth, handicapped problems, ecological issues. Some volunteers respond also that living in completely new culture was for them very valuable experience and lesson of life(19,2%). I asked also volunteer to evaluate their EVS experiences and tell how they grade the influence on various aspects of their lives.

Table 12

Influence on:	Significant influence	Big influence	Average influence	Small influence	No influence
Educational choice	23,5%	29%	12%	0%	35%
Occupational choice	23,5%	44%	12%	0%	21%
Getting job	26,4%	24%	12%	5,9%	32%
Personal development	70,5%	21%	2,9%	2,9%	2,9%

Participation in EVS still influence the most personal development of the volunteers. However refereeing to key international qualification mentioned above or “international skills” help volunteers to develop themselves also in other areas of their lives. Personal development influences educational and occupational choices. Volunteer are more open for new experiences, sometimes they decide to study subjects they would never decide before or they become convinced that occupational choices they made were right choices.

32% of the volunteers state that EVS experience has no influence on increasing the employability. We should try to answer why this kind of experiences is not still recognised in Poland.

II. Recognition of voluntary experience

Research conducted on Polish volunteers shows that a lot of Polish EVS participants expect that experience gained during the service will help them not only to develop their knowledge, skills and personality, but also will be a tramp card and will enrich their curricula comparing with those who don't take up the voluntary service.

European Union and governments of the countries make efforts to increase recognition of experiences gained during volunteering activities. Basing on my research I can affirm that voluntary activities are still not recognised by Polish employers who still treat voluntary activities as an interesting break in curriculum vitae, but they don't know how it could be useful in work.

The main problem of recognition of voluntary experience is that volunteering itself is not recognised in certain countries where programmes for volunteers exist from some time only and the phenomenon of volunteering has a short story. In post-soviet countries, e.g. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary volunteering has still very bad connotation, because it refers to the communist ideology where "each citizen should be involved in community improvement and should do something beneficial for society"⁷⁴. In consequence in the beginning of nineties when the fall of the iron curtain took place, even if the flood of new non-governmental organisation appeared, not many people were keen on volunteering for the foundation and associations. KLON/JAWOR's statistics⁷⁵ mentioned in the beginning of this research indicates that even in 2001 not many people were involved in voluntary activities, e.g. only 8,1% in 2001 of people under 25 years of age. In Poland, according to some researches, the word "volunteer" is not recognised by many people.

We should take into consideration that the voluntary sector in Central and Eastern Europe has a long lasting story. Before the 1989 breakout the civil society has proved its ability to organise itself under extremely difficult circumstances in Eastern and Central Europe. The study prepared by Ewa Leś⁷⁶ about the voluntary sector in post-communist East-Central Europe shows that even though there was no legal framework for NGOs activities, this sector was remarkably developed, however words like "volunteering", "non governmental" organisation didn't exist that time.

Since the beginning of nineties a great work was done to overcome negative connotation of the voluntary activities. People not forced any more to work for the common benefit, are given free will to participate in activities of NGO sector, in different areas and they participate more willingly. The way to increase recognition of the volunteer sector is to inform people what are the voluntary activities, where they can be done. Newspapers and magazines have very important role to play as they are the most spread source of information, also for young people.

One of the aims should be also increasing the recognition of voluntary programmes among young people who are "actors" of the voluntary scene. Still a lot of young people, a specially from the less privileged backgrounds don't know that they can volunteer, that there are some programmes which helped them to get experiences. There should be more open information access, by means of different institution of public life, NGO, government institutions. There should be a greater engagement of the state in promotion of the voluntary activities. Poland hasn't got youth policy for many years. In 2003 Polish Youth Strategy for the years 2003-2012⁷⁷ was adopted by the Ministry of National Education and Sport. The second strategic objective is creating chances for the development of own activity of the young generation. It can be realised also by development of youth voluntary service, either on national and international level. In 2003 The Ministry and the National Agency of the Youth Programme started popularising international forms of the youth voluntary service, e. g. Youth Programme. In 2004 there was a database youth voluntary service created. In this structure works Eurodesk Polska, and the next step will be in 2004-2005 building national

⁷⁴ Legal status of volunteers in Europe, research study, CEV & AVSO, 2002-2003,

<http://www.avso.org/en/activities/CEV&AVSO.htm>

⁷⁵ www.badania.ngo.pl

⁷⁶ Leś, E., The voluntary sector in post-communist East Central Europe, Civicus, Washington D.C., 1994

⁷⁷ www.menis.gov.pl

system of youth information compatible with Eurodesk. These actions should increase access of young people to information and in consequence also recognition of the experiences gotten during period of voluntary service.

Furthermore there is no good system of certification of skills gained during the service. NGOs didn't have to certify engaged volunteers before 2003. To change this situation Legal Act on Public Benefit and volunteering in Poland was issued in April 2003 (came into force 29 June 2003). This act provides a framework for the activity of the third sector and the volunteers. NGO are obliged to issue written volunteer agreement when the period of voluntary work exceeds 30 days. In addition they have to provide safe and hygienic work conditions, cover travel expenses incurred by volunteer in connection with the service, cover training costs. These solutions are still not obeyed by organisations, because many organisations find them bureaucratic and time consuming.

Polish government adopted Programme "First Job" which was created for young graduated people. Voluntary Service was included in this programme as a valuable source of work experience and to counteract to social exclusion.

A lot was done to increase recognition of voluntary services in Poland. However still there are some solutions missing. Voluntary activities still haven't been treated as a period of employment for the purposes of receiving state welfare payments. There is no distinction between short-term and long-term voluntary activities. Solutions in these areas would encourage employers to treat voluntary experiences as equal to work experiences. As I wrote in the beginning of this research employers often don't understand what does it mean to work as a volunteer and that volunteers are often engaged in activities which require a very good knowledge of certain areas.

Even though there are still a lot of things to do to increase recognition of voluntary experiences, Polish volunteer sector develops in good direction.

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Panel 5 – Development and promotion of voluntary activities

Kateryna Shalayeva (Kyiv University)

New methods to evaluate voluntary experiences

Soren Kristensen

Learning by leaving: the notion of quality in placements abroad

Dominik Mytkowski

Impact study on Action 2 (European Voluntary Service) of the Youth Programme in Poland

NEW METHODS TO EVALUATE VOLUNTARY EXPERIENCES

This paper is focused on the methods of qualitative research that might be used for a long and short-term evaluation of voluntary experiences of young people across Europe. It is other than questionnaire approaches that allow verification and estimation of an impact of voluntary experience on a volunteer, hosting and home communities and the European society at larger scale.

Primarily the methods are created to find out what are the skills and competencies that young people learn by completing voluntary activities and how their experiences (intercultural learning, job qualification, interpersonal skills, social identities, etc.) can be transferred for the purposes of social development?

Particular methods described in this paper include: case study, mainly oriented to explore community impact; personal development report as within the term of volunteering and at a later stage of life; biography method that in principal allows to learn the experiences of becoming volunteers for minority and socially excluded groups; qualitative research of documents (photos, drawings, notes) in order to include non-verbalised practices and hidden impacts into the process of social research. Other methods of qualitative nature are definitely possible in a research of voluntary experiences, meanwhile they don't make a focus of this paper.

An actual need to develop methodology of social research in volunteering was indicated in the *Analysis of the replies of the Member States of the European Union and acceding countries to the Commission questionnaire on voluntary activities of young people*. It states: "...much still needs to be done to improve the evaluation and monitoring of voluntary activities..." [1]. The sources of social information must be diversified and this brings qualitative methods into use. Diversification of social information allows inclusion and consideration of minority and previously excluded social experiences. Qualitative research gives information primarily on feelings, believes and attitudes of an individual social being and not generalised at the same time de-personalised statistical figures. It gives a possibility to a researcher to sensitise her research instrument and to adjust a focus of her research to an actual situation. In result we receive information that is highly personalised. It tells us stories of individual lives. That adds a humanitarian value to a current social research.

While using qualitative methods as a general approach to discovering social reality it helps us to look at the research questions both programmed in the research scheme and new up-coming questions that appear within the process of research. Methods of qualitative research do not only answer the questions How? and Why? They also allow answering the question What? Usually in the qualitative research like questionnaire a researcher already knows what is being both chosen and defined as a main subject of a research. Afterward the whole process of the research refers to the chosen definition. In result the picture of social reality is determined from the very start by the knowledge and interest of a researcher.

This is of cause true that any research is influenced by personal values of a scientist. And for qualitative methods the influence of a scientist appears even more visible, but in this regard the moderation of a process of social discoveries goes through motivation and encouragement of personal descriptive opinions of respondents and in-depth look into a field of research. For example, the first research question in the study on the impact of voluntary experiences on young people would be what is voluntary experience? For the quality of qualitative research it is important to know what respondents themselves consider as voluntary experiences, because on this basis they create descriptive pictures of

being active within different social domains. By knowing what respondents mean behind 'voluntary experience' we can harmonise the process of social research by being able to introduce the significant social meanings delivered by respondents into our research and its conclusions. Before starting to evaluate 'voluntary experience' we have to know what those who have such an experience mean by it. Consideration of respondents' impact increases validity of social research. In the contrary in the quantitative methodology what is being studied (how the subject looks and what are the main features to be analysed) is already decided prior to the beginning of a research.

Having described the focus of qualitative study as the focus on individual experiences, choices and attitudes we continue to look closer at different methods that facilitate social research of voluntary experiences.

The method to start with is a case study. Case study is a popular sociological method used broadly when there is a need to draw a general picture of a situation. In the field of voluntary experience it might be oriented to explore community impact. People as human beings live in the society. Society shapes our personality and every activity of an individual makes an influence on a society at a larger scale. Voluntary activities are meant for the society purposes. Therefore it is greatly important to make a clear estimation of results and impacts of voluntary activities into community life. For the purpose of development of deeper understanding of society trends we need to create a vast and detailed picture in which domains, by which tools and with which features voluntary activities bring changes into society. Human life is full of emotions and feelings that qualitative methodology targets. Therefore qualitative case study assists both a scientist and a broader audience to realise in a process and in a result what specific changes and influences have been made through voluntary activities and describes and delivers the conclusions in an easy accessible language.

For the case study we attract individual stories of volunteers, newspaper articles, feedback from the participants of related events, expert opinions, different published materials about particular voluntary activity including background papers, reports and proceedings, interviews with representatives of a target group, study of visual documents (photos, drawings, postcards, advertisements, logos, other promotional materials), analysis of mottos of related events, etc. Everything what comes into attention of a researcher is of a potential interest for a colourful, detailed and explanatory case study. The role of a researcher makes a very important part of a successful case study. A researcher must be creative and sensitive towards discovering of new and outstanding information.

As well as case study allows us to define community impact of volunteering, personal development report facilitates our knowledge of what an impact voluntary experience makes on an individual life of a volunteer. Short-term personal development reports covers the term of volunteering and is conducted prior, within and shortly after the term of volunteering. The aim of a short-term personal development report is to collect up-to-date information about current influences and changes that voluntary experience exercises above an individual life. Within short-term report we are able to compare the values and life practices actual for a person before and after term of volunteering. By this we can analyse immediate impacts that voluntary activities produce. At a later stage of life long-term personal development report might be undertaken. Within a certain period of life a volunteer returns in her memories to a previous voluntary experience and gives an opinion what was significant or insignificant in specific areas of voluntary experiences and how it is influenced (contributed or restricted) her future social achievements. Personal development report may be executed in a written or oral forms, when a volunteer describes her life on paper or participates in a semi-moderated interview. For both cases a list of pre-selected questions is desirable.

In social research special attention is being paid to discover life experiences of minority and socially excluded groups. A method that in principal allows learning social experiences of volunteering of

minority and socially excluded groups is called biography method. Biography method is oriented to research a general life path when a special consideration is given to structural points of human biographies. Structural points of human biographies apply to certain events, conditions and people that played crucial role in setting up life strategies and determination of life achievements.

There is a demand of social development that every individual receives opportunity to enrich her personality and to harmonise relations with social world. That is why minority and socially excluded groups require specific measures of social actions in order to introduce those groups at an equal opportunity basis into society interaction. In order to do so, we need information how and why the groups have been named 'minority' and 'socially excluded' and shifted to a margin of society. This is our departure point in order to build the outreach strategies as a first measure to return those groups into full play on a stage of society life. In a research on volunteering we are mainly interested which competencies and life chances has a volunteer gained through her activism? How new situation of life has influenced personal motivation and world orientation of a volunteer? If any impact has been made on a close social circle of a volunteer, like family and friends? If new skills and self-confidence of a volunteer gives her better social benefits in terms of recognition, employment and social choices?

There is a set of requirements how to organise biography study for minority and socially excluded groups. General recommendations are drawn from my doctoral research *Social mechanisms of life style formation in the context of feminist paradigm* [2]. Biography study is usually, but not only an in-depth interview. Semi-structured or non-structured interviews are most appropriate. For a semi-structured interview a list of pre-defined guiding questions is desirable. These questions must scan the whole duration of life of a respondent and have a focus on specific periods, social institutions and organisations that produce an impact on individual life as well as the influence of significant others must be estimated and considered. Because a researcher is always directly or indirectly influences the content of interview (it has been proved that respondents try to give "desirable" answers related to their expectations of gender character and common life experience with interviewer) there is a requirement of a quality of a research to minimise such an influence. For that reason the same gender and related life experience of a respondent and an interviewer guarantee correct interpretation of the results of biography study. Similar life experience also facilitates social learning by establishing a common language.

Especially biography method allows verification of an impact of voluntary experiences in comparison to a life set held prior to volunteering. The results of biography study give best illustration to the changes occurred in result of social activism particularly due to voluntary involvement.

Last method to be described in this paper is qualitative research of documents. By qualitative research of documents we mean social analysis of photos, drawings, postcards, logos, pictures, advertisements, and other visual materials when visual description creates a basis to conclude about non-verbalised practices and hidden impacts of social interaction among individuals and their groups. Non-verbalised practices are among most significant to define social roles and positions and therefore they have to be included into the process of social research.

