

VOLUNTEERING
INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPE
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1.VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPT DEFINITION

Volunteering concepts

In order to address the volunteering infrastructure in Luxembourg, it is first important to distinguish between the different types of volunteering. In Luxembourg, volunteering can refer to two concepts of voluntary activity.

The first, “*Volontariat*” describes the activities carried out within the “Youth Voluntary Service” [1] structure, defined originally by the 1999 Law on Voluntary Service and elaborated in the 2007 Law on Youth Voluntary Service. The law defines the service as activities of general interest carried out in a non-professional capacity by young volunteers at their free, personal choice. Whilst engagement in the service is voluntary, “*volontaires*” are party to a full-time working contract and are entitled to financial support covering food, travel and accommodation expenses, as well as pocket money. The domains concerned with the Voluntary Service include tourism, sport, education, and more.

The second concept, “*Bénévolat*” refers to voluntary activity undertaken freely with no financial remuneration in the service of a third party or a community. This form of volunteering is not governed by law as it is considered a free, private activity. According to the Charte du Bénévolat (Charter of Volunteering)[2] this concept explicitly excludes volunteering for family and friends from its definition. This form of volunteering is in fact often undertaken within the structure of an “association”, or a volunteer-involving organisation (VIO).

Volunteer-involving organisations

Associations sans but lucratif (ASBL), or non-profit organisations are volunteer-involving organisations that provide the largest platform for “*bénévoles*” to volunteer. They are subject to the 1928 Law on Non-Profit Organisations, under which they are restricted from undertaking commercial or industrial operations or providing material gains to their members, among other legal requirements.

Whilst not legally binding, the Charter of Volunteering, created by Luxembourg’s national agency, *Agence du Bénévolat*, sets out guidelines for the proper implementation of volunteering. For example, the Charter states that there should be no barrier to volunteering, and it is an exercise inclusive of everyone no matter their gender, age, race, physical ability, etc. The Charter stipulates that VIOs should provide adequate insurance to volunteers, as well as reimbursing expenses incurred undertaking voluntary activity, and so on. VIOs are able to sign this Charter, signalling their commitment to abide by the guidelines, and forming part of the process to receive a “Label of Quality” from the *Agence du Bénévolat*.

[1] Service National de la Jeunesse (2019). *Service National de la Jeunesse*. [online] Snj.lu. Available at: <http://www.snj.lu>

[2] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Charte luxembourgeoise du bénévolat*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/espace-benevole/charte-benevolat/index.html>

2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

History of volunteering

Luxembourg is a characteristically small country, with only 602,000 or so inhabitants (2018)^[3] yet it has three official languages: Luxembourgish, German and French. Much of the population is concentrated in its capital, Luxembourg City, whereas the rest of the country's landscape tends to be more rural.

Naturally, the agricultural sector played a pioneering role in the development of the non-profit sector as early as 1900. Prior to this, much of the voluntary activity in Luxembourg was carried out within a religious context, owing to the fact that Luxembourg is a predominantly Catholic country. Although some non-profit organisations appeared prior to the 1900s, such as the Federation of Firemen in 1883, development of this sector set in motion following the promulgation of the 1928 Law on Non-Profit Organisations. Then, from the 1960s onwards the government played a greater part in social initiatives, in terms of support and funding.

Following the International Year of Volunteering in 2001, more attention was paid to the concept of volunteering and volunteering infrastructure in Luxembourg. This led to the establishment of 3 pivotal organisations in the voluntary sector: the High Council for Volunteering (Conseil supérieur du Bénévolat), the Association for Volunteering (Association du Bénévolat), and the Volunteering Agency (Agence du Bénévolat).

Volunteering demographics

According to a 2015^[4] study, 37% of people in Luxembourg have been involved in the "bénévolat" form of volunteering within the structure of a VIO, whilst 30% have carried out informal volunteering, or volunteering outside of a VIO. These figures equate to 47% of the total population volunteering formally or informally.

There is little variation in voluntary engagement according to age, however the same study shows that formal volunteering rates are highest among those aged between 16-24 and 55-64, equalling around 40% of each age group. This latter age group also report the highest engagement in informal volunteering, at just under 40%.

