



General Assembly Conference
“Equal Opportunities for All –
Volunteering and Diversity”

Budapest | Hungary | 28 September 2007

CONFERENCE REPORT



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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10, rue de la Science
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Editor:

Branka Cicak
Markus Held

Revisor and Proofreader:

Grainne Maginnis

Design:

Stefanie Morgner



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I. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Each CEV General Assembly is accompanied by a thematic conference on a topic addressing the concerns and needs of its member organisations and partners, volunteer centres, volunteer development agencies, volunteering involving organisations and other stakeholders. These conferences provide an opportunity to meet, exchange good practice and build partnerships around topics that rank highly on the volunteering policy agenda.

On the occasion of the Budapest CEV General Assembly, the topic of "Equal opportunities for all – Volunteering and Diversity" was chosen. The European Commission had designated 2007 as European Year of Equal Opportunities, aiming to make Europeans aware of their right not to be discriminated against, to promote equal opportunities in areas from work to healthcare, and to show how diversity makes the EU stronger. This conference was CEV's contribution to bringing European diversity closer to its citizens and raising their awareness of the benefits of that diversity.

This General Assembly conference aimed to give examples of good practice where volunteering proved to be an instrument to help to ensure equal opportunities; and to discuss the challenges of bringing diversity into volunteering - involving and empowering disadvantaged groups to be the agents of change in their communities through volunteering. The presentations, workshops and discussions focused on the following fields:

- ➔ Volunteering by different (often disadvantaged) target groups such as disabled people, (long-term) unemployed people, people experiencing poverty/homelessness, ethnic groups/minorities, people living with HIV/AIDS, etc. – the challenges of trying to achieve diversity in volunteering;
- ➔ The role of volunteers in promoting and ensuring equal opportunities and fighting prejudices through advocacy, awareness-raising, social service provision etc;
- ➔ Social inclusion, empowerment and active participation of disadvantaged groups through volunteering;
- ➔ Collaboration between different stakeholders such as volunteer centres, specialized organisations of/for disadvantaged groups in society, employment agencies, public or private social services, educational institutions etc.

Additionally, an open space session provided the environment for all participants to meet and interact with each other in a different way – leaving space to address their own topics, issues and ideas for exchange and future cooperation.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The discussions in the panels, workshops and 'open space' have shown that **volunteering is a means for ensuring equal opportunities**. Both aspects of the relationship between volunteering and disadvantaged groups were tackled; how volunteers (can) help to ensure equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups in society (**volunteering for equal opportunities**) and how people from disadvantaged groups can better be involved in volunteering (**equal opportunities within volunteering**).

Through the presentation of good practice examples in workshops and panel discussions, the general importance of volunteering in ensuring equal opportunities was stressed as a clear way in which society can ensure that everyone - regardless of his or her social, economic, health or other status - can be included equally in its different elements. That does not only bring the benefits to the target group of disadvantaged people but to the organisations and wider community as well.

However, many discussions reflected upon whether volunteering organisations and the volunteer movement are ready to work with diversity, as it is not only about meeting ideals, but also about commitment to the targeted action. The most commonly identified benefits of involving disadvantaged volunteers in organisations are widening the organisation's horizons and its membership and its capacity for renewal. However, management of diversity in volunteering requires strong financial and human resources and specific skills, often to a much greater extent than in 'mainstream' volunteering. Therefore, organisations sometimes think that volunteers with special needs are "more trouble than they are worth" and do not give a chance to diversity volunteering. Further, organisations in countries such as France do not support the idea of distinguishing different groups of volunteers, fearing stigmatisation, and promote an equal approach to all individuals engaged in volunteering.

In spite of that, many delegates stressed the importance of volunteering organisations investing in diversity, as it enables them to reflect the reality of the sector they work in, and develop different forms of helping disadvantaged groups, or those at risk of social exclusion. In this way, volunteering organisations can achieve their aims of volunteer involvement by drawing potential volunteers from a broad range of groups in society. In addition, by bringing diversity into their own governing bodies, they can also demonstrate consistency.

In order to include disadvantaged groups into volunteering, organisations need to have clear target groups, a means to reach them and ways to make them feel comfortable with their volunteer role. This last, in particular, requires adequate staff training in order to be able to support a volunteer in his/her commitment. This will provide the basis for a success, as not all kinds of work can be done by all volunteers, or only with additional support from professionals.

Another crucial element of success is cooperation and networking with organisations that represent disadvantaged groups. This makes it possible to combine the volunteering knowledge of the volunteering-involving organisation with specialist knowledge on specific areas of disadvantage - taking a 'whole system' approach. Further, that cooperation can foster promotion of diversity volunteering and accessibility of volunteering to the different groups. As reaching disadvantaged groups and informing them about volunteering opportunities is sometimes a great challenge, such partnerships can also make the volunteering environment more attractive to every individual.

That means that the organisations need to be more open to adapting tasks or environments for volunteers; inviting volunteers to talk about their support needs or disabilities during recruitment; and remembering cultural awareness and treating all volunteers as individuals.

Sometimes volunteering of disadvantaged groups is a good way of including people into 'normal life', especially volunteering for their own cause (peer volunteering). That encourages them to develop good relationships with staff and other volunteers, raises awareness of social exclusion, successfully challenges stereotypes and finally has a real and positive impact on the lives of individuals, groups and organisations.

By no means should any disadvantaged group be forced into volunteering. Volunteering is an act of free will and it should be used as tool to promote social inclusion and not an aim in itself for diverse target groups. Therefore, such policies of forced volunteering actually create barriers for volunteer engagement of groups such as migrants, where in reality volunteering plays an important role in facilitating the recognition and integration of minorities into mainstream society by legitimising their social status and cooperating with concerned stakeholders to raise awareness of equal opportunity rights.

Aside from these external barriers, volunteers face a variety of personal barriers such as lack of self-confidence, unfriendly cultural attitudes and a fear of over-commitment. On the other hand, volunteering organisations display a lack of knowledge on how to deal with disadvantaged groups, insufficient coordination and poor access to information.

Conclusions

1. For volunteering to succeed as means of achieving equal opportunities, it is important to **work with the target beneficiary group**, and not just for them, and to ensure they feel free to express their needs and concerns. It needs to be clear to beneficiaries that volunteering for the organisation does not entitle them to 'extra' help or services. However, many people who have benefited from an organisation's services subsequently want to give something back to the association that has helped them. As well as boosting their self-confidence, this can provide an opportunity to reinvigorate their social life and acquire new skills. The best ground for recruiting volunteers is at community level, through **self-help groups, workshops, "peer to peer" activities, etc.**
2. **Volunteering is an excellent catalyst for bringing together people of different backgrounds**, as volunteers most commonly tend to be middle class/well-off and different disadvantaged groups.
3. One of the most successful forms of volunteering by disadvantaged groups is through self-help groups.
4. Associations' motives for recruiting volunteers from disadvantaged groups include wanting to affirm the values that underlie their particular action, to strengthen the organisations' values and identity and to give new energy to their activities. However, in order to avoid merely creating an impression of diversity, **organisations need to set concrete objectives and put values of anti-discrimination and solidarity into practice.**
5. Organisations that invest in diversity are more likely to have a culture of inclusiveness and be more aware of the needs of those facing disadvantage because of their direct experience of working in that way. Also, **volunteering is a very useful way of helping people enlarge their social contacts, gain new skills, build their self-esteem and may be a way for people to move towards employability**, if that is a longer-term goal.
6. It should be recognised that there are real cases where volunteer organisations could not realistically be expected to involve certain types of people in certain volunteer tasks, for example, in mountain rescue.

7. Reaching the disadvantaged groups is sometimes a great challenge with many communication obstacles to be overcome. Therefore it is important to develop different information tools suitable to the different target groups, developed in cooperation with the organisations specialised in working with these target groups. The process of preparing these materials brings new knowledge, views, skills and understanding of diversity and accessibility to the team. That enables the professional to put greater sensitivity to diversity and equal opportunities into their daily work.
8. There should be a **good practice bank** to spread the idea.
9. Expectations of governments, partners involved from the target group and volunteer centres are often very different. All of them have to accept that the partners' situations are different and the national governments have different priorities. Most of the European governments do not think this theme is so important, and often they ignore good initiatives coming from professional NGO's.
10. **Volunteering of disadvantaged groups is still in its infancy.**

Branka Cicak
Markus Held
CEV – the European Volunteer Centre

Brussels, November 2007



III. PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME: Friday, 28 September 2007

VENUE: European Youth Centre, Zivatar utca 1-3, H-1024 Budapest

09:00 Registrations

09:30 Opening plenary – Welcome

- **Andras F. Tóth** Director, ÖKA National Volunteer Centre, Hungary
- **Eva Hambach** CEV Board of Directors, Director, Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk, Belgium
- **Mr. Gábor Csizmár** State Secretary, Ministry of Social and Employment Affairs

Keynote speeches and round table, Chair: **Markus Held**, CEV Director

- **Katalin Levai** Member of the European Parliament: Equal opportunities for all in Europe - Vision or reality? The EU's role in promoting active citizenship as a tool towards equal opportunities
- **Tony Geudens** SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, Belgium: SALTO Inclusion's experience and resources for volunteering
- **Spyros Psychas** ARSIS, Greece: Volunteering for and of people experiencing poverty

10:45 Coffee Break

11:15 **Open Space:** Meet your CEV colleagues from around Europe

13:15 Lunch

14.30 **Workshops (WS) – Good practice session I**

- **1) Volunteering England:** Volunteering and diversity in England – an introduction to 'breaking down barriers' and being more inclusive in volunteering
- **2) France Bénévolat:** Initiatives taken by member associations of France Bénévolat to involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering
- **3) United Nations Volunteers:** Greater Involvement of People with HIV/AIDS in Viet Nam

16.00 Coffee Break

16:30 **Workshops (WS) – Good practice session II**

- **4) Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire,** Scotland: ACERISH: Promoting the independence of disabled persons through standardisation of competencies of support workers at European level
- **5) Volunteering Ireland,** Ireland: Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion
- **6) ÖKA,** Hungary: Raising the opportunities of young, disadvantaged people, through VPL/APL within the national, long-term "ÖTLET" programme

18:00 **Final plenary:** Conclusions of the day, Chair: Markus Held, CEV Director

