

FOCUS RESEARCH REPORT

"MAKING IT MATTER – the impact of volunteering on social inclusion"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Focus Research Report has been developed as one of the intellectual outputs of "Making it Matter" project, implemented under the Erasmus+ programme by 6 partner countries: Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Slovenia, Belgium and Germany.

The main objective of the Focus Research Report is to give an overview of existing EU and national policies and practices that support the inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering. To approach the topic comprehensively, the following **methodology** was used: desk research of existing policies on an EU and national level; research of volunteer-involving organisations through 413 on-line questionnaires and interviews with 11 disadvantaged youth volunteers and 9 volunteer coordinators.

Summary of the **key findings**:

- **Since 1983, EU institutions have emphasised, through relevant policy papers, the importance of making volunteering more inclusive.** EU institutions encourage Member States to implement these policies.
- Despite an existing European policy framework, **the practice in Member States varies.** There are many differences between countries regarding: the definition of volunteering, the methodology of gathering data on volunteering, the numbers of citizens volunteering, the national legal frameworks for volunteering, the recognition of volunteering on a national level and best practice for volunteer organisations regarding social inclusion. For example, **countries with a long tradition of volunteering** (Ireland Denmark and Germany) **have no specific laws on volunteering.** In contrast, Croatia and Slovenia as **post-socialist young democracies have specific laws to regulate volunteering practice.**
- The fact that **all countries realise the need for national strategies** relevant for the development of volunteerism suggests that **volunteering needs to be supported and recognised on a national level by relevant institutions.**
- The practice shows that **most volunteer-involving organisations (over 70%) already include disadvantaged youth as volunteers,** although **this has not been a result of conscious planning - 60% of organisations do not have a specific focus on recruiting or written policy about the involvement of disadvantaged groups as volunteers.** While

disadvantaged youth have been included in the overall focus on social inclusion or youth projects and activities, there is **a lack of specific motivational and regulatory measures for inclusive volunteer programmes for disadvantaged youth.**

- **Disadvantaged youth volunteers tend to be either long-term volunteers or frequent ad-hoc volunteers for a longer period.** The **most included groups of disadvantaged youth volunteers** are those facing **social and economic obstacles** and those volunteers with **cultural differences.** Some groups are perceived by organisations as very **hard to involve (homeless youth, youth with mental disabilities, youth with psychiatric conditions, ex-offenders and ex-drug and alcohol abusers).** This may indicate that there is a significant level of **hesitation and fear of the unknown, combined with prejudice and stigmatisation of certain social groups that can lead to further exclusion.**
- **Organisations face similar challenges and obstacles** when involving disadvantaged youth: lack of organisational capacity and resources as well as knowledge on how to work with specific groups of volunteers. Thus, **targeted support is needed and could be provided by national and/or local volunteer centres.**

The findings of this research indicate that there is significant evidence in favour of inclusive volunteer programmes. Yet, there are no specifically developed mechanisms to encourage and support disadvantaged youth to volunteer, or motivate and support non-profit organisations to create inclusive programmes. Therefore, it is important to **create and practice open and inclusive policies at all levels** and to use narratives that will challenge stereotypes, decrease exclusion, discrimination and alienation. Besides that, **development of a support system for inclusive volunteer programmes on a national and EU level** is also one of the recognised needs. The key stakeholders in the process can be **national volunteer development agencies and volunteer centres and thus their role needs to be strengthened.** The focus should also be on **designing programmes that overcome psychological and physical barriers of specific groups,** as well as on **motivation of volunteer-involving organisations to use impact measurement procedures.** **Development of transnational partnerships** that create European-wide practices can also be helpful in this process.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project summary

“Making it matter - the impact of volunteering on social inclusion”

Most EU and national research about volunteering emphasises the importance of a better collection of information on volunteering since they represent an important decision support for both policy decision makers and volunteer-involving organisations development. However, measuring the influence of volunteering on social inclusion as an important component of individual well-being is not yet explored enough and confirmed.

Most of the existing measuring tools are mainly focused on the overall impact of volunteers, organisations and communities and use traditional approaches to estimate this impact based on the financial benefit of volunteering, and in particular the financial benefits for the organisation. The lack of evidence of the effect of volunteering in non-financial terms makes it difficult to understand the effect that volunteering can have on empowerment and inclusion for the individual.

The project is in line with the Erasmus Plus horizontal priority “social inclusion” since it focuses on developing new practices and innovations in the field of volunteering of disadvantaged youth. We strongly believe that volunteering is a powerful tool for social inclusion by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life. The engagement of youth in diverse activities in local communities supports their personal and professional development and empowers them for active participation in society. This

project applies the principle of inclusiveness and seeks to challenge existing stereotypes about who can volunteer.

At the same time, the project enables disadvantaged youth to become the key actors of changing the public attitude about their abilities towards being accepted and valued as equal members of the society – through the project they will become important actors in creating a better environment for disadvantaged youth to volunteer.

The project goal of Making it matter is the creation of methods and indicators for impact measurement that will help volunteer-involving organisations to understand the key benefits of volunteering and therefore shape inclusive volunteer programmes. It will also assist institutions and decision-makers to formulate policies and support programmes through comparable systematic data on the circumstances in which volunteering is useful for personal development, empowerment and inclusion of young people.

The purpose of the project is to create strategic transnational cooperation among complementary organisations on measuring the social impact of volunteering on social inclusion by creating simple and inexpensive methods and tools for volunteer-involving organisations to evidence the impact that volunteering can have on different categories of disadvantaged youth. Project partners from Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and Slovenia aim to achieve this through several mutually reinforcing specific objectives:

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- a) Examine existing conditions in certain countries and at EU level in using the benefits of volunteering for inclusion of disadvantaged young people;
 - b) Create innovative methods and tools for measuring the impact of volunteering on social inclusion;
 - c) Develop a transnational curriculum for capacity building of volunteer-involving organisations working with disadvantaged youth;
 - d) Promote and increase the recognition of volunteering as one of the key components of social inclusion and integration of disadvantaged young people.

The expected results are:

- 1) The research report as a source of information for volunteer-involving organisations and decision makers will provide a detailed picture of volunteering of disadvantaged young people and social inclusion in certain EU countries and the EU in general;
- 2) A Methodology of Measuring Impact of Volunteering on social inclusion, presented in

the Manual and piloted in volunteering work with organisations and young volunteers, will support organisations to demonstrate the benefits of volunteering;

- 3) The curriculum as a transnational educational tool will support the ongoing capacity building of volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers;
- 4) A Policy Paper will provide a set of recommendations to improve the legislative and strategic framework for inclusive volunteering and influence the development of more opportunities for young disadvantaged volunteers;
- 5) Intellectual results will be discussed and presented at three international events involving decision-makers, researchers and practitioners and volunteer-involving organisations.

The significance of this project will ultimately contribute to improving social and organisational capacity for the development of high-quality, innovative and community-oriented services that support the empowerment and inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion through volunteering.

1.2. Partners



VOLONTERSKI centar Osijek

Volunteer Centre Osijek, Croatia

+Volunteer Centre Osijek (VCOS) was established in 2006 to support an open, democratic society based on activism, solidarity, cohesion and mutual trust. The mission is to inspire and support active participation of citizens, development of civil society and volunteerism.

VCOS works on strengthening active citizenship, civil society, volunteerism, social inclusion and integration by initiating and organising diverse activities and by using different methodologies in local communities, such as: promotion of democratic and EU values; direct support of sustainable infrastructure development; mobilisation of community through capacity-building of active individuals, initiatives and organisations; development and implementation of education for civic involvement; supporting empowerment and social inclusion of excluded groups; supporting integration of migrants/refugees; advocacy in order to influence public policy relevant for civil society; enhancement of networking and cooperation among different stakeholders based on dialogue and mutual trust; publishing and researching etc.

The work of VCOS is based on the principles of building and nurturing dialogue and trust with different stakeholders, merging different resources from the community in strengthening social capital, transferring knowledge and skills to the community, and creating activities based on community needs. Always, VCOS strives to be innovative in its action, to be a promoter of a positive change within community, and to create an environment and opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth and development.

VCOS is one of the founders and an active member of the Croatian Volunteer Development Centre¹ (previous name: Croatian Volunteer Centres Network), the key national organisation in the process of volunteerism development in Croatia. VCOS is also a member of the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) and EUCLID, the European network to empower civil society & social enterprise, Croatian youth network (MMH) and the Regional platform of civil society organisation MOTUS.

Web site: <http://vcos.hr/english>

¹ CVDC web site: <http://www.hcrv.hr/>



Volunteer Centre and Self-Help Denmark (FriSe), Denmark

FriSe is a national Volunteer Centre with 62 local volunteer centres and 13 self-help organisations as members. FriSe is independent of government, party political and religious interests and is dedicated to the development of civil society and volunteerism in Denmark. FriSe envisions a strong and diverse civil society, where everyone has the opportunity to make a voluntary effort and to get help and support in doing so. FriSe works to strengthen the local infrastructure and to promote and support volunteering through:

- Capacity building and consultancy to already existing volunteer centres and help to establish new volunteer centres around the country
- Partnerships and networking with key stakeholders across all sectors
- Visibility & dissemination of social volunteer work
- Interest safeguarding & advocacy

Amongst other things, FriSe works for an inclusive and responsible community and has a special focus on increasing the level of voluntary work and has, in the last years particularly, focused on inclusion and diverse recruitment in relation to different target

groups, such as ethnic minorities and physically and mentally disabled individuals. FriSe has been involved in a national project focusing on social inclusion in voluntary work among ethnic minorities and is now engaged in an effort for newly arrived refugees, many of whom are young people.

Furthermore, FriSe run the national online database Frivilligjob.dk and Volunteering.dk – two databases for volunteers to find volunteer opportunities amongst the many different organisations in Denmark. In 2017 there were nearly 924,907,000 million visitors on Frivilligjob.dk and nearly 16,000 sent applications to one of the many organisations using the site to recruit volunteers.

FriSe runs different projects in relation to self-help or support groups towards specific target groups such as adults and children with ADHD or men in vulnerable situations in the form of cohabitation break, unemployment and stress.

Web site: www.frise.dk



Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia

Slovene Philanthropy, an association for the promotion of voluntary work, is a humanitarian organisation operating in the public interest since 1992. The organisation's programmes aim at increasing the quality of life in the community as well as advocacy for the socially disadvantaged. The central activity of Slovene Philanthropy is the promotion of volunteering. The core belief of the organisation is that through volunteering we can all contribute to a better and more tolerant society, based on the respect of all people regardless of their personal or living circumstances. Slovene Philanthropy offers trainings for volunteers, mentors and organisers of volunteering activities.

The work of the organisation is focused on informing, advocating, networking and implementing

programmes in areas where national institutions are not yet active or not active enough, but have room for great improvement through additional - voluntary - people power. This work includes aid to refugees, children and young migrants, aid to the homeless and other persons lacking health insurance in accessing healthcare services, advocacy of migrant worker rights, and the promotion of inter-generational cooperation. At the field of migration, Slovene Philanthropy leads many different activities on a voluntary and professional level, especially for children, unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers and refugees.

Web site: <https://www.filantropija.org/en/>



Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE), Germany

The National Network for Civil Society (BBE) is a "tri-sectoral" network linking associations from the Third Sector, business/work-life and federal/community institutions. It was founded out of an initiative of the National Council of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV 2001) on 5th June, 2002. BBE meanwhile consists of 265 member organisations including the Churches, unions, corporations, foundations and governmental institutions as well as the full scope of the German civil society associations on a national level (with many of them being sectoral umbrella organisations).

The aim of the network is to strengthen civil society and civic engagement. The key objective is the improvement of the general legal, organisational and institutional conditions for volunteering and civic participation. BBE strives to encourage and support concrete projects for actual practice in civil society, as well as to raise and activate political awareness.

On a European level the BBE is actively involved within the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) and the European Network of National Civil Society Associations (ENNA).

Web site: <http://www.b-b-e.de/bbe-english/>



Volunteer Ireland, Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development agency and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Information Services in Ireland. Volunteer Ireland supports 21 Volunteer Centres and 8 Volunteer Information Services across Ireland.

Volunteer Ireland's vision is people connected to and participating in their communities to build a better Irish society. To deliver this vision, Volunteer Ireland has set the following three external strategic aims to increase awareness and quality and access to volunteering.

Volunteer Ireland provides support to volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers across Ireland. The support is provided nationally through I-VOL, the national database of volunteer opportunities to people who are interested in volunteering around the country. A network of Volunteer Centres and Volunteer

Information services are affiliated to Volunteer Ireland and work with county-based regional and local volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers around the country. Volunteer Ireland develops and supports best practice in volunteering and Volunteer Centres, including the evaluation of Volunteer Centres according to a quality standard framework. Volunteer Ireland manages the Quality Standards for Volunteer Centres and the Investing in Volunteers Quality Mark for volunteer-involving organisations.

Volunteer Ireland is a founding member of the Governance Code working group, which has developed a tool to help charities in Ireland improve their governance. Volunteer Ireland is a member of IAVE, the International Association of Volunteer Effort and CEV, The European Volunteer Centre.

Web site: <https://www.volunteer.ie/>



European Volunteer Centre (CEV), Belgium

The European Volunteer Centre (Centre Européen du Volontariat, CEV) is the European network of over 60 members from all 28 EU countries. Associate members are volunteer-involving organisations or organisations that promote and develop volunteering in a specialised field or a specific type of volunteering as well as volunteer support agencies. Those organisations act on a local, regional, national, EU, and international level.

Through the network, organisations work together to promote and support volunteering through advocacy, knowledge sharing and capacity building and training. In this way, organisations reach out to the many thousands of volunteers and volunteer organisations who see volunteer centres as a source of support bringing the European dimension to their work.

CEV channels the collective priorities and concerns of its member organisations to the institutions of the

European Union and the Council of Europe. Together with other European networks active in volunteering, CEV exchanges policy, practice and information in order to ensure effective and coherent follow up to European Year of Volunteering 2011 and ensure its legacy through the implementation of the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE) and the follow-up "Helping Hands – Hope for Europe" report.

CEV's vision is a Europe in which volunteering is central in building a cohesive and inclusive society based on solidarity and active citizenship. The mission is to contribute to the creation of an enabling political, social and economic environment in Europe where the full potential of volunteering can be realised.

Web site: <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/>

1.3. Disadvantaged youth

As defined in Erasmus and the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy from 2014, disadvantaged youth or youth with fewer opportunities are young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the exclusion factors and obstacles in the following categories:

- Disability: young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities etc.
- Health problems: young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions etc.
- Educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties, early school-leavers, lower qualified persons, young people with poor school performance etc.
- Cultural differences: immigrants, refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties etc.
- Economic obstacles: young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, young people in long-term unemployment or poverty, young people who are homeless, in debt or with financial problems etc.
- Social obstacles: young people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc., young people with limited social skills or anti-social or high-risk behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans etc.
- Geographical obstacles: young people from remote or rural areas, young people living on small islands or in peripheral regions, young people from urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) etc.

This definition focuses on the situation young people are in, to avoid stigmatisation and blame. The overview of the factors gives an indication of the type of exclusion situations being considered in this project. Since the risk of exclusion varies according to country and context, it was decided to include all above-mentioned factors in the research.

2. ABOUT THE FOCUS RESEARCH

2.1. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the focus research was to analyse the context and determine the opportunities and challenges for volunteering that disadvantaged youth face. The results of the research can then be used as a tool for social inclusion from the perspective of the specific EU countries and from European general perspective.

The specific objectives of the research were to find out:

- to what extent existing national (Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark, Germany) and EU policies support the inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering
- to what extent volunteer-involving organisations recognise and use volunteering for social inclusion of disadvantaged youth
- what kind of volunteering benefits are recognised by young disadvantaged people on their personal development and inclusion

This Research Report serves as an information source to volunteer-involving organisations and decision makers by providing a detailed picture of what is going on in volunteering of disadvantaged youth and social inclusion in specific EU countries and the EU in general. The research will be used for the development of high-quality, inclusive volunteer programmes, and an impact measurement tool and policy in the field of youth, volunteering and social inclusion.

In the research phase 413 organisations were included, 11 volunteers among disadvantaged youth and 9 volunteer coordinators from Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark, Germany and Belgium.

As part of this Research Report there is included a short video with personal testimonies of 5 disadvantaged youth about the benefits of volunteering in their lives.

2.2. Methodology

The research was implemented in four steps during April and October 2018:

Desk research

Partners analysed existing national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks related to supporting social inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering in non-profit organisations. The CEV provided analyses of existing policy, legislative and institutional frameworks at EU level for the same topic.

On-line questionnaire for volunteer-involving organisations.