There is a big number of different materials that tend to promote volunteering in different ways. All of them can become a target set for a potential documentary research. A qualitative research of documents is focused on symbols and signs introduced in the documents that are studied. What is a popular and a specific meaning of these symbols and signs? How this meaning has been acquired? What is a target group of certain symbols, signs and their meanings?

This approach allows us to find out how efficient are our promotional efforts in voluntary field. It is a method to see if there is a proper response to the images associated with voluntary experiences? It is important to be aware if a consequent understanding between the meanings and symbols that voluntary

activists put into popular materials and of a broader audience exists? Qualitative research of documents allows not only to answer the question if a symbol evokes a necessary associative meaning, but also allows to know how the connection between the symbol and its meaning was established and is currently supported.

Study of pictures and drawings made during the term of volunteering may tell us a lot about individual voluntary experience and what impact it has produced on the community. In general qualitative research of document is new among the methods that discover voluntary experiences, but has a great potential in further use.

Qualitative methods of social research, like case study, personal development report, biography method, qualitative research of documents described in this paper open new areas of social experiences that are important for better understanding of social reality and for the development of efficient social policy strategies. Among important social policy strategies are deeper institutionalisation and wider social recognition of voluntary activities. The results of qualitative studies contribute to visibility and quality of voluntary activities.

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BACKGROUND PAPER

The notion of quality in placements abroad

By Søren Kristensen

Introduction

The creation and development of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) is part of a significant trend within Europe, where placements abroad have been increasingly used as a didactic tool in a context of formal, non-formal and informal education and training. The programmes of the European Commission are an important factor in this. Besides the Youth programme (of which the EVS is an action), two other large EU programmes – Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci – are grant-aiding placement activities abroad. In addition to this, other European programmes (e.g. the 6th framework programme for research) contain provisions for mobility of specific groups of people (in this case: researchers), just as placements abroad is also an issue for many activities financed under the Social or the Regional Fund. These European programmes and initiatives are complemented and supplemented by similar programmes and initiatives at bi-national, national and regional level in Europe, as well as “spontaneous” activities undertaken by individuals. Even though we lack adequate statistical information, it is clear that the number of people undertaking placements abroad in Europe for an educational purpose is very big indeed. It is gradually becoming equally clear, however, that merely sending people abroad on placements will not necessarily bring about the benefits that we normally associate with this activity – especially when we target so called “disadvantaged groups”. *Quality* and *quality assurance* is therefore a pivotal concern in this context – how do we distinguish “good” from “not so good” (or even bad) mobility projects, and how can we ensure that the conditions for the acquisition of both cognitive and conative learning issues are optimal in a given project?

Our expectations of mobility

Basically, we perceive an artifact as being “of quality” when it lives up to our expectation of it. But what precisely is it that we expect from placements abroad? An analysis of policy papers and other documents concerning mobility⁷⁸ in recent times (i.e. from app. 1945 to the present time) identifies four different trends (or discourses) in the thinking on the issue of placements abroad undertaken for an educational purpose:

- The first discourse can be called the discourse of *intercultural understanding*. It has its roots in the time immediately after the Second World War, where sending young people abroad to other countries for a period of time was seen as a way of creating an understanding between the new generations of previously warring countries that would make them impervious to nationalistic propaganda and prevent new conflicts from breaking out. A prominent bi-national example of this are the exchange activities of the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ/DFJW), a bi-national organisation set up in 1963 with the express purpose of working from increased understanding between the two countries through the means of youth exchange.

- The second discourse is linked to the idea of *free movement of workers* within Europe as expressed in the original Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Communities in 1957. It was seen as essential for the economy of Europe that workers could move freely across borders to alleviate skills shortages and escape situations of unemployment. Mobility of young people is seen as way of preparing the labour force for a future where careers are pursued across borders. The first mobility programme of the European Economic Communities - the so called “Young Workers Exchange Programme” - was

⁷⁸ The following bases itself on the analyses undertaken by Kristensen (2004)

created with Article 51 of the Treaty of Rome and put into operation in 1964 (i.e. over 20 years before the much more known Erasmus programme) with exactly this rationale.

- The third discourse arises from the notion of *internationalisation of education and training in Europe*, and of *Europe as a single market*. Citizens of Europe should be equipped with the skills to operate within the context of a internationalised economy; i.e. they should possess foreign language proficiency and intercultural competence⁷⁹, which they can acquire through participation in mobility activities. An exponent of this line of thought is the Petra programme of the European Economic Communities 1987 – 1995 (Petra = Partnerships in Education and TRaining).

- The fourth discourse is set in a context of educational reform, and sees transnational mobility *as a method for the acquisition of so called “key skills” and improvement of employability*. Key skills (also known as “transversal skills”, “key skills” or “new basic skills”) are needed in the “knowledge economy” which is brought about by globalisation and the rapid rate of technological development. Participation in a mobility project – so runs this discourse - will enable individuals to cope with change, and should therefore be included in the curricula of education and training. This is a new line of thinking that has become especially prevalent since the time of the Lisbon Declaration (2000).

There is, of course, a distinct temporal (vertical) progression in the four discourses, but it must be underlined that it is not a matter of one taking over after the other with the passing of time. Rather, they are all four “live” and are used as the rationale for mobility activities today. Neither are they mutually exclusive – in fact, in many documents they are seen to appear side by side as equally valid justifications for mobility. In the Work Programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe⁸⁰ (objective 3.4) it is thus stated that “Mobility helps to promote the feeling of belonging to Europe, the development of European awareness, and the emergence of European citizenship. It allows young people to improve their personal skills and employability, and offers trainers the chance to broaden their experience and enhance their skills”. There is also a *horizontal* aspect to these four discourses, however, in the sense that their relative importance not only varies with time, but also with the educational setting in which the activity is set, and the target group it caters for.

Even though these four discourses are not mutually exclusive and share what we may call short-term cognitive learning goals⁸¹, they nevertheless have different impacts on concrete activities. Firstly, the normative standpoint they each represent (“why we *really* do this”) often means that certain aspects of practice are emphasized at the expense of others. Secondly, there is a degree of compartmentalisation between the discourses that often prevents the transfer of experience from practitioners operating within the ideology of different discourses. In order to understand the historical development of transnational placement activities in Europe, an insight into the differences between these discourses is therefore indispensable. In an overall context of quality and quality assurance, however, all we can do is to take note of their existence as co-ordinate elements in an overall perception of what transnational mobility (placements abroad) should do. Perceived “quality in mobility”, then, is when activities are seen as bringing about intercultural understanding, European labour market mobility, international skills in the labour force, and a capacity for dealing with change. But to what extent is this perception of quality backed up (“explained”) by research?

⁷⁹ Intercultural competence has been defined for the purposes of this study as “the ability to interact constructively with persons with another cultural background on the basis of a perception cultural differences and similarities” – i.e. a practical, operational skill. It is thus different from “international understanding”, which denotes an idealistic attitude.

⁸⁰ Official Journal of the European Communities C50 of 23 February, p. 1

⁸¹ They are all concerned with the acquiring foreign language proficiency, knowledge about other cultures/countries and issues of personal development. Where they differ is in the long-term goals – why it ultimately is important that we learn those skills.

Our knowledge base on mobility

In the framework of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) a survey was undertaken in the years 2000-2002 on the use of transnational mobility (with an emphasis on placements) in the context of VET. The survey covered all the present 15 Member States of the European Union, plus Norway and Iceland⁸². Part of this survey (which was carried out by national experts in each Member State) was concerned with scientific studies and evaluations of mobility activities, and aimed at creating an overview of research (and in particular evaluative research) of transnational mobility. To complement the national studies, a similar survey of evaluative research undertaken at European level was carried out by CEDEFOP. Even though the survey mainly was concerned with placements and VET, an effort was made to look into similar work in the field of youth and higher education with a view to identify findings here that could serve as inspiration for the VET-field. The findings of these surveys did not testify to a very great deal of evaluative activity being carried out. In particular evaluations based on scientific criteria are few and far between, and what we have is mostly so called summative evaluations carried out to ensure accountability in programme administration and/or to legitimate programme activities. There is thus very little research-based evidence to underpin the discourses with facts⁸³, and to a certain extent it seems justified to say that our conception of what transnational mobility can do is closer to wishful thinking than to knowledge.

This lack of knowledge is also mirrored in our understanding of how learning in mobility takes place. If we *a priori* assume that participation in a transnational mobility project does bring about the outcomes we have described, how is it precisely that this happens? Could we possibly emulate these conditions in other contexts (e.g. at home) and thereby bring about this learning in a more cost-effective way? With the exception of the youth field, there is actually not any detailed notion of how it is that we learn in transnational mobility projects. A very indicative metaphor is sometimes used – namely that of mobility as a “magic box”. Participants in mobility projects enter the magic box and come out again transformed, but no-one really knows what it is that has happened inside the box to effect this transformation. In tandem with this metaphor of the “magic box” goes a preoccupation with numbers as the most important success criteria for mobility programmes. In programme evaluations and reports, quantity has over the years been foregrounded as almost the sole indicator for the achievements of mobility programmes (see e.g. Deloitte and Touche, 2001). But numbers can in themselves not serve as justification for the programmes. The important thing cannot be that 1,000, 10,000 or 100,000 people went abroad as part of programme activities and spent a period of time on a placement, in an educational establishment or with peer groups in youth organisations. The important thing must necessarily be what they brought home with them in terms of learning that can enable them to function better in working life, in society and in their personal life.

If we want to obtain a deeper understanding of how learning in a transnational placement project takes place, we have relatively little material to go by⁸⁴. Evaluations and research projects looking at the learning element in transnational mobility projects are very rare, and there is not a “community of practice” of researchers in Europe, which can ensure that results from one study are taken into account and further developed in the next⁸⁵. The isolated studies and evaluations therefore often seem to be “reinventing the wheel” rather than taking the field a step further. What we do have, however, are many so called “examples of good (or even best) practice” – examples of projects or programmes, selected at

⁸² The individual national surveys have not been published. Results of the analysis of these are included in Kristensen (2004).

⁸³ A very extensive longitudinal study of former Erasmus students carried out by Teichler and Maiworm (1994) actually seems to indicate that student who have been abroad during their studies are not pursuing their career abroad afterwards in numbers that are significantly higher than those whose study period did not include a mobility experience. A smaller, qualitative study (Stahl and Kalchschmid, 2000) of a group of German apprentices going abroad on a 3-week placement does similarly not show any significant gains in terms of intercultural understanding.

⁸⁴ Excepting, again the youth field,, where extensive research and development activities have taken place. However, these activities (“youth exchanges”) are not carried out as placements, but as different kinds of encounters.

⁸⁵ See Kristensen, 2004

European or national level, which are seen as successful and held forward for emulation by others. Generally, however, these “examples of good practice” are selected according to an unspecified perception of their success rather than on the basis of transparent and transferable criteria. What they can tell us about, therefore, is what worked for a particular group at a particular moment in time and under particular circumstances; but not whether the project/programme contains elements that can be seen as generally conducive towards better outcomes in terms of learning in mobility projects⁸⁶.

If we want to get a clearer understanding of how learning in mobility projects take place, the inductive approach – trying to formulate general rules or guidelines from the study of empirical material – is therefore not going to be very productive, unless we have the resources to undertake the necessary field research as part of the study. We must therefore adopt a deductive approach – going from the general to the particular. In this case it means applying selected theories of learning to the phenomenon of educational mobility, and trying to deduce rationally from this what the elements are that are conducive towards the kind of learning that we assume take place. Using this approach must necessarily make the undertaking somewhat speculative, and a more correct scientific procedure would involve combining the inductive and deductive approaches in a fruitful interplay. The present study is mainly explorative in nature, however, and ideally the theorization in the following should be validated by appropriate empirical work before it can lay claim to broader acceptance.

Learning and transnational mobility projects

There are, of course, certain types of learning in mobility, which we do not need any help from high theory to explain. This goes for kind of educational mobility that takes place in the cases where the necessary learning facilities are simply not available in the participant’s home country. If a particular course or skill is only taught abroad, then a period of study or placement in the country in question is the only way to get to this learning opportunity, and it would seem futile to theorize further on this (unless, of course, one is interested in the “added value”). It would also seem evident that when the object is learning about a particular country (language and culture) a stay abroad is the most effective way of doing so – even though there certainly are elements which can respectively maximise and minimise the effectiveness of this kind of learning in connection with the stay.

If we look beyond these issues, however, the first question we must ask concerns the differences in learning environment: *what are the elements that we find in a stay abroad that we cannot emulate in the home environment?* Two immediately spring to mind:

The first is *geographical distance*. Participants in transnational mobility projects are generally a long way from home, from their family and friends and their usual surroundings. Of course, this can also happen within most countries in Europe – a person going from Flensburg to Munich in Germany has actually travelled a greater distance than if he had gone to Copenhagen in Denmark. Similarly, transnational mobility needs not necessarily involve great distances – if that same person had opted to go to Sønderborg in Denmark, he or she could comfortably go home in the evenings or the weekends, if he or she so wishes. *Generally*, however, participation in a transnational mobility project involves covering a considerable distance.

The second is *culture*. Stays abroad take place in the context of another national culture, and generally (but not always) involve having to communicate in a foreign language. But what exactly does “culture” mean? It is an elusive concept, and there are many definitions; but here we will use the one developed by the Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede, who sees culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from the other” (Hofstede, 1997: 180). Hofstede’s definition is a very broad one, and does not necessarily involve crossing borders. There may be different cultures within the same national parameter, and we may thus also talk about

⁸⁶ See Annex 1 of the study

organisational cultures, vocational cultures, or youth cultures (see Hebdige 1979) etc. Not all of these are, of course, as marked as the national cultures, and they are therefore sometimes termed “subcultures” in relation to this. Transnational mobility, however, by the very definition of the term, involves moving from one national culture to the other and back again.