20:30 Dinner

IV. PARTICIPANTS

ACKERMANN Ulrico	Verbund Freiwilligen - Zentren im Deutschen Caritasverband	Germany
AGRILLO Cristina	AVSO	Europe
ALATYÁNI Szilvia	Zöld-híd Alapítvány	Hungary
BALOGH Judit	Mobilitás KMRISZI	Hungary
BARSI Adrienn	Vocational Academy Alapítvány	Hungary
BENEDEK Gabriella	Facilitator	Hungary
BERNASCONI Paolo	UNV Programme	Germany
BRADLEY Elaine	Volunteering Ireland	Ireland
BRENNER Zsuzsanna	Budapesti Művelődési Központ	Hungary
CABRE Jose	FOCAGG	Spain
CASELLI Rossana	Centro Nazionale Volontariato	Italy
CERNA Lenka	Dobrovolnicke centrum Usti nad Labem	Czech Republic
CICAK Branka	CEV	Europe
CIEKINSKI Zsuzsanna	Kelet-európai Utógondozottakért és Lakóotthonokban Lakókért Al.	Hungary
COLCEAG Carmen	Pro Vobis Volunteer Center	România
COLLINO Maria Teresa	CSV Friuli Venezia Giulia	Italy
CSERI Györgyi	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
CSIZMÁR Gábor	Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs	Hungary
CZIKE Klára	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
DABASI Tamás	Ny-Pannon Rég. Pály. Tanácsadóinak és Projektmenedzsereinek Egy.	Hungary
DANCKAERT Wouter	Het Punt	Belgium
DARIDA Györgyi	Volunteer Reporter	Hungary
DELLA PORTA Nicki	BITC	UK
DR. KOZMÁNÉ KOVÁCS Tünde	Spring Közhasznú Alapítvány	Hungary
ENGLES Kate	Volunteering England	UK
F. TÓTH András	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
FARKAS Emese	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
FARKAS Biborka	Kórházi Önkéntes Segítő Szolgálat Alapítvány	Hungary
GÁLFI Lilla	Shell Hungary Rt.	Hungary
GERENCSÉR Balázs	NIOK Alapítvány	Hungary
GEUDENS Tony	SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre	Europe
GIEDRAITIENE Nijole	The Volunteer centre Lithuania	Lithuania
GOMBÁS Ágnes	Zalai Falvakért Egyesület	Hungary
GRAMBERG Anna	Tartu Volunteer Centre	Estonia
HADRÉVY Borbála	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
HALLEY David	BITC-ENGAGE	UK

HAMBACH Eva	Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk	Belgium
HAMILTON Patrick	Volunteering England	UK
HELD Markus	CEV	Europe
HILDI Erzsébet	Pesterzsébeti szociális és gyermekvédelmi Központja	Hungary
HIRSKÓ Renáta	Szimbíózis Alapítvány	Hungary
HOMONNAI Zsuzsanna	Volunteer Reporter	Hungary
HUGHES Alison	University of Liverpool	UK
HUNYADI Réka	Facilitator	Hungary
JANSSEN Silvie	MOVISIE	The Netherlands
JUHACSEK Petra	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
KÁRMÁN Erika	ÓKA Trainer / Facilitator	Hungary
KIRÁLY Borbála	Via Pacis Nemzetközi Ifjúsági Egyesület (YAP)	Hungary
KISSZŐLŐSI SZÁNTHÓ Beáta	Szinergia Kft.	Hungary
KOVÁCS Etelka	Facilitator	Hungary
KOZMÁNÉ SERES Ágnes	Közép-dunántúli Regionális Munkaügyi Központ	Hungary
KUNOVSKÍ Balázs	Junior Achievement Magyarország Alapítvány	Hungary
LEROY Verlee	Het Punt	Belgium
LÉVAI Katalin	European Parliament	Hungary
LUCKE Gisela	ARBES	Germany
LUNAS Maria Rosa	FOCAGG	Spain
MARGAU Jurgita	The Volunteer centre Lithuania	Lithuania
MAROSSZÉKI Emese	Életfa Segítő Szolgálat Egyesület	Hungary
MARTI Lluc	Barcelona Volontaria	Spain
MCKENNA Yvonne	Volunteer Centres Ireland	Ireland
MCNEIL Mary	Volunteer Centre North Lanakshire	UK
MESTERHÁZY Sándor	Interpreter	Hungary
MILANKOVICS Kinga	Euconsult Alapítvány	Hungary
MONSEN-ELVIK Karl	Volunteer Centre North Lanakshire	UK
MÓRA Veronika	Ökotárs Alapítvány	Hungary
MRACKOVA Alzbeta	C.A.R.D.O.	Slovakia
NÉMETH Enikő	Életfa Segítő Szolgálat Egyesület	Hungary
NUSSBAUM Mike	Volunteering England	UK
OCKENDEN Nick	Institute for Volunteering research	UK
OREIAN Mirona	Pro Vobis Volunteer Center	România
OSTI GUERRAZZI Alberto	SPES	Italy
PÁL Andrea	Euconsult Alapítvány	Hungary
PÁL Ildikó	Magyar Adományozói Fórum	Hungary

Participants

PIETROWSKI Dariusz	Centrum Wolontariatu	Poland
PIRES CHAMBEL Elza Maria	National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering	Portugal
PIECZKA KATALIN Judit	People Team Alapítvány	Hungary
POYATOS Juan Angel	FUNDAR	Spain
PROCA Roxana Maria	CEV	Europe
PSYCHAS Spyros	ARSIS - Association for the social support of youth	Greece
RAIMONDO Sergio	CSV Friuli Venezia Giulia	Italy
RAKOČEVIĆ Sanda	ADP-Zid	Montenegro
RAZZANO Renzo	SPES	Italy
REGER-BEAU Nicole	Agence du Benevolat	Luxembourg
RIGMAN Cristina	Pro Vobis Volunteer Center	Romania
RÓZSA Viktória	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
RUSKÓ Rita	<i>Facilitator</i>	Hungary
SCSAURSZKI Tamás	<i>Facilitator</i>	Hungary
ŠEHIĆ RELIĆ Lejla	Volunteer centre Osijek	Croatia
SOZANSKA Olga	HESTIA	Czech Republic
STEENBERGEN Marijke	MOVISIE	The Netherlands
STEWART Carol	University of Liverpool	UK
STRENNER Szilárd	ÖKA Trainer / <i>Facilitator</i>	Hungary
STUBBE Wendy	MOVISIE	The Netherlands
SUBIELA Maria Jose	BITC – ENGAGE	UK
SZABO Suzanna	France Benevolat	France
SZEBERÉNYI Adrián	Photographer	Hungary
SZÉCSI Szilvia	Szocio East Egyesület	Hungary
SZILÁGYI Róbert	Béthel Alapítvány	Hungary
UJJ Ildikó	Kristály Alapítvány	Hungary
VAJDA Róza	Artemisszió Alapítvány	Hungary
VALADŽIJA Đurđica	Volunteers' Centre Zagreb	Croatia
VAN GRINSVEN Saskia	MOVISIE	The Netherlands
VARGA Zsuzsanna	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
VARGA Máté	<i>Facilitator</i>	Hungary
VASZKUN Judit	Volunteer Reporter	Hungary
VILÀ I MIRAS Maria	Federació Catalana de Voluntariat Social	Spain
WIELOCH Joanna	CEV	Europe
WILLIAMS Sarah	Volunteering Ireland	Ireland
ZENTAI András	Volunteer Reporter	Hungary
ZSIVKOVITSNÉ GYENES Krisztina	Talentum Alapítvány az Önkéntesség Támogatásáért	Hungary

V. WELCOME SESSION AND EXPERT PLENARY

Mr. András F. Tóth (Director, ÖKA National Volunteer Centre, Hungary and Member of the CEV Board of Directors) opened the conference by welcoming the participants on behalf of the ÖKA National Volunteer Centre. He considered it an honour to host the conference in Budapest. This was ÖKA's sixth annual conference and, for the last three years, there has been an emphasis on international participation. With sixty international representatives and many Hungarian volunteer organisations, the international experiences would help ÖKA in achieving favourable results. Mr. Tóth gratefully acknowledged his colleagues, the staff of the European Youth Centre in Budapest, the National Civil Fund and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour for the subsidies and organisation of the conference.

Ms. Eva Hambach (member of the CEV Board of Directors and Director of Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk, Belgium) thanked ÖKA for holding the conference, the CEV membership and Markus Held for all the work he had done. She also apologized for the absence of Christopher Spence who was forced to step down due to medical reasons.

Mr. Gábor Cszizár gave a brief review of Hungarian volunteering history. The civil sphere in Hungary had developed in the past two decades: there are about 70,000 civil organisations, 100,000 employees and 500,000 volunteers in the civil sector. The legal and economic backgrounds had also developed for this extensive public work. For the last ten years Hungarians have been able to donate 1% of their personal income tax to civil organisations, and in the past few years they have also been able to donate another 1% of their personal income tax to Churches. The National Civil Fund, with an annual budget of 7 billion HUF, is at the disposal of the non-profit organisations.

Keynote speeches and round table, Chair: Markus Held, CEV Director

“Equal opportunities for all in Europe – Vision or reality? The EU’s role in promoting active citizenship as a tool towards equal opportunities.”

**Katalin Lévai,
Member of the European
Parliament**

Markus Held, CEV Director, opened the round table by welcoming and thanking the speakers and highlighting excellent location of the European Youth Centre. Referring to past and future CEV General Assemblies, he expressed his hope that the meeting would contribute to ensuring equal opportunities for all. Finally, he briefly introduced the next speakers.

Ms. Katalin Lévai presented a summary of the EU strategy for equal opportunities. The most important issue in the EU is partnership; no growth can be achieved without partnership with the civil sector.

While the legal framework is almost complete, with discrimination prohibited in law, the implementation of this principle falls short. Integration is the key and has three pillars:

- 1. Education** - Many education systems discriminate against ethnic groups and immigrants. These groups often live in ghettos and if the children do not start education they reproduce poverty (vicious circle). Ms. Lévai emphasised the importance of integrated education.
- 2. Employment** - Full employment is another key factor for integration, but it cannot be achieved without economic growth. To achieve both growth and a new social programme together is a big challenge and the interests of the vulnerable also have to be taken into consideration. Every legislative action should concentrate on the vulnerable groups. Perhaps it will change the way of protecting them.

3. Participation - Vulnerable groups need to have their say about legislation.

In order to achieve results, European discrimination cases should be followed and actions should be taken because awareness campaigns are not enough to make a difference.

Next year will be the year of partnership and close dialogue in the EU to continue the discussion and to put forward the present situation, because there is a lot to be done still, Ms. Lévai concluded.