This focused on the level of capacity within organisations for the development of high-quality inclusive volunteer programmes for disadvantaged youth. The questionnaire explored in detail the positive and negative implication of existing policy and legislative frameworks, the organisation's knowledge, skills, and experience, and cooperation with available local/national experts/network support system. The key question was what kind of support is needed for the sustainability of inclusive volunteer programmes in line with the needs of disadvantaged youth.

The questionnaires were distributed to 30-40

organisations in Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark and Germany. 413 questionnaires were used for final analysis, and as well for the comparative overview between the countries. CEV interviewed 5 EU networks in Brussel, Belgium.

In-depth interviews with disadvantaged youth and volunteer coordinators from non-profit organisations.

The interviews were focused on the impact of volunteering on the personal well-being of youth (e.g. self-esteem, self-respect, social skills, and social network) and developed competences of youth through volunteering, types of support that were useful and other things and issues that lacked from organisation/coordinator during volunteering. In every country, 2-3 interviews with disadvantaged youth and 1-2 with volunteer coordinators were implemented. In total, 20 interviews (11 interviews with disadvantaged youth and 9 interviews with volunteer coordinators) were conducted and analysed.

The analyses and interpretation of collected data and preparation of the Research Report follows.

3. EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL DESK RESEARCH ON VOLUNTEERING AND INCLUSION POLICIES

3.1. Volunteering and inclusion policies at the EU level

Statements, opinions, resolutions, policies etc. on volunteering have been produced by institutions in the European Union since 1983. Almost all of them stress the importance of making volunteering more inclusive and urge Member States to take necessary measures to make this a reality. They also frequently state that EU programmes that fund and facilitate volunteering should become more inclusive. The new European Solidarity Corps provides shorter term and in-country placements (different to the predecessor EVS programme) with a specific view to facilitating the involvement of young people from excluded and hard-to-reach groups. The recently adopted European Union Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 strongly supports inclusive volunteering. The Making it Matter seminar in October 2018 in Brussels also included a presentation on this issue.

European Parliament resolution on voluntary work 1983

"The European Parliament:

- A. conscious of the great desire of young people to offer service in society;
 - B. aware of the extra difficulties faced by young people from underprivileged backgrounds; ...
- ...Believes that the Scheme should be open to young people from all backgrounds and should include opportunities for young people with handicaps; "²

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000 on the social inclusion of young people [Official Journal C 374 of 28.12.2000].

"The Resolution is in line with the strategic goal set at the Lisbon Council on 23 and 24 March 2000. This goal unites economic progress and social progress, and the fight against social exclusion is a fundamental aspect of it."

"Noting that young people, especially the most

vulnerable, are particularly susceptible to social, political and cultural exclusion, the Resolution calls on the Commission and the Member States to take several initiatives to ensure that young people are included in all aspects of society."³

2001 White paper on youth

"The White Paper calls for EU and national policies to take greater account of the needs of young people. The policies most concerned are employment and social integration, the fight against racism and xenophobia, education, lifelong learning and mobility. The complex question of young people's autonomy is also included in the future work programme."⁴

2006 EESC Opinion on role of voluntary work

"Civil society organisations and volunteer centres will recruit volunteers more easily if they take account of new realities in our society, examples being changes in youth culture, greater use of the Internet and opportunities for volunteering online. They also need to be aware of new ways of contacting young people e.g. via text messages, and to offer short-term voluntary activity as an initial step for young people. Besides this, they should pay attention to new forms of leisure behaviour and the time available to interested members of public, and to new target groups such as migrants, the long-term unemployed or the increasing number of pensioners who wish to become involved." (Article 3.8.2)

"In summary, voluntary activity is a horizontal phenomenon which affects many policy areas in society and which involves a large section of the population. However, it may be noted that few volunteers come from disadvantaged backgrounds or socially marginalised groups." (Article 3.9)

"Voluntary activity can give various marginalised population groups an opportunity for involvement and

² Source: <http://aei.pitt.edu/61716/1/B1744.pdf>

³ Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42000X1228>

⁴ Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ac11055>

integration, either because volunteers are working for them or because through their own commitment they are brought back to the centre of society. This kind of empowerment through voluntary activity is particularly important for socially marginalised population groups and migrants. Unfortunately, in some countries the law is holding this process back; for example, in some Member States immigrants cannot become volunteers." (Article 4.6.4)

"Volunteering can play a special role in combating youth and long-term unemployment, as well as generally in relation to entering the labour force. Volunteers can accumulate important experience and knowledge, which is in demand in the labour market, and build up a network of contacts. Apart from activities in the social sphere and in health care, which are traditional areas for voluntary activity, volunteers can also acquire key competences and knowledge in areas like publicity, communications, self-expression, social skills, management and vocational training. They have the opportunity to try out various social roles, to learn to make the right decisions, to solve problems, to assimilate a work culture and to demonstrate their sense of justice and leadership qualities. Voluntary activity can form an important part of a person's CV and career. Voluntary activities are thus an important instrument of non-formal and informal learning that complement formal learning, education and training. They may also enhance employability, particularly of young people." (Article 4.6.2)

"In relation to active ageing voluntary activity is of twofold importance. On the one hand, it enables older people to continue to be involved in the life of society, to make use of their life experience and to continue to feel useful. This has a positive effect on their health and quality of life. Secondly, voluntary activity can promote understanding between generations when young and old act together, exchange experience and support each other." (Article 4.6.3)⁵

2008 EP report on role of volunteering for social cohesion

"Encourages Member States to promote and to facilitate volunteering within all communities, both real and virtual, such as family volunteering or volunteering in marginalised groups or groups that

might not traditionally volunteer and to stress the great importance of organising voluntary work so as to ensure that it is compatible with family and professional life." (Article 10)⁶

2011 Council conclusions on volunteering and social policy

"The Council underlines the importance of voluntary activities: For the strengthening of civil society, activating citizens (including those from vulnerable groups), social cohesion, solidarity between generations, inter-cultural dialogue, improvement of social skills and professional qualifications and key competences, fostering personal development, addressing gender inequalities, reducing existing social barriers, intolerance and all forms of discrimination; (Article 14)

For enhancing competences and improving skills of vulnerable groups which might be also involved in volunteering and thus benefit from better social inclusion; (Article 18)

Mobilize the potential of people experiencing exclusion, who can be active citizens through voluntary activities that increase their sense of efficacy and change the stereotypical image in society which reduces them to aid beneficiaries; (Article 28)⁷

2013 Council conclusions on youth work

"Social inclusion requires a comprehensive and cross sectoral approach to address the multi-faceted nature of marginalisation and exclusion in society." (Article 9)

"Encourage and support young people through education, civil society and quality youth initiatives to participate in democratic life and to make use of existing and new tools to contribute to policy development, thereby enhancing their development, well-being and social inclusion;" (Article 18)

"Support the youth sector in developing its structures, working methods and channels of communication so as to reach out to more young people, especially those at risk of social exclusion;" (Article 20)

"Stimulate and support volunteer-led involvement in youth provision to promote diversity, social inclusion and build social capital;" (Article 21)⁸

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:325:0046:0052:EN:PDF>

⁶ Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:259E:0009:0013:EN:PDF>

⁷ Source: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/124863.pdf

⁸ Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:168:0005:0009:EN:PDF>

European Parliament resolution of 12 June 2012 on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU (2011/2293(INI))

"Asks the national, regional and local authorities and the EU to pay particular attention to disadvantaged young people and young people with fewer opportunities (especially people with disabilities), so that they may participate in volunteering activities and, to that end, benefit from adequate educational and financial support;" (Article 4)

"Points out that volunteering reduces the risk of social exclusion and that it is essential to attract all social groups to such activities, especially people with disabilities; draws attention to the need to ensure that volunteering becomes more widely recognised and less hampered by barriers of all kinds;" (Article 5)

"Reiterates the need to make volunteering accessible to immigrants and minorities as an essential element in encouraging their integration and social inclusion;" (Article 6)⁹

The role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values (EP 2016).

"Stresses that volunteering encourages the development of civic participation and active citizenship, while also helping to boost participants' chances of finding a job; stresses, therefore, that funding under the Erasmus+ programme should be part of a wider policy strategy aimed at creating in Europe an environment conducive to volunteering, not duplicating but strengthening existing successful initiatives; recalls, however, that potential quality jobs can never be replaced with unpaid volunteering activities;" (Article 9)

Social inclusion and accessibility

"Regrets that fewer than 5 % of young Europeans benefit from the programme on account of socio-economic factors, limited funding, growing inequalities between and within Member States and the complexity of application processes and administrative management; calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the programme more open and accessible, delivering more for the final beneficiaries and maximising support, in particular for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special needs;" (Article 14)

"Urges the Commission and the Member States to make Erasmus+ even more inclusive in order to reach more young people through different tools, digital in particular, and organisations, including formal and non-formal educational institutions at all levels, youth organisations, arts and grassroots sports organisations, volunteer organisations and other civil society stakeholders, by mainstreaming the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy through the programme and targeting those with special needs and fewer opportunities;" (Article 15)

"Recalls that a lack of coordination and portability of rights among EU social systems represents a serious barrier to the mobility of people with disabilities, despite efforts to make the Erasmus+ programmes and other mobility initiatives more inclusive; calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen collaboration and thus improve the mobility of vulnerable people;" (Article 16)¹⁰

2016 European Solidarity Corps EP resolution on the EC Proposal

"Special attention should be paid to ensuring that the activities supported by the European Solidarity Corps are accessible to all young people, in particular young people with fewer opportunities as further detailed in the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy developed and applied within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme in the youth field . Special measures, such as appropriate formats of solidarity activities and personalised guidance, should therefore be put in place to promote social inclusion, the participation of disadvantaged young people, as well as to take into account the constraints imposed by the remoteness of the outermost regions of the Union and the Overseas Countries and Territories in accordance with Council Decision 2013/755/EU Similarly, the participating countries should endeavour to adopt all appropriate measures to remove legal and administrative obstacles to the proper functioning of the European Solidarity Corps. That includes resolving, where possible, and without prejudice to the Schengen acquis and Union law on the entry and residence of third-country nationals, any administrative issues that create difficulties in obtaining visas and residence permits." (Article 30)¹¹

⁹ Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0236+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

¹⁰ Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0359+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

¹¹ Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2018-0328+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

European Union Youth Strategy 2019 - 2027

The Council of the European Union adopted the Resolution on the European Union Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 in November 2018. The strategy is dedicated to the promotion of youth engagement and puts an emphasis on social inclusion as well, which is visible through the strategy objectives, youth goals and instruments.

„The strategy strives to:

- Enable young people to be architects of their own lives, support their personal development and growth to autonomy, build their resilience and equip them with life skills to cope with a changing world;
- Encourage and equip young people with the necessary resources to become active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change inspired by EU values and a European identity;
- Improve policy decisions with regard to their impact on young people across all sectors, notably employment, education, health and social inclusion;
- Contribute to the eradication of youth poverty and all forms of discrimination and promote social inclusion of young people;“¹²

“The EU Youth Strategy focuses on three core areas of action, around the three words: Engage, Connect, Empower, while working on joined-up implementation across sectors. During a 2017-2018 dialogue process, which involved young people from all over Europe, 11 European Youth Goals were developed. These goals reflect the views of European youth and represent the vision of those active in the EU Youth Dialogue:

1. Connecting EU with Youth;
2. Equality of All Genders;
3. Inclusive Societies;
4. Information & Constructive Dialogue;
5. Mental Health & Wellbeing;
6. Moving Rural Youth Forward;
7. Quality Employment for All;
8. Quality Learning;
9. Space and Participation for All;
10. Sustainable Green Europe;
11. Youth Organisations & European Programmes.

These goals identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people’s lives and point out challenges. The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising this vision of young people.”

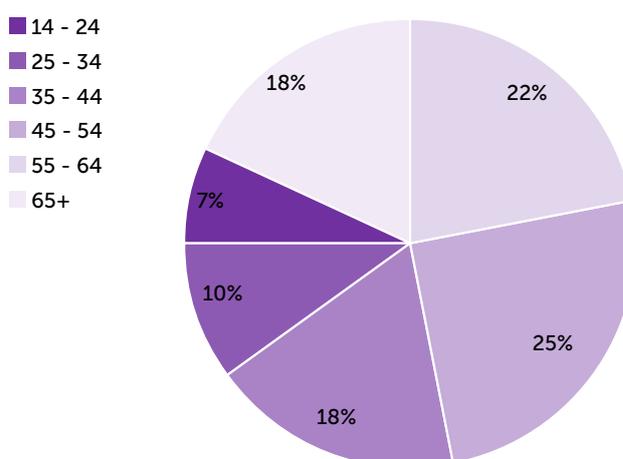
3.2. National desk research on volunteering and social inclusion policies

3.2.1. Ireland

The most recent official national volunteering census figures are from 2011. While more recent census’ have been held, questions about volunteering were not included. All statistics are based on the entire population in the Republic of Ireland.

- Over a quarter of adults aged 15 years and above volunteered in Ireland (28.4% of persons).
- A slightly higher percentage of females (28.7%) than males volunteered (28.1%).¹³
- In terms of time spent volunteering, over 232.8 million hours annually were contributed. Some 65% of those hours were volunteered by those aged 45 years and above. Those aged 15-24 volunteered the least number of hours (6.9%).¹ See figure 1.

Figure 1. Breakdown of volunteering hours by age category, July - Sep 2011¹



¹² Source: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14080-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

¹³ National Census of Ireland 2011 (2011 Reports on Volunteering, Central Statistics office, Dublin Ireland www.cso.ie/en/census/census-2011reports/)

Volunteer Ireland, as the national volunteering development agency in Ireland, recognises volunteers annually from around the country through a formal recognition event: "Volunteer Ireland Awards". This awards programme aims to shine a light on the remarkable work of volunteers around the country by celebrating them on a national level. The Volunteer Ireland Awards are a unique opportunity to say, 'thank you' to ordinary people doing extraordinary work across the country. The President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins is Patron of the Awards. Each year, people from all over Ireland are encouraged to nominate someone they know who gives their time and energy voluntarily.¹⁴

There are 10 categories, reflecting different facets of volunteering work:

- Animals and Environment
- Arts, Culture and Media
- Campaigning and Awareness Raising
- Children and Youth
- Community
- Health and Disability
- Safety and Emergency Services
- Social Work and Social Inclusion
- Sports and Recreation
- Outstanding Group

Each volunteer nominated receives a special Thank You card from Volunteer Ireland acknowledging their service. All nominations are adjudicated by a shortlisting team and a panel of judges. Entries are whittled down to 30 shortlisted nominees with 10 overall category awardees announced at the ceremony. One truly exceptional volunteer receives the Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year Award.¹⁵

The awards aim to celebrate and recognise the thousands of remarkable people across Ireland who selflessly give their time and talent to benefit others. The Volunteer Ireland Awards are open to volunteers of all ages volunteering with Irish volunteer-involving organisations.

Legislation and other regulations relevant to volunteering

Many charities and voluntary organisations would not be able to function without volunteers helping

alongside paid employees. The legal obligations owed to a volunteer as opposed to an employee differ, although currently there is no legislation governing volunteers and their rights. While the rights of volunteers are not as extensive as those of employees, charities do have certain responsibilities for volunteers.

The main distinction between employees and volunteers is that a volunteer does not get paid and the volunteer cannot be forced to perform the actual work. A person will generally be regarded as an employee where they supply labour, cannot subcontract the work, or receives a fixed wage and works a defined number of hours on a weekly basis.¹⁶

An obligation on a volunteer to carry out a task during a certain period may be indicative of an employment relationship, particularly if the 'volunteer' receives regular paid expenses. The payment of expenses may be viewed by the Revenue Commissioners as taxable emoluments from the charity and the volunteer could be deemed an employee on that basis.

This means that the charity, as an employer, will be required to register that person as an employee for tax purposes and pay them at least the national minimum wage.

Whether any particular arrangement is considered to be a contract of employment or not is a question of fact and naming a particular relationship as one thing does not suffice, as the totality of the relationship needs to be considered.

Interestingly, in the UK volunteer agreements are usually entered into, which set out the organisation's volunteer policy and the nature of the relationship between the parties, and can help clarify any issues that may arise.

Legal obligations

A raft of legislation applies to employees including health and safety, organisation of working time, minimum wage, employment equality, data protection, unfair dismissal and redundancy legislation.

The main legislation that applies to a volunteer relates to health and safety and data protection. A volunteer has the same rights under the Data Protection Acts

¹⁴ Volunteer Ireland – About Us (2018), Volunteer Ireland www.volunteer.ie/about-us/what-we-do/

¹⁵ Volunteer Ireland Awards Overview, Volunteer Ireland www.volunteer.ie/events/vi-awards/

¹⁶ Differentiating between Volunteering and working for Pay. Energize Inc, Susan J Ellis, USA <https://www.energizeinc.com/hot-topics/2010/january>

1988 – 2003¹⁷ as an employee. This means that the charity organisation must comply with the rules on personal data that are held about the volunteer on a computer or in paper files.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005¹⁸, all employers must take steps “so far as it is reasonably practicable” to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees and other persons such as volunteers at an employer’s workplace. In order to claim any rights under other employment related legislation, such as unfair dismissal legislation, a person must be an employee.

