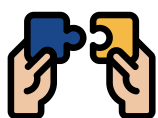


VOTE VOLUNTEER VISION

Toolkit for CEV members and other Volunteer-Involving Organisations to discover and develop the European Parliament candidates' opinions on volunteering for 2024 EP Election, with reference to the Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (PAVE) & the "Helping Hands EYV 2011 5-Year Review" and the 5R Policy Priorities.



VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION



IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERMENT



SOCIETAL RESOURCES



INTERGROUP



OVERALL ENGAGEMENT



NEW VOLUNTEERS AND METHODS

✓ **Who will you vote for?**

✓ **What is their Volunteer Vision?**

Since 2011 many countries have developed stronger and more appropriate legal frameworks for volunteering and the culture of volunteering has become more accepted and understood. PAVE has been a reference point for many of these developments. In 2021 on the 10th anniversary of EYV 2011, and the publication of PAVE, the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) (former European Volunteer Centre) has prepared this 2030 Blueprint for European volunteering. Building on the strengths of PAVE, the CEV Helping Hands Report and the 5R policy priorities¹ & the CEV Valuing Volunteering Report², as well as incorporating links to the SDGs and acknowledging the changed landscape from 2011 until now, this Blueprint will serve as an additional support and guidance tool for all stakeholders wishing to see the full potential of volunteering in Europe realised.

In 2011, when PAVE was published, the full effects of the 2007 economic crisis were being felt with austerity measures and high unemployment rates having a huge impact on volunteering capacity and demands³. Preparing the Blueprint in 2020 was in the context of another crisis - the COVID19 pandemic. Since the first day of the COVID19 pandemic crisis, citizens responded by adapting and launching numerous volunteer initiatives⁴. This demonstrated, beyond all doubt, the importance of volunteers and a vibrant and responsive civil society, reflecting the spirit of a resilient and caring community. In a context where, in many parts of Europe, volunteers, volunteer organisations and volunteering infrastructure organisations suffer from a lack of investment and absence of public and State support in recent times, this unprecedented situation highlighted more than ever just how critical volunteers of all ages and profiles are to our society, especially as a key partner of local policymakers at municipality level.

As part of the post-crisis recovery process, CEV has called for policymakers to “Step Up a Gear” regarding volunteering policies and programmes, explaining that this “change of gear” should include increased focus, intensity and speed of investment and partnership development with volunteer-involving and volunteer infrastructure organisations. CEV believes that this would lead to a situation that more properly reflects the importance of the energy, expertise, and commitment of volunteers for health, well-being and solidarity in Europe, whilst avoiding the exploitation of volunteers in for-profit settings. This Blueprint explains why this is the case, and what steps are needed to be taken by different stakeholders in order to make this a reality by 2030.

¹CEV, “Helping Hands” Hope for Europe! Conference Report, 8-9th October 2015, p.3

https://df2253af-c034-4026-aac2-5d1c91f60490.filesusr.com/ugd/3ec99c_d09820abb77847678d0cc98dc8a3e0fc.pdf

²CEV, “Valuing Volunteering” European Volunteer Centre Conference Report, 21st November 2019,

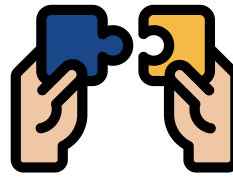
<https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/conferences-reports>

³CEV, Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE), 2011, p.6

⁴CEV, Volunteers in Solidarity COVID-19, June 2020

https://df2253af-c034-4026-aac2-5d1c91f60490.filesusr.com/ugd/3ec99c_eeed2c2f10db04406afd31596f28152d5.pdf

VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION



SOCIETAL CHALLENGES & COMMUNICATION

Volunteering provides a unique response to societal challenges. Citizens face growing and universal issues such as: social & economic inequalities; shrinking space for civil society and democracy; climate change; loneliness, the digital divide and the protection of culture & cultural heritage. Volunteers should not be depicted as “amateurs” playing a side role to “professional” employees but rather a complementary approach adding value as a unique resource for sustainable development and as experts in the challenges experienced by the communities they engage with and in and the possible solutions.