The next question we must ask, once we have isolated the elements that distinguish transnational mobility from other learning contexts, concerns the relationship between these and the concept of learning. In other words: *what kind of learning is it that the combination of distance and culture in an educational context can give rise to?*

To answer this question, I will in the first instance focus on the concept of culture, or rather on the relationship between culture and learning. The way in which we acquire a culture is a process of learning, known by anthropologists as “enculturation”. A popular textbook on cultural anthropology thus states that “every person begins immediately, through a process of conscious and unconscious learning and interaction with others, to internalise, or incorporate, a cultural tradition through a process of enculturation” (Kottak, 1994: 40). This insight has been introduced into general learning theory by Lave and Wenger (1999) with the formula “legitimate peripheral participation”, which denotes the process whereby a person acquires a “culture” (e.g. a professional or vocational culture) by starting on the periphery and then gradually moving closer towards the centre of that culture as he or she “learns the trade” and is accepted by the “community of practice” here. What that person acquires, however, is not only a matter of technical skills – it is also a specific mindset (or, in Hofstede’s term, a mental programming); a way of looking at the world (or a specific aspect of it): in other words: a culture⁸⁷. Because this has to do with the way in which people form their identity, this process is also sometimes called “formative learning” or “socialisation”. This denotes the process whereby people gradually gravitate from the rim of the circle towards the centre and a position as full-fledged member of the particular community of practice (or “culture”). In terms of vocational cultures, this is the way in which a person comes to see him- or herself as e.g. a carpenter (as opposed to other trades). In terms of national cultures, this is the way in which a person gradually comes to see him- or herself self as “French” (as opposed to other nationalities).

The concept of enculturation or legitimate peripheral participation is ultimately a static form of learning. If we could remain isolated in small communities of practice that had little or no contact with the outside world, this might suffice for a lifetime. Once we get in contact with other communities of practice and other ways of doing things (either through mobility or through technological developments), however, our conception of normality is challenged. Sometimes this challenge is relatively limited in scope, or happens over a long period of time, and we may manage to incorporate it successfully into our own culture, in a process known as “acculturation”⁸⁸. At other times, however - and this is, according to Giddens (2000) increasingly the case in modernity - the challenge is so abrupt and so fundamental that we need to change the parameters of our worldview in order to survive in this new situation. This process is a learning process, which by Mezirow – to distinguish it from the formative learning in the enculturation process - has been called “transformative learning”, which he defines as “...the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true and justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 2000: 7-8). The way in which this learning happens has been described by Jarvis

⁸⁷ In their book “Situated learning” (1999) Lave and Wenger have illustrated this by including case studies not only of e.g. the traditional apprenticeship of tailors and meat-cutters, but also of e.g. how persons are integrated into Alcoholics Anonymous and given a new identity as teetotallers.

⁸⁸ “Acculturation is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups come into continuous firsthand contact; the original cultural patterns of either or both groups may be altered by this... We usually speak of acculturation when the contact is between nations or cultures; elements of the cultures change, but each group remains distinct” (Kottak, 1994: 56).

(1999: 38-39) as an experience of *disjuncture* (Mezirow: a disorienting dilemma) that gives rise to *reflection*, which in turn is transformed into *learning*; i.e. “a lasting capacity change” (cf. Illeris)⁸⁹. Transformative learning, then, can be described as the way in which we learn to cope with change. The actual learning process constitutes, in the words of Mezirow (2000: 8) a “constructive discourse” in which taken-for-granted attitudes are probed and, if necessary, changed through the dialogue with an outside influence.

We may, however, also choose to react differently to these challenges, or changes; namely by encapsulating them as specific to a particular time and or environment, or by rejecting them altogether. As a Dane, when faced with practices from different cultures, I may choose to react by retreating into what is commonly known as national chauvinism, and present a hostile attitude to any new elements coming from the outside. As a carpenter, I may choose to reject new methods of building and construction that are seen to impinge on my vocational culture (e.g. the use of gypsum boards) and refuse to have anything to do with them. This is typically the “gut reaction”, since a reorientation of culture and identity may be a painful process; but hardly neither an appropriate nor a constructive one in an era of globalisation⁹⁰ and unprecedented technological development. A capacity for transformative learning in the individuals is therefore essential both for the creation of a unified Europe as well as for survival on a turbulent labour market where job profiles may change drastically or disappear altogether almost overnight.

On the basis of this brief (and densely concentrated) excursion into learning theory, I will describe the core of learning in a transnational mobility project as a venture into transformative learning; a meeting with new and different practices to challenge the established “mental programming” and make them “more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective” (Mezirow). Two elements are significant here. Firstly, the fact that most participants in mobility projects are young people; i.e. in the age bracket roughly between 15 – 25. This means that their “mental programming” into a particular culture is not fully completed yet, and it may be assumed that they are more capable of transformation than somebody who with the passing of time has become too deeply entrenched in a particular worldview. Secondly, the element of *distance* comes in; the fact that participants are a long way from home, in an environment where they are not surrounded by the usual crowd of family, friends and colleagues. This can on the one hand be perceived as a weakness, since it means that their usual sources of advice and support are not there. On the other hand, however, it can be seen as an advantage, in that it makes the stay abroad a kind of “free space” (Schön 1987: 37), where they are free to experiment with aspects of their vocational and personal identity – partly because their stay is only a temporal one and partly because they are not being held in place by the expectations of the usual environment. They are to a much larger extent thrown back on their own resources than is the case in their every day life at home. Moreover, the problems they encounter are framed in a different cultural setting, and the usual problem solving tactics may therefore not suffice to cope. Participants are therefore forced to develop their self-reliance and their capacity for innovative thinking if they want to come to grips with these.

Learning in placements abroad

A cardinal point in any stay abroad is certainly the proximity to, and interaction with, the culture of the host country, in particular the mentality of the people living there. It may sound almost superfluous to say so, since one can hardly avoid coming into contact with the native population during a stay abroad (unless, of course, one stays in a “Club Med”-type holiday camp!), but it is nevertheless easy to imagine a situation where this interaction is limited to the extent that it restricts the learning potential severely.

⁸⁹ Another way of describing these two aspects of learning could be Piaget’s notion of assimilative and accommodative learning (Piaget, 2001), or the difference between Bateson’s steps 0 & 1, and 2 & 3 in his theory of learning (Bateson 2000).

⁹⁰ Defined by Giddens (2000: 64) as “...the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away, and vice versa”

Many stays abroad (especially in the field of VET and youth) are organised as group exchanges, and here it can be quite easy for a participant to “hide” in the group and avoid contact with the natives. Such a stay may quite possibly result in the opposite of what was intended (if one of the learning goals was increased intercultural understanding): that the participants come back with their prejudices confirmed rather than dispelled. Interaction with culture and mentality of the host country may, of course, come about all by itself in a surprisingly short time for participants who are active and extrovert. More timid and shy participants may need assistance in this process, which may be given both in the form of preparation before departure (enabling them to settle into the environment ore quickly) and as tutoring or mentoring⁹¹ during the stay abroad. Preparation before departure is especially important for short-term stays, where it is essential that interaction begin as soon as possible. It should not only encompass linguistic and cultural aspects, but also practical, pedagogical and psychological aspects so that the participants can devote as much of their energy as possible to the integration process. I will call this process *immersion*⁹².

The distance from home is, as we have seen, another important learning situation in connection with a stay abroad. This is what creates the “free space” where the participant can experiment with aspects of their personality without being held in their wont place by the expectations of the surroundings, and where they can act relatively free of constraints because the stay is a temporal one. Arguably more important, however, is the fact that participants here – and for some of them for the first time – are thrown back on their own resources, and will have to cope with new and unfamiliar problems by developing their initiative, innovative thinking, and self-reliance. This does not mean leaving them to their own devices – it is necessary to support participants with advice (in the shape of preparation before departure and mentoring during the stay) and logistical assistance and build a “scaffold” around them to ensure that challenges do not become overwhelming. Basicaly, however, participants must assume responsibility for their own situation (including the learning process), and I will therefore call this process *responsibilisation*⁹³.

It is important for the emergence of transformative learning that the participants enter into a “constructive dialogue” with the “disorienting dilemmas” (Jarvis’ *disjuncture*) they encounter. They must in other words relate to the environment they encounter in order for them to open up to and absorb new aspects and elements and thereby enrich their own culture. This will not happen if the culture they encounter is too distant – too exotic or too remote – from what is perceived as their own culture. Besides the geographical implications, this can in an educational context also mean a line of study or (for a placement) a vocation that is seen as having no relation with their wont study or chosen occupation. When this happens, there is a risk that the foreign experience will more or less exist in a parallel world to the “real” world of the participant, to which it is seen as having no relation. I will therefore call the process of securing a compatible match between the two worlds and creating the conditions for a constructive dialogue between these for *relativation*.

An equally vital ingredient in transformative learning is reflection. Reflection comes about as a result of an experience of disjuncture – but so does rejection. Especially in short-term stays (but by no means limited to these) the risk is always there that the participants will be overwhelmed by the experiences and choose to shut them out of their minds rather than engage in a constructive dialogue with them. Part of that risk may be eliminated with an adequate preparation, but the reflection process itself cannot be done in advance of the actual experience. It either happens in tandem with the experience (cf. Schön’s

⁹¹ “Tutoring” is here used to denote the assistance offered in an educational environment, whereas “mentoring” refers to the same type of assistance offered at a workplace during a placement abroad.

⁹² The description of the four learning situations (immersion, responsibilisation, relativation and perspectivation) are taken from Kristensen (2004) I have invented these terms for the purpose and they do not exist in any dictionary of the English language

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notion of “reflection-in-action”⁹⁴, or after the experience has taken place (cf. Schön: “post-mortem reflection”). This reflection may come about by itself, but since it is an arduous process, it may also quite easily be sidetracked and forgotten. Part of the pedagogical challenge when working with educational stays abroad must therefore be to create the necessary space and support for this reflection process to happen – both during the stay and after. Because the aim of this reflection is about getting the right perspective on the experiences (or challenges) encountered, I will call this process *perspectivation*.

It is evident from these four learning conditions that the term “transnational mobility project” should not be taken to mean only the time spent abroad. There is a period before departure (“preparation”) and a period after (which we may call “debriefing”) which is of crucial importance to the learning process as a whole. It is the contention – or hypothesis – of this paper that the learning specific to a transnational mobility projects happens only when these conditions are in place, and is directly proportional in outcome to the extent to which they are fulfilled. I will therefore argue that any quality criteria for transnational mobility projects undertaken with an educational purpose must build on these four learning situations.

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⁹⁴ Schön 1987: 22-40.

Impact study on Action 2 (European Voluntary Service) of the YOUTH Programme in Poland⁹⁵

The paper presents methodology and the evaluation results of Action 2 - **European Voluntary Service** the Youth Programme in the area of the Programme's impact on young people. The evaluation study has been commissioned by the Youth Programme National Agency in Poland. The order to conduct such evaluation study was formulated by the European Commission.

1. Evaluation

The basic purpose of the evaluation of the Youth Programme was to assess the extent to which the general objectives of the Youth Programme and the specific objectives of individual Actions have been achieved, and to analyse the impact of the Youth Programme on young people, organisations and broader social environment. Another purpose of the study was to formulate recommendations for the future editions of the Programme.

In order to investigate the impact of the Youth Programme on **young people** (youth) the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the estimated impact of the Youth Programme on young people with regard to its general and specific objectives?
2. What is the estimated impact of the Youth Programme on young people with regard to the annual priorities ?
3. What is the estimated impact of the Youth Programme on young people with regard to the multicultural learning, the acquisition of new social and personal abilities and skills enhancing personal development and employability of young people?
4. What is the estimated impact of the Youth Programme on young people with regard to an increased involvement of young people in social life and a decreased likelihood of being involved in risk behaviour?
5. What is the estimated impact of the Youth Programme on young people with regard to the access of all young people to the Youth Programme, organised, non-organised and with less opportunities?

⁹⁵ Based on: *Impact study on Actions 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the YOUTH Programme in Poland with regard to the preparation of the future generation of programmes in the field of education, training and youth. Final Report*, Polish Evaluation Society for Youth Programme National Agency, Foundation for the Development of the Educational System, Warsaw 2003

2. Methodology

The research methodology was based on a model qualitative approach. According to a fragment of the *Analysis of qualitative data* by Miles and Huberman⁹⁶ “Qualitative study emphasises the ‘experience gained’ and is recommendable in recognising meaning which people associate with events, processes and structures of their lives (...) and in connecting these types of meaning with the social reality which surrounds those people”. For the authors of this evaluation study to recognise “the experience gained” and to identify “its meaning” was the main task and the biggest challenge. In order to collect the fullest possible research material in each phase of research data collection triangulation was used.

Triangulation is a research strategy involving reciprocal verification of data on two levels of collecting thereof. On the level of methodologies triangulation involves the use of varied, mutually complementary methods of collecting data; in the reported research focused group interviews, individual in-depth interviews and document analysis were used. The assumed research strategy allowed for the collection of the fullest possible information and in particular it allowed for a reciprocal complementation and verification of the collected data. The other triangulation level is used on the level of information sources and involves the collecting of information from various groups of respondents. This makes it possible to obtain information on the given subject from persons who possibly might have a different point of view in reference to the matter in question. In the reported research opinions of the Youth NA staff (Director of the Agency and co-ordinators of individual Actions) and the Programme beneficiaries (co-ordinators of projects realised by organisations and project participants) were collected. Interviews were also made with representatives of local authorities from the areas where the evaluated organisations/groups operate, and with representatives of national authorities responsible for designing youth policy on national level. Another important source of information were factual data contained in documents (annual reports and reports from project implementation). During the research no quantitative data were collected; the researchers used the material collected earlier by the National Agency.

Expert knowledge in the area of evaluation and extensive professional experience enabled the researchers to confirm the efficiency of using triangulation in the research procedure. Thanks to this the researcher obtains full, rich and varied information broadened by the context of the role which the respondent plays in the initiative subject to evaluation. Such information is interpreted more easily and thus, is more useful in the decision making process.