[3] Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (2019). Population. [online] Luxembourg.public.lu. Available at: <http://luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/population/index.html>

[4] Institut national de la statistiques et des études économiques (2017). Regards sur la participation socio-culturelle des résidents. [online] Luxembourg City: STATEC. Available at: <https://statistiques.public.lu/catalogue-publications/regards/2017/PDF-03-2017.pdf>

According to a 2010^[5] study on the non-profit sector, 72% of volunteers are men. Furthermore, an even higher percentage of men (77%) are presidents of VIOs in Luxembourg. Women are more likely to be active in certain domains, such as social action and educational VIOs, yet the percentage of female presidents remains low at 33% and 31% respectively. Volunteering also attracts those with a higher level of education, with 40% of volunteers with a higher education qualification.

There is no recent research on volunteering by sector in Luxembourg, however, a 2001 study^[6] into volunteering within VIOs showed that the most popular sector for volunteering was the cultural sector, followed by the sport sector, especially concerning voluntary participation of men in both. Third most popular was the social sector, which also happened to be the sector most subscribed to by women as previously mentioned. The study also found that women were more likely than men to carry out “relational volunteering”, such as helping family members, friends and neighbours. However, it is important to note that given the age of this data, it is quite possible that the situation has changed.

3.LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

1999 Law on Voluntary Service and 2007 Law on Youth Voluntary Service

These laws pertain to the “*volontariat*” concept of volunteering in Luxembourg. The 1999 Law on Voluntary Service, promulgated on the 28th of January 1999, was drafted with the goal of promoting youth engagement in voluntary activities as a way of promoting solidarity in Luxembourgish society, as well as providing youth with a formative experience. This law is no longer in action, as it has been replaced by the 2007 Law on Youth Voluntary Service, promulgated on the 31st October 2007, encompassing many of the themes of the previous law. The main principles of the law are:

- **Youth:** The Youth Voluntary Service is, naturally, only available to youths up to the age of 30. They must have completed their compulsory education in order to participate.
- **Remuneration:** Whilst volunteers do not receive a salary as such, they are entitled to tax-free “pocket money” during their service, which may equal no more than a fifth of the minimum wage. Furthermore, expenses such as accommodation, travel, and subsistence are covered. The State also covers the volunteer’s social security.

[5] CEPS/Instead (2010). Le secteur associatif au Luxembourg. [online] Luxembourg City: Oeuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/publications/etudes-enquetes/etude-ons/secteur-associatif-au-luxembourg.pdf>

[6] CEPS/Instead (2002). Le travail bénévole au Luxembourg en 2001. [online] Esch-sur-Alzette: CEPS/Instead. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/publications/etudes-enquetes/travail-benevole-2001/travail-benevole-2001.pdf>

- *Working hours:* The Voluntary Service is to be carried out at full-time hours, and it is not possible to undertake paid work alongside the voluntary work. Furthermore, the Voluntary Service terms can last between 3 and 12 months. Equally, the work undertaken by volunteers must not replace that of an employee at the receiving organisation.
- *Sectors:* Projects of the Youth Voluntary Service take place in certain sectors. These sectors are social and educational work, culture, tourism, sport, international peace and reconciliation, environmental protection and development.

Charter of Volunteering^[7]

As for the “*bénévolat*” concept of volunteering, there is no legal definition or framework that regulates this activity. There exist, however, some laws regarding specific aspects of volunteering, such as fiscal laws on volunteer reimbursement.

Although not legally binding, the Charte du Bénévolat, or Charter of Volunteering, was produced in 2001 following the International Year of Volunteering incited further interest in the sector in Luxembourg. It was created by Agence du Bénévolat and edited by the Ministry of Family and Integration. It seeks to define voluntary work of this kind and provide a guideline for volunteers and VIOs. The components of the Charter are the:

- *Bénévole:* the volunteer is someone engaging freely and voluntarily in unpaid actions or services to the benefit of a third party or a community. Their participation in volunteering should express solidarity with their chosen VIO/s and commitment to their development, by completing the defined tasks and accepting relevant training to this end.
- *Bénévolat:* voluntary work is the free and personal choice of volunteers to help the development of society. It does not provide any financial benefit to the volunteer. Volunteering must be accessible to all, regardless of their age, race, nationality, religion, gender, marital or status, or their physical ability and the voluntary activity must respect human dignity. It involves and encourages social and collective participation in missions to respond to the needs of society.
- *Volunteer-involving organisations:* VIOs are charged with welcoming volunteers as full collaborators to the project, providing them with complete and clear information on the organisation’s objectives and way of functioning. They must provide volunteers with meaningful and appropriate tasks, respecting the volunteer’s competences and availability. Under the Charter, VIOs are obliged to provide volunteers with adequate insurance as well as reimbursing expenses incurred in the voluntary engagement.