Outcomes:

- Every effort is made to ensure that this contribution of volunteers is better understood and highlighted by themselves, the media and society as a whole.
- Opportunities for public recognition for the action of volunteers, citizens and associations through awards, volunteer weeks and festivals etc. are provided and increased.

BEYOND SERVICE DELIVERY

Volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations and volunteer infrastructure organisations need to be implicated as key stakeholders in improving society and reaching equal opportunities for all, not just as deliverers of tasks and services⁵. Although having a meaningful task to undertake whilst volunteering and having a meaningful impact that is visible to the community is important, policy makers should also understand, not only the practical outputs of volunteering, but also the role that volunteering has to play in social cohesion, in interpersonal relationships, in bringing people together and keeping the communication and dialogue open between ourselves and each other - making European values a reality.

Outcomes:

- The importance of volunteers for quality of life, wellbeing and solidarity in Europe is better reflected, through positive messaging & appreciative discourse.
- The contribution of volunteering to achieving the SDGs is included and given due recognition in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

VALIDATION OF LEARNING

Volunteering provides a unique setting for civic education, is an important space for acquisition of skills and competences, learning and personal development, that is complementarity to employment and formal education and training opportunities, not an alternative.

⁵CEV, VIEWSS Report Volunteering in European Welfare and Social Services, 2014,
https://issuu.com/european_volunteer_centre/docs/viewss-report



Outcomes:

- It is understood that Civil Society Organisations can often be suitable places for structured learning and work experience and that CSO leaders should be trained and supported with resources to play that role in supporting trainees and others on work experience placement where a clear learning path and learning objectives are in place
- It is clear that this support should be kept separate from the actions to support and manage volunteers and the assistance they are offered to identify, document and certify their learning if desired by the volunteer through Non-Formal and Informal Learning (NFIL) validation processes.
- Efforts to share and recognize common tools at European level for validating the skills acquired through volunteering enjoy cross-sector support.
- Employers are supported to understand and value the skills and competences acquired through volunteering for their existing and future employees in HR development and recruitment processes.
- Educational institutions are supported to understand and value the skills and competences acquired through volunteering for their existing and future students.

RESEARCH AND MEASUREMENT

The continued lack of coordination at the EU level regarding volunteering programmes, policies and data gathering makes it impossible to have a realistic assessment and measure of the true transformative effect of volunteering in Europe, and the value of volunteering as indicated in chapter 6 of PAVE⁶, and consequently for efficient and sustainable, evidence-based policies to be developed⁷. A situation that makes volunteering budgets at all administrative levels and fields easily, and increasingly vulnerable, to cuts.

Outcomes:

- Policymakers work with partners to ensure that more reliable and comparable data on volunteering should be gathered in different European countries that also contributes to understanding the contribution of volunteers to achieving the SDGs.
- When measuring the value of volunteering it is done with the “Beyond GDP” approach and not be limited to economic value statistics but also to contribution to personal well-being, health, safety, social connections and civic engagement, such as that provided in the European Quality of Life Surveys harmonised Time Use Survey’s and SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions).
- The ILO guidelines for the Measurement of the Economic Value of Volunteering is recognised as an important resource based on robust data collection criteria endorsed by statistics professionals and agencies across the globe and support efforts to update the guidelines to take into account the current ILO approach to gathering data on both paid and non-paid labour.
- The information collected is used to inform and implement changes to volunteering policies and programmes.
- Volunteering organisations are empowered to work with statistics agencies, research institutes, experts and expert organisations to identify, quantify and record the contribution of volunteering for social and human capital and for achieving the SDGs.
- Relevant data on volunteering is shared in the UNV knowledge portal in order to capture the global and comparative map of volunteering.

