



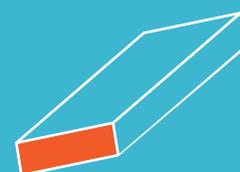
EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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CHAPTER



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VOLUNTEERING
INFRASTRUCTURE
IN EUROPE

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1. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

CONCEPT DEFINITION

Volunteering infrastructure includes resources, such as information, databases, legal acts, which are available for both volunteers and organisers of voluntary work in order to perform voluntary work and engage volunteers. Volunteering infrastructure can be treated as the necessary set of elements that are essential for successful volunteering:

- *legal basis, proper legal acts that determine the lawful ground for volunteering;*
- *organisational mechanisms for voluntary work ;*
- *suitable management tools, volunteers' selection process, a contract for voluntary work, volunteer training, insurance, reimbursement, certificate/proof of voluntary work;*
- *records of voluntary work, in order to assess voluntary work contribution, its economic contribution;*
- *funding for the organisation of voluntary work.*

Volunteering infrastructure has to assure development possibilities for voluntary work such as:

- *access:* voluntary work is accessible to everybody irrespective of age, gender, social status, political or religious opinions,
- *capacity:* organisations that are ready and interested to receive volunteers, perceive and know how to utilise volunteer work as a resource,
- *public opinion:* prestige of volunteering, general stand of the public and opinion about role of volunteering, its necessity, readiness to get involved in volunteering.

The main function of such an infrastructure is to provide all the necessary conditions so that voluntary work can occur successfully, without any obstacles. In principal every element has to be not just present but also properly implemented.

2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

There is no separate Law on Volunteering in Latvia that incorporates a clear definition of voluntary work. More detailed information on the interpretation of volunteering and in what legal acts it can be found can be seen in section 3 Legal framework. Voluntary work is still differently perceived and public discussions are taking place about the principles of volunteering including between NGOs. The concept of volunteering, practice (for pupil and students), and career possibilities are all mixed together from time to time. Work that has been done without pay is often the main criteria that is mentioned and with what voluntary work is associated. This lacks recognition about its added value and what it contributes to the public good and through the non-profit sector.

Studies on youth policy reveal that approximately 30% of youth have performed voluntary work. In comparison with similar studies in 2007 when only 12% of youth was involved, the situation has improved¹.

Predominantly, a volunteer in Latvia is a pupil or student who has not yet started to work, most frequently women. Youth are motivated and want to spend their leisure time meaningfully, gaining experience. Approximately half of those who have been engaged in volunteering activities would like to do it again. Most often youngsters are ready to get involved in activities in social or environmental (nature, animals) spheres. Especially popular are single outdoor activities – such as music festivals or sport events.

Another type of volunteer is a senior who is outside the labour market already. Senior volunteering is more common in rural areas that could be explained by the fact that relations between people in these regions are closer; alienation is not so great as in big cities. In addition, the needs of neighbours/peers are better known and understood. But this tendency also points to the fact that professionals, young specialists and other people with professional knowledge, expertise and experience are not involved enough in voluntary work that to a great extent is determined by the difficult economic situation.

The typical volunteer in Latvia is a pupil or student who has not yet started to work, most frequently a woman, or a retired person living in a rural area.

The “Eurobarometer” survey that was carried out at the beginning of 2007 showed that only 12% of Latvian youth are involved in some volunteering activities. This is one of the lowest figures in the European Union (EU). As the findings of the research “*Investigation of the youth social and political activities in Latvia*” indicates, voluntary work means nothing to 16.6% of young people. Only 5.5% of young people admitted that volunteering plays an important role in their lives.

Approximately one fifth of young people indicate that they have performed voluntary work. However, the study authors believe that young people do not really understand the concept of “volunteer work”, therefore, they have counted all the activity of any kind which they have performed without pay at school or at home.

According to the research, 21% of young people aged 15-16 agree to the statement “I would never do anything without pay”, as do 31% of those aged 17, 25% of those aged 18 and 16% of those aged 19-25. To this statement 32% of male respondents and 21% of female respondents² agreed.

Another survey shows that only 1/3 of the respondents have performed voluntary work – 4% of those “do it regularly”, 16% “have done it within last six months and if here is another possibility would do it again”, 12% have performed voluntary work “once in a lifetime”. For the purpose of analysis these responses were pooled into one group “have done voluntary work at least once in their lives”. It should be noted that more than 2/5 of respondents (44%) indicated that they have never done voluntary work, but would like to try it, for their part 21% noted that they “would never work free of charge”.

1. Pētījuma veicējs: SIA “Analītisko pētījumu un stratēģiju laboratorija”, 2007, “Jauniešu sociālās un politiskās darbības izpēte Latvijā”, Pētījuma pasūtītājs: Latvijas Republikas Bērnu un ģimenes lietu ministrija, Available at: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/jaunatne/petijumi/Jauniesu_socialas_un_politiskas_darbibas_izpete_Latvija.pdf

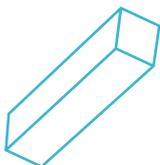
2. Pētījuma veicējs: SIA “Analītisko pētījumu un stratēģiju laboratorija”, 2007, “Jauniešu sociālās un politiskās darbības izpēte Latvijā”, Pētījuma pasūtītājs: Latvijas Republikas Bērnu un ģimenes lietu ministrija, Available at: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/jaunatne/petijumi/Jauniesu_socialas_un_politiskas_darbibas_izpete_Latvija.pdf



According to the study, responses of men and women differ. A higher percentage of women said they had at least once in their life performed voluntary work (36% of women and 30% of men), while men more often said that would never work without payment (25% of men and 17% of women).