Mr. Tony Geudens started his presentation by explaining the **SALTO-YOUTH** acronym: **S**upport & **A**dvanced **L**earning and **T**raining **O**pportunities within the **Youth in Action** Programme. There are eight SALTO Resource Centres, based in different National Youth Agencies and focusing on eight different European priorities. Mr. Geudens works in the Inclusion Centre in Brussels.

“SALTO Inclusion’s experience and resources for volunteering”
Tony Geudens, SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, Belgium

SALTO Inclusion develops methods, publications and provides opportunities for training, exchange and reflection on Inclusion; makes Inclusion’s work and resources visible and accessible (website, newsletter, etc.) and makes ‘inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities’ a supported priority.

SALTO Inclusion and Volunteering: Youth in Action – European Voluntary Service is an EU funded programme for young people to go abroad. The Sending Organisation prepares the volunteer, who contributes to the Hosting Organisation and then brings back the ideas to the Sending Organisation.

The inclusion EVS is more focused on supporting the volunteer, compared to regular EVS, where the volunteer and the organisation benefit equally.

Mr. Geudens explained the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of volunteering for Inclusion Groups. Organisations should start with the needs and interests of the volunteers, then give them educational support in cooperation with specialised organisations. Mr. Geudens concluded by specifying the extra measures needed in the European Voluntary Service: short term EVS, group EVS, mentorship, exceptional costs, etc.

Mr. Spyros Psychas focused his presentation on homeless people, how they can volunteer and how volunteers can support the homeless. He started by stating that 22% of the Greek population live beneath the poverty line and face multiple problems.

He defined the following categories of homeless:

- **Roofless:** living on the street;
- **Houseless:** do not have home, but do not live on the street;
- **Live in insecure houses:** e. g. living under threat of violence;
- **Live in proper house:** e.g. living with extreme overcrowding.

“Volunteering for and by people experiencing poverty”
Spyros Psychas, ARSIS, Greece

According to Mr. Psychas, an organisation first has to know what **kind of homelessness** it wants to address and secondly, what **methodology** it wants to use. Finally, the organisation must be aware of the **situation of the homeless person** (psychologically, etc.).

Example: Working for and with homeless people

- Before training the volunteer, staff must be trained. The basis has to be created; the professional work cannot be substituted. A group that works on the street needs at least one professional, as well as volunteers;
- People on the streets mostly want to have friends. Therefore trust building is important to help the person to feel good and to create a good atmosphere;
- Homeless people need to be motivated (personal interests). Volunteers and professionals have to work **WITH** them and not for them. When meeting with the homeless, volunteers should listen to what they have to say in order to understand their needs and give them space. The homeless have to understand how they can help in the project.

Mr. Psychas concluded his presentation by talking about his organisation’s extensive experience in training volunteers and in most cases about 20 hours training is sufficient.



VI. OPEN SPACE: MEET YOUR CEV COLLEAGUES FROM AROUND EUROPE

CEV General Assemblies are usually structured around formal discussions during workshops and plenary sessions. These methods have been positively evaluated as being well suited to the objectives of the assemblies. However, CEV members also identified a need for a less formal format in which to discuss the aspects of the conference topic most relevant to them.

Therefore, a new element was incorporated into the General Assembly in Budapest. "Open space" (also known as a "World café") was chosen as a method to provide members with the time to interact on topics they would like to discuss.

This method has been developed to strengthen the power of participants' interaction. It is based on seven principles that ensure a coherent dialogue in which participants are thinking together and interacting dynamically:

1. Set the context – Clarify the purpose and wider parameters of the dialogue.
2. Create a welcoming environment – Participants should feel comfortable, safe and respected.
3. Explore the right questions - Focus the dialogue on important questions that matter to all participants.
4. Encourage everyone's contribution - Aim to achieve full participation and mutual exchange and ensure everyone's contribution is heard.
5. Connect diverse perspectives – encourage a diversity of views and ideas but keep focussed on the core question and aim to find connections.
6. Encourage the group to find coherence - Focus the group's attention on patterns and shared insights without losing the importance of the individual contributions.
7. Share collective discoveries – Ensure the knowledge deriving from the dialogue is visible and actionable.

A team of one moderator and eight facilitators ensured these principles were followed and the Open Space dialogue achieved its goals. 10-12 conference participants gathered around each one of eight tables, laid with fruit and flowers to simulate a café atmosphere. Each table had writing materials and its own facilitator.

Facilitators ensured that the principles of the method were observed and helped the participants to overcome language barriers. Each participant took part in three 25-minute discussion sessions. For each new question, they moved to a different table and thus changed their group. In each round, participants introduced themselves and exchanged views rooted in their practice, finding common ground but also articulating their unique perspectives on the issue of equality in the volunteer movement. In each conversation, individual contributions were focused on questions that mattered.

The questions chosen were very open and general so that people could talk about what was most relevant to them, but they also kept the focus on the topic of the conference. The following three questions were discussed:

1. What are the impacts and benefits for the volunteer movement and for the organisations to further open up to the new target groups to be more inclusive?

2. What have been the challenges of working with diversity for the volunteer organisations? How have you been dealing with these challenges in your practice? What will you do differently to help everyone to have equal opportunities in volunteering?
3. What are the further questions that you take home with you and you wish to address in the workshop in the afternoon?

During each round, participants made notes of key ideas or thoughts coming out of the discussion, which they were then asked to share at the end of all three rounds. The facilitators brought together the feedback from all the groups by drawing a picture to illustrate the shared ideas. These drawings also provided an insight into the mood of the participants. To close the café, participants were asked to write up their final impressions on A4 paper, which was then displayed on the wall to form the gallery.

Participants' thoughts during discussions:

- "Catalyst for people getting to know each other [the typical middle class well-off volunteers and poor, disabled, disadvantaged]"
- "Living your values if you are not diverse you do not give up your values."
- "Diverse society needs diverse volunteering."
- "Being diverse as volunteer organisations = living up to our values of anti-discrimination and solidarity."
- "Collaboration/Networking with the organisations that represent disadvantaged groups"
- "Not only a question of benefits for organisation but benefits for the target groups."
- "Do we reinforce segregation/difference if we target different groups with "special" policies?"
- "Organisations need to be prepared and ask themselves if they actually want to be open and if they are ready."
- "Self help groups as form of volunteering of disadvantaged groups."
- "You have to change yourself and adapt if you want to be attractive to the volunteers."
- "Not work for diversity for the sake of the diversity / idealistic reasons. There has to be a link between objectives of the organisation and target groups. Then it will work."
- "There is a lot of similarities in the approach / process if you want to work with new target groups – use the similarities as a starting point."
- "Volunteering is only a tool and not an aim in itself for diverse target groups."
- "Cross-cultural learning if there is diverse volunteer workforce."
- "Diversity also in governing bodies! (Board of Directors)"
- "Diversity management needs resources (time / money) and skills."

Participant's thoughts and questions at the end of the session:

- "Do you think you are ready to work with diversity? How can you prove you are ready?"
- "What are the good practices of diversification of NGOs? What are the good factors of success?"
- "Are we able to manage diverse volunteers from different target groups? Are volunteers prepared to involve them? Do we have enough time and personal capacities? (to work with different target groups) Do we have financial resources?"
- "How to prepare organisations to engage in hosting people from different disadvantaged groups?"
- "How to prepare and encourage volunteers to work with disadvantaged groups?"
- "How can we get young people more active?"
- "How to figure out the needs of the different target groups? Not only to work for them but also to work with them and getting them involved as volunteers."
- "How to change the organisational structure of the voluntary associations in order to involve (participation) the diversity groups inside organisations?"

VII. WORKSHOPS – GOOD PRACTICE SESSIONS

All the project descriptions have kindly been contributed by the Workshop Presenters

WS 1) Volunteering and diversity in England – an introduction to breaking down barriers and being more inclusive in volunteering

Presenter: Kate Engles, Volunteering England, UK

1) Project details

Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

⇒	Volunteering England
⇒	Kate Engles, Information Officer, Information Team
✉	Regents Wharf - 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL - United Kingdom
☎	+44 207 520 8913
@	kate.engles@volunteeringengland.org
🌐	http://www.volunteeringengland.org

Target group of the projects / initiatives:

- A number of recent projects working with different target groups will be discussed during the workshop.

Main focus of the projects / initiatives:

- Involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering – most of the projects discussed will address this focus, but some will cover both.

Objectives of the project / initiative:

This workshop will look at how we can involve volunteers from a broad variety of backgrounds by removing or reducing potential barriers to their volunteering.

Firstly, we will look at different types of practical and psychological 'barriers', which can put off potential volunteers. How can organisations try to be more welcoming and attractive by looking at things from a different perspective?

Secondly, we will look at how 'Volunteering England', the national infrastructure body, supports organisations to be inclusive in their work with volunteers and how the Information Team adopted an Accessible Information Policy in 2006 to support the work of their specialist information service.

Thirdly, we will discuss how existing projects in England are proactive in recruiting and working with volunteers from disadvantaged groups in society.

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Thirdly, we will discuss how existing projects in England are proactive in recruiting and working with volunteers from disadvantaged groups in society.

Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative:

National Activities by Volunteering England

This section of the workshop will look at Volunteering England's work on promoting equal opportunities for all and diversity in volunteering. In particular, it will focus on several publications and projects from 2006.

- 1) Volunteering England has published a range of volunteer management publications on good practice in working with different groups such as asylum seekers, older volunteers and volunteers with mental health problems. In 2006, Volunteering England produced three new specialist publications in collaboration with other charities, which represent disadvantaged groups.
- 2) Volunteering England has a specialist information service on volunteering issues. It provides information by email, telephone, website, in print and at workshop presentations. In 2006 the Information Team developed an Accessible Information Policy. The policy aims to make sure that the information service is accessible to everyone who uses it.

Outcomes of Volunteering England's recent work on diversity and accessibility

- 1) Three new specialist publications on good practice were published in 2006 and have been widely circulated to Volunteering England's members, via partner organisations and as downloads on the internet.
 - Volunteering for everyone - A guide for organisations who want to include and recruit volunteers who have a learning disability, co-published with Mencap;
 - Involving Ex-offenders in Volunteering, co-published with Nacro;
 - Working with Volunteers: A management guide for refugee community organisations, co-published with the Evelyn Oldfield Unit.

Further information:

- Copies of these three publications can be downloaded from <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/publications/freeguides.htm#gp>
- Information about other publications mentioned above is available at www.volunteering.org.uk/publications

1) Volunteering England's Information Team

- Adopted an Accessible Information Policy and Plan in 2006;
- Took part in a website usability audit in 2006 and re-designed website resources to improve accessibility and usability.