⁶ CEV, Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe (PAVE), 2011 (Chapter 6)

https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/files/ugd/3ec99c_38c7cd0ec9b4490fbd96230430959e35.pdf

⁷ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/statistical-tools-measuring-volunteering>



2025 should be declared by the EU as the European Year of Volunteers. This would be a fitting tribute to the efforts and impact of volunteers during the COVID19 crisis and the crises caused by the war in Ukraine where people's lives and well being have been in grave danger. It would highlight the importance of volunteer support to health and well-being in Europe and the role of volunteers in the recovery and the future of Europe. 2011 was the European Year of Volunteering and the focus was on exploring and reaching closer common understanding on the concept of volunteering. The European Year of Volunteers 2025 would focus on the people who volunteer. It would seek to explore further and better understand their motivation and their impact on health and well-being in Europe. Studies show that volunteering can bring a new sense of purpose, identity and sense of belonging and that it improves life satisfaction, reduces loneliness and isolation and decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety both amongst volunteers themselves and those that they support. It is of great importance for the EU that citizens who volunteer based on solidarity, respect, equality and shared values are taking care of their own wellbeing and mental health, and, through volunteering they are giving back to the community and contributing to the wellbeing of others. The European Year of Volunteers 2025 will shine the spotlight on the essential collective actions of volunteers leading to increased health and well being in Europe and provide a suitable framework to better celebrate and reinforce positive recognition of volunteers in Europe.

IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERMENT



ENABLING

When information about, and access to, volunteering is increased in volume and quality, citizens can gain a deeper understanding of the importance and power of volunteering, adding to the richness and diversity of the volunteering environment in Europe.

Outcomes:

- Civic education and Service Learning are introduced more widely into the formal education systems to increase awareness of volunteering and civil society not only for children and young people but also their wider networks of families and friends.
- The “free will” nature of volunteering is protected as distinct from compulsory or optional parts of formal education systems that serve to connect young people to civil society and volunteering situations.
- Diversity is highlighted by showcasing possibilities to volunteer in a broad range of fields and areas of interest and need.

INCLUSION

Volunteering makes an enormous contribution to social inclusion but volunteering itself needs to become more accessible to people of different backgrounds, ages and diverse personal situations.

Outcomes:

- There is Investment in research and data collection that can inform about the lack of inclusivity and disparities in volunteering caused by restrictive legal frameworks, by prejudice or stereotypes or other sources of inequality.
- The data and evidence of inequalities and lack of inclusivity, be that based on age, ethnicity, gender etc. is used as the basis to support mitigating activities and policies as part of a concrete action plan in collaboration with civil society partners.
- Policymakers collaborate with volunteer development and volunteer-involving organisations, as well as volunteer-led initiatives, through public policies and funding⁸, to help them make a change-making example to raise awareness and visibility of diversity, remove psychological and physical barriers in volunteering, develop support systems, secure it as the norm.

STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The ability to provide quality, long term and sustainable impact as well as appropriate responses to community need, especially those that appear suddenly in crisis situations in a flexible and coordinated manner, requires volunteering organisations to be stable, well-established and well-regarded not only in the community, but also and particularly, by local, regional and national authorities.

Outcomes:

- There is appropriate support and encouragement for the volunteer sector to be able to provide flexible and innovative responses to community needs, to grow, and be sustainable.
- Suitable volunteering development strategies that are crosscutting and transversal for different policy fields and sectors are developed.
- Networking and cooperation between organisations, public authorities and sectors is facilitated, incentivized and/or rewarded to increase the potential and likelihood that organisations, during times of crisis, are ready and willing to collaborate.
- Targeted support to volunteer-led initiatives that have grown out of arising or sudden community needs (such as COVID19 crisis or earthquakes) is provided so that they are able to continue to harness the energy and enthusiasm generated, In this way being able to continue to respond to societal needs during the recovery period post-crisis and beyond the specific situation that they were responding to if the need continues to exist.
- The necessary support for more established volunteer-based initiatives, and that of the volunteer supporting infrastructure organisations, is available to ensure their sustainability and in recognition of their critical role in our communities and society as a whole.