In the research the following methods were used:

- **Individual in-depth interview** with the Director of the Youth National Agency;
- **Individual in-depth interviews** with co-ordinators of individual Actions in the Youth National Agency. Four persons were interviewed.
- Two **evaluation seminars** on national level, with Youth Programme participants. During the seminars the following research methods were used:
 - focused group interviews;
 - discussions;
 - group work.

The topics of individual sessions included:

1. Impact of the Youth Programme on participants and beneficiaries.
2. Impact of the Youth Programme on participating organisations and wider social community;
3. What did you like about the Youth Programme?

⁹⁶ Miles M.B., Huberman A.M., *Analiza danych jakościowych [Analysis of qualitative data]*, Trans Humana, Białystok 2000.

4. What changes would you suggest in relation to the Youth Programme?

A total of 94 people representing 58 organisations took part in two evaluation seminars which were organised on 23-24 April and 8-9 May 2003.

There were 50 people representing Action 1, **28 people representing Action 2**, 33 people – Action 3 and 18 people – Action 5. The total number of people representing individual Actions does not make the total number of participants because 20 people represented more than just one Action, and 5 people stated that they participated in all Actions of the Youth Programme. The research group consisted of 52 co-ordinators, 34 beneficiaries and 8 people who declared that they were both co-ordinators and beneficiaries.

- **Case studies** of 16 selected organisations participating in the Youth Programme. In the case studies the following procedures were applied:
 - document analysis (reports, reports from project implementation);
 - analysis of websites of studies organisations (whenever it was available);
 - individual in-depth interview with a president/leader of the studies organisations;
 - individual in-depth interview with a co-ordinator(-s) of projects implemented by the studied organisation;
 - focused interview / group interview with participants (beneficiaries) in projects implemented by the studied organisation;
 - individual in-depth interview with representatives of local authorities from the area where the organisation operates.

In total, in the case studies 150 people were interviewed.

A report from each case study contained the following information:

- Details on the organisation;
 - Activities realised in the organisation with the support from the Youth Programme (a brief description);
 - Impact of the Youth Programme on young people;
 - Impact of the Youth Programme on youth workers, organisations and local communities;
 - Impact of the Youth Programme on regional policy;
 - Recommendations for the future generations of the Programme;
 - Action-specific recommendations from the studies organisation;
 - Details of the study itself (date, details of the interviewees, etc.).
- **Individual in-depth interviews** with representatives of the Ministry of National Education and Sports and representatives from the Polish Parliament (a Parliamentary Subcommittee for Youth Affairs) responsible for designing youth policy. Three persons were interviewed.
 - **Document analysis** (annual reports, reports from project implementation submitted to the Youth NA, etc.).
 - A competition for an **essay – diary** on the topic “My adventure with the Young Programme”. Within the evaluation research a competition for a short essay-diary on the topic “My adventure with the Youth Programme” was scheduled. The most interesting papers were to be awarded and published on the NA’s website. The authors of the diaries were asked to reflect on the following questions:
 - How did you become a Youth Programme participant?
 - What were your expectation concerning your participation in the Programme?
 - In what activities did you participate?

- What is your personal benefit from your participation in the Programme?
- Has your participation in the Programme had any impact on your community in which you live, learn, act?
- Has anything changed in your life in relation to your participation in the Programme?

Apart from that, the authors were asked to provide the following details: age, status (pupil/student, young employee, unemployed), place of residence (region), living conditions.

Only 3 persons took part in the competition. Their works have been analysed as part of this report.

3. Results

3.1. Impact of the Youth Programme on young people (youth)

The Youth Programme has a particular impact on young people as far as a change of their attitude towards their community is concerned – young people are more encouraged to carry out activities for the benefit of their closes community and are more active in social life. Moreover, the stimulation of activity triggers greater creativity, with particular emphasis on the fact that most of the ideas come from youth themselves.

Participation in the Programme helps to develop attitudes of responsibility, enterprise, independence and resourcefulness. Young people become more self-confident and self-reliant. A change in attitudes also concerns the young people's relations with others – they become more open and tolerant. International projects are an opportunity for young people to see and understand the variety of European cultures, to overcome prejudice and stereotypes relating not only to foreigners but also to the disabled.

Participation in Action 2 – European Voluntary Service – apart from all of the advantages mentioned above, facilitates young people's social integration, encourages them to take active part in the life of their community. For many people their participation in a voluntary service project realised abroad is a chance to gain experience and knowledge which increase their employability and/or further educational opportunities sometimes in the country where the project was realised. Project implementation can be a basis for making international contacts and relations both in the private sphere and in professional areas. All project participants agree that voluntary work is a chance for intellectual development, gaining experience, learning foreign languages and cultures.

3.1.1. Encouragement of social integration and more active participation in community life

Both the volunteers themselves and the persons who trained them emphasised that participation in voluntary service projects develops one's sense of responsibility. For many participants it was a lesson on how to live in which they learnt to work with people and for people. On the other hand, it also offered them "satisfaction with being able to help others".

Participation in projects spurs young people into action that benefits their local communities. One of the volunteers said immediately after returning home: "Now I will help people from my town to do something interesting".

One of the examples of how to use ideas seen elsewhere is the work of a volunteer from Wroclaw who realised his Future Capital on a project that involved buying a climbing wall: "I saw something like this abroad. This was what the kids from our commune had been dreaming about". The commune authorities gave their recommendation for the implementation of this project, and the local school headmaster offered his support.

A co-ordinator of voluntary service projects from the Semper Avanti Association in Wroclaw said that voluntary service has changed the lives of the young people in her charge: "The well known pattern: school – work – home gets changed. Young people free themselves from the prevailing Polish cultural model, they realise that they can live differently. Volunteers do not think about getting a job because they know that there are other ways to personal fulfilment. When they return from voluntary service,

young people usually do not want to return to the well know path – their ideas of life and themselves have changed, they’ve become free”.

3.1.2. Improved employability

Participants of voluntary service projects have practically no professional experience, therefore the experience they acquire while working on EVS projects is perceived as a valuable item in the CV. For many participants, it is their very first work experience. One of the volunteers said that he wanted to work with young people after graduation and that he hoped that his experience as a volunteer would be an asset to the prospective employers. Another volunteer added that voluntary service is an investment for the future, it is not a single chance but something that opens more doors.

Many volunteers take part in projects immediately after finishing high school when they do not have any specific plans for the future. One of the volunteers said: This is a chance for those who don’t know what to do after leaving high school. Participation in voluntary service helps young people to define their interests more clearly, to choose a job or a field of studies and sometimes, as the volunteers themselves emphasise, simply to grow up. However, as one of the co-ordinators of voluntary service projects said, for many persons it is still too early to think about their future professional careers. They just expect that participation may be helpful later on.

Work as a volunteer inspires many participants to act after they have returned from the projects. One of the volunteers said: “Now I see new opportunities in Poland, of which I had no idea before”. Sometimes the experience of voluntary service influences the choice of a professional career and becomes a starting point for the fulfilment of one’s life plans. Some participants become more ambitious – they decide to finish school because they finally see a point in learning. Many of them go to study to the country where they have served as volunteers.

Nearly all volunteers who took part in this study emphasised that “voluntary service is a school of life”. One of the co-ordinators of voluntary service projects added: “When they start, people are unconfident, but when they come back, they are happy and strong”. This “personal strengthening” is also noted by a co-ordinator of voluntary service projects from the Semper Avanti Association in Wroclaw: “Volunteers return changed, with a new sense of being able to achieve something, with new self-confidence, with open minds and fresh ideas. Usually, those on short-term projects want to continue working on longer ones”.

For a great majority of voluntary service project participants, this is the very first experience of professional work and the first opportunity to acquire specific skills. One of the volunteers said that “this was useful pleasure”. Others saw their participation as a chance to test themselves or to get practical experience that they had no opportunity to earn before.

Some volunteers think about realising their Future Capitals. For example, one of the volunteers used his to make a video documentary on voluntary service which now serves as training material on voluntary service and is used by his sending organisation.

However, not all volunteers decide to realise their Future Capitals because, as they say: “We are not really able to use it – it is difficult to transform dreams into a project”.

3.1.3. Intellectual development, experience, foreign language skills and getting to know other cultures

Respondents named the possibility “to acquire experience in interpersonal contacts” as one of the main benefits to be derived from participation in EVS projects. These projects usually involve intensive

interaction and many emotional experiences. They also afford an opportunity to get to know different ways of thinking, opinions and lifestyles. One of the volunteers said: “When choosing a project, you have to be aware that you will get in contact with different people, and not all of them will be clean and perfumed. These people live differently, have different upbringing systems and different lifestyles. Whatever you say, it is an encounter of different cultures, which I had an opportunity to experience. You’ve got to remember that in order to understand the other side you always have to choose dialogue! While in Italy, I frequently thought in my Polish terms and I behaved according to my Polish upbringing. I forgot that what is “normal” for me is not necessary as “normal” for them, and vice versa! That’s why you must not forget that you are in a different country and a different culture, and dialogue is the only way to go!”

Volunteers emphasise the educational aspect of their trips, the fact that they “expand the horizons of your mind”. This is how one of the volunteers summed this up: “You get to a higher intellectual level”. Working in one of the EU countries is also an opportunity to learn about the EU procedures from the practical side. One of the volunteers stressed: “I moved from [European studies] theory to practice”.

The main reasons why many volunteers choose to participate in EVS projects is to get to know other countries. This stems from the conviction that one can truly get to know a country and its people only by staying with them for a long time and through ordinary everyday interaction. This is what one of the volunteers said shortly after she returned from a long-term project in Italy: “I have always wanted to spend a longer period abroad, and I wanted this for the cultural experience that’s deeper than what tourist trips could offer”. All participants agreed that this was indeed “a cultural experience” which let them get to know a country “truly” “by becoming familiar with the mentality of its people, their habits, their greetings, their meals...”

For all volunteers, on both short-term and long-term projects, voluntary service is a perfect occasion to learn foreign languages in the “practical dimension”. This is true “breaking down of language barriers” because the interaction is focused on “communication” and not necessarily on “grammatical correctness”. Communication is the winner because, as the volunteers said: “One learns to use a language, to handle it”. Another volunteer added: “This doesn’t compare to any school”.

4. Recommendations for future generation of programmes

4.1. More precise rules of what voluntary service is

In the context of Action 2 the question of Youth Programme priorities comes to the fore once again. Some of the respondents doubt if they are actually applied to the selection of participants: “there are some priorities but in the end the best candidates are selected anyway, that is those who speak foreign languages and have good PC skills”. One of the co-ordinators said: “there is a priority but it’s difficult to put in practice because there is no money for youth training and preparation”. Considering this, the respondents suggest that the priorities be set “in a more reasonable way”.

The problem has been identified by the National Agency as well. According to the Action co-ordinator the priority calling for including youth with less opportunities “sometimes has a reverse effect on us as Programme managers because it is us who convince sending organisations: please, do not send AISEC people, a student from Warsaw who completed a traineeship or a course abroad is not a good candidate for a volunteer, he does not fit in this Programme. In response they begin to promote young people from broken families from regions with lots of former state-owned farms, want to send them as volunteers and search for suitable projects. So who do you think would be a better candidate from the point of view of hosting organisations? Surely, the one who is experienced and speaks foreign languages. So, the communication between sending and hosting organisations becomes difficult because it is difficult to find a hosting project suitable for youth with less opportunities (...) and it is the hosting organisations that select volunteers”.

4.2. Better control over project implementation

According to some co-ordinators and also some volunteers, there should be better control over the implementation of voluntary service projects. It happens that organisations treat their volunteers as cheap man power and full-time employees. In such situations the volunteers' possibilities to realise project objectives are limited.

There also should be better control over hosting organisations because sometimes volunteers are not provided with any assistance, there was a case when a volunteers had nowhere to stay. A representative of a sending organisation said: "such control should be really well-organised and efficient. Right now even negative evaluation reports have no impact on eliminating an unreliable organisation from the list of potential project partners".

On the other hand, it also important to increase the scope of responsibility of hosted volunteers "because now they can withdraw from the project without taking consequences of it". To prevent this, an introduction of a legally binding contract and a money deposit requirement was proposed in relation to volunteers, "which would be a guarantee that the volunteer would not withdraw from the project just before it starts". One of the organisations thought it would be advisable to introduce a possibility to "replace" one volunteer with another within the same contract, "whenever the volunteer is not suitable for the project".

4.3. More homogenous rules of approving projects by National Agencies in different countries

According to voluntary service project participants the National Agencies from different countries should elaborate common standards of priorities. In Action 2 involving exchange of volunteers the general Youth Programme priorities should be compatible. A volunteer's participation in a project should be approved and monitored by both national agencies: the sending and the hosting one. Sometimes it happens that the sending agency approves the application, but the hosting agency rejects it. This makes it impossible to send another volunteer in the same period of time. The Programme should contain an action scheme to prevent such situations. One of the proposed solutions included an option where an application is approved by the hosting agency and automatically the sending agency pays out a grant for the volunteer's travel to the place of project implementation.

4.4. Better preparation of volunteers before their departure

According to representatives of several organisations, it is necessary to improve the process of preparing the volunteer to participate in the project. In their opinion, preparatory visits should be available to all volunteers who are to participate in long-term projects, not only to disabled ones.

A representative of an organisation which is very active in the field of EVS said that the National Agency should drop the exclusive responsibility to organise training events for volunteers and delegate some tasks to its Regional Centres.

Apart from that, it is advisable to consider a prolongation of the allowed age limit relating to voluntary service participants (up to 26 years) so that young people could be able to participate in projects after their graduation from a university instead of before or during the studies.