Study participants aged 13 to 14 years, retired persons, groups with low or medium income, as well as respondents in Riga, near Riga and Latgale, more often than average, noted that they had never done voluntary work, but would like to try. While the multi-choice “would never work without pay”, was mentioned more than on average by the respondents who work in the private sector, respondents with low incomes, those living in Vidzeme and other cities (not Riga)³.

The monitoring of youth policy that was carried out in 2009, shows that 23.9% of young people have never volunteered and do not know whether they would like to perform it, while 37.1% of respondents have carried out voluntary work. 32.4% of respondents mentioned that have not yet volunteered, but would like to try. 23.9% of respondents have not yet decided whether they would have an interest to volunteer. But 6.6% of the respondents asserted that they would “never work free of charge”. Just a bit over half of the respondents (55%) who have performed voluntary work already, would like to do it repeatedly⁴.



Youth monitoring that was carried out in 2010 reveals that in general the number of young people involved in volunteering in comparison to the previous year did not change significantly. Still, 6% of youngsters say they would not like to work without compensation. In 2010, 31% of respondents performed regular voluntary work, moreover the number of young people who point out that they have been volunteering once had increased (40%). According to the data, 57% of those young people who have ever done voluntary work are keen to perform it in the future⁵.

Youth monitoring carried out in 2011 reveals that, over the last year, 44% of young people have never done a voluntary work, while 56% say they have volunteered at least once, namely about 8% indicated that they have carried out voluntary work several times a year, 28% a few times and about 19% volunteered once.

Overall, 41% of young people say they are not willing to do voluntary work next year, only 18% of young people were fully convinced that definitely would like to volunteer next year, while 40% answered that they would rather like to volunteer⁶.

Scattered studies in the field of public integration (touching upon voluntary work issues) are carried out at municipal level as well. For example, in 2010, in the framework of the study “Integration of Society in Riga”, a telephone survey carried out amongst Riga’s population finds that an absolute majority (86%) of the respondents have not been involved in any non-governmental organisation, including involvement in voluntary work for last three years, while 14% have been active and engaged in some non-governmental organisation. Those engaged in non-governmental organisations, including voluntary work, more often are people

3. Tirgus un sabiedriskās domas pētījumu centrs SKDS, 2008.gada aprīlis – augusts. Attieksme pret dalību jaunatnes organizācijās. Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja.

4. Factum Research Studio, 2009, “Monitorings par jaunatnes politikas īstenošanas rezultātiem”, Available at: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/jaunatne/3Monitorings_par_jaunatnes_politikas_istenosana_2009.pdf

5. Factum Research Studio, 2010, “Aptauja ikgadējā monitoringa ietvaros par jauniešu dzīves kvalitāti, iesaistīšanos brīvprātīgajā darbā, jaunatnes organizāciju darbībā un piekļūvi jauniešiem aktuālai informācijai”, Available at: <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/nozares-politika/jaunatne/4468.html>

6. SIA “APTAUJU AĢENTŪRA”, Aptauja ikgadējā monitoringa ietvaros par jauniešu dzīves kvalitāti, iesaistīšanos brīvprātīgajā darbā, jaunatnes organizāciju darbībā un piekļūvi jauniešiem aktuālai informācijai, 2011, Available at (http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/jaunatne/petijumi/IZM_Monitorings_AptaujuAgentura_09.2011.pdf)

with higher education, managers/professionals, unmarried, and those who attend church once a week or even more frequently.

Experts indicate that the most important reasons for inhabitants of Riga not being involved in voluntary work are financial obstacles (people work harder in order to earn their living), lack of time, and general passivity⁷.

According to the survey data of the Ministry of Education and Science (2011)⁸, over the last 12 months a total of 25% of the Latvian population has been engaged in volunteering. The percentage of those being regularly involved in voluntary work is not high: 4% of the volunteers work once a week or more, another 4% volunteer once or several times a month, about 7% are involved in voluntary work once or several times a semester, while 10% have done it only once during the past year.

31% of young people aged 17 agree to the statement "I would never do anything without pay". 57% of the young people who were already involved in voluntary work are keen to do it again in the future.

The study reveals that volunteers are equally involved in activities of both the national/local governmental institutions and of nongovernmental organisations, namely 37% and 36% respectively. Interestingly, 25% of the respondents point out that they have carried out voluntary work in private companies, although that does not comply with the Latvian law.

The study also states that people who more often get involved in voluntary work:

- are aged 15 to 24 and 55 years and over;
- have higher education or are in a process of obtaining it;
- work in the public sector, are pensioners, pupil and students, as well as senior and middle managers;
- live in Vidzeme and Zemgale regions;
- live in rural areas;
- have an income per family member per month of less than 299 LVL (around 425 EUR) and a personal income of 249 LVL (354 EUR).