⁸ CEV, Inclusive Volunteering Toolkit, March 2019,

https://df2253af-c034-4026-aac25d1c91f60490.filesusr.com/ugd/3ec99c_38b45efe3d4c42a98e8e994da6ba4068.pdf

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Legal and policy frameworks need to be responsive to the reality of changing volunteer eco systems. Change in volunteering can be particularly seen in the growth of informal initiatives and on-line volunteering where volunteering plays a particular role in giving a voice to excluded groups and/or the means to campaign for a cause and/or the development of mutual aid initiatives.

Outcomes:

- Legal frameworks for volunteering are adapted and evolve to take this, and other societal and behavioral changes into account. In this way, in addition to the more formal and structured engagement that legal frameworks are frequently focused on, they will be more suitable to facilitate and enable different forms of voluntary engagement, rather than restrict engagement as can be currently the case, unlocking further potential.
- Legal frameworks for volunteering are fit for purpose and straightforward to understand, implement & evaluate by individual volunteers, organisations and monitoring authorities.
- Legal frameworks for volunteering acknowledge and contemplate both role-based and task-based volunteering providing quality volunteering in all cases.
- The legal frameworks protect the physical, mental and social safety of volunteers and the beneficiaries of their actions and are proportional and realistic for application for organisations of all sizes.

SOCIETAL RESOURCES



INVESTING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Public funding should reflect the true cost of volunteering, the true value of the contribution of volunteers, and the needs of infrastructure organisations that ensure: the provision of quality volunteering opportunities; Support for volunteers (such as training, counselling, evaluation etc.); Matching the supply and demand of volunteering; Capacity building and good practice exchange among volunteer-involving organisations; Removal of barriers to volunteering; Awareness-raising with regard to the value of volunteering for both the individual and the society; Influencing policy environment in areas where volunteering takes place in order to build an enabling environment where volunteering can flourish (PAVE 2011).

Outcomes:

- Funding and other support is allocated in a fair way that is flexible enough to match the flexibility in responses to needs that is often required by volunteering organisations.
- Public funds are accessible to all civil society organisations that respect human rights and European values through open calls for proposals, and funding for volunteering infrastructure organisations should also be increased and protected.



- Forms of support for associations also through impact measurement systems, arriving at the so-called “payment by results” in which the results are the positive impact that the association carries out in a specific place for the sole fact of existing, operating and participating in the life of the community are considered. This generates an outcome that cannot be measured numerically but certainly a value in terms of impact for the community and this could guide spending decisions.

INVESTING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Public funding should reflect the true cost of volunteering, the true value of the contribution of volunteers, and the needs of infrastructure organisations that ensure: the provision of quality volunteering opportunities; Support for volunteers (such as training, counselling, evaluation etc.); Matching the supply and demand of volunteering; Capacity building and good practice exchange among volunteer-involving organisations; Removal of barriers to volunteering; Awareness-raising with regard to the value of volunteering for both the individual and the society; Influencing policy environment in areas where volunteering takes place in order to build an enabling environment where volunteering can flourish (PAVE 2011).

Outcomes:

- Funding and other support is allocated in a fair way that is flexible enough to match the flexibility in responses to needs that is often required by volunteering organisations.
- Public funds are accessible to all civil society organisations that respect human rights and European values through open calls for proposals, and funding for volunteering infrastructure organisations should also be increased and protected.
- Forms of support for associations also through impact measurement systems, arriving at the so-called “payment by results” in which the results are the positive impact that the association carries out in a specific place for the sole fact of existing, operating and participating in the life of the community are considered. This generates an outcome that cannot be measured numerically but certainly a value in terms of impact for the community and this could guide spending decisions.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Volunteering is an important part of community resilience. It is crucial therefore for volunteering to be an integral part of the community planning for crisis prevention and response. Volunteering in crisis situations needs special attention, planning and organisation. This should be proportional to the potential risks and take into account all the knowledge, [experiences and potential of civic activism and volunteers and staff of organised civil society](#).