4.5. More support in formal matters relating to the volunteer's departure

Sometimes it takes a long time before the selection committee takes its decision whether to approve or reject the project and sometimes the volunteer receives the notice of the approval of his participation in the project much too late. This results in a situation where a volunteer travels without a visa because there was too little time to arrange it and then he has to travel back home or prolong his visa, which in the end increases the project costs.

4.6. Updating the project data base

Representatives of organisations often complained about the out-of-date information available on the "SOS for EVS" website.

The data base should also contain more detailed project descriptions.

Chiara Pace

1. The United Nations Volunteers Programme

Volunteering brings benefits to both society at-large and the individual volunteer. It makes important contributions, economically as well as socially. It contributes to a more cohesive society by building trust and reciprocity among citizens. Administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the United Nations organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers.

Since starting operations in 1971, the Bonn-based UNV programme has mobilized some 40,000 mid-career professionals to serve the causes of peace and development. In 2003, over 5,600 UN Volunteers, representing 162 nationalities, served in 144 countries. Reaffirming the programme's commitment to promoting South-South cooperation, the vast majority (72 per cent) of UN Volunteers are nationals of developing countries who make important and lasting contributions to the global effort to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015.

They support the activities of UN agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in key areas such as poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and the environment, crisis prevention and recovery and HIV/AIDS. In addition to sharing technical expertise, UN Volunteers demonstrate commitment and solidarity in promoting the ideals of volunteerism by often working in their spare time with communities in activities ranging from renovating classrooms and hospital wards, to building wells and distributing clothes to the needy.

In promoting volunteerism, UNV in recent years has launched a number of initiatives expanding opportunities for people to volunteer: UN Volunteers are helping many governments set up national volunteering programmes and are strengthening the capacities of volunteer involving organizations and volunteer networks.

Emerging from the Millennium Summit, UNV has established a university volunteer network in which students in IT support institutions, communities and

individuals in developing countries in strengthening their computer skills, building databases and web sites and repairing broken computers.

The Online Volunteering Service, managed by UNV, has opened up new possibilities for individuals to contribute their skills and time direct from their home or office. Since its launch in 2000, more than 12,000 applicants have offered their services online, over 45 per cent are nationals of developing and countries in economic transition, representing an important development in South-South cooperation. The service also supports organizational capacity building by providing advice and resources in areas such as setting up online discussion groups and best practices in online volunteer management.

Promoting corporate social responsibility through volunteerism, UNV works with the private sector to create opportunities for employees to volunteer in development initiatives. UNV and the New Academy of Business conducted a pilot research project in seven developing countries to find innovative ways to identify and involve transnational corporations and national companies in development activities.

Further advancing the momentum gained during the International Year of Volunteers (IYV), UNV continues to build on pro-volunteerism partnerships for global outreach with the International Business Leaders Forum, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, CIVICUS and the International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE). Based on

the demand from partners to maintain a resource for networking and dissemination of information relating to volunteerism, UNV launched the WorldVolunteerWeb, which has developed into an inclusive and global volunteer information portal.

Agreed by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, the Millennium Development Goals are a set of measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, Illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. They further serve as a framework for governments, the entire UN system, civil society, the private sector, media and academia to work coherently toward a common end in the immediate future.

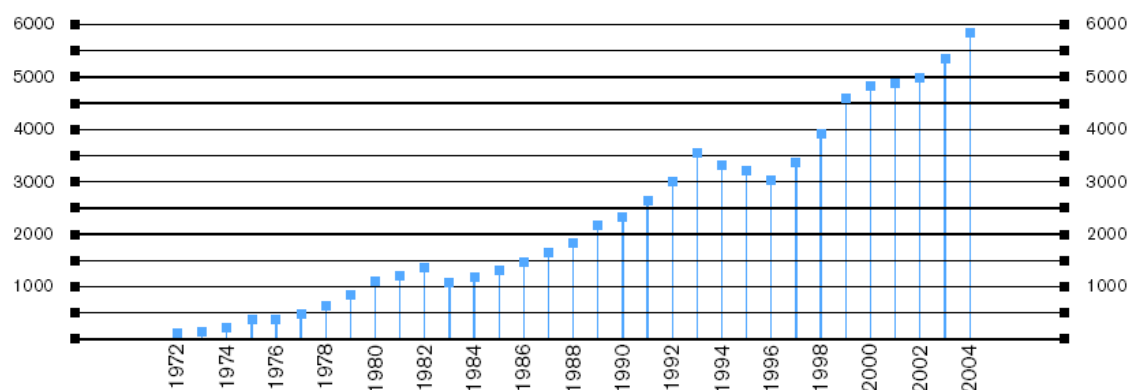
2. Painting by numbers: UN Volunteers statistics

Total No. of assignments in 2003/2004	5,832	
Total No. of individual UNVs	5,635	
International UNV assignments	3,573	61 %
National UNV assignments	2,259	39 %
Countries of assignments	144	
Countries of origin	162	
from developing countries		72 %
from industrialized countries		28 %
Male		63 %
Female		37 %
Assignments by region		
Africa		41 %
Arab States		7 %
Asia and the Pacific		25 %
Europe, CIS and Baltic countries		12 %
The Americas and the Caribbean		15 %
UNV Activities		
Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty		34 %
Forstering democratic governance		24 %
Crisis prevention and recovery		42 %
Number of UNV assignments with main partners		

United Nations	1,340	
UNHCR	630	
WFP	214	
UNOPS	118	
UNFPA	70	
UNICEF	69	
Others	143	

2.1. Growth of the UNV programme

Growth of the UNV Programme, 1972–2004



2.2. UNV donors

Cash contributions to UNV in 2003 (Thousands of US\$)

Donor Countries	Special Voluntary Fund	Other resources*		Total
		Government	Other	
Australia	-	-	27.0	27.0
Austria	61.5	-	-	61.5
Belgium**	309.0	1,243.5	-	1,552.5
Botswana	6.2	-	-	6.2
Canada	71.9	-	-	71.9
China	30.0	-	-	30.0
Cyprus	3.8	-	-	3.8
Czech Republic	42.4	112.3	-	154.7
Denmark	-	48.5	726.8	775.3
Finland	-	1,789.6	-	1,789.6
France	117.8	161.8	-	279.6
Germany	2,059.8	261.4	245.8	2,567.0
India	15.0	-	-	15.0
Ireland**	848.6	103.0	1,118.5	2,070.1
Israel	5.0	-	-	5.0
Italy	177.1	1,593.4	-	1,770.5
Japan	-	1,898.8	724.1	2,622.9
Korea	-	100.0	-	100.0
Luxembourg	-	75.5	-	75.5
Netherlands	-	-	257.4	257.4
Norway	-	127.9	-	127.9
Panama	0.5	-	-	0.5
Spain	-	1,048.1	-	1,048.1
Sweden	378.1	40.4	197.5	616.0
Switzerland**	441.2	167.9	-	609.1
Syria	1.4	-	-	1.4
Thailand	1.2	-	-	1.2
USA	100.0	-	-	100.0
Subtotal countries	4,670.5	8,772.1	3,297.1	16,739.7

* Other resources comprise trust funds, full funding of UNV assignments and cost sharing

** Includes contributions received in 2004 for 2003

Donor Other contributors	Special Voluntary Fund	Other resources*		Total
		Government	Other	
Cisco	-	-	210.0	210.0
City of Bonn, Germany	-	-	6.0	6.0
International Vaccine Institute	-	-	4.8	4.8
International Youth Foundation	-	-	8.6	8.6
World Bank	-	-	151.5	151.5
Others	-	-	18.8	18.8
Subtotal other contributors	-	-	399.7	399.7

* Other resources comprise trust funds, full funding of UNV assignments and cost sharing

Donor	Special Voluntary Fund	Other resources*	Total
United Nations System**		Government Other	
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation	–	– 221.7	221.7
UNOPS – United Nations Office for Project Services	–	– 168.2	168.2
UNDCP – United Nations Drug Control Programme	–	– 323.5	323.5
UNDP*** – United Nations Development Programme	–	– 34,514.5	34,514.5
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation	–	– 64.4	64.4
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund	–	– 1,669.9	1,669.9
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	–	– 12,334.6	12,334.6
UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund	–	– 1,593.9	1,593.9
United Nations (Memoranda of Understanding)	–	– 35,276.8	35,276.8
WFP – World Food Programme	–	– 4,828.6	4,828.6
WHO – World Health Organization	–	– 170.4	170.4
Others	–	– 637.7	637.7
Subtotal United Nations Systems	–	– 91,804.2	91,804.2
Total contributions before interest	4,670.0	8,772.1 95,501.0	108,943.6

Donor	Special Voluntary Fund	Other resources*	Total
Other income		Government Other	
Interest and other income	705.9	– 256.2	962.1
Income from external costs****	3,714.7	– –	3,714.7
Reimbursable support service	–	– 3,299.1	3,299.1
Subtotal other income	4,420.6	– 3,555.3	7,975.9
Total income including interest	9,091.1	8,772.1 99,056.3	116,919.5

* Other resources comprise trust funds, full funding of UNV assignments and cost sharing

** Includes contributions received in 2004 for 2003

*** Includes Biennial Support Budget from UNDP

**** Income from external cost includes amounts for 2002

3. UN Volunteers and Youth

In recognition of the particular role that youth play in shaping the development of their societies and the need to harness this potential, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme with its partners has launched pilot projects to explore ways in which, by building on and promoting a culture of volunteerism, youth can be mobilized and engaged in activities at the community, regional and national level.

- In Burkina Faso, UN Volunteers have partnered with youth associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Government to further the social development of the country's marginalized youth. Involving the participation of 1,200 young people and their parents, the project works with uneducated and under-education youth, street children, orphans, disabled youth, unemployed teenagers, single mothers and young victims of abuse. UN Volunteers placed in counselling centres provide services to the youth participants and their parents in a number of areas, including literacy training, employability skills, money management and counselling. The UN Volunteers also focus on promoting volunteerism and creating information networks on the prevention of child exploitation and reduction of young women's susceptibility to sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.
- In 1997, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNV teamed up with the South Africa Student Volunteer Organization (SASVO) to assist the organization in building its operational capacity to expand its activities throughout South Africa and in neighbouring countries. Through this initiative, SASVO developed strong networks and the capacity to mobilize volunteers. It engaged more than 8,000 student volunteers to participate in some 215

community-based projects through its various volunteer modalities such as the vacation work camps, the international volunteer exchange programme and the short- and long-term internship programme. Specific key achievements include building 204 classrooms, renovating 25 schools and establishing more than 15 vegetable gardens and 11 playgrounds. UNDP/UNV, SASVO and its implementing partners have recently signed a new three-year agreement to further strengthen SASVO's volunteer management capacity, increase the profile of the organization and assist in developing training materials in the relevant thematic areas of SASVO's interventions in agriculture, HIV/AIDS and social infrastructure.

- In Azerbaijan, UNV, the Ministry of Youth, the Baku Executive Power, the National Youth Council and UNDP are working together to provide increased opportunities for young people to contribute to their own and their communities' development. Following a massive awareness-raising campaign launched in NGO resource centres, universities and the city of Baku itself, more than 3000 young people and students volunteered their services. The selected volunteers support a range of activities including with disabled people, refugees, orphans, street children as well as in health care and environmental projects. Important networks have also been established among youth organizations, voluntary organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs). In line with government policy, the project has extended its networks to NGOs in the rural areas.

4. UNV and volunteerism in the Balkans

UN Volunteers firmly established itself in the Balkans between 1996 (**Bosnia & Herzegovina**), 1999 (**Kosovo**) and 2001 (**Albania**) in an effort to build on the respective governments growing openness towards democratic governance and civic engagement and tap into the growing potential for - together with UNDP - working with civil society and the Government in promoting volunteering for development in the Balkans.

Although volunteering has a long tradition in all countries of the region, it takes different forms and meanings in different settings. The main reason for this is a strong influence of the history, politics, religion and culture. People of the region used to have a strong will and desire to help other people in need, even if they had to sacrifice their own interests. However, the traditionally positive concept of volunteerism was weakened under the socialist/communist regime and the free will to volunteer (to help and to service) was replaced by "coercive volunteerism". While this period was characterized by high rates of involvement of people of all generations, particularly youth, in various forms of voluntary work, it has also created a negative image of the concept. The emergence of active civil society

organisations however, particularly over the last decade, is gradually restoring the traditional forms of volunteerism to its rightful position. Recent research initiatives on volunteerism carried out in Albania and BiH intended to identify the actual situation of volunteerism and its impact on development of the respective countries, as well as challenges and opportunities to be further addressed for the promotion of volunteerism. The results of these research initiatives pointed out that different NGOs are promoting volunteerism through activities to assist others, and that people who are starting to value volunteerism as a very important tool to build a better world, actually see the need for change and believe they can make a difference.

The paramount recommendation of both research initiatives is to consolidate ongoing volunteering efforts and raise awareness on volunteerism, emphasising youth volunteering in particular. More efforts should be made to promote and expand youth participation through public awareness campaigns that

demonstrate the work already done. Research results also highlighted that in order to increase the volume of volunteering at the community level, it is necessary to explain and clarify the concept of volunteerism among people in general and in particular targeting families with low and very low levels of education, bearing in mind that they are often the main beneficiaries of volunteer activities.

4.1. UNV Programme in Bosnia & Herzegovina: the Integrated Youth Programme

In 1976 the UN General Assembly assigned a special mandate to UNV to be a major operational arm of the UN in promoting youth participation in development. In BiH such goal is targeted through the Integrated Youth Programme (IYP) implemented by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Programme's main aim is to promote, support, and complement efforts towards **empowerment of young people** in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in such way contribute to achievement of **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**. Furthermore, the Programme aims at taking proactive steps in promotion and implementation of the **Youth Policy** at all levels.

The programme's primary objective is to work with **young individuals, local youth groups and organisations** who are in position to empower other members of the community, schools and Youth organisations through their example, toward the restoration of their community, and who receive project training and capital grant support via the Confidence and Capacity Building Fund. The indirect beneficiaries are the local communities and population in general that benefit from the programme's empowerment measures. In such way, the 'critical mass' of youth leaders-agents of change will be assembled to be a driving force for development process with their knowledge, strength and dedication.