Best practice

To adhere to best practice in this regard, volunteers should:

- Receive information about the organisation’s purpose, work and values and its policy on volunteers and a clearly written description of the work to be undertaken;
- Be trained/inducted into the organisation (for example, manual handling training to avoid personal injuries claims);
- Be consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect them;
- Be covered by insurance for their actions;
- Be told how to deal with difficulties when volunteering, for example, bullying and harassment policies and so on;
- Carry out their work in a safe environment;
- Be reimbursed for actual agreed expenses;
- Be free from discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, race, sexuality, religion and disability.

In Ireland, there is currently no law or national policy on volunteering so as part of Volunteer Ireland’s strategic plan 2018-2022¹⁹, one of its strategic aims; “Advance Volunteering” will work towards developing and implementing a national policy for volunteering in Ireland. To date, Volunteer Ireland have achieved the government committing, orally in person and in speeches to collaborating in developing this policy.

Legislation and other regulation important for organising volunteering with disadvantaged youth Garda Vetting (Police Check)

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016²⁰ provide a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons. Under the Acts, any person whose work or activity involves access to children or vulnerable persons must be vetted. Workers include staff, volunteers and those on student placements working for a relevant organisation through which they have access to children and/or vulnerable adults. The act defines “relevant organisation” as one that employs or permits a person to carry out work or activities which mainly consist of them having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons. The Act also creates offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions.

The Act stipulates that a relevant organisation shall not permit any person to undertake relevant work or activities, unless the organisation receives a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person.

If a person is seeking employment or intending to volunteer with an organisation which conducts relevant work, the person will be asked to make an application to be vetted. In Ireland, local volunteer centres are registered with the National Vetting Bureau which carries out the service for volunteer-involving organisations in their county.

Garda vetting (Police check) is conducted on behalf of registered organisations only and is not conducted for individual persons on a personal basis.

Special projects or organisations who work in the field of volunteering with disadvantaged youth

There is a vibrant youth work sector in Ireland and there are several government funded projects specifically set up to encourage young people who may have dropped out of main stream education to continue their education, such as the “Youthreach” projects.²¹ In these types of projects, volunteering is used and encouraged

17 Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003, Data Protection Commissioner of Ireland, www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/dsfadataprotectionguide.pdf

18 Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Government of Ireland, Irish Statute book 2005

www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/10/enacted/en/pdf

19 Volunteer Ireland’s strategic plan 2018-2022, Connecting Communities through Volunteering, Volunteer Ireland 2018, www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Volunteer-Ireland-Strategic-FINAL.pdf

20 National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 (Revised 1 January 2019), Government of Ireland, Irish Statute Book <http://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2012/act/47/revised/en/html>

21 Youthreach, a second chance for education, Dublin, Ireland www.youthreach.ie

as a path to develop the young person’s ongoing personal development, but there are no projects set up to target disadvantaged youth specifically.

Volunteer Ireland, as the national volunteer development agency, aims to build the capacity within

3.2.2. Croatia

The state of volunteering

Volunteering in Croatia has a long tradition that can be related to the concept of solidarity, a significant value from the past, although it has been exercised in different ways than it is understood today. Croatian society went through many political and social turbulences that brought a sense of insecurity in peoples’ lives and created a culture of givers and receivers and in turn it influenced the general perception of who can volunteer. Traditionally only the wealthier, the more capable, and people that were more fortunate could help the poorer and those less fortunate. Therefore, there was a need to challenge existing social institutions about who can volunteer and demonstrate that it is every person’s right to volunteer freely and easily, regardless of his or her social and/or economical background or ability.

Croatia is seriously lagging in conducting (longitudinal) research projects on volunteerism, therefore the relevant empirical data is inconclusive. Based on the yearly reports of the volunteer-involving organisations collected by The Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy there is evidence of an increased number of volunteers and volunteer hours, and thus an increased number of registered volunteer-involving organisations (VIO) since 2014 until 2016. Those years were marked with emergencies (2014 floods and 2015 refugees) and resulted with greater numbers of volunteers. In 2017, Croatia experienced emigration due to economic factors, which consequently resulted in a slight fall in the number of engaged volunteers.

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Volunteers	45 955	52 208	48 731	47 372 (49% aged 15 – 30)
VIO	1 032	1 367	1 217	1 168
Volunteer hours	2 597 121	2 943 902	3 332 984	2 603 676

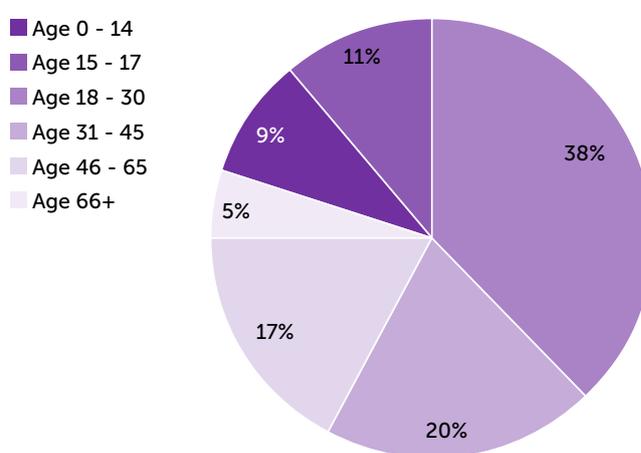
Definition and legal basis of volunteering

According to Croatian law on volunteerism, “volunteering is recognised and promoted as an activity or service

volunteer-involving organisations to increase the number of disadvantaged youth as much as possible. It is hoped that the overall findings of this project will provide evidence and impetus to continue working towards this aim.

of interest to the Republic of Croatia which leads to improvement of the life quality, strengthening social capital, personal development, active inclusion and to the development of more humane and equitable democratic society.”

Breakdown of volunteering by age in Croatia 2017



The Law on Volunteering (The Official Gazette NN 58/07) was adopted by the Croatian Parliament on May 18th, 2007. The amendments on the Law on Volunteering were adopted (The Official Gazette NN 22/13) by the Croatian Parliament on February 8th, 2013. It stipulates the following definition:

Volunteering is an investment of personal time, effort, knowledge and skills, based on free will, to perform services and activities for the benefit of another person or public benefit, which is carried out without the prior conditions of financial reward or any other material benefit for that activity.²²

Besides the principles embedded in the definition, the law on volunteering defines additional basic volunteering principles, such as: non-discrimination of volunteers and volunteering beneficiaries; protection of volunteering beneficiaries; non-exploitation of volunteers; special protection for minors as

²² Law on Volunteerism, Official Gazette No. 58/2007 and 22/2013, Croatia

volunteers; education for volunteering (educating for values); inclusive volunteering; non-chargeability for volunteering; free will and solidarity of volunteering; mobility in volunteering.

In addition to these legally binding documents, several soft law and policy documents have significantly contributed to volunteer development including:

The Code of Ethics on Volunteering²³; National Strategies for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development; National Programmes for Youth; Certificate of Competences Acquired through Volunteering (2014)²⁴; National Curriculum for Volunteer Management Education; Quality Standards for Volunteer Centres and Quality Standards for Volunteer Programmes;

Certificate of competences acquired through volunteering is an official tool for the recognition and validation of competencies acquired through volunteering. The certificate is prepared and published by the Ministry responsible for volunteering, in cooperation with the National Board for Volunteerism Development. The aim of this tool is to provide support to volunteers through the recognition of competencies (knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility) acquired through their volunteering experience.

The Law amendments (2013) introduce the principle of inclusive volunteering and prescribe the provisions that oblige volunteer organisers to pay special attention to ensuring equal conditions of volunteering, with special emphasis on members of socially excluded groups to ensure their social empowerment and inclusion in society. It also introduces the obligation of a volunteer organisation to provide adequate assistance and supervision to volunteers who are members of socially excluded groups.

Persons who lost their power of legal representation were denied the right to be volunteers until the changes in the law of 2013. Although this was done to ensure their protection, the restriction was contrary to the need to develop inclusive volunteering programmes. Therefore, since the change in 2013 and the introduction of the principle of inclusive volunteering every person can be a volunteer, regardless of their mental disability.

Programmes and Initiatives for the Inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering

During 2011, the Croatian Network of Volunteer Centres (CVCN)²⁵ implemented a project that introduced the concept of inclusive volunteering as an innovative tool for social inclusion.

This was an opportunity to explore the meaning of inclusivity in the context of volunteering. The work has led to valuable insights about the impact of active engagement for those who in the context of citizenship have never had an opportunity to be anything else but the beneficiaries. With this insight and experience, in 2013 CVCN started supporting and facilitating the placement of volunteers with disabilities into meaningful volunteering positions in hosting non-profit organisations. Through volunteering, people with disabilities who were often socially disadvantaged and marginalised had an opportunity to restore their social life and gain new skills. The survey that was implemented back in 2011 with 109 representatives of non-profit organisations shows that most Croatian non-profit organisations recognised the great potential of inclusive volunteering, but at the same time many of them did not realise the importance of investing in inclusive volunteer programmes. Many civil society organisations in Croatia declared inclusiveness as an organisational value, but when it came to putting it in practice they were challenged with the lack of capacity to deliver an inclusive volunteer programme. They lacked educated staff, suitable volunteer positions and, in many cases, relevant additional support for volunteers. Soon, CVCN realised that volunteer centres had to invest more in motivation, education and mentorship in order to bring a new prospective of inclusive programmes for organisations.

Governmental programmes promoting volunteering of disadvantaged groups

Finally, a very important process is currently taking place in Croatia – the creation of the first National Programme for Volunteer Development which will be the pivotal strategic document in the field of volunteering, directing the course of its development in the years ahead. One of the proposed measures is to improve inclusive volunteering support through promoting inclusive volunteering and empowering volunteer organisers to implement inclusive volunteering programmes through providing support to volunteer co-ordination.

²³ The Code of Ethics on Volunteering, Official Gazette No. 13/2008, Croatia

²⁴ <https://www.hcrv.hr/hv/kompetencije/public/en>

²⁵ Later Croatian volunteer development centre, <http://www.hcrv.hr>

3.2.3. Denmark

Volunteering and civil society organisations have a long tradition related to the development of the welfare state in Denmark and today there is approximately 100,000 local and national organisations and foundations. The number of volunteers has been fairly constant since the first big research in 2003, but here are some key facts from the latest research in 2017:

- 41% of Danes do volunteer work at any given time, spending 336 million hours volunteering every year. 63 % of Danes have at some point been active in volunteer work within the last five years.
- A few more men than women are volunteers - previously, the gap was even larger, but throughout the years the difference has been diminished (this is especially due to an increase in the number of female volunteers in the social field led by active senior citizens).
- Teenagers and senior citizens over the age of 70 are the largest age groups of Danish volunteers – 42% and 44% respectively.
- The lowest number of volunteers by age group is 25 - 29 year-olds.
- For many years, most research in volunteerism named the 30 – 49 year olds as the most active in volunteer work, but now families with children are overtaken by the growing volunteer engagement amongst grandparents.
- On average, volunteers spend 15 hours a month on their volunteer commitment.
- Mostly, volunteer work is done in associations or volunteer organisations, but self-organised volunteering, activity-based and ad hoc volunteering is on the rise.

Some national policies in Denmark aim to support voluntary work. The government has visions and strategies about social inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering in non-profit organisations. Recent policies in this area include the government's 10 Goals for Social Mobility, the cohesion reform of the public sector and the Civil Society Strategy.

10 goals for social mobility

In May 2016, the government published 10 Goals for Social Mobility with the aim to ensure that everyone becomes a part of the community. The government's

10 long-term social goals seek to achieve that more vulnerable children, young people and adults will complete education and begin employment. Other goals are about fewer crimes, fewer homeless and a bigger effect of alcohol and substance abuse treatment. The purpose of the 10th goal is that more citizens outside the working community participate in voluntary efforts. The former minister of social affairs and the interior said about the goals:

"Education and employment are not equally relevant for all. But the goals are about creating possibilities in that concern and include people in other communities like the volunteering community. Too few outside the labour market participate in the volunteering community. The volunteering community can and must embrace all corners of society – people with fewer resources too. Therefore, the government has chosen to set a goal about more people outside the labour market ought to participate in volunteering. The volunteering sector binds the society together and contains enormous power, which can reach further than today."²⁶

The cohesion reform of the public sector

In April 2017, the government presented their cohesion reform of the public sector. It involved a vision about a better and more coherent public sector through development and the improvement of efficiency. The civil society will be involved to a great extent. Here, the focus will be on creating better possibilities for a greater participation in volunteering communities and better conditions for civil society. This part of the cohesion reform of the public sector is unfolded in a civil society strategy.²⁷

The civil society strategy

The government's civil society strategy was presented in October 2017. A key element to the strategy was for local volunteering organisations to have better terms and for vulnerable citizens to have easier access to volunteering communities. The strategy has three tracks – participation, infrastructure and knowledge – and contains 12 initiatives for a total of 112 million DKK over four years. The government sees great potential in the cooperation between civil society, business and the public sector because they can support and complement each other, which leads to a higher

²⁶ Source: http://www.stm.dk/multimedia/sociale-maal_publikation_large.pdf

²⁷ Source: <https://www.regeringen.dk/nyheder/sammenhaengsreform/>

quality solutions. The government has completed some initiatives that strengthen civil society's conditions and volunteering engagement in society. Among other things the government has achieved new rules that are less stringent about the amount of voluntary work allowed to be undertaken by people who receive unemployment benefit.²⁸

The 12 initiatives in the civil society strategy:

Track 1. Participation and community for everyone

Initiative 1: Strategic partnerships between volunteering organisations and municipalities

Initiative 2: More resources to common solutions

Initiative 3: Strengthening of civil society in rural areas

Initiative 4: Strengthened integration through civil society

Track 2. A supportive and developing infrastructure

Initiative 5: A simpler state support structure in the voluntary social sector

Initiative 6: Local innovation through volunteering organisations

Initiative 7: Strengthening of the local voluntary social sector

Initiative 8: A new national council for volunteering

Initiative 9: A competence boost to the voluntary social sector

Track 3. Knowledge

Initiative 10: Inclusion in volunteering organisations

Initiative 11: More cooperation amongst volunteers and municipalities through education

Initiative 12: Solid knowledge about volunteering

Track 1: Participation and community for everyone

3.2.4. Slovenia

The state of volunteering²⁹

Volunteering in Slovenia has a long tradition and generally, we could say that is very well developed. Each year from 2011 on, organisations involving volunteers, officially known as 'voluntary organisations' or 'organisations with voluntary programmes' report basic statistical data about volunteering. The latest report about volunteering in Slovenia³⁰ was done in the year 2017. The report includes some very inspiring data: 291,214 volunteers did 6,524,717 hours of

The government wishes to strengthen the link between volunteering communities and municipal efforts for vulnerable people and people with disabilities. It means that the civil society's programmes, should complement the public services to the benefit of the citizens. To support this development, the government will allocate funds to strategic partnerships between municipalities and volunteer organisations. The government wishes additionally to allocate funds to gather and share knowledge, which can support and develop the strategic partnerships and contribute to sustainable projects.

Track 2: A supporting and developing infrastructure

The government want it to be easier to be a volunteer.

This requires both supporting stable terms and conditions for volunteer organisations and strong local and qualified volunteer programmes. It will be achieved through a simpler state support structure and administration. The government will allocate funds to strengthen competencies within local volunteer organisations and develop better possibilities to create sustainable solutions to social challenges.

Track 3: Knowledge

The government supports the inclusion of disadvantaged citizens in volunteer organisations. The government will develop civil society to reach the goal of increased participation in volunteering communities amongst people who are outside the labour market. To reach this goal new knowledge about the management of volunteer organisations is required. Therefore, the government has allocated funds to research the best practice of organisational management.

voluntary work. The contribution of the volunteering that took place in 2017 was evaluated to be equivalent to €94,786,789.

Slovenian data consists of youth in two different age groups: below 18 years old and between 18 and 30 years old. In the first group, 36,037 volunteers were reported, while in the second group there were 51,609. Altogether youth represents 30.09 % of all volunteers. At the end of 2017 in Slovenia there

²⁸ Source: <http://socialministeriet.dk/media/19014/strategi-for-et-staerkere-civilsamfund.pdf>

²⁹ Relevant source: Jamšek, P., Novak, T., Bahovec, A., Kobal Tomc, B., Gerl, N. and Vojnovič, L. (2015). Zrcalo prostovoljstva in vloga države pri njegovem razvoju. Ljubljana: Slovenska filantropija, Združenje za promocijo prostovoljstva

³⁰ Source: Skupno poročilo o prostovoljstvu v Republiki Sloveniji za leto 2017. http://www.mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mju.gov.si/pageuploads/SNO/Skupno_porocilo_o_prostovoljstvu/Prost_2017.pdf

were 186,644 people aged from 14 – 30 years old, which means that 19% of Slovenian youth were actively involved in voluntary work. There is no further specific data on youth volunteers, so we do not know how many youth volunteers are also disadvantaged youth.