[7] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). Charte luxembourgeoise du bénévolat. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/espace-benevole/charte-benevolat/index.html>

VIOs are able to sign this Charter beginning a process of accreditation with the national agency and eventually receiving a “Label of Quality”. This accreditation is designed to facilitate voluntary engagement in society by providing a guideline for VIOs to ensure the protection and appreciation of their volunteers, as well as promoting VIOs that adhere to the Charter’s criteria.

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

Service National de la Jeunesse^[8]

The National Youth Service is the structure providing opportunities to carry out the “volontariat” form of volunteering. It was created in 1964, under the *Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth*. Its goal is to provide support to youths to develop their educational and professional skills and the service is governed by the 2008 Law on Youth. There exist 12 local branches of the National Youth Service. They provide individual support to youths experiencing difficulty and help put them back on track through a number of initiatives such as workshops, social skills classes, etc., as well as accompanying youths interested in the National Youth Service. There are also 5 regional offices monitoring the quality of non-formal educational services, and 4 learning centres which offer educational group activities. The service comprises 250 partners, and is able to offer voluntary activities to 40,000 youths as well as offering 200 courses to 3,000 youths.

Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration^[9]

The Ministry of Family and Integration is the public body responsible for “bénévolat” volunteering in Luxembourg. The Minister plays a part in representing the volunteering interests of Luxembourg on the international stage, for example, opening the European Volunteer Centre’s General Assembly in 2015. The Minister also promotes volunteering at home, helping present events such as “72 Hours of Volunteering”, an event which allows the public to discover VIOs and volunteer opportunities in the region.

Conseil Supérieur du Bénévolat^[10]

The High Council for Volunteering was set up in 2002 following the International Year for Volunteering and at the suggestion of the Minister of Family and Integration. It comprises 30 members representing many different stakeholders in the voluntary sector, such as youth organisations, charities, VIOs and public bodies. Their missions include: advising on government measures concerning volunteering as well as drafting their own policies, promoting regional and international volunteering exchanges and promoting recognition and support for volunteering initiatives.

[8] Service National de la Jeunesse (2019). *Service National de la Jeunesse*. [online] Snj.lu. Available at: <http://www.snj.lu>

[9] Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région (2019). *Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région // Le gouvernement luxembourgeois*. [online] Mfamigr.gouvernement.lu. Available at: <https://mfamigr.gouvernement.lu/fr.html>

[10] Agence du Bénévolat (2014). *Conseil Supérieur du Bénévolat*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/acteurs/luxembourg/conseil-superieur-benevolat/index.html>

Association du Bénévolat and Agence du Bénévolat[11]

The Volunteer Association was set up during the International Year of Volunteering in 2001 to respond to Luxembourg's new recognition of the importance of volunteering in society. In turn, the Volunteer Association established the National Volunteer Agency in 2002, with its offices opening in June 2003. It comprises 14 members including VIOs, NGOs and voluntary support organisations. The Agency plays many roles in promoting volunteering. As well as managing the volunteering portal and acting as a source of information, advice and support for VIOs and volunteers, the Agency is engaged in promoting continuous learning, validation of skills acquired, the need for a legal status of volunteering, and more. The Volunteer Agency is a member of the European Volunteer Centre and Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen (bagfa – Federal Association of Volunteer Agencies)[12], which is the National Volunteer Agency of Germany.

Cellule d'Appui aux Associations[13]

The Support Unit for Associations is active in supporting VIOs. They act as an information helpdesk advising on juridical, organisational and administrative issues. The Unit also organises learning events to advise on aspects of VIO functioning from marketing to accounting. They facilitate exchanges between VIOs and facilitate the work of VIOs in lending materials such as academic resources.