As the IYP is engaged in identifying the areas where it has a comparative advantage and explicitly articulating a strategy attempting to address key issues related to peace building, specific efforts are made to focus on hard-line areas still characterized by tension between the different ethnic groups. Selection of the programme's target areas/municipalities is based on the following criteria: hard-line areas, no or minimal presence of other international or local agencies, municipality's boundary lines, and return areas. Currently, the programme is implemented in 15 municipalities in both entities including the Brčko District. Programme activities are related to the level of youth activity in target areas and are organized in ascending order in relation to the capability of the local NGOs, with the overall objective of creation of a sustainable and powerful youth individuals and organisations.

Beside the overall objective of **empowering young people to take a proactive role in the development and decision-making processes at all levels of the BiH society**, there are some specific sub specific and objectives such as:

- **Capacity Building for Youth:** Provide support - knowledge - skills and tools - material instruments - Youth Volunteers Centers and project grants - to youth groups and associations enabling them to have a leading role in the local development of a strong civil society, to generate ideas and 'handle them', to face challenges, to operate in network and partnership with institutions and other national and/or international organisations, as well as to understand the rights and responsibilities and full meaning of the active citizenship. This will include the following sub objectives:
 - Confidence Building
 - Capacity building of Youth Organisations
 - Establishment of Youth Centers
 - Local Economic Development among Youth

- Human Rights
- Media
- **Institutional Capacity Building:** Contribute to creation of a sustainable and coherent National Youth Policy and its further implementation by providing support, expertise, and technical support to all levels of government involved in these processes. The sub objectives included are:
 - Capacity building of the municipal level governance
 - Capacity building of the state level governance

Among the **expected results** we count:

- Young people empowered to take a proactive role in the respective communities
- Built capacity of respective youth organizations to design and implement activities and thus contribute to community development
- Youth Volunteer Centers (3-5) established
- Young people informed on the rights and responsibilities that go with active citizenship

Although people in BiH have witnessed many improvements during recent years, deep divisions between and amongst numerous communities still exist. The current Programme therefore will continue to strengthen the ongoing **confidence and peace building processes** in BiH. While maintaining its focus on youth, it will adopt a new approach in order to follow the trend of a smooth shift from “**post-war**” interventions to **development** program.

IYP is supported by UNV Special Voluntary Fund, UNDP BiH, Dutch Embassy of BiH and CIDA

4.2. UNV in Kosovo: the Volunteers for Peace Program

Kosovo today is in a period of delicate transition – politically, economically, and socially. The Provisional Institutions of Self-government are gradually assuming the considerable autonomy provided to them under Security Council Resolution

1244, while the economy is slowly shifting towards a free-market model. Socially, the controversial issue of returning and reintegrating ethnic minorities is of primary importance. Whilst easing overall, potential for violence and instability remains significant and the continuing outflow of minorities is further evidence for ongoing security uncertainties as well as poor development prospects. To some extent also, the legacy of the emergency phase has distorted expectations of international assistance; tensions are appearing between those who have received help and those who remain on waiting lists but whose needs at this stage, are unlikely to be met.

In addition, there is a very large, fairly well educated young population (54% of the population is under 25 years) with little or no employment opportunities in the short to medium terms. Unless their energy is positively channelled soon, there is the fear that an air of despondency and resignation may set in at best or at worst that they may resort to criminal or paramilitary activities in which Kosovo could easily become a breeding ground. A Kosovo-wide, community-based program is needed to harness this population and empower it to positively contribute to its own development process.

Given its past project experience in Kosovo and its regional presence UNDP-Kosovo is well placed to undertake such a community initiative; furthermore, UNDP has a worldwide network of 136 Country Offices to draw experience and lessons from. The Village Employment and Rehabilitation Program

(VERP) provides UNDP-Kosovo with a network of partners totaling more than 22,000, and reaches into the most rural and remote corners of the province. As the first program in Kosovo to utilize an inter-ethnic workforce, VERP provides a foundation of peace-building through local economic development and is knitting UNDP's ties with outlying communities. A second initiative involves the Kosovo Youth Network (KYN) that was formed through the Youth Post-Conflict Participation Program (YPCPP); and is composed of thousands of multi-ethnic

youth from over 100 organizations across Kosovo. The KYN is an invaluable tool through which youth can positively affect the development process. Other projects (such as the ongoing Housing Reconstruction Program) also provide strong networks of beneficiaries. The key is to now mobilize and synergize these networks in a creative and effective manner. This is precisely the aim of the Volunteers for Peace Program (V4P).

In Kosovo, the concept of National Volunteering outside the UN systems will be promoted on a large scale through the Volunteers for Peace Program. The strategy consists in harnessing the enthusiasm of young qualified nationals to serve as volunteers in their own country, and to establish volunteerism and self-help as a movement in Kosovo in support of social development and humanitarian efforts.

The V4P Program will primarily be a mobilizer of Kosovan youth and bring them together during participatory workshops and trainings in confidence-building, reconciliation, peaceful co-existence, and capacity-building, but also in professional know-how. The aim is to foster camaraderie and develop trust among participants by identifying common goals, accepting diversity and learning to appreciate each others' manifold interests and aspirations. V4Ps will thus reflect the ethnic landscape of Kosovo. The V4P program will promote "bottom-up" participatory culture at local level whilst stimulating and building new leadership capacity and contributing to ethnic and political tolerance. The program will include activities that require inter-ethnic collaboration, thus leading to longer-term confidence-building at the community level.

The V4P Program has been developed as a synthetic mechanism to achieve the following outputs:

- Support community-based activities;
- Facilitate networking & network exchange;
- Provide assistance in emergency situations;
- Promote peace-building & human rights;
- Assist with specialized technical support;
- Transfer technical skills;
- Mobilize local interest, input, and action on development through local initiatives;
- Increase ethnic & community interaction through resolution of common problems;
- Improve gender awareness through inclusive debate on local development action;
- Increase self-reliance in the quest to improve living conditions.

Among the other project component we have:

- **Establish a V4P framework & network:** Build an administrative, logistical & procedural system to oversee and deploy V4Ps efficiently and rapidly. Through community, media, UN agencies, web-based mechanisms, and V4P coordinators, establish a roster and a Kosovo-wide network of volunteers.
- **Build capacity of V4Ps:** V4Ps will undergo conflict-resolution, leadership, vocational, & other trainings in order to serve effectively the communities in which they work . The added benefit for the volunteers is professional qualification.

- **Mobilize volunteers for development interventions:** Identify opportunities for V4Ps and assign them to projects of local & international GOs & NGOs. The V4Ps will thus make crucial contributions to peace- & confidence-building, reconstruction, institution-building & community-development. Target: *800 volunteers Kosovo-wide*.
- **Establish the V4P program securely as a movement in Kosovo:** The Kosovo Youth Network will be supported and accompanied towards institutional maturity in order to eventually bear alone the responsibility for the V4P program and extend it into the future. Thus the program will eventually be fully run by Kosovars for Kosovars.

V4P is supported by UNV and UNDP Kosovo.

4.3. UNV in Albania: the Local Governance Programme

The Government of Albania's overall development objective is to strengthen the on-going process of decentralization and democratic system of local governance as the institutional basis for sustainable human development. The recently approved UNDP Local Governance Programme (LGP) is supporting the government in this process and will also be UNV's main partner in implementing this current project. This partnership will enable UNV to focus directly on the community based components (downstream) and indirectly on the policy support (upstream).

The UNV project, being an important component of the overall UNDP Support to Local Governance Programme will focus on four major outcomes: Training for policy development and partnership building at the central level; Co-ordination and institutional support structure at the regional level; Democratic governance

and development at municipal and commune levels; and Promotion of volunteerism to support social mobilization practices. The fact that the project is linked to the UNDP LGP responsible for supporting the process of decentralization through building capacities of local governments in Albania provides a unique opportunity and entry point for UNV to demonstrate volunteer roles and to promote volunteerism at local level in Albania.

The UN Volunteers' activities in this project are, from a broad prospective, different and even innovative. UNV will use the promotion of volunteerism to ensure the sustainability of the social mobilization process. UNV will be intervening in a complete process of building the institutional capacity of local authorities and enabling it to address the problems of these authorities to delivery services to poor people. The main fact in favour of the feasibility of this scheme is the near unanimous support that broadly exists for the decentralization process among all stakeholders, be it the government, Civil Society, decision makers, local community and the donor agencies. It is expected that experiences and lessons from the project will be replicated, where possible into future joint UNV/UNDP decentralization/local governance initiatives in the Balkans and elsewhere.

The immediate beneficiaries are the local authorities and local organizations, especially the most destitute ones in the three regions. At the regional level, there are the Regional Councils that represent the elected authorities. At the local level, the programme will support the municipalities and local authorities in strengthening their management and technical capabilities. As the first level of local governments, these institutions are directly responsible for local development. Besides these local governments bodies, this project will also work closely with community-based groups of men and women that will be formed as self-governing entities.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the proposed project will be the inhabitants of the most disadvantaged settlements in the three project areas, especially the low-income groups. The beneficiaries will be involved through discussions about the priorities in the CBOs and municipalities, and through the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities.

The main objective of the UNV project is to **support the commitment of the Government of Albania in strengthening the on-going process of decentralization and democratic system of local governance as the institutional basis for poverty alleviation and human security.**

This project proposes four main components:

1. **Policy Development and Partnership Building at the Central Level:** to support the Government in developing policies and partnership building, based on programme experience, to further strengthen the process of decentralisation and local governance.
2. **Democratic Local Governance: Institutional Support at the Regional Level:** to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Regional Councils, as the second level of local government, to increasingly manage central development functions and provide support services to the commune and municipal authorities.
3. **Democratic Local Governance and Development:** Support at the Commune and Municipal Level: to strengthen local self-governance systems at the municipality and commune levels as the entry point to enhanced poverty alleviation and increased human security.
4. **Promotion of volunteerism to support social mobilization practices:** to revitalize and strengthen the tradition of volunteerism in the three Regions of the project as an alternative action to promote sustainable social mobilization through the involvement of municipalities and communes.

LGP is supported by UNV Special Voluntary Fund and UNDP Albania.

5. RIVER SEE: Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reunion of SEE - UNV's Regional Initiative for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia

During the past decade, the SEE region has undergone a series of profound and dramatic changes that have radically altered its political, economic and social physiognomy. Years of transition and conflict have left it with a legacy of inadequate growth and declining living standards. Within the region, the economies have recovered only 75 percent of their pre-transition income levels. Over the past several years, growth has declined in aggregate, increasing the gap between these economies and the rest of Europe. More alarming is that living standards, social integration, inequality and unemployment have deteriorated. The poor economic performance can be attributed to the adverse initial conditions (unbalanced industrial structures, weak institutions and fragmented civil societies), as well as to the regional conflicts, inconsistent macroeconomic stabilization policies and weak structural reform policies (i.e. trade liberalization, privatization, social and environmental policies).

Although volunteering has a long tradition in all countries of the region, it takes different forms and meanings in different settings. The main reason for this is a strong influence of the history, politics, religion and culture.

People of the Balkan region used to have a strong will and desire to help other people in need, even if they had to sacrifice their own interests. However, the traditionally positive concept of volunteerism was weakened during the past decades and the free will to volunteer (to help and to service) was replaced by a volunteerism sometime felt as “coercive”. While this period was characterized by high rates of involvement of people of all generations, particularly youth, in various forms of voluntary work, this fact has also created, in some cases, an unenthusiastic image of the concept.

Regional co-operation is crucial for accelerating democratic and economic development as well as peace building in the region. However, such an approach requires reconciliation, confidence and a willingness to put past wrongs behind, and develop “habits of co-operation”.

The UNV RIVER SEE “*Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reunion of SEE*” launched in September 2003 and targeting Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro including UNMIK Kosovo aspires to formulate, prepare for and provide inputs to a wider UNV RIVER SEE to build up regional integration and social cohesion in the Balkans **by enhancing cross-border co-operation between civil society/volunteer** involving organisations and **individual/volunteers**.

The main aim of the UNV RIVER SEE **is to enhance mid-long term youth/voluntary exchanges** aiming at **strengthening networks** between civil society organizations in order to increase confidence and interaction between individuals, as well as to **develop capacity** through exchanges and joint activities.

Developing the capacities of large number of volunteers through exchanges of knowledge and experiences will aid capacity retention and add the multiplier effect to the initial capacity development. Furthermore, **by supporting cross-border cooperation**, networking and exchanges through volunteerism, *the UNV RIVER SEE will significantly contribute to confidence building and lasting peace in the Balkans region.*

Preparatory phase lasting six months, **will** contribute to a development of a sustainable volunteer support structure in the Balkans, especially **through the setting up of a relational/multilingual database** and **carrying out an in-depth field assessments** of Civil Society/Voluntary Involving Organizations and volunteers. Approximately **1500** Civil Society/Voluntary Involving Organisations and **3000 potential individuals/volunteers** are expected to be assessed and entered in above-mentioned database. The database will be continuously accessible from volunteers and organisations side after preparatory phase is completed. Web-accounts will allow for online-updates by organisations and volunteers. **Special focus** of preparatory phase is **to identify Implementing partner organisations (IPOs)** in all respective countries /targeted areas in the Balkans region **that will act as focal points in their countries/areas.**

Main expected outputs are:

social inclusion, volunteering and community development and cross-border cooperation promoted, confidence between individuals increased, capacity through joint activities developed, CSOs networks strengthened.

All this should contribute to secure lasting peace in the Balkans. Furthermore, in the mid term, the success of the initiative could contribute to design a new volunteer scheme to support CSOs active in MDGs achievement.