When it comes to recognition of volunteering the situation is slightly different. From 2011, we have had state awards for volunteering. Volunteers and voluntary organisations can apply each year and they make the selection for the national awards for volunteering; awards are given at a ceremony hosted by the President of the Republic of Slovenia. Each year there is always at least one volunteer representing youth who receives a national award, even if this is not any special rule or selection criteria. Volunteering can be important for people who are receiving state financial support, as it can be raised for 28 or 56% if the person is active in different areas (including volunteering), which in turn could improve their possibilities for employment. One of these activities is also organised voluntary work. This regulation, which started to be implemented in 2014³¹, is highly motivating for disadvantaged youth who are receiving state financial support to start volunteering. A signed voluntary agreement is the basis for a 28% increase in state financial support. The voluntary sector from 2014 reports an increase in the motivation of disadvantaged people for volunteering as well as new challenges for the inclusion of these volunteers, including: lack of long-term motivation, the need for special mentoring/support, and the lack of specially designed voluntary opportunities.

Youth organisations, youth centres and other organisations which provide non-formal education and promote active citizenship as well as the formal school system are very important institutions for encouraging young people to volunteer. Formal school systems support youth volunteering, but concrete action plans are up to each school itself. Primary schools (1-9 year of schooling) often organise “voluntary clubs” run by one of the teachers at school. High schools get involved in the promotion of volunteering very differently. Some of the schools just allow other organisations to promote their voluntary programmes amongst students, while other high schools organise “voluntary sections” and actively connect youth and voluntary organisations. Each student

of a general high school is obliged to contribute 40 hours of extra-curricular activities. According to Slovenian schooling legislation, one of the extra-curricular activities must be voluntary work.

Legal basis of volunteering

In the 2011, Slovenia passed a Volunteering Act³², which is a general act about volunteering. The Volunteering Act provides a definition of volunteering, organised voluntary work, organisations involving volunteers, and long-term volunteering. It also focuses on the basic principles of organised voluntary work (anti-discrimination rules, protection of minors, users, transnational activities). It defines the rights and responsibilities of the volunteer and voluntary organisation, as well as basic issues that must be defined in voluntary work. It recognises some benefits for voluntary organisations, a system of collecting data and obliges the state to have a national strategy for the development and promotion of voluntary work.

The Volunteering Act does not mention specifically disadvantaged youth. However, there are some important aspects to the Act relevant to youth. The first one is that there is a principle of no discrimination. It means that disadvantaged youth have the same rights to be included in voluntary work as other youth. Organisations can still refuse individual volunteers if a volunteering opportunity requires special conditions. There is also a limit of what kind of voluntary work volunteers under 18 years of age can do: voluntary work should be appropriate to their age and psycho-physical development. Mentors should also supervise their voluntary work. One of the obligations of organisations is providing mentorship and training on all voluntary activities that require it, or if volunteers ask for it.

Governmental programmes promoting volunteering of disadvantaged groups

The government of the Republic of Slovenia on 30th May 2018 accepted a strategy of development of non-governmental and voluntary organisations and promotion of voluntary work until the year 2023³³. The national strategy plans to reinforce mentorship for volunteers by providing additional funding to voluntary organisations to do so. Development of the youth voluntary work is also one of the goals written in the

31 SOCIALNA AKTIVACIJA BREZPOSELNIH SKOZI SPODBUJANJE PROSTOVOLJSTVA. (2018).

<https://www.prostovoljstvo.org/resources/files/pdf/analiza.pdf>

32 Volunteering Act (Official Gazette of Republic of Slovenia, 10/11, 16/11, 82/15)

33 STRATEGIJA RAZVOJA NEVLADNIH ORGANIZACIJ IN PROSTOVOLJSTVA DO LETA 2023.

http://www.mju.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/nevladne_organizacije/strategija_razvoja_nevladnih_organizacij_in_prostovoljstva/

Resolution on Youth for the years 2017-2023.

Programmes and Initiatives for the Inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering

Involvement of disadvantaged youth in Slovenia in practice is not very well developed. The biggest obstacle identified is human resources. Non-governmental organisations do not have enough qualified human resources to provide the special mentorship required.

Slovene Philanthropy as a national organisation which promotes and develops voluntary work in Slovenia is providing support to all volunteers and voluntary organisation. The organisation is also active in developing voluntary work for disadvantaged youth. From January 2011 until June 2012 Slovene Philanthropy educated 643 teachers of primary and high schools to run voluntary programmes. 40 hours of the training had a focus on the

involvement of disadvantaged youth in volunteering as an important prevention against violence and exclusion. In 2016, Slovene Philanthropy carried out research about social activation through volunteering. Our analysis found that out of 94 participant organisations, 11 didn't have experience with any kind of involvement of volunteers coming from any kind of vulnerable group. Out of 86 organisations, 35 involved disadvantaged youth as volunteers.

Creating voluntary opportunities for all is still a challenge for Slovenian organisations. Still, we found very good examples of their involvement inside youth organisations and organisations who work with migrants or disabled people.

3.2.5. Germany

Definition and legal basis of volunteering in Germany

Volunteering has a long tradition in Germany. In its traditional term "Ehrenamt" it used to be a formal voluntary commitment within an association or institution. When new forms of volunteering were discussed and motivational changes of volunteers were experienced in the 1990s, the term "bürgerschaftliches Engagement" (civic engagement) more and more replaced the term Ehrenamt in the academic and political discourse on volunteering. Between 1999 and 2002, the Enquiry-Committee "Future of Civic Engagement" of the German Parliament established a nowadays commonly accepted definition of "bürgerschaftliches Engagement" (civic engagement/ volunteering) and defines it as including activities that are:

- oriented towards the common good and benefit,
- voluntary without an employer-employee-relationship and its legal framework,
- taking place in the public sphere and address groups outside the familial circle,
- unpaid and not for financial gain (although in certain cases a limited payment as a form of compensation may be acceptable).

There is however no legal definition nor a legal framework for volunteering in Germany. So far, the

legal provisions relevant to volunteering can be found in different law texts. This includes the Sozialgesetzbücher (Social Codes) II and XII (volunteering by unemployed or welfare recipients), Sozialgesetzbuch VIII (open youth/ street work), the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (Civil Code: public insurance for volunteers), the Income Tax Code (definition of charitable/ non-profit status of bodies, rules for tax-free expense allowance, etc.).

The state of volunteering in Germany

Generally, the value of volunteering is socially and politically widely acknowledged in Germany. There are various instruments for recognition in place, such as the National Volunteering Week or the National Volunteer Awards. It is widely shared that volunteering does serve the well-being of society and can also be of benefit to the people who engage in it. People who volunteer are better tied into society through their work in their communities, learn new skills and capacities through their volunteering, and foster their career prospects. In addition, volunteering can also have a positive effect on life satisfaction and health.

The results of the recent German Survey on Volunteering³⁴ (2014) show that 43.6% of the resident population of Germany from the age of 14 years and above is actively involved in volunteering³⁵. Data shows

³⁴ The German Survey on Volunteering (FWS) is a representative survey of voluntary activities of persons aged 14 and older in Germany and the main source of data on volunteering. It has been conducted on the basis of roughly 40,000 interviews every five years since 1999. The survey is thus a basic instrument for social accounting on volunteering and is funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

³⁵ Compared to the data of previous years however, the time spent by the average individual on voluntary activity has reduced,

however, that opportunities available for volunteering are unequally distributed. There are some social groups within which the rate of volunteering is sometimes considerably lower than the average:

- People with a low level of educational background are less likely to participate in volunteering activities (28.3%) than those with a medium or high level of education (41.1%, 52.3% respectively).
- People in poor financial situations become engaged in volunteering to a far lesser extent than those who see their financial situation as very good.
- People with illness-related impairments get involved in volunteering to a lesser extent (25.8%) than those not suffering from illnesses or from illness-related restrictions on their day-to-day activities (47.4%).
- While the rate of volunteering among older people has increased over the last fifteen years as compared to the figures for the mid-life age bands, engagement weakens substantially in the 'fourth stage of life' (people 70 years and older).
- While people with an immigration background, but without their own personal immigration experience, volunteer in very similar numbers to people without any immigration background, rates of volunteering among people with their own personal immigration experience are below average. However, this group's high level of willingness to become active suggests great potential for engagement in the future.
- With a figure of 41.5%, women engage in volunteering a little less than men (45.7%). Female volunteers remain less likely to take on management or board functions, which suggests that gender equality has not yet been fully achieved in the voluntary sector.

With these findings of the German Survey on Volunteering 2014³⁶, in the past years the public and political debate on volunteering has shifted towards the inclusiveness of volunteering opportunities and how to foster this. "Voluntary engagement seems to be linked to a number of socially structured preconditions and resources that are not accessible on an equal basis to everyone" (Voluntary Survey). It is therefore very important to consider those groups whose rate of voluntary engagement is smaller than the federal average and who may find themselves encountering barriers to access opportunities to volunteer.

Programmes and Initiatives for the Inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering

Within this general debate on inclusive volunteering in Germany, youth work is a first area to explore opportunities and challenges for disadvantaged young people. In youth work facilities, participatory processes of co-determination represent a form of social engagement that provides young people important experience in developing autonomy and a sense of shared responsibility. This task of youth work is laid out by German law under § 11 SGB VIII: Beginning with youth centres, youth workers should provide opportunities for democratic community building in urban districts, municipalities and society more broadly. In 2016, the Bertelsmann Foundation published the study "Gesellschaftliches Engagement von Benachteiligten fördern"³⁷, demonstrating that promoting social engagement among socially disadvantaged children and youth is both possible and necessary. The publication offers youth work professionals a conceptual framework and guidance on how to manage the challenges they face daily in building a sense of community and commitment to society among youth.

Apart from professional youth work, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in volunteering has been an ongoing debate within the voluntary sector for some years. In 2008, the German Red Cross Association published a manual "Volunteering of disadvantaged youth"³⁸ which was widely received and implemented. In 2010, the National Youth Sport Association conducted a study on the inclusive impact of volunteering sports activities³⁹.

Governmental programmes promoting volunteering of disadvantaged groups

While some volunteering strategies on a regional level focus partly on the inclusiveness of volunteering opportunities, the current national volunteering strategy does not explicitly tackle inclusive volunteering. The only clear focus was set on the volunteering of refugees and migrants to support their integration in society⁴⁰.

Among current governmental programmes to support volunteering, Voluntary Services have a special role in Germany with more than 150,000 young people active each year in this full-time, year-long service

and a comparatively smaller proportion of volunteers take on leadership roles.

36 <https://www.dza.de/en/research/fws.html>

37 "Promoting Social Engagement among Socially Disadvantaged Kids in German Public Youth Work – GEBE,"

38 <http://www.jugendsozialarbeit.de/media/raw/DRKBroschuereWebversion.pdf>

39 https://issuu.com/sportjugend/docs/jetst_2_aufgabe_web

40 <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/97916/00c72df530ac8e8049bb06305201a307/engagement-strategie-data.pdf>

programme. For example, the Federal Volunteer Service was established in 2011, aiming at all those who would like to get involved outside of their job or training in the social, cultural or ecological spheres or perform other activities for the common good for 6 to 24 months, while being covered by social security and supervised by professionals in the form of free training and seminars. Within this programme, the inclusion of disadvantaged young people is a central objective. The programme has undergone several evaluations and proposals for inclusive measures⁴¹.

While voluntary services mark a very specific form of civic engagement, there are different governmental funding programmes for volunteering infrastructures which refer to the objective of including (young) people with disadvantages, e.g.:

- "Mehrgenerationenhäuser"⁴²
- The programme "Engagierte Stadt"⁴³
- Project funding can be obtained through a great variety of programmes, e.g.:
- The initiative "Jugend stärken"⁴⁴

3.3. Comparative analysis of volunteering and social inclusion policies and practices in partner countries

The purpose of the desk researches was to make a short analysis of existing EU and national frameworks (Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Slovenia and Germany) in terms of supporting social inclusion of disadvantaged youth in volunteering in non-profit organisations.

Volunteering policies in Europe

As seen from the previous chapters, almost every policy document in the EU since 1983, and in particular recently, has stressed the importance of making volunteering more inclusive. For example, "The new European Solidarity Corps" provides a specific view to facilitate the involvement of young people from excluded groups. The recently adopted European Union Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 also strongly supports inclusive volunteering. EU institutions have set up necessary policy frameworks on volunteering, social inclusion and engaging disadvantaged youth and they urge Member States to take all necessary measures to implement those policies. In addition, some of the EC funding programmes prioritise the issues of inclusion of disadvantaged youth.

Comparative analyses of volunteering policies and practices in partner countries

Despite existing European policy frameworks on volunteering and social inclusion, the practice in Member States varies, depending on the tradition of volunteering, national priorities and political

environment, the level of support infrastructure and citizens' awareness of the importance of active engagement. The comparative analysis of desk researches shows many differences between the countries regarding:

- numbers of citizens volunteering;
- methodology of gathering data on volunteering;
- volunteer recognition on a national level;
- best practice for volunteer organisations regarding social inclusion;
- laws on volunteering and national strategies for civil society.

Volunteering in the countries

Consequently, from the desk researches conducted differences are visible in ways of gathering data on volunteering, as well as percentages of the population engaged into volunteering.

Long term traditional democracies (Denmark, Germany, Ireland) have a more systematic approach in gathering data on volunteering done through comprehensive national research or through gathering statistical data on a national level implemented by state institutions. Post-socialist new democracies (Slovenia and Croatia) have started with this practice recently, noting that in Croatia there is no comprehensive approach in gathering data and thus relevant empirical data is inconclusive.⁴⁵

⁴¹ <https://www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/>

⁴² <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/engagement-und-gesellschaft/mehrgenerationenhaeuser>

⁴³ <https://www.engagiertestadt.de/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/kinder-und-jugend/integration-und-chancen-fuer-junge-menschen>

⁴⁵ The national ministry responsible for volunteering gathers data through an on-line application, which is available to all volunteer-involving organisations, but there are no mechanisms to reach all the volunteer organisers and to collect the exact data on number of citizens

- Ireland (2011): 28% of population volunteered spending around 232 million hours volunteering - aged 15 - 24 volunteered the least.
- Croatia (2017): Over 47000 volunteers spent 2.6 million hours volunteering – 49% of volunteers are young people aged 15 to 30.
- Denmark (2017): 40% of the population aged 16 and over volunteered spending 336 million hours volunteering - around 35 % of youth volunteered.
- Slovenia (2017): 291,000 volunteers spending 6.5 million hours volunteering - around 19% of youth volunteered.
- Germany (2017): 43% of the population aged 14 and over volunteered.

Legal framework for volunteering

When it comes to the regulation of volunteering, the practice also varies from country to country. Countries with a strong tradition of volunteering (Ireland, Denmark, Germany) have no specific laws regulating volunteering. In these countries, some legal provisions relevant to volunteering can be found in different laws which are related to health, safety and the data protection of volunteers. Yet Slovenia and Croatia, which have a long tradition of solidarity, but lack a formal framework for volunteering, have regulated volunteering by adopting national laws on volunteerism. This states that more efforts needed to be invested by national institutions in supporting volunteering and establishing appropriate infrastructure for volunteer development. Laws on volunteering in Croatia and Slovenia define volunteering, volunteers, volunteer organisers as well as their rights and responsibilities, volunteering principles, etc. In addition, Croatia has adopted a Code of Ethics on Volunteering, setting up fundamental principles, values and standards of volunteering to promote best practice in volunteering for volunteers, volunteer organisers and beneficiaries.

National strategies and policies relevant for the development of volunteerism

Even though not all the partner countries have laws on volunteering, it is clearly visible that all countries strive for national strategies or policies that invest in volunteer development, supported by the government.

- **Ireland** - Volunteer Ireland is working in collaboration with the government to develop and implement a national policy for volunteering.
- **Croatia** – CVDC in collaboration with the government is working on the creation of the

first National Programme for the volunteer development.

- **Denmark** - several strategies for civil society in the last 20 years – the latest one is from 2017.
- **Slovenia** – in 2018 the government adopted a strategy to develop volunteer organisations and to promote volunteer work until 2023.
- **Germany** - developed a national volunteering strategy in 2017.

Recognition of volunteering

Even though there is always room for improvement, when it comes to the acknowledgment of volunteering, significant efforts have been invested in most of the countries. Croatia, Germany, Ireland and Slovenia share a good practice in terms of a National Volunteer Awards, with a patron or organised by the government or president. In Croatia, special focus has been given to the development of a tool for recognition and validation of competencies acquired through volunteering (Certificate of competencies acquired through volunteering). The certificate follows the European framework of competencies and is similar to the Youthpass.

