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EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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VOLUNTEERING
INFRASTRUCTURE
IN EUROPE



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1. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

CONCEPT DEFINITION

Under the Portuguese basic legal framework for volunteering (Law no. 71/98, article 4), the organisations legally allowed to recruit and coordinate volunteers are public entities of central, regional or local administration or other legal persons governed by public or private law, as well as socially recognised organisations, that meet the conditions to integrate volunteers and coordinate their activities.

This law also mentions that activities involving volunteers must pursue the social and community interest and can be developed in the following domains: civic, social action, health, education, science and culture, patrimony, environmental protection, consumer protection, cooperation for development, employment and vocational training, social reinsertion, civil protection, development of associative life and social economy, promotion of volunteering and social solidarity or others with similar nature. This list is not exhaustive, it contains a certain degree of overlap and is always open to existing domains or to new ones that might emerge.

The Law no. 71 defines volunteering as a set of activities pursuing community or social interest, carried out in an unselfish way by individuals, within the framework of not-for-profit projects, programmes or other interventions developed by public entities or private organisations for the benefit of individuals, families or communities in need.

A volunteer is defined as an individual performing volunteer activities in an organised setting, out of his/her will, in an unselfish and responsible manner, according to his/her qualification and during his/her leisure time.

Volunteering infrastructure is responsible for defining a volunteering programme as the result of the mutual will and responsibility of the volunteer and the organisation. The volunteering relationship is based on 3 principles: the free and responsible adhesion of the volunteer to carry out the volunteering activities, the existence of a relationship between the organisation and the volunteer, and the translation of the principles of volunteering, such as solidarity and complementary responsibility, into practice.

The National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering was established by the law decree no. 389/99, as the public entity responsible for the development of volunteering functioning according to the provisions of the Resolution no. 50/2000 of the Council of Ministers.



2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

The Law no. 71 defines volunteering as *a set of activities pursuing community or social interest, carried out in an unselfish way by individuals, within the framework of not-for-profit projects, programmes or other interventions developed by public entities or private organisations for the benefit of individuals, families or communities in need.* This law does not cover informal and isolated volunteer work.

The principles of volunteering set forth by the law are: responsibility, participation, cooperation, complementarity, being without payment, and convergence. In Portugal volunteering is strongly influenced by Christian values and morals. The church was the first institution to supply volunteer assistance inspired by the Christian principle of charity. Over time, State and Church shared social responsibility and supported the establishment and expansion of the institutions supplying social assistance. These institutions maximised the spirit of solidarity and individual participation. The last decade of the XIXth century marked a turning point for volunteering

with the institutionalisation of the Social Service. This institutionalisation of social services entailed services previously provided by religious believers and/or volunteers being provided by professionals.

Organisations such as Humanitarian Associations of Firemen and the Red Cross are heavily dependent on volunteers, whereas private institutions of social solidarity rely rather little on volunteers

The percentage of volunteers in Portugal is lower than the percentage of volunteers in other European countries and North America. This is linked to the social, economic and political factors that have affected both the supply and demand of volunteers. Various

organisations depend in different degrees on the utilisation of volunteers, according to their main activities and available resources. Thus organisations such as Humanitarian Associations of Firemen and the Red Cross are heavily dependent on volunteers, whereas private institutions of social solidarity rely rather little on volunteers. Smaller entities targeting vulnerable social groups and with little support from the state, are the ones that depend more on the work of volunteers. In 2001, the study 'Characteristics of Volunteering in Portugal' showed that there were 1.5 million volunteers integrated in the voluntary work of active organisations.

The profile of volunteers varies according to the field of involvement and the type of organisation they are involved in. The most significant percentages are among the young and adult population, educated above average, either still studying or already employed. Fields of volunteer involvement have changed from the traditional social assistance and health towards environment, culture, and social economy. This diversification of fields of activity for volunteers has brought along an improvement in the qualifications of volunteers, the recognition, and the motivation of volunteers.

The interest of media for volunteering has been increasing and The European Year of Volunteering (EYV) 2011 was an excellent opportunity to obtain even more visibility.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Law no 71/98 establishes the principles of volunteering, namely solidarity, participation, cooperation, complementarity, being payment free, responsibility and convergence.