Maison des Associations[14]

The Maison des Associations was founded in 2007 with the collaboration and support of the Luxembourgish Office of Reception and Integration and the Ministry of Family and Integration. Its goal is to promote the voluntary movement and the role of volunteers and VIOs in society. There is also a focus on intercultural and social cohesion, especially concerning their culturally diverse member Federations. Some of their specific projects include Language Cafés, World Kitchen, and involvement as a sending/receiving organisation of the European Solidarity Corps.

5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Catholic Church

The Church was focal in the volunteering landscape in the 1900s. Following the arrival of Italian migrants in the early 1900s, the Church was active in setting up reception and support facilities. Its voluntary missions continued throughout the century, receiving financial aid from the State. The Catholic Church is still active in carrying out volunteer projects in Luxembourg, as well as in the promotion of voluntary activity. Notably, Catholic VIOs such as *Luxembourg Women's Catholic Action* and *Confédération Caritas Luxembourg* are members of both the High Council for Volunteering and the National Volunteer Agency.

[11] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Agence du Bénévolat a.s.b.l.* [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at:

<http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/acteurs/luxembourg/agence-benevolat/index.html>

[12] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen e.V. - Bagfa.* [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at:

<http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/acteurs/reactions-internationales/bagfa/index.html>

[13] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Cellule d'appui aux associations - Veräinswierkstat.* [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at:

<http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/acteurs/luxembourg/cellule-appui-associations/index.html>

[14] Maison des Associations (2019). *Maison des associations - Qui sommes-nous ?.* [online] maisondesassociations.lu. Available at:

<http://www.maisondesassociations.lu>

Companies

More and more companies are adhering to the concept of corporate social responsibility, and one way of doing so is supporting the actions of a VIO and supporting their employees to carry out voluntary action. The National Volunteer Agency is active in promoting and mediating partnerships between companies and VIOs[15]. These partnerships often result in a “Day of Solidarity” where employees are able to devote a day, or half a day, to volunteering with a VIO with the support of their employer. This brings benefits to VIOs as well, as it can provide a lot of human resources to a cause, as well as potentially bringing certain competences. Partnerships between companies and VIOs can also bring financial and material aid to a VIO.

L'Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte

The National Relief Service Grand-Duchess Charlotte[16] is a public institution majorly responsible for organizing and financing philanthropy in Luxembourg. It was initially founded in order to help and support victims of World War II. Now, under the supervision of the Minister of State, the organisation manages the National Lottery and funds VIOs acting in the social, cultural, environmental, health and sport and remembrance sectors. The Service is funded by private donations and legacies, levies on bets on sporting events relating to the Service, grants, revenues, and also the National Lottery. In 2018, the total of financial aid awarded to VIOs was over 18 million euros [17].

6.FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Public funding

The State is involved in funding both types of volunteering in Luxembourg. Firstly, the state finances the provision of social security, subsistence expenses and pocket money to those participating in the National Youth Service. Concerning “*bénévolat*”, there are a few ways in which the State provides financial assistance[18]. One such form of assistance is for VIOs active in the sectors outlined by the National Relief Service Grand-Duchess Charlotte, who may apply to this public institution for funding. These funds come from both private donations and public grants. Furthermore, VIOs are able to apply directly to the government for funding. VIOs must address the ministry specific to their sector. These ministries then award the grants which are calculated on a case-by-case basis and according to the size and scope of the VIOs projects.

[15] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Partenariat avec les entreprises*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/gerer-association/partenariat-entreprises/index.html>

[16] Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte (2019). *Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte*. [online] Oeuvre.lu. Available at: <https://www.oeuvre.lu>

[17] Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte (2018). *Rapport annuel 2018*. [online] Luxembourg City: Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte, pp. 74. Available at: https://www.oeuvre.lu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/08989_0E-LO_RA18_2019_WEB.pdf

[18] Agence du Bénévolat (2014). *Soutien financier de l'Etat*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/creer-association/relation-etat/soutien-financier-etat/index.html>

Private funding

Individual donations contribute to the functioning of VIOs in Luxembourg. According to a study^[19] for the *Cercle de Coopération des ONGD du Luxembourg* (Circle of Cooperation of the NGOs of Luxembourg) the sector most donated to is emergency aid, accounting for 36% of donations. In second is culture at 31%, and the third-place sector for donations is shared by animal welfare and environmental conservation at 24%. Private donations are most commonly valued between 120€ and 500€ at 37%, followed by less than 120€ at 36%. Most often, donations are made online or in cash. It is becoming increasingly popular to donate money to a cause as a legacy donation. Companies are also involved in donating to VIOs. Many form partnerships, contributing not only financial aid, but also in terms of human resources and competences and material aid in terms of equipment.