Outcomes:

- Volunteering is included as an integral part of the community planning for crisis prevention and response.
- It is taken into account that volunteering in crisis situations needs special attention, planning and organisation and that this should be proportional to the potential risks and take into account all the knowledge, experiences and potential of civic activism and volunteers and staff of organised civil society.
- Responses to crises with the support of volunteers is efficient and effective by ensuring that the structures for the coordination and support needed for episodic emergency volunteering are ready in advance with adequate and suitable support and funding. Care should be taken that such structures and processes are developed alongside other initiatives that build a sense of community in a more cross cutting manner.

VOLUNTEER MANAGERS AND MENTORS PHYSICAL, MENTAL & SOCIAL SAFETY

Outcomes:

- Volunteer infrastructure and Volunteer Involving Organisations should continue investing in the development of the quality of the role and practice of volunteer managers and mentors that will help cultivate thriving and relevant volunteer programmes leading to high impact.
- Public funding for the support for the training and engagement of volunteer managers and mentors is provided. It should include a more targeted and deeper approach with a long term vision in the context of a wider cross-cutting, cross-field and cross-sectoral approach.
- Resources to enable organisation to introduce and sustain a variety of support measures especially for new volunteers, such as inter-generational mentoring schemes and other volunteer buddy approaches are available.

PHYSICAL, MENTAL & SOCIAL SAFETY

Outcomes:

- There is Investment in the development of volunteer management courses and certification that includes the basic requirements and ensures that all volunteer managers are trained in all relevant legal and health and safety requirements for volunteers.
- Volunteers are provided with the necessary support and protection through suitable accident and third party liability insurance.
- Funding partnerships for resourcing volunteer insurance are developed and there is progress with insurance providers to develop market products that provide insurance to volunteers regardless of their circumstances and in an inclusive way.

ONLINE MATCHING SYSTEMS

Continued sanitary and physical distancing measures, in place to prevent the further spread of the COVID19 virus and to protect vulnerable people, will mean that a certain number of regular volunteers, particularly elderly people or those with underlying health issues, will not return to their previous volunteer activities and people with those profiles will not engage as new volunteers in the same way as before. Online matching services to find new volunteers to fill these roles can seem like an ideal solution.

Outcomes:

- It is understood that onlinematching systems are one of the possibilities to give volunteers access to engagement opportunities and there are good examples from volunteering organisations in Europe that ensure the quality, transparency & complementarity of the process. In order to provide an inclusive and quality approach however, they can not completely replace physical matching and support.
- Extreme care is taken if looking to finance or engage such systems as part of volunteering policy delivery that they have the capability to identify and facilitate quality opportunities that meet all legal requirements (including those related to the safety of volunteers and beneficiaries and GDPR) and that the expectation of both volunteers and organisations are managed in a way that prioritises positive community impact and not headline-making targets and numbers.
- The sale of data of people registering on matching platforms to become volunteers is prohibited.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS & EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The European Solidarity Corps should be a starting point for broader and more comprehensive European policy for volunteering. The proposal from the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union (2020) to develop a platform for older people volunteering should be considered with great care and comprehensive needs analysis undertaken while ensuring the necessary additional resources that are needed for this platform or any other similar initiatives to be developed.

Outcomes:

- Volunteering policies are coordinated across policy fields and include robust support for a functioning volunteering infrastructure based on cross-sector dialogue, consultation and collaboration. This should be at all decision making levels including, and especially, at the local level supported in and underpinned by a European framework.
- The specificities and needs of the volunteering sector are taken into account in the COVID19 recovery period, alongside those of business interests.

INTERGROUP

Candidate MEPs are encouraged to complete the pledge for a Volunteering Intergroup.

✓ The creation of a European Parliament Intergroup on Volunteering is necessary to ensure an on-going commitment of the European Parliament towards the further development of a comprehensive EU agenda on volunteering.