The initiative is also underway in collaboration with Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), OneWorld SEE (OWSEE), South East Europe Youth Network (SEEYN), Youth Communication Center BiH (YCC), Red Cross Albania Albanian (RCA), Albanian Youth Council (AYC), Care International (CI) and Balkan Youth Link (BYL). The initiative is going to be supported also by EU/EVS YOUTH Programme.

The UNV's strategy will be implemented in two phases:

- ◆ The objective of the six months long initial phase - *Building up regional integration and social cohesion in the Balkans* - is to contribute to strengthening networks between civil society organisations and to promote “relational volunteering” as a tool for increasing confidence and interaction between individuals, as well as a way to develop capacities through exchanges and joint activities. During this phase, an in-depth field assessment will be carried out, targeting as many grass-root organisations as possible and focusing in particular on those organisations that are not involved in or even informed about the existing cross-border opportunities.

The assessment should confirm that there is an interest in co-operation, networking and exchanges and that the ongoing initiatives and programmes, the way they are designed and implemented, are able to support only a small percentage of possible cross-border activities. More concretely, the assessment of volunteer involving organisations and individual volunteers will help to determine what are interest in and potentials of regional exchanges of volunteers. The result of the assessment will be a database containing information on volunteer involving organisations and individuals/volunteers willing to take part in the regional exchanges.

The assessment will also help not only to identify partner organisations to be involved as beneficiaries, but also to select and train some of them to become implementers of the next phase in each respective country. In this respect, a new partnership with VSO is being negotiated for the selection and training of focal point organisations. The implementation of this partnership will take place initially in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina and later on in the all targeted countries of the region. The UNV Country Offices in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are ready to carry out the assessment in their respective countries. As for the other countries of the region, UNV will undertake its assessment through networks of partners such as OneWorld and SEEYN, as well as by joining forces with UNDP in the eSEE ICT Sector Status Report.

The initial phase will also include the creation of a publication containing short presentations about selected partner organisations and cities/areas they operate in. This publication will be fashioned for each of the six participating countries and will be used as a promotional material. The initial phase will be concluded with a regional seminar where the results of the assessment, as well as the publications and the regional online forum on volunteering will be presented. By offering participants an opportunity to share their experiences and lessons learned, the seminar will stimulate a transfer of knowledge adapted to the specific situation of the region. The participants will also have an opportunity to touch upon the main challenges for the development of civil society in the region, including strengthening of networks of civil society organisations through the establishment of partnerships between civil society organisations in the region.

More precisely, the initial phase will encompass the following activities:

- (1) Preparation and distribution of questionnaires to volunteer involving organisations willing to host or send volunteers as well as to individuals/volunteers ready to take part in regional exchanges;
 - (2) Carrying out of a field assessment in each SEE country focussing on grass-root organisations failing to receive information on the existing programmes (Voluntary assistance demand and supply assessment at the regional level);
 - (3) Distribution of guidelines to partner organisations willing to prepare a short presentation about themselves and cities/areas they operate in;
 - (4) Creation of a database containing information on the organisations willing to take part in regional exchanges of volunteers;
 - (5) Setting up of a Regional Forum on Volunteering and separate heading enclosing up-to-date information on regional exchanges within the UNV Albania and BiH websites;
 - (6) Identification of a focal point volunteer involving organisation in all target countries;
 - (7) training of the focal point volunteer involving organisations from Albania and BiH;
 - (8) Co-ordination of the short presentations creation for each target country;
-
- (9) Selection and putting together the presentations about partner organisations and cities/areas they operate in;
 - (10) Distribution of the publications to various stakeholders increasing the knowledge about other cultures and reducing influence of prejudices;
 - (11) provision of support in establishing links and contacts;
 - (12) organisation of a regional seminar in Sarajevo or Tirana.
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- ◆ The second strategy phase, consisting of concrete exchanges of volunteers, will enhance capacity development and contribute to the confidence building at the regional level, thus leading to a greater cross-border cooperation and integration of the Balkan region. However, although the development of this phase will largely depend on the results of the assessment and future development of partnerships, these are some of possible approaches:
 - Direct financial support to the cross-border activities and regional exchanges of volunteers through the establishment of a specific UNV regional project.
 - Advocacy and lobbying for the establishment of a specific scheme supported by EU, building on the EVS (European Voluntary Service) mechanism and focusing on the SEE countries.
 - Support to the cross-border activities and regional exchanges of volunteers by setting up specific projects with some of the partners or by complementing the previously mentioned programmes.
 - Transfer of the database and all established structure to the implementing partners maintaining a role of external supervisor during the first six months following the assessment conclusion.

The direct beneficiaries of the UNV's initiative will be volunteers, or more precisely two types of volunteers: professionally qualified volunteers willing to engage in cross-border activities and youth with no substantial education or professional skills possessing a strong will to develop their own personal and professional capacities while engaging in regional exchanges. Furthermore, the beneficiaries will be hosting and sending volunteer involving organisations included in the exchange programme, civil society organisations, youth volunteer centres, as well as the participants in the other possible cross-border activities such as regional summer camps, seminars, etc.

The ultimate project beneficiaries will be all those communities members positively affected by the activities carried out within the regional exchanges, as well as residents of the six target countries who

will benefit from the enhanced efforts for capacity development and confidence building at the regional level.

The Preparatory Phase of RIVER SEE has been funded by UNV and by Swiss Govt.

Chiara PACE

Tirana, June 18th 2004

Voluntary service in social and political transformations of Europe during the last fifteen years.

The number of people who dedicate themselves to voluntary activities has increased a lot, especially in the last fifteen years. Every year new associations are instituted and old associations register a growth in new inscriptions. This phenomenon is related to the changes, produced in the society and with the transformations in the political and civil European dimension. The increase of voluntary activities and voluntary services is a complex issue and it has to be analyzed under several different points of view.

The experiences of voluntary service, observable today, have different aspects, and they represent a variegated universe. The development of voluntary service is a social fact, produced and modified by other social elements; whose growth depends on changes occurred in the civil society. Today the civil society is, in fact, dramatically different from the past and the biggest variation regards the European attribute.

If until a couple of decades ago, the sphere of voluntary service, just like the biggest part of civil actions, was mainly defined by the national dimension, at present this is not anymore a true picture of the reality. Many things have changed such as the volunteer's profile, the kind of activities done, the supranational work, the age of people employed in this sector, and their aims. All these changes are causes and at the same time effects of the changeable and changed international political and social dimension.

For the whole Europe, the period of biggest changes occurred in the year 1989: the fall of the communism, the end of the cold war, the growth of the European perspectives, the end of a historical passage and the beginning of a new one. In 1989 many facts happened, many others transformations were already in action and other "revolutions" occurred in the following years so that the date of '89 is more a conventional indication than an exact starting point (or ending point). Any case, 1989 represents a moment of enormous transformations for Europe and for the entire European civil society, not only for the Eastern European Countries, but also for the Western ones, deeply affected by the "wind of change". The new European situation dramatically transformed the citizen's life, and in less than 20 years Europe completely changed its shape: from a fragmented continent, which could not even think about a reunification, to a Union, which really attempts to overcome differences and problems in order to guarantee the establishment of a European community. Nowadays, after the enlargement of the 1st of May, European civil society is called to new challenges and, at the same time, occasions and opportunities are multiplying.

Italy and Spain: a sum of crisis produces the triumph of the civil society

Moving from the general European dimension to the more specific situation of Countries like Italy and Spain, another watershed in the political and social life is undoubtedly the beginning of the 90s. In both countries, additional events happened and contributed to create an earthquake in the social and political life. The decade of '90s was marked by the "experience of crisis" (Anne Muxel, 1996) determined not only by the international context but also by the internal one. The main factors of political and social change were the end of the 1st Republic in Italy, which was disintegrated by the discovery of a spread corruption in the main political parties and the collapse of the socialist government and socialist party in Spain for the same reason. The reaction to the disastrous political situation has been led by the civil society so that the 90s have been defined as the epoch of the civil society "Es la epoca de la denominada sociedad civil" (Felix Ortega, 2001).

The ideological vacuum, the political disappointment and the sense of betrayal have been overcome by the impact of the civil society. The civil engagement has represented a new way for the future and a new hope, for many social actors. In those times of confusion, new ideas for the development of the European Union were presented and new perspectives of changes appeared; if on one hand the transformation left disillusion and a sense of loss, on the other hand new doors were opened. The analysis of that period could be conducted only a posteriori, because at that time, everything resulted

confused and complex, whereas today it is possible to recognize there the roots of important happenings of today.

As a component of the civil society, also voluntary activities have been affected by those multifaceted changes. Before the crisis i.e. before the happening of many international events, that confused electors and activists, the dimension of the voluntary actions was mainly linked with the parties' activities. In Italy, during the span of time of the first Republic the most diffused form of social and political participation was the militancy in a party or in its supporting structures. The biggest parties could count on a strong basis of activists, whose activity was not only based on election campaigns, but on a form of continuative occupation, voluntary and not paid. The Radical Party constructed its history on voluntary's activities and it became the strongest point of its political issues. The Italian Communist Party (PCI), the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and the main governmental party, the Christian Democratic Party (DC), had an apparatus of volunteers, which added up to millions of people for almost 50 years. Voluntary's activities and militants' engagement operated in many different spheres, from the strict party's support to civil actions such as activities for youth, environmental protection, international exchanges and many others.

The deep crisis in the parties' system, at beginning of the 90s, produced a huge decrease of voluntary based engagement. The distrust on ideologies and, in general, on the political system modified not only the party's structures, canceling several historical parties, but also the civil engagement based on voluntary activities. The traditional political channels of involvement suffered a lack of interest and a decrease of popularity. Particularly interesting, in order to show the disaffection to politics, is the experience of the Italian Green Movement: the ecologist movements emerged between the end of the Seventies and the beginning of Eighties, they reached vast dimensions and they could count on the work of an enormous number of volunteers. The experience of the Italian Green party is paradigmatic; the attempt of building up a political party took place during the first half of the 80s, when several Green lists obtained quite good results in the national and European elections. When the Green Party reached a kind of unity, during the second half of the 80s, it could count on a strong base of militants, even if the greatest part of Green activist had refused to be politicized. The passage from the First to the Second Republic, overwhelmed also the Green party, which passed from the 6.1% obtained at the European elections of the 1989, to the 2.8% in the National elections of 1992. The decrease of popularity of political system carried away also the freshest forces, and Green militants restarted to dedicate themselves to forms of engagement far from to the party system. The leadership of the party decided to rediscover its roots and encourage the form of militancy based more on ecologist issues than on political ones (Biorcio,2000).

People started or, in some cases, restarted to dedicate themselves to other form of activities and discovered other meanings of the voluntary involvement on different basis. It was not a quickly substitution and it is not a real substitution, but a change of perspectives and values in the civil society, transformation touchable only some years later. It did not happened a sudden change of involvement, even more because the voluntary service was already born and it had already a long history, but the deep crisis in the political sphere contributed to address many people to forms of engagement different from the past, and far from the political activity.

The crisis of political traditional channels has been registered also in Spain, where from the first part of the 80s to the middle of the 90s the interest in politics lost 13 percentage points between young people (Orzio 1996). Young people refused the involvement in the traditional channels of politics⁹⁷ and preferred to try to sustain new forms of action. Even if, in the Spanish population, the quote of people working as volunteers in fields as ecologismo, human rights and pacifism is still quite low, the interest showed by the majority of youth is growing, and episodes as the Prestige's disaster testify the young people's sensibility to these civil topics.

⁹⁷ Traditional channels are actually not so traditional in Spain, where democracy has a recent history.

Another comment we might add to the new face of voluntary service in countries like Italy and Spain is about the Catholic Church; in fact, in the past, voluntary service presented mostly a religious connotation. In Spain, during the dictatorship, every activity of voluntary service was under control of the Catholic Church, and only in the middle of the 70s, when the dictatorship was at its end, a form of diversification was introduced in the voluntary sector, and it was consolidated when Spain obtained finally democracy.

Today the influence of religion in voluntary service is still profound, and many voluntary organizations refer to Catholic institutions and promote Christian values, but also laic organizations are emerging and they inspire their work to different backgrounds. The main difference from the past really concerns the link with politics and religion; voluntary service is today free of being more independent from the political engagement and it can acquire broader connotations. Between the voluntary associations, which name themselves “confessional” or “a-confessional”, a third category appeared, it contains all the “voluntary organizations without any explicit matrix”. The birth of this third kind of organizations indicates the low politicization of the civil society, but also the heterogenous face of the voluntary service, not anymore linked with traditional political channels and institutions but, on the contrary, completely open. Something similar is happening in former Communist Countries, where during the regimen, voluntary activities were totally under the Party’s control, and today a process of “ideological liberalization” of voluntary service activities is going on.

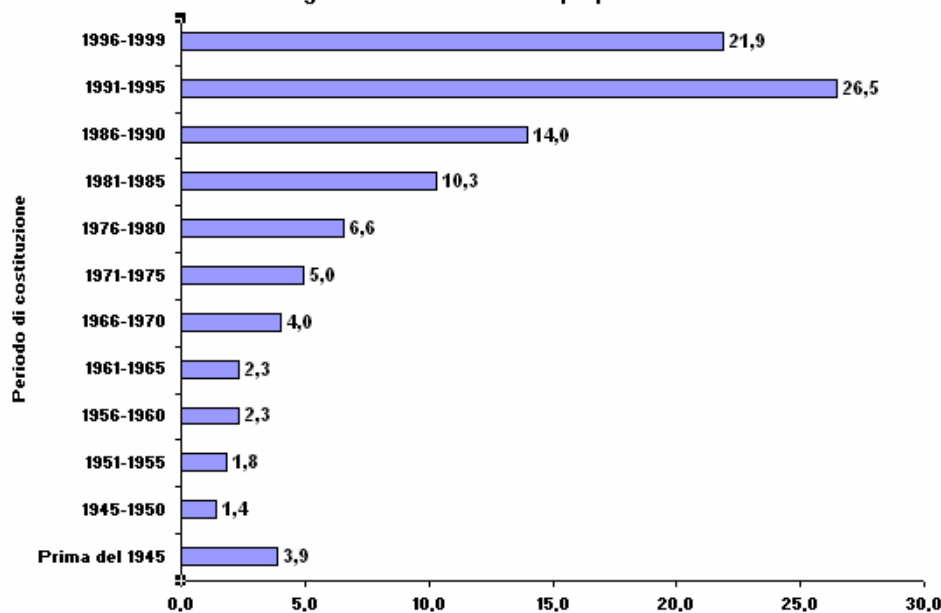
In Italy, the crisis of political and ideological beliefs, among young people, is deep. Only the 3.9% of Italian young people is member of a political party (Eurispes and Telefono Azzurro, 2002), similar data has been recorded in Spain. On the other hand, data regarding youth involvement in voluntary activities and youth organizations mark an opposite trend. Only complaining both data, we can have a complete picture of the youth society: young people seem to prefer forms of civil engagement very different from the political affiliation, but to interpret this data as a proof of political disengagement should be a misunderstood. The data show a new way of civil involvement not linked with party affiliation, but somehow still political. It is a different way of understanding politics and acting in political forms, it represent the best part of politics; it is a type of social action which intends to make better the society, without reference to competition for the power.

