
Solidalciti Conference report and Solidalciti Statement

18th June 2019

The 138 participants in the solidalciti closing conference from 20 European countries, represented the voice of the communities they serve, including underrepresented groups and those who are at risk of social exclusion. Around 20% of them were in a European event for the first time and at least 15% of all participants can be considered as people with fewer opportunities. 70 participants identified as female and 67 as male and the age of participants was divided as follows: 78 under 30; 59 from 30 - 65 and 1 over 65. They came together in the knowledge that voluntary organizations are often the quickest force to intervene in response to unmet needs, where or when public or private, for-profit sector interventions can't fully address the needs of a population. Accustomed to engaging with the most disadvantaged communities addressing both geographic localities and communities of interest across Europe, the participants, with some specific input from experts in the topic, shared their best practices and innovative ways to support and represent the interests of vulnerable people, regardless of their origin.

The Solidalciti project was built around the idea of volunteering as an expression of active citizenship that is made up of three main elements: information, expression and action. The conference provided an interactive and participatory framework that contributed to being able to progress towards better awareness and knowledge around the practice of active citizenship with volunteering at its core.

The conference opened with keynote interventions from Gabriella Civico (CEV Director) and Musa Ahmed (Volunteer). Following this, Francesco Piemonte Solidalciti Project Coordinator & Prof. Anna D'ascenzio, Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples presented what had been achieved during the Solidalciti project, and Matteo Adduci, Policy Advisor to MEP Brando Benifei shared his perspectives on "Volunteering and EU Policies 2019 onwards".

After the opening sessions there were three parallel sessions to further recognise and promote volunteering, and better value the experience of volunteering organizations and volunteers, especially among young people and migrants:

Volunteering, Migrants and Media: Moderator: Marko Paunovic, Director Out of the Box International Expert input from: Illustrator Madeleina Kay; Elisa Buccolini Sans-Papiers TV; Alkisti Macrynikola Ethelon.

Volunteering, Crisis and Management: Moderator: Elise Poumay Red Cross EU Office Expert input from: Anne-Catherine de Neve Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés; Adnan Panjeta Red Cross Novo Sarajevo/BRAVO; Fabio Fraiese Sodalìs CSV Salerno

Volunteering, Youth and Motivation: Moderator: Milosh Ristovski Secretary General Young European Federalists (JEF) Expert Input from: Elena Sbarai & Laura Lopez Belgian Red Cross - Youth (fr) ; Citizen K, Democracy 4.0; Milica Žugić & Kristina Pavićević Mladiinfo Montenegro

The **SolidalCiti final conference participants reached the following conclusions** in order that the vital role of volunteers and volunteering organisations in the interest of all citizens can be maximised.

SolidalCiti Statement

Volunteering migrants and media

In order to better portray migrants and the volunteers that assist them in the media and ensure a better approach from media professionals so as to contribute to the social inclusion of migrants and further maximise the support offered by volunteers stakeholders should:

- 1) Promote positive models/examples of integration
- 2) Ensure that journalism is ethical and evidence-based
- 3) Support participatory media where the stories are created or co-created by the subjects of the stories.
- 4) Promote solidarity movements that contribute to real integration
- 5) Educate especially, but not only, young people on correct terminology, facts and history in relation to active citizenship, social inclusion and integration stories.
- 6) Distinguish between defending freedom of speech and promoting and/or enabling hate speech.
- 7) Reinforce the power of images.
- 8) Create spaces for discussion with people with other perspectives.

Volunteering Crisis and Management

Managing volunteers in crisis situations is different from regular situations and the following should be taken into account by stakeholders:

1. The time-frame, for example time available for planning and training, can be less.
2. Increased mobilisation of volunteers means extra resources need to be available to manage them, including their expectations.
3. To be efficient and effective with different than usual amounts of resources (people and financial) needs careful planning.
4. People's willingness to get engaged needs to be balanced with actual need.
5. Organisations with complex structures for volunteer management are maybe not always the right stakeholders to respond.

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6. Flexibility is needed and organisations and citizen's initiatives should be ready to adapt and learn by doing.
 7. Engage people and make them accountable before they volunteer, for example by signing a code of conduct and making sure that the management of their expectations and well-being can be properly addressed.
 8. Try to structure, even if in a crisis situation, and properly prioritise need and responses.
 9. Plan as much as possible for crisis in advance.

The legal implications of volunteering in crisis situations, where saving a life can be counter to the Legal Framework, should be better understood and improved in order that:

- 1) Human right to life should be respected in law, and practice in all times.
- 2) The "precautionary principle" should be applied, meaning that saving lives should be done while making sure that no more lives are put in danger.
- 3) There is no contradiction between EU law and national law and both should be updated taking into account current trends and situations.

Volunteering, Youth and Motivation

In order to best motivate young people to volunteer and fully harness both the role of social media influencers and established organisations stakeholders need to:

1. Be where the young people are (e.g. pubs, gardens, schools)
2. Get to know the volunteers
3. Receive feedback from volunteers
4. Make sure there are tasks for everyone
5. Gather feedback on why and why not people stay motivated
6. Develop a sense of community
7. Ensure that young people are having fun as well as having an impact on need and fully understanding that impact.
8. Offer space for volunteers to decide - participation
9. Hear stories from other volunteers in order to involve new ones
10. Involve young people both online and offline to outreach volunteers - postcards, social media posts
11. Consider how established organisations should rebrand in order to outreach to more young people without losing the established base of volunteers
12. Offer diverse forms of volunteering in order to answer the interests, time (to volunteer), of different groups of people (example point croix rouge).

The conference concluded with the Presentation of the Solidalciti Statement & Solidalciti Slide-Show at a Networking Aperitif with music from volunteers #EUSuperGirl, #AdamLevyandFriends and #Bohemian Holiday.