✓ A cross-cutting issue as volunteering, needs an official and structured intergroup, in order to have the financial resources to facilitate the activities. The intergroup will be a crucial cross-party and cross-Committee framework for ensuring the good implementation of the European Solidarity & Voluntary Service (European Solidarity Corps).

I (name).....
MEP candidate for.....
in the event of my election in the 2024 European Parliament elections, commit to supporting and promoting the establishment of an EP intergroup on volunteering.

Signed:

Contact Details
Telephone:

Stamp:

Email:

Date and place:

Social media:

OVERALL ENGAGEMENT



DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Volunteering is an essential component for European democracy and an expression of European Values. The active engagement of citizens both in practical actions and in policy development leading to systemic change is crucial.

Outcomes:

- Article 11 of the “Lisbon Treaty” concerning structured dialogue with European civil society is implemented in full.
- Civil society partners that are experts in volunteering are engaged in regular structured dialogue with policymakers on all matters related to and impacting on volunteers & volunteering.

DIGNITY & FREEDOM

The contribution of volunteers should be accepted as a key part of the team effort and a trusted partner for social cohesion. Volunteers should be seen as actors in their own destiny engaging in participatory democracy alongside representative democracy to improve quality of life for all. Not only in terms of material services but also, and especially as concerns other outcomes such as: the human bonds and connections between people in a spirit of mutual respect, recognition and the freedom to be different. Volunteering to contribute to social justice and reaching a fairer society should be based on European values and be open, inclusive and accessible to all.

Outcomes:

- Volunteer organisations are always included in the design and delivery of social cohesion policies.
- The basic principles of volunteering are protected by policymakers and all stakeholders.
- The dignity of volunteers and those being supported by volunteers is protected.

TRANSPARENT & DEMOCRATIC STATE FUNDING

Transparent and democratically distributed state funding to democratic and inclusive volunteering initiatives with clear and transparent procedures is essential for quality volunteering to thrive. The absence of State support for civil society and volunteers leaves space for individuals and groups to take advantage of the vulnerabilities of others and promote their ideological and political agendas in connection with the distribution of funds. When these agendas are incompatible with European values and human rights this leads to long term challenges in social cohesion, safety and security for all.

Outcomes:

- A variety of suitable funding possibilities for both core costs and projects of different sizes and scopes to volunteer-involving (formal and non formal groups) & volunteer infrastructures organisation are available.

- Volunteer time that does not replace paid jobs can be used for the co-financing/ co-resourcing of grants.
- Public funding for volunteering is allocated on the basis of open Calls for proposals.
- Procedures are simplified to make it easier for all entities, including volunteer-based organisations with limited capacities (few or no paid staff) to apply for funding without compromising on standards and/or transparency.

COLLABORATIVE NETWORKING

Pre-existing and trustful cross-sector collaboration has proved crucial in enabling communities to respond to existing and new requests for help and assistance. Democratic and inclusive structures that support and promote volunteering should be in place. In order to develop and sustain these networks of actors from different sectors and fields, based on mutual recognition and trust at all levels, including local, regional, national and European adequate and suitable public funding should be made available.

Outcomes:

- Not for profit volunteer centres and platforms receive sufficient public funding.
- Policymakers engage with not for profit volunteer centres for their contribution to policy development and design as experts in the field and not only as delivery partners.
- Regular cross sector meetings are convened to encourage and facilitate co-creation of solutions between actors from different fields and sectors harnessing the full potential of volunteers and their organisations.

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As highlighted in the European Volunteering Capital competition, good cross-sector collaboration at the local level between the public and private sectors (profit and not for profit), for communities of all sizes and situations, has high potential as a driver of value creation that is crucial for sustainable development, as well as for disaster preparedness and risk reduction. This collaboration enables different stakeholders to face threats together and contribute to common, sustainable solutions to existing and future challenges.