Most (55%) of the Latvian residents who were involved in some volunteering activities last year, volunteered in environment and nature protection and clean-up actions (including the Big Cleanup). A little less than 1/3 of volunteers participated in organisation and implementation of the cultural and artistic activities (29%), educational activities (27%) and professional assistance (25%). Approximately 1/5 have participated in the organisation and implementation of children leisure activities and of youth activities, as well as elderly, disabled and child care.

Although most volunteer activists have been involved in environmental and nature protection and clean-up activities in terms of hours spent, it is one of the activities done less – an average of only 8 hours of time invested by those who participated in this activity. The largest investment of time was in activities with the elderly, the disabled and child care – an average of 40 hours during the year. An average of 21 hours per year was invested by those who participated in various education-related activities, such as helping teachers, helping students meet the homework, lecturing, educational seminars; while 16 hours - children and young people, as well as professional assistance activities. On average each volunteer invested 57 hours in concrete volunteer activities.

7. TNS Latvia, 2010, "Sabiedrības integrācija Rīgā", pēc Rīgas Domes pasūtījuma.

8. Laboratory of Analytical and Strategic Study Ltd, 2011, Study on development possibilities of volunteer work in Latvia and its contribution to Latvian economy, Available at: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/petijumi/IZM_BrivpritagaisDarbs_Zinojums_Laboratory_07.2011_ENG.pdf

In general, the perception of volunteering is slightly deformed in society. The majority would consider helping in music festivals or other undertakings having commercial character as a voluntary work. Voluntary work is also poorly perceived because present generalized priority is to earn money. This is also why the majority would consider the engagement of volunteers to be unwise. Volunteers are people who are doing their work without pay – this is the unified general understanding, without going deeper. But there is also another part of the society that values the work performed by volunteers, as they are doing a useful and necessary function as well as they contribute to the society.

As the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011 approached, attitudes started to change. Decision makers were forced to plan for the activities and include them in political documents. It has been a possibility to uplift voluntary work in a new level. Thanks to 2011, society and media were informed that it is planned to spend both EU and national funds in order to popularize (promote) voluntary work, that volunteering has far greater added value than it was perceived before.

Thanks to EYV 2011, society and media were informed about the added value of volunteering.

There is not much information in the media about voluntary work and it is not reflected regularly. If there is some information, it tends to be subjective, possibly

within a narrow, concrete context. It is also hard to establish contacts with journalists for whom voluntary work issues would be one of the most actual themes to write. From time to time however really positive articles can be found about the contribution of volunteering, its added value to society, about the satisfaction it brings, about the ways in which voluntary work solves problems in local communities.

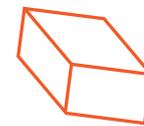
Decision makers predominantly lack the information and deeper understanding of voluntary work. They consider that people are doing an important job, but it is their own choice and nobody forces them to do it. Organisers at different levels, planning some social actions often do not properly understand what it means to engage volunteers. They consider that volunteers are a specific group of people always and at any time ready to help doing anything. Sometimes it is forgotten that they need motivation, support and recognition.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

There is no specific law on volunteering in Latvia, although debates over its necessity have been taking place for several years. In mid 2010, the Ministry of Justice called together all the relevant actors – state institutions and NGOs. After discussions the decision was taken to make the necessary amendments in the Civil law in order to dissolve the identified shortcomings in the legislation regarding volunteering:

- *shortage of the principles to be followed in concluding a voluntary work contract;*
- *non existence of specific rights, duties and responsibilities of both parties;*
- *necessity to define a wider scope of legal entities that are eligible to engage volunteers, because existing legal acts in general regulate only youth (persons aged 13-25) voluntary work and voluntary work in associations and foundations, but do not regulate how other age groups can be engaged in volunteering by other legal entities (for example, state and municipal institutions, religious organisations etc.);*
- *non existence of legal basis of application of volunteer work.*

Currently amendments in the Civil law have been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and still have to be adopted by the Parliament (Saeima). They define general provisions that would refer to every organiser of voluntary work, as well as determine the legal norms applicable to the voluntary work contract and occasions when the contract has to be concluded in writing. According to the amendments, with the voluntary work contract one party - the volunteer - undertakes to perform, without payment tasks of the other party – organiser of voluntary work that does not have profit making intention – that conform with the aims of the organiser stipulated in its statutes, regulations or constitution, without substituting paid staff and that are oriented towards public good.



If the amendments of the law would come into force, a voluntary work contract would be concluded in writing if: 1) one of the parties has required it in writing; 2) the organiser of voluntary work is the state or the municipal institution; 3) the volunteer performs work or provides services abroad. Similarly the amendment stipulates that terms of labour contract are applicable to voluntary work contract (Section I of the Civil law) as well as other legal acts that regulate labour legal relations and labour safety regulations as far as they do not interfere with these amendments.



Section 8 of the Associations and Foundations Law (adopted 30.10.2003.) law that regulates the guiding principles for the activity of associations and foundations stipulates that associations and foundations have the right to engage persons in volunteer work. It defines volunteer work as unpaid work or provision of services performed by a natural person without entering into employment legal relations and which is aimed at the achievement of the objective laid down in the articles of association or foundation. It also stipulates that a written agreement shall be concluded regarding the performance of volunteer work upon the request of a person, indicating the work to be performed and the performance deadline thereof. According to the law, the volunteer may request the compensation of such expenses which have arisen during the course of the performance of the volunteer work, if internal regulations of association or foundation allow for it. An association or foundation shall be liable for any harm caused to a person while performing volunteer work if such duty has been undertaken or also the harm was caused due to the fault of the association or foundation. These rules apply only to associations and foundations and do not regulate voluntary work in state and municipal institutions.