In 1998 (through Law no 71/98, 3 November) the basic legal framework for volunteering was published, with the aim to promote and ensure the equal participation of all citizens in volunteering. Since some aspects of the framework needed to be detailed and further regulated, almost a year later a law decree was published (law decree no. 389/99, of 30 September). A working group to review the legislation was recently implemented, on 5 December 2011, to make proposals in order to change some aspects of the legislation.

The Law no 71/98 defines the basic legal framework under which volunteering should be developed, recognising its social value as an expression of active citizenship and consequently promoting and ensuring its autonomy and diversity. It establishes the principles of volunteering, namely solidarity, participation, cooperation, complementarity, being payment free, responsibility, and convergence. It includes the definitions of volunteering activity and volunteers, the organisations allowed to recruit and coordinate volunteers, the domains in which volunteering activities can be developed, the rights and duties of volunteers and the relationship between the volunteers and the volunteers involving organisations.

Volunteering is defined as a set of activities pursuing community or social interest carried out in an unselfish way by individuals, within the framework of not-for-profit projects, programmes or other interventions developed by public entities or private organisations for the benefit of individuals, families or communities in need. A volunteer is defined as an individual performing volunteer activities in an organised setting, out of his/her will, in an unselfish and responsible manner, according to his/her qualification and during his/her leisure time.

This law contributes to the creation of an enabling environment for volunteering as it clearly defines its legal framework and regulates other relevant aspects of carrying out volunteer work. The main responsibility for implementing the provisions of this law lies with the government. Until 1999 there was no formal infrastructure body to support volunteering. However through the law mentioned above the National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering (CNPV) was established.

CNPV is a Portuguese public body within the structures of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity. It is composed of representatives of public organisations, from several ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Internal Administration, Social Security, Family and Child, Justice, Education, Health, Environment, Culture and Youth Ministries, from Regional Governments and of private, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including a broad range of volunteering activities, such as the National Municipalities Association, National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions, Holy Houses of Mercy Union, Portuguese Red Cross Union and Mutualities Union.

CNPV main competences are: promoting volunteering; coordinating volunteering; enhancing skills of the volunteers. CNPV promotes a wide array of actions that lead towards the recognition of the rights of volunteers and actions related to the promotion, coordination and qualification of volunteering. CNPV activities are supported with information resources such as website, publications, and a newsletter.

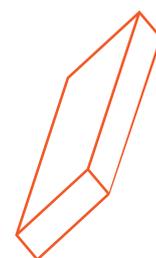
CNPV is a consultative board, compulsorily consulted by law whenever policy measures concern

volunteering, which issues statements and advises the Parliament on the draft laws. CNPV meets once a month in plenary. The analysis of strategies and the approval of policy proposals are done in the monthly meeting with all the Counsellors. Two specialised commissions were created: the Commission for Volunteering in Health and the Commission for Volunteering in Justice. CNPV also provides vocational training for trainers concerning specific aspects of volunteering all over the country, and has published a Trainer's Handbook.

The major national volunteer organisations are represented in CNPV, as the National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions, Holy Houses of Mercy Union, Portuguese Red Cross Union, Mutuality's Union, and the Portuguese Confederation on Volunteering. Other organisations often consult CNPV on various issues. There is close cooperation between all the organisations that support volunteer projects and the CNPV.

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

There is no national volunteer centre in Portugal. CNPV acts as a national support and resource centre for volunteering in its capacity of public body responsible for volunteering. In 2001 Local Volunteering Banks (LVB) were created to stimulate volunteering at the local level. These banks are realised by local municipalities or NGOs, with the technical support of the CNPV. These local and decentralised structures seek to facilitate the promotion of volunteering and to be a meeting point for individuals that are willing to volunteer and institutions that need volunteer contributions in order to support the implementation of their activities. There are 91 LVBs throughout the country including the Madeira and Azores Autonomous Regions. CNPV works closely with the LVBs, which are implemented by local municipalities or NGOs, with the technical support of the CNPV.



In 2007 the *Portuguese Confederation for Volunteering (CPV)* was set up as a representative structure for volunteer organisations in Portugal, regardless of their specific field of activity. There are a variety of civil society organisations active in Portugal, taking the form of associations, cooperatives, foundations, local development organisations, holy houses of mercy, non-governmental organisations for development, and private institutions of solidarity. Many of these organisations are members of the CNPV, as well as the Portuguese Confederation of Volunteering.