Outcomes:

- The specific role of public sector actors at the local level in facilitating and enabling this process is recognised and the creation of an environment conducive to constructive cross sector collaboration is created and considered crucial in this process.
- The co-creation of public policies becomes the norm and the opportunities offered by participatory decision making processes are fully explored and exploited.
- Special attention is paid to the links between the public and private sectors (not-for-profit and for-profit) and full efforts are made by all stakeholders to understand the added value of the contribution of each sector.

TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION & SOLIDARITY

Around the world, we are witnessing the increase of activism and volunteering crossing borders and connecting people motivated to respond to global challenges such as climate change, migration and COVID-19 pandemic. All of that has reaffirmed the importance of solidarity beyond borders as a way to address common challenges, inequalities and protect and support the vulnerable.

Outcomes:

- Volunteers are recognised as an important force for achieving global goals for sustainable development (SDGs).
- Suitable funds are provided to European networks dedicated to supporting and promoting volunteering that provide clear added value to these goals fully reflecting this crucial role.
- Education institutions, volunteer development and volunteer involving organisations are supported to build their capacity to promote and implement global solidarity and the sustainable development goals (SDGs), making explicit the link between volunteering activities and 17 objectives.
- Volunteer exchange programmes and sharing of European volunteer development experience and practice and learning from others is facilitated and encouraged.
- Statistics authorities make the contribution made by volunteering to the UN 2030 Agenda visible by including volunteer contributions in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the SDGs.

NEW VOLUNTEERS AND METHODS



NON-FORMAL VOLUNTEERING

Digitalization and social networks have facilitated an increased amount of non-formal volunteering activities. In addition to providing flexible and immediate responses to societal needs, they have an additional importance in nurturing a sense of connectedness and solidarity between people facing common challenges. Especially in times of crisis, spontaneous volunteering can be a key resource for community resilience. Whilst increasing informal and spontaneous engagement brings new dynamics and numerous benefits, it also opens the space for ideas and actions that are not always genuinely based on true societal needs and can cause damage and loss of potential.

Outcomes:

The importance of strengthening self help and solidarity networks is recognised as an important and critical component of volunteering support strategies, especially for isolated and vulnerable communities.

There is awareness that whilst increasing informal and spontaneous engagement brings new dynamics and numerous benefits, it also opens the space for ideas and actions that are not contributing to the well being and common good, and to prevent this, basic standards of conduct are in place.

Stakeholders from different sectors engage to find the best models for capitalising on the potential of this type of engagement through achieving synergies with more organized forms of community engagement and collective response in order to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts and contribute to sustainable initiatives that are genuinely needs-based.

Suitable and sufficient public support is provided to volunteer infrastructure organisations to have the capacity to support and guide these new forms of volunteering.

DIGITALISATION

Digital technology can be used to ease access to, and increase the quality of volunteering. Digital development has shown the potential to mobilise more participation and support social movements. Online volunteering has shown the importance of digitalisation as a critical way to meet many needs in our societies these days. Whilst access to information, social media and networking have made volunteering accessible for more people and can widen the space for more volunteer possibilities, at the same can also represent a barrier for those people without access to digital means and/or competencies. Supporting accountable digital empowerment in volunteering organizations is one of the key ways to achieve increased potential of volunteering but care must be taken that differences in access to digital tools and data don't lead to further inequalities in access to volunteering or volunteer support.

Outcomes:

- It is fully understood that volunteering organisations can play a role in several ways, for example in identifying needs and providing online access through data and hardware/software provisions, education for digital literacy, digital competencies and critical thinking etc.
- Volunteer organisations are provided with the necessary resources (knowledge, materials, finances and technical support) to fully support their volunteers in their activities (online and offline).
- The needs of organisations are listened to and a suitable balance is kept between support for both offline and online volunteering opportunities.