The Youth Law (adopted 08.05.2008.) states that young people have the right to participate in youth policy development and implementation, including the possibility to engage in volunteer work (Section 7). It also stresses that state and local governments shall promote voluntary work as one of the essential ways of useful utilisation of leisure time (Section 8). The law defines voluntary work as oriented towards activity of public benefit and promote the development of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes thereof, as well as the useful utilisation of leisure time. It also points out that a young person shall carry out voluntary work free of charge, not entering into legal employment relationship with the organiser of the voluntary work.

According to the law, youth voluntary work shall not be used for the purpose of profit making of the organiser of the voluntary work or a third party and prohibitions and restrictions specified in the regulatory enactments regulating legal employment relationship shall be applicable to youth voluntary work (Section 9). Section 10 of the law stipulates that youth voluntary work may be organised by associations and foundations, as well as state and municipal institutions. It is also defined that an organiser of youth voluntary work: 1) shall be responsible for safe voluntary work conditions, which do not harm the health of a young person; 2) shall issue a

written certification regarding the time spent in voluntary work, duties, acquired knowledge, skills and abilities upon the request of a young person; and 3) is entitled to request that a young person, upon commencing voluntary work, presents a statement issued by a doctor regarding their state of health, thus ascertaining the suitability of the young person for the intended voluntary work. According to the law, written contract regarding voluntary work may be entered into upon the initiative of the organiser of the voluntary work or a young person, specifying the work to be done and the time period for the fulfilment thereof.

Law on State Probation Service (exception) (adopted 18.12.2003) refers to volunteering by regulating the status of “voluntary probation employee” being defined as a person who is authorised by the State Probation Service to execute a specific task. Voluntary probation worker can be a person who has expressed the wish to participate in the implementation of probation tasks, who have participated in consultations with the officials of the State Probation Service and have received an opinion that they can perform certain probation tasks. The State Probation Service shall enter into collaboration agreements with voluntary probation workers.

Legal frameworks are very important for creating an enabling environment for volunteering. They allow both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governmental/municipal institutions and structures to understand what are the mechanisms and ways to engage volunteers in their activities. For example, up to now in Latvia it has not been stipulated that public authorities – state or municipal institutions – can engage volunteers (adults) in their activities and that has, to great extent, hindered the engagement of volunteers in hospitals, social care houses, and orphanages and so on. The lack of a legislative framework also created difficulties for the authorities, which nevertheless risked and brought in volunteers, risking misunderstandings of the controlling authorities, for example, regarding tax issues. Now the on-going amendments of the Civil Law eliminate these uncertainties, facilitating volunteer involvement in public institutions. The legal basis is also a guarantee for a volunteer as anyone can justify their rights and recognize responsibilities.

There are certain challenges with the implementation of the norms envisaged in the legal acts. Organisations, particularly governmental and municipal institutions, are not well informed about voluntary work, ways to attract, motivate, manage volunteers, and the like. Most organisations are missing or have limited capacity to manage/coordinate volunteers. Only every third organisation has a particular person whose responsibility is the management of volunteers, motivation and monitoring. If an NGO does not have anyone responsible for volunteers, often situations arise where a volunteer is more a burden than a benefit. In its turn, a volunteer who happened to be engaged in an unprofessional NGO, could lose motivation and does not see the sense of volunteering any more. Surveys on organisations show that on average, only half (53%) of the organisations engage volunteers for more effective performance of their activities⁹.

The implementation of these laws is also impeded by the lack of explanatory capacity of the existent norms. In the beginning of 2011 a Latvian NGO got fined and was required by the State Revenue Service to pay 500 LVL (711 EUR), as it was considered that the NGO tried to avoid the payment of taxes since its book-keeper was a volunteer, having a voluntary work contract.

The explanation, common understanding and implementation of legal norms is crucial. Also, current amendments of the Civil Law contain many references to the other parts of the same

If an NGO does not have a person responsible for volunteers, a volunteer can become more a burden than a benefit.

In its turn, a volunteer who happened to be engaged in an unprofessional NGO could lose motivation to continue volunteering.

9. NVO Institūta pētījums “Kā trūkst brīvprātīgo kustības izaugsmei Latvijā?”, 2007 http://www.nvoinstitut.lv/fileadmin/materiali/Petijums_brivpratigie.pdf

law (labour rights) as well as other legal acts. Consequently, it is necessary to make a great explanatory work to embody the norms prescribed by it.

Since there is no specific law on volunteering in Latvia, there is also no specific supervising institution that is responsible for the implementation of other provisions referring to volunteering present in other laws. However, implementation of provisions referring to volunteering from other legal acts falls under the responsibility of the respective ministries: Ministry of Education and Science, which is responsible for youth policy, the Ministry of Justice, which deals with issues of development of civil society as well as matters covered by the Civil Law, Ministry of Welfare, which is in charge of the child, labour rights and the like. This shared responsibility often creates difficulties in effective implementation of the voluntary work policy in the country. In addition, for example the implementation and monitoring role of the activities during the European Year of Volunteering 2011 was given to the Ministry of Education and Science and it has attached this task under the youth policy meaning that more attention is given to youth and youth voluntary work while adults, professionals and seniors are left without due attention and their resource potential is not used.