2) Volunteering England's Information Team

- Undertook a pilot project to produce a sign language video for the national Volunteering England website;
- Researched case studies about deaf volunteering.

These initiatives have improved the team's knowledge and understanding of diversity and accessibility issues, which can be communicated to anyone who uses the service. When responding to enquiries on volunteer management or developing new information resources, the Information Team place a great emphasis on promoting volunteer diversity and equal opportunities.

The sign language video aims to present a simple introduction to Volunteering England's website and has been praised by deaf organisations for setting a good example in promoting inclusion.

Further information:

- A copy of the Accessible Information Policy is available at <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/information/Accessible+Information+Policy.htm>
- The Information Team's website resources and Good Practice Bank are available at www.volunteering.org.uk/information
- The sign language video can be viewed at <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/bslvideo>
- The case studies on deaf volunteering are available at <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/information/bsl/casestudies/Case+studies.htm>

Local activities by other organisations working with volunteers in England

This section of the workshop will aim to showcase some projects in England, which actively try to recruit or work with volunteers from different backgrounds. The presenter will provide paper examples or case studies, which the participants can discuss in groups.

Some examples include:

1. A recruitment leaflet, which targets older people (by an advice organisation in York)
2. Translated letters and forms to recruit asylum seekers, refugees or speakers of community languages (by a refugee and asylum seeker project in Sheffield)
3. An 'easy-read' website which includes simple text and pictures for people with learning disabilities (by a Volunteer Centre in Suffolk)
4. An expenses policy for reimbursing volunteers' out of pocket expenses which aims to enable a wide number of people to volunteer (by a hospital in Yorkshire)
5. An organisation which uses current volunteers as 'volunteer champions' to appeal to others in their community (by a community project in the Tees Valley)

2) Making the project work

What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative?

What make this project a success?

A) Seeking opportunities to work with external organisations which represent disabled people or other disadvantaged groups was very important to all these projects

- 1) The three new specialist publications were all co-written with national or large charities with expertise in their field. This meant that we could combine Volunteering England's knowledge on volunteering with their specialist knowledge on other areas. It also meant that we could promote the finished publications to a much wider audience. The publications were distributed to Volunteering England's members and via the partner organisations. The publications were also co-branded with both organisations' logos, which gives them a wider appeal to anyone seeking authoritative information.

- 2) We commissioned a local disability charity to carry out an audit of the information service. They also gave training to the Information Team in disability equality issues and provided a constructive review to help us develop the Accessible Information Policy. The same charity also carried out a website usability audit which involved ten users from different impairment or disability groups.
- 3) We commissioned a national Deaf charity to produce the sign language video for Volunteering England's website. We particularly wanted to work with a Deaf-led organisation, so that the finished video would directly cater for Deaf people's information needs. We also wanted to learn more about the practicalities of working together on a joint project of hearing and Deaf people.

B) Learning opportunities for Volunteering England's staff

Firstly, the opportunity to collaborate with other specialist organisations and benefit from their knowledge was very valuable. It helped us to look at volunteering from new perspectives and to identify possible future projects to take the work further.

Secondly, the projects really increased our knowledge-base on the themes of volunteer diversity and accessibility. We aim to promote volunteer diversity in all our information services and responses to enquiries, even when the original enquiry concerns technical matters and doesn't directly refer to equal opportunities.

Thirdly, we have been able to share our learning with colleagues in other teams at Volunteering England. Most importantly, we can share good practice information with greater confidence and enthusiasm.

C) Identifying future areas of work

The publication on involving ex-offenders as volunteers has prompted us to think about further work we can undertake to support ex-offenders into volunteering. For example, we are thinking about developing more support for Volunteer Centres and links with prisons.

The publication on supporting volunteers with a learning disability has led us to think about improving publicity and advertising for supported volunteering schemes run by England's network of Volunteer Centres. We hope to develop the Volunteer Centre finder map on our website to include information about supported volunteering programmes.

The audits of our information service and website taught us a lot about accessible information provision, both for specialist audiences and the general public. They have also helped us to identify gaps in our information provision, which we hope to fill.

The sign language video project taught us a great deal about the practicalities of working together on a joint project of hearing and Deaf people. We are investigating the possibilities of organising sign language training for staff who meet members of the public.

Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

Please see section a) of answer above on the main key partners for each project. Another key partner was our funding source: the three specialist publications were funded by a national government grant called "ChangeUp" aimed at strengthening the support and assistance available to voluntary and community organisations. Some of Information Team's work was funded by this grant and some was funded by Volunteering England's core budget.

What were major barriers to involve people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering? How were they overcome?

Luckily, cost was not a major barrier because we secured the funding at an early stage. On the whole this meant that the projects ran quite smoothly and helped us to develop partnerships, because our partners were keen to benefit from the funding we had secured. However, cost could be a barrier in developing similar projects in the future, or in developing follow-up projects.

It is a little difficult for us to assess the success or reach of these projects. For example, from the demand for copies of the publications, it is clear that hundreds of organisations have used them. However, while we are sure that there is a need for such good practice guides, it is difficult to capture detailed information about how many organisations put the information into practice and how many volunteers this has helped.

For the sign language video project we had to address a number of communication issues in person and via telephone and email. At times, this did delay the project, but it also gave us a useful insight into the practicalities of working together on a joint project between hearing and Deaf people.

Is it the role of volunteer organisations to invest in diversity? What were according to your experience the benefits from investing in diversity?

We believe it is particularly important for volunteering organisations to invest in diversity, because it enables them to reflect the sector they work in. Most charitable or not for profit organisations aim to help the disadvantaged or those at risk of social exclusion in some form or other. We feel that volunteering organisations should make every effort to reflect their general aims in their volunteer involvement by drawing potential volunteers from a broad range of groups in society.

Within Volunteering England, these projects have encouraged us to work with partner organisations in new ways. As a national volunteering agency, we have also found new ways to spread good practice in volunteer diversity so that isolated projects can share their ideas, for example through the Good Practice Bank on Volunteering England's website.

Above all, our work on volunteer diversity has really increased our passion and enthusiasm for what we do!

Local activities by other organisations working with volunteers in England

This section will highlight some good practice elements and success factors for the examples and case studies discussed (*).

The presenter will aim to show how the participants in the workshop can adopt a similar approach to thinking about potential barriers and adopting proactive methods in order to reach new volunteers.

(*) Please note that the exact number and choice of examples will depend on the audience who attend the workshop. If this workshop is chosen for the CEV conference, I will ask the organisers for advice on what would best suit the audience.

3) Workshop questions

Which of the three questions would you like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

What can we do at European level to create equal opportunities for all?

What reactions have you had from organisations when you've offered to volunteer for them, and what could this show us about how organisations recruit volunteers?

What challenges do individual organisations face when trying to achieve diversity in volunteering?

Presentation

After a short introduction of all those in attendance, the workshop dealt with three main topics:

- Identifying potential barriers;
- Services of Volunteering England;
- Examples from local projects in England.

Identifying potential barriers

Identifying the barriers is the most important thing in support of volunteers. Firstly we look at different types of practical and psychological 'barriers', which can put off potential volunteers.

Practical barriers can be for example:

- Finding out about opportunities – a lack of publicity;
- A too formal recruitment procedure which is common in the United Kingdom;
- A physically inaccessible environment;
- Meeting costs (for example travel expenses) of volunteering.

The lack of confidence; the fear of over-commitment or the public image of 'volunteering' is psychological barrier for the volunteer.

Organisations should try to be more welcoming and attractive by looking at things from a different perspective e.g. being open to adapting tasks or environments for volunteers; inviting volunteers to talk about their support needs or disabilities during recruitment; showing cultural awareness and treat all volunteers as individuals.

Services of Volunteering England

Volunteering England is the national infrastructure body, and supports organisations to be inclusive in their work with volunteers. Volunteering England has a specialist information service on volunteering issues, providing information by email, telephone, website, in print and at workshop presentations and writing information sheets and magazine articles.

In terms of national activities, Volunteering England has published three new specialist publications in collaboration with other charities representing disadvantaged groups.

- Volunteering for Everyone - A guide for organisations who want to include and recruit volunteers who have a learning disability, co-published with Mencap;
- Involving Ex – offenders in Volunteering, co-published with Nacro;
- Working with Volunteers: A management guide for refugee community organisation; co-published with the Evelyn Oldfield Unit.

These good practice publications on working with volunteers from different backgrounds contain practical and legal issues and helpful examples. Besides those mentioned above, there is a range of publications on working with black people, unemployed people, older volunteers, younger volunteers or volunteers with mental health issues. It is difficult to evaluate the benefits of books, because the publications can be downloaded for free and there is no information related to how many organisations download them.

In 2006, the Information Team developed and adopted an Accessible Information Policy. The policy aims to make sure that the information service is accessible to everyone who uses it. Altogether the two external audits and the internal research helped to identify gaps in the work of Volunteering England. So the organisation have quickly fixed small problems and planned new projects.

Benefits of the Policy include increasing practical knowledge about volunteer diversity and accessibility; greater confidence and enthusiasm in Volunteering England; enjoying the work more and having more credibility.

Examples from local projects in England

A “welcome” video in sign language (with subtitles) aims to present a simple introduction Volunteering England’s website. The video improves accessibility, even though the whole website could not be translated into sign language.

The project has been praised by deaf organisations for setting a good example in promoting inclusion. For the video project the organisation had to address a number of communication issues in person and via telephone and email. This did delay the project, but it also gave them a useful insight into the practicalities of working together on a joint project between hearing and deaf people. Also a Internet news channel for hearing-impaired people called VeeSee helped to publicise the video and 3000 people have watched it on it on Youtube as well.

At the end of the workshop the presenter provided sample documents and case studies for the participants to discuss in groups how such materials could help to encourage people to volunteer and how can increase diversity in volunteering.

Examples included:

A recruitment leaflet for older volunteers; translated letters and forms to recruit asylum seekers, refugees or speakers of community languages as volunteers; an ‘easy read’ website which explains how a ‘supported volunteering programme’ works; an expenses policy for reimbursing volunteers out of pocket expenses.

Conclusions

Volunteer England believes that, ‘Everyone should have the chance to be volunteer’. Volunteering should be ‘repackaged’ when necessary. National organisations should first identify problems and barriers first, and then solve them. The best way to identify these barriers is to ask - asking fast is the way to help other colleagues who are facing problems.