QUALITY FOR NEW WAYS OF ENGAGEMENT

To ensure quality volunteering experiences for new volunteers they need to be prepared and educated for their roles ensuring at all times that they are helped to understand how volunteering contributes to the common good. Particularly when being trained and/or prepared for volunteering in events or for other sporadic opportunities, volunteers should be equipped with the knowledge and tools to identify opportunities that might be considered as roles that are replacing jobs rather than being genuine volunteering roles. They should also be assisted in building on these volunteering experiences as a route to longer term volunteering engagement in causes they want to support if they so wish. The importance of values and solidarity as a motivating power at the heart of their action, alongside other motivating factors that are personal to individual volunteers should also be highlighted.

Outcomes:

- Quality in volunteering is ensured by encouraging entities offering volunteering opportunities to existing and new volunteers to apply the principles for quality volunteering engagement as described in PAVE
- Quality online volunteering is ensured by encouraging volunteers and organisations to be guided by the CEV Guidelines for Online Volunteering
- Every volunteer has a suitable and accessible point of information or reference point to channel their questions and suggestions.
- Educational curriculum for volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations includes values and core civic competencies as an integral part.



NEW EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS

Changing employment regulations and working cultures are leading to a new reality of employment with more flexibility for some, but also more unpredictable and varying paid working hours for others.

Outcomes:

- Volunteer organisations are enabled and supported to adapt in order to offer volunteer opportunities that fit with changing working/employment conditions and hours. This will ensure that volunteer engagement can be organised in an inclusive way enabling organisations to meet their missions with the support of as many volunteers as possible.
- Volunteer infrastructure organisations are enabled and supported to ensure that the support that they offer to potential and existing volunteers is provided in such a way that is sensitive to these new employment situations.
- New ideas to enable all European citizens to have more time from employment or other duties in order to fulfil any citizen's rights or duties contributing to the common good, including volunteering, are explored.

WELFARE & HEALTH POLICY SINERGIES

People claiming benefits or any other kind of state support such as integration processes for newcomers should not be excluded or prevented from volunteering. Volunteering should not be misused by state authorities as a compulsory tool to get people back to work, volunteering should be based on a person's own free will and should not be required by the state authorities as a conditionality for any support or consideration.

Outcomes:

- The inclusion of volunteering as part of Social Prescribing schemes is carefully researched and considered with data collected from closely monitored trial experiences before being subjected to wider and more significant outreach and implementation. The essential characteristic of choice and free will to volunteer should be maintained.
- When seeking to engage in volunteering, there are no additional steps required for people receiving an allowance or any other state support, as compared with those who do not.

VOLUNTOURISM

There is a growth of supply and demand of "Voluntourism" - volunteering opportunities taken up as part of the main purpose of travel or engaged in whilst travelling in the volunteers' own country or another. Volunteering and tourism are both phenomena motivated by passion and interest in a particular subject and are both something that people generally engage with in their free time. Concepts and feelings such as excitement, memories, opportunities, entertainment, free time, travel, new experiences and pleasure are common to both. There is a growing trend towards linking the two concepts. As people's time becomes increasingly under pressure, due to the vast range of opportunities that are available for them to experience, both on and offline, the idea to combine time that is available to be dedicated for tourism and a holiday, with time that could be committed for solidarity purposes, is increasingly attractive to an ever-greater number of people. As with many other phenomena, different individuals and organisations have identified a 'business potential' in this proposition. There is an expanding multi-billion Euro industry of what has now come to be known as 'voluntourism' sector.

Outcomes:

- The growth of the sector is monitored and regulated in order to ensure quality volunteering experiences that provide a measurable added benefit to the common good and local community.
- Citizens considering the voluntourism model as a way of engaging as a volunteer have access to information in order to make informed decisions to choose quality experiences.
- Major information campaigns to raise public awareness of the issues of voluntourism - the damage it can cause and the indicators of quality are implemented.



Who will you vote for?
What is their Volunteer Vision?



This publication is supported by the European Commission in the framework of the Europe for Citizens Programme. Sole responsibility for the publication lies with the European Volunteer Centre.

Contact:

*© Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)
Avenue des Arts 7-8
Brussels 1210
Belgium*

*www.europeanvolunteercentre.org
communication@cev.be*



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