7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

There is very little research concerning voluntary activity in Luxembourg. Firstly, as previously mentioned, volunteering was not regarded as a significant aspect of Luxembourgish society until after the International Year of Volunteering in 2001. Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of academic research, owing to the fact that there was no university in Luxembourg until 2003. Even now, volunteerism does not fall under the university's research areas. Therefore, Luxembourg does not output any sort of academic research on volunteering. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (STATEC) has collected *some* data on volunteering, however this is neither exhaustive nor systematic.

8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

La Charte du Bénévolat

The Charter of Volunteering^[20] lays out specific guidelines equating to an ethical code for VIOs and volunteers to follow. The ethical considerations are:

- *Accessibility*: Volunteering must be accessible to all, regardless of their race, nationality, gender, physical ability, social status, religion, etc.
- *Choice*: The decision to volunteer must be made through a free and personal choice.
- *Human dignity*: Volunteering must respect human dignity and be carried out in an ethical and humanitarian manner.
- *Society*: Volunteering should respond to the needs of society and incite collective action and solidarity to this end.
- *Integration*: Volunteering must employ a creative and responsible spirit in order to increase participation and social integration.

[20] Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Charte luxembourgeoise du bénévolat*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/espace-benevole/charte-benevolat/index.html>

As well as signing the National Volunteer Agency's Charter, many VIOs lay out their own ethical codes regarding volunteers. For example, Caritas has its own Charter of Volunteering, encompassing many of the principles outlined above.

9.AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Agence du Bénévolat

While there is no national database for volunteering opportunities, the National Volunteer Agency provides a platform^[21] on which to search for volunteering (*bénévolat*) opportunities, allowing potential volunteers to filter their choices by region, volunteer sector and type of volunteering. Furthermore, the Agency organises the 72 Hours of Volunteering, an event where Luxembourgish VIOs, foundations and clubs are able to promote their activities and the need for volunteers. The event was first organised in 2015 and taking place annually over three days.

Just Arrived^[22]

Just Arrived is an online resource which offers help and advice to expats arriving in Luxembourg. While the practical guide was first published in 2005, the website was launched in 2014 and receives around 100,000 visitors each month. Within its "Working in Luxembourg" section it provides information on "Public Interest Associations" and advertises VIOs to expats.

10.ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICS

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11.RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, there is no legal status for "bénévoles" in Luxembourg. Whilst their status is laid out symbolically in the Luxembourg Charter of Volunteering by the National Volunteer Agency, they are not afforded any rights or obligations in the eyes of the law. Creating in law a legal definition and a framework for "bénévoles" and "bénévolat" volunteering would solidify the position of volunteering in society. Furthermore, the lack of research and collection of data on volunteering in Luxembourg hinders the progression of the voluntary sector. Much of the literature available is outdated, going back to the early 2000's. Recent data is not exhaustive and there is no way to tell exactly how many volunteers there are in Luxembourg or in each sector of volunteering. Providing in detail and systematic research would be beneficial to VIOs and to the National Volunteer Agency for informing policy and promotion of volunteering.

[21] Agence du Bénévolat (2019). *Chercher une activité bénévole*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/espace-benevole/chercher-activite-benevole/index.php>

[22] Just Arrived (2019). *Volunteering in Luxembourg, where to go and which associations?*. [online] just arrived.lu. Available at: <https://www.justarrived.lu/en/working-in-luxembourg/volunteering-luxembourg-solidarity-integration/>

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- Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Agence du Bénévolat a.s.l.*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/acteurs/luxembourg/agence-benevolat/index.html> [Accessed 15 Sep. 2019].
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- Agence du Bénévolat (2015). *Charte luxembourgeoise du bénévolat*. [online] Benevolat.public.lu. Available at: <http://benevolat.public.lu/fr/espace-benevole/charte-benevolat/index.html> [Accessed 20 Sep. 2019].
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