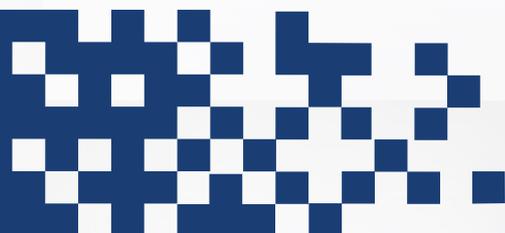


INEAR



Inclusion, Equality and Rights in Volunteering

WEBINAR



Appreciation of contribution Report

June 22nd 2022



Gabriella Civico opened the meeting outlining the 4th chapter of the BEV2030 and the subsections; challenges in communicating the contribution of volunteers, extending volunteering beyond service delivery, validating the learning and skills gained by volunteers through volunteering, and research and impact measurement relating to volunteering projects.



Participants from the INEAR 4th Webinar

Michał Zorena, Department of Social Development, City Hall in Gdańsk - Societal Challenges and Communication - Public Recognition

Michał began with a presentation of the work done in gaining public recognition for the contribution of volunteers. He expanded the topic to include how Gdańsk created infrastructure to enable active citizenship and participation, which in turn raises awareness of the social impact citizens can make through volunteering. The challenges posed by the pandemic and then the war in Ukraine presented a test of the ecosystem that the municipality had created, and how quickly their infrastructure would be able to respond to unexpected emergencies. He stressed that creating an infrastructure where citizens feel enabled to act, and see that their efforts are celebrated and recognised, is essential in rising to unexpected challenges.

The three pillars of this ecosystem in Gdańsk are as follows: Solidarity, space for activists, and social innovations. In Gdańsk's case, a physical space co-managed by a community of activists was created, and the Gdańsk cohesion centre provides a space for minorities or marginalised groups to be involved actively in their community.

Michał then outlined that there are five funds available for citizens and volunteers, not just formalised NGOs, for the development of community projects and actions. These funds cover different topics: Young people, seniors, neighbourhood activists, sports, and equal treatment projects. The funds also act as a way of communicating that the municipality values and encourages these kinds of volunteering projects, and the impact they have on the local community.



Furthermore, these funds are also seen as investing in a learning process, as failed projects will not have to return the money if they can explain and justify what mistakes were made and what the project leaders have learned from the experience. This allows all involved to take bold actions and learn from the experience to improve future projects.



Michał Zorena, Department of Social Development, City Hall in Gdańsk

The floor was then opened for questions from the participants.

The first question asked what actions the municipality takes to ensure that these projects and funds are visible and communicated well to citizens. Michał responded that the main celebration and visibility period for volunteering in Gdańsk is during the volunteering week in December, which raises the profile of volunteering while also focusing on current projects. On the point of communication, he also stated that it was important to use real activists and materials from projects in Gdańsk in the promotional material, as they are more genuine and easy to connect to if the material features real citizens from the city.

Finally, Michał spoke about the benefits of being the EVCapital 2022, which celebrated and spread awareness of the main events and projects in the city, including a concert to thank volunteers during which the city was able to invite this year's Eurovision Song Contest winner to perform.

Another participant asked whether Gdańsk had seen refugees becoming involved with volunteering themselves, as this can often help with integration. Michał expressed how extraordinary it was that refugees arriving from a situation of such hardships felt the need to help others and contribute through volunteering, even after only 2 days since their arrival.

The final question asked about the difficulties of offering these funds to informal groups of volunteers, from a legal perspective. Michał expressed that this is quite a challenge due to a lack of legal framework for informal volunteering, so the funds are usually given with an NGO as an operator of the grant, who then disperse funds to the citizens.



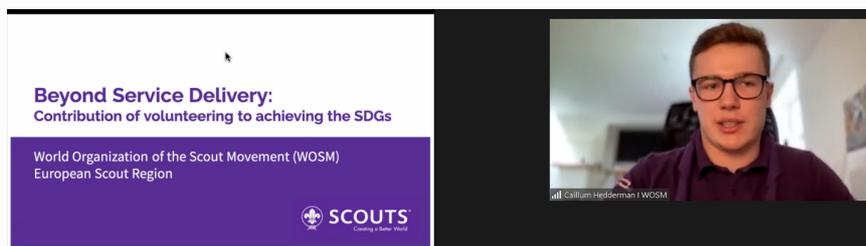
He also highlighted that these funds are usually a small amount, and are seen mostly as a catalyst for citizens to organise and combine their resources, making the funding a starting point for action.

Caillum Hedderman, WOSM - Beyond Service Delivery - Contribution of Volunteering to Achieving the SDGs

Caillum started his presentation by highlighting scouting's contributions to the SDGs. For example SDG 4 (Quality Education), achieved through reaching out to young people facing barriers to quality formal education, providing them the chance to learn and grow in a non-formal manner through volunteering activities.

The Scouts rely on active citizenship, as only through grassroots engagement and volunteering can they achieve the SDGs.

The 2007 fires in Croatia were presented as an example of the contribution volunteers can make, as Croatian Scouts created the Boranka campaign to provide education on climate change and forest fires. A video was shown highlighting the key components of this campaign; during September 2018 over 100,000 boralice crayons were given away free of charge to citizens, schools and kindergartens across Croatia. Citizens could then use these crayons to draw a tree and upload a photo to the campaign website. By doing so, they took part in creating a virtual forest. The more the virtual forest grows, the more real seedlings were planted by Scouts and other volunteers in the wildfire sites.