Associations

There are many forms of associations in Portugal, namely associations of voluntary firemen, consumer protection, education, students, families, immigrants, youth, women, parents, disabled, environment, leisure, and cultural activities. Each has specific by-laws regulating them.

Local development organisations

Local development organisations were created after the Portuguese accession to the European Union. They intervene on training activities, adult education, research and development, environmental protection, and support to the elderly population.

Holy Houses of Mercy

The first Holy House of Mercy was established in 1498, as a charitable institution dedicated to improving health and social problems. Nowadays they focus on providing healthcare, education and cultural opportunities to the most deprived. There are approximately 400 *Holy Houses of Mercy* in Portugal, united in an umbrella organisation representing their interests, and are called *The União das Misericórdias*.

Non-governmental organisations for development (NGDOs)

These are private non-for-profit structures. They intervene especially on the field of cooperation for development, education for development, humanitarian and emergency aid. A Portuguese Platform of NGDOs was created in 1985; today it counts 56 members.

Private Institutions of Solidarity (IPSS)

Such institutions are non-for-profit organisations, of private initiative, which seek to give an organised answer to the moral duty of solidarity and justice among individuals, administered by the state or a municipal political body. The majority of IPSS in Portugal are Holy Houses of Mercy, parishes and social centres, mutual associations and social solidarity associations.

5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Private sector

Business involvement in volunteering is reflected by the project called G.I.R.O. – Grace, Intervene, Recover and Organise, the largest corporate voluntary action in Portugal whose main objective is the improvement of quality of life of groups at risk. This action gathers around 500 volunteers from several enterprises who exchange office for community work for local charities and associations for one day. They carry out activities like rehabilitation of various social facilities, including painting walls/fences, placement of pavements, yard remodelling, placing ceilings and other similar tasks. This project is led by the Reflection and Support Group for Corporate Citizenship Association (GRACE). This is an annual initiative, the sixth edition of which took place in 2011 in various places across Portugal.

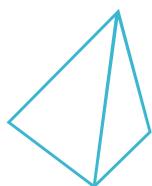
The *Hand in Hand Project*, established in 2001, is a corporate movement sponsored by the Portugal Telecom Foundation. This project is linked to IPSS and to Holy Houses of Mercy, as well as to hospitals and public educational institutions. The project targets victims of social exclusion. The project is made possible by the participation, willingness and commitment of many companies. During its nine years of existence the project counts nearly 3,000 beneficiaries, more than 100 actions and 60,000 working hours.

Public sector

Government involvement in promoting volunteering is reflected in the legal framework provided for volunteering and also in the support it gives to the CNVP and its activities. CNVP is consulted with regard to new legislation and invited to support the development of specific projects.

Education

Since 2001, the subject “Civic Education” has been integrated in student curricula as a compulsory area for all students between the 5th and 12th grade. This course is intended to be a privileged space for the development of citizenship skills, to develop students’ civic awareness



as a key element in the formation of responsible citizens, critics, actors and assets, using exchange of experiences and active participation, both individual and collective, in the life of the class, school and community. Volunteering is often chosen as the practical form of active participation. An optional class with the subject “Law and Volunteering” is taught in the private Catholic University of Lisbon. The class includes both theoretical and practical components, including effective volunteering activities. The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Coimbra offers a course for University Volunteering within the curricula of the degree in social service.

6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The main governmental source of funding for volunteering is the Institute of Social Solidarity who allocates a budget to CNPV of around 70,000 EUR per year. This funding is stable and reliable. The money, despite not being much, is sufficient for the activities planned. This budget covers a magazine, travelling costs and participation in international meetings, seminars, conferences, the organisation of other initiatives, issuing of volunteer national cards etc.

The National Council for the Promotion of Volunteering receives funding of 70,000 EUR per year. The funding, despite not being much, is sufficient for the activities planned and, moreover, is reliable.

Other voluntary organisations are independent from the state and have their own budgets. Other sources of funds for the voluntary sector in Portugal are donations and fund raising events (for example, the Portuguese League against Cancer organises, with the support of volunteers, an annual national collection to raise funds).