Generally, NGOs are involved in the discussions and debates at national level conducted by the public bodies responsible for different fields of activity, as was the case, for example, during the work on amendments in the Civil Law. Though these debates are often formal, since majority of recommendations of NGOs are not included in the final decisions. NGOs are present and heard, but their capacity to influence consistently the decision makers is still very limited.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING

There is no national volunteer centre or national support or resource centre for volunteering in Latvia. Nor are there regional or local volunteer centres in the country. There are organisations which engage volunteers in their activities, either in their basic activities or in some specific campaigns. The organisation “*OdinVita*” in Daugavpils focuses, alongside its basic activities, on lobbying for support for volunteering at local and even national level.



The majority of NGO members in Latvia consider their activities in the NGO as voluntary work. It can be said that to a great extent Latvian NGOs are based on voluntary work. A 2007 study¹⁰ revealed that 68% of the surveyed organisations consider their participation in board meetings, general meetings, the overall organisation of the preparation and leadership of the organisation as being volunteer work.



Organised volunteer work is not common in Latvia. The most popular form of voluntary work is to be an active member of an NGO and according to the organisation’s profile to manage ones’ volunteer activities. Those people that would like to take a specific job for a certain period of time are an untapped resource. A poll of experts assesses that the Latvian NGO’s too unproductively engage volunteers in their work. Volunteers are often perceived as technical workers, and rarely they are seen as an important tool for the organisation and its development objectives. Mostly it is due to the fact that the organisation does not have defined needs, which can be met by the work of volunteers. Organisations most often attract volunteers for the

10. NVO Institūts, 2007, “Kā trūkst brīvprātīgo kustības izaugsmei Latvijā?”.

preparation of different campaigns or events and the conduct of these events (69%), as well as specific project implementation activities (64%)¹¹.

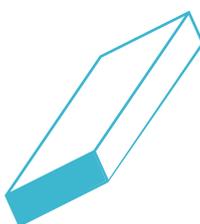
The largest organisation that involves volunteers in its everyday actions is the *Latvian Red Cross* that has 329 divisions throughout Latvia and involves more than 1200 volunteers. The Latvian Red Cross carries out activities to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged groups, promoting a healthy lifestyle. However, no information is available directly on volunteer's contributions such as the total number of volunteering hours or the economic value of the volunteer work. Overall, as the study reveals, approximately 80% of surveyed organisations do not monitor how many hours volunteers have invested, thus, both organisations and volunteers have only a rough idea of the amount of voluntary work contribution to the goals of an organisation¹².

One other active volunteer involving organisation is the organisation "*Apeiron*" the aim of which is to integrate persons with disabilities into society. Volunteers help to carry out everyday activities. The organisation has also established its own volunteer code of ethics.

5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Public service providers

Governmental and municipal institutions rarely or not at all involve volunteers in their activities because they lack the necessary knowledge about the involvement of volunteers and their contribution. The involvement of volunteers is also hindered by the absence of proper legal framework to this regard, until amendments of Civil Law will come into force.



The *State Probation Service* may be referred to as one of the few exceptions where involvement of volunteers is determined in a separate law that regulates activities of the service. The Probation Service¹³ is the state institution responsible for public safety, which works with offenders serving community sanctions (suspended sentence, community work service) and helps the former prisoners to reintegrate in society. The Probation Service is designed to promote the elimination of crime and to ensure qualitative enforcement and coordination of community sanctions and to facilitate the work of other law enforcement authorities. There are however shortcomings in this legislation. For instance in 2009, ten volunteer probation officers certified within the National Probation Service, but due to deteriorating economic situation in the country four of them had to withdraw from the programme in order not to lose social benefits. According to the *Law on State Social Insurance*¹⁴ the National Probation Service volunteer probation officer has the legal status of an employee and is subjected to all the social contributions that relate to any employee. Amendments should be encouraged for this law in the near future, as a volunteer probation officer does not receive a salary, but a compensation for the expenses incurred when carrying out the respective volunteer activities¹⁵.

Governmental institutions/agencies engage volunteers on a large-scale, even international events such as, for example, national song and dance festivals (in 2008 around 260 volunteers), pupil song and dance festivals, during organisation of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

11. NVO Institūts, 2007, "Kā trūkst brīvprātīgo kustības izaugsmei Latvijā?".

12. NVO Institūts, 2007, "Kā trūkst brīvprātīgo kustības izaugsmei Latvijā?".

13. <http://www.tm.gov.lv/en/ministrija/iestades/probacija.html>

14. 01.10.1997. likums "Par valsts sociālo apdrošināšanu"

15. Valsts probācijas dienests, "Publiskais pārskats par 2009.gadu", Available at: http://www.tm.gov.lv/lv/documents/parskati/2009/2009_VPD_publicais_parskats_.pdf

(NATO) Summit in 2006 (600 volunteers were involved, mainly aged 18-23), organisation of the World Ice Hockey Championship in 2006 (700 volunteers were involved).