Social inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering

In general, in all countries there is a growing awareness about equal opportunities for participation and about social inclusion of disadvantaged people through volunteering. For example, Croatia has made amendments in the law since 2013 containing principles of inclusive volunteering for excluded groups. Moreover, within the first National Programme for Volunteerism Development in Croatia there is a proposal for improved support for inclusive volunteering. In Denmark, the latest national strategy has several goals related to inclusion and since 2018 inclusion is also a specific objective for all volunteer centres if they want to get funding from the state. In Slovenia's volunteer strategy there is a goal regarding the development of youth voluntary work and in Germany there are several governmental programmes with a specific focus on inclusion of disadvantaged young people.

From the desk research analysis, it is evident that there are no specific measures to motivate, facilitate and recognise non-profit organisations who specifically design inclusive volunteer programmes for the benefit of disadvantaged youth.

engaged into volunteering.

Best practices of involving disadvantaged youth through volunteering

When it comes to involving disadvantaged youth through volunteering, we can say that in most of the countries there is not a specific focus on disadvantaged youth.

Typically, they are included in the overall focus on social inclusion or youth projects and activities in general.

Most of the best practices come from individual projects implemented by non-profit organisations with the

general focus on social inclusion and volunteering, including youth as well as other social groups. Even with focus on inclusion and while many organisations work with disadvantaged youth, there is still a long way to go when it comes to the practice of strategically and deliberately involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers.

4. RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING ON THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

After the desk research was conducted, partners implemented an on-line research tool in the format of a questionnaire for volunteer-involving organisations. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions and it sought to gather the experiences and views of non-profit organisations on the existing practices of inclusive volunteer programmes and disadvantaged youth involved in volunteering. It focused on the level of organisational capacity for the development of high-quality inclusive volunteer programmes for disadvantaged youth and, in more detail, the positive and negative implications of existing policy and legislative frameworks, the organisation's own knowledge, skills, and experience, and the available local/national experts/network support system. The key question was what kind of support is needed for deploying sustainable inclusive volunteer programmes in line with the needs of disadvantaged youth.

The questionnaires were distributed to 30 - 40 organisations in Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark and Germany. 413 questionnaires were used for the final analysis, and as well for the comparative overview between the countries.

CEV interviewed 5 EU networks in Brussel, Belgium. In addition, 11 volunteers were interviewed in 5 partner countries (Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, Denmark and Germany). The results of the interviews conducted reflect the impact of volunteering on the young person's personal development, quality of life and the competencies acquired through volunteering, as well as type of the support relevant for their engagement. The interviews of 9 volunteer coordinators reflect specific aspects of volunteer management related to disadvantaged youth as well as the benefits and impact of inclusive volunteering for young disadvantaged volunteers.

4.1. European networks and their members on inclusion of disadvantaged youth volunteers

Primary activities of the network's members and areas of volunteering

Most of the interviewed networks stated that their member's primary activities were based on education, advocacy and organising events. Care or social activities and community building were stated as primary activities of members of three European networks. The primary area of volunteering in two networks was related to social, health or humanitarian work. One network named human rights and democracy as well as three other areas; non-formal education, European citizenship and community building.

Average number of active volunteers and employees of member organisations

The average number of active volunteers varies from 20 up to over 100. Three out of five networks reported that their members have more than 100 volunteers. One of those networks previously stated that care and social care were the primary activities of its members and two

others were networks whose members were active in other fields (non-formal education, European citizenship and community building). One network reported having 100 volunteers and one reported having 20 volunteers currently active (the activities of its members were related to care and social care).

The average number of employees of member organisations was rather small with 2 - 4 employees (in two out of five networks). Two networks reported more than 8 employees and one reported an average of 4 - 6 employees. The networks that reported a larger number of employees of member organisations also reported a larger number of active volunteers.

Written policies for member organisations on involvement of disadvantaged groups

Three out of five networks stated that they have written policies for their member organisations on the involvement of disadvantaged youth. It is interesting to mention that those networks that stated that their

members had over 100 active volunteers didn't have such written policies.

Encouraging members to focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth

Three out of five networks encourage their members to have a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth (between 15-29 years) as volunteers and one network stated that they don't do that because their members already recruit disadvantaged youth. Four out of five networks stated that their members have beneficiaries who then become their volunteers.

All participating networks noticed differences in the number of disadvantaged volunteers from one country to another among their members. Networks stated the reasons for the difference were related to the differing social and economic environments. As well, reasons for differences can be found in the varying support systems in each country, the size of the organisations, the presence of an active policy of involvement of disadvantaged youth, the culture of the organisation itself and the demographic make-up of current employees or volunteers as well as the part of the city in which they are situated.

Network support to its members related to volunteering

All participating networks reported that their members sought support from them when needed. In three

networks part of this support related to involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers. Three out of five networks do not believe they can provide enough information about this area and two of these three are those who are already providing support to their members about involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers.

Obstacles for involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers

According to the networks, their members who do not involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers, do so due to insufficient organisational capacity (36.4%) and insufficient knowledge and competencies (27.3%). According to the research results, the network's members they would need more organisational capacities and resources (30.1%) and knowledge about finding and recruiting these groups of volunteers (23.1%). Also, 23.1% of the answers were related to new activities that were customised to these groups of volunteers.

Among the benefits that disadvantaged youth volunteers would gain through volunteering with network members, they emphasised new knowledge and skills (20.8%), education and work are more accessible (16.7%), better social relations/bigger social network (16.7%), more meaningful everyday life and a feeling of being useful (16.7%), greater self-confidence and independence, and a sense of success (16.7%).

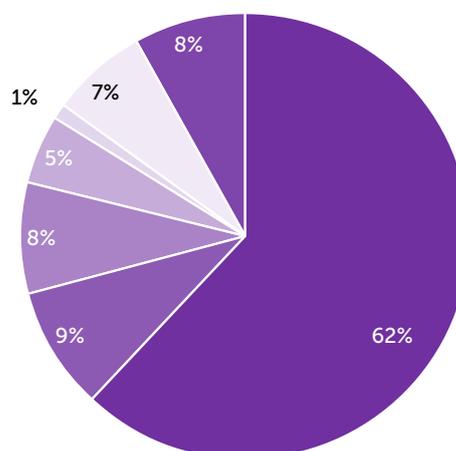
4.2. Volunteer-involving organisations regarding the inclusion of disadvantaged youth volunteers – comparative analysis and general overview

Profile of the organisations

In the online survey for volunteer-involving organisations, **413 organisations participated**. For 62% of them the primary area of volunteering is **social, health or humanitarian work**, while a further 9% work in sport and recreation, 8% in culture and art and 5% in nature, agriculture and environment.

Primary field of volunteering

- Social, health or humanitarian work
- Nature, agriculture or environment
- Sport and recreation
- Religious
- Culture and art
- Human Rights and Democracy
- Other fields



Around **50% of the organisations involved** in the research stated that their primary **volunteering activities are in care and social care**. Besides that, organisations from all countries organise volunteer activities in the areas of counselling, education and events as well as community building activities and mentor or peer-to-peer support.

When it comes to the number of active volunteers and employees within the organisations, the situation differs from country to country. For example, the average number of active volunteers per organisation are similar **in Denmark and Croatia** (around **30% of organisations** in those countries involves between **20 to 50 volunteers**). Slovenia has a unique situation in that **40% of organisations** have a small **number of active volunteers** (up to 10). On the other hand, in **Ireland and Germany over 20% of organisations involve over 100 volunteers** (in Germany this is around 35%).

Number of active volunteers	Slovenia	Ireland	Croatia	Denmark	Germany
1-10	42.6%	24.32%	28.95%	17.93%	22.86%
10-20	19.4%	18.92%	31.58%	18.48%	22.86%
20-50	17.6%	21.62%	31.58%	26.63%	14.29%
50-100	20.4%	13.51%	5.26%	18.48%	5.71%
over 100	7.4%	21.62%	2.63%	18.48%	34.29%

The number of employees within the organisations varies from country to country. In general, we can say that **Ireland and Slovenia have on average more than 8 employees** per organisation. **Croatia** is next with most organisations stating they have **3 to 6 employees**. Interestingly in **Denmark** around **35% of organisations** sampled **didn't have any employees**, which means they were relying exclusively on the engagement of volunteers. Also, more than **20% of organisations in Denmark have only 1 to 2 employees** and there is almost the same percentage of the organisations that employ **over 8 employees**. Like Denmark, **around 30% of organisations from Germany have on average either over 8 employees or 1 to 2 employees**.

Organisations' focus on working with disadvantaged youth

Comparative analysis and research results show that **over 60% of organisations from all countries involved don't have a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth** (between 15-29 years) as volunteers. The percentage is over 50% in every country and it is highest in Denmark (over 75%).

Although 51.6% of participating organisations stated that their organisational articles contain values statements about diversity among volunteers e.g. the inclusion of disadvantaged groups as volunteers, at the same time almost **60% of organisations do not have a written policy about the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups as volunteers**.

Written policy about involvement of disadvantaged groups	Slovenia	Ireland	Croatia	Denmark	Germany
Yes	25%	35.14%	69.23%	20.65%	28.57%
No	65.7%	45.95%	23.08%	70.65%	65.71%
Do not know	9.3%	18.92%	7.69%	8.70%	5.71%

Involvement of disadvantaged youth into volunteering

When it comes to the practice of the involvement of disadvantaged youth in volunteering, the research results are quite similar in all partner countries. In every country, **except Germany, almost 70% of organisations have experienced the involvement of their beneficiaries as volunteers in their organisations**. The highest percentage of organisations that involve their beneficiaries as volunteers is in Slovenia (over 85%) and the lowest is in Germany (28.6%).

Although, **for over 50% of organisations involvement of disadvantaged youth volunteers is not a result of conscious planning**, the same percentage of organisations have had **positive experience working alongside disadvantaged youth** as volunteers. Additionally, **over 20% of organisations have had very positive experiences working alongside disadvantaged youth**.

One of the significant research results is the **length of the volunteering period** of disadvantaged youth. In general, the percentage in every country varies, but on average **most disadvantaged youth volunteer for a longer period than other groups of volunteers or appear as ad hoc volunteers more frequently**. In Denmark, almost 50% of disadvantaged youth are long-term volunteers. The same percentage of disadvantaged youth are appearing more frequently as ad hoc volunteers in Croatia. In Ireland over 28% of disadvantaged youth are long-term volunteers and the same percentage are also more frequently ad hoc volunteers. In Slovenia, almost the same percentage of volunteers are short-term volunteers and long-term volunteers (around 25%). Over 50% of volunteers in Germany are short-term volunteers.

The **most included groups of disadvantaged youth** volunteers are: in Ireland, Denmark, Slovenia and Croatia

volunteers facing economic and social obstacles (people with low income, long-term unemployed, etc.), in Denmark, Ireland and Germany young **volunteers with cultural differences** (refugees and immigrants). In Slovenia there is a high percentage of volunteers with educational difficulties (early school-leavers) and in Denmark quite a high percentage of young people with mental disabilities.

Table: The percentage of volunteers that are already included in participating organisations

	Slovenia	Ireland	Croatia	Denmark	Germany
Mental disability	22.2%	48.6%	39.3%	49.7%	14.29%
Physical disability	17.3%	54.1%	32.5%	45.4%	34.29%
Health problems	17.6%	19.6%	17.9%	37.8%	10%
Educational difficulties	42.9%	56.8%	29.9%	-	-
Cultural differences	30.6%	67.6%	21.8%	44.5%	47.6%
Economic and social obstacles	34.1%	58.4%	36%	33.3%	11.4%

*estimation

Recognised benefits and effects of volunteering

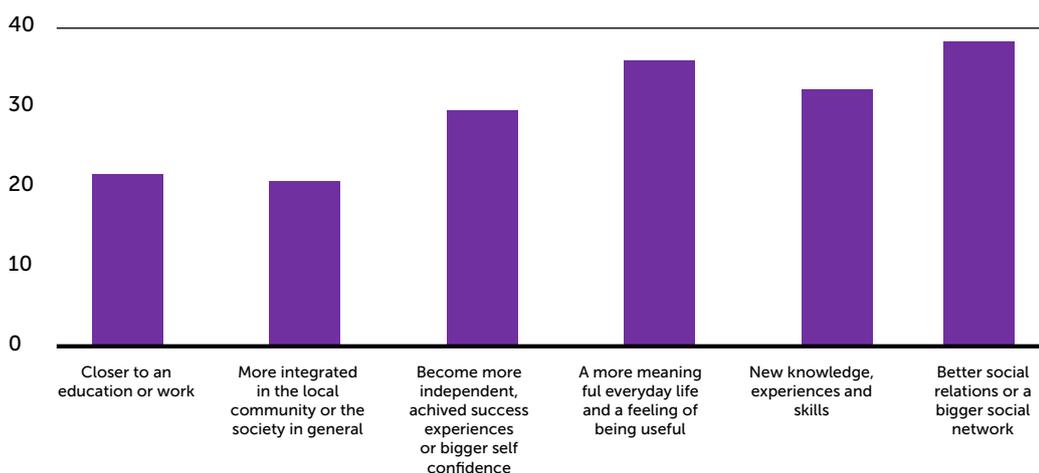
The benefits of involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers have been recognised by both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. Volunteer-involving organisations recognise the **effect on social network, a feeling of usefulness and more meaningful everyday life, as well as gaining new knowledge, experience and skills as the most valuable advantages of volunteering for disadvantaged young volunteers.**

Volunteer-involving organisations also recognise organisational **benefits from involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers.** The most common benefits listed by organisations were:

- **The opportunity to give everyone a possibility to be a part of a social community and providing an active effort** (over 60% in every country)
- **Diversity brings the organisation value, joy and new dimensions** (over 50% in every country, specifically in Ireland and Germany with over 60%)
- **More volunteers and resources within the organisation** – equal to other volunteers (around 50%) in every country
- **New competencies, perspectives and experiences** (around 50% in all countries, except 30% of organisations in Denmark and almost 70% of organisations in Germany)
- **By including the activity’s own target group as volunteers, organisations can better achieve the target group’s interests and needs** (over 30% in every country)

The support needed to involve disadvantaged youth in volunteering and reasons for not involving disadvantaged youth in volunteering
Among those organisations, who do not (yet) include listed groups of volunteers, most of them

Advantages of volunteering for volunteers



agree that they have a possibility to include them. The possibilities vary from country to country and are shown in the table below. In **Slovenia**, more than **70% of those organisations** stated that **they have possibility to include those volunteers facing discrimination because of age and religion**; in **Ireland**, **29.7% homeless volunteers and those facing discrimination because of disability**; in **Croatia**, **78.6% volunteers who are descendants from immigrant or refugee family**, while in **Denmark** **48.1% of organisations**, who do not yet include these group of volunteers could **include volunteer ex-offenders**.

Table: The percentage of volunteers that could be included in participating organisations

	Slovenia	Ireland	Croatia	Denmark	Germany
Mental disability	26.9%	14.3%	35.7%	24.9%	57.14%
Physical disability	46.3%	23%	50.6%	44.9%	28.57%
Health problems	45.1%	15.5%	51.5%	41.4%	71.4%
Educational difficulties	41.4%	18%	51.7%	-	-
Cultural differences	53.5%	14%	59.7%	40.2%	36.4%
Economic and social obstacles	49.8%	17.6%	50.2%	38.4%	53.3%

*estimation

To involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers to a greater extent, the research results show that all participating countries face the same **challenges**:

- on average, 60% of all organisations named the **lack of organisational capacity as well as insufficient resources** as the main challenges they are facing when it comes to increasing their involvement of disadvantaged youth as volunteers;
- **one third of organisations** stated that they would **need new tailored activities to accommodate disadvantaged youth as volunteers**;
- **one third of organisations** stated that they **lacked knowledge about managing, leading and motivating disadvantaged young volunteers**.

When it comes to groups of volunteers that it is not possible to involve, the situation is quite similar in some of the countries. In Croatia, Ireland and Slovenia it was predominantly youth with mental disabilities, as well as ex-offenders particularly in Ireland, that organisations felt they could not involve as volunteers. In Denmark and Germany it was mostly youth who were homeless that organisations felt they could not involve. Germany and Slovenia had the highest percentage of organisations listing youth with physical disabilities as not possible to involve.

Table: The percentage of volunteers that is not possible to include in participating organisations

	Slovenia	Ireland	Croatia	Denmark	Germany
Mental disability	50.9%	37.1%	25%	25.4%	28.57%
Physical disability	38.6%	18.4%	16.9%	9.7%	37.14%
Health problems	37.3%	48%	30.6%	20.8%	18.6%
Educational difficulties	15.7%	11.7%	18.4%	-	-
Cultural differences	15.4%	10.3%	18.5%	15.3%	16.2%
Economic and social obstacles	14.5%	14%	13.8%	28.3%	35.2%

*estimation

Less than 10% of all organisations involved in the research do not consider involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers at all.