The pilot projects inspired other organisations to increase their work on accessibility, attracted the attention of wider audience and raised awareness about removing barriers. The initiatives have improved the team’s knowledge and understanding of diversity and accessibility issues, which can be communicated in turn to anyone who uses the service.



WS 2) Initiatives taken by member associations of France Bénévolat to involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering

Presenter: Susana Szabo, France Bénévolat, France

1) Project details

Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

⇒	France Bénévolat
⇒	Jean Bastide
✉	127 rue Falguière, Hall B - 1, 75015 Paris, France
☎	+33140610161
📠	+33145679975
@	international@francebenevolat.org

Name of project / initiative:

Presentation of experiences of member associations of France Bénévolat (Secours Catholique – Secours Populaire - Fédération Nationale des Associations d'Accueil et de Reinsertion Sociale (FNARS) to involve those who benefit from their social action in volunteering as an efficient first step towards reintegrating society.

Target group of the project / initiative:

- People experiencing poverty.

Main focus of the project / initiative:

- Involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering in the framework of non-profit associations.

Objectives of the project / initiative:

To gather information on practices/ methodologies used by these member associations of France Bénévolat in order to facilitate the involvement of disadvantaged groups in volunteering.

Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

- Compile the experiences of member organisations.

2) Making the project work

What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; what made this project a success?

- ➔ Raising awareness in member organisations about the importance of involving those who are being helped materially in a volunteering process that turns them into partners for the benefit of all.

Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

- ➔ The above-mentioned associations provided information. France Bénévolat will continue to compile concrete experiences for internal use and eventually for publication.

What were major barriers to involve people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering? How were they overcome?

- ➔ Cultural attitudes.
- ➔ Raising awareness in associations and providing ongoing training as well as contact opportunities between different categories of members; allocating funds and human resources to this end.

Is it the role of volunteer organisations to invest in diversity?

What, according to your experience, were the benefits from investing in diversity?

- ➔ Investing in diversity means widening the organisation's horizons, its membership, its capacity for renewal.

3) Workshop questions

Which of the three questions would you like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

How can we overcome the gap between the declared values of associations and their actual practices?

What are the best ways of integrating the disadvantaged in the organisation that helps them?

Which Training methods do exist?

Presentation

Ms. Susana Szabó started the presentation by introducing France Bénévolat, a non-profit organisation, created in 2003. It runs a number of centres that welcome potential volunteers and helps them to find non-profit organisations where they can improve their particular skills.

In 2005 France Bénévolat published a booklet about "best practices" in volunteer management. The practices however refer to general volunteers and experiences and do not deal with specific target groups, such as poor and disadvantaged people. It only refers to them in theory. This is the basic difficulty that French organisations have to overcome when recruiting volunteers – the people they assist: French associations reject the idea of treating them as a distinct group and separating them from other volunteers.

The local delegations of Secours Catholique (the French Caritas), for example, uses a wide range of terms in the attempt to label each type of volunteer: "participant", "companion", "helped volunteer", "weak volunteer", "young helper", "assisted volunteer", etc. Seeing this tendency, a debate developed whether a special name should be given to the volunteers recruited to differentiate them from those who are assisted. The decision was NO, there should be no distinction between volunteers, a volunteer is a volunteer, there's no ranking amongst them



. If an assisted person becomes a volunteer, he/she is to be named and treated just like any other volunteer. The debate has not settled yet because of the financial participation in the associations' events, such as meals, outings, etc. How could homeless contribute to these events?

The second question addressed the associations' motives in recruiting volunteers from among the disadvantaged. Organisations want to affirm the values that underline their particular work. The problem is that charitable associations are overburdened by an increase of poverty in France. As a result they have to be more and more efficient. This is measured mostly in terms of quick results, such as the number of people helped or the number of meals distributed.

Ms. Szabó gives four examples of efforts that have been made by organisations to clarify their objectives and involve disadvantaged people in their actions:

- UNIOPSS, a non-governmental umbrella organisation published a book entitled "The ambition of Associations: a Guide to question our practices". This guide encourages the organisations to question their practices by asking the right questions and thus measure the gap between the values proclaimed and their actual way of working.
- In 2006 Sabine Hernas Lamothe, the Financial Executive of Secours Populaire launched a study on the process that transforms those who benefit from the help of Secours Populaire into volunteers with the organisation.
- FNARS is an organisation that was founded after the Second World War to help the homeless, those coming out of prison, etc. Today it is a huge organisation, whose basic staff is composed of paid social workers and not volunteers. In one of its centres, homeless people whom they have sheltered decided to give a hand and help the educators. They started to volunteer for the organisation and get involved in its work. It gave the association a better image and the homeless started to see the social workers as partners and not just as professionals.

- In 2005 ATD Quart Monde carried out an "action research" project in collaboration with French and Belgian universities. The programme gave rise to training courses with the participation of professionals and university professors on one hand and "people experiencing poverty" on the other hand. The methodology of this type of "cross-cultural learning" was developed and is now being applied by the organisation. Involving disadvantaged groups in volunteering strengthens the values and identity of the organisation and gives new energy to their activities.

The third question raised was why disadvantaged groups get involved in volunteering. Sabine Hernas Lamothe's study and other publications presented some personal case stories, which are very instructive. Normally when someone asks an association for help that means that he/she has exhausted all other solutions offered by the State and the situation is quite desperate. While this crisis prevails, people cannot be expected to do volunteering. Some assisted people believe, however, that if they volunteer for the organisation they will receive more help. This is obviously not the case and they can be disappointed. But once their problems have been solved, they are glad to lend a hand to the association that has helped them before. The fact that they are able to be generous and give something in return makes them feel better and boosts their self-confidence. It gives them the opportunity to renew their social life and to acquire new skills. The best ground for recruiting volunteers is at community level: self-help groups, workshops, "peer to peer" activities, etc.

Before drawing conclusion Ms. Szabó presented a summary by the Volunteer Committee of Secours Catholique summing up the opportunities, risks and precautions to be taken when welcoming the "assisted" in their groups as volunteers.

The **opportunities for individuals** are: to find dignity again, the right to speak up, recognition, companionship and be in a situation of responsibility.

The **opportunities for the team** are: a better "inside" knowledge of the problems facing the disadvantaged, to pay attention to the words and expression used, to wake up from an established routine.

The **risks for the individual** are: instability (due to confused perceptions of their double status as helped person/volunteer), over-acting, too much responsibility.

The **risks for the team** are: if too many disadvantaged members, it will be less able to help, rivalry and jealousy.

The **precautions to be taken by both sides**: trust each other, allow lots of time for discussion, clarify the roles and tasks, and offer required support and training.

Conclusions

Finally, Ms. Szabó presented the booklet France Bénévolat has launched called "Volunteer Passport" ("Passport du Bénévole"). It has not been used yet. It is a kind of recognition; it keeps record of all the training the volunteer had done. Some French organisations have asked for it. Nowadays in France employers and universities start to take volunteering into account.

WS 3) Promoting Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in Viet Nam

Presenter: Paolo Bernasconi, United Nation Volunteers

1) Project details

Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

⇒	GIPA/Vietnam Women's Union – United Nations Volunteers
⇒	Ida Munck – UNV Programme Officer
✉	25/29 Phan Boi Chau, Ha Noi, Viet Nam
☎	(84-4) 942 1495 Ext. 142
📠	(84-4) 942 2267
@	ida.munck@undp.org
🌐	http://www.un.org.vn/unv

Target group of the project / initiative:

- People living with HIV.

Main focus of the project / initiative:

- Promote voluntary involvement of PLHIV in HIV initiatives.

Objectives of the project / initiative:

The project aims to increase voluntary participation of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS activities and other efforts to improve their lives, families and communities.

Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

For National UN Volunteers:

- Training and Mentoring (English language, communication, IT, HIV prevention and treatment, GIPA concept, training of trainers, interpersonal, leadership & management skills etc.) as well as informative updates on issues such as care and treatment;
- Regular psychological support;
- Exchange visits to and information sharing with UNV and other GIPA initiatives in the region (e.g. Laos, Cambodia).

For PLHIV (People Living with HIV/AIDS) groups:

- Training (behavioural change, communication development, treatment literacy, human rights, communication skills);
- Refer PLHIV to existing income generation and vocational training schemes.

Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative (if already available):

Participating in the SHGs (Self Help Groups) helps create a common voice; share experience and emotion; enhance knowledge of HIV, treatment, and organizational and communication skills.

Lessons learnt so far:

- Listening, integration and solidarity are three important factors for success;
- There is a need to strengthen collaboration with different sectors in AIDS work;
- Need to promote information sharing and approach more funding sources.

2) Making the project work

What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; what made this project a success?

- ➔ Reduction of stigma and discrimination by using PLHA perspectives and experiences;
- ➔ Strategic involvement of PLHIV on a voluntary basis in planning, advocacy and implementation of HIV/AIDS activities;
- ➔ Most project activities are educational in nature and therefore enabling capacity development without creating dependence;
- ➔ Project will empower the PLHIV by developing their capacity to sustain themselves physically, psychologically and economically;
- ➔ PLHIV groups and networks receive training in areas such as fundraising and management in order to increase their sustainability, allowing them to continue to provide opportunities for PLHIV to engage in HIV/AIDS activities on a voluntary basis;
- ➔ Formation of more than 30 SHGs involving PLHAs;
- ➔ Provision of access to treatment services for PLHAs;
- ➔ Bringing together people from the 4 project sites;
- ➔ Support for better HIV/AIDS policies;
- ➔ National and international partnerships (implementation by Vietnam Women's Union ensuring local ownership of the project, as well as UNAIDS technical assistance).

Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

- ➔ **Vietnam Women's Union (VWU)** has a strong background in implementing projects and a wide network from central to community level to reach a wide range of communities and populations with health and social messages. It has participated in HIV/AIDS prevention and control structures for more than ten years and gained much experience in this area (in particular they have established a network of over 100 Empathy Clubs). VWU is responsible for the planning, management and implementation of project activities, the provision of office space, financial and administrative support, introducing the project to the target provinces, helping to disseminate the project results within the VWU itself and within the Party structure and the Government, as well as helping the project to reach out to as many other organizations as possible. In addition, VWU is part of the Project Steering Committee (PSC).



- ➔ **UNAIDS:** Coordinates the HIV/AIDS activities of the different UN Agencies in the country. It has built international as well as in-country HIV/AIDS related expertise and in-depth knowledge, and provides technical and strategic support to UN Agencies. UNAIDS is therefore positioned as key player in the project to oversee the technical implementation of the project. It provides technical back up and initial supervision during the project set up. Specifically, UNAIDS offers technical guidance and advice on programme management to the general project coordinator. In addition, UNAIDS facilitates the coordination of the project with other HIV/AIDS interventions in Vietnam. It is also part of the PSC.
- ➔ **PLHA representatives** (also part of PSC).
- ➔ **Local institutions such as provincial AIDS Bureau and VCT Centers, the media.**

What were major barriers to involve people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering? How were they overcome?