The graph below shows the period of constitution of voluntary organizations in Italy in the 20th century. We can see, the 48.4% of Italian voluntary organizations have been created after 1990. The graph not only testifies that after 1990, in the crisis’s period, there was an enormous implement in the number of voluntary service organizations, but also that before the 80s the phenomenon was marginal. As said, the growth of civil service organizations did not appeared exactly in 1990, but it reflected changes already produced in the society during the 80s, when the ecologist and pacifist movements appeared producing new ideas and debates. The crisis, the social changes and social movements realized a big turn off in the 90s and one of the most significant signs of social transformations has been the implement of the voluntary service. Civil society had its gold era in the 90s and it is still changing its manifestations; certainly, the voluntary service represented a huge part of the civil revitalization. Also, if we think in terms of numbers, the dimension of the voluntary service today is something impressive: 4.861.600 people were involved in voluntary service activities in 2001(FIVOL, 2001). It means almost 5 million people operating in voluntary service activities, a number not even thinkable 20 years ago; referring again to the numerical dimension is important to remark the fast growth of the number of volunteers: from 3.221.722 in 1997 to the almost 5 millions in 2001. A recent inquiry about the things the Italian trust on, showed that voluntary service is one of the most trustful things in the Italian’s opinion with a percentage of 85%; political parties, as tradition in the last ten-fifteen years, got just 20%.

The revitalized civil society showed, in the 90s, its new connotations, testified also by the affirmation of the role of civilian service instead of the military one. The majority of the European Countries have decided for the creation of a professional army, not only for budget reasons, but also because of the enormous number of young boys who preferred civilian service to military service.

Civilian service is not a form of voluntary activity, is just an alternative to conscription, but its popularity between young people testified the change of values happened in the European society. Even more, in Italy, on the 14th of February 2001, it has been established the possibility of doing civilian service also for girls. Girls have no conscription's duties, so, for them, the choice of civilian service is a real form of voluntary service. Female civilian service is not only operating in Italy, it has been already experimented in other countries and the Italian results appear particularly good. Data regarding civilian service in Italy are remarkable: 17930 people in 2003, with a prevision of 37.880 at the end of 2004.⁹⁸

Gráfico 2 - Distribuzione delle organizzazioni di volontariato per periodo di costituzione - Anno 1999



Spain has not a so big number of volunteers; data indicate 1.073.636 in the year 2.000 (Ministerio del Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 2000) Compared to the Italian numbers it is quite small, but the Spanish Ministry of Social Affairs did not include in its inquiry almost 300000 people working, not paid, in NGO's. The significance of the number becomes more evident if we compare the data with the previous relief, done in 1996, when the number of people working as volunteers was "only" 300.000 (Ministerio del Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 1996).⁹⁹ So the growth of voluntary service in Spain seems to have been enormously fast in just few years. It is easy to predict a similar badger of growth in the period 200-2004.

Given these two Countries as a case study, it is also interesting to check France data and have a look of the French condition in the field of voluntary service. France is certainly the first one in number of people involved in voluntary service. The data indicate an incredible growth, from 7,9 millions in 1990 to 10,4 millions in 1996 and finally 12 millions in 2003. Numbers are impressive and they clearly show that also France has followed the trend of the other two countries in the last 15 years; voluntary service has gone up to massive participation, especially between young people.

⁹⁸ In these data are not included numbers regarding people who choose civilian service instead of military service (conscientious objectors), these almost 18000 people who made civilian service in 2003 could be rightly considered volunteers.

⁹⁹ It has been noted by many inquires how difficult is to collect data about volunteers. It depends on the fact that many volunteer associations are not registered on the Regional Registers, that in Italy it estimated the existence of a bigger number of voluntary association, but it is hard to census them. In Spain have been found the same difficulties. In Italy data from FIVOL and Censis are quite different and the gap is justified by the fact that Censis collected data just on registered association and FIVOL thinks that the 50% of voluntary organization are not registered on the Regional Registers.

Voluntary service's growth seems to prove the civil society "revolution" and indicates a trend for the future. In fact, the changes happened in this sector are not only important in terms of numerical growth and increase of civil engagement, but also, and maybe mostly, in relation with structural factors. The social and political changes, at national and international level, produced at the beginning of 90s, modified also the shape of voluntary service. One of the biggest changes is related with the volunteer's profile: in Spain, for example, the 49% of volunteers are young people under 25 years of age. France does not get, at national level, a so big amount of young people engaged in voluntary service, but looking from a regional point of view, the results indicate a good level of participation where the information systems for the promotion of voluntary activities are working out. A study conducted in several France regions has demonstrated that the national average depends on the connecting and information supports: in Ile de France almost 50% of young people have volunteered, even better in Champagne Ardenne, where more than half of the young population have been engaged in voluntary activities, in Midi-Pyrénées, the level arrives at two third of the young people. In Italy, the percentage is significantly smaller: roughly 10% of volunteers are under 30 years.

In the percentage of women in the voluntary service, Spain presents better data than Italy: in the previous 61% of volunteers are women, in the latter 50.8%. It is important to underline the feminine and youth involvement in voluntary service because it means that this face of the civil society is attractive for young people and women, who probably find there a broader space than in other sectors, like politics, where the feminine engagement is still low. Regarding the involvement of women, the voluntary sector does not present gender inequality.

In Italy and in Spain, it has been noted that young people prefer to be active in voluntary activities for brief periods and with different levels of intensity. However the main news in youth engagement in this sector, regards experiences of international voluntary service and especially the opportunities granted by the European Union. In this sphere is easy to point out the importance of the changed international context: in fact, depending on the development of the European Union and the fall of borders, the voluntary sector has registered a real new era.

A new Europe produced new Voluntary Service

Just like the end of dictatorship in Spain, the fall of communism in Eastern Europe represented a crucial moment for the civil society. The democratization and the "explosion" of the civil society affected directly the former communist countries, but also, as we saw, the civil life of the Western European Countries. We have already indicated the internal factors of change and civil revitalization in Spain and Italy, but the dimension of the voluntary service today, has to be analyzed from a global European point of view. Especially at the moment, after the recent enlargement and the future prospective of other adhesions, is important to underline the European dimension in every aspect of the civil life, included the voluntary service. In this field, an important experience of international voluntary service has also been experimented. The European citizens who have a double citizenship, ensured by their status, often forget this big advantage; on the other hand, many people, especially young people are exploiting the advantages of being European, apart from citizenship of the member States.

One of the chances offered by the European Union is really the opportunity of approaching experiences of voluntary service in different ways. The European program of voluntary service, among them the most important one is the European Voluntary Service, are different from the majority of the national ones, since they promote a form of action based not on free time, but on full time format for long or short periods. It represents a new way of living the voluntary experience and it appeals many young people who never tried before the involvement in voluntary service associations. The main aim of the program is: "to help young Europeans become more mobile, and hence more active citizens, provide them with a formative experience in several areas of activity and encourage them to make an active contribution to building Europe and to co-operation between the Community and non-member countries

by taking part in transnational activities of benefit to the community” (<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11602c.htm>)

The fundamental objective of the program is to give the opportunity of acquiring a total knowledge of the meaning of active citizenship at international level to young people, thanks to an empirical experience, useful not only for who receive the volunteer’s help but especially for the same volunteers.

The European Voluntary service involves 3-4000 young people each year; it was born on 20th July 1998 and it has been one of the most successful programs promoted by the European Union. The experience of the voluntary service is linked with an intensive experience of life abroad and it promotes not only values as solidarity and philanthropy but it also supports a culture of brotherhood and knowledge of diversity. The opportunity of living in another country, of doing a helpful job, improving skills and proving another way of life is appealing many young people in the whole European territory. One of the most attractive aspects of the EVS is the possibility of choice between a vast range of different experiences such as activities for integration and against racism, cultural activities for youth, help for old people, help for homeless and many others.

It is understandable that a project, which allowed participant to have such a big variety of experiences, calls the interest of many young people. These kinds of “open” experiences seem to be the favorites of the European youth.

The choice of taking part in voluntary service programs it is a sort of bet that young do with themselves, it is a passage to the adulthood and a first step of an independent life. Because of that, projects like EVS represent a phenomenon a bit different from the previous forms of voluntary service and, thanks to the European citizenship, it is possible to enlarge the dimension of voluntary service. The growing desire of testing new way of engagement is also confirmed by the success of program as With Helmets, and many other voluntary service programs promoted, directly or not, by the United Nations; they involve today 10 millions volunteers all over the world. Generally is a flux of volunteers from the richer countries to the poorer ones and it is a proof of the civil culture of cooperation between nations promoted by the voluntary service. The diffusion of the voluntary service culture, especially between young people, shows the existence of transnational solidarity and produces useful services for communities.

An open experience requires open media

There is another remarkable aspect of the renewed diffusion of the voluntary service; it especially regards the recent form of engagement in this area: the use of new media.

If new technologies brought in the common life of the communities, but also in the citizen’s private life, many advantages, furthermore they contributed to the diffusion of civil engagement and voluntary service programs. The extreme facilities in logging onto the Internet and in diffusing information through it, has transformed and enlarged the approach to voluntary service experiences. Thanks to new technologies, the diffusion of the EVS program has increased and there are on the web many sites about the personal experience of volunteers. So young people interested in making this experience can also easily check what the previous volunteer’s impression of that was. The Internet is helping the “virtual volunteers”, the previous volunteers as well as the associations, which want to take part in the program. The UK represent a vanguard in this field, but the level of “connectivity” of many other European Countries is growing and web sites dedicated to voluntary service are registering an impressive number of visitors (www.hacefalta.org and www.do-it.org.uk are just two successful examples).

It has been demonstrated that the level of connectivity of each country depends mainly on the monetary capacity of voluntary associations. The first problem for voluntary associations is to be able to pay a website and an internet connection; in fact, even if many associations would like to get a certain level of diffusion on the web they are still not able to pay for it. Another significant factor in establishing the level of connectivity of voluntary associations is the age of their managers: a France study (IRIV, 2003) proved that manager under 55 year of age are better disposed to get an internet connection and a

website than their elders colleagues do. So that voluntary associations managed by young people, have more chance to be known on the web and to get opportunities from there.

The use of the Internet has helped the development of another important experience of voluntary service: work camps. This form of volunteering had already been experimented for several years, yet the Web facilitated its diffusion, thanks to the possibility of easily getting information and applying on line. The concept of work camps comes from the beginning of the 20 century, and the first experience in Europe goes back to the 20s, when after the First World War, some work camps for reconstruction have been built up. This form of volunteering has being developed during the second half of the 20 century and today is quite well know. Generally, it is a form of international cooperation based on a short time period of volunteering, which has the goal of making a determinate work. Many work camps regard environmental protection or historical goods' protection but, nowadays, they propose a vast range of choices. Even if their aim is to work on a project, one of the most important characteristics of work camps is to promote the culture of volunteering and international cooperation, especially among young people. Overall, there are many forms of volunteering today, for short period, for long periods, during the free time or on particular occasions. The European Union has started to help the diffusion of the voluntary service and has provided some special programs for its implementation. Young people seem to have liked it and they are getting the opportunities offered by it; it seems that at the moment young people are interesting in involving themselves in this kind of activities, also because the personal improvement they can get from them.

Conclusions

The forms of civil engagement and civic participation have changed a lot in the last fifteen years, and voluntary service has changed as well. The European civil society in the 80s was a fragmented entity; it was divided in national civic societies with a scarce web of international connections. Political parties, in Western Europe, and the State or the only party, in Eastern Europe, mainly managed the civil society. The Forms of voluntary service and voluntary associations were already born, and some of those had a long and successful history, but the element of European cohesion did not exist. On the contrary, today, civil society and voluntary service are getting more and more European every day. The phenomenon has got a strong enforce and has collected a massive participation; the opportunities given by the European Union are interesting young people. The shape of voluntary service has changed and its popularity is growing thanks also to the Internet and new media. The European civil society is acquiring an open connotation, which is the real new element, comparing to the past.

We analyzed the Italia and Spanish cases, but similar trends have been noted in other European country. Italy and Spain passed through the experience of the governmental corruption and failure; even if the previous is an old democracy and the latter a relatively new democracy, they both experimented the same disillusion and crisis in political beliefs.

However, the civil society was able to reinvent itself and become a protagonist of the Nineties. If trust in politics decreased, voluntary service, voluntary activity and number of voluntary associations went up. In spite of the difficulties, the popularity of the voluntary service has risen and its international vocation has become an unchangeable characteristic.

Overall, the found trend gives good hopes for the future not only for the voluntary service, but also in general for the growth of the civil society, although it is still necessary to sort many problems out. In fact, there are still big problems in diffusing information and voluntary service's culture and the status of volunteers need a better definition and recognition, as well as their legal implications.

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