The most common reasons for not involving these groups vary from country to country and can be summarized as follows:

- organisations from **Slovenia and Denmark** state that **volunteers' tasks demand a special knowledge or specific skills and that disadvantaged youth are too vulnerable or not stable enough for the types of activities on offer**;
- **insufficient organisational capacity and suitable settings e.g. for persons with a disability** were the main reasons for not involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers among organisations from **Croatia**;
- Some of the main reasons for not involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers in **Ireland and Germany** were the **lack of suitable settings and insufficient organisational capacity**, and the fact that **volunteers' tasks demand a special knowledge or specific skills**.

In addition, some countries recognised other challenges faced when involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers. For example, in Croatia it is recognised that disadvantaged youth have a low interest in volunteering in general. In Ireland, several organisations stated that due to the highly sensitive nature of their work they were not able to involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers.

The last part of the research was focused on the support needed by organisations to involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers. From the answers provided it is clearly visible that organisations need additional support. In general, **over one half of organisations recognise national and local volunteer centres and volunteering organisations as a relevant resource and source of support** in the area of volunteering and social inclusion. **This is particularly the case in Croatia, Germany and**

Ireland. Organisations from **Denmark and Slovenia** have slightly different results, which indicate that most organisations there seek support **from within their own organisations.** For over **30% of all organisations the support currently provided is estimated as**

between insufficient and partially sufficient. Over 20% of organisations consider the support currently provided as partially sufficient in all countries except for Croatia where 42% of organisations consider the support provided as partially sufficient.

4.3. Young disadvantaged volunteers' experience of volunteering and inclusion

As part of the research, interviews were conducted with young volunteers from disadvantaged groups. 11 young volunteers from disadvantaged groups participated in the interviews giving their views and perspectives about the positive effects of volunteering in their lives in general.

During in-depth interviews, volunteers stated that their volunteering experience has:

- increased their self-confidence, abilities, skills and knowledge;
- given them a feeling of belonging and being less lonely;
- increased their physical and psychological wellbeing;
- helped with widening their social network, etc.

The most recognised benefit by interviewed volunteers was increased confidence in their skills, knowledge, abilities and self-image.

"For me, volunteering was very positive experience, because I want to help people like me. When I was helping younger boy who also had Asperger's syndrome, like me, he said: "I'm so happy that I can speak with someone, who is my kind." volunteer, Slovenia

"Since I have started volunteering, I feel that I have more confidence, I feel more brave and I feel that life is more

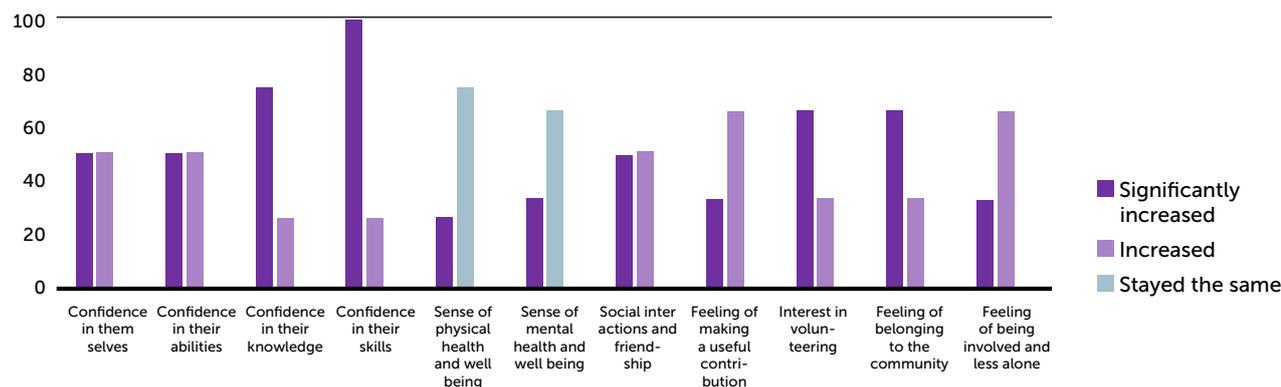
beautiful, when you can help someone. I have learned sign language and because of that I am very happy and proud." Irena, Croatia

"The difference is that I no longer doubt my abilities, regardless of my disability. I do not doubt what I can do – not even a little. And what has changed is that I've met new friends, I've discovered this new, physical ability." Martina, Croatia

One of the most significant benefits and effects of volunteering for disadvantaged youth is the fact that it helps them come out of the social isolation they often experience as inactive members of their community and society. Therefore, when asked about their volunteering experience interviewed volunteers often pointed out their feelings of belonging to the community, of being involved and feeling less lonely as well as benefiting from more social interactions with other people. Regardless of their disadvantage, interviewed volunteers recognised the same or similar effects and benefits of volunteering on their wellbeing.

"There is also more social life – my social circle got bigger, I have more contacts. Before, I didn't had social network. Now, I do – not just in my hometown, but also internationally. It gives me feeling, that I'm not alone." volunteer, Slovenia

Sense of effects of volunteering



4.4. Volunteer coordinators perspective on the inclusion of disadvantaged youth volunteers

Interviews with volunteer coordinators gave an overview of the existing practice and good examples of working with disadvantaged youth. Through their interviews, volunteer coordinators recognised the benefits of volunteering for disadvantaged youth and their organisations, and gave specific examples of involving disadvantaged youth volunteering as well as challenges encountered.

Recognised benefits for volunteers

Like the perspectives of the young people interviewed, volunteer coordinators also recognised the valuable and positive benefits and effects of volunteering for disadvantaged youth in terms of their increased skills, knowledge, abilities and self-confidence, as well as their active participation in the community.

“The changes that they encounter are that they feel better, feel more useful, they use those skills that they have learned during education or during our program. So, they are not only those who receive someone’s support, those who need someone’s help, but they also start seeing that their skills and knowledge can somehow contribute and help others and that they can participate in the local community.”
Tena, volunteer coordinator, Croatia

“Volunteers gain knowledge, experiences, social skills, they feel as part of international environment, (activists, meeting the volunteers from the region), with additional motivation for active participation in society. Through volunteering, they gain the understanding why this is important to actually change something in the world.”
Ines, volunteer coordinator, Slovenia

Benefits for volunteer-involving organisations

Almost all the interviewed coordinators agreed that **disadvantaged young people are more inclined to volunteer for longer periods, more reliable as volunteers, and that they bring new, young energy. Coordinators felt the new input provide by young disadvantaged volunteers and inclusive volunteer programmes and activities could enhance the satisfaction of the organisation’s beneficiaries.**

Among the benefits of inclusive volunteer programmes for organisations, coordinators recognised three main aspects:

- Volunteers **bring more diversity to programmes.** For example, an organisation that primarily focuses on environmental challenges started a new project called Diversity & Inclusion. Other organisations said that it helped them to become more aware of the young people’s resources and opportunities.
- Disadvantaged youth volunteers are **influencing the volunteer community** –stereotypes are broken, a culture of dialogue is established, and there is better communication about taboo subjects, for example, refugees and migrants.
- The volunteers, who were beneficiaries in the past, **understand current beneficiaries** of the organisation in a completely different way than other volunteers, since they were in that same situation themselves. They have more in-depth knowledge of the organisation’s target group and can create different, very valuable relationships with their beneficiaries.

Specific volunteer management requirements

During interviews, the coordinators pointed out that from their experience disadvantaged youth volunteers connected more easily with the organisation’s beneficiaries, and that they are more active and dedicated. Their motivation for volunteering varies, often volunteers, who were the beneficiaries in the volunteering organisation in the past, want to give something back of what they themselves have experienced in the organisation. Since they are often socially excluded, young disadvantaged youth are also looking for company, and they would like to actively contribute to their local or global environment. They still recognise the organisation as a safe place, and spending time there prevents them from feeling lonely.

They see volunteering as a learning opportunity to develop their skills, or they see it as useful for their future education.

Volunteer coordinators also emphasised the importance of the appropriate individual approach when involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers.

It certainly takes more time and effort invested in maintaining their motivation; it takes a lot of patience in communication and in implementing the tasks and requires more encouragement, guidance and work on building their self-confidence.

“The motivation, together with volunteers’ needs and interests, can change, and that is why the support is crucial for their development in the future.”
Torben, volunteer coordinator, Denmark

When seeking support, the disadvantaged youth volunteers differ from other volunteers in terms of their need for more support in general. For example, they need more help in defining their responsibilities and setting limits in the beneficiary-volunteer relationship. It is also very important to offer them a safe space where someone will listen to them, where they can express their uncertainties, difficulties, disagreements and fears. The interviewed coordinators also emphasised the importance of regular reflection with disadvantaged youth volunteers to recognise what went well and talk about what has been difficult in certain situation. Disadvantaged youth volunteers need more direction and supervision. As some mentors pointed out, it is important that their

coordinator is sometimes present while they are volunteering, just in case something goes wrong, or if they feel insecure.

“ We believe that every volunteer, as well as any of us, needs individual approach and individual support. That includes everyday tasks, as well as in some other segments, such as support in education, learning new skills, etc.

So far, experience has shown us that young people with disadvantages are really hard working volunteers and frequently stay longer than volunteers without disadvantages, but they occasionally do need more encouragement, more guidance, more work on building their self-confidence. ”

Tena, volunteer coordinator, Croatia

Challenges of involving disadvantaged youth

The main challenge of working with disadvantaged young volunteers’ that coordinators recognised was the need for more monitoring and support, which can be limited due to the lack of organisational capacity. Volunteer coordinators also emphasised that sometimes their fellow employees lacked the knowledge and training for working with this group of volunteers.

5. SUMMARY OF THE FOCUS RESEARCH REPORT AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of the Focus Research Report was to give an overview of existing EU and national policies and practices that support the inclusion of disadvantaged youth through volunteering. To approach the topic comprehensively, the overview was done through several channels: desk research on existing policies on EU and national level; research of volunteer-involving organisations and interviews with disadvantaged youth volunteers and their volunteer coordinators.

The desk research overview shows that EU institutions have stressed the importance of making volunteering more inclusive through relevant policy papers since 1983. Recent documents and strategies such as “The New European Solidarity Corps” and EU Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 provide a specific view and strongly support the involvement of disadvantaged youth. EU institutions urge Member States to take all necessary measures to implement these policies.

Despite the existing EU policy framework on volunteering and social inclusion, the practice in Member states varies, which is clearly visible through analysis of the desk research among partner countries. Regarding the recognition of volunteering on a national level, the definition of volunteering, best practices for volunteer-involving organisations and national legal frameworks for volunteering:

- Countries with a long volunteering tradition (Ireland, Denmark and Germany) have no specific laws on volunteering. Volunteering is regulated through different law texts and is related to health, safety and data protection of volunteers, while Croatia and Slovenia as post-socialist young democracies have specific laws to regulate the practice of volunteering.
- The fact that all countries realise the need for national strategies relevant for the development of volunteerism (either they already adopted it or strive to adopt it) suggests that volunteering needs to be supported and recognised on a national level by relevant institutions.
- In general, there is a growing awareness about equal opportunities to participate in volunteering and about the social inclusion of disadvantaged people through volunteering. While disadvantaged youth have been

included in the overall focus on social inclusion or youth projects and activities, there is a lack of specific motivational and regulatory measures for inclusive volunteer programmes for disadvantaged youth.

Although there are no national documents targeting volunteering of disadvantaged youth specifically, the practice in each country shows that there are good examples of involving disadvantaged youth. Such projects and activities are mainly implemented by leading organisations in volunteering or those organisations dealing with youth or the issues of social inclusion.

The research conclusions on the existing practice of involving disadvantaged youth can be summarised as it follows:

- Most volunteer-involving organisations that participated already included disadvantaged youth volunteers and over 70% of them (except Germany) have experienced involvement of their beneficiaries as volunteers. Though for over 50% of organisations this has not been a result of conscious planning.
- Although 48.6% of participating organisations stated that their organisational articles contain values statement about diversity among volunteers, e.g. inclusion of disadvantaged groups as volunteers, 61.8% of organisations do not have a written policy about the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups as volunteers.
- In general, more than 60% of organisations that participated in the research do not have a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth or written policies about the involvement of disadvantaged groups.
- The most included groups of disadvantaged youth volunteers are those facing social and economic obstacles and those volunteers with cultural differences.
- The research results show that organisations felt that they were not able to involve some specific groups of disadvantaged youth, such as homeless youth, youth with mental disabilities, youth with psychiatric conditions, ex-offenders and ex-drug and alcohol abusers. This may indicate that there is a significant level of hesitation and fear of the unknown,

combined with prejudice and stigmatisation of certain social groups that can lead to further exclusion.

- Disadvantaged youth volunteers tend to be long-term volunteers or ad-hoc volunteers for a longer period.
- Organisations face similar challenges and obstacles to increasing their involvement of disadvantaged youth: lack of organisational capacity and resources as well as knowledge on how to work with specific groups of volunteers. Thus, targeted support is needed and could be provided by national/local volunteer centres that are already recognised by volunteer-involving organisations as resource centres.

Volunteers and volunteer coordinators have recognised different benefits and effects of volunteering on volunteers:

- it increases confidence in themselves in general and their abilities, skills and knowledge;
- it gives them a feeling of belonging and being less alone;
- it increases physical and psychological wellbeing;
- it creates a wider social network, etc.

From the perspective of volunteer coordinators, it takes a lot of effort and dedicated engagement, as well as a structured approach to create the enabling and supportive environment that is one of the key preconditions for involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research indicate that there is significant evidence in favour of inclusive programmes that support disadvantaged and marginalised youth to participate actively in volunteering.

Social inclusion is defined as a process “Where a person or group of persons participates actively and equally in mutually developing communities regardless of differences in assumptions and functional ability, including contextual factors”.⁴⁷

Inclusion support measures aim to ensure that the individual’s and the community’s interests are accommodated. Social, learning, physical and cultural barriers should not hinder an individual’s participation.

Here, participation is about people actively engaging and contributing in volunteer work in whatever way they can. There are many forms of participation in voluntary communities.

The success of social inclusion programmes depends not only on the kind of volunteering activities on offer, but also on the kind of support and conditions that governments, volunteer development agencies and volunteer-involving organisations can provide. Even though there is an enabling political and social framework for the development of inclusive volunteering, as of yet there are no specifically developed mechanisms to encourage and support disadvantaged youth to volunteer, or to motivate and support non-profit organisations to create inclusive programmes.

Therefore, it would be important to consider the following recommendations:

1. Create and practice open and inclusive policies at all levels

The benefits of inclusive programmes include: increased diversity, the development of a culture of solidarity and respect, increased civic participation in the community and decision-making, better and more representative services, better life conditions, and a sense of ownership and belonging for all members of the community. Therefore, it is important to create

and practice open and inclusive policies at all levels and to use narratives that will challenge stereotypes, decrease exclusion, discrimination and alienation.

2. Create policies and specific measurements to develop a support system for inclusive volunteer programmes on a national and EU level

Such policies and measures will more directly lead to the improvement of practice in both quantity and quality, including the implementing of a system that monitors this improvement. The measures should specially address three mutually reinforcing issues: the challenge of motivating the disadvantaged, the need of volunteer-involving organisations for additional resources and the need for increased public awareness of the positive impact that volunteering can have on empowerment and inclusion.

3. Strengthen the role of national volunteer development agencies and volunteer centres

National volunteer development agencies and volunteer centres should be supported to embrace social inclusion as one of their core values and to invest more in the motivation, education and mentorship of volunteer-involving organisations so that they have a greater understanding of and capacity to deliver inclusive volunteer programmes.

4. Design programmes that overcome psychological and physical barriers of specific groups

Volunteer-involving organisations have similar challenges and opportunities across the EU. Inclusive volunteering programmes require special attention in terms of creating volunteer positions, providing additional support, overcoming barriers and tracking results. Training and support, such as mentoring and education, impact measurement tools, the design of tailor made inclusion programmes, transnational projects, and quality standards should be developed for volunteer-involving organisations. Some of the key barriers for successful inclusive programmes are; lack of empathy with vulnerable groups; lack of organisational resources; prejudice about abilities of specific social groups; inadequate suitable work environments; and lack of resources to provide the extra support volunteers may need. For such programmes to have the desired impact,

⁴⁷The definition is overtaken from the report “Examination of the management’s importance for inclusion”, done by Rambøll company in March 2019, Denmark.

they should consider the specific needs, constraints and other social characteristics of individual youth groups. Programmes need to be designed in a way to overcome psychological and practical barriers of specific social groups.

5. Motivate volunteer-involving organisations to use impact measurement procedures

In this way, volunteer-involving organisation will collect specific data, evidence and testimonies regarding disadvantaged youth volunteers/volunteering in order to provide evidence regarding the improvement

of wellbeing, social capital and socio-economic development that results from volunteering.