Caillum Hedderman, WOSM

One participant asked whether the Scouts were divided by a religious line, to which Caillum responded that while there are faith groups, scouting is incredibly cross-cultural and cross-faith as an organisation, which encourages intercultural exchanges and interfaith cooperation; there are no kind of religious limitations or barriers.

A further question was asked about whether there is a differentiation made between scout leaders and members in terms of their contributions to the SDGs. In response, Caillum said that scout leaders are seen as facilitators and a catalyst for the actions of young people, it is seen as an intergenerational and intersectional collaboration where everyone has an essential role.

Finally, it was expressed by participants that the video produced by the Scouts is a really good example of communicating the contribution of volunteers, as videos and promotion are extremely important to enable the recognition of the actions of volunteers.

Michel Lefranc, France Benevolat & CEV Board Member - Validation of Learning - The role of Volunteer Centres - UPVAL Erasmus Plus project

Michel introduced the UPVAL project, which has been ongoing for two and a half years with the involvement of four countries; Belgium, France, The Netherlands, and Romania, who all worked on the validation of volunteers and created a europass style recognition tool for volunteering. He expressed that the inclusion of validation of learning is a logical part of volunteering, as volunteers undoubtedly gain many skills which will be useful for them both in life and in the labour market. Furthermore, it was stated that organisations should be encouraged to systematise the validation of volunteering learning, and that the awareness of the benefits of validation need to be well communicated.

Michel then went on to present the validation roadmap, created as part of the project, which has three categories; the volunteer, the supporting organisation, and the volunteer involving organisation. The supporting organisation should help the involving organisation, who in turn helps the volunteer directly.



Micky Lefranc
CEV Board & France Benevolat
Validation of Learning
The role of Volunteer Centres



*Michel Lefranc,
France Benevolat & CEV Board Member*



The steps of the roadmap were outlined, including (for the volunteer involving organisation), being aware of the value of validation, choosing a tutor to support the volunteer on their road to validation, providing training, monitoring and periodically making the volunteer aware of the competencies they are gaining through their volunteering experience. This assessment and rewarding of the contributions made by volunteers shows that the volunteer has worked well and their actions are appreciated.

Furthermore, it was expressed that employers should also be made aware of the value of competencies gained through volunteering, one step in this is through validation, but also requires a more general cultural understanding of the contribution of volunteers through strong communication and engagement from the public bodies for example.

Michel then used the example of sports volunteering, showcasing the different skills volunteers gain through these projects (leadership, team working, active participation), and linking this to the skills employers often look for.

Marguerite Minani - Research and Measurement - UNV knowledge portal

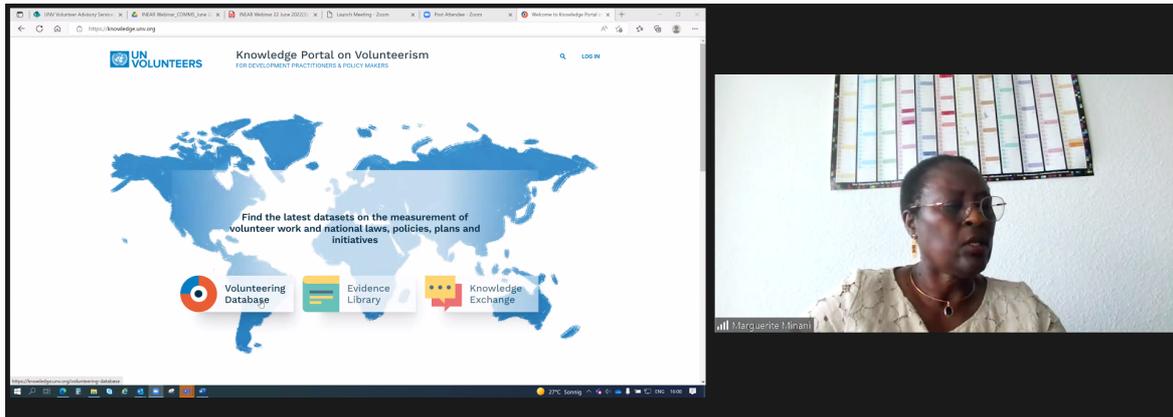
Marguerite presented the UNV knowledge portal, which focuses on knowledge aiming at the 2030 UNV agenda. The portal itself was launched in 2020 and provides a platform for sharing knowledge, resources, exchanging ideas and learning from peers involved in the volunteering sector.

The portal also has country-specific information, for example on the portal you can see that Kenya has a draft national volunteering law, which is uploaded into the portal for all to access and read. It also shows the different policies relating to volunteering, and even youth schemes, as well as information on which countries have launched impact measurement research and what the results of this was.

Participants expressed that this resource is an excellent tool for collecting information on volunteering frameworks across the world, as well as seeing information on upcoming webinars, and the ability to contribute to volunteering discussion groups on different topics of interest.



The webinar closed with a thank you to all speakers and participants, and participants are looking forward to the next and final INEAR webinar, "Resources for more Value".



Marguerite Minani, UNVolunteers

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