During the last year municipalities get more informed and interested to develop voluntary work in their subordinate institutions. Good example is Riga city municipality. For example, the Welfare Department of Riga City Council is working to prepare guidelines for its institutions (social service providers) on how to organise and implement voluntary work programmes. They also planned to allocate one responsible coordinator for implementation of those programmes. Besides that, in 2014 Riga has been chosen to be one of the European Capitals of Culture to provide living proof of the richness and diversity of European cultures. An important role in the organisation of the Riga 2014 cultural programme has been assigned to volunteers.

At important events, volunteers are assigned small tasks, such as showing places for visitors, distributing flyers, but seldom trusted to do more significant tasks such as work in a press room, provide first aid, translations etc.

Volunteers are generally assigned to different tasks, such as award completing, showing places for visitors, distributing flyers etc. Volunteers are rarely trusted to do more important tasks, such as, for example, work in a press room, provision of first aid, escorting, translation etc.. Usually volunteers are granted lunch,

free transportation and presentation materials (T-shirts, jackets, caps). Training is also provided for volunteers, but it is rather technical and touches upon the exact work volunteers are assigned to. The principles of volunteering and the philosophy behind it are rarely discussed. Still, young people value this possibility to gain experience in such events; this is why their responsiveness is very high in applying to become volunteers in such events.

One of considerable voluntary work examples is the *Project "Big Cleanup"*, that every spring gathers a huge amount of environmental volunteers who engage in the clean-up campaign. The project is based on voluntary participation to keep the environment tidy, bring people together and promote positivism and satisfaction with the achievements. The objective of the project is to make Latvia and the Baltic Sea region the tidiest place on the map of the world within 10 years (until the centennial anniversary of Latvia), to allow the nature regenerate relieving it from plastic bottles, rubber tyres, poisonous paint tins and other waste and litter.

The results of Big Cleanup are really considerable. On 13 September 2008 about 50,000 volunteers participated, 364 municipalities got involved in the clean-up, and over 260,000 bags of litter have been collected. On 18 April 2009 about 110,000 volunteers participated, 392 municipalities, 269 schools, 161 companies and organisations and 12 universities involved in the clean-up, and over 340,000 60-litre bags of litter have been collected. On 24 April 2010 about 150,000 volunteers participated, 1354 clean-up places all around Latvia were officially announced in www.talkas.lv and the land has been cleaned from about 3,500 tonnes of litter¹⁶.

The success formula for the project is the creation of a nation-wide net. In every district of Latvia a Big Cleanup coordinator is nominated who communicates to the inhabitants of the district as well as with organisers. Besides, usually charismatic, well-known persons of specific districts who are able to motivate the masses are nominated as coordinators. Organisers of the project normally think of some bonuses in order to motivate and encourage the coordinators, for example, for next year's Big Cleanup it is planned to organise special leadership and rhetoric training.

16. The Big Cleanup, Available at: <http://www.talkas.lv/?page=558&lng=en>

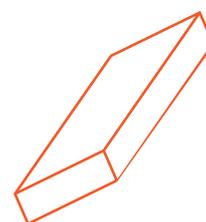
Even though the idea is really noble and welcomed, discussions are taking place in society whether such annual campaign should be organised as municipal territories are cleaned during the Big Cleanup, or municipalities are to take responsibility about cleanness of its own territories. Similarly, logistical issues are rarely managed properly, for example, scavenging always creates problems after the Big Cleanup.

The business sector

Business is not a very active stakeholder of volunteering in Latvia. CSR is relatively a new concept and practice. There are few businesses, state institutions and community members who understand the meaning of it and support the manifestation of CSR. Furthermore, voluntary work as part of CSR performed by employees of businesses has not been widespread so far. There are a couple of examples that could be mentioned: employees of translation office Skrivanek Latvia make free translation of materials for the purposes of charity portal www.ziedot.lv and for Latvian Occupation Museum, while project group www.lidot.lv from tourism office Latvia Tours volunteered to plant 3500 trees in Ķekava¹⁷.



Similarly, there are a few businesses that engage in philanthropy (including, possibly volunteering), setting up separate institutions. For example, AB.LV Bank has established the *AB.LV Fund*, which supports a variety of charitable and artistic projects.



Recently, there is also an increasing trend, for companies to recruit volunteers for their own commercial activities, for example, in the organisation of a summer music festivals, where there is no public benefit or purpose.

There is also no consensus and proper understanding of differences between voluntary work and practice (for pupils or students). Often, volunteer work is aligned with student/pupil practice. Young people, of course, are responsive and willing to contribute, but these cases should be controlled and eliminated by giving them a different name, as it undermines the image/prestige of volunteering in society. Of course, this misunderstanding is further encouraged by improper legal basis and because of general lack of understanding of the principles of volunteering - both from state, businesses and individuals.

There are no significant efforts of government, political parties, and public administration bodies to promote voluntary work. If there are some efforts, they are either limited and only in the scope of reviewing legal acts, or as separate flickers of interest (as, for example, due to the European Year of Volunteering 2011).

There is neither a uniform policy in the field of volunteering, nor a systematic support (financial or of any other kind) for the non-governmental sector, which is addressing these issues. Separate tasks in the field of promotion of volunteering at the national level can be found in some state programmes, but they do not complexly address the significant issues in the field of adjustment of voluntary work. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science, being responsible both for the European Year and for the implementation of the tasks incorporated in the National Youth Policy Programme, still focuses on youth volunteering, instead of taking a broader look – as a possibility for every member of society to be involved.