Internal:

- ➔ Lack of PLHA knowledge on treatment;
- ➔ Weak volunteer management skills from VWU;
- ➔ Lack of enthusiasm on the side of the PLHA;
- ➔ Lack of coordination within and among groups;
- ➔ Insufficient skills for establishing, sustaining and developing the group model;

- ➔ Difficulties in accessing HIV information and health services;
- ➔ Number of SHGs still too limited, many PLHAs not able to access them;
- ➔ Lack of understanding of the GIPA concept within implementing partner.

External:

- ➔ No legal framework for voluntary self-help groups of PLHIV;
- ➔ Serious stigma and discrimination of PLHA in Vietnamese society;
- ➔ Donors do not trust in SHG capacity;
- ➔ Local authorities do not pay due attention and do not provide timely support to SHG activities;
- ➔ Weak civil society structures.

Measures to overcome the barriers:

- ➔ Involve PLHAs in SHG activities
- ➔ Replicate successful SHG models
- ➔ Enhance capacity of PLHA
- ➔ Strengthen solidarity within and between groups
- ➔ Improve quality and effectiveness of SHG activities
- ➔ Provide technical and financial support for groups and clubs
- ➔ Mainstream GIPA concept in all VWU GIPA initiatives

Is it the role of volunteer organisations to invest in diversity? What were according to your experience the benefits from investing in diversity?

- ➔ Yes, there is an important role for volunteer organisations in this, namely facilitating the recognition and integration of PLHIV into mainstream society through legitimising their social status and cooperating with concerned stakeholders to raise awareness on equal opportunity rights. Interventions at the local level help build trusting relationships between government and PLHIV as well as foster a constructive dialogue between the communities, government and civil society organisations.

3) Workshop questions

Which of the three questions would you like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

In what ways can volunteers/volunteer projects help to ensure equal opportunities of disadvantaged groups of society? (Volunteering for equal opportunities)

How can we involve and empower disadvantaged groups of society through volunteering in order for them to be themselves the actors of change in their communities? (Equal opportunities within volunteering)

How can we promote volunteerism for equal opportunities through development projects?

Presentation

Mr. Paolo Bernasconi started his presentation by presenting his organisation. United Nation Volunteers was founded in 1971 with the aim of helping the volunteers who want to help in making the world a better place by travelling to other countries and applying their skills there. Mr Bernasconi continued by stating that UNV believes that volunteering plays a very active role in facilitating the recognition and integration of minorities into mainstream society through legitimising their social status and cooperating with concerned stakeholders to raise awareness on equal opportunity rights. Volunteers are instrumental in mobilizing local minority groups via community-based organisations and volunteer-involving organisations, building on local community dynamics and social mechanisms. This is the very essence of the UNV project on promoting greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS in Viet Nam, where the AIDS is one of the most burning questions because one of every 75 families is affected by this tremendously hard thing. As can be seen in the title, the main goal of their project was to bring the people living with this syndrome back to the society and to end the stigmatization of these helpless women and men.

This engagement of GIPA (Greater Involvement of People living with HIV and AIDS) principle in Viet Nam has been running since 2003 and rely upon the self-help groups of concerned people. People living with HIV understand each other's situation better than anyone and are often best placed to counsel one another and to represent their needs in decision- and policy-making forums. UNV dealt with some similar programmes in several other countries, such as Malawi, Zambia, Cambodia and Caribbean Islands.

In Viet Nam, the first step was to seek the people living with this disease and fund the voluntary-based Self Help Groups, where the clients could meet each other, talk to someone who really knew what they were experiencing, and exchange their experiences of AIDS treatments. This process took two years, and many working hours, but finally was very successful. In developing countries like Viet Nam, the affected people are obliged to face a double stigma (on one hand, the shame on themselves and on the other hand, the disdain of ordinary people in society) and this is really hard to cope with.

The project aims to create an enabling environment and to increase voluntary participation of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS activities and other efforts to improve their lives, families and communities. Through using PLHA (People living with HIV/AIDS) perspectives and experiences, the project also aims to reduce stigma and discrimination. The project trains and mentors the volunteers, as well as providing informative updates on issues such as care and treatment. Consequently they will be good helpers to the clients who face the same problems.

To change society's attitude to people living with HIV/AIDS, the project managers and the UN volunteers searched for Viet Nami celebrities who could take up the cause, and they have been successful as many artists joined. The volunteers are mainly women. (We all can easily see the very different problems of a sexual worker and a homeless person.) The UN is convinced that the key is the volunteer activity, as they have the understanding to help the people like them because they face the similar problems as the clients. (The volunteers are also stakeholders or affected with HIV/AIDS). According to Mr. Bernasconi, it is worth noting that there are also volunteers who do not have HIV/AIDS but are concerned about those affected, and they can be very great advocates towards the outside world.

The volunteers are all local, they are all from the same country, and it is so good because the government of the state does not look on the programme such as a western or European intervention, but as a domestic initiative although the money for this mostly come from the United Nations. The government of Viet Nam is delighted with this intervention and tries to give a hand. They are minded to devote money and working hours and they prepared the National AIDS Strategy in the year 2004. Mr. Bernasconi points out that this is a benefit that the GIPA helped to achieve. In that country there are the facilities to help, there are international and national funds but many of the affected do not dare to ask for help because of the above-mentioned double stigma, and in that case the Self Help Groups are probably the key as they have nothing to fear. All the countries of the world have similar problems such as the condemnation of homosexual people, but in Viet Nam, the main group of concern is the illegal sexual workers and people with some kind of drug problem.

The next step of the Asian GIPA activities is to start a similar project in Laos in the next years. In the end the workshop concluded that different people need diverse kinds of help but what they have in common is that they all need help. Likewise, the volunteers are varied but they share a desire to lend a hand to those in need.



WS 4) ACERISH: Promoting the independence of disabled persons through standardisation of competencies of support workers at European level

Presenter: Karl Monsen-Elvik, Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire, UK

1) Project details

Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

➔ Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire, Scotland

➔ Karl Monsen-Elvik

✉ 84 Main Street, Wishaw ML2 7AB - UK

☎ +44 (0)1698 358866

@ karl@nlvda.org

🌐 <http://www.volunteernorthlanarkshire.org.uk/>

Target group of the project / initiative:

- Disabled people;
- Workers involved in supporting persons with disabilities.

Main focus of the project / initiative:

- Involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering;
- Competency identification for workers supporting disabled persons.

Objectives of the project / initiative:

- To develop a European project (of 7 partners) working in the field of promoting the independence of disabled persons;
- To create tools to identify the key skills and competencies that promote the independence of persons with a disability;
- To disseminate the findings at the national and European level.

Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

Activities progressed during 8 transnational partnership conferences:

- Development of a typology and standard definition of disability;
- Research into key competencies in the fields of work, learning and life;
- Comparison of skills in the disciplines of education, social and voluntary spheres;
- Development of a competencies/disciplines "Competencies Cube";
- Creation of a website to host the reports and project findings.

Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative:

The project is near the end of its operational life, progress so far includes:

- Partnership of 8 created including: France, Spain, Norway, Hungary, Scotland, Bulgaria, Poland & Switzerland;

- Completion of the Typologies for each national partner and agreement on a European-wide Typology including a standard definition of disability;
- Identification of key competencies from research in each country;
- Model for a competency framework agreed by partners in the form of a 3-dimensional cube;
- Final conference to be held in Switzerland in October 2007.

2) Making the project work

What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What did make this project a success?

- ➔ Good mixture of skills and experiences across the partnership;
- ➔ Visits to the partners' own projects to see their work with disabled person in action;
- ➔ Central co-ordination by one partner;
- ➔ Understanding of the individual responsibilities of the partners;
- ➔ Time for reflection and evaluation given at every partners' meeting;
- ➔ Acceptance that partners situations are different and the national governments have different ideas of the topic.

Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

- ➔ **Coordinator:** Agora, France
- ➔ **Contributing partners:** All other listed partners except Norway
- ➔ **Evaluation:** Agder University College, Norway
- ➔ **Website/English Verifier:** Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire, (Scot.)

What were major barriers to involve people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering? How were they overcome?

This issue was the particular specialist topic of the Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire and not the other partners, the major barriers as identified were:

- ➔ Ideas in society of disability being more about what a person cannot do instead of what they can do;
- ➔ Disability being described in medical language and not social language;
- ➔ Regulations giving rights to financial support can have a negative impact on opportunities to volunteer;
- ➔ Institutions with a support function sometimes use volunteering as a cost-free option for their disabled clients, but this is unrealistic;
- ➔ Volunteer involving organisations may not have the resources to properly include those volunteers with extra support needs.

Is it the role of volunteer organisations to invest in diversity? What were according to your experience the benefits from investing in diversity?

- ➔ Many volunteer organisations are established for purposes that include helping others who have some identified need. They recognise that in wanting to provide this help they need to be prepared to make opportunities for clients or members to not only receive help, but also be involved in providing help as far as their capacities allow. This would often include the need to make volunteering opportunities available for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, in some countries, it is a requirement that for charities to be recognised by their government they need to have policies on diversity and equality. Some funding agencies also want to see evidence of diversity.
- ➔ Organisations that invest in diversity are more likely to have a culture of inclusiveness and be more aware of the needs of those facing disadvantage because of their direct experience of working in that way. Also, volunteering is a very useful way of helping people enlarge their social contacts, gain new skills, build their self-esteem and may be a way for people to move towards employability if that is a longer-term goal.
- ➔ It should be recognised that there are real cases where volunteer organisations could not realistically be expected to involve certain types of people, for example, in mountain rescue.

3) Workshop questions

Which of the three questions would you like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

Are there any barriers in different European countries caused by regulations that were intended to help disadvantaged people?

How do volunteer organisations balance the desire to involve volunteers who require extra support with the need to do the actual work of the organisation?

How can strategic volunteer infrastructure organisations influence policies at national level and unify this with practice at local level to aid in the involvement of volunteers from diverse backgrounds?

Presentation

The workshop started with the presentation of Acerish2 project, which aims to promote the independence of the disabled persons through standardization of competences of volunteers at European level. This is a transnational programme involving partners from eight different countries, funded through Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the European Commission. The lead organisation is the French agency AGORA with European partners from Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Switzerland and Spain.