International Medical Assistance (AMI) a non-governmental humanitarian organisation and *Cáritas Portuguesa* promote the revitalisation of the social actions of the church and rely on other forms of financing. Other examples are partnerships with banks, as the case of Montepio.

7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

The first well-known study on volunteering in Portugal dates back to 2001 and was published by the National Commission for the International Year of Volunteers. The study was conducted by the Social Sciences Institute from the Lisbon University and is titled “*Profile of Volunteering in Portugal*”. The study focuses on the framework of volunteering in Portugal, the volunteer profile, and types of organisations within the third sector. Other studies on volunteering in Portugal are published by the CEV-European Volunteer Centre (“*Volunteering in Portugal Facts and Figures Report*” edited in 2008) and by SPES-Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio (Study “*Volunteering across Europe-Portugal*”).

Under the EYV2011, two studies were carried out in Portugal: the first was the follow up of the study of 2001 (Characterisation of Volunteering in Portugal) and the second, on the activity and functioning of the Local Volunteer Banks in Portugal (actually there are 95 LVBs implemented and around 50 to be implemented).

The economic impact of volunteering was measured by a preparatory study conducted by the Observatory of Employment and Vocational Training, dated 2008.

8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

One important issue for ensuring quality of volunteering in Portugal is related to training for volunteers. Training is particularly important in certain areas, e.g. healthcare, where volunteers have to be well prepared before they can work by themselves. The definition of a basic training methodology for volunteers, assumed and recognised by all is essential. Local Volunteering Banks play an important role in this field by giving technical support to organisations who involve volunteers and by training volunteers.

One of CNPV's commitments is to ensure proper training of volunteers. In 2003 CNPV published a trainer's handbook, based on collaboration with other organisations. This Handbook is used in CNPV training sessions throughout the country. One of the important actors in producing this training handbook was the Institute for Solidarity and University Cooperation (ISU). ISU runs a Centre for Volunteering Training, promoting solidarity and citizenship culture through volunteering.

9. AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

CNPV¹ runs a website where a database of volunteer involving organisations exists to help potential volunteers to identify suitable volunteering opportunities and choose the most appropriate one, according to individual interest and skills and matching the needs of the organisations. This database has around 1000 registered volunteer involving organisations. This matching service is also available through the Local Volunteering Banks.

CNPV edits a quarterly magazine called "*Volunteering, today*"². This is a free magazine printed in 8,000 copies and distributed throughout the country. CNPV staff often participates in seminars, conferences, meetings, radio and television programmes, informing on and promoting volunteering. To celebrate 5 December International Volunteer Day, CNPV organises a big event dedicated to the Day. Public messages are launched on this occasion through outdoor electronic display facilities.

Besides resources made available by CNPV for promoting volunteering, organisations active in the field also use their own promotional tools such as personalised websites, publications, studies, research reports, etc. Media is a very good tool for promoting volunteerism; staff of CNPV and other volunteer involving organisations participate in TV and radio programmes and give interviews to magazines and newspapers.

10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES

One of member organisations of the Conselho Nacional para a Promoção do Voluntariado is the Portuguese Fire-fighters League. The great majority of fire fighters are volunteers.

1. <http://www.voluntariado.pt/>

2. Voluntariado, hoje, available at: <http://www.voluntariado.pt/left.asp?01.03.05>

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

In Portugal, it would be important to connect the Local Volunteering Banks to the Local Social Networks, a structure created by the Government, in all municipalities, for discussion and planning of local social development.

Another recommendation is to stimulate local partnerships between businesses, NGOs and local authorities to develop new combined ways of volunteering.

At the European level, it would be interesting to define a partnership between the governments and the most important enterprises and NGO networks, to establish a functional cooperative framework for volunteering.



Resources

Conselho Nacional para a Promoção do Voluntariado www.voluntariado.pt

Delicado, Ana., Almeida, A., Ferrão, J. (2002) “*Caracterização do Voluntariado em Portugal*”, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, ED. Comissão para o Ano Internacional do Voluntariado

European Volunteer Centre, 2008 Report on “*Volunteering in Portugal Facts and Figures*”

Fundação Portugal Telecom www.fundacao.telecom.pt

GRACE Portal de Cidadania Empresarial www.grace.pt

SPES-Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio, “*Volunteering across Europe*”, ED spes, 2008