17. Andris Petersons, Projekta "Sociāli atbildīga organizācija Baltijā" Latvijas pieredze, Available at: http://www.turiba.lv/darba_tirgus_2008/pages/Petersons_lv.html

Education

Volunteering is not included in school curricula as a separate discipline or field of study. The educational programme includes a limited amount of hours that can be spent discussing topics such as culture, healthy lifestyle, operation in extreme situations and safety, career choice, patriotism and civic participation and it is likely that volunteering could be touched upon here, but it is neither an official theme to be approached nor a generalized practice to talk about volunteering.

During the European Year of Volunteering 2011, issues of voluntary work became more relevant. Due to this, the Ministry of Education and Science prepared “*Guidelines for the organisation of activities within the pupil project week in the framework of the European Year of Volunteering 2011*” and invited pupils to implement the volunteer work projects during these weeks. Based on the experience of the organisation “brivpratigais.lv”, one can say that young people in schools are very poorly informed about the principles of voluntary work, how to get involved, and to find voluntary work possibilities, offers, as well as about other related matters. More aware and knowledgeable are those young people who are already engaged in some youth NGOs, but those young people who are not involved in any association, in general are not addressed and invited to become volunteers.

Unified practice of cooperation with, for example, schools that would be supported from government or municipalities, is missing. But separate NGOs for which volunteering ideas are important, visit schools in order to inform pupils about the principles of volunteering, possibilities, activities of concrete organisations, encouraging youth to get involved etc. Activities like these are not taking place regularly though, due to the lack of capacities and limited resources of NGOs.

6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

At national level there is no structured and regular support for voluntary work activities. From 2005-2007 separate activities in the field of volunteering were carried out or funded by the Secretariat of Society Integration Affairs (in the framework of activities aimed at strengthening the civil society) and the Ministry of Child and Family Affairs (in the framework of youth policy)¹⁸.

At present none of these governmental institutions exist anymore. Corresponding functions of the Secretariat have been taken over by the Ministry of Justice, but corresponding functions of the Ministry have been divided between another two ministries – the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Welfare. Now the Ministry of Education and Science in the framework of the National Youth Policy Programme organises separate tenders aiming at informing and training youth on voluntary work matters and these are only youth NGOs who are authorized to do trainings. NGOs have possibilities to raise funds participating in various tenders or competitions. For example, there are a few calls for applications announced by municipalities to support various social, cultural events organised by

¹⁸. NVO Institūts, 2007, “Ka trūkst brīvprātīgo kustības izaugsmei Latvijā?”

NGOs. Usually these are small amounts, with limited possibilities for organisations to pay for administration costs or to buy logistical support, like for instance computers, programmes, furniture. Riga can be mentioned as a good example of practice, since for a second year it provides funds for its Education, Culture and Sport department and Welfare department institutions to organise tenders for the implementation of various voluntary work projects.

In Latvia there is no governmental or municipal funding available for NGOs. It is a very demanding process for the organisations to constantly look for funding opportunities, prepare proposals and organise reporting.

Unfortunately, in Latvia there is no governmental or municipal funding available for the operation of organisations. This is a very resource demanding process for the NGOs constantly to look for project funding opportunities, prepare proposals and organise reporting. NGOs are seeking financial aid opportunities through a variety of international, European Union's project calls. There are some services, performance of that state or municipality may delegate to NGOs thus supporting the activities of NGOs, and probably volunteers if there are any in the organisation.

The organisation "brivpratigais.lv" does not receive constant funding from the government or the municipality for implementation of its activities, although the organisation's database, a platform where volunteers and organisations looking for volunteers can match, has been acknowledged in several national programmes. For example, on 29 August 2009, the Youth Policy National Programme 2009-2013 was approved and one of the aims and prior direction of activities is youth involvement and useful usage of a free (leisure) time. Within this framework it has been planned to popularize and promote the opportunities provided by data base www.brivpratigais.lv/datubaze. Due to the EVY 2011, some funding for maintenance and administration has also been allocated to the organisation as well as three other organisations to popularize voluntary work platforms.

In 2010, the organisation received a grant from the European Social Fund (ESF) for the Project "*Strengthening capacity of NGOs for the participation in a formation and implementation processes of voluntary work policy*". In the framework of this project the organisation updated the database, providing necessary technical improvements. An in-depth study was also carried out on the voluntary work situation in all of Latvia's five regions. Similarly, we had a possibility to engage in activities of the European Volunteer Centre (CEV). In the framework of the project, hand-book/guidelines were produced for organisations, governmental and municipal institutions to ease the engagement of volunteers.

Yet, without this funding the organisation was operating based on its member's voluntary work. Additionally, brivpratigais.lv also received funding from European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian financial mechanisms, ESF, and the European Commission, for the implementation of different projects.



7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

Data related to volunteering is not measured systematically and regularly. Some scattered studies are available in the field of volunteering that has been carried out recently, mainly in the youth policy area. The added value (economic or any other kind) of volunteers is not measured systematically either. In 2011 the study on development possibilities of volunteer work in Latvia and its contribution to Latvian economy was carried out¹⁹.