6. Support development of transnational partnerships

Support development of transnational partnership in order to create more European-wide practices, improve infrastructure for sustainable volunteering opportunities for disadvantaged youth as a path to social inclusion and to reach more standardised indicators of the impact of volunteering at the macro level.

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH RESULTS

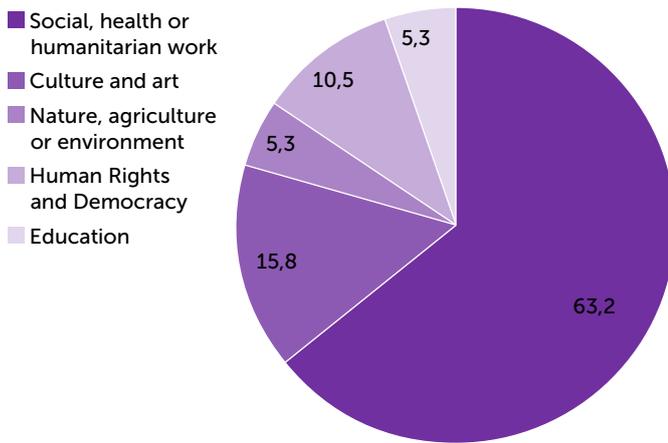
7.1. Croatia

Overview of the sample

39 volunteer-involving organisations were sampled. The primary field of volunteering for 63.2% of the sampled organisations was social, health or humanitarian work.

In 28.2% of participating organisations there were more than 8 employees, while 35.8% of organisations had 2 to 6 employees.

Primary field of volunteering



Inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers

65.8% of organisations had articles of association or a vision that contained values about diversity among volunteers. 69.2% of organisations had written policies covering the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups as volunteers.

53.8% organisations did not specifically focus on recruiting disadvantaged young volunteers.

Among the organisations which are inclusive towards disadvantaged young volunteers, 54.5% of them reported that the involvement of disadvantaged youth volunteers is a result of conscious planning. 54.5% also reported they had a positive experience working alongside disadvantaged young volunteers, and 24.2% reported having had a very positive experience.

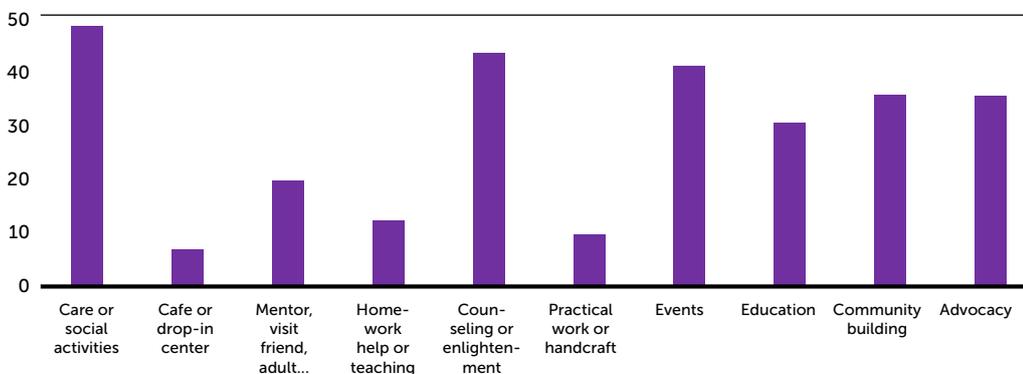
Of these, 48.7% of the organisations' primary activities were care or social activities, in 43.6% counselling and in 41% event organisation.

84.6% of organisations involved volunteers who had previously been beneficiaries of their programmes.

92.1% of organisations had 50 or less volunteers, while 7.9% organisations had more than 50 volunteers.

Among the most included groups of volunteers are

Primary volunteering activities



volunteers from a national or ethnic minority (65.5%), with low standards of living (63.3%), with low income (60%), who face long-term unemployment or poverty (62.1%), volunteers who live in remote or rural areas (66.7%) and those living in peripheral regions (62.1%). All mentioned groups are included in more than 60% of organisations.

	Already included	Possibility to include	Not possible to include
Mental disability	39.3%	35.7%	25%
Physical disability	32.5%	50.6%	16.9%
Health problems	17.9%	51.5%	30.6%
Educational difficulties	29.9%	51.7%	18.4%
Cultural differences	21.8%	59.7%	18.5%
Economic and social obstacles	36%	50.2%	13.8%

Most of the volunteers are sporadic volunteers. 46.9% of them are sporadic volunteers, but for a longer period and 25% of them at a small number of events.

Organisations involved in the research sample recognised that the most important positive effect of involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers was that it gave everyone the option to be a part of a social community and to contribute (84.4%). Other effects recognised refer to better understanding and achieving target group interests and needs (56.3%) and more volunteers and resources (59.4%).

Effect of Volunteering on Disadvantaged Youth

There were many specific benefits of volunteering that disadvantaged youth volunteers may experience. 56.4% of organisations identified better social relations or a bigger social network as a benefit, 79.5% said a benefit was new knowledge, experiences and skills. 51.3% felt volunteering gave disadvantaged youth a

more meaningful everyday life and a feeling of being useful, and 61.5% felt they became more independent, experienced success and gained self-confidence. 56.4% said they were more integrated in the local community or society in general and that 38.5% of organisations said volunteering helped get disadvantaged youth gain an education or employment.

What is still missing?

The organisations that didn't involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers stated the following reasons: insufficient organisational capacity (72.7%) and lack of suitable settings (36.4%). 28.2% organisations from the Croatian sample currently do not involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers. 7.7% of organisations from the sample wouldn't consider involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers at all. Also, organisations recognised a low interest of disadvantaged youth for volunteering in general.

Among the factors that would help an organisation to involve disadvantaged youth to a greater extent as volunteers are for 69.2% organisational capacity and more resources, 35.9% require a better physical environment – (e.g. for persons with a disability) and for 33.3% new activities were needed– ones that would be suited to these groups of volunteers, as well as knowledge about handling, leading and motivating these groups of volunteers.

38.24% of sampled organisations seek support when needed in their national volunteering network, 32.35% in local volunteering organisations and 23.53% inside their organisation.

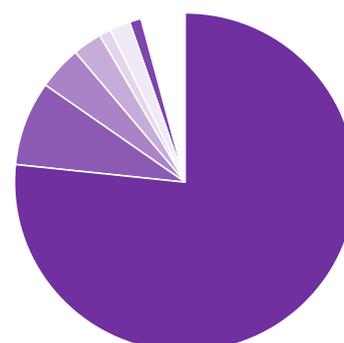
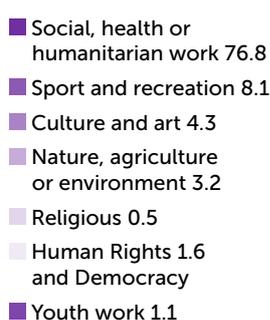
31.4% of organisations felt the current level of support was sufficient, while 45.7% felt it was somewhat sufficient.

7.2. Denmark

Overview of the sample

The Danish sample included 191 organisations, 76.8% of which the primary field of volunteering was social, health or humanitarian work. 42.9% of organisations identified their primary activities as care or social activities. In 27.7% of organisations the primary activity was counselling or raising awareness, followed by 22% providing a Café service or drop-in centre. 20.4% listed other activities such as: scouts, self-help groups, sports activities, etc.

Primary field of volunteer work



The current number of volunteers in participating organisations was 20-50 in 26.5% of organisations, more than 50 in 37.3%, while in 17.8% of organisations there were up to 10 volunteers.

35.1% of participating organisations had no employees. 21.1% had one or two employees and in 22.7% there were more than 8 employees.

Inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers

45.9% organisations have articles of association or a vision that contained values about diversity among volunteers. In 70.8% there were no written policies about the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups as volunteers.

78.4% of participating organisations did not have a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth (between 15-29 years) as volunteers.

65.9% of organisations reported that they had beneficiaries who went on to become volunteers.

In 60.1% of organisations the involvement of disadvantaged youth as volunteers is not a result of conscious planning.

Their experience working alongside disadvantaged young volunteers was positive in 49% of organisations and very positive in 21%. In 28% of organisations it was neither positive nor negative. Negative experiences were reported by 2.1%.

Among 191 participating organisations from Denmark, 83.8% of them include at least one category of disadvantaged youth volunteers. The most included groups of volunteers are: those on social benefits, early retirement or long-term unemployed (72.4%); youth with mental disabilities (49.7%) and physical disabilities (45.4%); immigrants or refugees (44.3%) and descendants of immigrants or refugees (55.7%).

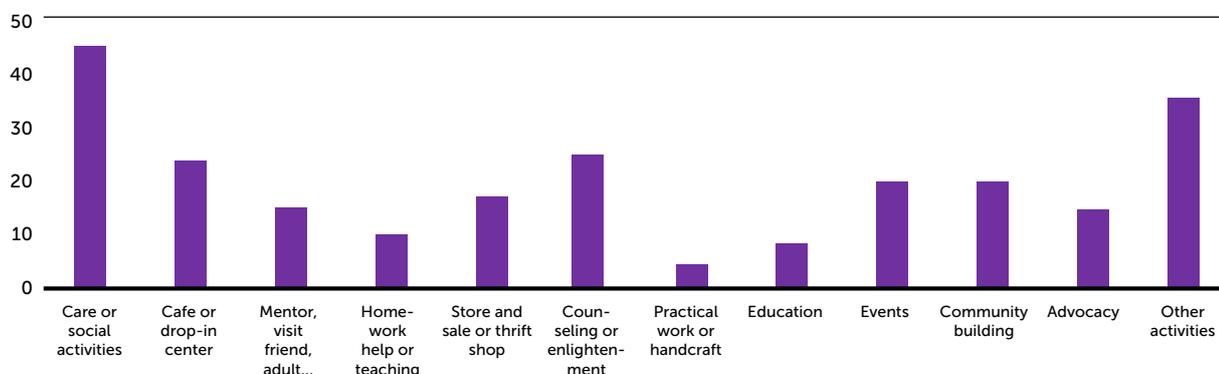
	Already included	Possibility to include	Not possible to include
Mental disability	49.7%	24.9%	25.4%
Physical disability	45.4%	44.9%	9.7%
Health problems	37.8%	41.4%	20.8%
Educational difficulties	-	-	-
Cultural differences	44.5%	40.2%	15.3%
Economic and social obstacles	33.3%	38.4%	28.3%

The most included group of disadvantaged youth volunteers are volunteers with on cash benefits, early retirement or long-term unemployed, descendants of immigrants or refugees as well as volunteers with mental disability. 49.7% of organisations reported that it was not possible to include homeless youth as volunteers.

Disadvantaged young volunteers were long term volunteers in 46.2% of organisations and short-term volunteers in 23.8% of organisations.

Among the benefits of the inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers 47.6% organisations recognised the

Primary volunteering activities



opportunity to give everyone a possibility to be a part of a social community and providing an active effort. 42.9% of organisations think that one of the benefits may be related to more volunteers and resources within their organisations and 40.8% felt that diversity brings the organisation value, joy and new dimensions.

Effect of volunteering on disadvantaged youth

Among benefits that volunteering has on disadvantaged young volunteers, 55% of organisations noted better social relations or a bigger social network and 49.2% noted a more meaningful everyday life and a feeling of being useful.

What is missing?

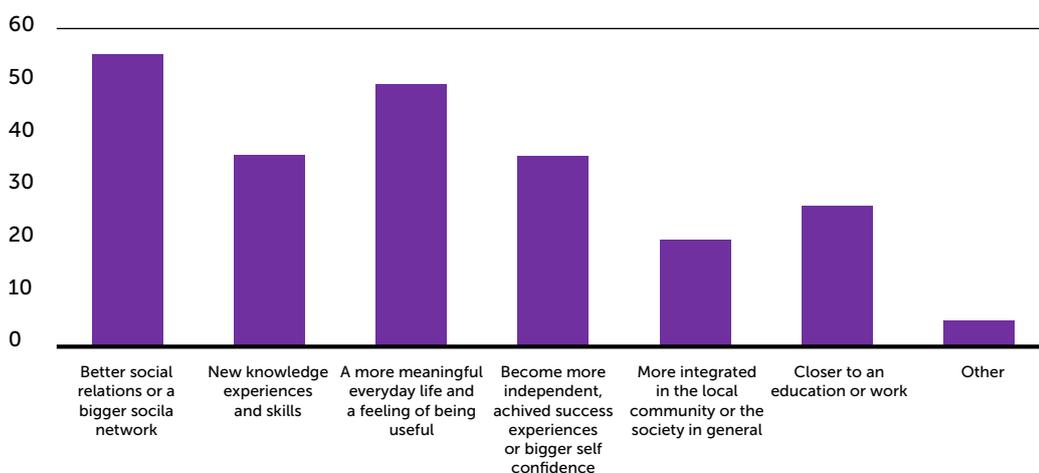
Those organisations that don't involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers state the following reasons: the volunteers' tasks demand a special knowledge and skills (44.8%) and because they are too vulnerable and not stable enough for the type of activity (37.9%).

15.3% organisations from the Danish sample do not involve disadvantaged youth. 1.6% of organisations from the sample don't consider involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers at all.

46.1% of participating organisations responded that they would need organisational capacity and more resources for more involvement of disadvantaged young volunteers, also new activities tailored to their groups of volunteers would be needed in 25.1% of organisations.

31.8% of organisations seek support related to volunteering inside their own organisation, 27.1% seek it in their local network and 16.5% in their national network. In 37.1% of organisations their estimation of received support is neither sufficient nor insufficient, while in 14.7% it is sufficient and in 12.4% insufficient.

Benefits of volunteering on disadvantaged young volunteers



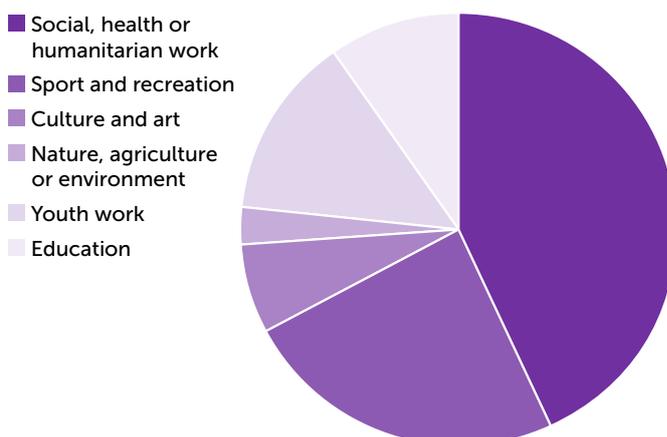
7.3. Ireland

Overview of the sample

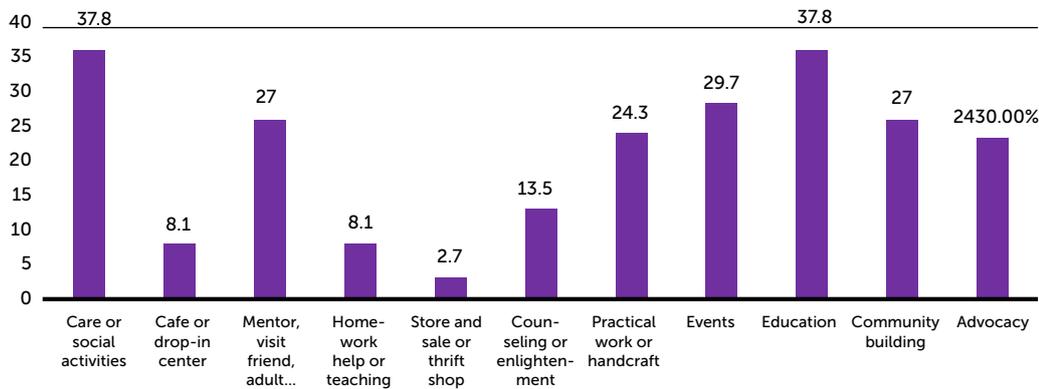
Among 37 participating organisations from Ireland 48.6% had a primary field of volunteering that was social, health or humanitarian work. 21.6% organisations worked in sport and recreation and 10.8% in youth work.

In 37.8% organisations the primary activities were care or social activities, in 37.8% education and in 29.7% event organisation.

Primary field of volunteering



What are your primary activities?



Currently there are 20 active volunteers in 43.2% of participating organisations and more than 50 volunteers in 35.1% of participating organisations. The number of employees in the organisations varies. In 37.8% of organisations there are more than 8 employees, while there are no employees in 18.9% of organisations.

Inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers

In 45.9% of organisations their articles of association or their vision contains values about diversity among volunteers e.g. inclusion of disadvantaged groups as volunteer.