The project is working in three important areas: education, work and volunteering. It focuses on what disabled people can do instead of what they cannot do. Disability is defined as a condition experienced by people, which is physical or mental impairment or alteration of function that can be anatomical, physiological, sensory, psychological or cognitive. It can be permanent or temporary, long-term or short-term and originate from various circumstances such as genetic abnormality or accidental trauma.

Disability may affect specific or multiple communication, motor, mobility or social functioning and can have health or behavioural consequences that result in limited possibilities to engage in working, learning or social environments and everyday activities. In this way disability is treated as a medical phenomenon and not a social one.

The programme wants to concentrate on usable and practical things such as social language and institutional and systemic background instead of complicated definitions of disability and competencies. Therefore the spotlight is on own skills that are taught or gained through the job experience.

The Acerish2 knows that disabled people always face barriers if they want to do volunteer work, because the volunteer-involving organisations may not have the resources (or simply the courage) to properly include those volunteers with extra support needs. So the organisations sometimes think that the disabled volunteers are “more trouble than they are worth” and they do not let the volunteer to do the job. They must find the balance in supporting the volunteer and getting the work done. Involving volunteers with disability always has its costs, but there are ethical and moral gains of such volunteering.

The Acerish2 developed seven different products (Typology of Disability; Comparative study of the validation of acquired experience by supervisors in the structures for disabled people; Description of practice related with the social and professional autonomisation in several structures and institutions for disabled people in the European Union; Proposal to validate the skills of supervisors; Synthesis Report; Disseminating information on ACERISH website; Evaluation of project activities, products and environment). Part of these products is The Competency Cube. This is a dice with commercial competencies and disciplines on each side, which are important for doing a volunteer work.

Discussion

The workshop participants traced some typical barriers of disabled people, such as lack of skills, lack of money, ‘different-from-normal’ feeling, access to necessary information, and inaccessible organisations. Sometimes there is a feeling that involving volunteers with disability is not cost effective, as often there is no balance between the support given to the volunteer and work being done by that volunteer. In some countries there are judicial regulations on disabled volunteering, but the workshop participants did not think it would be very effective, because disability is handled in a medical instead of the social way. There is also another big issue; most European governments do not think this theme is so important, and often ignore good initiatives coming from professional NGO’s.

The 2-year project will end in October 2007 with a big conference in Switzerland. We hope it will be successful, because the field of disabled volunteerism is in its infancy in many European countries - shame on the non-disabled.

WS 5) Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

Presenter: Elaine Bradley, Volunteering Ireland

1) Project details

Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:

⇒	Volunteering Ireland, Ireland
⇒	Chiara Magini
✉	Coleraine House Coleraine Street, D7, Dublin, Ireland
☎	+353 1 872 2622
@	chiara@volunteeringireland.ie
🌐	http://www.volunteeringireland.ie

Target group of the project / initiative:

- Disabled people;
- (Long-term) unemployed;
- People experiencing poverty;
- Ethnic groups / minorities;
- Elderly people, youth, people homeless, drug-users, people with differing sexual orientation (LGBT), ex-offenders.

Main focus of the project / initiative:

- Involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering;
- Other (please specify) To bring about structural change to facilitate and support the input of diverse groups and people excluded.

Objectives of the project / initiative:

- To promote an equal and diverse society in Ireland that values the contribution from all its members through promoting, supporting and facilitating voluntary activity for all;
- To engage marginalized and socially excluded groups and individuals in (and through) voluntary activity;
- To challenge perceptions about who can volunteer;
- To challenge underlying assumptions about who has a valuable contribution to make in society;
- To actively involve volunteer involving organisations in the process of engaging and enabling volunteers who are traditionally marginalized and excluded.

Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

- Identifying and engaging groups and communities who are socially isolated and/or excluded, through the Volunteering Ireland Outreach Service;
- Engaging with and building capacity in volunteer involving organisations to enable the participation of all volunteers;

- Developing models of practice that support individuals, groups and organisations;
- Action research as a means on-going learning and development.

Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative:

- Raising awareness of the issues of social exclusion and volunteering;
- Successfully challenging stereotypes;
- Having a real and positive impact on the lives of individual, groups and organisations (case studies will be used at the workshop to illustrate).

2) Making the project work

What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What made this project a success?

- ➔ Taking a whole systems approach;
- ➔ Identifying and engaging with key stakeholders;
- ➔ Creatively leveraging the expertise of Volunteering Ireland;
- ➔ Good communication.

Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

- ➔ The volunteers themselves (as participants);
- ➔ Organisations working with people who are socially excluded (as key stakeholders and experts in their particular area);
- ➔ Volunteer involving organisations (providing volunteering opportunities and enabling the participation of volunteers from diverse backgrounds);
- ➔ Local area partnership (partners in the project);
- ➔ Government (as funders and supporters).

What were major barriers to involve people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering? How were they overcome?

- ➔ Attitudes;
- ➔ Issues of self esteem and disengagement from the mainstream by prospective volunteers;
- ➔ Negative stereotypes;
- ➔ Lack of capacity within volunteer involving organisations to support a diverse volunteer workforce;
- ➔ Working to overcome these barriers is a long-term goal and on-going process. Volunteering Ireland has had many successes in its work for inclusion, equality and diversity, which together create a momentum for positive change.

Is it the role of volunteer organisations to invest in diversity? What were according to your experience the benefits from investing in diversity?

➔ We believe that a healthy and vibrant organisation is one that reflects the diversity of the society in which it works. How we organise and run our organisations can reinforce stereotypes. Where organisations are committed to equality and diversity, investment is needed to ensure that the appropriate structures, systems and processes are in place.

3) Workshop questions

Which of the three questions would you like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

What is the value of inclusion, equality and diversity?

How do you turn values into action?

How can volunteering be a way of bringing positive societal change?



Presentation

After the short introduction of the participants to the workshop, Mrs. Elaine Bradley presented the project that Volunteering Ireland had developed to create more equal opportunities for all.

The workshop dealt with the following subjects:

- Situation in Ireland: economic, legal background;
- The work of Volunteering Ireland;
- Case studies.

Situation in Ireland

Mrs. Bradley started her presentation by saying that volunteering has a very long history in Ireland; it was a shift from charity to volunteering. In the last twelve years there has been an economic boom in Ireland – the ‘Celtic tiger’ economy – the labour market was full; the gap between poor and rich deteriorated; demography changed (emigration, refugees). The changing demographic situation increased diversity, but blocked integration. That is why Volunteering Ireland thinks they should create social pressure in order to involve people. The problem is that not all members of society are valued equally; not all members of society have the same opportunity. Language barriers decreased, but the behaviour behind it has not changed yet, so on the whole nothing has changed. Mrs. Bradley also presented the legislation and policy context in Ireland. To establish the legal background the Equal Status Act 2000 and the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion helped. Equal Status Act 2000 makes it illegal to discriminate on 9 grounds: Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Ethnic Origin, Membership of the Traveller Community. The National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion recognises the positive impact that volunteering has on socially disadvantaged individuals and groups. The Taskforce Report on Active Citizenship 2007 affirms the values of inclusion, equality and solidarity with those who are disadvantaged.

Volunteering Ireland

Mrs. Bradley continued by presenting her organisation. Volunteering Ireland is an independent, non-party political membership-based organisation and the brainchild of Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups – Ireland’s largest centre for voluntary organisations. They are a professional and efficient not-for-profit organisation; their work includes advocacy and organisational development. Advocacy includes influencing government policy; research & development (action research) and the social inclusion programme. Organisational development includes, for example, mentoring support.

The organisation engages with and builds capacity in volunteer involving organisations to enable the participation of all volunteers. It also develops models of practice that support individuals, groups and organisations.

In addition, Volunteering Ireland promotes high quality voluntary activity, by encouraging organisations that involve volunteers to adopt good policy and practice, and by acting as a link between such organisations and individuals who wish to undertake meaningful voluntary work.

The first program was a pilot project in supported volunteering in 1999. In 2004 they ran the ‘Opportunity Knocks’ project; and in 2005 the employment of social inclusion programme co-ordinator.

Case studies

Mrs. Bradley continued with the presentation of the concrete actions taken by Volunteering Ireland. At the beginning of a project the first question that Volunteering Ireland tries to answer is "What opportunities do we have?"

The major barriers to involving people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering were the attitudes and negative stereotypes. The lack of capacity within volunteer involving organisations to support a diverse volunteer workforce and issues of self-esteem and disengagement from the mainstream by prospective volunteers were also problems. To engage volunteers from other cultures Volunteering Ireland produced a number of publications in translations.

Case studies were used at the workshop to illustrate how to find out about volunteering and that different groups have different needs, different people need different answers. The key partners in the case studies introduced at the workshop were the volunteers themselves as participants; organisations working with people who are socially excluded; local area partners and the government as funders and supporters.

At the end of the workshop the presenter provided questions, which the participants discussed in three small groups. The three topics were:

- The value of inclusion, equality and diversity;
- Turning values into action;
- Inclusive volunteering as a way of bringing about positive social change.

This discussion highlighted that bridge building is a good way to support volunteering. Actions are the way to learn; without any actions there is no conclusion even if a project is not successful.

Conclusions

To summarize the work of Volunteering Ireland, Mrs. Bradley emphasized action learning and the development of models, which help strategic thinking. Volunteering Ireland believes that a healthy and vibrant organisation is one that reflects the diversity of the society in which it works. It promotes volunteering to the general public, the media and policy-makers and matches individuals who wish to volunteer with organisations, which offer opportunities. Being successful firstly organisations should identify the barriers then encroach – first create equal opportunities, develop models of practice and influence policy.

The organisation has had many successes in its work for inclusion, equality and diversity, which together create a momentum for positive change. Volunteering Ireland believes that volunteering is a way of life; everyone has the right to volunteer.

WS 6) Raising the opportunities of young, disadvantaged people, through VPL/APL within the national, long-term "ÖTLET" programme

Presenter: Szilard Strenner and Monika Nagy, ÖKA

1) Project details**Organisation Name and contact details of project manager:**

➔	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány – ÖKA
➔	Szilard Strenner
✉	Múzeum krt. 23 - 25. 4/17, 1053 Budapest, Hungary
☎	+36 6 1 4570614 or +36 30 2713053
📠	+36 6 1 2250711
@	szilardstrenner@yahoo.co.uk
🌐	http://www.onkentes.hu

Target group of the project / initiative:

- (Long-term) unemployed;
- Post-drug addicted, young people, and people from rural regions.