The aim of the study was to obtain data and carry out comprehensive analyses of situation of the volunteer work in Latvia – to analyse social demographic and value profile of active volunteers, to identify obstacles for wider popularity of volunteer work in society overall, to assess awareness of volunteer work, as well as to study interest and willingness to volunteer. Within the study economic calculations were carried out on contribution of volunteer work to economy overall, calculating its contribution to gross domestic product.

Overall, in 2010 the Latvian voluntary work monetary value was 82,558 million LVL (117,470 million EUR), which represented about 0.65% of Latvia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). About 435,000 Latvian residents spent at least one hour for volunteering and they all together worked on a voluntary basis nearly 33 million hours.

The most significant volunteering contribution to the Latvian economy in monetary terms has been in the form of professional assistance (15.314 million LVL) and the elderly, disabled and child care (11.184 million LVL) areas, as well as education (9.612 million LVL).

The organisation “brīvprātīgais.lv” also carried out qualitative study on policy and practice of voluntary work in municipalities in all five regions of Latvia in 2011. Some findings of the study revealed that, although at the local government and NGO level, the importance of volunteering is recognised, there is a lack of a deeper understanding of the volunteer status, role, motivation and opportunities to support the volunteer work by the municipalities. The potential of volunteering in local government and organisations is not sufficiently used, with one of the reasons being the fact that organised and comprehensive volunteering system does not exist. Ambiguous legal options for (local) government structures to attract adult volunteers significantly impede development of the voluntary work.

There also remains confusion given by the fact that there is no institution that could provide specific and competent answers for volunteering legal organisation and other related matters; and this confusion is responsible for volunteering issues at the national level.

19. Laboratory of Analytical and Strategic Study Ltd, 2011, Study on development possibilities of volunteer work in Latvia and its contribution to Latvian economy, Available at: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/petijumi/IZM_BrivpratigaisDarbs_Zinojums_Laboratory_07.2011_ENG.pdf

8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Unified principles according to what organisations and institutions engage or select volunteers have not been developed and approved. The most common method is to prepare questionnaire where a potential volunteer specifies necessary data and motivation according to what organisation makes an evaluation and takes a decision. Probably interviewing of volunteer will follow as well. Discussions are taking place in Riga City Council that guidelines are needed on management/organisation of voluntary work. Some organisations have developed their own voluntary work ethical standards. But there is no one - general and unified – document. There is also no institution to supervise ethical aspects of voluntary work.

The Education, Culture and Sport department of Riga City Council together with NGOs, in the framework of the URBACT²⁰ Programme, “My generation” project, developed a methodology to document voluntary work carried out. According to it, the organiser of voluntary work (association, foundation, state or municipal institution), may prepare and issue the document of proof to their volunteers acknowledging experience gained during voluntary work. In standart documents, the information about hours spent in voluntary work, tasks concluded as well as experience and skills gained is included. This document can be issued to everyone who has volunteered at least 120 hours.

9. AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Most successfully in Latvia operates the voluntary work database www.brivpratigais.lv/datubaze that acts as a virtual meeting point for volunteers and providers of voluntary work, organisers. Several hundred of people have registered in this database thus expressing their desire and

willingness to perform voluntary work. Unfortunately due to the lack of understanding about voluntary work, there is no corresponding amount of organisations registered in the database.

One of databases that positions and popularise itself as voluntary work database, www.prakse.lv, advocates that there are several hundreds of labour supplies, but they cannot fully be regarded as voluntary work offers, as

they offer practice places in different private as well as governmental and municipal companies and most of those supplies do not comply with the principles of volunteering.

The promotion of voluntary work is mostly practiced by some NGOs concerned about the development of voluntary work. Volunteering promotion is usually included as a separate activity in different projects. But, it has to be noted, that due to the European Year of Volunteering 2011, the state also put an increasing contribution towards information of society and has funded some voluntary work projects and campaigns. Most of activities were oriented towards informing and involving youth.

20. <http://urbact.eu/>

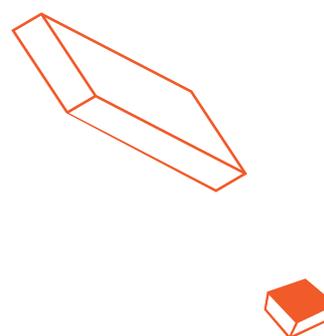
Voluntary work is not high in agenda for media. There are few journalists for whom this issue is the topic of the day. Like society, media members also lack understanding about this topic. In the end of November 2010 information about essential contribution towards the development of voluntary work was sent to 40 media contacts and only four of them reacted: The National News Agency LETA, national media www.la.lv (“Latvijas Avīze”), diverse information portal www.reitingi.lv and portal for youth www.jaunatneslietas.lv.

10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES

All relevant aspects on volunteering in Latvia have been outlined above.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary to develop procedures on volunteer engagement and management in the organisations/institutions in Latvia (unified voluntary work model/guidelines). It is also indispensable to carry out training of volunteer coordinators in NGOs, governmental and municipal institutions. A unitary voluntary work record keeping system should be developed (so that every organisation knows how to list and then in bookkeeping display voluntary work hours), as well as a system of evaluation of economical contribution of voluntary work. It is also necessary to introduce regular financial support to NGOs for their activities related to volunteering as well as to create volunteer assembly points in municipalities, ensuring all the possible information on voluntary work, possibilities and offers.



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