35.1% of organisations have a written policy about the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups as volunteers. There are differences among specific groups of young disadvantaged volunteers based on whether the organisation has a written policy or not. That difference is seen in young volunteers who face discrimination because of gender, who are ex-offenders, ex-drug or alcohol abusers, living in peripheral regions and they are immigrants.

For 44.1% of participating organisations the involvement of young disadvantaged volunteers is not a result of conscious planning.

In 61.1% of organisations there is not a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth (between 15-29 years) as volunteers. There are differences among specific groups of young disadvantaged volunteers

based on whether the organisation has a specific focus on recruiting these groups, and this is seen in young volunteers with severe illness and in young volunteers who are immigrants.

73% of organisations reported that their beneficiaries became their volunteers. 48.6% of organisations had a positive experience working alongside young disadvantaged volunteers, and 21.6% had very positive experience.

The participating organisations listed the following needs for involving more disadvantaged young volunteers: in 59.5% they need increased organisational capacity and more resources, and in 27% of organisations a better physical environment is needed e.g. for persons with a disability. Knowledge and competencies as well as knowledge about finding and recruiting these groups of volunteers was listed as a need by 24.3% respondents.

The most included groups of disadvantaged young volunteers are volunteers who are immigrants (78.4%), who are descendants from an immigrant or refugee family (70.3%), who originate from a national or ethnic minority (73%), volunteers with a low standard of living (70.3%), with low income (83.8%), volunteers who are dependent on the social welfare system (86.5%), who face long-term unemployment or poverty (78.4%), who face discrimination because of ethnicity (70.3%) and volunteers living in urban under privileged zones (70.3%).

	Already included	Possibility to include	Not possible to include
Mental disability	48.6%	14.3%	37.1%
Physical disability	54.1%	23%	18.4%
Health problems	19.6%	15.5%	48%
Educational difficulties	56.8%	18%	11.7%
Cultural differences	67.6%	14%	10.3%
Economic and social obstacles	58.4%	17.6%	14%

The volunteers from disadvantaged are in most cases short-term volunteers (24.3%).

Organisations involved in the research sample recognised that diversity brought the organisation new value, joy and new dimensions (63.6%). The same percentage of organisations also recognised that the most important benefit of involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers was the opportunity it provided for them to be a part of a social community and make a contribution.

Effects of volunteering on disadvantaged youth

Among the specific benefits that disadvantaged youth volunteers experience through volunteering, organisations recognised the following; new knowledge, experiences and skills (59.5%), a more meaningful everyday life and a feeling of being

useful 56.8% and the feeling of independence, achievement and greater self-confidence (54.1%). 51.4% of organisations noted that volunteering helped disadvantaged youth move on to education or work. 10.8% of organisations from the sample didn't consider involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers at all.

What is missing?

For organisations who do not include disadvantaged youth as volunteers their reasons were that they did not have a suitable setting e.g. for persons with a disability (27% of responses), insufficient organisational capacity as well as the fact that the volunteers' tasks demanded a special knowledge or specific skills (22.6%).

45.9% of organisations find support related to volunteering in their local volunteering network, while 40.5% find that support in the national volunteering network and within their own organisation.

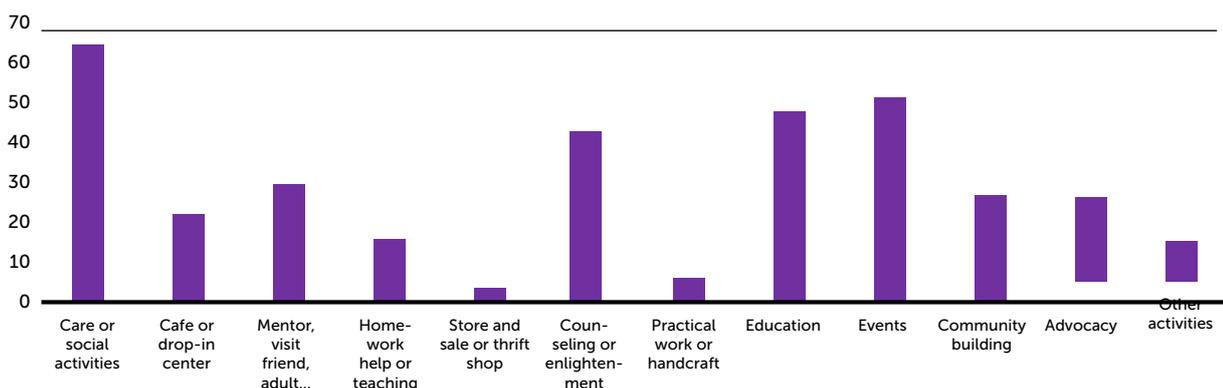
The support they receive is somewhat insufficient as reported in 26.5% cases and in 20.6% insufficient. Almost a third of the sample (32.4%) finds it neither sufficient nor insufficient.

7.4. Slovenia

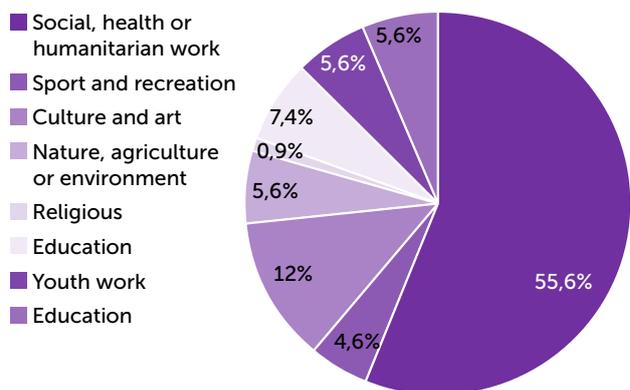
Overview of the sample

108 volunteer-involving organisations from Slovenia participated in the research. For 55.6% of them their primary field of volunteering is social, health or humanitarian work, and for 12% it is culture and art. Most organisations reported their primary activity as social activities (67.6%), while 53.7% listed education 50.9% listed organisation of events.

Primary volunteering activities



Primary field of volunteering



42.6% of participating organisations have 10 active volunteers, 19.4% have between 10 - 20 volunteers, 17.6% have between 20 - 50 and 20.4% organisations have more than 50 volunteers.

There are no differences in the number of active volunteers within the different fields of volunteering.

In 33.3% of organisations there are more than 8 employees. In 20.4% there are no employees.

Inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers

48.1% of organisations have articles of association or a vision that contain values about diversity among volunteers e.g. inclusion of disadvantaged groups as volunteers. 65.7% of organisations do not have a written policy about the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups. 64.8% of organisations do not have a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged youth (between 15-29 years) as volunteers.

The inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers is not consciously planned in 60.6% of organisations.

When we asked organisations what benefits there were from the inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers, 32% noted that diversity brings the organisation value, joy and new dimensions and 22% said it gives everyone an opportunity to be a part of a social community and make a contribution.

In 86.1% of organisations their beneficiaries became their volunteers.

54.5% of organisations estimated their experience working alongside disadvantaged young volunteers as positive and 15.2% as very positive.

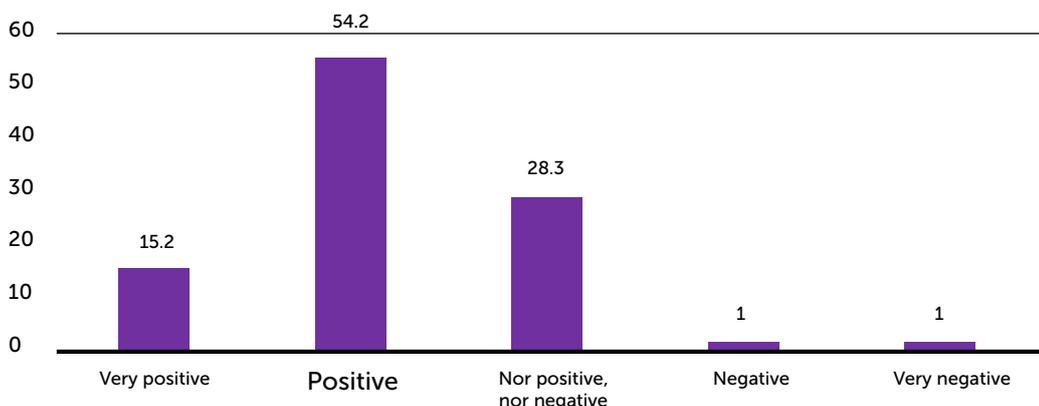
The overall percentage of the inclusion of different groups of disadvantaged young volunteers are presented in the table below. The most included groups of disadvantaged youth belong to: those with educational difficulties (48.1% of early school-leavers); young people with economic and social obstacles (over 60% of youth with a low standard of living, low income or long-term unemployed) and those belonging to the group of youth with cultural differences (40.7% of immigrants).

	Already included	Possibility to include	Not possible to include
Mental disability	22.2%	26.9%	50.9%
Physical disability	17.3%	46.3%	38.6%
Health problems	17.6%	45.1%	37.3%
Educational difficulties	42.9%	41.4%	15.7%
Cultural differences	30.6%	53.5%	15.4%
Economic and social obstacles	34.1%	49.8%	14.5%

The most often included group of disadvantaged young volunteers are volunteers with low income (in 69.4% of organisations), low standard of living (in 63.9% of sample) and volunteers who face long-term unemployment or poverty (in 64.8%).

Over 50% of organisations reported it was not possible to include volunteers with a mental disability or psychiatric condition.

The estimate of experience working alongside disadvantaged young volunteers



In 28.7% of organisations disadvantaged youth are short-term volunteers and in 25% long-term volunteers.

Effects of volunteering on disadvantaged youth

Among the specific benefits that disadvantaged youth volunteers experience through volunteering, organisations recognised new knowledge, experiences and skills (29.6%) and a bigger social network (19.4%).

What is missing?

Those organisations that don't involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers state the following reasons: the volunteers' tasks demand a special knowledge and skills (5.6%) and because they are too vulnerable and not stable enough for the type of activity (3.7%). 2.8% of the organisations don't consider involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers at all.

When asked what they need for broader inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers 57.4% of organisations responded organisational capacity and more resources, 37% new activities that are adapted to these groups of volunteers and 25.9% knowledge about finding and recruiting of these groups of volunteers as well as about handling, leading and motivating these groups of volunteers.

67.63% of organisations find support related to volunteering from within their own organisation when needed, while 52.8% find support from similar organisations, 48.1% in their national volunteering network and 28.7% in their local volunteering network. 40.7% of organisations estimated the received support as neither sufficient nor insufficient, 16.7% as sufficient and 2.8% as insufficient.

7.5. Germany

Overview of the sample

In the German sample, there were 35 volunteer-involving organisations. The primary field of volunteering for 42.9% of the sample is social, health or humanitarian work.

The primary activities are care or social activities (22.9%), counselling (20%) and practical work and handcraft (20%).

The number of volunteers at the time of the survey in 34.3% of organisations was more than 100, and

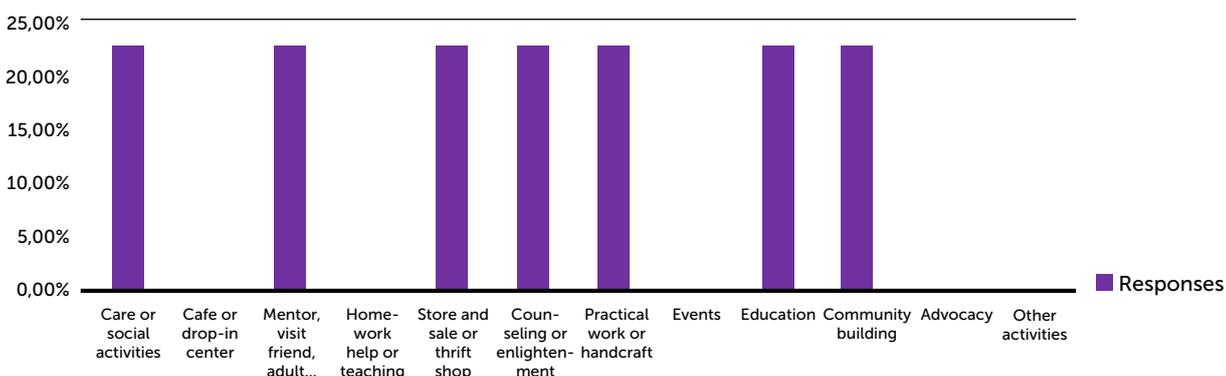
in 22.9% organisations it was up to 10. The same percentage of organisations has on average 10 - 20 volunteers.

Number of employees: more than 8 in 31.4% of participating organisations, 28.6% of organisations had 1 to 2 employees. 28.6% of organisations had 2 to 6 employees.

Inclusion of disadvantaged young volunteers

54.3% of organisations have articles of association or a vision that contains values about diversity among

What are your primary activities?



volunteers. 65.7% of organisations do not have written policies about the involvement of disadvantaged or marginalised groups as volunteers.

The same percentage of organisations (42.9%) do or do not have a specific focus on recruiting disadvantaged young volunteers.

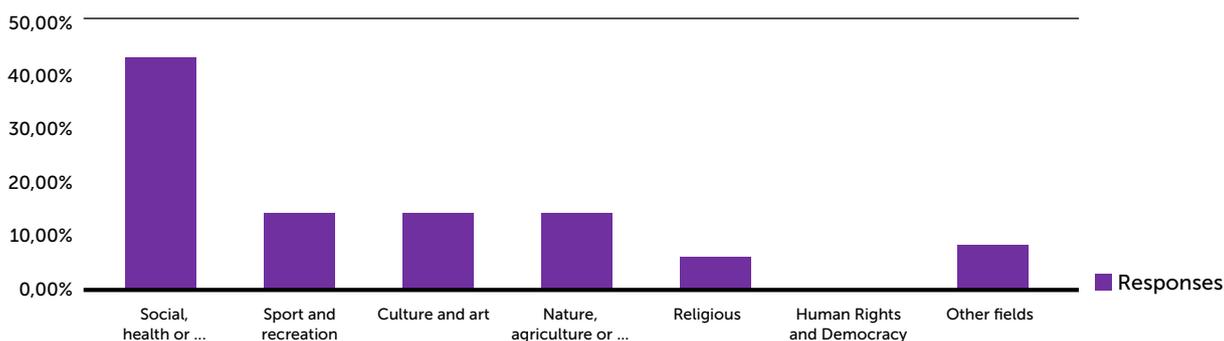
Among the 84.9% organisations which are inclusive towards disadvantaged young volunteers, 35.7% of them reported that the involvement of disadvantaged youth volunteers is a result of conscious planning. 42.3% reported having had a positive experience working alongside disadvantaged young volunteers, while 28.6% reported having had a very positive experience.

28.6% of organisations have volunteers who were, in the past, their beneficiaries. Among the most included groups of volunteers are those with cultural differences (immigrants or refugees, descendants of immigrants or refugees (57.1%), as well as persons with language, cultural adaptation and inclusion difficulties (28.6%); physical disability or other disabilities (34.3%) and among volunteers with economic and social obstacles on cash benefits, early retirement or long-term unemployed (28.6%).

	Already included	Possibility to include	Not possible to include
Mental disability	14.29%	57.14%	28.57%
Physical disability	34.29%	28.57%	37.14%
Health problems	10%	71.4%	18.6%
Educational difficulties	-	-	-
Cultural differences	47.6%	36.4%	16.2%
Economic and social obstacles	11.4%	53.3%	35.2%

Most of the volunteers are short-term volunteers (53.6%). 35.7% of them are ad hoc volunteers for a longer period.

What is your primary field of volunteer work? More possible answer



Organisations involved in the research sample recognise the opportunity to give everyone a possibility to be a part of a social community (75%); new competencies, perspectives and experiences (67.9%); diversity brings the organisation value, joy and new dimensions (60.7%) as the most important benefits of involving disadvantaged youth.

Volunteering effect on disadvantaged youth

Among the specific benefits that disadvantaged youth volunteers achieve through volunteering in organisations reported the following; better social relations or a bigger social network and more meaningful everyday life and a feeling of being useful (54.3%); new knowledge, experiences and skills (48.6%); and youth become more independent, experience success or greater self-confidence and feel more able to access an education or work (42.9%).

What is still missing?

Those organisations that don't involve disadvantaged youth as volunteers state the following reasons: insufficient organisational capacity (80%) and the fact that volunteers' tasks demand special knowledge and skills (60%). 5.7% of the organisations from the German sample don't consider involving disadvantaged youth as volunteers at all.

Among the factors that would help an organisation to increase the involvement of disadvantaged youth as volunteers are: organisational capacity and more resources (77.1%); better physical environment e.g. for persons with a disability (40%) and new activities that would be suited to these groups of volunteers (42.9%). 42.3% of sampled organisations sought support when needed from a national volunteering network, 28.6% from local volunteering organisations and 40% from within their own organisation. 37.1% organisations felt the support was neither sufficient nor insufficient, but in 25.7% organisations they felt the support was insufficient.





the impact of volunteering on social inclusion



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