Main focus of the project / initiative:

- Involve disadvantaged groups of society in volunteering;
- Raising the awareness and further developing the skills and competencies of disadvantaged young people through volunteering.

Objectives of the project / initiative:

- To help to reintegrate young people into society.

Activities of the project / initiative to achieve objectives:

The ÖTLET programme is a national framework for young unemployed people to take part in supported volunteer activities over 6 – 10 months. During their projects, the young people could try out different volunteering by in the capital and 7 regions in the country.

Within the program there was:

- Training, personal mentoring system, for the young people;
- Material support;
- Training and support for the staff member;
- National framework for the 10-month programme.

Outcomes achieved by the project / initiative:

The self-confidence and the different skills of the people has increased significantly, and most of the young unemployed people got a job after the project. Both the volunteers, the host organisations and the mentors have gained a lot of experience of volunteering and supporting young disadvantaged people.

2) Making the project work

What do you consider to be the good practice components of the project / initiative; What made this project a success?

- ➔ The national support system, and the framework;
- ➔ The well-trained mentors and the committed staff members;
- ➔ The clear objectives for the young people;
- ➔ The proper recruitment;
- ➔ The evaluation of learning process;
- ➔ The application of experiential learning.

Who were the key partners and why / how were they involved in this project / initiative?

- ➔ Volunteers;
- ➔ Personal Mentors - project leaders nominated by the local host organisations;
- ➔ Regional coordinator - who supported and maintained the overall programme;
- ➔ Special Mentors - psychologists, who provided support for any partners or volunteer in need;
- ➔ The volunteers - who were motivated, and committed to the programme.

What were major barriers to involve people from disadvantaged backgrounds in volunteering? How were they overcome?

- ➔ To maintain the motivation of the volunteers;
- ➔ Conflict management.

Is it the role of volunteer organisations to invest in diversity? What were according to your experience the benefits from investing in diversity?

- ➔ The work on diversity was not undertaken cautiously. Obviously the young people brought different culture, habits and style to the host organisation, which created a great learning experience for all involved people.

3) Workshop questions

Which of the three questions would you like to discuss with the audience of your workshop?

How can mentors and other professionals support the development of young disadvantaged people?

How can we apply the different VPL / APL tools to raise the awareness and skills, competencies of young people?

How can we prepare the host organisations properly before the volunteer arrives?
And many more questions.

Presentation

Mr. Szilárd Stenner started the workshop by giving a brief overview of the ÖTLET programme:

- Why was it established? The Hungarian government realized the successes of the EVS long-term volunteering programme and decided to establish a similar one on national level.
- ÖTLET means IDEA in English and it stands for: Ö – önkéntesség (volunteering), T - tanulás (learning), L – lehetőség (opportunity), E – elhelyezkedés (find employment), T – tapasztalat (experience).
- What is it for? To increase the opportunities for young unemployed people. Young people between 18 -30 years can take part in supported volunteer activities for between 6-10 months.
- Project activities: training of volunteers, personal mentors and host organisations; personal mentoring system and material support for the young people.
- Under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the Employment and Social Office (Foglalkoztatási és Szociális Hivatal) heads the ÖTLET programme. Eight regional coordinating organisations and one managing organisation (ÖKA National Volunteer Centre) are responsible for implementing the programme. The ÖKA National Volunteer Centre provides the knowledge and skills, while the regional coordinating organisations deal with the financial questions.
- This is the second year of the ÖTLET programme. In the first year 1,200,000 EUR were spent on the accommodation, travel, food, mentor and training costs, etc. of full-time volunteers.
- What are the outcomes so far? Within two months of completing the programme, 65% of the young volunteers found jobs. The volunteers, the host organisations and the mentors have gained a lot of useful experiences about volunteering and inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Ms. Mónika Nagy continued the presentation. She is a psychologist, working with young addicted people for the "Halfway Foundation" (Félúton Alapítvány). She started her speech by introducing the "Halfway Foundation". She asked the audience: "When do you think that a 23 year-old addicted young person ask for help?" When there is no hope because he/she has had all kinds of medical support. When he/she is dying, and realises that there is no other option, no one is around him/her anymore. And if this young person is lucky, he/she knows about the "Halfway Foundation". The Foundation provides an option to get rid of their illness for good. Because according to Ms. Nagy, alcohol and drug-addiction is an illness.

The method that the foundation applies is the Minnesota Model, as used in the United States, in the Betty Ford Foundation for example. There are three special features of the programme:

1. Apart from the medical support, which uses drugs and pills, a special mental and spiritual programme and self-help working groups are built in the treatment. The combined effects of these methods make it more probable to get rid of the addiction.

Out of 100 participants on the Minnesota Model, 50 were clean (not using drugs) a year after finishing the programme: the figure is 12% for normal medical programmes. The reason for the difference in effectiveness is that in the "Halfway Foundation", after finishing the programme, the participants enter the social phase of the treatment, which means that they get all kinds of support.

2. Social support includes: financial, options for education, preparation to find a job and to be able to keep it, help to find good company to meet their social needs, etc. The focus has to be not only on the addicted person but on the environment as well.

3. Addictions are “family diseases”. Therefore to be able to treat the addictions the whole family should participate in the programme. The reason for this is the fact that normally addicted people are taken into hospitals where they stay for about a month without friends and family. After the medical treatment they are let out alone and in most cases they lose their way sooner or later and start using drugs again.

What is the reason for the relapse?

Firstly, it is a lack of family support. Their families do not recognise their efforts to give up the drugs. This problem is being handled by the programme with the participation of the families in the treatment.

Secondly it is the failure in the labour market. And this is where the ÖTLET programme comes into the picture: How volunteering can help these young addicted people to improve their chances in the labour market?

4. The ÖTLET programme. The aim of this cooperation is to interconnect the medical, social and labour sectors and thus show an option to include young addicted people into society by finding them jobs. The ÖTLET programme created such a framework where this model could be tried out.

The problem for young addicted people is not only to find a job but also to keep it. They cannot admit that they are not accepted basically. The main problem is with attitudes: there are huge differences between employers' and young addicted people's attitudes. Employers have to change their attitudes in a positive direction or else long-term employment for addicted people is almost impossible.

The training programme within ÖTLET has two parts: for the young addicted and for the employers. One without the other does not work. But how can attitudes be changed? Personal experience is the key factor. Apart from the training of both groups, they have to meet to gain personal experiences.

The training programme for young addicted people has three phases:

- Communication training: basic communication situations are examined; for example, teaching them to make eye contact because due to their addiction they feel a kind of guilt and that is why they do not make eye-contact when talking to someone.
- Analysing and solving problems: due to the addiction certain capacities are gone and have to be rebuilt.
- Psycho education: they need to know information about the illness they have and how to handle the problems arising from it. For example, the pills they take have side-effects and if they do not know them they might think that when not feeling alright it is because they need the drugs.

The employers' training is very similar to that of the addicted people but with different viewpoints! They have to understand why young addicted people communicate in a different way. Ms. Nagy expressed that it is harder to work with employers than with young people. First they need to find and train a mentor who is sensitive to this problem or has had similar situation in his/her family. Each young person has a mentor whose job in the organisation is to help him/her to communicate, integrate, develop, etc. The mentor has to sensitise the organisation to the problem. The task for the organisation is to keep the young person for a long time.

In the first year 28 ex-addicted young people found jobs: 14 were employed by the host organisations, 5 found jobs in the labour market, 5 disappeared / started to use drugs again and the rest are still volunteering in the same organisations. In September 15 “new” volunteers started the programme.



Discussion

Following questions were raised during the discussion:

What are the most common positions the volunteers take?

- ➔ It depends on their experience and the level of the host organisation. Some of them do not know anything about volunteering while others are "experts".

What kinds of organisations host the volunteers?

- ➔ Volunteering is open to all kinds of non-profit organisations, but experience in working with volunteers is favourable.

What if 10 months is not enough for the volunteer?

- ➔ Then the organisation will decide whether they have resources to keep supporting the person or not.

What if the volunteer starts using drugs again?

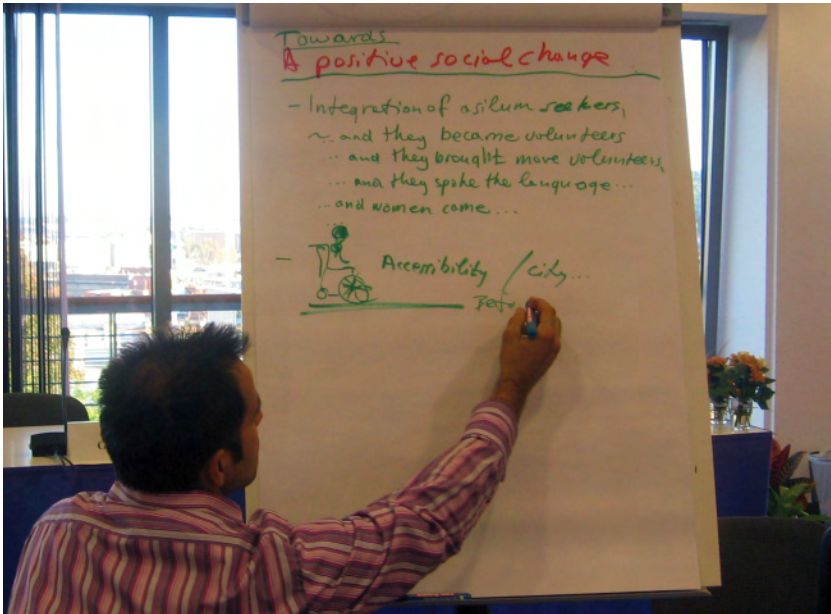
- ➔ Then the organisation cancels the contract.

In order to take part in this program the volunteer has to be clean (not using drugs)?

- ➔ Yes, at least for a month he/she has to be clean.

What are the methods to draw in more addicted young people?

- ➔ With a wide living connection network we can attract them.



VIII. VOICES FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

"My first Assembly – thoroughly enjoyed meeting such a range of people and feeling the "European Spirit", had a great time!"

"Diverse society needs diverse volunteering."

"I liked very much activity where we have been asked to have ideas on how to achieve CEV goals"

"Volunteering is only a tool and not an aim in itself for diverse target groups."

"Cross-cultural learning if there is diverse volunteer workforce."

"The open space gave a better opportunity to everyone to participate (note that many participants were for the first time in a CEV assembly)."

"Not only a question of benefits for organisation but benefits for the target groups."

"Organisations need to be prepared and ask themselves if they actually want to be open and if they are ready."



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